

SOUTHERN NIGERIA.

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO THE
LIQUOR TRADE IN SOUTHERN NIGERIA.

PART I.—REPORT.

(The Minutes of Evidence and Appendices are printed separately as [Cd. 4907]).

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
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Southern Nigeria Liquor Trade Committee.

To the Right Honourable The Earl of Crewe, K.G., P.C., &c., &c.,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

MY LORD,

Pursuant to your Lordship's instructions dated 6th April, 1909, of which a copy is printed with this Report, your Committee proceeded to Southern Nigeria to investigate the effects of the import, sale, and consumption of alcoholic drinks in that country. *Proceedings of Committee.*

We first took evidence at Lagos and then proceeded to take evidence at the following places:—Abeokuta, Ibadan, Oshogbo, Calabar, Opobo, Bonny, Warri and Forcados. *Witnesses and Evidence.*

Two members of your Committee (Mr. Welsh and Mr. Cowan) visited Oyo and interviewed the Alafin on the subject of our inquiry. *Minutes of Evidence, p. 191.*

The Committee also visited Offa, Ilorin, and Jebba in Northern Nigeria and took evidence there for the purpose of comparing the conditions existing in Northern and Southern Nigeria. *Minutes of Evidence, pp. 230-242.*

We examined orally 171 witnesses representing as far as possible all classes of experience. Of this number, 83 were Natives and 88 were Europeans; two witnesses dealt with Statistics, 31 witnesses represented the various Missionary Societies, three witnesses appeared on behalf of the Mohammedan community, and 27 were put forward as representing trade interests. We also examined six members of the Legislative Council, five Judges and Magistrates, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General, and the Crown Solicitor, 15 Political Officers, four Chief Officers of Police, 17 Medical Officers, one native medical practitioner in private practice, and 17 other Government officials. The remaining witnesses consisted of 33 native chiefs and seven other natives. The Chiefs included Prince Eleko of Lagos, the Alake of Abeokuta, the Bale of Ibadan, and the Alafin of Oyo.

At each place we visited we satisfied ourselves that due notice had been given of the meetings of the Committee and that witnesses had been invited to come forward freely, with the promise of payment of any travelling expenses that they might incur. Our sittings were open to the public.

In addition to examining the 171 witnesses mentioned above, we circulated a series of questions to District Officers, Police Officers, and Medical Officers. The questions and the answers to them, together with an analysis, will be found set out in Appendix A to the Minutes of Evidence. The effect of this evidence is dealt with in the course of the Report under the appropriate heads. Several gentlemen whose answers are included in the appendix were also examined orally, and in this case the fact of the officer having given oral evidence is indicated by an asterisk. Excluding the officers who gave evidence before the Committee, we thus obtained the statements of 64 officers who for various reasons could not attend before the Committee. *Appendix A to Minutes of Evidence.*

2. We made such inquiries as we could as to the quality of the trade spirits imported into Southern Nigeria, but no scientific evidence was available. The merchants produced certificates from English and foreign experts testifying to the non-injurious character of the spirits imported, but, as these certificates did not go into analytical details, we reserved the question of the quality of imported spirits until we could obtain the results of the analyses made at the Government Laboratory at home of samples taken in Southern Nigeria for that purpose. *Quality of imported Spirits.*

We also sent home for analysis samples of the native liquors preserved in accordance with instructions from the Government Laboratory. [See para. 11 *post.*]

On our return to England we received the report of the Principal of the Government Laboratory, Sir Edward Thorpe, F.R.S., who had analysed 175 samples of imported spirits, and we examined, as a witness, Mr. C. Proctor, the Superintending Analyst at the Government Laboratory. Taking the imports as a whole the analyses showed that the spirits imported were of fair quality, containing nothing of an injurious character. Both the rum and the gin are of about the same quality as the cheaper classes of those spirits sold in England. It must be borne in mind that the cheaper classes of spirits are made by the patent still process. Spirits made by the pot still process have more flavour, but contain larger quantities of the various by-products or secondary constituents, *Appendix B to Minutes of Evidence, Proctor, p. 397.*

which in any undue proportion tend to increase the toxic effect of ethyl alcohol, which, flavouring apart, constitutes potable spirit. Under the patent still process furfural is eliminated and the higher alcohols, or fusel oil as they are commonly designated, are reduced to a minimum. Speaking broadly, the cheaper the spirit the more nearly it approaches to pure ethyl alcohol, and, though it loses in flavour, the freer it becomes from what may be deleterious secondary constituents.

Proctor, p. 399. While in Nigeria our attention was called to certain analyses of trade spirits made there by direction of Sir William MacGregor, some years ago. Some samples then analysed were said to show as much as four per cent of fusel oil. Mr. Proctor was of opinion that this was practically an impossible quantity; either the decimal point was put in the wrong place or the analyses were defective; the spirits would be undrinkable, and could not be produced under the patent still process. Fusel oil has a higher commercial value than ethyl alcohol so it would be against the interest of the manufacturer to send out any such spirit. The opinion that there was some mistake in the analyses in question is confirmed by the fact that in 1897 a large number of samples of trade spirits from Lagos were analysed at the Government Laboratory in England, and that the analyses closely accorded with the present analyses, the highest amount of fusel oil detected in any sample subjected to analysis being .2 per cent. of the absolute alcohol present in the liquid.

Proctor, p. 400, and Appendix O. As regards physiological effects we examined Major C. H. Bedford, I.M.S., Director of the Central Excise Laboratory for India. Major Bedford was the medical officer who drew up the report of 1906 on spirituous liquors in India, and who for the purposes of that report performed a series of experiments at Kasauli on the physiological effects of the by-products of alcoholic distillation. Assuming the correctness of the analyses of the Government Laboratory, Major Bedford was of opinion that there was nothing physiologically injurious in the trade spirits imported into Nigeria.

Bedford, p. 403. He called our attention to one sample of rum which contained a somewhat undue proportion of aldehydes, but, speaking broadly, he was of opinion that the sole material point as affecting health would be not the quality of the liquor, but the quantity consumed and the strength at which it was consumed. Major Bedford's conclusions are so fully in accord with the voluminous scientific evidence given before the Royal Commission on Whisky and other Potable Spirits, which has just reported, that we did not think it necessary to pursue this question any further.

Bedford, p. 404. *See report of Commission, p. 43.* 3. The estimated area of Southern Nigeria is 77,000 square miles, and the latest estimate of the population supplied by the Governor is $7\frac{1}{2}$ millions. This latter figure, however, is somewhat hypothetical, being based on an inquiry made by District Officers and not on any census in the European meaning of the term. Some parts of the country are hardly yet under British control, and the natives have a superstitious fear of anything in the nature of a census, and, outside one or two coast towns, object strongly even to the registration of births and deaths.

Import of Spirits. Taking the import of spirituous liquors as a whole, we find that in 1903 the total number of gallons imported was 2,797,308 ;
Pontifex, pp. 2-4. in 1904 the total number of gallons imported was 3,190,339 ;
 in 1905 the total number of gallons imported was 2,811,438 ;
 in 1906 the total number of gallons imported was 3,321,902 ;
 in 1907 the total number of gallons imported was 4,055,204 ;
 and in 1908 the total number of gallons imported was 3,235,669.

These figures require explanation because we were told that the standard adopted in 1903 and 1904 was the English standard of proof gallons, and that the returns are shown on that basis. For the years 1905 to 1908 the above returns are given in liquid gallons.

Minutes of Evidence, Appendix D. For the purposes of accurate comparison the figures for the years 1906 to 1908 have therefore been converted into proof gallons, according to the English standard, and are as follows, namely, for

1906	2,697,999 gallons.
1907	3,272,436 "
1908	2,767,629 "

For the year 1905 the data are not available for converting the liquid gallons into proof gallons.

The result of these figures is to show a marked increase in the imports of spirits for the year 1907, but otherwise the amount of spirits imported does not show an increase during the last five years. It is to be noted that the year 1907 was a bumper year for

all imports. In the year 1906 the declared value of imports, exclusive of spirits, was £2,846,530, while in 1907 the declared value of imports, exclusive of spirits, amounted to £4,053,403. The effect on imports of the increased duty on spirits imposed in January, 1909, cannot at present be estimated. [See Pontifex, p. 2.]

