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ROYAL COMMISSIONS AND SIMILAR BODIES IN BRITAIN



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**REFERENCE DIVISION
CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFORMATION
LONDON**

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ROYAL COMMISSIONS AND SIMILAR BODIES IN BRITAIN

THE USE OF ADVISORY BODIES

ADVISORY bodies play an important and necessary part in modern British government. Although individual ministers and the Government as a whole have at their disposal factual information and advice from within the Civil Service, they do from time to time wish for information or advice from other sources. Long-term planning or detached investigation of a problem is not always easy to fit in with the urgent tasks of day-to-day administration; it may be useful to obtain a synthesis of the opinions of experts with outside experience, whether people with technical knowledge of scientific subjects or practitioners as opposed to administrators in, for example, education; it may be preferable to have a problem examined and the views of representatives of different interests affected obtained by an obviously impartial body in a disinterested non-party manner, and that it should be clear to the public that such an examination is being made; the publicity given to a committee's deliberations and findings can itself educate and inform the public about a subject or can elicit reactions which can then be taken into account more easily in the formation of policy by a minister who has not had to commit himself beforehand to a particular course of action.

An obvious source of outside advice is a Parliamentary committee, and in the nineteenth century Select Committees of the House of Commons or House of Lords were set up on a number of occasions to investigate matters of public concern. For example, reports of Parliamentary Select Committees played an important role in exposing the evils of employing children in factories and transporting convicts to the colonies.¹ Since then pressure on Parliamentary time has increased, whilst many subjects requiring examination have needed the attention of experts who were not necessarily Members of Parliament. Again, the views may be wanted of observers without party bias. Today *ad hoc* Select Committees of either House are normally appointed only to inquire into matters affecting its own procedure or privileges, and outside advisory committees on general questions have become more usual.

It is sometimes suggested that the use of outside advisory committees, whether their members include Members of Parliament or not, relieves ministers of their responsibilities and by-passes Parliament. This suggestion overlooks the fact that advisory committees are asked only to investigate and to recommend. Their reports are in no way binding on the Government or on Parliament; the Government can accept or reject them, and remains responsible to Parliament for the action it takes.

¹Six typical inquiries by Select Committees of the House of Commons, between 1729 and 1837, are described in *A People's Conscience* by S. Gordon and T. G. B. Cocks. (Constable, 1952).

TYPES OF ADVISORY BODY

Advisory committees are of two kinds. There are standing committees which remain in being over a period of time and examine whatever comes before them within the subject with which they are concerned, for example, the Central Advisory Council for Education or the Colonial Research Council. There are also committees appointed *ad hoc* to investigate a particular problem; when they have reported on that their work is done and the committee ceases to exist.¹ It is with these that this paper is concerned.²

Among *ad hoc* advisory bodies Royal Commissions are the elite. They are of some antiquity, an example being found as early as the fourteenth century, but were not used frequently as tools of inquiry before the last century. They are appointed comparatively rarely, by the Crown (hence the description 'Royal'), to examine problems of prime importance and public interest and report to the Queen upon them. A list published in March 1960³ of Royal Commissions and other committees appointed between January 1955 and March 1960 to inquire into social or economic matters contained only three Royal Commissions, those on Common Land, the Remuneration of Doctors and Dentists, and the Police. Investigating Committees appointed by ministers are more numerous; the same list enumerated nearly 70. In structure and procedure they have so much in common with Royal Commissions that what is said in the following pages may be taken as applicable to both except where a difference is noted. Although Royal Commissions carry most prestige, many other *ad hoc* committees, variously described as departmental or inter-departmental committees and working parties, have been concerned with subjects of comparable weight. For example, although the Priestley Report on the Civil Service,⁴ which dealt with pay and conditions of service, was prepared by a Royal Commission, the Masterman Report⁵ on the Political Activities of Civil Servants was prepared by a departmental committee. Again, between the two world wars there were Royal Commissions on Oxford and Cambridge⁶ and Durham⁷ universities respectively, but a Departmental Committee on London University.⁸ Thus some subjects dealt with by departmental committees would seem to be of Royal Commission standard. The converse is not true; the status of Royal Commission has not been given to bodies inquiring into subjects of such specialised interest as the need for a wages council for the rubber-proofed garment-making industry.

