46. Do you know a soap called Velvet soap ?—Yes.
47. Where is that soap made ?—In Christchurch.
48. Is that a line on which cutters have been at work ?—Yes, for a long time.
49. In consequence of that, do you stock it ?—No.
50. By reason of the cutting ?—Yes, It is cut by everybody.
51. Do you stock another line of soap, which you try to sell to the public in substitution for ——— soap ?—Yes, a brand that is called ——— soap.
52. Do you get many people coming in for Velvet soap ?—Yes.
53. What do you do ?—We try and introduce the other soap.
53A. Are you successful or otherwise ?—Yes. It is a good article.
54. The people go in for ——— soap and they get ——— soap ?—Yes.
55. We will now take granose biscuits : do you stock them ?—Yes.
56. Why do you stock them ?—It is a line that is asked for.
57. Is that a cut line ?—Yes.
58. What do you sell it at ?—11½d.
59. There is another line that has come in ?—Yes.
60. What is the name of that line ?—It is called the Weet Bix.
61. Are you stocking that line now ?—Yes.
62. Are you selling any of it ?—Yes.
63. The people who come in and ask for granose biscuits are told what ?—We introduce it in front of granose.
64. I suppose you get a profit on it ?—Yes, we sell it at 1s. 2d., as against granose 11½d.
65. What does it cost you ?—11s. 6d. per dozen.
66. You stock Bell tea, do you not ?—Yes.
67. What price do you get for that tea ?—2s. 11d. per pound.
68. It costs what ?—2s. 10d.
69. Do you sell Amber Tips tea ?—Yes, at 2s. 11d.
70. Why do you sell those two classes of tea at that price ?—To meet the competition, as before. In other words, the other people are selling it at 2s. 11d.
71. To whom do you refer particularly ?—Self-help, and, I think, almost all the grocers now.
72. Somebody has to start cutting on those lines ?—Yes.
73. Do you know who started it first ?—I think it was ———. The ——— stores were 3s. for a long time, and ——— came down to 2s. 11d. I think it was ——— who actually started selling it at 2s. 11d.
74. After that, do you know who started cutting the line ?—Self-help.
75. Do you pack any tea yourself ?—Yes.
76. Do you buy it in bulk and pack it yourselves ?—Yes.
77. Do you buy more than one quality ?—Yes.
78. What is the price of your best quality ?—2s. per pound.
79. And what do you sell it at ?—2s. 10d.
80. Suppose you were getting 3s. 4d. for Bell tea, could you sell your own packed tea at less than 2s. 10d. ?—Yes, we could afford to, certainly.
81. Which kind of tea do you sell in preference—that is, Amber Tips, Bell tea, or your own tea ?—Our own.
82. Supposing a customer comes in for Amber Tips and Bell tea, what do you try to do ?—I may say that it does not do to push these things in all cases, but if you get a slight opening you try to sell your own lines.
83. Do you succeed in some cases ?—Yes, in quite a lot of cases.
84. You would have to do that to make the business pay ?—That is so ; but you cannot do that when people want Bell tea particularly ; but you can do that wherever you can.
85. Do you sell a line such as Clements' tonic ?—No.
86. Why do you not stock it ?—It is sold at 2s. 6d., and I cannot buy it at that wholesale. The general merchants want 32s. 6d. per dozen for it.
87. We all know that if you cannot get a profit on one line you have to get it on others to make up your overhead expenses ?—Yes.
88. The lines on which you make it up are called recovery lines, or come-backs ?—Yes.
89. What are your best recovery lines ?—Cheese, flour, amd currants.
90. Salt ?—Yes, and soda.
91. Washing-soda ?—Yes ; bulk vinegar, kerosene, &c.
92. You have not mentioned sugar : is that one ?—Sugar is not altogether a good line.
93. The articles which you have mentioned are articles which everybody uses ?—Yes.
94. Can we take it that if you were able to sell proprietary lines at a fair and reasonable profit you could give corresponding benefits on the sale of the articles which you now refer to as recovery lines ?—Yes, we could sell them at a lot cheaper.
95. Until the cutting commenced you had in view what was a good profit on any line : what was that ?—A profit of about 18 per cent. to 20 per cent.
96. On turnover ?—Yes.
97. Is that over all ?—Yes.
98. Well, in view of the cutting, what is the effect upon a number of lines on which you used to be satisfied with a lower margin of profit ?—You have to increase them any way you can without being noticed.
99. Do you stock Kolynos ?—Yes.