*Minutes of
Evidence,
Appendix
F.*

Taking, then, the figures for the latest year available, 1908, and taking the population of Southern Nigeria at 7½ millions, the consumption of spirits per head of the population works out at .37 of a proof gallon, *i.e.*, about one-third of a proof gallon, whereas the consumption of spirits per head of the population of the United Kingdom was .91 of a proof gallon for 1907, the latest year for which figures are available. Our colleague Mr. Welsh points out that these figures taken by themselves may be somewhat misleading, because they assume an equal distribution of liquor throughout the whole population, whereas there are still many districts in Southern Nigeria, especially in the north-east, which have not yet been opened up to trade. For example, Colonel Trenchard, speaking of his latest expedition, says "this year we preceded the trader, but before that I think the trader preceded us with regard to spirits" [p. 69]. Having regard to this consideration it may be that in those parts of the country where trade spirits have penetrated the consumption per head may approximate more nearly to that of the United Kingdom. On the other hand it is satisfactory to note that as more and more country is opened up to trade there has been no proportionate increase in the quantity of spirits imported. In fact the imports for 1908 are somewhat less than the imports for 1903. [See also paragraph 8.]

We have no materials for comparing the amount of native fermented liquors drunk in Southern Nigeria with the amount of beer and cider drunk in the United Kingdom.

In Lagos (now the Western Province of Southern Nigeria) the importation of trade spirits seems to have reached high water mark in 1895, in which year the net imports were 1,727,000 gallons,* as compared with 971,469 gallons in 1908.

Making a similar comparison in the case of old Southern Nigeria (the present Central and Eastern Provinces) the following figures are of interest :—

1894	...	...	...	...	2,682,418 gallons.*
1904	...	...	...	...	2,131,997 gallons.*
1907	...	...	...	...	2,967,316 gallons.
1908	...	...	...	...	2,221,512 gallons.

In each case the area of distribution in 1908 was, of course, very much larger than it was in the earlier years quoted.

The relative proportions of the different spirits imported are shown in Appendix F to the Minutes of Evidence, and for the year 1908, which may be taken as typical, the figures were as follows :—

*Appendix
F to
Minutes of
Evidence*

Brandy...	...	...	...	...	2,216 proof gallons.
Gin ...	...	...	...	...	1,924,311 proof gallons.
Rum ...	...	...	...	...	672,214 proof gallons.
Whisky ...	...	...	...	...	43,962 proof gallons.
Other spirits ...	...	...	...	...	124,926 proof gallons.

Incidentally we may point out that up to and including the year 1908 a certain amount of over-proof spirit, locally designated as "alcohol," was imported for the purpose, in more recent years, of compounding it into gin in Lagos. This "alcohol" is classified under the heading of "Other Spirits" in the Tables in the Appendix, but this importation has now been put an end to by the new scale of duty introduced in January, 1909, which renders it unprofitable to import any spirits of a strength exceeding 50 degrees Tralles, which strength roughly corresponds with the English 12½ under proof, English proof being about 57 per cent. of absolute alcohol.

The merchants in the Western Province have agreed amongst themselves to import gin and rum in future at the respective strengths of 41° and 45° Tralles (Brown, p. 57). These strengths are equivalent to about 27 and 20 under proof, respectively, being a little weaker than ordinary matured whisky.

4. It may be of interest to compare the relative proportions borne by imported spirits to other imports into Nigeria. They are also shown in Appendix F to the Minutes of Evidence. For the year 1908 the figures are as follows :—

*Value of
Imports.
Appendix
F to
Minutes of
Evidence.*

Declared value of spirits	...	...	...	£332,577.
Declared value of other imports	...	...	...	£3,952,253.

By "declared value" is meant the f.o.b. value at the port of export, that is to say the value of the article in question minus freight, duty, insurance, and landing charges.

* Board of Trade Statistical Abstract (Colonial), 1906.

Appendix
F to
Minutes of
Evidence.

Taking the two principal imports, namely, spirits and cotton goods, it appears that while the declared value of spirits increased from £301,739 in 1906 to £332,577 in 1908, the declared value of cotton goods increased in the same period from £760,815 to £983,410.

The percentage of spirit imports to the total inward trade was as follows for the last three years :—

ib.	1906	...	...	...	...	...	...	10.6
	1907	...	...	...	...	...	...	10.0
	1908	...	...	...	...	...	...	8.2

We made inquiries as to the country of origin of the trade spirits and we found that about 90 per cent. of the whole were imported from either Hamburg or Rotterdam. [Pontifex, p. 261.]

There is no doubt that spirits bulk very largely in the trade of the country. Adding the duty to all imports, we find that the declared value of spirits imported into Southern Nigeria, plus the duty, works out as follows :—

1906	...	...	...	...	...	...	£902,523
1907	...	...	...	...	...	...	£1,192,446
1908	...	...	...	...	...	...	£1,023,763

while the commercial imports (that is *excluding* Government imports) work out as follows :—

1906	...	...	...	...	...	...	£2,821,764
1907	...	...	...	...	...	...	£4,130,626
1908	...	...	...	...	...	...	£3,493,459

On this basis the percentage of spirit imports to the total inward trade (less Government imports) was as follows for the last three years :—

1906	...	...	...	...	...	...	24.2 per cent.
1907	...	...	...	...	...	...	22.4 per cent.
1908	...	...	...	...	...	...	22.6 per cent.

It is to be noted that the main part of the expenditure of the people on spirits consists of the Customs duty, which it has been the policy of the Government to raise periodically, and that the total amount of spirits imported does not increase in proportion to other articles of trade.

Customs
Duties.

5. We now come to the question of Duties, and we may observe in passing that practically the whole of the taxation of Southern Nigeria is raised by means of Customs Duties, whereas in Northern Nigeria a large proportion of the revenue is raised by direct taxation on land and cattle. [Anderson, p. 232.]

The Revenue of Southern Nigeria for the last three years was as follows :—

Minutes of
Evidence,
Appendix
F.

1906	...	...	...	...	...	...	£1,088,717,
1907	...	...	...	...	...	...	£1,459,554,
1908	...	...	...	...	...	...	£1,388,243.

Of these amounts, the duty collected from spirits was as follows, in :—

ib.	1906	...	...	...	...	...	£600,784,
	1907	...	...	...	...	...	£806,942,
	1908	...	...	...	...	...	£691,186.

ib. It will be seen that the percentage of the total revenue derived from spirits fell in 1908 to 49.8 from 55.18 in 1906.

Scales of
Duty.

The general Customs tariff on articles imported into Southern Nigeria is at the rate of 10 per cent. *ad valorem*. There is a generous free list.

Certain articles, however, *e.g.*, gunpowder, are subject to a higher specific duty. Spirits fall under a special category, and, partly for the purposes of revenue, though mainly for the purpose of diminishing consumption, the duty on spirits has been progressively raised from 6*d.* per proof gallon to 5*s.* per gallon of 50 degrees Tralles (equal roughly to the English 12½ under proof) with a surcharge of 2½*d.* for every degree, or part of a degree, above that strength, and a rebate of 1¼*d.* for each degree under that strength, subject to a minimum of 4*s.* a gallon. The result is that gin is charged about 200 per cent., while rum is charged about 300 per cent., on its declared value. [Pontifex, pp. 128 and 260.]

Retail
Prices and
Methods
of Distri-
bution.

6. Confining our attention to "trade spirits," that is the cheaper classes of gin and rum, and turning first to the method of importation, rum is imported in demijohns which must be of uniform size and certain standard quantities. Gin is imported in cases each case containing 12 bottles, and each case must consist of ¾ of a gallon, 1¼ gallons, 1¾ gallons or 1¾ gallons. The smallest bottle, therefore, which can now be legally

imported contains half-a-pint and these are sold at the place of import at a minimum price of 7*d.* a bottle. Formerly, small bottles containing about four ounces of gin were sold at 3*d.* a bottle, but bottles of this size can no longer be lawfully imported. It was found that these bottles differed considerably in their cubic contents, and that frauds were consequently practised on natives by the retail dealers.

This prohibition, however, does not apply to brandy or whisky, or any spirit other than trade spirits, and we were shown a bottle of whisky which, it was said, was being sold for 6*d.* [Bishop Tugwell, pp. 26 and 30]. It was a sample bottle and we found, on measurement, that it contained about 2 ounces of whisky, that is to say, about one thirteenth of what is known as a "bottle" of whisky in England which is a reputed quart and should contain 26 ounces [Pontifex, p. 126].

The retail price at which trade spirits are sold outside the ports of import depends, of course, on the cost of carriage and the profits which the middleman can make. For instance, at Ilesha we were told that imported spirits were sold for 2*s.* a gallon, which would work out at 1*s.* 6*d.* for the half-pint bottle [Binny, p. 418].

In Abeokuta and Ibadan the Native Government levy a toll of 1*s.* and 9*d.* a gallon, respectively, on the import of all spirits into their territories. This, of course, raises the retail price by about a penny or twopence a bottle within those territories.

