

entirely unnecessary on my part, and for a time I sold at 7½d., but, being refused supplies, I did eventually agree to sell at 9d. The same applies to Johnson's baby-powder; but at present I hold stocks. So soon as my supplies fail I will be compelled, so far as that article is concerned, to also sell to the public at a considerably higher figure than I wish to take from them.

40. Is there anything further that you wish to submit to the Committee?—Yes. I would like to say that since 1919 I have studied the retail and wholesale position very keenly, and acted as adviser in a great number of retail establishments in the Wellington district, also Nelson and Marlborough, and also have seen the balance-sheets, besides valuing the stock of a very large number of those establishments. My investigation proved to me that when old-fashioned ideas existed, where credit obtained and when attention to detail and attention to competition were ignored, the almost invariable result was a slipping-back of the return of the particular business, and also the eventual elimination of that individual from the trading area. I must, however, state that invariably where my advice was sought I instituted for that person a systematic running of such business, a cutting-out of unnecessary services, and a proof to clients that prices were better there than elsewhere, that the business once more flourished.

*Mr. Collins:* We will take it as a fact.

41. *Mr. Myers.*] Would you mind telling me what you consider is a fair wage to yourself as manager and superintendent and director of your business?—I certainly would not work and do the work I am doing for any one else, leaving capital out of it. I take it you want me to consider a man with the same experience as myself?

42. Yes?—I consider that I could get a manager—I do not say with the same experience—for about £400 or £500 per annum.

43. You would not regard that as sufficient remuneration for yourself?—I would accept it, knowing the poor rate of wages paid in New Zealand in both the wholesale and retail trades.

44. But do you not consider yourself worth more?—We all do that.

45. Would you mind telling me, when you started in business, whether you had three shops?—No.

46. You started in one shop, did you not?—Yes.

47. How long did you keep that one shop?—I think it was for approximately six months.

48. When did you open your second shop—was it about six months afterwards?—Yes.

49. When did you open the third shop?—At the end of another six months.

50. When you were telling the Committee of the increased turnover for the second half-year, was that not including your second shop instead of one, and in the third half-year from three shops instead of one?—(No answer.)

*Mr. Kennedy:* I am to blame for that mistake.

*Witness:* I wish to state that my main shop has increased during that period to a very great extent.

51. *Mr. Myers.*] May I point out to you that if you take three shops together, is that not for the last six months three times the return of the one shop in the first six months?—I quite see that; but you must take into consideration the overhead charges with regard to wages, and also rents.

52. I am not taking that into consideration—I am taking the question of turnover?—I see your point.

53. That is a fact, is it not?—Yes; but I think it should be qualified with the statement that I have one main shop and two smaller shops.

54. But you cannot supply the Committee with figures as to the turnover at any one of the three shops for any period of six months, except the first period, when you had only one shop?—I could do so by getting the information from Wanganui.

55. But you are unable to give the information now?—Not unless I had some considerable time, and I do not think you wish to keep me here.

56. Certainly not. We have, I think, copies of the balance-sheet for the first two half-years?—That is so. My third period has been delayed as a consequence of this Committee. I did not take stock for the last period, because I knew that I was coming here.

57. It might have been good for your side if you had taken stock. Where are the three shops situated?—In the Avenue in Wanganui, Guyton Street, and also at Aramoho.

58. That is a pretty big centre?—It is not a big shopping centre.

59. It is a centre in which there are a great many working-people?—Yes. My returns from that shop are very low in comparison with the others.

60. Is that the third shop?—Yes.

61. You say that you invariably sell at a figure to cover expenses?—Yes.

62. Is that quite correct?—Except in the case I cited.

63. You heard the different articles mentioned by Mr. Boyd where he sells and has sold on your behalf?—They were only on paper, although I had most of them.

64. You know there were a number of articles that he sold at substantially less than his average overhead cost would be?—I do not state that they are sold under cost. I do not agree with him that they are sold under cost.

65. You say the same thing as Mr. Boyd—that although you may have sold at less than cost, plus the average overhead expense, you still say, in regard to the particular article, you have sold at cost?—I quite see that it would be good business to do so on certain occasions.

66. Especially, of course, on well-known lines—for instance, articles that have a good reputation on the market?—I would not take that into consideration. I would take into consideration the demand of the public for such lines.

67. Articles, for instance, which are quick sellers?—Yes.