

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

TUESDAY, 6TH OCTOBER, 1903.

GEORGE JAMESON examined. (No. 1.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—General manager of the New Zealand Flour-millers' Association.

2. Resident in Christchurch?—Yes.

3. *Mr. Taylor.*] Have you been connected with the Flour-millers' Association since its inception?

Mr. Hall (on behalf of the association): I would just like to ask whether Mr. Taylor's charges before the Committee are in harmony with the order of reference. I should like the Committee's opinion on that point. The order of reference is solely confined to the action or relation between the Flour-millers' Association and the Lyttelton bread-supply, and I do not think it can be said that Mr. Taylor's charges are in harmony with it. So far as the Flour-millers' Association is concerned it has no desire to burk the inquiry at all, and it would prefer to have the fullest investigation into its operations, but it would probably be fit and proper at this point, seeing that the inquiry hinges upon certain statements with regard to the Lyttelton bread-supply, that Mr. Taylor should be asked to substantiate his statements and bring his evidence before you for your consideration.

The Chairman: There are three distinct charges in the order of reference—(1) The connection, of any kind or nature, with Christchurch or Lyttelton bakers; (2) Has the association anything to do with the price of bread? and (3) Are all the bakers treated alike?

Mr. Taylor: It seems to me that the position is that the operations of the Flour-millers' Association, with their methods generally, are involved in the points raised by the discussion in the House, and that it was not so much the exact words of the telegram that were referred to the Committee for investigation, but rather the whole question of this particular organization and its methods, and their effect upon the trade of flour-milling. If this is to be an inquiry into the exact words and terms of that particular telegram, I may say at once that I consider my time and the time of the Committee will be wasted. If, on the other hand, the inquiry in the public interests is to go into the constitution of this association I am prepared to go on.

(After further discussion as to the necessity for application being made to the House for an extension of the order of reference, the examination of Mr. Jameson was continued.)

4. *Mr. Taylor* (to witness).] On what date was the Flour-millers' Association formed?—On the 1st March, 1901.

5. When did you join the association?—Not until September of that year.

6. Who was in charge of the association from March until that date?—Mr. Thomas Meek, who was managing director.

7. Have you a copy of the agreement connected with the association which each miller on joining had to sign?—Yes.

8. Is that the form of agreement [produced, and handed to witness]?—Yes.

9. Is that the agreement the associated millers are now working under?—No.

10. There is a new agreement?—Yes; this is the old agreement [marked A]. There was a new agreement made afterwards [produced, and marked B].

11. What clauses have been amended in the new agreement?—There are several alterations, all of them more or less of a minor character. The general agreement is precisely as it was before.

12. Why was the amended agreement issued—for what reason?—So that it would be more workable.

13. Is clause 3 the same as it is in the new agreement?—Yes.

14. Is the preamble the same?—Yes; I do not think there is the alteration of a word, but there may be little alterations all through the agreement.

15. Is there any alteration in section 7?—Yes, there is a little alteration there.

16. What is the nature of the alteration?—It is practically the same. It says, "The general manager of the association for the time being, after consultation with each director, and with the consent in writing or by telegram of a majority of the directors, or with the sanction of a resolution of the board of directors, shall from time to time fix the prices at which flour shall be supplied to and purchased by the association, in manner aforesaid, in each of the towns or districts in which any associated mill or mills shall be situated; and in fixing the price in each town or district the cost of wheat and other matters that ought reasonably to be taken into consideration shall be considered so that as nearly as possible the price payable to each mill-owner shall be fixed on an equitable basis as between the mill-owners who are members of the association. When there is more than one associated mill in any such town or district the general manager shall apportion the local trade rateably between the said mills according to the fixed capacity of each such mill, provided that, where the directors have reasonable grounds for believing that any mill-owner or mill-owners is or are obtaining an undue advantage in any such town or district over other mill-owners in the same town or district in consequence of the value of such local trade or otherwise, they may adjust the same in such manner as they consider fair and equitable. This proviso shall apply whether or not there is more than one associated mill in any such town or district as aforesaid. After giving each mill its proportion of local trade as aforesaid the balance of the said mills proportionate monthly quantity shall be sold for shipment, and in the event of a difficulty being found in disposing of the said balance on account of the brand being unknown by buyers a reduction may be made by the directors in the price until the flour is introduced and approved of by buyers, and any such reduc-