

For the last three years of their running the dining-cars were worked at a loss of £2,605 in 1915, at a profit of £2,045 in 1916, and at a profit of £4,611 in 1917. These figures exclude any charge for the haulage of cars.

As opportunity offers, refreshment-rooms hitherto held on leases are being taken over by the Refreshment Branch, which now controls eighteen rooms and performs the catering-work on the Lake Wakatipu steamers. Since the opening of the Railway refreshment-rooms at the beginning of 1918, net revenue, after deducting the rental of the rooms and interest on capital invested, has averaged £4,900 per year. The receipts last year were £96,342, the expenditure £85,405, leaving a profit of £10,937. The accumulated profit to date on account of refreshment-room services is £49,200.

In the course of our tours we have inspected many of the refreshment-rooms, stores, &c., and are satisfied that they are being conducted on good lines. The food supplied is of the best quality, the equipment is clean, the rooms are well arranged, and the prices charged reasonable. No single complaint has been received by us with regard to the working of the refreshment-rooms, and, in view of the difficulty attendant upon catering for an indeterminate number of people at intermittent intervals, this speaks well for the administration. We have no recommendations to make in this regard, except to suggest that it might be found desirable—it will be essential in time—to run dining-cars, or at least buffet cars, on some of the principal expresses.

#### INFORMATION, ADVERTISING, AND PUBLICITY.

Advertising at stations and in trains, &c., as also the publicity work carried on, is under the control of an Officer in Charge of Advertising. Prior to 1915 it was the practice to let advertising by contract, when the revenue derived was approximately £4,000 per annum. During the last four years the aggregate revenue of the branch has been £16,609. The revenue from book-stall leases during the year ended 31st March, 1924, amounted to £3,994, but as the majority of the leases expired on the 30th June last, and were renewed at higher rates, the estimated revenues from this source for the 1924-25 year is £6,500.

Publicity work in connection with the Railway Department's activities has only recently been developed, and considerable activity is proposed during the next few years. There is certainly great need for more vigorous and intensive publicity work in connection with the railways of New Zealand, with regard to the circulation of information as to ordinary tourist and excursion-train facilities, and generally in connection with the activities of the Department. It is now definitely recognized that there is a real need for the development of a "railway" sense among the general public, and this can only be done by a forceful Publicity Branch working in close touch with the management in this important field.

The cost of publications and advertising during the last financial year amounted to approximately £5,000, an insignificant amount viewed in the light of developmental possibilities. We recommend that energetic steps be taken to improve this aspect of the Railway Department's work, and that on the appointment of a Secretary, as suggested in our report on "Organization," he be placed in charge of information, advertising, and publicity work, and be assisted by a competent staff.

#### TRAINING OF RAILWAY MEN.

There is yet another matter upon which we must make adverse comment, and that is the absence of any facilities for the training of the younger members of the staff in railway work. It is understood that some scheme of training is in operation for the teaching of station work, the foundation of all general railway knowledge, but there is no regular arrangement applicable to the whole of the staff, and subject to examinations at regular intervals. Nearly all railways have realized the need for the systematic training of their employees in order to develop a more enlightened personnel, and it is a matter of urgency that a definite scheme