

An increase in expenditure of \$196,734, or 36.57%, with an increase in car miles of 600,378, or 3.72%. The car statistics show that 356 box, and 22 refrigerator cars, were built new, and 16 brake vans rebuilt at Company's shops at cost of revenue. In addition 500 double hopper steel coal, 500 double hopper

On account of:—	£	s.	d.
19.86% Maintenance of way and structures	17.77%	557,688	4 0
11.04% Maintenance of equipment	11.56%	324,904	11 6
35.77% Conducting transportation	37.77%	1,185,331	11 1
2.24% General expenses.....	2.21%	69,289	10 0
68.91% Total working expenses	69.31%	2,175,213	16 10
1.32% Taxes	1.24%	38,870	11 9
<u>70.23%</u>	<u>70.55%</u>	<u>2,214,084</u>	<u>8 7</u>
Balance to net revenue account.		924,383	13 9
		<u>£3,138,468</u>	<u>2 4</u>

The President, Sir C. Rivers Wilson, in moving the adoption of the report, said it showed revenue and profits in excess of those of any previous half-year. The large falling away of the revenue during the last two months was solely attributable to the extraordinary severity of the weather, but there was no reason to suppose that when the unusual stress of weather ceased traffic would not be returned in the same proportion as before. There would be some leeway to make up, but the year was yet young, there still being ten months before them. The gross receipts for the half year were £3,138,468, an increase of 11.61%, compared with the corresponding half-year of 1902. Passenger traffic showed an increase of 10.72%, the total number carried being 5,139,073 at an average fare of 3s. 7¾d. Notwithstanding the large increase in passengers carried the passenger train mileage only increased 4.75%, the receipts per passenger train mile increasing from 4s. 5¾d. in 1902 to 4s. 9d. in 1903. It was expected that considerable benefit would accrue to this branch of the Company's business during 1904 by reason of the holding of the St. Louis Exhibition. Receipts from mails and express traffic increased £16,820, while freight and live stock totalled £1,971,955, an increase of 12.33%. The number of tons carried was 6,738,702, an increase of 59,172, and there was also an increase of 1¼d. in the average rate received per ton. The rate was 5s. 10¼d., which was the highest rate received in any half-year for the past five years, being 0.68 of a cent per ton per mile, against 0.64 of a cent in the same half-year of 1902. The average load per car was 9.84 tons, which was the highest load the Company had ever carried. This was due in a great measure to the larger capacity of the cars now being constructed, which were replacing old cars of lighter capacity, and to the great care exercised in the matter of loading the cars. It could not be expected that large increases in gross receipts could be earned without proportionate increase in expenditure. This general increase in the expenditure has, however, been accentuated by an advance in the price of materials generally, and to a still greater extent by the increased wages of all classes of employees, which it had been necessary to grant owing to the great demand for labor of every description. The total working expenses were £2,214,084, an increase of 70.23%, the proportion to gross receipts being 70.55%, compared with 70.23% in 1902. The expenditure on maintenance of way and structures showed a decrease of £814, but even under this head there had been an increase in wages of £24,000, which was, however, counterbalanced by reductions in other items of expenditure. Maintenance of equipment showed an increase of £52,485, partly due to the increased mileage run, but largely accounted for by the increased wages paid, and a larger expenditure on repairs to equipment. During the year 49 locomotives, 20 passenger cars, and 1,341 freight cars had been turned out at the Company's shops. The cost of conducting transportation was responsible for three-fourths of the total increase in expenses during the half-year, or £179,616. Of this £92,712 represented increased cost of coal, £15,800 being increased mileage run to accommodate increased traffic, and with the exception of a slight increase in the cost of labor in handling, the balance of £76,912 is due to higher prices. The anticipations of the directors that there would be a considerable saving on fuel account in 1904, will, to a considerable extent, not be realized, as during Jan. and Feb. the locomotive power had to be doubled and even triplicated on the trains the Company was able to run. Employees' wages, under this head, showed an increase of £49,762, about 11%. The result of the operation of the railway for the past half-year was