90. In the meantime you yourselves put up your figure. Instead of being able to buy at 12s., how much would the retailer pay ?—12s. 9d. ; and that price is for 6-gross parcels.

91. Do I understand you to say that the chemists prefer to keep your baby-powder in the cellar rather than to sell it when they cannot get more than $16\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. ?—No, that was not inferred ; but the price at which that line was being sold was 1s.

92. In general terms, did you find, in effect, that the chemists declined to take your goods because they could not get the margin of profit they wanted ?—They could only get a margin of profit which we recognized as reasonable.

93. And the margin of profit they wanted ?—Exactly.

94. It was a larger profit than what you term the "cut-throat" trade was getting ?—The cut-throat man was not getting any profit.

Mr. Collins : I think you are at cross-purposes—that is to say, Mr. Page is thinking of Invercargill and you are thinking of Macduff's.

95. *Mr. Kennedy* (to witness).] May I take it from you that the chemists were not buying from you because under the conditions of the market they were not able to get the profit they wanted ? —They were not able to compete with the cut-rate shops.

96. So that it was through the non-purchasing of the chemists that your sales went down ?—It was not only by the chemists.

97. Well, then, chiefly by the chemists ?—Partly by the chemists. Every storekeeper, however little, fancy-goods or otherwise, stocks our powder.

98. Do the chemists require a larger profit than the grocer ?—I cannot say.

99. You have given certain instances of increases, and you show an increase during the last six months, since your scheme came into operation ?—Yes.

100. I suppose when it became known that you had a price-fixation scheme in force large stocks of your baby-powder were purchased ?—That is so.

101. Are you aware that in Wellington during the period when you say you had increased sales practically all the stock of baby-powder here was purchased, so that wholesalers had to refuse orders ?—That is not so. We knew the stocks they had right through the period.

102. Would you be surprised to know that Macduff's bought in Wellington when your fixation scheme was started every bit of baby-powder they could get their hands on ?—That is not so. I know that is contrary to fact.

103. I suppose, also, when your price-fixation scheme came into operation the chemists who had boycotted your line because it did not give a large enough profit would be replacing, would they not ?—Quite likely.

104. So that to test the accuracy of your figures we will have to go over another six months ? Perhaps so ; it does not take six months to do that.

105. However, these factors which I have mentioned, if you assume the correctness of my facts, would put up the sales for this period that you have increased sales ?—You say so.

106. *Mr. O'Leary.*] In the course of your travels throughout New Zealand did you find any chemist who indulged in this pernicious policy of price-cutting ?—Yes.

107. How many?—I cannot say offhand how many. The balance asked us either to meet the competition in this particular line that was being cut by the cut-rate people or they would take this line off their shelves.

108. What proportion would you give us ?—I could not give you the proportion.

109. Could you give me any number, because I am interested to know, due to the fact that there are five chemists who have not joined up with the P.A.T.A. Do you think the number would be five ?—I do not think so. If you let me know those chemists who stood out of the P.A.T.A. I will tell you whether they are the price-cutters or not.

110. In a general way the chemist is not a price-cutter ?—That is so.

111. *Mr. Myers.*] If a person buys an article like yours at 12s. 9d. per dozen how much would he have to take ?—He must take a gross before he could get the article.

112. If he sells it at 1s. 2d. is he making a profit equal to his overhead expenses ?—I should not think so.

113. Even assuming the most advantageous circumstances in favour of the trader ?—I should say not.

114. It was suggested to you that possibly it might require a longer period than six months to ascertain as to whether or not your price-fixation is effective—what do you say to that ?—We are nearly two months in the price-fixing scheme and our sales are most satisfactory this year.

115. Just so ; and the chemists are selling the article ?—When it is asked for.

116. *Mr. Reardon.*] I would like to ask this question, Mr. Page : Supposing a firm such as, for instance, Hart or any of those firms had an agent in London, would it not be possible for him or them to buy this powder at a lower price than what it could be purchased here ?—By the time they paid their duty and other charges involved it would bring it to a higher price than they could purchase it for here.

117. Supposing they could buy this article from the manufacturer in London and land it in New Zealand and put it on the market at a price that was returning them a fair margin of profit, would you say that that is unfair to the other traders ?—They could not do it that way.

118. I know they could not. Supposing the manufacturer did not know that the article was intended for New Zealand ?—Even though the manufacturer did not know to what part it was going they could not bring it here at a price to enable them to sell it at the same price that we could. In that respect we are giving the New Zealand consumers the advantage.

119. It would take the difference between 8s. and 13s. to pay the cost of carriage, &c., between England and New Zealand ?—Yes, after duty, freight, &c., are paid.