

opportunity of doing so. We make purchases from opponent stores in order to test the quality of their teas, and we also ascertain their method of wrapping and the attention given in the shop. In that particular matter we buy direct from Colombo in regular monthly shipments, and that standard is one of the best advertising mediums we have.

4. Mr. Barker, from Auckland, gave evidence before this Committee as to the operations of the National Grocery Union. Is the Christchurch or the Canterbury Grocers' Union affiliated to the New Zealand Federation?—We have never become connected with them because of some clauses in their policy with which we are not in agreement. They have spoken of price-fixation for several years, and they put forward a clause which particularly demand of their prices—not only the lines that carry with them a bonus coupon—being fixed by the packer of the particular line. May I mention here that that was originally one of the reasons why lines such as Amber Tips and Bell tea were cut in price. The coupon schemes have been dead for some considerable period.

5. And still exist?—Yes.

6. That is against the policy of the New Zealand Grocers' Federation, is it not?—That is so.

7. But not against the policy of the Canterbury union?—No.

8. Do you know the position existing in Dunedin?—Yes. The association is affiliated with the New Zealand Federation, but their association is actually an executive of six or eight members. I am well acquainted with the matter, because I am a member of the Employers' Association in Dunedin, and the secretary of that body or his assistant acts as secretary for the Grocers' Association. Only the executive meets, and they do the whole of the deliberations for the province, and the difficulty they have experienced there in getting members has been immense.

9. There are a number of members outside the executive?—That is so.

10. The association does not consist of, say, half a dozen members?—That is all the association men, and what they represent outside is very small.

11. When Mr. Barker elects to speak on behalf of the New Zealand grocers in reference to the P.A.T.A. policy, for what territory is he entitled to speak?—Auckland, Wellington, and that portion of Dunedin which constitutes the grocers' section of the New Zealand Federation, and we cover the same area as the award in Canterbury.

12. What is your view of the P.A.T.A. in Christchurch?—We virtually turned it down.

13. By resolution?—Yes, and here is the resolution: "It was resolved, 'That this association does not recommend any action being taken at present with regard to the formation of a P.A.T.A.'"

14. *Mr. Myers.*] I understood you to say the other day that in comparing your prices, for the purposes of a circular, with the prices of the credit grocery store you picked out the particular credit store that suited you best?—In this particular instance it is situated directly opposite our own business.

15. Did you pick out the shop that suits you best?—No, sir; no particular selection.

16. I will take apricots: there are various brands of quality or grades?—There are three distinct grades.

17. Each grade has its own price?—Yes. In that case the grade would be identical. It would be foolish for us to attempt to recommend a different line to our customers.

18. This circular [produced] is purely advertising propaganda?—Yes.

19. Why did you not show what brand of apricots you refer to on this circular?—To conserve space.

20. Who purchased these things in the other Dunedin shop?—The local manager there.

21. You mention three bars of soap: they are all different brands of soap?—Yes; that has reference to one brand.

22. Why did you not say so?—Because it makes the circular more readable by the clients.

23. In regard to the Eastern tea, you are not a professional tea-blender?—No, sir, but I have been in the trade for about ten years.

24. Who does the blending?—A firm in Colombo.

25. They blend the tea and it is sent out to you in bulk and you pack it up: is that your practice?—Yes. We have a guarantee from them that they have packed to the standard that has been set.

26. You are not a professional tea-taster?—No. I may say that I have submitted that tea to some of the leading tea-tasters in the trade, and I have their views on it.

27. It is sufficient for my purpose to know that they are all different qualities of tea?—Quite so, sir.

28. And many different blends?—Yes.

29. I suppose it takes an expert to value the tea?—Yes, quite so, but not an expert to recognize the taste.

30. Now, you show on your circular two sorts of butter (best). I suppose the price of butter varies, even sometimes from week to week?—Yes; but in this particular case I can prove conclusively that it is identically the same butter.

31. There are different brands of butter, and different grades?—Yes; but where there are different brands of butter nearly all the grocers have to stock these brands.

32. Even in salt you have different grades?—There are only two grades that I compare so far as I am concerned—namely, Australian and English salt. We handle the English fine.

33. I suppose there are different manufacturers of Worcestershire sauce?—Yes.

34. And the same applies to essence of lemon—namely, different manufacturers, different qualities, and different sizes of bottles?—Yes. We built our business on quality, and we would not think for one moment of running our business—it would not be an attraction to our business—on lines that did not compare in all circumstances with others. We would be very foolish if we did not do so.