

£319,288 19s. 3d. per annum. The taxable profit for the year was £26,561 18s. 9d. after allowing for income-tax, social security charge, less refund from last year owing to finalizing of Grand Hotel Suspense Account, the net profit is £17,504 11s. 10d.

The members of the Trust are at present considering placing on the market a debenture issue to cover present indebtedness.

#### DISTRIBUTION OF PROFITS

After closing the 1945-46 accounts the Trust distributed the following : the Council of Sport, £4,000 ; Civic Band, £250 ; Southland Museum, £100 ; Ladies' Pipe Band, £50 ; First Battalion Band, £100 ; Progress League, £100 ; Southland Domain Board, £200 ; Southland Regional Planning Council, £200 ; Y.M.C.A., £500 ; Boy Scouts Association, £500 ; a total of £6,050. Further distributions will also be made this year after the finalizing of the balance-sheet.

#### HOURS, ETC.

Six o'clock closing with no after-hour trading leads to large sales of bottled drink. We are inclined to think that evening drinking-hours would at least restrict drinking in homes or silent drinking. Some consideration must be given to the drunkenness figures of Tasmania, where the convictions have gradually declined since the adoption of the following trading-hours : 12 (noon) to 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. Tasmania, incidentally, has the lowest drunkenness figures in Australasia. From these facts we assume that 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. hectic drinking on an empty stomach is the cause of a large amount of drunkenness and that drinking after the evening meal leads to more leisurely drinking and making intoxicating drink what it should be—a social amenity. We look forward to the time when our saloons can be called social centres with drink only a small part of the entertainment. We already can see this tendency in our sit-down saloons. While complaints may be made on the slow service of drink in our hotels, we think that the service of drinks on request is preferable to the practice of barmen filling the empty glass or shouting when a round of drinks is completed. There is still the problem of youthful drinkers. Our staff have great difficulty in assessing ages, but do their best to prohibit doubtful customers from procuring drink. We think that this is where our churches or prohibition friends could give us some practical assistance. The criticism of these people has, we find, been most fair, but their open patronage in our saloons, or more particularly in our restaurant, the Brown Owl, would do much to help in the youthful drinking problem. We claim, however, that the Trust and their servants do everything possible to prohibit under-age drinking.

#### GENERAL

At the end of its second complete year of operations members are becoming more satisfied that the policy of the Trust, now that it is becoming more widely known, is progressing along the right lines, as the general behaviour of our patrons is very good indeed, and we think that the police could again support this statement. Our strict observance of hours and the general law as to trading still continues to be the inviolable rule of the Trust and is strongly impressed on all new managers and staff.

A staff superannuation scheme was inaugurated during the year.

We wish to pass a word of praise to our staffs. Very few of them had hotel experience previous to employment with the Trust, and, taken generally, they have given every assistance in carrying out the policy adopted by our members.

However, until our full building programme is completed no complete judgment can be passed as to the success or otherwise of Trust control.

HUGH RITCHIE, Chairman.