TOPICS DEALT WITH

Some topics dealt with by Royal Commissions and other bodies have already been mentioned. Any topic could be the subject of reference to a Royal Commission or a committee which could conceivably be a responsibility of Government or a subject for legislation. The subjects considered are not limited to the area of the United Kingdom; Royal Commissions have been appointed from time to time to investigate problems concerning territories for which the

¹Notwithstanding certain exceptions among Royal Commissions.

²Standing Committees do however on occasion produce reports of similar kind and importance as those of Royal Commissions, for example the report of the Central Advisory Council for Education, *15 to 18* (HMSO, 1959), known as the Crowther Report. Most of what is said in this paper about Royal Commission reports applies also to documents such as the Crowther Report.

³*Hansard* 3.3.60, Col. 170.

⁴Cmd. 9613 (HMSO, 1955).

⁵Cmd. 7718 (HMSO, 1949).

⁶Cmd. 1588 (HMSO, 1922).

⁷Cmd. 4815 (HMSO, 1935).

⁸Cmd. 2612 (HMSO, 1926).

British Government is ultimately responsible, e.g., the Royal Commission on East Africa which reported on measures needed for the development of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika.¹ There has even been a Departmental Committee on the Procedure of Royal Commissions.² Generally subjects 'suggest themselves' as a result of activity in or out of Parliament or discussion in informed circles. For example, the Royal Commission on the Remuneration of Doctors and Dentists³ followed accusations of bad faith by the British Medical Association after the Government had rejected a claim for more pay, and the Holidays with Pay Committee⁴ was appointed when the interest of working people in legislation guaranteeing holidays with pay, which was spreading in other European countries, had been reflected by the introduction of two Private Members' Bills in Parliament, and expressed in a Trades Union Congress resolution. Sometimes the initiative for the appointment of an advisory body comes from within a department, as in the case of the Merchandise Marks Committee,⁵ which was appointed to consider '*inter alia* whether any extension of the Merchandise Marks Act, 1887, was required in respect of the provision relating to indications of origin', because it was clear to the Department administering the Act that revision was needed. A list of all Royal Commissions since the second world war is given at the end of this paper.

APPOINTMENT

The formalities of appointment are among the points in which Royal Commissions differ from other *ad hoc* advisory bodies. A Royal Commission is appointed by a Royal Warrant by the Queen and countersigned by one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State. It is traditionally couched in somewhat quaint ceremonial language, beginning with a recitation of the royal titles, addressing the persons being appointed members of the commission as, for example, 'Our Trusty and Wellbeloved ——' and wishing them 'Greeting'. This Warrant contains their terms of reference and their authority to call for witnesses and information. It has, however, been stated by the Lord Chancellor that a Royal Commission has not in fact the power to compel witnesses to give evidence⁶; there is no difficulty in practice as persons and bodies interested in the subject of a Royal Commission are normally only too anxious to bring their views before the Commission.

Departmental committees are appointed by the minister concerned with the subject of the inquiry, by a simple letter of appointment. Where more than one department is concerned, an inter-departmental committee may be appointed jointly by the various ministers, for example, where a committee is appointed to examine in relation to Great Britain a problem which is a responsibility, so far as England and Wales are concerned, of a particular ministry confining its activity to England and Wales, and in Scotland of the equivalent department of the Scottish Office.⁷

Sometimes separate commissions and committees are appointed to consider a problem in relation to England and Wales, and in relation to Scotland. For example, the Royal Commission on the Law relating to Mental Illness and Mental Deficiency⁸ was concerned only with the position in England and Wales,

¹Cmd. 9475 (HMSO, 1955).

²Cd. 5235 (HMSO, 1910).

³Cmnd. 939 (HMSO, 1960).

⁴Cmd. 5724 (HMSO, 1938).

⁵Cmnd. 760 (HMSO, 1920).

⁶*Hansard* (House of Lords) 3.6.59, Col. 662.

⁷There are departments of the Scottish Office dealing with health, education, agriculture and fisheries, and home affairs in Scotland.

