

action was in a sense warranted it had many objectionable features. With a view to providing a more popular winter time-table, and making conditions of travel more attractive, it has been decided to continue running the trains as separate services throughout the year.

When the "daylight" express was put on the evening trains from Rotorua and from Thames for Frankton were started a little earlier and accelerated to arrive at Frankton in time to connect with the daylight express for Auckland. A certain amount of traffic has been developed by this connection, and, in order to foster this business and the traffic from Te Kuiti, a passenger-train is being maintained from Frankton to Auckland on the time of the up daylight express.

A number of improvements have been made to the Auckland suburban service in order to keep pace with suburban development. Several trains serving the inner area on the south line have been extended to Papakura and Drury. On the north line the Swanson-Auckland workers' train, morning and evening, has been extended to Kumeu, and other adjustments have been arranged to suit the convenience of our clients.

Additional passenger stopping-places have been opened at Ranui and Puhinui, and the number of trains stopping at Oratia, St. George's Street, and Croydon Road has been increased.

The train that formerly left Marton at 6.55 a.m. for Wanganui has been accelerated and scheduled through to New Plymouth so as to provide a connection with the night "Limited" express from Auckland.

The early-morning train (6.50 a.m.) from Palmerston North for Napier has been accelerated and timed earlier at Napier, and the return train has been timed to leave Napier two and three-quarter hours later than formerly, thus providing facilities for business people from Palmerston North and intermediate stations to travel to Napier or Hastings and return the same day.

The early-morning trains between Masterton and Woodville have also been rearranged with the object of overcoming the previous early start.

The Foxton-Palmerston North train service has been transformed from an irregular service to a regular one of two trains of uniform timing each way per day.

The Wellington-Johnsonville-Paekakariki suburban service has also received attention, and a number of attractive improvements have been introduced.

The Greymouth-Christchurch mail-train has been further accelerated and now leaves Greymouth at 10.35 a.m. The Christchurch-Greymouth mail-train has also been slightly adjusted in the direction of ten minutes later start from Christchurch.

Local services between Greymouth and Otira, Greymouth-Reefton and Inangahua, and Greymouth and Hokitika, have been speeded up in keeping with the course followed on the main lines.

The double line between Dunedin and Ravensbourne was opened in May of last year and afforded an opportunity for some improvement to the Port Chalmers suburban service.

The branch line time-tables have also been adjusted to fit in with the main-line alterations, and where possible the services have been improved. During the Exhibition period a fast passenger service was arranged for three days a week to provide better communication between Dunedin and the Lakes district, and, instead of reverting to the original daily mixed-train service with the closing of the Exhibition, it has been arranged to make a trial of the ordinary train three days per week and a passenger-train on the alternate three days. Visitors and residents will thus have, during the winter months, a service that will compare very favourably with that provided during the Exhibition period.

The Lawrence Branch line has been extended to Miller's Flat, situated fifteen miles beyond Beaumont, the previous terminus, and the Orepuki line has been extended a further eight miles to Orawia. A suitable time-table has been arranged on each line.

The isolated sections—Dargaville, Gisborne, Nelson, Picton, and Westport—were not overlooked. Their time-tables were also reviewed and the trains accelerated where possible.

One feature of the reorganization was the institution of through goods-trains in each Island. The existing services in the North Island were adjusted to provide a train that would enable goods traffic to be worked from Auckland to Wellington, or *vice versa*, with only one day occupied in transit. In the South Island a goods-train has been specially scheduled to make the journey Christchurch to Invercargill or Invercargill to Christchurch in one day. These trains are a boon to the business community in the matter of expeditious transit.

The Dunedin and South Seas Exhibition, which was open for a period of six months, severely taxed the Department's organization. Very heavy traffic was successfully and efficiently dealt with, especially at Christmas, Easter, and in the closing-hours of the Exhibition. Throughout the currency of the Exhibition a very large number of special excursions were arranged to Dunedin from all parts of the Island. It is gratifying to record that no hitch occurred in the arrangements and that the whole traffic was successfully handled without mishap.

LOCOMOTIVE-POWER.

During the year ended 31st March, 1926, forty-five new locomotives were added to stock,—

- 35 Class AB Pacific type 4-6-2 from North British Locomotive Company.
- 4 Class AB from Messrs. Price Bros., Thames.
- 6 Class AB from the Department's workshops at Addington.

Two engines were sold, and one old engine written off. Two rail-cars were added to the stock during the year, and two written off. It is expected that a Clayton steam-car and an Edison storage-battery car will be placed in service early in the current year.

The following locomotives are now under construction,—

- 4 Class AB 4-6-2 Pacific at Addington Workshops.
- 10 Class WAB 4-6-4 Heavy Tank at Hillside Workshops.
- 8 Class WAB 4-6-4 Heavy Tank at Messrs. Price Bros., Thames.