

90. What proportion of your turnover consists of butter—if you cannot tell me it does not matter ? I can figure it out.

91. I want something like approximately ; I do not want a guess ?—It would work out at 16 or 16·5.

92. On your total turnover ?—Yes, I should say so.

93. You have not available your wages-book for last year ?—No.

94. Do you have your balance-sheet audited each year ?—Yes ; but I did not bring that down.

95. Who is your auditor ?—Mr. Dackon.

96. Have you the audited balance-sheets for the last two or three years available ?—Yes.

97. Will you send them to the Committee ?—Yes.

98. In connection with those figures you have put down, for what period does that cover ?—That is for the year ending 31st March last year.

99. And that is your total profits [pointing out on piece of paper figures shown thercon] ?—Yes.

100. Without taking into account wages paid out and nothing for yourself ?—That is so.

101. Do you take a very active interest in the business ?—Yes.

102. You are the manager ?—There is a man who is described as that, but I am really the manager.

103. You supervise the whole thing ?—I am really the head.

104. Do you do the ordering ?—Yes, most of it.

105. And, really, the success of the business depends upon your personal efforts ?—Yes.

106. What do you think would be a fair wage to yourself, supposing you were running it for somebody else and doing what you are doing : would you say £500 per annum ?—I might have to be satisfied with a lot less.

107. I am not asking you that ; I am suggesting to you do you consider £500 per annum as being your remuneration ?—I do not know of anybody who gets that salary in a retail business.

108. You are not a mere establishment, you know ?—The highest paid for a similar position in this country is £400 per annum.

109. If you were to take £400, that would be deducted from this figure [pointed out] ?—Yes.

110. Do you know what return that would give you on your turnover, supposing you took £400 per annum ?—I have not worked it out.

111. *Mr. Hayward.*] You carry on a cash and credit business, do you not ?—Yes.

112. And I understand that your overhead charges are 5·5 per cent. of your return : that is the figure you gave ?—Yes.

113. Do you deliver goods ?—Yes.

114. Your wages account amounts to a little over 5½ per cent., and, that being so, that would leave you under 3 per cent. to pay the whole of your other charges in connection with your business and also your cost of delivery ; is that so ?—That is the correct percentage I have worked out. I am doing ——— per week.

115. You mentioned that the price of proprietary articles were fixed. I presume the manufacturer you are referring to at 33½ per cent. on return or 50 per cent. on cost—what articles are fixed at that price ?—Lane's emulsion ; Baxter's lung-preserver. When I say that, there might be 1 per cent. difference. In good buying you can always make that price mentioned on the bottle.

116. There are proprietaries fixed much higher at the present time than under the P.A.T.A. operating abroad. The British P.A.T.A. fixes the price on a number of lines ; I am prepared to say on all of them—at any rate, on a number of lines it is 20 per cent. on return ?—The profit at Home, as I know it, is not as high on any commodity as the profits are here. For instance, rentals are not so high. I do not know anything about the P.A.T.A. at Home at all.

117. You mentioned that you sell aspro at the price fixed ?—Yes.

118. Did your sales come down at the fixed price ?—I have two shops, and that, of course, means bigger sales ; but the sales did come down immediately at the fixed price.

119. The position is that you are able to sell those aspros at the fixed price ?—It is a great seller.

120. *Mr. Collins.*] Has there ever been a price war amongst the grocers in Hawera ?—Yes.

121. Did it last long ?—Yes. They took up a hostile attitude when I opened up there. No man wants to sell an article that does not give him a fair working profit on any line. I appreciate both sides of the question ; but the great thing I object to is this controlling by big companies.

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ALFRED ALEXANDER KELLY sworn and examined. (No. 28.)

1. *Mr. Kennedy.*] You are a grocer ?—Yes, in Hastings and Napier.

2. And the business you carry on is a cash business ?—Yes.

3. And you have been in business a year on your own account ?—Yes.

4. Before that you were in other places of employment ?—Yes.

5. You have found that you have been able to sell at a figure which your competitors consider is a cutting price ?—Yes, but it pays me.

6. What economies have you been able to effect in your particular business ?—I have no delivery, and I do not wrap up the goods ; the customers take the goods away themselves. I have no accounts—in fact, there is no office staff to pay. I do all my own books myself, and I am therefore able to give the best of service to the customer.