

A new illustrated booklet entitled "Freight by Rail" explains briefly the advantages obtainable by the people of New Zealand in the use of their own railways. For the first time a comprehensive time-table of goods-train services has, through this medium, been made available to business houses.

Two maps of the North and South Island respectively, indicating by colours the contour and other surface characteristics of New Zealand in relation to the railways system, have been prepared for suitable distribution.

The "Romance of the Rail, No. 2," descriptive of travel by the South Island Main Trunk Railway, was also published during the year.

A competition, open to all art students, for a poster design advertising the New Zealand Railways, was arranged during the year. The response was particularly good, and the standard of work was of a high order. The two prize-winning designs were distinctly modern in conception, and effective examples of finished poster-work.

An essay competition, open to all primary, secondary, and technical school pupils, caused a great deal of interest in railway matters and produced some thoughtful contributions. The winning essays were published in the *New Zealand Railways Magazine*.

From time to time lecturettes on railway subjects have been broadcast by wireless, in addition to descriptive accounts of trips to scenic resorts reached by rail, and other information likely to be of assistance to travellers.

Particular attention has been paid to publicity in connection with week-end, seaside, and farmers' excursions. The principal mediums employed were electric talking signs, theatre screens and programmes, newspaper advertisements, local window displays, large calico signs, attractive handbills, tramcar dash-boards, three-coloured posters, and two-coloured art circulars. A suitable mailing-list is also used to give a wide distribution of publicity matter featuring these excursions.

The work of the Publicity Branch is co-ordinated with that of the Government Overseas Publicity Board. This is designed to avoid overlapping of functions and makes for the wider use of modern publicity in featuring the Department's work.

#### THE NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS MAGAZINE.

The Department's official monthly *Magazine* has now entered upon the fourth year of its publication, and continues to receive a most favourable reception from the Railway Staff, the press, and the public throughout New Zealand and overseas.

The *Magazine* has a circulation of twenty-three thousand copies monthly. It is an eminently convenient and effective medium for the diffusion of current railway information to the employees of the Department, and also to the commercial and farming community immediately interested in the business of railway transport in the Dominion. The publication of special articles by accredited experts in the science of transportation, and of articles and news items by members of the staff featuring the many activities of the Department, is serving to accumulate a definite store of authoritative knowledge of great value to the Railway service as a whole.

Moreover, as a publicity medium within the Dominion and overseas the *Magazine* can rightly be regarded as a valuable departmental investment. "The *Magazine* constitutes one of our main information sources regarding New Zealand," is an opinion received from the Institute International du Commerce, Brussels, Belgium. Equally impressive communications indicative of the utility of the *Magazine* in its publicity aspects are being constantly received.

There has been a substantial increase in the number of advertisers, and it is safe to predict that when the advertising side of the *Magazine* is more fully developed the revenue from advertisements will materially lessen the cost of production, which is already low in relation to the size, quality, and circulation of the journal.

All branches of the service are proud of their own *Magazine*, to which they look for light and guidance in coping with the difficulties surrounding the operations of the Department.

#### SHORTAGE OF ROLLING-STOCK.

The question of shortage of rolling-stock is an ever-recurring one, and is one in regard to which there is a good deal of misunderstanding. There seems to be a conclusion, all too hastily arrived at, that whenever a full supply of trucks cannot be placed at every point as and when required there is a shortage of rolling-stock. Such circumstances do not necessarily justify any such conclusion. A little consideration of the incidence of railway traffic must make it obvious to any one that the Department could not possibly maintain a supply of rolling-stock to meet the needs of every period of peak loading, however short that period might be.

During recent months the question has been more particularly felt in the South Island, and in order to make the foregoing position clear I append hereunder a graph showing the variations in the goods traffic in that Island from 1926 to 1929. This graph brings out very vividly the traffic shocks which the Department is expected to absorb. The variations, as will be readily seen, cover a very wide range, and it will be noticed that in 1929 we reached a record of traffic. Within a period of eight weeks in 1929 the traffic varied from below 180,000 to above 270,000, while the general average of traffic over the five years was in the neighbourhood of 220,000. To have maintained a quantity of rolling-stock