

569. The evidence against the proposal to fix standard measures and standard prices came mainly from representatives of the brewery and hotel companies. They thought that the obtaining of glasses of different sizes and the handling of them and of different amounts of cash would be difficult in practice. They also thought that freight charges and breakages during carriage must make for differential prices. On the other hand, Mr. Kelliher, of Dominion Breweries, although not in favour of a proposal for two standardized measures and prices, thought that that proposal could be carried out (R. 4269). One licensee was definitely in favour of standard measures and prices (R. 3949). Another licensee sold beer mostly in two sizes, a handle and a medium, and did not appear to experience any trouble in so doing (R. 2304). Mr. Wise, of the Price Tribunal, also said that it would have been possible for the Tribunal to have made a half handle of 6 oz. available for 4d. and that it might be practicable in post-war years to fix standard measures and prices, though he thought it had not been practicable during the war years (R. 6173 and 6174).

570. With regard to the actual handling of standard measures, we cannot think there is any real difficulty. The evidence of the Federated Hotel Workers' Union, which represents the barmen, is in favour of standard prices and containers, even containers of different design so long as they are of standard measurement (R. 7153). Furthermore, in Petone the Petone Working Men's Club seems to have had no difficulty in selling beer in three sizes at proportionate prices—viz., 12 oz. for 7d., 9 oz. for 5d., and 5 oz. for 3d. (R. 6232).

571. In England and Scotland a standard imperial pint and half-pint measures are compulsory. All beer glasses are officially stamped with the Royal Crown and marked to show the pint imperial and the half pint (R. 1539 and R. 5624). A retired English publican, Mr. H. G. Batchelor, gave this evidence as to Great Britain :—

If you asked for a half pint they have to serve you in a measure stamped a half pint. The same with the pint. Also there, if you are having a pint of beer, you finish your beer and push the glass over and say "Just give me a half, George." He will take your pint measure and serve you in a half-pint measure.

He is bound to do that by law? . . . Yes, it is illegal to serve a half pint of beer in a pint measure.

Speaking as an ex-licensee in England, did you find any disadvantage or difficulty in conforming to the practice of selling liquor by standard measure? None whatever (R. 5624).

Similar evidence was given by Mr. F. H. Greenaway, Public Accountant, of Lower Hutt (R. 1539).

572. Little attention was directed to the provision of a standard measure for spirits, but the principle is the same. Mr. Greenaway advocated the standard adopted in America, where whisky glasses are marked to show the 1 oz. or 2 oz. measure (R. 1539).

573. The Price Tribunal took the view during the war that if prices were differentiated according to the measures the profit on the sales of the small glasses at the same price as that of the large glass would have been lost, and that if the licensee were to carry on his business on a reasonably profitable basis the price of the 12 oz. handle would have had to be raised above 7d. Even if this were so, the principle would not be affected, but the question whether the Price Tribunal's view was correct is open to serious doubt. In this respect the following points may be noted :—

(1) The Britomart Hotel, in Customs Street, Auckland, in which the licensee has a large overhead, makes a large profit by selling only 12 oz. handles of beer for 7d.

(2) Mr. Wise, of the Price Tribunal, understood from the figures supplied to him that hotels during the war were returning substantially less than 50 per cent. on cost of their trade in liquor (R. 6179), whereas the gross profit on cost of the liquor trade made by four companies in Auckland whose trading accounts were reviewed by us was respectively 52.6 per cent., 54.1 per cent., 56 per cent., and 69 per cent.