PROPOSED NEW SLEEPING CAR TRAINS

TENDERS from six countries were received by New Zealand Railways for the supply of rolling stock for the proposed new sleeping-car trains for the Wellington-Auckland service. When this issue closed for press, they were being evaluated so that a report and recommendation could be prepared for the consideration of Government. In conjunction with evaluation of the tenders, the possibility and economics of building the cars entirely in New Zealand railway workshops were also being studied. Subject to satisfactory delivery dates being offered, and to approval being given for a contract to be placed, it was hoped that the first of the new cars could be ready for service late in 1970.

In an earlier announcement, the General Manager of Railways, Mr Ivan Thomas, said that full air-conditioning, modern electric lighting, and shower rooms would be features of the new trains.

Tenders, closing on 9 April 1969, had been invited on a worldwide basis, offers being sought either for the supply of completed cars, or for the supply of the body shells, in which case all the interior fittings and furnishings would be installed in New Zealand railway workshops, where the cars would be completed. Provision was also made, as another alternative, for the supply of drawings and design data sufficient to permit manufacture of the cars in New Zealand railway workshops.

"These provisions," Mr Thomas said, "will allow the Department to compare the economics of a fully completed train imported from overseas, with the costs of one either partly or completely built locally."

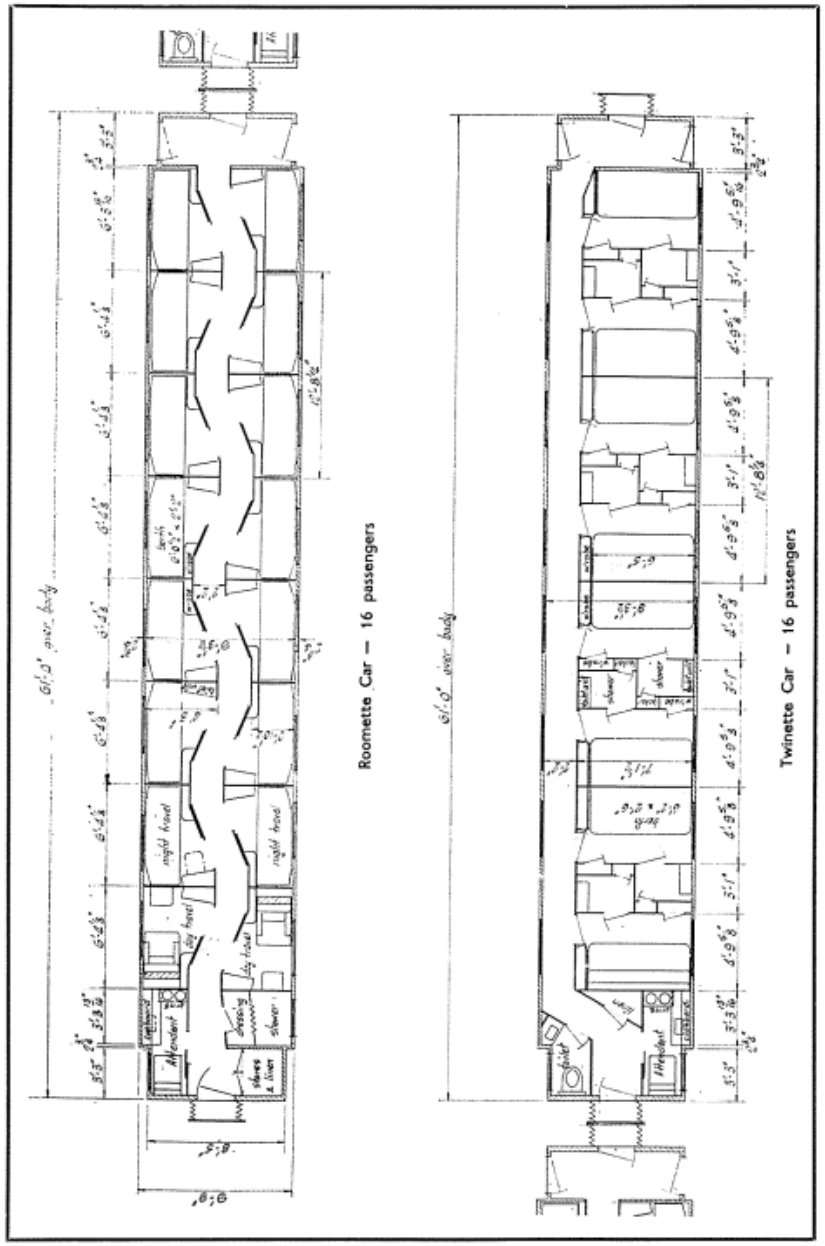
Thirty-one cars would be required, comprising twelve single-berth "roomette" cars, twelve double-berth "twinette" cars, three buffet cars, and four power/luggage cars.

