

giving fares and other particulars. This exhibit was very favourably commented on, as was also a hall set aside for the Department and decorated with mural picture signs illustrating phases of railway activities.

In order that the public both in New Zealand and overseas may be fully apprised of the advantages which the railway has to offer, the range of publicity will be further extended.

Safety First.—The problem of reducing the possibility of railway accidents to passengers, employees, and road-users is two-sided, depending for its solution not only on the perfecting of safety appliances, but requiring also the extension and continual exercise of safety practices by public and staff.

Whilst specially alert, watchful, and skilled people may live and work without coming to harm amidst surroundings which call for the constant exercise of those qualities, humanitarian considerations require that effort should be made to reduce, by the introduction of safety appliances, the risk of personal accident. As, moreover, no conceivable improvement in the methods of transport can make operations entirely safe for the careless individual, education in regard to and in the need for safety practices becomes increasingly necessary with the growing size and complexity of our business.

In the matter of appliances the Board is pushing on with the erection of warning devices at level crossings, and, in conjunction with the Main Highways Board, the elimination of the more important level crossings. Better lighting is being provided in shunting-yards where this is necessary, and the whole of the workshops reorganization is designed, both in general layout and machinery, with the idea of safe working as a primary objective.

Education in safety practices is being proceeded with. "Safety-first" showcases have been placed in 246 workshops, locomotive depots, car and wagon depots, station buildings, shunters' cabins, &c., throughout New Zealand. In these are exhibited coloured posters advocating various safety-first methods, and containing warnings against risky practices. The posters will be changed periodically to deal with new aspects of the subject.

A special feature has been made of "safety first" in its relation to shunting by the issue of a pamphlet containing advice to shunters, the various slogans being compiled in conjunction with and upon the advice of experienced shunters throughout the Department. It is recognized that the proportion of shunting accidents to employees may be reduced by a thorough understanding of safe railway practices. Five thousand copies of the pamphlet have been sent out, to be prominently exhibited in places where the notices are likely to catch the eye of those immediately concerned, and distribution has also been made amongst those who have the control of shunting immediately in their hands.

The setting-up of safety committees amongst employees to act in conjunction with the management in pointing out any dangerous conditions which may call for remedy, and checking unsafe practices wherever they may develop, is another phase of "safety first" which is receiving attention.

A further means of propaganda in regard to safety practices is found in the departmental magazine, wherein a special page has been set aside for the purpose of spreading "safety-first" news. This avenue is also used to carry the message of safety out amongst the public in regard to the need for care at level crossings. On this point it is not generally realized how large is the number of level crossings which have to be negotiated by drivers on trunk express trains during the course of their day's run.

The following figures are enlightening:—

<i>North Island.</i>					
Engine Runs.					Number of Level Crossings.
Wellington to Taihape ..	..	..	..	..	130
Taihape to Ohakune ..	..	..	..	..	31
Ohakune to Auckland ..	..	..	..	..	87
					248 (3 crews).
<i>South Island.</i>					
Christchurch to Glenavy ..	..	..	..	..	119
Glenavy to Waihola ..	..	..	..	..	100
Waihola to Invercargill ..	..	..	..	..	97
					316 (3 crews).

These figures show not only the impossibility of seriously contemplating the immediate elimination of all level road-crossings, but also the great strain which is placed (through the reckless actions of certain drivers of road-using vehicles) upon engine crews having to cross these roads in the course of their run. It is hoped the publication of these figures will help to bring home to such motorists the other side of the level-crossing problem, and aid them towards a fuller realization of the necessity for the exercise of care when approaching the railway-line.

The aim of the Department in connection with its operations is to secure the greatest possible immunity from accidents both to the public and its employees. It is to this end that the above devices and methods have been inaugurated, and statistics are being kept with the object of referring at the end of each year to the benefits accruing from the adoption of the new methods.