



Back from Parliament came the Invercargill Licensing Trust Act constituting the Invercargill Licensing Trust—a body corporate to run the hotels of Invercargill on distinctly different lines.

Acts of Parliament are drier than Invercargill was a year ago, but the preamble to the Bill puts the position simply: "An Act to set up a body corporate for the purpose of providing for the establishment of model hotels in Invercargill to be conducted in conformity with the Licensing Act and in the interests of public well-being and of providing for the sale of intoxicating liquor in the district and to provide for the distribution of profits for public purposes."

Two of the Trust's six members are nominated by the Invercargill City Council and one by the South Invercargill Borough Council. The other three are nominated by the Minister of Justice. The Governor-General appoints the chairman. Mr. Hugh Ritchie has been selected for the job. A local live-wire, Mr. Ritchie's business ability has been proved by his work as secretary to the Southland Building Society, one of the largest concerns of its kind in New Zealand. And this is not the first time he has been connected with the beer business. After being wounded in the last war

he took on the organization of Army canteens in Egypt and won the respect of the "wog" merchants as one who could beat them at their own game—a not inconsiderable qualification, as any Kiwi will admit.

The task set the Trust is to run model hotels within the provisions of the Licensing Act. It may buy, lease, and deal with property in the same way as any private individual or company. It decides how many hotels there shall be,

and appoints managers and staff for them. It collects all the revenue from the hotels, stands all the expenses, and applies the profits to specified purposes.

Its decisions as to where the pubs shall be are subject to an important qualification. The Act allows citizens to object to an intended site on the grounds that a hotel is not necessary in the neighbourhood, that it will disturb the peace, or that it is too close to a church, hospital, or school.

These objections are heard by a Justice of the Supreme Court. Three of the original suburban sites were queried by local residents, but the objections were not sustained by the Court.

The members of the Trust hold office for four years, and the Secretary, who is appointed by the Trust, for three. The members are all local men. The Secretary, Mr. H. B. Barnett, who was selected from eighty applicants, is an Aucklanders with plenty of experience in

hotel management and the wine and spirit business. Applications for other jobs, especially managers, were also plentiful.

As the Trust must operate within the provisions of the Licensing Act, there can be no change meanwhile in the hours of the hotels, but there will be other changes which, for New Zealand, will be revolu-



Mr. H. Ritchie, Chairman of the Trust.