

handling of goods traffic so as to secure the best possible loading of goods wagons and trains and quick despatch to long-distance and other traffic. Data will be available to ensure the more punctual discharge and better use of wagons, and so reduce the number of complaints regarding shortage and wastage of truck-power.

Records will not, however, give the Traffic Manager that intimate personal knowledge of his staff and movements of traffic in his district that he should possess. Systematic outdoor supervision is the fundamental means by which responsible officers can familiarize themselves with the duties and become personally acquainted with the capabilities of their staff. Promotion must, in the interests of efficiency, be made strictly on merit and capability, seniority of service, of course, being the determining factor when qualifications are equal. The staff must, however, feel assured that the appraisalment of their value is being made by officers who are thoroughly intimate with the conditions under which the work is carried out.

The strengthening of the Chief and District Traffic Managers' offices will render unnecessary the positions of Traffic Superintendents, which do not fit in with either the present or proposed organization. The Superintendents themselves are at present in a false position, as they have neither executive authority, responsibilities, nor staff. The outside supervision by officials acting with the authority of the Chief and District Traffic Managers, and with defined duties and responsibilities, will be much more efficient and infinitely preferable.

Under the existing organization there is attached to each District Traffic Manager's office an official known as a "Traffic Inspector." When these appointments were created it was intended that the officers filling them should devote their attention almost entirely to outside duties, but in the course of time they have been given routine duties to perform to such an extent that their original functions have been lost sight of and they have become more or less office men. Under my proposals the Traffic Inspectors will again become outside officers working under the direction of the Assistant District Traffic Managers.

When the proposed reorganization of the Traffic Managers' offices is completed inquiries into matters affecting traffic-working generally, which are now to a large extent dealt with by the Head Office, will be handed over to the Chief Traffic Manager, on whom will be fixed the responsibility for making investigations and reporting promptly to the General Manager, who will, as heretofore, keep closely in touch with the traffic operations. The Chief Traffic Manager will by this rearrangement be able to exercise a more comprehensive supervision over the traffic-working, and be in a position to deal immediately with questions affecting demand and supply of rolling-stock, train services, &c.

Appointment of Commercial Agent.

There is frequently a tendency to overlook the fact that the New Zealand Railway Department, although a State concern, is nevertheless a business undertaking established for the purpose of selling transport. In no other concern in which capital exceeding £32,000,000 has been invested would the organization be considered complete without the inclusion of a responsible official whose sole duty would be the development of new revenue-producing business. It is, however, a fact that there is no such official attached to the New Zealand railways.

The Railway Traffic officer is trained primarily to conduct traffic operations with the greatest possible economy consistent with safety. Economy ultimately becomes and remains almost second nature to the Traffic man, whose efficiency is largely judged by his ability to concentrate the traffic into big train-loads and to work with the minimum of train-mileage. Economy of haulage-power even to the extent of parsimony is regarded as a virtue and should be encouraged in the Traffic officer, but to get the proper balance in the conduct of the undertaking an antidote is necessary, otherwise there is a danger of new business which may ultimately become remunerative being stifled instead of nursed. The antidote I propose is the appointment of a "Commercial Agent." This official will not be held directly responsible for the cost of traffic operations, but will be expected to explain all decreases in business. His duty will be to increase the sale of transport by every means available, and he will usually be somewhat at variance with the Traffic Manager's economical views. The Traffic Manager, by reason of his training in economics, naturally views schemes involving additional train services or facilities with disfavour and the bait of additional business with scepticism. The Commercial Agent, on the other hand, will lend a ready ear to proposals in regard to new trade. He will act as the sympathetic advocate of the public at any discussion between departmental officials as to revised train services, questions of rating, improvement or increase of rolling-stock, or any other means by which passenger or goods business can in his opinion be attracted to the railway.

The officer controlling traffic-working may be a pessimist as far as suggestions from the public are concerned, the Commercial Agent should be an optimist of a pronounced description, constantly employing his ingenuity as a salesman in evolving schemes to popularize travel by rail. The Traffic officer may be trusted to act as an effective brake upon the Commercial Agent when the latter's efforts tend to spoil the average of operating-costs or loading-returns. The function of the General Manager is to hold the balance between these two extremists. It will not be harmful to the General Manager to have attached to his staff a responsible officer whose role is advocate for the customers of the Railway Department.

The Commercial Agent will be free from the routine of preparation of time-tables, traffic advertisements, or rates revision, but he should nevertheless be required to keep a watchful eye on these matters as well as on the cleanliness of passenger stock, smoothness of railway-track, running of trains, efficiency of the dining-car service, civility of staff, and convenience of facilities for dealing with traffic at passenger and goods stations, &c., because these and kindred matters tend towards the attraction or repulsion of business. Complaints from the public will concern