

*Statement showing Goods Tonnage and Wagons available and suitable for dealing with same at  
31st March, 1924.*

Section.	Goods Traffic for Year ending 31st March, 1924 (exclusive of Live-stock).	Wagons used exclusively for Goods Traffic.			Excess of Capacity of Wagons over Traffic offering.
		Number.	Tonnage Capacity per Day.	Capacity per Annum at 1½ Trips only per Week.	
	Tons.		Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Kaihu .. .. .	10,984	60	382	29,796	18,812
Gisborne .. .. .	57,223	141	1,526	119,028	61,805
North Island Main Trunk including Whangarei	2,864,422	10,604	104,821	8,176,038	5,311,616
Picton .. .. .	59,310	201	1,626	126,828	67,518
Nelson .. .. .	42,853	150	1,180	92,040	49,187
Westport .. .. .	476,484	755	6,072	473,616*	—2,868
South Island Main Trunk including Westland	3,001,447	10,093	94,910	7,402,980	4,401,533
Totals .. .. .	6,512,723	22,004	210,517	16,420,326	9,907,603

\* In this case the wagons can be made use of at least four times per week; the capacity therefore considerably exceeds the traffic.

**Average capacity per wagon—**

1924 .. .. .	9.57 tons.
1908 .. .. .	8.11 tons.

The foregoing statement will show that if the trucks are given reasonable despatch there is ample rolling-stock to meet the requirements of the business. The difficulties that arise in connection with the supply of trucks are, indeed, not through any shortage in the number of trucks, but in the delay which occurs in releasing trucks under load. The losses which the Department sustains through neglect of consignees to give due attention to this matter is the greatest obstacle to the efficient performance by the Department of its functions in the matter of wagon-supply. The charges which are imposed for demurrage do not adequately recoup the Department for its losses in this connection; and while consignees who are debited with these charges generally resent their imposition, they seem quite oblivious of the fact that the Department would much prefer to have the use of its rolling-stock for carrying purposes than to allow it to be used for warehousing consignees' goods, and that the demurrage charges are necessary in the interests of the users of the railways themselves, and are really the only effective means which the Department has to ensure that the trucks shall be made available within a reasonable time for their legitimate purposes.

**CAR ACCOMMODATION.**

The desirability of ensuring the maximum degree of comfort for passengers travelling on the long-distance trains has always been a particular care of the Department, and from time to time important improvements have been made to attain this end. In this connection it has been found that the running of ladies' cars has been a step in the right direction, and one that has been much appreciated by ladies making long journeys alone or with children. On the Main Trunk trains where night travel is involved a female attendant is provided to travel on each of these cars, whose duty it is to give personal attention to the comfort of lady passengers and assist those travelling with young children.

Ladies' cars have now been placed on the mail-trains between Wellington and Napier, Wellington and New Plymouth, and on the express trains in the South Island.

A further addition to the comfort of long-distance passengers is to be found in the provision already made in a number of carriages of separate lavatories for ladies and gentlemen respectively. Arrangements have been made for similar conveniences being provided in all cars now in service and all new cars under construction. The alteration will be effected as opportunity offers and cars running are taken into the shops for overhaul.

Another important alteration that the Department has in hand is the abolition of the system of gas-lighting and the substitution of Stone's system of electric lighting. The superiority of the electric light over the gas-lighting formerly in use is amply demonstrated by the cars that have already been equipped with electricity and placed in service. Better illumination is obtained from electricity; the lights can be manipulated with greater facility, and the possible danger of fire which may arise in an accident through the escape of the gas will be eliminated. It will also be possible with electric lighting to provide a light on the platforms of the carriages, and this will afford a greater measure of safety in entering and leaving carriages during hours of darkness.

Paper drinking-cups having been tested out and found to be efficient and satisfactory, suitable fittings of an artistic type have been designed as holders therefor, and these cups are now being added to the equipment of all trains, in substitution of the enamel and other similar drinking-vessels which from the hygienic standpoint have been the subject of complaint.