In connexion with the price at which trade spirits are sold to the actual consumer, we have to consider the purchasing power of the people. The wages of unskilled labour in Southern Nigeria range from 6*d.* to 9*d.* a day, with the exception of Lagos, where wages run up to 1*s.* a day. Taking the average price of gin outside Lagos as 1*s.* 3*d.* a bottle (five-sixths of a pint), it is obvious that trade spirits are an expensive luxury to the great mass of the people.

For the year 1908, according to the late Dr. Dawson Burns, the expenditure per head on spirits works out at £1. 0*s.* 1*d.* in England, £1. 19*s.* 7*d.* in Scotland, and £1. 4*s.* 8*d.* in Ireland. Assuming that the average price of trade spirits in Southern Nigeria is 1*s.* 3*d.* a bottle of five-sixths of a pint, and that the consumption of the higher class liquors extends to half a million people, the expenditure on trade spirits in Southern Nigeria works out at about 5*s.* 6*d.* per head of the population. No very reliable inference can be drawn from these comparative figures, having regard to the very different conditions of the two countries, both as regards wealth and individual requirements of life, and to the fact that the whole of Southern Nigeria has not yet been opened up for trade.

Expenditure per head on drink.

We had a certain amount of evidence to show that as trade spirits travel up country from the coast they are adulterated with water as they pass from hand to hand and before they reach the ultimate consumer. For example, we were told that at Onitsha some of the gin arrived there so attenuated as to be unsaleable. [See Simpson Gray, Appendix A, Minutes of Evidence, p. 410.] Evidence was given that no other adulterant than water was used, and Mr. Gloye informed us that the rum was always diluted by the retailers before sale [Gloye, p. 131].

7. Based on importation, as we have already pointed out, the annual consumption of spirits per head of the population works out at slightly more than a third of a proof gallon, but in all probability the consumption is not so high as this figure, because trade spirits, especially gin, are not used merely for drinking, but are in some parts of the country employed as a substitute for currency, and large quantities are stored as accumulated wealth.* In the more backward parts of the country British coin is regarded with suspicion by the natives and either does not pass current at all or only passes at a depreciated rate. The people are still in the barter stage, and for various reasons gin furnishes the most convenient standard of value. Its value at a given moment is pretty well ascertained, and as the policy of the Government is to increase the duty and thereby to increase the retail price, it forms a medium of exchange of which the tendency is to appreciate rather than to depreciate. It is imported in cases of fixed quantity and each case contains 12 bottles of equal contents; it is easy, therefore, to calculate the value of other goods and produce in terms of gin. Unlike cotton goods and tobacco, moreover, it keeps for a long time. The other articles available for the purchase of native produce are cotton goods, tobacco, brass rods, and manillas.† The import of brass rods and manillas has for

Gin as Currency.

Sinclair, p. 344. Miller, p. 335.

cf. Simpson Gray, Appendix M.

* We ourselves in visiting the house of a Chief in the Central Province saw a large quantity of gin (in old cases) which had been purchased some 30 years before. Two witnesses gave us instances within their knowledge where gin had been kept so long that the corks had rotted away and the liquor had been lost. (See Miller, p. 335, Sinclair, p. 345, Bedwell, p. 368.)

† Pieces of mixed metal, somewhat of the shape of a horseshoe, used, as well as brass rods and copper wire, as native currency.

the last few years been prohibited by law in order to promote the circulation of British coin. Incidentally and unintentionally this measure has doubtless increased the use of gin as a medium of exchange and has possibly stimulated its importation.

Our attention was called to the fact that in five native Courts* in the Brass district where pecuniary fines had been imposed, payment of the fines had been received in gin. [Bishop Tugwell, p. 23; Adam, p. 75.] This was contrary to the instructions of the Government issued in 1901, which appear to have been overlooked in consequence perhaps of the rapid change of officers and the manifold duties, both executive and judicial, imposed on those officers. Moreover, in backward districts where gin is the only available means of exchange, considerable hardship would have been inflicted on the defendants if the native Clerk of the Court had refused to accept payment of the fines in the only available means of exchange.

The Government have again called attention to those instructions, and no doubt the enforcement of them, though entailing some temporary hardship on individuals, will tend to force the use of British currency on the backward native population [James, p. 98].

*Northern
Nigeria.*

8. Again, there is no doubt that a certain amount of gin filters through from Southern to Northern Nigeria in spite of the precautions taken by the Southern Nigeria Government, and this must be taken into account when considering, on the foregoing basis, the consumption of gin in relation to population in Southern Nigeria. We are not aware what precautions are taken by the Northern Nigeria Government to protect its own territory. The Southern Government has taken measures to prevent the importation of gin into Northern Nigeria by the Lagos Railway and the River Niger, the two great trade routes.

As regards the railway which runs upwards through the Western Province and enters Northern Nigeria at the 216th mile, the carriage of spirits by rail (except under a special conditional permit issued to Europeans only) is prohibited beyond Ikirun, a station ten miles south of the boundary. Southern Nigeria also provides at Okuku, the last station before the railway enters Northern Nigeria, a special police detachment to search the train for spirits. The quantity of spirits conveyed by rail to Ikirun since the line was opened to that station has not been considerable, about 3,000 gallons having been conveyed in ten months [Brown, p. 60]. From Ibadan, which is about 90 miles from the frontier, an extra rate has been imposed for the carriage of spirits. Below Ibadan the water route competes with the railway. It may be noted that the amount of spirits carried northward by rail shows a diminishing ratio when compared with other goods. [Pontifex, p. 9.]

As regards the Niger, under a law passed in 1901, which affirmed the rule and practice of the Royal Niger Company, the importation of spirits by water carriage into certain inland regions of the Protectorate is prohibited so far as natives are concerned. The territory so affected comprises all that portion of the Protectorate north of the junction of the River Niger and the River Anambara which was formerly under the jurisdiction of the Royal Niger Company. The importation of spirituous liquors by land routes into this strip of territory is therefore not prohibited, but the law further provides that no such imported liquors shall be sold or bartered within such regions. The practical effect of this legislation has been to create a prohibition zone on the banks of the Niger from a point on that river about 60 miles below its junction with the Northern Nigeria boundary, upward to such boundary. This buffer zone was established to prevent spirituous liquor being carried by the great water-way of the Niger into Northern Nigeria, in which it is prohibited except when imported under special permit for the use of Europeans and certain native officials. Boats are stopped and searched at the junction of the two rivers and patrols are established above that point.

The Government has recently taken a further step to check the importation of spirits into remote districts lately brought under the control of the Administration by forbidding the carriage of such goods up the Ewayong River on the boats of the Government Transport Service on the Cross River. The Ewayong is a large tributary of the Cross River flowing into the latter just above Obubra Hill.

*Danger of
smuggling
into
Southern
Nigeria.*

9. The examination of the steps taken to prevent the importation of spirits into Northern Nigeria led us incidentally to consider the possibility of preventing smuggling into Southern Nigeria in case the import duty on spirits should be raised much above the

* There are, as a rule, in the Eastern and Central Provinces several native Courts in each district. The District Commissioner presides when he happens to be present, the Clerk of the Court is a native, and native chiefs constitute the tribunal.

French or German level so as to make smuggling a profitable business. The western boundary of Southern Nigeria marches for about 200 miles with the French frontier. Most of the country is more or less open, and different estimates were given to us as to what would prove an effective preventive service, but these estimates were purely conjectural and would require careful reconsideration. At present, the French duty on spirits is about 3s. 7½d. per gallon at 50 degrees Tralles, as compared with the present Nigerian duty of 5s. at the same strength. It is said that a certain amount of smuggling goes on in the Badagry district, but under the present scale of duties there is probably no great temptation to smuggle in any quantity.

On the Eastern boundary the German frontier marches for about 200 miles with the British frontier. The country is for the most part wild bush which has not at present been reduced to any sort of effective control, and it would be impossible for many years to come to establish an effective preventive service. At present, the German duty on spirits is pretty nearly the equivalent of the Nigerian duty.

In addition to these two land frontiers there is a coast line of about 500 miles to be guarded. The Western Province is more or less guarded by the surf, but it would be easy to land spirits in surf boats, at almost any point, from ships in the offing, but no doubt an effective marine control could be established, though we have no evidence as to the cost. [See Pontifex, p. 5, Johnstone, p. 13, and Partridge, p. 215.]

As regards the Central and Eastern Provinces the sea-board is almost entirely intersected by numerous creeks lined by a dense growth of mangrove, and it is very difficult to see how an effective preventive service could be established.

Obviously, therefore, if the Southern Nigeria duty is to be further increased, it would be most desirable that the increase should be preceded by new Conventions with France and Germany.

