

APPENDIX B.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WORKING OF THE LOCOMOTIVE DEPARTMENT, 1899-1900.

SIR,—

Locomotive Superintendent's Office, Wellington, 4th May, 1900.

I have the honour to report on the working of the Locomotive Department for the year ending the 31st March, 1900.

The locomotives, carriages, wagons, vans, cranes, tarpaulins, machinery, and general plant have been maintained in good working condition, and improvements have been made as they suggest themselves.

The following new locomotives were provided during the year:—

Description.	How charged.
One Class B locomotive (goods type), built at Addington	Additions to open lines.
Four Class B locomotives (goods type), imported from Great Britain	"
Two Class U locomotives (passenger type), built at Addington	"
Three Class U locomotives (passenger type), imported from Great Britain	"
One Class Wa locomotive, built at Hillside	"
Three Class U locomotives (passenger type), imported from Great Britain	Working-expenses.

Three old double Fairlie Class E locomotives, which have been in service since 1875, have been written off, and have been replaced by three Class U locomotives imported from Great Britain.

Following the discussion which has already taken place, it will be necessary to order more Class U locomotives from Great Britain, also some Class Wa locomotives from America.

During the year the tractive power has been increased 10·4 per cent., of which increase 9·1 per cent. has been charged to "Additions to open lines," and 1·3 per cent. to working-expenses.

The new locomotives, locomotive conversions, and boiler renewals in hand in the workshops, and the new locomotives under order from Great Britain, will still further increase the tractive power 14·8 per cent.

The additional train-mileage run during the year has been 219,185 miles = 5·52 per cent.; and the engine-mileage 363,200 miles = 6·94 per cent.

Considerable inconvenience still exists on account of the restrictions upon locomotive runs. This should be remedied as soon as possible by making the permanent-way and structures more than equal to all locomotives.

The replacing of old types of locomotives with those of more modern design should be pushed forward, more especially as the altered conditions (on account of increased traffic) require locomotives of a heavier type.

The following additions have been made to the workshops during the year: Lean-to building for interlocking gear, timber-drying room, iron-foundry, pattern-store, and additions to blacksmiths' shop at Petone. Further additions to the principal shops are most necessary, and the machine shop at Addington should be rearranged at an early date.

Additional car and wagon stock is still necessary to meet traffic requirements and to allow of the proper attention to the existing stock.

Shelter-sheds for carriages should be available at all the principal places.

Arrangements have been made with the Westinghouse Brake Company to fit all the rolling-stock on the Wellington-Napier-New Plymouth and Auckland Sections with their automatic brake. Also, fittings for equipping the through trains on the Hurunui-Bluff Section have been ordered, and will be fitted by the department at the workshops.

The following additions to plant have been made during the year: Two sewing-machines, one mortising-machine, three heavy drilling-machines, one plate-edge planing-machine, one three-cylinder blowing-engine, one firebox drilling and tapping machine, four small drilling-machines, one small wheel lathe, one multiple drilling-machine (four spindles), one 10 cwt. steam-hammer, two punching and shearing machines, one 96-horse-power Babcock and Wilcox boiler, one lapping and grinding machine, one Root's blower, two rivet-forges, one emery tool-grinder, one cutter and twist-drill grinder, one planer-knife grinder, one overhead travelling crane, one cupola, two tanite grinders, two capstan lathes, one firebox bottom ring and frameplate milling-machine, one plate furnace, one springmaker's furnace, one set of heavy plate-bending rolls, one heavy screwing-machine, and four lathes (screw-cutting).

Some valuable tools are now under order, and may be expected during the next year.

More tools of modern type should be ordered as early as possible.

The additional workshops and new machinery have enabled the boiler renewals and repairs to be brought up to a better position than before. At the end of the financial year boilers were ready for fitting into 4 H, 5 LA, and 2 M locomotives; also work is in hand for 4 B, 2 C, 1 K, 1 R, 1 T, and 2 Wa locomotives. There are also seventeen new crane-boilers ready to replace old ones.

During the year ninety-nine cars, three bogie covered goods-vans, and four bogie brake-vans were fitted for use of compressed gas—making a total of 431 cars, four bogie covered goods-vans, and four bogie brake-vans fitted to date. Two travelling storeholders for gas have also been fitted to bogie platform-wagons, and two additional gas storeholders have been erected in the gasworks, Dunedin.