Mr Thomas said that, although tenderers were free to quote for supply of the car bodies in whatever material was suited to their production capacity or their design knowledge, the Department would be particularly interested in bodies built completely in either stainless steel, aluminium alloy, or corrosion-resistant carbon steel.

The detailed specifications, he said, called for cars of the highest standard of workmanship, and of impeccable finish and appearance. Special attention was required to details of design intended to promote smooth riding, insulation from external noise, and passenger comfort generally.

Each of the cars would be 61 feet long over headstocks (i.e. 5 feet longer than the present main trunk cars), and would have a maximum outside width of 9 ft 9 in., compared with the present 8 ft 11 in. These dimensions would enable the "twinette" cars to accommodate eight two-berth cabins, each with its own adjoining shower and toilet cubicle, and the "roomette" cars to accommodate sixteen individual compartments, each with a berth arranged parallel with the side of the car.

The cabins in the "twinette" cars would be reached from a side corridor. In the "roomette" cars, the compartment would be arranged for each side of a central corridor. A toilet unit would be provided in each roomette, and one shower room at the end of each car.



In both types of sleeping car, the berths with their bedding would be folded back against the wall when not required. In this position they would reveal comfortable armchair style seating designed to provide the correct sitting position to reduce fatigue. These seats would be used before passengers retired for the night.

The specifications also called for the passenger cabins and corridor areas in all sleeping cars to be laid with best-quality carpet, and for at least four colour arrangements to be used on the seating materials and walls in each car to provide variation in the interior finish of the cabins.

To assist in insulating the interiors of the cars from external noise and dust, all windows would have a double-glazed outer unit sealed and fixed. Venetian blinds would be fitted between the outer units and a hinged inner pane of glass.

To ensure smooth riding, the specifications required that the four-wheel bogies offered (two for each car) should be of a proved design providing for the maximum of riding comfort with a minimum of noise and vibration at all normal speeds.

Provision was to be made in each sleeping car for an attendant's cabin fitted up for the preparation of light suppers and light continental breakfasts. These would be served on trays to passengers in their cabins.

The proposed arrangement of the buffet car provided for tables and chairs to seat up to 48 customers. Tenderers were required to incorporate a refrigerator with deep-freeze compartment, an electric stove, a microwave oven, a coffee urn, a hot water urn, a hot savoury display cabinet, and other facilities for the storage, preparation, and serving of food. Consumption of food at the counter was not contemplated. Passengers would be served at the counter, and would then take their food to nearby tables.

A small bar and liquor store would be located at one end of the counter near the cash desk, but passengers would not be served at the bar. The bar steward would serve passengers at their tables as required.

The buffet car would be fitted with a public address system, a radio, and a tape deck for the broadcast of appropriate background music and news summaries when desired.

All electric power required on the train for lighting, heating, air conditioning, and other electrical appliances would be supplied by generating units in the special power/luggage car located normally next to the locomotives. This car would accommodate two diesel engine/generator sets arranged to supply alternating current.

The power/luggage car would also contain accommodation for the train guard and the engine-room attendant, plus about 200 square feet of floor space for the stowing of passengers' luggage.

Mr Thomas said the detailed specifications drawn up for these new trains would ensure that the latest developments in railway rolling stock construction would be offered. It would also be probable that a range of alternatives would be submitted, thereby making it possible for the Department to ensure that the final choice would be the most appropriate for New Zealand's needs.