

160. Did you circularize your members in regard to price discussions?—No. The idea is to enable the small man in the suburbs to know what the price is. We simply say what has been adopted in the matter of the adjustment of the prices in the general stores. He can do what he likes, of course. Some of them know that prices have advanced, while some of them may not know.

161. Do you record minutes at the meeting of the association?—Yes. I may say that we have a page allotted to us by one of the wholesale grocers by means of communications at times. I have one here. [A booklet was produced by witness, handed to the members of the Committee, and was subsequently returned to him.]

162. In regard to the question of advertising, which was dealt with by Mr. Myers, where you put a list of your prices and tried to induce the customers to believe that they could save 3s. in the pound by dealing with your shops, did you compare your lowest price with the highest of your competitors?—I did not say that it was taken as the highest of our competitors. We simply take it as the near-by competing business.

163. Following up Mr. Montgomery's question about the elimination of P.A.T.A. lines from the whole of your stores, could you carry on your business if those lines were withheld from you?—It would certainly be a hindrance for us to have them taken away if there were other stores near by to handle them and agree to sell them at the fixed prices.

164. If the P.A.T.A. functions in New Zealand you feel that you would inevitably have to observe their regulations?—We would be compelled to do so.

165. Do you consider that your present method of conducting your business is the best in an economic sense?—I am sure of it.

166. You told Mr. Myers, did you not, that you thought you made a mistake in adopting delivery?—Yes. On that point I would withdraw my statement. We were compelled to commence delivering because the other fellows came down to our method of business. If we could eliminate it we would do so.

167. Do you have any objection to the grocer who sells below cost?—I would say that he is foolish.

168. Would you regard it as unmoral?—No.

169. Just that he would be foolish?—That is all. Before concluding, there are one or two small matters that I would like to refer to. I mentioned to my counsel the other day the question of competitive lines that was being sold against Kolynos. On a particular line we sell in our stores for 10d., on the packet it says, "Manufactured from the formula of Dr. N. S. Jenkins, D.D.S., Paris." We have advertised in our windows that it is the same as Kolynos, and nobody has said a word against us. I may say that I have used that line myself, and I fail to find the difference. We sell that line at 10d., whereas the other line is compelled to be sold at 1s. 6d.

170. *Mr. Collins.*] Is the price of that competing tooth-paste fixed?—No.

171. Kolynos is sold at 1s. 6d., and the price is marked on the cover?—Yes.

172. What is the name of the article that you sell at 10d.?—Florimel dental cream.

173. *Mr. Myers.*] It does not follow that it is the same formula: you do not know that it is the same formula?—No.

174. Do you know that Kolynos is a trade-mark?—Quite so.

175. Would you be surprised to know that it was an offence?—It was put there for the public to find fault with if they wished.

176. I am asking you this: did you know, when you did that, it was an offence?—I do not know that I considered it that way.

177. It is an infringement of their trade-mark?—I was wishing to show the public that, whilst we were compelled to sell Kolynos at a higher price, the other article was being sold at a lower price.

178. What does it cost you?—It cost me 8s.

179. And you sold it at what?—10d.

180. Of course, you are not selling so much Kolynos?—No, because they are compelling us to sell at the same price as the other man, who gives discount.

181. Is it being cut down in your district?—Yes, to 1s. 2d.

182. You will not stock it?—We do stock it.

183. But you stock something else and sell it in preference, and push the name of it?—Because we want to make friends with our customers. I will hand in two wrappers for the information of the Committee.

184. *Mr. Collins.*] Have you anything further to say?—Yes. I would like to say that Mr. Barker, who gave evidence prior to the week-end with regard to Wheelers in Auckland, also mentioned the liquidators in the society as having been previously the auditors of the company. I think Mr. Barker's implication was that perhaps the greatest reliance could not be taken on their statement, and it is because of that I am now referring to the matter. In one of the copies of his magazine he applauds that particular partnership in connection with some transaction. His implication the other day was, therefore, not in order. It has been mentioned on several occasions that popular lines are taken and reduced in price by cash grocers purely and simply as an attraction. I would like to say that as a consequence of the experience in my own business I find it is impossible to effect a saving or economize for the benefit of any section of the public on slow-selling lines, because the turnover is not sufficient to warrant a reduction. There is another point that I would just like to refer to briefly, and it is this: you mentioned at the opening of this Committee, sir, that the amount of evidence coming forward had been surprisingly small. I would like to point out—

*Mr. Collins.*: No, I did not make that statement. I mentioned that as a result of advertisements throughout the Dominion the number of letters sent into the secretary was surprisingly small.