

The picnic traffic and special week-end issues were also affected by the economic situation, while the fact that in a large number of cases picnics were cancelled in order that the expenses in connection therewith should be donated to the Hawke's Bay Earthquake Fund also contributed to the decrease under this heading.

Compared with the year ended 1930 the season-ticket revenue decreased by £15,066, or 5·74 per cent., while the passenger journeys under this heading decreased by 1,389,932, or 8·22 per cent. The principal decreases under this heading were in all-lines and sectional annual tickets, which decreased by £5,381, and tourist tickets, which decreased by £2,741. The balance of the decrease is spread over the remaining classes of season tickets.

The following tables show the decline in passenger revenue since 1921, in which year the total passenger journeys was the highest recorded, and the revenue the second highest. For the five-year period 1921-26 the total journeys and revenue decreased by 4·06 and 4·37 per cent. respectively. Between 1926 and 1931 the total journeys and revenue decreased by 17·52 and 29·89 per cent. respectively.

Year.	Total Number of Journeys.	Increase or Decrease, Five-year Period.		Revenue.	Increase or Decrease, Five-year Period.		Average Revenue per Journey.
		Journeys.	Per Cent.		Amount.	Per Cent.	
ORDINARY.							
1921	..	15,291,452	..	£ 2,454,438	£	d. 38·5
1926	..	11,787,723	−3,503,729	2,271,498	−182,940	− 7·45	46·2
1931	..	7,265,912	−4,521,811	1,531,376	−740,122	−32·58	50·5
SEASON.							
1921	..	13,506,143	..	198,497	3·5
1926	..	15,840,034	+2,333,891	265,549	+ 67,052	+33·78	4·02
1931	..	15,521,144	− 318,890	247,349	− 18,200	− 6·85	3·82
TOTALS.							
1921	..	28,797,595	..	2,652,935	22·1
1926	..	27,627,757	−1,169,838	2,537,047	−115,888	− 4·37	21·9
1931	..	22,787,056	−4,840,701	1,778,725	−758,322	−29·89	18·7

It will be noted that the decrease is heaviest in the more profitable ordinary passengers. Comparing 1931 with 1921, ordinary passenger journeys have decreased by 52·4 per cent. and revenue by 37·6 per cent.

Comparing 1931 with 1921, the total journeys and revenue for season tickets have increased by 14·9 per cent. and 24·6 per cent. respectively. For the five-year period 1926-31 the season-ticket revenue decreased slightly, but not in the same proportion as the ordinary revenue.

The number of passengers carried at season-ticket rates was 47 per cent. of the total in 1921, 57 per cent. in 1926, and 68 per cent. in 1931, while the season-ticket revenue for the corresponding years was 7 per cent., 10 per cent., and 13 per cent. respectively.

The passenger-train mileage increased from 3,875,332 in 1921 to 4,155,773 in 1926 and to 4,874,650 in 1931. The mileage of track in the three years referred to was 3,018, 3,138, and 3,303 miles respectively, and, while a proportion of the increased mileage is due to the provision of services on the new lines taken over, additional express services were introduced during the past few years in order to meet competitive conditions and enable the Department to retain a fair share of the business.

The standards of passenger-accommodation have been considerably improved, resulting not only in a constant increase in capital cost, but also in the heavier tare weight of the carriages and reduced carrying-capacity.

A review of the figures in the above table indicates the serious decline in the passenger traffic on the railways, the principal cause of which has undoubtedly been the private motor-car.

PARCELS, LUGGAGE, AND MAILS.

The receipts under this heading totalled £359,277, a decrease of £27,515, or 7·11 per cent., as compared with the previous year.

An analysis of the revenue is as follows:—

	1931.	1930.	Variation.
	£	£	£
Parcels	189,482	212,670	—23,188
Excess luggage	12,259	13,230	—971
Left luggage, luggage checks, bicycles, and dogs	40,934	44,714	—3,780
Mails	116,602	116,178	+424
Totals	359,277	386,792	—27,515