24. So that your figure of 30 per cent. is a guess ?—As a proportion of my business I think it is pretty correct.

25. In your patent medicine and foodstuffs would you include Allenbury's foodstuffs, &c.—Yes, all cough-cure drugs.

26. Of that 30 per cent. a large portion would include patent foods, such as infant-foods, and so on ?—In the turnover I should say not. We sell a tremendous quantity of patent medicine.

27. And I take it you also sell a considerable quantity of patent and other proprietary foodstuffs ?—Yes, but not in proportion.

28. It is all included ?—Yes.

29. You say that you could not dissect your figures ?—It would be a week's work. I cannot do that, because I have not separate figures.

30. I understand your difficulty. What proportion of your turnover do you think would include soaps—that is, not toilet soap ?—Approximately, 4 or 5 per cent.

31. That, again, must be a guess ?—Yes.

32. If it turns out to be the fact that foodstuffs, including patent foodstuffs and infant-foods, do not and cannot come under the operations of the P.A.T.A., then you would not be prevented from buying these articles from any source that is available to you ?—Well, I understand there are.

33. Very well, that is all right. It is upon the assumption that they are that you have come to the conclusion that you would have to go out of business ?—Yes.

34. *Mr. Hayward.*] With respect to the fruit that you purchased from Australia at the figure of 9s. 5d., that was only an accidental price, was it not ?—That proved to me that I could land stuff and sell it at the price which the merchants were selling at to me.

35. The price which you mentioned—namely, 9s. 5d.—is not the usual price ?—That was the usual price that the merchants were landing it at.

36. *Mr. Collins.*] When was that ?—In 1923.

37. But you have not been able to buy it at that price since ?—Yes.

38. You mentioned that you had proposed to open a cash and credit business when you made the change ?—I did not say that. I said that I had been looking into the system while I was in Australia.

39. You had two prices at the time ?—Yes.

40. Had you really issued a price-list to your customers ?—I have a copy in my pocket if you would care to look at it.

41. Generally, what was the difference between the cash price and your credit price ? They varied. I reduced my margin of profit from 25 per cent. to 20 per cent., and then for cash business a lower margin, but I did not fix any fixed margin on that. It varied from 2½ to 5 per cent. difference in the booking price.

42. Have you any knowledge of the present working of the P.A.T.A. in New South Wales ?—Yes ; I made inquiries while I was in Australia about it, and I was informed that in some States it was working, and in other States it was not working and was not a success.

43. Were you in New South Wales ?—Yes.

44. Did you come into contact with tradesmen like yourself ?—Quite a number.

45. That is, tradesmen who were working under the P.A.T.A. rules ?—No, I did not come in contact with anybody who had been working under the P.A.T.A. rules ; but I understood it was not a success there—in other words, they were able to get all round it. That was the impression I gathered as a result of conversations I had with various people.

46. You were, I presume, interested in its working ?—No, I was not. I happened to mention it, and it came about in the usual way. I was looking about for other matters and this subject came up.

47. You did not really sense from those conversations you had whether they were in favour or against it ?—I do not know.

48. Will you let the Committee have your net profit during the last three years ?—I will let you have it for last year. The figures are only approximate.

49. Will you also let us have the amount of the net capital which you have in the business ?—Yes. [Witness wrote down particulars as desired by the Chairman and handed the piece of paper to him.]

50. Do you take a salary in addition ?—My salary is included in those figures.

51. Do you sell any line under cost ?—We do not.

52. I take it, then, that you have not practised selling under cost, not even to meet competition ?—We have never practised selling under cost. We will take, for instance, Edmonds' baking-powder and Taniwha soap, and, touching on the argument this afternoon, I would say that we would sell those lines at very close on cost as an advertising medium.

53. Do you not think that by selling at cost, or close on cost, that it has a deleterious effect upon the manufacturer of those lines ?—That is a matter I am not concerned with ; they are my goods and I can please myself in what way I advertise. If that is my method of advertising, it is for me to decide.

54. You are of opinion that, as a consequence, if the goods are purchased by you you can sell them under cost if you so elect, or at any other price which you decide upon ?—I consider they are my goods and I can sell them at any price I like ; and I consider that the manufacturer—we hear a lot about what he has to lose by selling his goods at cost—has a lot to gain by selling his goods at cost.

55. I am asking you to give your opinion with respect to selling under cost ?—I would not recommend under any circumstances the selling of goods under cost.