

439. On the question of the loss of efficiency due to the consumption of alcohol, we have referred to the physical effects in Chapter I above. We refer here only to the question of industrial efficiency.

440. The Department of Labour states that sometimes the sailing of a ship has been delayed because intoxicated members of the crew have not returned to the ship, but that these occurrences are less now when boilers are oil-fired than when they were coal-fired. The Department states that there is no recorded case where industrial disputes have arisen out of the consumption of alcohol. The Department reports that it has no evidence that industrial efficiency has been impaired through the consumption of alcohol (R. 379), but the Secretary of the Department, Mr. Moston, stated that a former custom for an apprentice to carry drink into a factory does not exist in New Zealand to-day (R. 760).

441. A member of the Hutt Licensing Committee states that the effect of drink on industrial efficiency is particularly noticeable in the Hutt Valley. On the other hand, the Licensing Committees for Motueka, Buller, and Westland state that the effect of the consumption of liquor on industrial efficiency is not marked (R. 207 and 232).

442. The evidence does not establish that the drinking of alcohol materially affects industrial efficiency in New Zealand to-day, and we conclude that it does not. The increasing tendency over a long period of years to consume beer instead of spirits has probably contributed substantially to this result. Likewise, since June, 1942, the reduction in the alcoholic strength of beer has probably been a contributing factor.

443. There has been a general improvement in the drinking habits of the people of New Zealand. This has been so in other countries—*e.g.*, in Great Britain. Various causes have contributed, such as a better and a more widespread education, which has tended to raise an individual's standard of self-respect; better economic conditions; better opportunities for the use of leisure, as in attendance at the cinema, or in the use of libraries; lighter beer and a steady tendency to drink more beer and to reduce the consumption of spirits and of wine. Other suggested causes, such as the limitation of hours in New Zealand, require further consideration at a later stage in this report. All we need say here is that, while this improvement has taken place, there has been much drinking after hours.

444. On the whole, the consumption of alcoholic liquor causes substantially less drunkenness, ill health, domestic discord, ill treatment of children, or industrial inefficiency than it did twenty-five years ago and more. During the war of 1939–45 drinking was, as might have been expected, associated with an increase in sexual immorality, but that has now diminished. In this respect it should be noted that the licensed victuallers of Auckland, where there were many visiting servicemen, voluntarily accepted a scheme proposed by Canon Coates that all women should be required to leave hotel lounges (where liquor was supplied) at 5 p.m. This scheme was carried out during the war from March, 1942, onwards.

445. Notwithstanding this steady improvement, the nature of alcoholic liquor remains the same. Unless a standard of self-respect and of self-control is maintained, its use readily leads to abuse, and its abuse is always accompanied by evil effects. Its control is necessary in a form suited to the temperament, the intelligence, and the character of the people.

CHAPTER 20.—MISCHIEFS IN RESPECT OF THE MANUFACTURE OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR

446. We refer now to the principal mischiefs alleged in respect of the manufacture of alcoholic liquor.

447. We think that, in general, the industry of manufacturing alcoholic liquors is carried on in New Zealand with care and skill. Some breweries are more efficiently equipped than others and the more modern brewery is naturally the more efficient. It suffers less waste and is likely to produce a beer with better keeping qualities. Nevertheless, having regard to the quantity of beer produced, we have had very few complaints of bad quality in the beer as it is manufactured.