

such as the Canadian Pacific Railway and the owners of some of the larger hotels in Canada and America, with the object of obtaining the best possible distribution of the Department's literature. A very extensive scheme has also been embarked on, involving the preparation of a large number of hand-painted photographs of the patent "cirkut" type, which will be suitably framed and sent abroad for hanging in hotels and other suitable places, principally in America and Canada. These pictures are of a distinctly superior type, and show the various tourist attractions of the Dominion to great advantage. A poster of a highly artistic nature typifying the native birds of New Zealand has also been prepared by the Department's artist, and the resulting production is one of very great artistic merit. It is proposed to suitably frame the poster uniformly with the pictures, and to send one copy of the poster with each set of pictures distributed. The whole scheme will involve fairly considerable outlay on the part of the Department, but, as the quality of the pictures is such as to make them practically permanent, there will be virtually no further expenditure on renewals, and the distinctive and attractive nature of the pictures themselves will be such as to make them quite suitable for permanent exhibition in even the highest-class hotels and other such buildings. The importance of attracting to the Dominion a steady flow of revenue from other countries such as follows on a well-maintained foreign tourist traffic is fully appreciated by the Department, both in its own interests and those of the Dominion, and it is considered that the expenditure that is involved in the publicity work, though in the present early stage of development necessarily heavy, will in the ultimate result be amply justified. The many artistic publications received by the Department from other countries indicate that this opinion is evidently shared by railway authorities elsewhere, while, without undue egotism, it may be safely concluded from an inspection of these publications that the attractions which New Zealand has to offer to the tourist suffer in no way in comparison with those of other countries.

TRANSPORT OF CATTLE.

During the year a transaction of more than ordinary importance was the carriage for export to Australia of a very large number of cattle. These were railed from various points in the North Island to Wellington for shipment, the total conveyed being in the neighbourhood of 5,300; and, notwithstanding that many of the animals were somewhat wild, the losses in transit by rail were very small, and were estimated by Mr. Keith McLean, of Gippsland, Victoria, shipper of the stock, not to have exceeded five.

From time to time the Department is assailed by complaints of a more or less general nature that the carriage of live-stock on the railways is attended by very heavy loss, due to some fault in the railway transport which is not always made clear. In this connection it is interesting to note the remarks of Mr. McLean in regard to the carriage of the stock dealt with by the Department on his behalf. The following is the text of a telegram received from Mr. McLean himself: "Very grateful for the magnificent manner your railways handled my stock, also for the courtesy and consideration extended to me." Speaking to a newspaper reporter in Victoria, Mr. McLean, after estimating that the number of deaths in trucks did not exceed five, stated that the number of bruised cattle was also very small, and he continued as follows: "I would like the taxpayers of this beautiful country to know the splendid attention given by the railway always. In every instance special trains were run absolutely on time. The trucks were all at the stations ready for loading operations, and were always in a clean condition. The railways are too often blamed for cattle killed and bruised, whereas often the fault lies in overloading and over-travelling cattle." Mr. McLean, in commenting on the freedom from loss during the period of transport, also stated that all the animals were country stock, and in most instances had never before been handled by man.

The performance of the Department in connection with the railing of this stock undoubtedly furnishes a complete answer to the suggestions that are, as indicated above, more or less vaguely made from time to time that there is something wanting in the Department's arrangements for the transport of stock, and certainly warrant the suggestion that when losses do occur it should not be too hastily concluded that the transport by rail has been the cause.

SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The report and balance-sheet of the Railways Superannuation Fund for the 31st March, 1924, give the following figures:—

	£		£
Annual liability	177,689	Members' contributions	133,148
		Fines and donations	436
		Interest	28,566
		Deficit (to be paid out of Government subsidy)	15,539
	<u>£177,689</u>		<u>£177,689</u>
On the 31st March, 1924, the liability of the fund to contributors in respect of amounts paid by them was			£ 983,298
The total accumulated fund was			671,827
Deficit			<u>£311,471</u>