⁸Cmnd. 169 (HMSO, 1957).

and recommendations were made on the subject in Scotland, after the publication of the Royal Commission's Report, by one of the Secretary of State's standing advisory committees.¹

MEMBERSHIP

The members, including the chairman, are chosen by the Government or minister concerned. A usual number is between 9 and 15, but both smaller and larger bodies have been known. The kind of person selected depends to a great extent on the nature of the problem referred to the Commission or committee. Generally some members are chosen who are familiar with the technicalities of the subject (they do not need to be the supreme authorities, whose contribution can be made in evidence to the commission or committee) and some who, though usually they are active in some form of public life, are in the position of 'intelligent laymen' and have not previously been concerned with the problem at close quarters or made public statements on the subject.

For example, the members of the Royal Commission on Population,² appointed before the end of the second world war to investigate the facts relating to the current population trends in Great Britain, to investigate the causes of those trends and consider their probable consequences, and to consider whether any measures should be taken, in the national interest, to influence future trends, had the following members:

Lord Simon (Chairman)—lawyer and politician, member of the Departmental Committee on Street Trading, 1909,³ the Royal Commission on the Selection of Justices of the Peace, 1910,⁴ and the Royal Commission on the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and Chairman of the Indian Statutory Commission.⁵

Professor A. (later Sir Alexander) Carr-Saunders—then Director of the London School of Economics, previously Professor of Social Sciences at Liverpool University.

Sir Hubert Henderson—Economic Adviser to H.M. Treasury, formerly University Lecturer in Economics at the University of Cambridge, member of the West India Royal Commission, 1938–39.⁶

Professor A. W. M. Ellis—Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford University and Director of Research in Industrial Medicine for the Industrial Research Council.

Mrs. E. Cassie—formerly senior assistant Medical Officer of Health for maternity and child welfare at Birmingham.

Lord Cranbrook—Deputy Regional Commissioner for Eastern Civil Defence Region and former Member of Parliament.

Lady Dollan—wife of a former Lord Provost of Glasgow.

Mr. R. C. K. (later Sir Robert) Ensor—lawyer, journalist, member of the London County Council 1910–13, Research Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

Mr. J. R. Hobhouse—partner in a Liverpool shipping firm, Regional Shipping Representative for the North West, Ministry of War Transport 1941–45.

¹*Mental Health Legislation—report by a committee appointed by the Scottish Health Services Council (HMSO, 1958).*

²Cmd. 7695 (HMSO, 1949).

³Cd. 5229 (HMSO, 1910).

⁴Cd. 5250 (HMSO, 1910).

⁵Cmd. 3568 (HMSO, 1930) and Cmd. 3569 (HMSO, 1930).

⁶Cmd. 6607 (HMSO, 1945).

Mrs. M. C. Jay—member of the London County Council.

Mrs. G. Longmoor—wife of a West Hartlepool factory worker.

Mrs. G. P. Hopkin Morris—wife of the British Broadcasting Corporation's Regional Director for Wales.

Lady Ogilvie—wife of a former Director General of the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Mrs. H. Pawson—area representative for Wales of Women's Voluntary Service.

Mr. Alfred (later Sir Alfred) Roberts—general secretary of the Association of Card Blowing and Ring-room Operatives (i.e. a cotton workers' union).

Mr. W. D. Robieson, editor of the *Glasgow Herald*.

Thus the commission brought together medical and economic experts, journalists, lawyers, people acquainted with local and central government, people from the employers' and the employees' side of industry, people familiar with Wales and Scotland as well as England, and people with experience of commission and departmental committee work, and it included seven married women.

Commissions and committees do not necessarily include Members of Parliament. Particular Members of Parliament may be appointed because they have a non-political qualification relevant to the Commission's work, but they may also be appointed for the sake of their political experience, in which case it is usual for members from each major party to be included, for example, the Indian Statutory Commission included members from both Houses of Parliament who between them represented the Conservative, Liberal and Labour parties. Although officials who are still serving may be appointed to membership of Royal Commissions, it is more usual to appoint a retired official if it is desired to have the benefit of an administrator's experience, thus avoiding any conflict of loyalties.

