

113. Was there any necessity for it if your only purpose was to retain your clients?—That was the special purpose.
114. It was not to weaken your competitors?—Well, in the ordinary course of trade I suppose one does that.
115. Have you never avowed that as being the purpose of the special low price?—No.
116. Have you ever sold flour in any part of the colony at less than the current rates charged by competing mills? You say you have done it in Auckland?—Nowhere else.
117. Have you done it in Dunedin?—No.
118. Have you never threatened any one that it would be disastrous to a competing mill-owner if he did not join the association?—No, that has never been done.
119. What has been your policy with regard to supplying flour, say, in the Christchurch district, to bakers? Do you always supply what they are able to pay for?—Yes, we have; except in one or two cases.
120. What were those cases?—One was the Working-men's Co-operative Society.
121. Why did you not supply that society?—Because we were specially requested not to do so by our best customers—the bakers—who said the society was ruining their trade by cutting prices below what they could produce bread at.
122. Was that course not followed at the dictation of the Master Bakers' Association?—Yes; the members are our chief customers.
123. Was that not the outcome of an arrangement between the Canterbury Union of Employers and your association?—It was done at the request of the Master Bakers' Union.
124. Had you a working agreement with the union?—No.
125. Did any representative of your association ever sit with the representatives of the Master Bakers' Union to deal with such matters?—No representative ever sat on the bakers' committee. One or two of the millers did, but they were in no way representatives of the association.
126. Were they members of your association?—Yes; but they did not represent the association in any shape or form.
127. Generally speaking, did you not refuse to sell flour to any baker who was not a member of the Bakers' Union?—Generally speaking, no.
128. Only in specific cases?—Yes.
129. And at the request of the Union?—Not always.
130. Give us an instance where you refused to sell to a baker and the refusal was not at the request of the Bakers' Union?—I do not think it would be wise to mention names, because it was done in cases where we did not think we should get paid for the flour.
131. Was that always the reason?—Not always.
132. Take Mr. Williams, a Christchurch baker; did you refuse to sell him a large supply of flour when he offered cash for it?—Yes.
133. What was the reason?—Simply because he wanted to speculate against us. Last year, I might say, was a phenomenal year, and he wanted to buy 100 tons of flour for forward delivery. The Millers' Association refused to take the order, because of the difficulty in obtaining supplies of wheat. We gave Mr. Williams his ordinary supply of flour.
134. Did you ever decline to supply Mr. Williams on any other occasion?—I do not think so.
135. Did he always get the flour he wanted from you?—Yes, as far as I know.
136. Coming back to the Working-men's Co-operative Society, do you remember the circumstances when you refused to supply it—who saw you in reference to the matter?—The secretary of the society came to see me.
137. And asked you for how much flour?—I cannot remember the quantity.
138. Did he say anything about booking an order with the Irwill Mill?—I do not remember.
139. Did that mill ever belong to your association?—No.
140. Tell us the exact circumstances connected with your refusal to supply flour to the Working-men's Co-operative Society?—So far as I recollect, some one connected with the society came down to the office and asked to be supplied with flour, and we had been requested by the Bakers' Union shortly before that not to supply any of these men, as the society was selling bread at a very low price. I mentioned the matter to Mr. Woodfield. I told him if he wanted flour for his shop trade we would gladly supply it, but if he wanted it for the bakery we could not supply him with it, because he was undermining our customers in selling the bread at a very low price. Shortly after that they tendered the money for the flour, and we let them have as much as they liked.
141. How long afterwards?—We supplied them every month from January, 1902, to last month in varying quantities.
142. Did they charge the whole of that time the cutting rate for their bread?—I could not tell you that.
143. From January, 1902, up to the present time you have not been watching the price of bread?—No.
144. Since that time you have sold flour free from the influence of the Master Bakers' Union?—I would not like to put it that way. That is an admission that we did at one time sell the flour under the dictation of the Master Bakers' Union.
145. Have you any correspondence with the Federated Bakers' Union in regard to this "price committee" and its operations?—No.
146. Have you any correspondence as to the desirability of your acting with perfect freedom so far as your association is concerned?—Yes, we have. But I should like to finish what I have to say with regard to the Working-men's Co-operative Society, first of all. They were selling bread at a price which was ruining the bakers of Christchurch. I have the Christchurch Working-men's Co-operative Society's balance-sheet and report, dated the 11th August, 1903. The directors say