There is also another matter to be considered. The natives of Southern Nigeria have not yet learned any method of distillation, but they are quite intelligent enough to take to rough pot-still distillation if they could not get spirits in any other way, and the materials for so doing are everywhere to be found. The nature of the country would render it practically impossible to deal with this evil should it arise, and probably the evils of shebeening would considerably exceed those of any authorised trade.

10. In certain districts a licensing system has been established, and persons who either sell spirits or import spirits for sale require to have a licence which must either be wholesale or retail or both. The Licensing Ordinance in the Protectorate does not, however, affect the bartering of gin for other commodities. The map* in the Appendix shows the districts to which the regulations generally have been applied. The revenue as yet received from licences is small, namely, £8,680 in 1908, and the extension of the system has been urged on the Government rather as a method of controlling the trade in spirits than as a mode of raising revenue. Its practical operation is to confine the regular trade to European traders and the richer class of native traders, but there was no evidence to show that it has had any effect on the drinking habits of the people. Towards the end of 1908 an attempt was made through the native Governments to extend the licensing system to Abeokuta and Ibadan. The introduction of the licensing system coincided with the increase of the import duty at Lagos. The result was curious. A boycott of spirits was established, and the trade fell off to almost nothing. When we visited these towns there were signs that the people were resuming purchase, but for four months the boycott was kept up. Some of the witnesses attributed this to a temperance movement, but the large majority of the witnesses were of opinion that it was merely a strike against the increased price and a novel form of taxation. (Bishop Tugwell, p. 25 Young, p. 154, The Alake, p. 156, Okuseinde, p. 179, Humfrey, p. 134, Bale of Ibadan, p. 189.) We expected to find that the diminution in the demand for trade spirits would be accompanied by a corresponding increase of demand for other articles of trade, but with the exception of one witness all the witnesses examined informed us that the demand for cotton and other trade goods notably diminished. One native trader told us that when spirits ceased to be consumed in the Ibadan district his other trade improved, but his evidence was not very satisfactory and he was alleged by another native witness to have been secretly selling trade spirits.

Everywhere we were told that the people in Southern Nigeria had a horror of any form of direct taxation,† and they deeply resented what they regarded as the thin end of the wedge for bringing in new and unpopular taxes. The success of the boycott shows incidentally that the taste for spirits has no great hold on the masses of the

* Not reproduced.

† The Rev. Sidney Smith informed us that in the Onitsha district people left Northern for Southern Nigeria to escape the direct taxation.

people, and that they can forgo the use of them for any reason which appears to them to be adequate. The abstention from spirits was accompanied by a large increase in the consumption of palm wine. The District Commissioner told us that at three gates of Ibadan, out of some 100 approaches to that town, 800 demijohns of palm wine were brought into the town in one morning. The increased demand for palm wine was assuming proportions which in the opinion of many witnesses was threatening the palm oil industry. In some places the palm oil trees are actually cut down, and in others they are tapped in such a manner as eventually to destroy the tree. As the prosperity of the Colony depends mainly on the oil trade, this is a serious matter which must be taken into account if the duty on spirits should ever be raised to a prohibitive degree. (See Thompson, p. 50, Ungebauer, p. 108, Dennett, p. 120, Gloye, p. 130, Walton, p. 149, Coquard, p. 152, Young, p. 154, The Alake, p. 157, Edun, p. 160, Bale of Ibadan, p. 191, Roper, p. 222, Palmer, p. 354. See *contra* Tugwell, p. 34, Sapara, p. 145.) In Dahomey, which is French territory, legislation against the destruction of palm trees has been found necessary.

*Native
Liquors.*

11. In Southern Nigeria the Natives have not yet learned the art of distillation, but they have always been alcohol drinkers. Throughout the country they use fermented liquors which they make from the juice of various palms, and from guinea corn, millet, and maize. Distilled spirits, in the shape of rum, were introduced long ago by the Portuguese and Brazilians before the advent of British trade. Gin has now largely superseded rum as the spirit most commonly drunk in the country. Both rum and gin are as a rule cheaper than the other spirits imported, and are thus commonly designated as "trade spirits." There are no legal restrictions on the manufacture and sale of native fermented liquors. In the Western Province a kind of beer called "shekete" is made from maize, while another kind of beer called "pito" is made from guinea corn; palm wine is also drunk. In the Eastern and Central Provinces there appears to be but little beer, but palm wine is largely made and drunk. Palm wine when made from the raphia palm is known as "tombo" or "mimbo," and appears to be the favourite beverage. When quite fresh it is non-intoxicating, but fermentation commences at once and the liquor appears to increase in strength as fermentation goes on. In most cases water is added as it is made,* but practically all the witnesses agreed that palm wine which has been allowed to ferment for any length of time becomes highly intoxicating. One Chief told us that on one occasion he drank three glasses of tombo with the result that he remained in a state of insensibility until the next day. Another witness told us that on the occasion of a special native festival he found the whole of the inhabitants of Akwete, a town in the Eastern Province, drunk and incapable from drinking tombo [G. S. B. Gray, p. 381. See also James, p. 100]. Witnesses differed as to whether the intoxication produced by tombo was of a worse character than the intoxication produced by spirits, but of course a man can get drunk on a much less quantity of spirits. The ill effects due to tombo and other palm wines may be due to some extent not only to the alcohol contained therein but to the large quantity of acrid liquid which is consumed, and also to the fact that when the liquor is kept for any length of time or blended with any liquor which has been so kept, a poisonous putrefactive fermentation may set in. The actual alcohol contained in the native beers and palm wines varies from 5 to 12 per cent. of proof spirit; that is to say, the stronger beers and palm wines are slightly more alcoholic than ordinary English beer and are about on a par with English home-made wines.

p. 315.

*cf.
Coquard,
p. 151.*

*Bedford,
p. 405.*

*Proctor,
p. 400.*

We made enquiries as to the relative prices of spirits and native liquors in the different places. The price of trade spirits was invariably in excess of that of home manufactured fermented liquors, but we found that the ratios varied considerably. For example, they compare—

In Forcados in the ratio of 12 to one.

Ishan	"	"	18	"
Afikpo	"	"	24	"
Udi	"	"	30	"
Oshogbo	"	"	50	"
Ilesha	"	"	96	"

In most parts of the country it is obviously cheaper to get drunk on native liquors than on imported spirits at their present prices, though the process may be longer.

*Evidence
as to
Drinking
Habits.*

12. As regards drinking habits generally, the evidence before us was somewhat conflicting. Evidence of the existence and spread of drinking habits among the people,

* The water so added is often impure, and we had the strongest evidence that neither palm wine nor spirit has any effect in disinfecting impure water [Bedford, p. 408].

and of the disastrous consequences ensuing therefrom, was mainly given by 18 witnesses put forward by the Church Missionary Society, including Bishops Tugwell, Johnson, and Oluwole, the two last of whom are natives.

Archdeacon Crowther, of Bonny, however, who is also a native, while agreeing that certain individuals were slaves to drink, gave the general population of his district a good character for sobriety and self control. Three witnesses on behalf of the United Free Church Mission spoke strongly of the evil effects of drinking spirits in the Cross River and Calabar districts, but the head of the Mission, the Revd. Arthur Wilkie, while agreeing that drinking habits were far too prevalent in the Calabar district, thought that drunkenness was diminishing and that there was much more drunkenness among the "foreign natives"* than amongst the natives of Southern Nigeria. p. 332.
p. 268.

The Revd. A. Walton, of Abeokuta, the only English missionary who appeared on behalf of the Wesleyans, agreed that there was a certain amount of drunkenness at Abeokuta, but bore strong testimony to the general sobriety of the people, saying that they compared very favourably with the inhabitants of large English towns. p. 148.

Two native Wesleyan witnesses at Ibadan came forward as reformed drunkards and gave their personal experience. pp. 198,
199.

A native Wesleyan pastor from Benin gave the people a good character for sobriety [Atundaola, p. 352].

The other missions did not volunteer to give evidence but Bishop Lang of Lagos, the Roman Catholic Bishop, and Father Coquard of Abeokuta and Father Shanahan of Onitsha, two very experienced missionaries, kindly came forward at our request. Bishop Lang, speaking of Lagos, thought that drinking habits were slightly on the increase, but that the evil had not yet assumed any serious proportions. Both Father Coquard and Father Shanahan, while agreeing that individuals injured themselves by drink, bore strong testimony to the general sobriety of the people. [See also Roman Catholic Fathers, Ibadan and Calabar, Q. 7604 and Q. 10745. And as to the other missions, see James, Q. 3724.] p. 50.
p. 151.
p. 116.

