

Thirty-one open sittings of the Commission were held, in addition to numerous committee meetings. In all 270 witnesses were examined (on oath or affirmation), and their occupations were as follows :—

			Occupations of witnesses.		
Accountants .. ..	3	Contractor .. ..	1	Meat company managers ..	2
Agricultural-implement makers .. ..	2	Dairymen .. ..	3	Merchants .. ..	7
Apiarist .. ..	1	Dairy company manager ..	2	Manager (acting), shipping company .. ..	1
Architects .. ..	2	Dentist .. ..	1	Printer .. ..	1
Auctioneers .. ..	4	Doctor of medicine .. ..	2	Produce-merchants .. ..	3
Bakers .. ..	4	Domestic duties .. ..	5	Restaurateur .. ..	1
Bank clerk .. ..	1	Drapers .. ..	6	Saddler .. ..	1
Boardinghouse-keeper .. ..	1	Educationalists .. ..	5	Sawmiller .. ..	1
Boot-machinist .. ..	1	Engineers .. ..	4	Secretary, Farmers' Union ..	2
Boot-manufacturers .. ..	6	Farmers .. ..	23	Secretary, A.M.P. Society ..	1
Boot-retailers .. ..	5	Fishermen .. ..	6	Secretary, workers' unions ..	16
Boot-trade worker .. ..	1	Fishmongers .. ..	6	Secretary, Coal Fund .. ..	1
Brickmaker .. ..	1	Flourmillers .. ..	5	Secretary, shipping company ..	1
Builders .. ..	4	Fruiterers .. ..	8	Secretary, Master Grocers' Association .. ..	1
Butchers .. ..	11	Furniture-dealers .. ..	8	Shipping agent .. ..	1
Candle-manufacturers .. ..	2	Gardeners .. ..	2	Soap-manufacturer .. ..	1
Caretaker .. ..	1	Gas company managers, &c. ..	3	Stock-dealer .. ..	1
Carrier .. ..	1	Grocers .. ..	11	Tea-merchant .. ..	1
Carpenters .. ..	4	Hardware-merchant .. ..	1	Temperance advocates .. ..	2
Civil servants .. ..	18	Hollow-ware .. ..	2	Timber-merchants .. ..	5
Clerks .. ..	3	Journalists .. ..	8	Tobacconists .. ..	2
Clothing-manufacturers .. ..	6	Labourers .. ..	5		
Coal-merchants .. ..	10	Land agents .. ..	9		

In addition, several written statements were received from medical practitioners, who gave their opinions on definite questions put before them by the Commission. These questions and statements are printed after the evidence. Medical statements.

The sittings at the centres visited were held on the following dates : Dunedin, 4th to 8th June ; Christchurch, 10th to 18th June ; Auckland, 20th to 29th June ; Wellington, 2nd to 11th July. Date of sittings in chief towns.

We would like to place on record the difficulties of getting reliable evidence from certain witnesses on matters within the scope of the Commission. Whilst valuable evidence was freely tendered by most of the witnesses who appeared before us, there was, on the other hand, a reluctance on the part of some to disclose even in confidence information exclusively in their possession, which would have been of the utmost service to the Commission in framing its report. We would particularly draw attention to the fact that the Commission was met by a point-blank refusal on the part of the Merchants' Association of New Zealand to give any evidence whatever. Difficulty of securing reliable evidence.

Finally, your Commissioners would say that whatever shortcomings there may be in the Report are largely due to the wide range of the investigation, the paucity of statistical information relevant to the questions, the short time allowed us for the inquiry, and the insufficient powers conferred upon us by the Commission of Inquiry Act, 1908. Sources of evidence partly unsatisfactory.