

46. There is not so much cutting in the wine and spirit line ?—There is a bit there, too.
47. You said that you have got on fairly well ?—Yes.
- 47A. Would you be able to cover yourself to that extent without the wine and spirit branch ?—
I do not think that I could.
48. *Mr. Collins.*] How many employees have you got in the grocery business ?—Four and my son.
49. Is he an employee ?—Yes, he receives his wages.
50. Would you be in favour of the extension of fixation of prices to proprietary lines ?—Not to a great extent.
51. Why ?—Because of the Act, and because we do not want to be unfair or to raise the cost of living any more than we can help. Our aims are to give good service and to sell as cheaply as possible.
52. You admit that price-fixation may increase the cost of living : that is a fair deduction to be taken from your answer ?—I do not admit that.
53. Can you suggest any remedy to prevent cutting proprietary lines other than the fixation of prices ?—I cannot see any.
54. Has your business been progressive during the last ten years ?—It has grown slowly.
55. Do you endorse the opinion expressed by the secretary of your association, Mr. Barker, that the loss in bad debts throughout the Dominion would not exceed $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. ?—I do not know about others, but we do not go over that.
56. Do you give any concession to a cash customer as against a customer who has a monthly account ?—They get $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. discount.
57. Do you treat them on the same basis ?—Yes.
58. Do you suggest that the average customer gets just as fair a deal from you as through, say, a cut-rate store ?—There is a lady I have in mind who came into my shop and she purchased about 30s. worth of goods. The boy started to tie the parcel up neatly, and she said, "I have a bag here to put them in," and as he was packing them in just the same as if it were a parcel she said, "This is not the way I got them before in other shops ; I get them thrown at me."
59. That is not an answer to my question. Supposing I had £3 to spend in your store, would it go as far as if I dealt with a cut-rate store—that is, not in proprietary lines, but in general lots ?—Yes.
60. Would you give these services and the prices existing at present without the competition of cut-rate stores ?—We have always done so.
61. I take it from what you say that you have always endeavoured to serve the public with the best of goods at the lowest possible prices ?—Yes.
62. Therefore you take cognizance of cut-rate stores, but they do not affect your policy ?—That is so.
63. Do you deal largely in tea ?—Yes.
64. Do you stock all proprietary brands ?—None.
65. How do you get on with the customer who wants, say, Amber Tips ?—We induce them to try some of ours.
66. What profit do you make on the tea you sell at, say, 2s. 10d. per pound—I want it in percentages ?—About 33 $\frac{1}{3}$.
67. Is that on return ?—On return ; we are not profiteers.
68. Is it your policy to make up your own tea ?—Yes.
69. Who does the blending ?—I start them out and give them the quantities.
70. Are you capable of blending your own tea ?—I was with the Amber Tips man before they started.
71. Is your brand of tea popular with your customers ?—They come from all parts for it—namely, Day's Bay, Kilbirnie, Seatoun, and other places.
72. Your business is in no way interfered with by not stocking proprietary tea ?—I cannot see that it is.
73. Has your trade in tea increased ?—Yes.
74. Very considerably over a period of five years, or taking the years 1921 to 1926 ?—It has kept growing all the time. Everybody cannot put up the tea.
75. You consider that you have special skill in blending your tea ?—Yes.
76. Why do you not stock packet tea ?—I did stock packet tea, but I do not do so now.
77. Why ?—Because they were no good to me. I was working for the packer.
78. Were the prices cut at that time ?—Yes.
79. You could make more profit out of your own packed tea ?—Yes.

JAMES ROBERTS sworn and examined (No. 19).

1. *Mr. Collins.*] I understand you are not represented by counsel ?—No.
2. You propose to make a statement to this Committee, do you not ?—Yes, a brief statement.
3. Is it by way of evidence or by way of opinions ?—By way of expressed opinions in connection with the trade-unions here on the P.A.T.A. business.
4. Whom do you represent ?—I represent the New Zealand Alliance of Labour to-day, to which is affiliated forty-five trade-unions of New Zealand. I am secretary of the Alliance of Labour.
5. Will you please make your statement in your own way ?—I am given to understand that this Committee at the present time is for the purpose of inquiring into the fixation of prices on proprietary articles. I want to say that I am opposed to the fixation of prices if the fixation is allowed