

136. When was the first occasion that you found a difficulty in getting flour?—As soon as the combination started.

137. You told me just now that you did not know when it started?—I do not know when it started, because it was not publicly announced.

138. Was it not publicly announced when the Bakers' Union was started?—Well, one concerned me and the other did not.

139. The Bakers' Union did not concern you?—No.

140. Can you give me approximately the dates when you say that you were refused those brands of flour?—Not from memory.

141. Was it last year, the year before, or the year before that?—It was the year the association started.

142. It would be some time in 1901?—Yes.

JAMES GIFFORD LAURENSEN examined. (No. 9.)

143. *The Chairman.*] You are a baker, residing in Roslyn, Dunedin?—Yes.

144. *Mr. Loughnan.*] You are president of the Master Bakers' Union of Dunedin?—Yes.

145. For how long have you been in that position?—For three or four years.

146. You have had transactions, negotiations, and correspondence with Steven and Co. relative to members of your union getting some of their supplies from that firm?—Yes.

147. Are there any occasions upon which the Master Bakers' Union have had to prevent members of its association taking flour from Steven and Co.?—Yes.

148. Will you tell me the first occasion when that took place?—Immediately after Steven and Co. withdrew from the Flour-millers' Association.

149. That was in March of this year?—That is so.

150. Will you be good enough to tell me the reasons that resulted in your union refusing to take flour from Steven and Co.?—Certainly. The day after Steven and Co. withdrew from the Flour-millers' Association they committed a distinct breach of our rules—that is, Rule 24 of our registered rules, which prevented any member of our union doing business with them.

151. What was the breach?—They supplied a man who was cutting our prices.

152. Did you notify to them the decision of your union on the subject?—They were aware of it. They told us they were quite prepared to abide by the consequences.

153. Then followed a letter which we have had in writing by your association on the 10th March, telling them that your members were free and were prepared to be supplied by them?—Yes; that was in reply to a threatening letter saying what was going to be done to us. They sent a very threatening letter saying that they were going to start a bakery against us, and would bring us to our knees and make us lick the dust.

154. Was that in writing?—No.

155. When did they say that?—Mr. Dall told several of our members that they were going to bring us to our knees.

156. Then you wrote to say—the letter is already in—that the union was untrammelled and would deal with them?—Yes.

157. The next communication is in August, when you had occasion to pass a resolution setting out the terms on which you were prepared to deal with Steven and Co.?—Yes.

158. The necessity for that resolution was some complaint contained in a letter from Steven and Co. to your union, because they did not get a fair share of your business?—That is so.

159. Will you, please, as far as you know them—not as a matter connected with the union's action—give me the reasons adduced by the bakers, or some of them, in Dunedin to deal less with Steven and Co. than with the association?—In the first place, the firm made themselves unpopular. They simply tried to bully us into doing business with them, and, of course, that is a very unpopular way of getting business.

160. Secondly?—Their salesman, Mr. Dall, is very unpopular. In fact, some of our members to-day will not take a pound of flour from that firm while he remains connected with it. We, as a union, cannot control our members and say that they must take flour from Steven and Co., while Steven and Co. look to the executive of the union to do the business for them. We say that we cannot do that unless they are willing to give us 2½ per cent. As a matter of fact, I told the representative repeatedly that he did not solicit business in the proper manner. He went round to a man once, and because he did not get orders he came to the conclusion that his firm was being boycotted. Well, of course, a man does not buy flour every day in the week, and Mr. Dall ought to have been prepared to receive refusals.

161. In addition to the first reason you gave us—that of supplying cutting bakers, and also the unpopularity of their representative—have you any other reason to offer?—Another reason why our members did not do business with them is this: that we found it more convenient to do business with the association. I sometimes buy 25 tons of flour at a time, because there are certain concessions given. I ring up the association's office, and they ask what I want. I say 4, 5, or 6 tons of So-and-so's flour of different brands, and it is sent. I receive my account, covering all the brands I have ordered, and give my cheque. Another reason is that with the association we do not have travellers coming round to us every day. The association does not do that, and it is far better to have one man coming round occasionally than to have half a dozen men bothering you from time to time.

162. You put these reasons forward as accounting for Steven and Co. not getting more of the Dunedin bakers' trade?—Yes.

163. Is there any arrangement—written, verbal, or implied—between the Flour-millers' Association and your union under which you are limited or restricted in your dealings with Steven and Co.?—Not the slightest, so long as they comply with Rule 24 of our registered rules.