Coming now to the non-missionary evidence, Dr. Adam, who had eighteen months' experience in the Brass District, spoke strongly of the disease caused by drink in that district, but Dr. A. Browne, who had had seven years' experience in the same district and 27 years' experience of the country, absolutely disagreed with him. Dr. Manners, who handed over the Brass District to Dr. Adam, after a year's experience of it, entirely confirms Dr. Browne's conclusion (Manners, p. 326). Dr. Supara, of Lagos, thought that drink was an increasing evil in that town, but Dr. Randle, also a native medical man, with even longer experience of the town, came to an opposite conclusion. p. 70.
p. 347.
p. 142.
p. 256.

There was a certain amount of evidence of drinking to excess among the Popos at Badagry on the borders of the French frontier. The Popos are a small tribe partly in French and partly in English Territory, wholly distinct from the Yoruba nation who constitute the inhabitants of the Western Province. (See Williams p. 79, Pennington p. 147, Stone p. 182, Pinder p. 294, Ross p. 379.) Popos.

We examined some of the engineers engaged on the construction of the railway from Lagos to Zungeru who had had large bodies of labourers under them and who had had experience both of Northern and Southern Nigeria. They were unanimous that as regards health and physique no distinction could be made between the workmen recruited from either territory. One witness spoke to a certain amount of drunkenness when camp was shifted or holidays were taken; but two other engineers who had had charge of the same or adjacent sections of the line gave the workmen a high character for sobriety. The chief engineer had never found any trouble from drink among the many thousand labourers under his control, though he had received complaints concerning the drinking habits of two contractors and a clerk. Railway
and Road
labourers.
Purcell
p. 235.
Smith
p. 242.
Firman
p. 237.
Woodburn
p. 229.

Mr. James Stone, Superintendent of Roads, who has habitually from 1,000 to 2,000 labourers under his control, who receive sometimes as much as £5 at a time, told us that he had never known a case of drunkenness amongst them, and that while there were many hawkers frequenting the camps none of them dealt in spirits. Stone
p. 181.

We examined representatives of the Mohammedan community in Southern Nigeria and found them strongly opposed to prohibition. Two of them being traders, dealing in spirits among other things, we therefore asked the Limomu, or religious head of the community, to give evidence, and at our request he came forward as a witness. Although himself an abstainer, he took the same line as his co-religionists. Moham-
medans.
pp. 46, 47,
and 81.

The remaining 134 witnesses, drawn from all classes of the community, while admitting that individuals injured themselves by drink, were of opinion that the people

* Negroes from other Colonies such as Sierra Leone, &c., are known as "foreign natives."

as a whole were extraordinarily sober and well able to exercise self-control in the matter of drink. They saw no signs that drunkenness was on the increase.

Analysis, para. 6, Appendix A, Minutes of Evidence. Drunkenness as an offence.

This opinion is fully confirmed by the very great majority of the district officers, medical officers, and police officers who answered our written queries regarding the moral, social, and physical effects of the import and consumption of trade spirits in Southern Nigeria.

13. In a new country like Nigeria statistics are almost non-existent, but we were able to obtain from the Inspector of Prisons the total number of persons imprisoned for drunkenness, that is to say, persons who were imprisoned without the option of a fine, or who went to prison in default of payment of the fine. The figures are as follows:—

<i>Gray, p. 381 and Appendix L.</i>	1906	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	35
	1907	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21
	1908	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33

It would, of course, be futile to compare these figures with the corresponding English statistics because at present only a small portion of Nigeria is policed in the English sense of the term. But the town of Lagos is well policed, namely, about 300 constables to a population of between 50,000 and 60,000 inhabitants.

In Lagos, the convictions for drunkenness were as follows:—

<i>Johnstone, p. 10.</i>	1906	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
	1907	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	23
	1908	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	32

This would, we imagine, compare favourably with any seaport town in England of the same size and with a mixed population.

In the Courts in the out-districts drunkenness as a substantive offence is very uncommon. [See Humfrey p. 134, Young p. 155, Edun p. 159, Leslie p. 187, Pinder p. 294, Moore p. 304, Biddell p. 309, Leigh-Lye p. 323, Sinclair p. 344, Maxwell p. 358, Chute p. 361; *cf.* also Ross p. 378; Prince Eleko p. 80, The Alake p. 156, Bale of Ibadan p. 190.] The absence in Southern Nigeria of public-houses and places where people drink away from home must be taken into consideration. It was suggested to us that there might be a good deal of drinking in private houses, but no direct or trustworthy evidence to this effect was brought to our notice and the general body of medical evidence does not support this view.

Drink and serious crime.

14. We investigated, as far as we were able, the effects of drink as a cause of serious crime. We examined the three Judges of the Supreme Court, but did not ask the Chief Justice to give evidence as he was unwell and had been only a short time in the Colony.

We also examined the Attorney-General, the Solicitor-General and the Crown Solicitor, as well as the Police Magistrates of Lagos and Calabar, one of whom had sat as a High Court Judge, and four Chief Officers of Police and a large number of district officers whose functions correspond to those of committing Magistrates. In their experience, apart from two or three isolated cases, there was no connexion between drink and serious crime. [See Johnstone p. 12, Packard p. 105, Pennington p. 147, Binny p. 223, Harcourt p. 263, Punch p. 266, Winkfield p. 293, Pinder p. 294, Ross-Brown p. 296, Green p. 303, Moore p. 305, Biddell p. 308, Leigh-Lye p. 323, Sinclair p. 344, Douglas p. 349, Chute pp. 361-2, Maxwell pp. 358 and 360, Stoker p. 364, Bedwell, p. 365, Ross p. 379; *cf.* also Ajasa p. 76, Coquard p. 152, Abolade p. 170, Alafin p. 192.]

Drink and disease.

15. As regards the effect of spirit drinking on the health of the people, the medical, as well as the general, evidence was almost unanimous in supporting the view that spirit drinking has had no effect on the physical condition of the people. The ordinary diseases due to excessive indulgence in alcohol are very rare in Southern Nigeria. We could only hear of about half a dozen cases of delirium tremens among natives. Cirrhosis of the liver and kidney disease are very uncommon and alcoholic neuritis is unknown. One English medical practitioner, who had been secretary of a temperance association in England, thought he had seen cirrhosis of the liver due to alcohol [Adam p. 71], and a native medical practitioner mentioned the case of a child who in his opinion suffered from cirrhosis caused by taking medicine dissolved in gin for an illness which he described as "black tongue" [Sapara pp. 143 and 146].

Alcoholism and anaesthetics.

It is a well-known fact that chronic alcoholics take chloroform badly. The period of excitement is prolonged and they go under with difficulty. Dr. Adam, who told us he had operated or given the anaesthetic in over 200 cases in Nigeria, had observed the characteristics of alcoholism in something like 25 per cent. of the cases [Adam,

p. 72]. Dr. Smith told us that he had only seen symptoms of alcoholism under anaesthetics in the case of one Yoruba, but that he believed that he had noticed it in Kroo boys, who come from Liberia [Smith, p. 226]. Dr. Currie, who had operated largely in Lagos and elsewhere, and who had undergone a special course of anaesthetics at home, told us that the natives took chloroform very easily, and that he had never come across a case showing the characteristic symptoms of alcoholism [Currie, p. 193]. His experience was confirmed by the many other medical men whom we examined. [See *e.g.* Findlay, p. 240, Tipper, p. 139, Smythe, p. 376, Best, p. 317, Read, p. 290, Collett, p. 274, Manners, p. 326, Browne, p. 347, Laurie, p. 396.]

Dr. Adam further informed us that he had had many native patients who complained of suffering from impotence. In these cases he found a history of alcohol, and where he could induce his patients to give up alcohol, he found a marked improvement in their symptoms [Adam, p. 72]. We examined many other medical men who had had patients complaining of impotence, and without exception they attributed this malady to sexual excess, and had never come across a case which they had attributed to alcoholism. [See *e.g.* Currie, p. 194, Tipper, p. 140, Smythe, p. 376, Best, p. 316, Read, p. 290, Manners, p. 327, St. G. Gray, p. 369, Laurie, p. 396.]

*Opin as a
cause of
impotence.*

Most of the medical men who gave evidence before us had not, so far as natives are concerned, come across any of the specific diseases which usually follow alcoholic excess. [See Strachan pp. 17 and 18, Laurie pp. 84 and 86, Tipper p. 139, Welyly p. 150, Currie p. 193, Collett p. 274, Read p. 290, Best p. 316, Manners p. 325, Browne p. 347, St. G. Gray p. 369, Smythe pp. 375-6-7. See also paragraph 8 of Analysis of Written Evidence, Appendix A to Minutes of Evidence, page 409.]

