

307. The position with regard to the prices of wine is that the wholesale and retail prices of the wine made by the principal manufacturers have been fixed by price authorizations during the war period, but owing to the considerable variation in the quality of the wines on the market the Tribunal has not regarded it as possible to control all prices (R. 2126 and 6187). That could only be done by relating prices to a specified standard of quality, and, so far, a way has not been found to fix standards for wine (R. 6188).

STRENGTH OF BEER AND USE OF SUGAR

308. We refer now to the reduction in the alcoholic strength of beer and the regulation of the use of sugar.

Following the increase in duty in April, 1942, which was designed to bring about a reduction in the alcoholic content of beer, it was found that the majority of brewers were brewing beer with an original specific gravity of 1036 or under, although this was not so in the case of stout. In the majority of cases the spirit content of beer brewed to this gravity lay between the limits of 6·5 per cent. and 7·1 per cent. of proof spirit. This constituted a reduction of approximately 25 per cent. in the average strength of beer prior to 1942 (R. 319). With a view to ensuring uniformity, the brewing of beer with an original specific gravity exceeding 1036 was prohibited by the Manufacture of Liquor Emergency Regulations 1942, which came into force on the 15th August, 1942 (1942/251), except with the consent of the Minister of Customs. General authority was given under these regulations as from the 15th August, 1942, for the brewing of stout in excess of 1036 specific gravity, with a restriction on the quantity to the average quantity brewed during the period January to June, 1942 (R. 319). Brewers were also permitted to blend beer of which the specific gravity of the worts was higher than 1036 with brews of lower gravity, provided that the original specific gravity of the worts which would be required to produce beer of the spirit strength of the blend did not exceed 1036. This concession was granted to enable brewers to maintain the quality of their yeast.

309. No alteration of prices by the Price Tribunal followed upon these alterations in strength.

310. We refer now to the control of the use of sugar. Although the majority of brewers continued to comply with the Manufacture of Liquor Regulations of 1942 and did not brew beer with an original specific gravity exceeding 1036, some brewers were using a considerably greater quantity of sugar proportionately to the amount of malt ordinarily used (R. 320). This practice resulted in a higher spirit content of the beer. According to the Customs Department (R. 321), in at least one case the brewer had added considerable quantities of sugar to the beer after primary fermentation—i.e., after the time when the quantity and the specific gravity had been recorded for duty purposes. This process resulted in a secondary fermentation, whereby both the apparent original specific gravity and the spirit content were increased without any corresponding increase in the duty being paid. Furthermore, Mr. K. M. Griffin, the Government Analyst at Auckland (R. 2948), stated that the practice of adding sugar when beer was being bottled was also being carried out extensively by the licensees of hotels in 1943 and prior thereto.

311. Accordingly, by the amendment of the 19th May, 1943, to the Manufacture of Liquor Emergency Regulations 1942 (1943/81), the following provisions were made :—

Except with the consent of the Minister and under such conditions as he may prescribe—

(1) No brewer shall use in the manufacture of beer more than 3 lb of sugar to 40 lb. of malt ;

(2) No brewer shall add any sugar to any worts or to any beer at any time after entry in the brewer's book of the quantity and specific gravity of the worts ; and

(3) No person shall add any sugar to beer intended for sale after such beer has been delivered from the brewery.