

largely due to the inauguration of the through Wellington–Auckland service *via* the Main Trunk line, the inclusion of the Wellington–Manawatu line in the Government railways system, and the revision of the time-tables generally, making it necessary to provide additional trains to meet the altered circumstances of the country.

In order to give the quickest connection possible between the various important towns of the North and South Islands, it was decided to accelerate the running of the first north and south bound express trains between Christchurch and Invercargill, and to reduce the number of stopping-places *en route*. One hour and thirty-five minutes were taken off the time, thus reducing the journey between Lyttelton and Invercargill to thirteen hours, and enabling the through journey by rail and steamer, Auckland to Invercargill, to be made in forty-eight hours including a stay of about three and a half hours in Wellington.

The following figures, which give the record of the late arrivals of the principal trains during the year, indicate that the train service has maintained punctuality :—

AVERAGE LATE ARRIVAL.			
	Min.		Min.
For long-distance passenger-trains	1.29,	against	1.43 last year.
For suburban trains	0.36,	"	0.38 "
For long-distance mixed trains	1.88,	"	1.75 "

The passenger traffic increased very materially during the year, and for the first time in the history of the railways of the Dominion ordinary passengers totalled over ten millions; the number actually carried being 10,457,144, an increase of 700,428 over the previous year. Season tickets numbered 192,547, an increase of 7,373. The number of workers' twelve-trip tickets was 45,227, and of workers' weekly tickets, available on suburban lines, 102,262. The steady increase in workers' tickets is a very gratifying evidence that the people for whose benefit they were established are realising the advantages derivable from living in the healthy suburban areas. I look forward, therefore, with confidence to a continued expansion of traffic from workers' tickets. Holiday excursion tickets issued numbered 790,179, an increase of 58,044 over the previous year. School, factory, and friendly societies' excursion tickets numbered 117,044, an increase of 3,964.

The coaching and goods traffic show increases under the various headings under which the traffic is grouped, carriages, pigs, firewood, timber, and merchandise excepted. In the coaching the increases have been—parcels, 23,728; horses, 701; dogs, 3,032; and in the live-stock and goods traffic—cattle and calves, 9,133; sheep, 618,389 head; chaff, lime, &c., 12,899 tons; wool, 17,323 tons; grain, 54,225; minerals, 22,136. The decrease in the number of pigs carried was 8,361 head; firewood, 7,534 tons; timber, 34,032 tons; merchandise, 27,676 tons.

The decrease in pig traffic resulted from low prices ruling this year, and in merchandise from a falling-off in the quantity of frozen meat railed in the South Island, and the fact that Home vessels now invariably proceed direct to Dunedin to discharge, thus diverting the bulk of the shipping traffic from the Port Chalmers line.

The decrease in timber resulted from the temporary closing-down of a number of mills owing to scarcity of orders, consequent on the dullness in the building trade.

The average number of men employed during the year was 12,505, against 12,338 for the previous year.

During the year 259 members of the permanent staff resigned, 64 retired on superannuation, 38 died, 132 were dismissed, 923 engaged, and 324 were taken over from the Wellington–Manawatu Railway Company.

Twenty appeals were heard during the year by the Railway Appeal Boards; of these, seven were upheld and thirteen dismissed.

Twenty members of the Second Division were promoted to the First Division during the year.

The sum of £7,512 has been paid as compensation during the year under the Workers' Compensation for Accidents Act.