Some of them told us that more harm was done by drinking foul water than by drinking alcohol [see Findlay p. 241, Read p. 291], and in the Eastern and Central Provinces the doctors were of opinion that venereal disease was a more serious and pressing evil than drink. [See Collett p. 274, Best p. 317, Manners pp. 325 and 327, St. G. Gray p. 369, Smythe p. 376.] In the Western Province it is said to be rare, though Dr. Strachan, the Principal Medical Officer, regarded the future with some apprehension [p. 19].

*Foul
water.*

*Venereal
diseases.*

16. There is a large preponderance of evidence that no deterioration of the race whatsoever has taken place which can be attributed to the abuse of alcohol. [Strachan pp. 18 and 19, Ajasa p. 77, Tipper p. 139, Coquard p. 152, Currie p. 194, Findlay p. 239, Randle pp. 257 and 258, Punch p. 266, Collett p. 275, Read p. 292, Ja-ja p. 313, Best p. 317, Manners p. 328, Miller p. 336, Banigo p. 342, H. Jumbo p. 343, Browne p. 348, Douglas p. 350, Palmer p. 355, Thomas p. 355, Bedwell p. 365, Smythe p. 377. See also paragraph 8 of Analysis of Written Evidence, Appendix A to Minutes of Evidence, page 409.]

*Race
deteriora-
tion.*

17. Although, as above stated, we found no evidence of anything like race deterioration nor any grounds for believing that the population is diminishing, we were informed that everywhere the rate of infant mortality was very high, but none of the medical witnesses whom we examined, with one doubtful exception, could trace any connexion between alcoholism on the part of the parents and infant mortality. The Principal Medical Officer, summarising all the information at his disposal, attributed this mortality to malarial infection, diseases due to alimentary troubles, and pulmonary disorders. Asked if he had any reason to suppose that alcoholism on the part of the parents was responsible for any proportion of the infant mortality, he replied that "there is absolutely not the faintest indication of such a thing." The great majority of the medical witnesses examined laid stress on the ignorance of the mothers as to the proper bringing up of their children. In most parts of the country the mother suckles the child for a period of three years and this we were told was prejudicial to its health. The children are recklessly exposed to sun and rain while carried on their mothers' backs, and are often dosed with improper native drugs. Practically every child suffers from malaria, although as they grow up they become immune and the malarial parasite disappears from the blood. The practice, which appears to be general in the wilder parts, of killing twins and turning the mother into the bush, may also have some slight effect in checking the growth of population. [See, *e.g.*, Findlay p. 239, Currie p. 194, Adam p. 75, Randle p. 257, Miss Slessor p. 281, Manners p. 326, St. G. Gray p. 369, Smythe p. 377, Laurie p. 395.]

*Infant
Mortality.*

p. 19.

18. Some of the apparent conflict of evidence on the drink question may perhaps be explained by the fact that natives who drink spirits as a rule take them only on festive and special occasions, such as marriages and memorial funeral ceremonies, and in the

*Conflict of
evidence.*

intervals wholly abstain from them. The result is that even if they exceed at these times constitutional effects do not follow.

*Drinking
at native
festivals.*

19. As regards the native feasts and festivals it is very difficult to know how far drunkenness prevails. Some of these festivals are kept up for many days and nights at a time. There is continuous tom-toming, dancing, singing, and noise; food is supplied by the hosts as well as drink, and it is very difficult for the onlooker to determine how much of the excitement and subsequent depression is due to drink and how much is due to the nature and conditions of the entertainment [*cf.* Bedwell p. 368].

The custom of supplying trade spirits at these festivities entails heavy expenditure on persons who are obliged to entertain and is in every way to be deplored. The burden of this expenditure increases as the duty on spirits, and consequently the retail price, is raised, but this is no argument against raising the duty. The evil can only be met by using influence to induce people to curtail this objectionable form of extravagance.

*Drinking
by educated
natives.*

20. There was a considerable amount of evidence before us that (with the exception of a few chiefs) habitual hard drinking was mainly indulged in by natives who had received some European education at Missionary or Government Schools and copied the bad habits of the lower class European. These people to a large extent appear to drink whisky, brandy, and the liquors indulged in by Europeans, rather than the cheaper spirits. [See Bishop Tugwell p. 26, Bishop Lang pp. 51-52, Williams p. 79, Wright p. 92, Lawson p. 114, Shanahan p. 117, Sapara p. 144, Walton p. 149, Young p. 154, Edun p. 160, Melville-Jones p. 200, Findlay p. 240, Bishop Johnson p. 249, Harcourt p. 263, Wilkie p. 269, Collett p. 274, Read p. 290, Moore p. 305, Hartje p. 306, Manners pp. 326-8, Crowther p. 332, Atundaola p. 353, Maxwell, pp. 358 & 361, Bedwell p. 365, St. G. Gray p. 369, Smythe pp. 375-6-7, *cf.* also Smith p. 387.]

*Specific
allegations
by
witnesses.*

21. Wherever we could obtain specific statements we endeavoured to get at the real facts of the case, but owing to the rapid change of officers and the large number of European witnesses on leave it was not always possible to do so. We proceed now to deal with some of the cases in which such specific allegations were made.

*Alleged de-
population
of a village
owing to
drink.
pp. 87 and
90.*

(i) We were told by Mr. E. H. Obafemi, a Church Missionary lay preacher, that a village called Iru had been depopulated and demoralised by drink. In reply to further questions the witness stated that the village was a flourishing village 20 years ago, but that in five years' time it had so deteriorated that the mission to it had to be abandoned, and that the deterioration was still going on. Some of us visited the village and found it to be a small fishing village about half a mile to the east of Lagos. We could see no evidence of demoralisation and could discover nothing to show why the people of Iru should be more drunken than the population of the rest of Lagos. There has been no doubt a shift of population to the other side of Lagos, where the main work of the town is carried on, and where, the working population lives for convenience. We examined two other witnesses who knew Iru well, one of whom was the Wesleyan pastor of the place and had known it for 30 years. He informed us that there was nothing in Iru to call special attention to drink, and he denied that drink had had anything to do with the abandonment of the mission [Wright, p. 91]. The other witness, who was the Sanitary Warden, and had also known Iru for 30 years, fully bore out Mr. Wright's statement that drink had had nothing to do with the fall of population, which they both attributed to the migratory habits of the people [Walton, p. 115]. This was the only specific statement we could get of any village having become depopulated owing to drink.

*Allegations as to
price and
quality of
trade
spirits.*

(ii) In a letter to Colonel Seely dated the 14th January last, which was formally communicated to the Committee by Your Lordship's directions, Bishop Johnson states as follows:—"I respectfully submit that: (1) The traffic deals especially in gin and rum of a very cheap, low, and vile character, which sell in Africa at from 6*d.* to 9*d.* a quart bottle, after the expense of production, casing, transport, Customs duties, and payment for licences in some places has been allowed for, which scarcely any European, not excluding the one who sells them, ever uses himself, and which, I am sure, would never be allowed to be sold in England; and that this quality of the stuff, apart from other considerations, condemns the traffic."

We found on enquiry that trade spirits are not sold in quarts. The smallest bottle now allowed to be imported contains half-a-pint, while the larger size contains five-sixths of a pint; the price of the half-pint bottle is 7*d.* at the port of import, and it of course gets dearer as it goes further up country. The larger bottle is sold at 10*d.* at the port of import, so that the price per quart is never less than two shillings.

As regards the quality, Sir Edward Thorpe, Principal of the Government Laboratory, after the analysis of 125 samples, reports that "the spirits from which these gins have been prepared are, as a whole, clean and well rectified and of fair quality. The majority of the gins are similar to what is sold in ordinary public-houses in this country." The rum (of which 27 samples were analysed) does not compare unfavourably with the cheaper rum sold in England.

