

**ROYAL COMMISSION TO INQUIRE INTO AND REPORT UPON
MATTERS CONCERNING THE FIRE AT THE PREMISES OF
MESSRS. J. BALLANTYNE AND CO., LTD., CITY OF
CHRISTCHURCH, ON THE 18th DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1947**

REPORT

To His Excellency Sir Bernard Cyril Freyberg, Victoria Cross, Knight Grand Cross of Our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Knight Commander of Our Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Knight Commander of Our Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, Companion of Our Distinguished Service Order, Doctor of Laws, Lieutenant-General in Our Army, Governor-General and Commander-in-chief in and over Our Dominion of New Zealand and its Dependencies, acting by and with the advice and consent of the Executive Council of the said Dominion.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

We, the undersigned Commissioners, appointed by Warrant dated the 10th day of December, 1947, have the honour to present to your Excellency our report under the following terms of reference :—

- (1) The cause and origin of the fire :
- (2) Whether all possible means were taken to warn the staff and the members of the public in the premises of the existence and seriousness of the fire, and whether all possible steps were taken to provide for their safety and escape :
- (3) Whether any special circumstances contributed to the rapid spread of the fire, and, if there were such circumstances, whether the fire hazard could have been reduced by the installation of fire-prevention equipment or by any other means :
- (4) Whether the structural design of the building and the fire-protection and egress arrangements complied with all relevant statutes and regulations, and with all relevant by-laws in force in the City of Christchurch :
- (5) The adequacy and administration of all existing relevant statutes and regulations and all existing relevant by-laws in force in the City of Christchurch in regard to (a) fire protection and fire-prevention in such buildings, and (b) the construction and design of such buildings in relation to the safety of the public :
- (6) The desirability of applying to existing buildings any present or future statutes, regulations, or by-laws providing for adequate means of egress from buildings in case of fire :
- (7) The desirability of occupiers of business premises instructing their staffs in the principles of fire-prevention, evacuation drill, and the elementary principles of fire-fighting :
- (8) The effectiveness of the operations conducted and the equipment employed by the Christchurch Fire Brigade to combat the said fire :
- (9) Whether, as the result of the evidence submitted, the Commission has any, and, if so, what, recommendation to make as to the principles which should in the public interest be adopted for protection against fire in existing buildings generally of a type similar to the Ballantyne building :