The chairman is a very important member of commissions and committees, who normally sets the tone of the meetings and guides the members on the procedure to be adopted (there is no standard prescribed form of procedure but a general pattern is discernible, see below). He or she is appointed as such, not elected by the members from among themselves. Often a commission comes to be known by his name: there are numerous examples in this paper. The chairman is not so often a person with expert knowledge of the subject under review as one who may be expected to have a good capacity for mastering and marshalling the facts on any subject which comes before him—a lawyer or judge, e.g., Judge Holman Gregory, Chairman of the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance,¹ or Lord Alness (of the Scottish Court of Session), Chairman of the Committee on Grants to Scottish Universities,² or a university figure, e.g., Sir Raymond Priestley of the Priestley Commission, who was Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University from 1938 to 1953, the year the Commission was appointed.

Service on a Royal Commission or a committee is part-time. The members fit in their meetings and reading of papers with their own normal business. In the nature of the work, full-time activity over a short period would not be practicable. For example, as described later, time must be allowed to elapse while individuals and organisations which have information or opinions to put before the committee are preparing their submissions. As well as being part-time, service is unpaid, but out-of-pocket expenses are broadly met by means of subsistence allowances paid by the Treasury on the scale appropriate to senior civil servants, and fares are paid for travel in connection with the commission's or committee's work.

¹Cmd. 3872 (HMSO, 1931) and Cmd. 4185 (HMSO, 1932).

²Cmd. 5735 (HMSO, 1938).

SECRETARIAT

When a commission or committee is appointed, a secretariat is also set up to maintain the papers, conduct the correspondence, and generally assist the commission or committee in its business. The members of the secretariat, a secretary and clerical and typing staff, are generally drawn from an appropriate sector of the Civil Service, for example, the Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration was lent its secretariat for the duration of its work by the Ministry of Health and the Department of Health for Scotland. This commission had joint secretaries, one from each of the two departments. There is not a standing corps of specialised secretaries; the possible advantages are outweighed by the usefulness of having secretaries borrowed directly from practical administration and conversant with the subject-matter of their own departments.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference of a commission or committee are set out in the Royal Warrant or official letter appointing it, and normally take the form of a request to investigate a problem 'and make recommendations'. They are as explicit as possible, in order that the eventual report may cover all the points, and only those points, on which advice is desired. For example, the full terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Greater London Local Government¹ were to examine the present system and working of local government in the Greater London area 'defined as the Metropolitan police district, together with the City of London, the boroughs of Dartford, Romford and Watford, the urban districts of Caterham and Warlingham, Chorley Wood, Hornchurch, Rickmansworth, and Walton and Weybridge, and the parish of Watford Rural in the Watford rural district'. The commission was asked to recommend 'whether and if so what' changes in the local government structure and distribution of local authority functions in the area, 'or any part of it', would better secure effective and convenient local government. They were further instructed that for the purposes of their inquiry the term local government did not include the administration of police or of water (both of which are the concern of special bodies not controlled by the local authorities).

PROCEDURE

Once the commission or committee and its secretariat have been appointed, they can begin their work. Although there is no prescribed standard procedure it generally follows the following pattern.

The commission or committee meets to discuss its terms of reference and how it will work, what public announcements it wishes to make and, perhaps, a programme of meetings. Publicity will have been given to the original ministerial statement to Parliament that a commission or committee was being appointed, but the commission or committee now seeks to make it publicly known, by issuing a statement to the press, that it has begun work and is ready to receive written evidence. (Submissions to commissions and committees are traditionally described as 'evidence', and persons submitting them as 'witnesses', although the ordinary rules of evidence in judicial procedure do not apply and the evidence comprises opinions as well as factual information.) The commission or committee may have a memorandum prepared to be given to would-be witnesses setting out the points on which it desires help, and may decide itself to invite particular persons or organisations to submit evidence.

These preliminaries necessarily take time. A further amount of time must also elapse before evidence can be received, since organisations may need to consult local branches or subsidiary groups before their submissions can be completed. Once written evidence has begun to come in the commission or

¹Cmd. 1164 (HMSO, 1960).

committee can proceed to oral questioning of witnesses whom it wishes to call for elucidation or discussion of their evidence, and this may occupy a considerable number of meetings; the Royal Commission on Common Land¹ spent as much as 49 days on examining witnesses.

