4. We held a preliminary meeting in Wellington on the 9th February, 1945, and decided to sit in public to hear evidence and argument, but we reserved to ourselves the right to make any inquiries concerning the matters in question which we thought proper. We gave notice in the newspapers in various parts of the country of the sittings of the Commission, and invited evidence from those having knowledge of the matters under inquiry. We began our public sittings in Wellington on the 6th March, 1945, and continued until the 27th April, when we adjourned to Auckland. We have since held the following public sittings, the dates mentioned being inclusive: at Auckland from the 8th May to the 18th June; at Rotorua from the 26th June to the 2nd July; at Te Kuiti from the 4th July to the 7th July; at Christchurch from the 20th July to the 26th July; at Invercargill from the 1st August to the 3rd August; at Dunedin on the 7th and 8th August; at Wellington from the 28th August to the 20th September, and again at Wellington from the 15th October to the 30th October, 1945. In all, we held 93 public sittings. We heard 297 witnesses, and the evidence occupies 7,824 typed foolscap pages. In addition, many documents and files have been admitted as exhibits. The Chairman sat in Chambers on two occasions for the purpose of hearing legal argument. A case was stated for the Court of Appeal upon the question whether we were authorized to inquire as to what contributions were made by the licensed trade to the funds of political parties. The Court of Appeal held that we were not authorized by our order of reference to make that inquiry.

PART II.—ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR: THE NEED FOR CONTROL

CHAPTER 1.—THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR

5. As our inquiry is concerned with the problems arising out of the consumption of alcoholic liquor, we desire to explain briefly our view of the evidence concerning the nature and effect of alcohol upon the human body. Oral evidence was given by Professor D'Ath, Professor of Pathology at the Otago University Medical School, and by Dr. J. F. G. Richards, Medical practitioner, of Auckland. We have also been supplied with various books and reports on the subject.

6. The intoxicating ingredient in alcoholic liquor is ordinary or ethyl alcohol, to which we shall refer as "alcohol." The scientific evidence refers to the effect of alcohol, as distinct from alcohol in beverage form, as in beer, whisky, and the like. The distinction must be remembered in applying the evidence, because any specified quantity of alcohol is represented by a larger quantity of alcoholic beverage. For example, 15 c.c. of alcohol is the equivalent of 30 c.c. of whisky (R. 3536G).

7. Alcohol is usually produced by the fermentation of sugar. It has several effects upon the human body. The first effect when burnt in the body is that it liberates a certain amount of energy. This is the total value of alcohol as a food, but it has no advantages as a food over other much more desirable substances such as milk. Alcohol is seldom taken as a food.

8. The second effect of alcohol is that it operates as a drug if not taken in excessive quantities. A drug is a substance which temporarily modifies the activities of the bodily organs, including the brain, otherwise than by acting as a food. The use of alcohol as a drug is its main use. It may be used as a medicine in certain restricted cases—*e.g.*, in angina pectoris or in diabetes—but there are other more effective drugs for use in those conditions. When used as a beverage its main effect is that of a narcotic and not of a stimulant. It depresses the action of the nervous system and blunts the higher mental processes. The highest functions—those of the critical judgment and of self consciousness—are first affected. The result is some loss of self-control. The average individual counteracts this effect in its early stages by an increased effort at self-control. As the dosage of alcohol is increased, the effort at self-control tends to become ineffective.