

REFRESHMENT BRANCH.

	1929. £	1928. £	Variation. £	Per Cent.
Revenue	123,059	122,220	+ 839	0.69
Expenditure	116,090	114,644	+1,446	1.26
Net profit	£6,969	£7,576	— £607	8.01

An analysis of the revenue discloses the following variations:—

	1929. £	1928. £	Variation. £
Dining-rooms.. .. .	26,005	27,371	—1,366
Counter-rooms	94,063	92,472	+1,591
Miscellaneous.. .. .	2,991	2,377	+ 614
	£123,059	£122,220	+ £839

The opening for traffic of the East Coast Main Trunk Section of railway to Taneatua necessitated the erection of a refreshment-room at Tauranga. This room was opened in December last, and the Department now controls twenty-nine refreshment-rooms, in addition to the catering on the Lake Wakatipu steamers.

The refreshment-room revenue for the year amounted to £123,059, or £839 more than last year. The expenditure was well regulated, with the result that the year's trading was satisfactory.

The refreshment-rooms derived considerable business from week-end and excursion trains, and additional business was obtained through placing sales-boys on some of these trains for the purpose of vending ices, sweets, smokers' requisites, fruit, &c.

The inauguration of the dining-room service in the Hillside Workshops, with the proposed extension to the Hutt and Otahuhu Workshops at an early date, and later at Addington Workshops, marks a new era in departmental catering. In the well-equipped dining-room the men may obtain light luncheon at a nominal charge. Facilities are also provided to enable those who do not desire to partake of a full lunch to obtain tea or coffee and consume same in the dining-room. A counter, at which smokers' requisites, &c., are obtainable, is also provided.

Arrangements are now being made to provide kitchenettes in the De Luxe sleeping-cars on the "Limited" express trains, for the purpose of enabling all sleeping-car passengers who desire it to be supplied in the morning with tea, coffee, bread roll, bread and butter, or hot scones. It is anticipated that this service will enable the requirements of passengers on this train to be met quite satisfactorily.

The system of cushion-hire has now been extended to the South Island, and also to the principal daylight express trains. The number hired during the year was 99,939, compared with 82,143 in 1927-28. During the holiday periods there is a heavy demand for cushions, and this service is most popular.

PUBLICITY BRANCH.

Extended scope has been given to the operations of the Publicity Branch during the past year. The main objective has been to make more generally and easily available any information likely to be helpful in letting the public understand the range and quality of services which the Department has available for its patrons. Allied to this has been such action as would tend to remove those misunderstandings which arise from uninformed criticism of the Department. A further application of railway publicity has been in the direction of creating and stimulating interest in travel within the Dominion.

The publicity campaign has included regular weekly features in the principal newspapers, and in each issue of several magazines, dealing with special phases of railway operations. This has been supported by a liberal use of hoardings and other effective means of reaching the public.

The principal passenger services, and tables of fares, have been comprehensively advertised thrice weekly in the city newspapers of the Dominion. Special articles and "write-ups" have been supplied to, and published by, the press and vocational journals in New Zealand and abroad.

An extensive distribution has been made of a number of specially prepared publications such as "The State Railways of New Zealand," and "Top Dressing for Top Prices," the latter being issued to show how railway freights for artificial manure assist primary production.