Occasionally a commission or committee concludes that available information and opinions will provide insufficient data for it to form a view, and it undertakes or sponsors the collection of new information. For example, the Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration, which had been asked to advise what should be the proper current levels of remuneration of National Health Service practitioners in the light of comparison with members of other professions and other members of the medical and dental professions, found it necessary to carry out a survey by questionnaire (executed under their instructions by the Social Survey Division of the Central Office of Information) to gather data about earnings in a number of professions not covered by the material they already had. Where appropriate, the experience of other countries is examined; for example by the Royal Commission on Electoral Systems² and the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment.³ It may also be useful for the commission or committee to make personal visits to see people or places, for example, the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment visited five other European countries and the United States of America, and saw both witnesses and penal institutions there.

Royal Commissions generally conduct the examination of oral witnesses in public sessions.⁴ Departmental and similar committees do so more seldom, although the Franks Committee on Tribunals and Enquiries⁵ did hear witnesses in public. Public sessions may be reported, and commented on, in the Press, especially the more serious journals and periodicals. Thus a process of informing and testing public opinion begins before ever a report appears; this may help the commission or committee itself in reaching its conclusions and is certainly helpful to the Government which is to receive the report.

The collection of information and opinions through evidence and any special inquiries initiated by the commission or committee fulfils part of its duty of investigation; it must then complete it by sifting and evaluating the material and proceed to its second duty of formulating recommendations, which it does in subsequent meetings.

REPORTS

The report of a commission or committee embodies both that body's findings as regards facts (presenting a succinct review of the available material and sometimes including data available nowhere else) and its conclusions. Particularly long reports may carry in addition a summary of the contents. Procedure varies but it is not uncommon for the secretariat to prepare a draft or series of drafts as a basis for discussion, one of which eventually, after amendment, becomes the report as finally published. Where the members disagree, one or more may feel obliged to submit either a minority report or a note of dissent.

The report of a Royal Commission is addressed to the Queen herself (beginning 'May it please your Majesty' and ending 'all of which we humbly submit for your Majesty's gracious consideration'); reports of other committees are made to the minister or ministers who appointed them. The report is signed by the chairman and members and, in the case of a Royal Commission, counter-

¹Cmnd. 462 (HMSO, 1958).

²Cd. 5163 (HMSO, 1910).

³Cmd. 8932 (HMSO, 1953).

⁴Unless, exceptionally, there are special circumstances in which witnesses might feel unable to speak freely if their evidence was to be reported.

⁵Cmnd. 218 (HMSO, 1957).

signed by the Secretary or Secretaries, whose help is generally acknowledged in one of the closing paragraphs. The names of bodies and persons which gave evidence are always listed at the back of the report.

When the report has been received it is normally published by the Stationery Office, traditionally bound in a blue paper cover (hence the expression 'Blue Book'), and presented to Parliament. Royal Commission reports are published 'by the Queen's Command' and are described as 'command papers', but other reports made to ministers are nowadays also usually published in this category, with the note 'presented to Parliament by the Minister of ——— by Command of Her Majesty'. The written evidence may also be published if it is thought to be of public interest, and so may transcripts of the oral evidence. An example illustrates the volume of material which may be put before a commission or committee. In connection with the Priestley Commission on the Civil Service, the Stationery Office published a factual memorandum of 179 pages, with appendixes, prepared by the Treasury, and 1,175 pages of subsequent written and oral evidence from the Treasury and various other sources. By contrast, the commission's report was contained in only 230 pages (including the appendixes).

Publication by the Stationery Office means that the report may be purchased by members of the public, and some reports have achieved a sizeable sale. The report of the departmental committee on the position of English in the English educational system,¹ described by a contemporary newspaper as 'a first rate book, full of knowledge, humaneness, and wisdom, and written—when ever it can forget that it has to be a report—as people write for their own delight and the eyes of those of their friends who can tell good writing from bad',² sold out of several editions in a fortnight. More recently, the Reports of the Royal Commissions on Capital Punishment, the Press,³ Mental Health, and Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration all had considerable sales (over 6,000 copies). Royal Commission reports are bought as much for their value as compendious surveys of the facts on a particular topic as for their proposals for change and reform.

