

A further comparison on the same basis of the composition of the revenue from goods traffic, as shown immediately above, for the last five years is as under:—

| | 1938. | 1937. | 1936. | 1935. | 1934. |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Per Cent. | Per Cent. | Per Cent. | Per Cent. | Per Cent. |
| Agricultural products | 6·85 | 7·47 | 6·95 | 8·78 | 8·64 |
| Animals and their products | 25·16 | 25·95 | 27·36 | 27·98 | 30·50 |
| Products of mines | 18·67 | 19·75 | 20·23 | 20·16 | 20·51 |
| Products of forests | 9·28 | 9·54 | 9·62 | 8·69 | 7·52 |
| Benzine, cement, and manures | 15·55 | 13·90 | 13·46 | 13·12 | 12·61 |
| Miscellaneous | 24·49 | 23·39 | 22·38 | 21·27 | 20·22 |
| Totals | 100·00 | 100·00 | 100·00 | 100·00 | 100·00 |

A detailed comparison of 1938 with 1937 is as follows:—

Traffic in agricultural products decreased by 3,074 tons. Grain traffic shows a serious decline of 27,414 tons and £10,295 in revenue. Last year's figures were considerably augmented by the very late season in 1936, the result being that traffic which would normally have been included in the 1935-36 year was included in the 1936-37 figures.

Fruit traffic shows an increase of 7,472 tons and £12,259 in revenue. Favourable climatic conditions in both Islands, resulting in heavy crops, coupled with the fact that traffic handled last year was light owing to a late frost having practically ruined the Hawke's Bay crops, are the factors responsible for the favourable result shown this year. The revenue from root crops again shows a substantial improvement, the increase being £8,609 (14·52 per cent.).

Animals and their products increased by 88,148 tons. The number of cattle forwarded again shows a substantial increase of 107,582 (24·58 per cent.), which can be attributed to the favourable market conditions, with the result that heavy yardings were in evidence at all sales. The increased demand for suitable cattle to meet the expanding needs of the chilled-beef trade also had an important bearing on the number of cattle transported by rail during the year. Sheep increased by 752,641 (7·83 per cent.). The increase shown is, however, more or less artificial in that last year the season was very late and large numbers of sheep came forward in April and May, while this year the season being early, was almost finished by the end of March. The number of pigs carried, 736,804, shows an increase of 3·21 per cent. compared with last year. The progress being made in this branch of the farming industry is evidenced by the fact that the number of pigs railed in 1938 is more than double the number dealt within 1930.

With an increase of 24,251 tons (11·07 per cent.) and £27,270 (15·49 per cent.) in revenue the returns for frozen-meat traffic compare more than favourably with the figures for last year, when a decline was recorded. The bulk of the increase was in the North Island and is attributable to the expansion of chilled-beef exports, this commodity advancing by 46·55 per cent., while the export of mutton and lamb increased by 22·32 per cent. Traffic in the South Island, while showing a satisfactory financial result, was down in tonnage to the extent of 2,652 tons when compared with last year. Butter shows little variation, an increase in the North Island being partly offset by a decrease in the South Island. Cheese traffic fell away slightly with a decrease in revenue of £1,652 (2·36 per cent.). Traffic in fat, skins, tallow, &c., was normal. Very little fluctuation occurred in the quantity of wool handled, the comparative figures for 1938 as compared with the previous year being as follows:—

| | 1938. | 1937. | Variation. |
|---------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Tons | 159,442 | 159,743 | — 301 |
| Revenue | £156,807 | £154,391 | +£2,416 |

Having regard to the lower prices obtained by growers for their product this year and to the fact that there was very little, if any, carry-over of wool stocks from the previous season, the quantity of wool brought forward to rail may be regarded as satisfactory.

In products of mines coal continues to show an upward tendency, an improvement of 54,326 tons (3·33 per cent.) and £14,725 (1·80 per cent.) in revenue having been shown as compared with the previous year. With the exception of the Westport section, which showed an increase in the quantity of coal carried, the returns from coal generally did not come up to expectations. This was due to a variety of causes, the chief of which were stoppages of work at the mines on account of labour disputes and to the closure of the mine at Hikurangi since June, 1937, owing to flooding. Increased purchases of Westport coal by the Railways Department for locomotive purposes in the North Island were responsible for the Westport section showing a good increase amounting to 74,680 tons (21·16 per cent.) and £13,908 (21·96 per cent.) in revenue.