

433. Other information with regard to Wellington was given by Miss Annie Constance Tocker, the Senior Officer of the Child Welfare Department at Wellington. She agreed with Mr. McClune that there had been a decrease in the number of committals of children of drunken parents (R. 6425), and she supplied the following table for the years 1937 to 1944 inclusive (R. 6430 and 6431):—

				Committals due to Drink.		Total Committals.
				Number of Families involved.	Total Number of Children committed.	
1937	..	..	..	3	8	76
1938	..	..	..	1	2	109
1939	..	..	..	4	9	55
1940	..	..	..	1	3	71
1941	..	..	..	6	15	82
1942	..	..	..	5	8	88
1943	..	..	..	3	11	79
1944	..	..	..	1	3	73
				24	59	633

The number of children committed on account of the drunkenness of the parents was therefore 9.3 per cent. of the total number of children committed.

434. Miss Tocker gave the following reasons for the general reduction (R. 6426):—

- (1) The compulsory employment of men for full time under war conditions;
- (2) The payment of the family benefit to the mother, which gave her a better economic position and enabled her to provide for the children and, where both parents were not reliable through drink, the payment and disbursement of the benefit through an agent or trustee; and
- (3) The decreased alcoholic content of beer and the dearth of spirits.

435. Miss Tocker stated there had been a definite increase in drinking by young girls during the war period, and that that drinking was associated with the increase in illegitimacy (R. 6427).

436. We have no particulars for Christchurch, but in Dunedin the position is different from that in Auckland or Wellington. Miss Coe-Smith, the secretary of the Dunedin Branch of the Society for the Protection of Women and Children, said they had to deal with between 2,000 and 3,000 cases every year (R. 5984). During 1944 there were 2,150 cases which required action. These included old cases in which default in a maintenance order had to be dealt with during the year. In only 25 of the cases during the years 1936 to 1944 inclusive did the Society consider that drink had been the chief factor in causing domestic unhappiness or ill treatment. There were other cases in which drink had been a factor, though not the prime factor. In most cases in Dunedin the cause of unhappiness had not been drink, but ill temper and selfishness. The secretary said there was a drink problem in Dunedin, but she had lived in Auckland and other places, and liquor in Dunedin represented only a minor problem compared with Auckland (R. 5983).

437. Licensing Committees, Magistrates, and social workers have all expressed concern about the increased drinking by young men and young women. Complaint is made of surreptitious drinking of the quantity taken to dances. The chief secretary of the Salvation Army states that drinking by girls is very prevalent and seems to be increasing. These complaints have some reference to the period of the war, but they indicate also a general increase in the consumption of liquor by young people irrespective of the influences of the war period.

438. We have also had evidence of the effect of alcoholic liquor upon the Maoris. At a later stage we shall discuss their particular problems. We say here only that we think that the Maori people, in general, are not yet as able as the Europeans to withstand the temptations of alcoholic liquor and the ill effects that flow from over indulgence.