

*Car-lighting.*—The oil-gas manufactured at the five separate Pint ch-gas works during the year amounted to 8,137,260 cubic feet, and cost to manufacture 3s. 1·9d. per 100 cubic feet, the increase in cost of production being due principally to increased charges for oil owing to war conditions.

On sections not provided with Pintsch gas all cars are lighted with acetylene gas.

*Motor-cars.*—The motor-cars used on the Culverden–Hanmer service were sold during the year.

*Rail Motor-cars.*—The Thomas transmission rail motor-car was out of commission, due to repair parts not being obtainable owing to the war. The Westinghouse petrol-electric rail motor-car was withdrawn from service when the reduced time-table came into operation.

*Steamers.*—The Railway Department's steamers on Lake Wakatipu service have been maintained in good working-order.

*Renewals and Replacements.* During the year three second-hand tank engines, one car, and sixteen wagons were sold; also 692 worn-out tarpaulins were condemned and written off. To replace engines and rolling-stock sold one heavy tank engine and twelve wagons were built, and 692 tarpaulins were made. To replace the balance of rolling-stock sold new vehicles are under construction.

*Train Running and Mileage.* There has again been a decrease in train-mileage, amounting to 1,677,685 miles, as compared with 1916–17. The decrease is due to reduced train services and the provision of more powerful engines.

The engine-mileage has decreased by 2,133,514 miles as compared with 1916–17. The decrease is principally due to the reduction in train services and the use of Class Ab engines mentioned in my last report. More of these locomotives have been built, and there are now nineteen of this type at work. These engines are now used on all express trains, and continue to give great satisfaction.

During the year the heavy tank engines referred to in last report have been regularly used between Taihape and Taumarunui on express and other trains, and have given good results. These engines on 50 per cent. less coal-consumption are doing almost equal work to the Class X compounds.

The following table shows particulars of the expenditure per train-mile :—

Year.	Train-mileage.	Engine-mileage.	Cost, in Pence, per Train-mile.		
			Locomotive Branch.	Car and Wagon Branch.	Total.
1917–18 .. ..	7,468,646	10,161,941	31·42	9·10	40·52
1916–17 .. ..	9,146,331	12,295,455	25·02	6·27	31·29

The increase in cost per train-mile is distributed as follows :—

Branch.				Wages.	Material.	Total.
				d.	d.	d.
Locomotive .. ..	..	..	..	3·27	3·13	6·40
Car and wagon .. ..	..	..	..	2·30	0·53	2·83
Totals .. ..	..	..	..	5·57	3·66	9·23

In this increased expenditure is included the cost of fuel, which in 1917 was £348,000, or equal to 9·13d. per train-mile, while in 1918 it was £367,600, or equal to 11·81d. per train-mile; also war bonus and allowances amounting to £73,600 were charged to working-expenses. Another item was the increased percentage of non-productive mileage to train-mileage, which amounted to 1·63 per cent. over 1917, or equal to £10,467.

*Material for Repair Work.*—It is now becoming more difficult to obtain the necessary material for the repair and upkeep of rolling-stock, many special lines essential for this purpose being absolutely unprocurable.

*General.*—During the year East Town shops have been equipped with electric light, and the Newmarket shops have been electrified and the old steam-power plant dismantled.

## STORES.

Mr. H. Baxter, Comptroller of Stores, reports as follows :—

The value of stores, material, and plant (purchased under the Railway vote) on hand at the 31st March, 1918, at the various stores, depots, and sawmills amounted to £437,788 3s. 5d., as against £392,597 13s. 8d. on the 31st March, 1917.

The value of stores on hand on account of additions to open lines amounted to £13,244 1s. 2d., as against £15,212 6s. 8d. on the 31st March, 1917.

The whole stock is in good order, has been systematically and carefully inspected, and is value for the amounts stated.