(iii) The Rev. A. W. Smith stated that he had been informed on good authority that early in 1909 three chiefs had died of the effects of drink in the neighbourhood of Oshogbo [Smith, pp. 219-220]. While, of course, fully accepting that the statement made to us by Mr. Smith was exactly what had been reported to him, we thought it strange that in an apparently sober part of the country three chiefs should die of drink immediately before our arrival. We therefore asked the Governor to obtain a medical report on the cause of death in the case of these three chiefs. He directed the District Commissioner and the local medical officer (Dr. John Currie) to take evidence and report what they could find out. Dr. Currie sums up the result of the enquiry in the following terms:—

- "The first case was that of the Babasonya of Ede. He is reported to have died at the end of July or beginning of August, 1908.
- "The principal witnesses examined were his son and his chief wife.
- "These both agreed in saying that the day before his death he fell into a deep hole somewhere in the neighbourhood of his house ;
- "That he was picked up and brought home unconscious ;
- "That he bore marks of serious injury to the head and face ;
- "That he never recovered consciousness, and that he died early on the following day.
- "I have no hesitation in ascribing his death to convulsions of the brain, the result of his accident.
- "There is evidence to show that he was in the habit of taking spirits, and also that on the morning of his accident he had been drinking more than was his custom. It is possible that he was intoxicated, although able to walk, at the time of his accident, but the evidence is not absolutely clear on this point ; but both the witnesses referred to above are very positive that on no other occasion had they ever seen him the worse for liquor.
- "His death, therefore, cannot be described as a death from drink. His death was unquestionably due to accident.
- "The second case was that of the Jagun of Ede, who is reported to have died in December of last year.
- "The witnesses examined were his son, the present Jagun, and two of his wives.
- "The evidence was as follows:—
- "That one evening after dark he went out into his compound to relieve nature ;
- "That he trod on a bundle of lime sticks and that a thorn pierced the sole of his right foot ;
- "That two or three days later he was seized with 'convulsions,' and that he died within 24 hours of their onset.
- "The nature of these convulsions was the subject of careful enquiry on my part and I was able to elicit the facts that they were not accompanied by unconsciousness, that he was conscious in the intervals and was able to say when they were coming on, and that they were accompanied by pain.
- "I have no doubt that these were the convulsions of tetanus, and that tetanus was the cause of death.
- "The evidence shows that he was a moderate drinker, and that he was never known to be intoxicated.
- "There is no evidence to show that he had taken any spirits or other intoxicating drink on the afternoon or evening of his death, and it is quite certain that drink played no part whatever in causing his death.
- "The third case was that of a chief of Ifon, near Oshogbo.
- "The man in question could not be identified, and the other chiefs of the place strenuously denied that any man of position in the place had died for some years."

Appendix B, Minutes of Evidence. Proctor, pp. 398 and 399.

Certain Chiefs said to have died of drink.

See Appendix K, Minutes of Evidence.

Kola nut.

(iv). More than one Church Missionary witness lamented the fact that gin had superseded the kola nut* when guests were entertained [Bishop Johnson, p. 252]. We found on enquiry that between the years 1904 and 1907 the import of kola nuts into Southern Nigeria increased from £44,027 to £75,377 in value [Pontifex, p. 9]. It was suggested that larger quantities are now demanded by Northern Nigeria from this supply, but no evidence was adduced in support of this statement.

Births and deaths in Lagos.
pp. 252-3.

(v). Bishop Johnson, in support of his statement that the Yoruba people were dying out through drink, told us that every year in Lagos the deaths exceeded the births. We found on enquiry that since trustworthy statistics have been kept the birth rate has always exceeded the death rate.† For the last three years the figures have been as follows:—

—						Births.	Birth rate.	Deaths.	Death rate.
<i>Laurie, pp.</i>	1906	...	...	...	...	2,133	49·7	1,801	41·9
<i>394-5.</i>	1907	...	...	...	...	2,156	49·4	1,830	42·0
	1908	...	...	...	...	2,281	51·5	1,978	44·7

Fines in gin at Onitsha.
p. 392.

(vi.) A Church Missionary witness named Onyeabo informed us that fines were taken in gin at Onitsha by the Government, and in support of his statement alleged that on the 28th of April last a native crier went through the town summoning the waterside people in the name of the District Commissioner to meet on the following day to elect a chief, proclaiming at the same time that every person who did not attend would be fined one case of gin. Considering that there was no power at all to fine people for not attending such a meeting and that the District Commissioner was a very experienced officer we asked the Nigerian Government to telegraph to him to ascertain the facts. Mr. Simpson Gray sent in a detailed report in which he absolutely denied that he had authorised any statements to be made with regard to the infliction of a fine or payment thereof in gin.

Appendix M, Minutes of Evidence.
“Warri House,” &c.
Appendix C, Minutes of Evidence.

(vii.) Bishop Tugwell, in his written memorandum handed in to the Committee, stated as follows:—

“In the delta of the Niger drunkenness is also very rife. At Brass Nembe there is a drinking club known as the ‘Penny Adultery Club,’ the proceedings of which I am told are very shameful. In the same town the ‘Warri House’ has been ruined by drink.”

Sinclair,
p. 344.

On arrival at Bonny we took the evidence of Mr. Sinclair, the Commissioner of the district, who made the following statement:—

“The Penny Adultery Club was merely a slang term. I do not know who originated it. I have often used the term myself. Both at Nembe and Ogbayan certain men thought they had discovered a way of living without working. Every native village had their club house for social gatherings in the evenings, and these men used to send their wives there, and the wives, for a purely nominal sum, would induce the young men to commit adultery with them, and the husband then brought an action for adultery and got adultery fees. The person who had committed adultery with the wife had been fined 16 or 18 cases of gin. That became so common that I announced publicly that the next case that came up I would put the husband in the dock for blackmail, and since then I have had no cases. It had nothing at all to do with drink.”

Sinclair,
p. 344.

As regards the Warri House,† the same witness informed us that the chief of the Warri House referred to by the Bishop had been removed for incompetence and bad management of the affairs of the House, and that there was no question of drink at all in connexion with the matter. He offered to place all the papers in connexion with the case at the disposal of the Committee.

* Kola nut is much prized by the natives. It is a stimulant, and is said to diminish the feelings of fatigue and hunger. We were informed by a medical witness that it was supposed by the natives to be an aphrodisiac [Best p. 318].

† Dr Laurie was of opinion that while the death rate was correct, as a death certificate is required before burial, the whole of the births may not have been declared.

‡ In the Eastern and Central Provinces the “House” corresponds with what we should call a clan or division of a clan. At Bonny one chief told us that he had 1,000 “boys” in his house, *i.e.*, that the clan consisted of 1,000 adult males.

(viii.) Bishop Johnson informed us that in 1906 he visited a Government School at Warri where he addressed the children on the evils of drink, and asked the children who were regular gin drinkers to stand aside: the school contained 75 children between the ages of eight and sixteen years: no less than 60 of the children stood aside. In reply to further questions the Bishop told us that he did not report the matter either to the Inspector or the Government of Nigeria, but that he used it in making representations to the Secretary of State. He further informed us that there was no visitors' book at the school. On arrival at Warri we summoned before us the headmaster of the school, Mr. Samuel, who is a Wesleyan lay preacher, and the Assistant Master, Mr. Omatsola, a Presbyterian. The visitors' book was produced to the Committee. We found that on the occasion in question the Bishop had made the following entry:

"Visited the school: found 75 boys present, a very large number for Warri: work going on: appearance of room and pupils tidy: pupils being evidently taught earnestly: progress made appreciable; addressed the school."

(Signed) JAMES JOHNSON,
Bishop.

Mr. Samuel informed us that only a minority of the boys stood aside and that the Bishop made no comment to him on the matter. He further told us that the Bishop addressed the children in English, as he could not speak the Jekri language, and that Mr. Omatsola interpreted for him. Mr. Omatsola told us that he asked the children whether they had ever tasted gin and not whether they drank it habitually. Some of the boys it appeared were over 16, one indeed being over 20 years of age. Some of them had only tasted gin in the form of native medicine and as regards the others Mr. Samuel explained that at plays and visits a small glass of gin is handed round and that after the fathers and mothers have drunk from the glass a sip is given to the children. He had never known any of his boys take to drink or be the worse for liquor.

22. Among the witnesses whom we examined were several witnesses who had had considerable experience in other Colonies inhabited by Negro races. *Nigeria as compared with other Colonies and United Kingdom.*

Although in the opinion of the witnesses none of these places could be described as drunken, they were unanimously of opinion that Southern Nigeria compared most favourably with any or all of them. Dr. J. F. Smith told us that he had seen more drunkenness in a district in South Africa, where the sale of spirits to natives is prohibited, than in Southern Nigeria (p. 226), and Dr. Randle, a native of Sierra Leone, had seen more drunkenness in Sierra Leone in a week than he had seen in Lagos in six years (p. 258). [See also Jamaica, Strachan, p. 18; Antigua, Amblesone, p. 106; Demerara, Young, p. 156; Sierra Leone and French Guinea, Roper, p. 221; Sierra Leone, Firmin, p. 238; South Africa, Binny, p. 224; Sierra Leone, Bishop Johnson, p. 251; Sierra Leone and St. Lucia, St. G. Gray, p. 370; Jamaica, Ross, p. 380; East and South Africa, Gray, pp. 382 and 383; *cf.* also Thompson (Burmah), p. 48; Stone (Australia), p. 182; Leslie (India), p. 188].

