

39. Can you tell us something about that?—The best price from the wholesaler to the retailer is 14s. per dozen, less 2½ per cent; but Baxter's do supply to some of the larger retailers as if they were wholesalers; the best price that the wholesaler can buy at from Baxter's is 11s. 11d. a dozen for five-gross lots.

40. I see Rexona soap is also set down in the advertisement?—The best price at which the wholesaler can buy is 12s. 4d. a dozen net for five-gross lots. I believe the best price from the wholesaler to the retailer is 12s. 10d. a dozen for six-gross lots.

41. I see there are a number of other items, like Coalgate's shaving-soap, at the same price?—Yes.

42. *Mr. Gresson.*] You have given us a good many wholesale prices: how do you get these wholesale prices?—From various sources.

43. The reason I ask is that my information is that in many respects those prices are quite wrong, and I would like to know whether you may not possibly have been mistaken?—There may be fluctuation in prices. For instance, one wholesaler may do better in one line than another, and a retailer who confined his purchases to one or two wholesalers might not always get the best price.

44. Well, take as an instance Amber Tips tea. You told us, I think, that the price was 2s. 10d. less 5 per cent. to retailers. I believe the right price is 2s. 8d. less 10 per cent., and I have people here who will say that they can buy at that price?—I question that price.

45. But if I call the witnesses?—I would prefer to see the invoice.

46. You would prefer to see the invoice rather than believe the evidence of a witness?—Yes, I would prefer to see the invoice.

47. How long have you been associated with the P.A.T.A.?—Indirectly, about eleven years.

48. Are you still associated with the organization in Australia?—No.

49. How long is it since you have been associated with it in Australia?—About eighteen months.

50. Did you come over here to form the P.A.T.A. here?—Yes, I came over here at the invitation of the traders.

51. Which section of the traders?—Generally, retail chemists and a number of other manufacturers.

52. Who actually approached you first?—A retail chemist.

53. By letter?—By word of mouth. I was over here in the middle of 1924 on other business and a retail chemist approached me on P.A.T.A. matters. It was Mr. Cotterell, of Auckland.

54. Then, how did the manufacturers and wholesalers and retailers come into it?—After I saw Mr. Cotterell I saw Mr. Laird, of the Auckland Drug Co., and then saw different manufacturers of popular proprietary medicines and toilet preparations for the purpose of ascertaining the position here, and one and all told me that conditions were in a very bad state—that their lines were being "hawked about" and slaughtered, seriously damaging their business. They informed me that they would appreciate such an organization as the P.A.T.A. to protect their interests here.

55. Then, I suppose, you would approach the manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers to join up?—Yes. It is not necessary to have the co-operation of all. The next thing, after having decided to come across and organize, I called meetings of Grocers' Associations in each of the four centres. Three out of the four centres were unanimous in supporting the association. One centre was somewhat apathetic about it—that was Christchurch.

56. So Christchurch held the fort?—It was not so much a question of that as a matter of internal trouble. At one meeting I held there they were unanimous, but when they came to consult other members those other members were content to "let the other fellow do it."

57. Is the association actually formed yet?—Yes.

58. And functioning?—No.

59. As regards all this preliminary work that you had to do, who paid your expenses?—They were paid from subscriptions collected by me from retail chemists.

60. And manufacturers?—No; the manufacturers' subscriptions were held in trust. They were not used to finance the organization of the association.

61. Why did they subscribe?—To register their goods.

62. I notice that in your organization you set up various provincial committees?—Yes.

63. And I notice that you have a provincial committee for Christchurch, which, according to your literature, consists of certain gentlemen who are named?—Yes.

64. When and where did you approach any of those gentlemen and ask whether they would act on the committee, and when did you get their consent?—In the first place, the minutes of the meeting which they attended will show the appointment of the different gentlemen to the committee.

65. Appointment by whom?—By themselves; the meeting appointed them.

66. Were all of the gentlemen whose names I have read appointed?—No, all but two.

67. How did you get their consent to act on your committee, because those gentlemen say they never consented to act on the committee?—The minutes of the meeting show that two of those gentlemen were not at the meeting. One of them, Mr. ———, arrived just as the meeting was closing. It was explained to him that he had been appointed, and he accepted the position. The next morning I saw Mr. ——— and explained to him that he had been appointed, and he also accepted the appointment, verbally. Mr. ——— and Mr. ——— and Mr. ——— were at the meeting.

68. Did all those gentlemen agree to act on the committee?—Yes. Further than that, they appointed two delegates to come to Wellington, Mr. ——— and Mr. ———. Neither of those gentlemen came to the conference in Wellington, but both appointed proxies which were sent to us.

69. What actually do you regard as a proprietary article—I speak of proprietary articles in the general sense, patent medicines and toilet preparations?—Proprietary toilet preparations and patent medicines.