Most reports also receive publicity from press, radio and television, and thus their contents reach a wider public than Members of Parliament and those organisations and members of the public interested enough to buy copies.

TIME TAKEN

The time taken by commissions and committees to report varies. The collection of evidence must inevitably take time, if witnesses are to be given a fair opportunity to prepare a considered submission and their evidence to be properly evaluated. Because members serve part time, meetings cannot be held too frequently, and members' other engagements limit the possible dates. Fixing an early date for a meeting is even more difficult when the convenience of witnesses has also to be considered. Furthermore, a commission or committee is appointed not to give 'snap decisions' but in order to obtain a report based on thorough and deliberate examination and mature reflection. Out of 42 commissions and committees on social and economic subjects appointed later than November 1954 which had reported by March 1958, 15 took under a year, another 14 reported within two years, and the longest time taken was 3½ years; none of those appointed after November 1954 which had not reported by March 1958 had been in existence for more than 1½ years.⁴

¹*The Teaching of English in England* (HMSO, 1921).

²*The Manchester Guardian*, 5th November, 1921.

³Cmd. 7700 (HMSO, 1949).

⁴*Hansard* 3.3.60, Col. 170.

COST

The cost of a commission or committee is published in the report. It includes payments to members and also to witnesses for fares and expenses, the salaries of the secretariat, and the cost of printing and publishing the report and any records of the evidence submitted. The duration of the commission or committee inevitably affects the cost, and the cost may be increased by expenditure on any special investigation. For example, the Albemarle Committee¹ took 11 months and produced a Report of 136 pages; the cost was £2,225. On the other hand, the Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration spent 35 months, commissioned a special survey into earnings in various professions, and produced a report of 339 pages; extensive minutes of evidence were also published. The Commission cost £36,991.

IMPLEMENTATION OF REPORTS

What happens after a report has been published depends on many factors, including the reaction of public opinion. Sometimes a report constitutes the end of a debate; it contains all the relevant facts and its recommendations amount to an acceptable proposal or compromise. The report on the Remuneration of Doctors and Dentists, for example, constituted an acceptable basis for negotiation between the Government and the medical and dental professions, though they did not agree with all that was in it, and talks followed leading to a pay settlement. Three reports, those of the Barlow Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population,² which had to be put aside during the second world war, the Scott Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas³ and the Uthwatt Committee on Compensation and Betterment⁴ which were active during the war, form the basis of post-war British town and country planning. A report that was acted on very swiftly was that of the Royal Commission on the University of Durham. It appeared in January 1935 and the recommendations had become law by the following August. Recent statutes that have been based on the recommendations of a commission or committee whose report met general approval include the Mental Health Act, 1959 (following the *Report of the Royal Commission on the law relating to Mental Illness and Mental Deficiency* of 1957), which marks a milestone in the promotion of mental health in England and Wales, and the Charities Act, 1960 (following the *Report of the Committee on the Law and Practice relating to Charitable Trusts*⁵), which replaced a complex of complicated and obsolescent statutes by a clear legislative framework for the operation of charities under modern conditions. Sometimes the work of a commission or committee constitutes only a phase in the history of a controversy, and its contents provide ammunition for different parties in further debates. For example, the report of the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment was precluded by the terms of reference from considering total abolition of capital punishment, but some of the information in it was used by opponents of capital punishment in subsequent continuing arguments with supporters. Again, the report of a commission or committee may open a debate. An instance is the first part of the report of the Wolfenden Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution,⁶ which recommended the repeal of the law under which homosexual acts between consenting adult males in private are criminal offences. This was a subject on which people in general had been reticent or indeed ignorant, and the committee's

¹*Report on the Youth Service in England and Wales*. Cmnd. 929 (HMSO, 1960).

²Cmnd. 6153 (HMSO, 1940).

³Cmnd. 6378 (HMSO, 1942).

