

*New Lines opened.*—The Tuatapere–Orawia Section (8 miles 23 chains), the Huarau–Portland Section (30 miles 67 chains), and the Beaumont–Miller's Flat Section (14 miles 57 chains) were taken over and opened for traffic during the year, making the total mileage open for traffic on the 31st March, 1926, 3,138 miles.

*Train-mileage.*—The train-mileage for the year was 10,319,407 miles, as against 9,083,623 miles the previous year, an increase of 1,235,784 miles. The particulars are as follows:—

Section.	1925–26. Miles.	1924–25. Miles.	Increase. Miles.
Kaihu .. .. .	17,749	17,232	517
Gisborne .. .. .	78,631	65,609	13,022
North Island Main Line and Branches .. ..	6,168,991	5,372,957	796,034
South Island Main Line and Branches .. ..	3,854,181	3,438,695	415,486
Westport .. .. .	90,680	87,640	3,040
Nelson .. .. .	59,112	56,469	2,643
Picton .. .. .	50,063	45,021	5,042
	10,319,407	9,083,623	1,235,784

The total coaching train-miles were 3,495,331, and freight train-miles 6,824,076.

The total engine-mileage was 14,657,039, as compared with 12,854,287 the previous year, an increase of 1,802,752 miles.

*Line Interruptions.*—Floods and slips during the year have been extensive, the railway-lines being considerably damaged thereby. On the 25th May slips and washouts between Piriaka and Kakahi blocked all traffic with the exception of the express trains for four days.

On 1st July a fall of rock derailed two engines and eight wagons between Parera and Mt. Allen, on the Otago Central line, and caused a dislocation of traffic for two days.

On the 22nd September the Wellington–Napier express was derailed near Opapa. The Board regrets to state that three people were killed and twenty-one injured as a result of this accident. Further reference is made to the matter in this report.

On the 4th December, a heavy flood in the Grey River destroyed the Blackball combined railway and traffic bridge, causing a total blockage of traffic between Blackball and Ngahere for a period of four weeks. Steps were immediately taken to erect a temporary structure, and by working continuously night and day this work was completed on the 3rd January, when the bridge was again opened for road and railway traffic.

Owing to a washout immediately west of Otira all traffic was stopped from the 10th to the 19th December.

*Train-operating.*—The whole of the time-tables were revised during the year, and early in November new time-tables, providing faster express and mixed trains schedules were brought into operation. A special feature of the new time-table was the provision of a third daily express service each way between Wellington and Auckland. This service—the “Daylight Limited”—has, however, not met with the patronage anticipated except during the Christmas, New Year, and Easter holidays. With the close of the Dunedin Exhibition and the approach of the winter season the traffic fell off considerably, necessitating the reversion to the two regular express trains each way daily.

The attraction of the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition at Dunedin gave a great impetus to traffic, particularly in the South Island, where extra express services and a large number of special trains were run to cope with the traffic.

During the year the Huarau–Portland Section of line was taken over, and a through train service for passenger and goods traffic was inaugurated between Auckland and Whangarei. A daily train service is now provided between Auckland and Opua. Improvements have also been made in goods-train services, and provision made for a through goods service between Auckland and Wellington and between Christchurch and Invercargill. These trains are a boon to the business community in the matter of expeditious transit.

The Department's organization was severely taxed with the heavy traffic to the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition at Dunedin, which was open for a period of six months. It is gratifying to record that no hitch occurred in the arrangements, and that the very heavy traffic to Dunedin, particularly at Christmas, Easter, and in the closing hours of the Exhibition, was successfully handled without mishap.

The Board is also pleased to state that the general timekeeping of the passenger and mixed trains throughout the year was good. The following figures, which include delays from every cause, give the record of the late arrivals at destination throughout the year of the principal trains:—

				Average late arrival.	
				Mins.	Mins.
Long-distance passenger-trains .. ..	..	..	..	5.54	against 3.64 last year.
Suburban trains .. .. .	..	..	..	0.68	„ 0.65 „
Long-distance mixed trains .. .. .	..	..	..	6.27	„ 4.63 „

When the difficulties experienced in connection with slips, floods, and other unforeseen circumstances are taken into consideration it will be seen that the trains have, as a whole, run well to time.