

95. Generally speaking, you endeavoured to induce the outside millers to join your association?—I did.

96. Even to the extent of threatening to specially work their districts?—Yes.

97. Did you not tell Mr. Gardiner that working his district might mean working at a lower price than he was selling at?—I did.

98. You did not threaten to sell at a lower price?—No.

99. And if he says that you did, he will be wrong?—To the best of my belief he is wrong.

100. *Mr. Rutherford.*] You said that in your interview with Mr. Gardiner—at the last interview—you told him that unless he joined the association you would travel his district?—Yes.

101. Did you receive instruction from the association to coerce Mr. Gardiner into joining, or did you do it on your own motion?—I did it on my own motion.

102. *The Chairman.*] What was the quantity of flour, Mr. Buchanan, that you declined to supply Mr. Williams with?—The transaction I referred to took place when there was a rising market. I had no particular instructions, but 25 tons was the limit I always sold in one parcel to a man before he got another.

103. Do you remember the quantity that Mr. Williams required to buy?—Fifty tons or 100 tons I think he said he would take.

104. *Mr. Loughman.*] I gather from you, Mr. Buchanan, that in your experience of the association you know of no instance in the nature of coercion being brought to bear on an outside man?—None by overt act.

105. That suggests a distinction. Do you know of any instance of any sort, overt or otherwise, by which the association coerced any miller to come into the association?—I cannot say I do.

106. What you do say, and what the association also says, is that they desired all millers to go into the association because they think association is good for the trade, and consequently for the good of all who join the association, is that so?—Yes, naturally.

107. That, then, formed the matter of your argument with these gentlemen whom you were urging to join the association?—Most certainly.

108. And in your opinion the association is a desirable institution from the millers' point of view?—Most certainly.

109. Your personal interest at the present time, if I understand you, if anything, is adverse to the association?—If the association keeps in existence I have no chance of following my occupation, which I have followed for the last twenty-six years; so it must be.

110. With regard to the question of price, you say that for certain brands of flour produced by non-associated millers you get some increase in price?—I have got an increased price for flour I have in the market.

111. You suggested that the cause of that was quality?—A great deal has to do with the quality.

112. Do I understand that what you wish the Committee to understand is that where you get an increased price you induced the purchaser to believe that he was getting better value for that brand than for other brands he could get from the association?—A baker will soon tell you what flour best suits him, and he would not look at 5s. a ton more if the brand suits him.

113. Is that the reason you give for getting a better price for the flour of some of the non-associated millers—because it is of better quality?—I must answer, certainly, because I do not think a baker would give 5s. more for flour if it were against his own interests.

114. You argue that he gets a better article?—I might use other arguments as well.

115. Is there not another reason, that you probably have overlooked, that you may charge a little larger price? But do you not in many cases grant easier terms?—I do not grant easier terms than the association.

116. You adhere entirely to the terms of the association?—All the sales I have made were made on association terms.

117. I think there is a little inaccuracy about your statement that Mr. Heslop joined the association?—I think he joined a little before I left.

118. I am quite sure you think so, but, as a matter of fact, he never joined at all?—This is the first time I knew it.

119. Are you sure that he joined the association?—No; only from hearsay—from what I was told.

120. Then, as a matter of fact, we may take it that you do not know personally anything about it?—No, I do not.

121. You are representing outside millers, and consequently you conduct your business on the ordinary lines of trade unregulated by any association?—Yes.

122. Would you supply a cutting baker now?—I should be very chary about it.

123. Why?—If he gave me cash I would supply him.

124. But you would be chary about supplying him?—Not if he offered cash.

125. Otherwise you would not supply him?—If I thought he was financial I would. The fact of his being a cutting baker would not affect me.

126. Except from the assumption that his cutting the price might result in his own loss, and that would be your loss?—Yes; but I should be most chary because possibly it might interfere with my other customers.

WILLIAM DALL examined. (No. 4.)

127. *The Chairman.*] What are you?—Traveller for Messrs. A. Steven and Co., of Dunedin.

128. *Mr. Taylor.*] You represent Messrs. A. Steven and Co., of Dunedin?—Yes.

129. Does your firm belong to the Flour-millers' Association?—Not now; they did.

130. Did they join when the association was originally formed?—Not immediately; we were some weeks behind the majority of the others in joining.