

Do you sell Q-tol? I understand the price is fixed?—Under the registration scheme.

Lane's emulsion?—Yes.

Scott's emulsion?—No.

Kolynos tooth-paste?—Yes.

These are a few of the things on which prices are fixed and can legally be fixed at the present time?—We want the power to be able to fix any line that the manufacturers consider should be fixed.

Mr. Healy.] What would be the result of Boots opening one additional shop in Wellington?—It would do us an enormous amount of harm, but if it is going to save the other chemists of New Zealand, then it would be far better that at least one section only of the chemists should be affected.

Mr. Holland.] Are you in Wellington?—I am a chemist in Willis Street.

Mr. Healy.] I believe the chemists throughout New Zealand are very alarmed over Boots?—Yes.

I had a deputation on Tuesday. The general opinion is that they will not stop on your lines only, the fear is that they will operate like an American drug store?—In England they operate very extensively in so far as they have a lending library, stationery department, leather bags, and leather-ware. I understand that here it will be confined to chemists' goods.

I believe the capital is £10,000,000?—No, their capital we have learned is £3,000,000.

AMENDMENT TO COMMERCIAL TRUSTS ACT.

Evidence to be given before the Committee by R. A. Cometti, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Wholesale Druggists' Association of New Zealand, comprising the following firms:—

Kemphorne, Prosser, and Co.'s N.Z. Drug Co., Ltd. (four branches).

Sharland and Co. (four branches).

Salmond and Spraggon and Co., Ltd. (Dominion Drug Co.) (four branches).

Auckland Drug Co., Auckland.

H. F. Stevens, Ltd., Christchurch.

F. Stevens Ltd., Auckland.

P. Hayman and Co., Ltd., Dunedin.

Murdoch and Co., Ltd., Dunedin.

Lockwood and Sons, Ltd., Wellington.

It is hoped that legislation will be passed to enable the amendment of the Commercial Trusts Act, so that manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers can combine to form a P.A.T.A. Association for the stabilization of prices of proprietary articles.

We desire to support enthusiastically the petition of the retail pharmacists, with whom our interests are closely linked.

The chemist to-day is suffering considerably, as the result of price-cutting in proprietary lines, and, in consequence, this reflects seriously on the wholesalers and curtails the scope of their activities.

The introduction of the P.A.T.A. will mean that the present pernicious cutting of certain lines by certain sections of the trade will cease, and a fair and reasonable price to the wholesaler, retailer, and public will be fixed to the benefit of all concerned.

Manufacturers who spend large sums of money to advertize and popularize their preparations should be able to reap some reward for their expenditure and energy, but at present certain lines have been "tabooed" by a considerable portion of retailers, due to the fact that they have been used as "draw" or "catch" lines by cutters, and sold to the public at prices sometimes lower than the small trader can purchase at.

The establishment of the P.A.T.A. would eliminate this state of affairs, and, by stabilizing prices, the public interests would not be prejudiced, as manufacturers would make sure that their lines would not be exploited by the addition of high profits as, by so doing, the retail figure would be raised to such an extent that this would not be competitive with many similar lines on the market.

Further, P.A.T.A. would bar the "cutters" or "pirates" from taking nationally advertised lines, and, by cutting these down to cost or thereabouts, use them as a medium to draw people to their place of business for the sole reason of selling them other goods on which a substantially higher margin of profit is shown.

In the past few years quite a number of preparations have been so seriously affected by the action of cutters that other retailers have refused to stock them, or, if they did carry supplies, endeavoured to influence the public to purchase something else. This has had a serious effect on the sales of these preparations, and, while it may have been illegal to do so, some proprietors have, at great expense and inconvenience, introduced price-maintenance schemes, this only because the turnover had been so adversely affected by price cutting.

The following is a list of proprietary articles coming under this heading:—

Lane's emulsion.

Baxter's lung-preserver.

Aspros.

Bonnington's Irish Moss.

J. and J.'s baby powder.

Wood's Peppermint Cure.

Vick's Vapo Rub.

De Witt's Antacid powder.

Beltona.

Kodak films.

Selo films.