It goes without saying that the standard of sobriety in Southern Nigeria is very much higher than that of the United Kingdom. Speaking of Abeokuta, a town of 150,000 people, one missionary, who was a strong advocate of temperance, volunteered the statement that you could see more drunken men in the Wandsworth Road in one night than you could in three years in Abeokuta. Another witness said that he had seen more drunkenness in one day in Bristol than he had seen in the whole of his experience of 13 years in Southern Nigeria. Dr. Currie in reply to questions asking him to compare Ibadan with places in England of which he had experience, replied that the two could not be compared:—"You cannot compare Barnsley with Ibadan," he said, "because one is a drunken town and the other is not." And then asked with regard to the district round St. Bartholomew's Hospital, he said again:—"You cannot compare the two. Smithfield is a dirty, drunken district and Ibadan is not." Dr. Manners, speaking of Brass and Bonny and asked to compare them with the districts round St. Thomas's Hospital, replied:—"Lambeth would not compare well. I do not take Saturday nights because that would be unfair, but an ordinary night in Lambeth would not compare favourably with any village in the Brass district." He added that that would apply even more to Bonny. [See also Ajasa p. 78, Laurie p. 85, Pearce p. 122, Tipper p. 141, Sapara p. 145, Walton p. 149, Welply p. 151, Edun p. 162, Harvey p. 172, Boettcher p. 176, Leslie p. 188, Melville-Jones p. 201, Wegener p. 211, Partridge p. 218, Randle p. 258, Winkfield p. 294, Hartje p. 306, Ja-ja p. 313, Best p. 318 and H. Jumbo p. 343.]

Physiological effects of alcohol on Natives as compared with Europeans.

23. The medical witnesses whom we examined informed us that they could see no difference in the physiological effects of alcohol either in the case of natives or of Europeans, and several witnesses, including two native members of the Legislative Council, told us that any legislation which prohibited the sale of spirits to natives, while allowing its consumption by Europeans, would be deeply resented by the native population [Ajasa p. 77, Williams p. 79, John p. 82, Carr p. 113, Pearce p. 123, Edun p. 160, Ja-ja p. 313]. It is obvious that in the hot and trying climate of Nigeria the European has a much stronger temptation to indulge in alcohol than the native, who is inured to the climate of his own country, and the European, as a rule, has more means and opportunity of procuring spirits. As far as the evidence goes, any restriction on the consumption of spirits, from a purely physiological point of view, would be not less necessary in the case of the European than in the case of the native.

Some of the doctors, speaking for both Europeans and natives, were of opinion that no alcoholic drink was necessary, though they ascribed no ill-effects to strict moderation; but the trend of medical opinion seemed to be that for the majority of people strict moderation was preferable to total abstinence, though any excess was highly dangerous.

Personal observation on journey.

24. Our opportunities for personal observation were, of course, limited, but we freely walked about the native towns during our journey and we found neither drunkenness nor any traces of the effects of drink.

Conclusion.

25. As we read Your Lordship's instructions to the Committee, you desire us only to report the facts as we found them and not to make any recommendations as to the future. We therefore make no recommendations, but may sum up our conclusions as follows:—

There is absolutely no evidence of race deterioration due to drink. In Southern Nigeria mortality is high and disease is rife, but drink is only an insignificant factor in producing these results. There is hardly any alcoholic disease amongst the native population, and with the exception of one or two isolated cases we found no connexion between drink and crime. On the occasions of feasts and festivals the natives often drink more than is good for them, both of trade spirits and native liquors. Individuals injure themselves both morally and physically by indulgence in drink, but the people generally are a sober people, who are able to drink in moderation without falling into excess. There appears, however, to be a tendency among some of the natives who have received a certain amount of European education to acquire drinking habits, but the prohibition of the import of "trade spirits" would not do much to diminish this evil. As education progresses this tendency will doubtless be carefully watched. The expert evidence taken in England shows that there is nothing to complain of as regards the quality of the spirits imported into Nigeria.

26. We have embodied our thanks to the Secretary in a separate communication, and we desire to express our appreciation of the services rendered as shorthand writer to the Committee by Mr. R. Marshall, who did much trying work, often under very difficult conditions.

We have the honour to be,
My Lord,

Your obedient servants

M. D. CHALMERS, Chairman,
THOS. WELSH,
ALEX. A. COWAN,
CYRIL H. ELGEE.

D. C. CAMERON,
Secretary,
17th September, 1909.

ANNEXURE TO REPORT.

Colonial Office to Sir Mackenzie Chalmers, K.C.B., C.S.I.

Downing Street, 6 April, 1909.

SIR,

I AM directed by the Earl of Crewe to transmit to you a copy of correspondence* between the Native Races and the Liquor Traffic United Committee and this Department showing the circumstances in which his Lordship decided that it was desirable that a Committee should be constituted to enquire into the facts connected with the importation of Trade Spirits into Southern Nigeria and with their sale and consumption.

Native Races, etc., Committee, 6 July.
To ditto, July 18. From ditto, July 28.
To ditto, Sept. 30. From ditto, Oct 21.
To ditto, Dec. 3, 1908.

2. You will observe that, in the letter from this Department dated the 3rd of December, it was stated that the Secretary of State was awaiting a communication from the Governor of Southern Nigeria on the subject of the constitution of the Committee of Enquiry. This communication was duly received, and after full consideration the Secretary of State decided that, as the scope of the enquiries of the Committee was to be limited to an investigation of facts, there was no reason to appoint to membership of the Committee representatives of all the various mercantile and missionary interests in the Colony as well as of the numerous types of the native community of Southern Nigeria. The representation of the various interests affected would, in His Lordship's opinion, be better secured by the attendance before the Committee of witnesses representing the mercantile bodies, the missionaries of the different denominations, and the natives of the Colony and Protectorate, as well as medical and other Government officers. As regards the constitution of the Committee, Lord Crewe decided that it should be composed of a Chairman of recognized position in this country, assisted by not more than three gentlemen familiar with the commercial and social conditions of Southern Nigeria.

3. In pursuance of this decision, the Chairmanship of the Committee was offered to you, and Lord Crewe desires me to take this opportunity to convey to you his sincere acknowledgments for the readiness with which you have undertaken this duty, which he is aware cannot be carried out without some personal inconvenience. The other gentlemen who have been appointed to serve on the Committee are Captain C. H. Elgee (Resident at Ibadan), Mr. A. A. Cowan, and Mr. T. Welsh, the two latter being members of firms engaged in trade with Southern Nigeria. Mr. D. C. Cameron of the Southern Nigeria Secretariat has been appointed Secretary to the Committee.

4. The subject matter of the Committee's enquiry will be as follows:—

They will enquire into and report upon the facts connected with the importation of trade spirits into Southern Nigeria, and with their sale and consumption. The enquiry should include the following heads:—

- (1) Character of the spirits imported.
- (2) Sources from which they are obtained.
- (3) Methods of distribution, and area over which distributed. Facts as to the precautions taken against smuggling.
- (4) Methods of sale, including licensing.
- (5) Drinking habits of the people, and the classes affected, including facts connected with the local manufacture of fermented or other intoxicating beverages; the composition of those beverages; whether they are adulterated; the extent of their consumption; and their effect on the consumers.
- (6) Relation of the spirit trade to the commerce of the Colony, including the collection of statistics as to the revenue derived from duties on spirits and from other sources.
- (7) Results—moral, social, and physical—of the trade on the natives.

5. You will understand that it is the intention of the Secretary of State not to circumscribe closely the scope of the enquiry, but to leave it to your discretion to include any other matters which may appear to you germane to the subject in hand, provided that they do not transgress the limits of the investigation, which is definitely confined to matters of fact. The procedure of the Committee will also be left to your discretion.

6. Steps have already been taken for the collection of samples of the different kinds of liquor imported, and for their transmission to this country for analysis at the Government Laboratory. These samples will include liquors purchased at the inland markets. Arrangements have also been made for the examination of the native fermented liquors, which are prepared from the palm, maize, &c.

7. You will observe from the letter addressed to the Native Races and the Liquor Traffic United Committee on the 18th of July last, that it was originally the intention of the Secretary of State that the Report of the Committee should be submitted in the first instance to the Governor of Southern Nigeria, but he is now of opinion that it would be more convenient that it should be addressed to the Secretary of State direct.

8. As at present arranged, you will embark for Lagos by the steamer leaving Liverpool on the 10th of April.

I am, &c.,

FRANCIS J. S. HOPWOOD.

* Not printed.

