7. You have eliminated book-keeping expenses?—Yes, entirely.
8. You do the management yourself?—Yes, entirely.
9. And you claim that you are a keen and good buyer?—Yes.
10. You have a staff of how many now?—Eleven.
11. I suppose that your business has shown a uniform increase each month?—Yes, except for the second month.
12. You say that your returns will be audited when you get the pioneering-work through?—Yes.
13. Will you write down on a piece of paper your turnover for last year?—Yes. [Particulars written down and handed to Committee.] I may say that I do not think that the cutting of prices is such a terrible sin. It popularizes the grocery concern. That is what it has done in my case; and, moreover, it puts cheap service in the way of the public.
14. In connection with your prices, are they uniformly below those of what may be termed the old-fashioned grocer?—Yes, they are lower. I may say that I issue a price-list every month.
15. This is one of your price-lists, is it not?—Yes. I sell nothing below cost, except in one or two instances where I have been forced to do so by competition.
16. By the competition of whom?—Other grocers about the town.
17. Have you found that you get satisfactory returns for your labour?—Yes.
18. Just write down on a piece of paper what are your earnings, including all that you have taken out of the business?—I cannot remember the exact figures. [Particulars written down and handed in.]
19. You have some figures here [pointed out]; are these taken from your records?—Yes.
20. That is [referring to particulars written on piece of paper] drawings for wages and profits during the year?—Yes.
21. I will hand in those particulars. That is the total profit for the year, and that is in respect of your first year's operations?—Yes.
22. And you expect to greatly improve your business?—Yes, much better next year.
23. You objected so strongly that you came down here to voice your opinions against the P.A.T.A.?—Yes, because they would force me out of my business by reason of the fact that I have popularized myself for selling cheaply, and if I were to put up my prices I would have to go out of business.
24. You think that if the P.A.T.A. functions you will have to substitute increased services for your present lower prices?—Yes.
25. Do you find that the public demand lower prices in place of services?—Yes, so far as the type of customer that deals with me is concerned.
26. That is the principle on which you founded your business?—I popularized my business on low prices.
27. Has there been any other business in the same line in Napier that has shown anything like the development that your business has shown?—No.
28. What class of customer are you serving chiefly?—I should say mostly the working-class. As I said before, I do no credit system, no delivery, and I do not do any wrapping, and I am able to sell my goods at a lower price than other grocers. I do a considerable amount of work myself—in fact, I am what may be termed a heavy worker.
29. *Mr. Myers.*] How long have you been in the grocery business?—For about ten years.
30. You have been in the retail grocery trade?—Yes.
31. And on your own account just a year?—Yes.
32. I suppose you would not class yourself as an expert in tea-blending?—No.
33. But you do blend tea yourself?—No, I do not blend tea myself.
34. Who does?—I buy my tea from an indent firm, and it comes to me and I bag it up.
35. Do you mind telling me what price you pay for that tea?—The tea that I sell for 2s. 6d. is bought, in some instances, for 2s. 1½d.
36. What price are you selling other tea at?—2s. 4d.; and it practically costs about the same—namely, 1s. 10d.
37. You have another line of tea, have you not?—Yes. It costs 1s. 7½d., and it is sold at 2s. per pound.
38. You sell Bell and Amber Tips tea at what?—3s.
39. On that tea you get how much profit?—2d. and the usual discount.
40. You have not an audited balance-sheet?—No.
41. When you gave us this figure [pointed out] you took that from the balance-sheet which you prepared?—It is not an audited balance-sheet.
42. It is just taken from your books. In order to get at your net profit you will have to take out a balance-sheet?—I will.
43. You took stock at the end of the first year?—Yes.
44. I suppose you took your cost at cost price?—Less 2½ per cent.
45. So that without allowing for any possible depreciation or deterioration ——?—I allowed for depreciation on plant.
46. Notwithstanding that this top figure here [pointed out] that is all your profit—as a matter of fact you are managing the shop; that is, you do all that the last witness does—namely, you do the whole of your ordering—and your service is worth more than that top figure [pointed out], is it not?—Probably so.
47. If you were manager you would get at least the bottom figure [pointed out]?—I do not think so.