

178. The proprietary tea, according to what you say, is sold in bigger quantities by your firm than the tea made up by you in packets?—Yes.

179. I judge from your evidence that you think the position to-day in regard to cut prices is most extreme?—Yes.

180. Worse than it was, say, three years ago?—I think so.

181. Despite the fact that ——— and the cut-rate stores are in close proximity to your premises, you have been able to maintain your position?—We are still able to make a living.

Examination of CHARLES JAMES STAUNTON-VERE BURBERY continued. (No. 11.)

1. *Mr. Gresson.*] I notice in the analysis you gave in 1924 you show proprietary medicine 8 per cent.: what class of medicine would that be?—Cough-medicine and such things as that.

2. Are you in favour of the P.A.T.A.?—Certainly.

3. If you come into the P.A.T.A. you will have to register those articles with them?—No.

4. Why not?—They are too small, and are not sold outside our own business.

5. Do you realize that if you go into the P.A.T.A. place and ask for a P.A.T.A. article you have no right to endeavour to sell to the customer an article of your own that is not on the P.A.T.A. list?—That is the principle of substitution.

6. Do you realize that?—Certainly I do.

7. I will accept that?—Except, as a chemist, I am asked to prepare something else.

8. What do you mean by that?—Say for argument's sake you come in for Baxter's and I do not stock it, and you say, "Will you make me up something?" I would be able to do it.

9. You consider that you have the right to do that if you join up with the P.A.T.A.?—Certainly.

10. You realize that if I were to go into your shop and say to you, "I want a bottle of Baxter's lung-preserver," you have no right to say, "I have a better article here?"—That is foolish business.

11. You realize you have not the right to say that to the customer?—Certainly I do.

12. *Mr. Kennedy.*] You are not the only chemist in your particular locality?—No; there are two now.

13. I suppose you are able to do the prescription-work for the whole district?—Yes.

14. I suppose the same thing happens in other parts of New Zealand—that is, there are two men to-day where one of them might do?—The same thing applies to doctors and all the professions to-day.

15. Do you agree that it applies a very great deal more to your profession?—At the present time, yes.

16. There has been a very large increase in numbers in recent years?—Yes, there has been quite a number of them. I cannot say the average increase.

17. I suppose it is because there are so many that you cannot make a sufficient return out of prescriptions and you are seeking other lines?—No; I beg to differ from you. Our business is different.

18. Do you wish the Committee to understand that you would like to have certain articles restricted to chemists?—That is how it should be—that is to say, patent medicine and things of that nature.

19. I take it you will agree that a grocer is in a position to carry on the sale of certain proprietary lines and requires a smaller profit than you do?—If I were to sell his tea, for instance, I could sell it cheaper than he could, for that matter. I used to sell tea and other things like the best of them. I may say that a lot of these things are sold in order to advertise other lines. On the occasion I refer to, when I was selling various lines, I was stopped from doing so by the Labour Department because I kept open after the grocers had closed, and if I wanted to retain my privilege as a chemist to remain open on a Saturday or Sunday I had to discontinue selling the articles I have mentioned, but if I wanted to sell grocery articles I had to shut and open at the same time as the grocers.

20. Then, there is no complaint from you because there is price-cutting by reason of the fact that as a chemist you could undersell him in his own line?—We cannot sell those articles at all, but I say if we were we could pick the eyes out of it the same as they are doing.

21. Did you undersell the grocers in the things you mentioned?—Of course I did. When the question was brought up in regard to the sale of the face-cream mentioned by a cutter in Willis Street, I forgot to mention that the face-cream which was sold for 2s. was brought by them at 8d.

22. *Mr. Hayward.*] I did not quite understand you when you were asked a question of what percentage of your takings were consumed by your overhead expenses, and you said 25 per cent. on cost and 33½ on returns?—I may say that 25 per cent. on return is 33½ on cost.

23. You cannot take overhead except on anything but returns. The question was, What percentage of your turnover is consumed in rent and your general expenses of running the business?—My rent is not as bad as a lot of other people.

24. The question as you answered it has conveyed nothing?—When talking to a chemist yesterday he said that the cost of doing business was 40 per cent. on turnover.

25. What is yours?—Mine would be 33.

26. That is, one-third of your takings is consumed in your expenses?—Yes; I cannot give you actual figures; that is worked out in proportion. I could give you details later on that probably cover this point.

27. Will you send that information in?—Very well.

28. *Mr. Myers.*] The 33 per cent. includes a wage to yourself at £6 per week?—That is tabulated out in that particular return.

29. *Mr. Reardon.*] You take shop cost, so you pay interest probably on a mortgage?—What Mr. Myers has is a detailed list worked out for 1923.

30. *Mr. Myers.*] It comes to over 30, from what I can make it. You cannot include depreciation?—That is so.