

TRAIN SERVICES.

The Board has, since the commencement of its functions, diligently pursued a policy of improved services. It felt that, with the changing standard of demand in transport matters, the quality of service provided was bound to play a very important part in the results ultimately achieved. Speed in transit and efficiency in the direction of eliminating trouble for the customer immediately impressed the Board as vital factors. On both the passenger and the goods sides the advantage which the railways have in their capacity for night transport, was, in the opinion of the Board, a line of action that could be developed to the advantage of the railway business. Unfortunately, depressed conditions in trade and industry and the necessity for a curtailment of train-mileage to reduce expenditure, have made it impossible to develop night travel on the passenger side to the extent that the Board would have wished. This was due to the fact that the day services which have been provided over a long period of years could not be immediately curtailed, so that any night services that might be provided would involve additional train-mileage and consequent increased expenditure. If the improvement that has taken place during the past year in the financial position of the Department is maintained, the Board feels that its policy of providing night services, which has been held in suspense for the reasons above mentioned, might be gone on with, and the Board is accordingly hopeful that during the coming year it may be able to do something in that direction.

So far as goods services are concerned, the same difficulty did not present itself, as existing day services could be substantially cut down and the night services substituted therefor. A good deal has already been done in this direction, and, taken in conjunction with collection and delivery services which the Board has developed, generally in association with local carriers, the Board is now able to give a rapid and efficient service in connection with the carriage of goods. There are express goods services now operating on the Main Trunk lines in both the North and South Islands. Between such points as Dunedin-Invercargill, Christchurch-Dunedin, Dunedin-Timaru, Christchurch-Timaru, Wellington-Palmerston North, Wellington-Wanganui, and Auckland-Hamilton goods delivered to the Department for transport up to the evening of one day are available at their destination practically at the opening of business on the following morning.

The following table shows the average late arrivals of the express, mixed, and suburban trains for the year:—

AVERAGE LATE ARRIVAL OF TRAINS, YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1934.

Year ended	Period ended													Average for Year in Minutes.
	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March.	March.	
<i>Express and Mail Trains.</i>														
1934 ..	5.87	3.58	1.86	1.77	1.47	1.60	1.13	1.68	1.64	7.88	5.37	5.63	7.41	3.60
1933 ..	1.69	2.81	1.33	2.62	1.32	5.58	1.66	1.43	1.15	4.50	2.80	3.06	6.27	2.78
<i>Suburban Trains.</i>														
1934 ..	0.72	0.52	0.74	0.44	0.37	0.32	0.25	0.32	0.39	0.08	0.72	0.92	0.88	0.51
1933 ..	0.47	0.48	0.42	0.44	0.28	0.25	0.20	0.28	0.26	0.56	0.47	0.60	0.55	0.40

These figures include delays arising from all causes, including slips, floods, washouts, earthquakes, engine and other mechanical failures, and traffic delays at stations.

In previous Statements the foregoing tabulation has included particulars for "long distance mixed trains." These particulars have been omitted from the tabulation in this Statement for the reason that "mixed" trains have now become substantially goods trains, the passenger traffic worked by them being very subsidiary to their main purpose. As the tabulation is intended to serve as an indication of the punctuality with which the passenger trains have been worked, particulars regarding "mixed" trains have been omitted as having little significance in relation to the purpose of the tabulation.

A résumé of the more important alterations to the principal express and passenger trains is as follows:—

From 7th May, 1933, the daily Oamaru-Dunedin return service was accelerated by the provision of passenger trains in lieu of the mixed trains that had run previously.

As from 10th May, 1933, a special passenger service was inaugurated between Timaru and Christchurch on Wednesdays, leaving Timaru at 7.50 a.m. and returning leaving Christchurch at 4.15 p.m. Subsequently the departure time from Christchurch was delayed to 4.50 p.m.

As from 5th June, 1933, the ordinary express train leaving Wellington for Auckland daily at 2.0 p.m. was rescheduled to leave Wellington at 3.0 p.m. to synchronize with the departure time of the ordinary Auckland-Wellington express train, and to provide a more suitable arrival time at Auckland.

GENERAL.

On 4th September, 1933, the Tahora-Okahukura Section of the Stratford-Main Trunk Line was taken over from the Public Works Department and a thrice-weekly express passenger service from New Plymouth to Auckland and *vice versa* was brought into operation. Parcels, goods, and live-stock traffic has been worked over the new line since the 12th December, 1932.

As from 5th November, 1933, Sunday trains between Wellington and Upper Hutt were reinstated as a trial. The patronage afforded this service, however, was below expectations even during the summer period, and fell away to such an extent that the service was discontinued from the 13th May, 1934.

As from the 5th November, 1933, Sunday trains in the Auckland-Helensville and Auckland-Papakura areas were reintroduced. At the present time these trains are not being patronized as well as was anticipated, and their retention is contingent on the result at the expiry of a fixed trial period.