

The sum of £25,645 was paid under the Workers' Compensation Act during the year to members who sustained injuries while in the execution of their duties.

Twenty-six new engines were added to the stock. Five tender engines, Class AB, and one heavy tank engine, Class WAB., were built in the Government railway workshops; four Class AB engines built under contract by Messrs. A. and G. Price (Limited), of Thames, and sixteen Class AB built by the North British Locomotive Company (Limited), of Glasgow, under contract let in 1920.

Ten bogie cars, twelve bogie brake-vans, five bogie and 243 four-wheeled wagons were built in the Department's workshops.

The rolling-stock on order at the close of the year comprised forty-two engines, 130 cars, four bogie brake-vans, and 166 bogie and 514 four-wheeled wagons.

Four thousand two hundred and eighteen car, van, and wagon axles were replaced with modern axles, thus increasing the carrying-capacity of the vehicles by 2 tons each.

The permanent-way, buildings, structures, and appliances have been efficiently maintained, and a considerable number of improvements have been made in the accommodation at various stations.

Forty-eight and one-quarter miles of track were relaid with heavier material, 172,746 new sleepers, and 161,553 cubic yards of ballast were placed in the track during the year.

The Auckland-Mercer grade easements and the station rearrangements in connection therewith have been completed.

Fixed signals were provided at two stations, making the total number of stations so equipped 304, while 101 stations are interlocked.

The railway telegraph and telephone systems have been extended, and now comprise 285 Morse sets, 1,737 telephones, 333 electric bells, 7,630 miles of wire, and 2,679 miles of poles.

Up to the 31st March, 1923, the sum of £83,120 was spent under the vote "Additions to open lines" in the rearrangement of stations and the providing of telegraph and telephone facilities and signalling-appliances between Rolleston and Arthur's Pass; and £131,694 on similar works in the Greymouth district, to provide for the requirements of the traffic on the opening of the Otira - Arthur's Pass Tunnel.

REVENUE.

The gross revenue for the year amounted to £6,727,802, of which the North Island system yielded £4,009,677, a decrease of £11,722, and the South Island system £2,708,774, an increase of £94,602 on the previous year's figures; the increase from the whole system, including the Lake, was thus £84,211 on the earnings of the previous year and £27,802 above the estimate. The particulars are as follow:—

	1923.	1922.
	£	£
Passengers, ordinary	2,216,514	2,212,633
Season tickets	204,106	205,594
Parcels, luggage, and mails	393,322	339,482
Goods	3,671,008	3,646,594
Miscellaneous, rents, &c.	242,852	239,288
	<u>£6,727,802</u>	<u>£6,643,591</u>

The gross receipts per train-mile for all lines were 193·18d., against 182·69d. for the preceding year, an increase of 10·49d. per train-mile.

The North Island main line and branches produced 193·2d. per train-mile, against 183·71d. for the previous year, an increase of 9·49d.

The South Island main line and branches gave a return of 192·4d., as against 179·22d. last year, an increase of 13·18d.

The earnings from the Lake Wakatipu steamers amounted to £9,350, an increase of £1,331.

The net revenue, £1,225,305, was equal to a return of 3·04 per cent. on the capital invested in the lines open for traffic (£40,275,161) and 2·62 on the capital invested in the opened and unopened lines (£46,851,071).

EXPENDITURE.

The working expenditure for the year under review, including £14,100 the cost of working the Lake Wakatipu traffic, amounted to £5,502,497, a decrease of £735,230 on the expenditure for the previous year, and £661,503 below the estimate.

The ratio of expenditure to earnings was 81·79, as compared with 93·89 for the preceding year, a decrease of 12·1.

	Expenditure.		Per Cent. of Revenue.	
	1922-23.	1921-22.	1922-23.	1921-22.
	£	£	£	£
Traffic	1,527,033	1,703,049	22·73	25·66
Locomotive	2,657,153	3,134,164	39·55	47·23
Maintenance	1,040,892	1,111,884	15·49	16·76
Signals and electrical	67,425	72,343	1·01	1·09
Management	195,894	202,948	2·91	3·06
	<u>£5,488,397</u>	<u>£6,224,388</u>	<u>81·69</u>	<u>93·80</u>
Lake Wakatipu steamers	14,100	13,339	0·10	0·09
	<u>£5,502,497</u>	<u>£6,237,727</u>	<u>81·79</u>	<u>93·89</u>