

16. Supposing that all the proprietary articles came under the P.A.T.A. how would it affect your business?—I could cut about 50 per cent. off my business.

17. If the P.A.T.A. comes into operation it forces you to discontinue that part of the business?—It means forcing me out of business eventually.

18. Unless you agree to their retail prices?—Yes.

19. *Mr. Myers.*] How long have you been in business as a grocer on your own account?—On my own account I have been in business eight years.

20. And what length of time at Oamaru?—Four years and a half.

21. As a cash grocer, that is, how long have you been running this cash business on your own account?—Three and a half years.

22. Would you mind telling me what is your turnover?—I came here quite unprepared, but I will post particulars up if you like. My last balance-sheet will show that my turnover was somewhat over

23. How many men do you employ?—I have one man, my own daughter, and my father-in-law.

24. How much a week do you pay your father-in-law?—He is seventy-five years of age, and is unable to obtain a pension, and I am giving him £2 10s. per week and keeping him. My daughter is getting £1 15s. per week, and my man receives £4 15s. per week.

25. What do you allow for your own expenses?—£4 5s.

26. What is your rent?—£5. 4s., including rates and taxes.

27. Have you an auditor who inspects your balance-sheet?—Yes.

28. Would you mind telling me what is your percentage of gross profit?—My gross profit runs out at 12½ per cent.

29. Over all?—Yes.

30. Do you issue a price-list?—No, just through the ordinary advertisements.

31. Your business is for the most part a cash-and-carry business?—Yes.

32. And I suppose the people take their goods away?—Yes, small lots and large ones.

33. I suppose there is very little of it done for £2 10s. lots?—I have had orders up to £50. I may say that I do a fair amount of business with the farming community, and they are not small items.

34. I take it that your business is done with people who come in and take their goods away?—Yes.

35. Do you stock any baby-powder?—Yes, I have two or three different kinds of baby-powder. I cannot get stocks of Johnson's.

36. But you sell other baby-powders?—Yes.

37. In any case, those sort of lines are not often asked for?—No, it is not a big sale with me.

38. You could well afford to buy an article and sell it at 1s.?—I am not in the habit of selling below cost.

39. You stock Bell tea?—Yes.

40. What do you sell it at?—3s. 2d.

41. What does it cost you?—2s. 10d., less 5 and 2½ per cent.

42. What is the fixed price?—3s. 2d.

43. So you do undersell, then?—No, I do not undersell other people. We have retailers down there who give 6 per cent. reduction. They take an order, say, on the 25th February and it is delivered, and the order is paid for in April. If you work out the percentage on that you will find who is the cutting man.

44. However, you sell a pound of that tea at 3s. 2d.?—Yes.

45. From whom do you buy that tea?—From the agent in Otago.

46. Who is he?—

47. Do you buy Amber Tips tea?—Yes; it is the same price—namely, 3s. 2d.

48. From whom do you get that tea?—It comes from

49. Do you sell any tea that you put up in your own packets?—Yes.

50. What do you pay for it?—I blend my own tea myself. I may say that one line will cost me perhaps 1s. 8d., another 2s. 1d., and another 2s. 5d.

51. And you sell tea up to what price?—3s.

52. You do not sell much Amber Tips or Bell tea?—No. Of course, I sell my share with the quantities that are going.

53. But you sell a great deal more of your own blended tea?—I suppose I do. I sell about the same proportion of bulk tea as I sell proprietary tea.

54. I understood you to say that you sold more of your own tea than the others: do you wish to withdraw that statement?—Yes, I withdraw that statement.

55. Because you saw what I was driving at, you want to withdraw your previous statement. However, do you stock such lines as Kolynos?—Yes.

56. What do you charge for a tube?—1s. 5d.

57. What do you pay for it?—14s. 6d. per dozen. Of course, it depends on the quantities you buy. I am not a big buyer of those lines.

58. Do you deal much in proprietary lines?—I handle a few of them, but not a great lot. I suppose 10 per cent. of my business might be proprietary lines.

59. What do you mean by that?—I mean proprietary lines such as syrup of figs and sundry other things—Johnson's baby-powder.

60. Which you do not stock. On the average, how much per week do you think you would take so far as those proprietary lines are concerned?—It is a hard thing to say.

61. I want to find out if I can—I am speaking now with respect to the turnover?—It is a hard thing to say, because I do not section my business to that extent. I suppose if I went into details I could tell you.