

TEMPORARY BOTTLE-STORES

Restoration of the sale of liquor was partly effected on Monday, the 24th May, 1948, when two bottle-stores were opened, one at the north end of the town and one in the south.

A good variety of stocks was available and excellent business was recorded from the opening day in both stores. As the volume of turnover at peak periods became unduly heavy at the two stores, and it was considered desirable to offer the convenience and service of a more centrally situated selling-point when suitable premises became available, a third bottle-store was opened on 20th December, 1948, in a central position in the town. This store could have been opened a month earlier, but an objection was filed by thirty-nine residents under the provisions of section 34 of the Trust Act. The objection was heard in the Magistrate's Court, and was adjourned until January, 1950, subject to conditions laid down and agreed to by both parties.

Very favourable comment has frequently been made both locally and by visitors from other parts of New Zealand on the modern layout, brightness, and cleanliness of the stores and on the variety of stocks and service of the staff.

PROPERTIES ACQUIRED

During the course of the year the following properties were acquired in accordance with earlier decisions:—

- (a) *Cosy Theatre Building*.—A contract has been entered into for reinstatement of earthquake damage, and conversion into a bar and lounge, and the work has been commenced.
- (b) *Northern Approach Site*.—Purchased with a view to the establishment of both bar and accommodation facilities for the public, plans and specifications are being prepared for the immediate erection of a two-story bar and lounge, the design and setting of which has been given local prominence and has been the subject of most favourable comment as representing an outstanding advance in the planning of such amenities. Agreement has been reached with interested local bodies for development of the area in conformity with the local War Memorial and beautifying schemes, and preparation of the site has gone forward to create a large park-like recreational area at the entrance to the town. A sufficient area is being reserved for the erection of a main residential hotel.
- (c) *Empire Hotel*.—Plans are being prepared for the reinstatement of earthquake damage and reconstruction, and for the complete modernizing of the existing hotel building for accommodation of the travelling public. In addition, bulk-store facilities, staff quarters, and additional guest accommodation is to be provided by a two-story annex to be erected on the site at the rear of this building, and for which plans have been commenced. Bar facilities for guests are included.
- (d) *Midland*.—Negotiations have been completed for the acquisition of this hotel, and it is intended that the Trust will take possession on 1st October next. It is proposed to reinstate earthquake damage and modernize the existing building at a later date, but in the meantime, with the pressing need for accommodation, business will be conducted in the premises as at present. Facilities for the sale of liquor to guests in these premises will be provided when the Cosy project is opened.