

## PUBLIC MEETING

A representative public meeting was held in the State Theatre on 18th November, 1948, for the purpose of tendering a report to the electors. A full explanation of the Trust's policy and plans was given by Trust members and reference made to the problems that were being encountered. The meeting terminated with the passing of a unanimous vote of confidence in the Trust, and a request to the Government to facilitate at the earliest possible date the granting of the building permit for the "Northern Approach" bar and lounge.

## PROGRESS OF PERMANENT DEVELOPMENT

A contract was let in mid-December for the conversion of the Cosy Theatre Building, and work was commenced by the contractor early in February. After an initial delay in the first few weeks, progress has been steadily maintained and the estimated time for completion is fifteen months. In the meantime, orders are being placed for equipment and furnishing. Plans and specifications for the "Northern Approach" bar and lounge are being completed and the Trust will be in a position to call tenders for this work immediately a building permit is forthcoming. Major work was carried out in filling and levelling of this site in preparation for building. The Trust has appointed a landscape architect, and plans are in hand for laying out and beautifying the area. Final plans for the Empire Hotel are being expedited by the Trust's architects, and it is hoped to call tenders for the work within the next few months. It is intended that erection of the annex to this building will be completed simultaneously with the completion of the existing building.

## LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENT

In its policy the Trust aimed at separation of bar facilities from accommodation hotels, and, while provision in the Trust Act permitted this as a temporary measure, on the Trust's recommendations the Statutes Amendment Act, 1948, has now amended the Masterton Licensing Trust Act, 1947, and has given permanent authority for the separation of the units of the Trust.

## FINANCE

Acknowledgment is made of the generally helpful attitude and advice of the Minister of Finance and of the officers of his Department. The Trust's officers have faced an almost impossible task in preparing reliable estimates of capital expenditure in face of delays, uncertain costs, and other factors outside the Trust's control. It has not been possible to approach this problem either from the view of normal local-body finance or of normal commercial practice. The Trust early formed the opinion and urged that the Government should permit development to proceed on the finance of bank overdraft until the stage was reached when this temporary finance could be converted to longer-term loans offered to the public or suitable lending institutions. This, however, was not agreed to, and negotiations are still proceeding.

As a result of steadily rising costs, the eventual total capital expenditure will be much greater than would have been the case if the Trust had been able to proceed unimpeded with its plans. On the latest figures available, based on cost levels expected when permits to do the work are made available, it is estimated that the minimum basic development (which includes completion and equipping of Cosy and "Northern Approach" bars and lounges, Empire and annex and Midland residential hotels) cannot be less than £300,000. To complete the total development as at present proposed, and which includes a modern residential hotel unit on the "Northern Approach," it is considered a total expenditure in the vicinity of £500,000 may be required. As already indicated, plans for obtaining these capital sums are under discussion with the Minister of Finance, as is required by section 37 of the Trust Act.