

Particulars are given hereunder of the mileage run by locomotives before being overhauled in the year 1926 and the year 1931 :—

	North Island.		South Island.	
	1926.	1931.	1926.	1931.
Total number of locomotives overhauled	155	135	95	99
Mileage run since last overhauled	8,496,541	10,338,004	5,005,097	6,980,436
Average miles run by locomotives overhauled	54,816	76,577	52,685	70,509
Increased mileage run per engine (per cent.)	39	..	33

The expenditure on the maintenance of locomotives for the past year was much less than that of the preceding year. The reduction for the year ended 31st March, 1931, actually amounted to £99,319.

RAILWAY PUBLICITY BRANCH.

The keen competition of the road motor-vehicle in the matter of services and rates, and the extensive advertising campaigns carried on by the various road transport interests, have been an indication of the tremendous effort made by the motor industry to capture a large share of the land transport of this Dominion.

An analysis of the various advertising and propaganda media used by motor and allied interests disclosed the fact that quite large sums of money were being spent in order to create a definite public feeling in favour of road transit and the road motor-vehicle. The cumulative effect of this effort has been very great, and has no doubt affected adversely our business during the year. As an offset to the efforts of motor interests and in order to attract and retain as far as possible our legitimate business, a comprehensive scheme of advertising covering the whole of the press of New Zealand has been in operation.

Whilst the money available did not permit any large advertising campaign to be undertaken, yet the advantages of rail transport have been kept steadily before the public. With increasing competition on every hand the importance of the Publicity Branch maintaining its activities is apparent, and the necessity for continuous effort to place the many advantages of rail transport before prospective patrons cannot be too firmly stressed. Apart from intensive and probably expensive publicity campaigns carried on in its favour, the ubiquity of the road motor-vehicle keeps it continually before the eyes of the public, and this helps it, to a large extent, to advertise itself; whilst the railway, which can offer excellent service, but is confined to its own three thousand miles of track, is liable to be overlooked unless its claims on public patronage are kept prominently before the people by judicious advertising.

With the object of encouraging travel to New Zealand's many health and holiday resorts, a series of folders giving brief descriptions of the attractions of the country and the advantages of rail travel have been distributed. The folder depicting the "Spiral" on the North Island Main Trunk Line between Raurimu and National Park Station, and the one setting forth the beauties of Otira, have been in particularly keen demand, while our large contour maps, entitled "Seeing New Zealand by Rail," are still selling freely to the public, although first published over two years ago. A small reproduction of these maps is now included with the Pocket Guide and helps to add to the informative interest of the latter publication.

Special posters prepared and distributed by the Branch during the year included those for spring and autumn school vacations; Christmas and Easter holidays; Labour Day week-end; the British Rugby football tour; winter sports at Chateau Tongariro and Hermitage; round trips by rail (Rotorua, National Park, Mount Cook, and Queenstown); agricultural and pastoral shows; and "Lake Wanaka."

The new Rotorua expresses were well featured by photographs which we supplied to the principal papers in the Dominion, framed composite photographs exhibited in the principal hotels in the districts served by the Rotorua express, and publicity matter distributed through the High Commissioner.

The Branch ran an exhibit, including a mechanical display, at the Winter Shows of the agricultural and pastoral associations at Invercargill, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Hawera, Wellington, and Christchurch.

Joint advertising on the screen and tram-cars, and through the press, in association with travel and sports organizations for particular events or objectives, has been successfully carried out on several occasions during the year, and time-table advertising as a convenient service to the general public has been maintained in several of the principal newspapers, and the assistance of our organization has been available for district advertising.

A useful feature of reciprocal service between the railways of various countries has been the adoption of an exchange system of posters. This system has developed rapidly, and is now an important aid to the stimulation of travel interest. Of any two railways included under the arrangement each agrees to exhibit a number of posters at stations equivalent to the number of its own poster, it sends to the other railway. We now have such an arrangement with the following: Indian State Railways, South Rhodesian Railways, South African Railways, Railways of each Australian State, Belgian Railways, and the London, Midland, and Scottish Railway.

NEW ZEALAND RAILWAYS MAGAZINE.

In the course of its sixth year of active service, the *New Zealand Railways Magazine*, the Department's official publication, is vigorously fulfilling the important mission for which it was founded. As a medium of advice and explanative information and instruction between the management and the employees, and a very helpful link between the railways and the public, the *Magazine* has thoroughly justified its existence. As time goes on the importance of both of these functions will increase.