⁴Cmnd. 6386 (HMSO, 1942).

⁵Cmnd. 8710 (HMSO, 1952).

⁶Cmnd. 247 (HMSO, 1957).

recommendations on the subject amounted to the first full-scale public discussion and objective presentation of facts. They have been debated in Parliament and widely commented on in the press, and further writings on the subject have appeared since, and the Government has announced that it is deferring action on this section of the report until public opinion has had time to inform itself further and reach considered conclusions.

The charge is sometimes made that the Government appoints a commission or committee to avoid the necessity for decision or action on a contentious issue. While it is true that some recommendations may not be directly implemented, this is not necessarily a reflection on the commission or committee, the Government which appointed it, or the system; the exploration of facts in the published report and the part it plays in the formulation of public opinion may well be as important as its recommendations.

LIST OF ROYAL COMMISSIONS SINCE THE SECOND WORLD WAR

Appointed	Subject	Chairman	Reports
1944	Population	first: Lord Simon second: Sir Hubert Henderson	1949 Cmd. 7695 Cmd. 7832 1953 Cmd. 8743 1956 final: Cmd. 9744
1946	Justices of the Peace	Lord du Parcq	1948 Cmd. 7463
1946	Awards to Inventors	Sir Lionel Cohen	1948 Cmd. 7586
1947	Press	Sir William Ross	1949 Cmd. 7700
1949	Betting, Lotteries and Gaming	Mr. (now Sir Henry) Willink	1951 Cmd. 8190
1949	Capital Punishment	Sir Ernest Gowers	1953 Cmd. 8932
1951	Marriage and Divorce	Lord Morton of Henryton	1955 Cmd. 9678
1951	Taxation of Profits and Income	first: Lord Justice Cohen second: Lord Radcliffe	1953 Cmd. 8761 1954 Cmd. 9105 1955 final: Cmd. 9474
1952	East Africa	Sir Hugh Dow	1955 Cmd. 9475
1953	Scottish Affairs	The Earl of Balfour	1954 Cmd. 9212
1953	Civil Service	Sir Raymond Priestley	1955 Cmd. 9613
1954	Mental Illness and Mental Deficiency	Lord Percy of Newcastle	1957 Cmd. 169

List of Royal Commissions Since the Second World War—*continued*

Appointed	Subject	Chairman	Reports
1955	Common Land	Sir Ivor Jennings	1958 Cmnd. 462
1957	Doctors' & Dentists' Remuneration	Sir Harry Pilkington	1960 Cmnd. 939
1957	Local Government in Greater London	Sir Edwin Herbert	1960 Cmnd. 1164
1960	Police	Sir Henry Willink	still sitting

READING LIST

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|--|------|----------|
| CLOKIE, H. M. D., and ROBINSON, J. W. Royal Commissions of Enquiry: the significance of investigations in British politics.
<i>Stanford UP/OUP</i> | 1937 | 24s. 0d. |
| COLE, A. H. Finding List of Royal Commission Reports in the British Dominions; with an introductory essay by H. M. D. Clokie.
<i>Harvard UP/OUP</i> | 1939 | 6s. 6d. |
| GABINE, B. L. Finding List of British Royal Commission Reports, 1860 to 1935; with a preface by A. H. Cole.
<i>Harvard UP/OUP</i> | 1935 | 6s. 6d. |
| HERBERT, A. P. Anything but Action? (A criticism of the system.)
<i>Institute of Economic Affairs</i> | 1960 | 3s. 6d. |
| JACKSON, R. M. Royal Commissions and Committees of Enquiry—article in <i>The Listener</i> for 12.4.1956.
<i>BBC</i> | 1956 | 4d. |
| VERNON, R. V., and MANSENGH, N. (Ed.). Advisory Bodies—A study of their uses in relation to Central Government, 1919-39.
<i>Allen & Unwin</i> | 1940 | 18s. 0d. |
| WHEARE, K. C. Government by Committee. <i>Clarendon Press</i> | 1955 | 25s. 0d. |
| Royal Commissions 1936-59. Sectional List No. 59. <i>HMSO</i> | 1959 | unpriced |



