

GROCCERS IN RIDDIFORD STREET AFTER THE CHAIN STORES HAD BEEN OPERATING A FEW YEARS (ABOUT 4) TAKEN FOR THE ARBITRATION COURT.

|                          | Groccers. | Managers. | Assistants. | Wives. | Children. | Aged Parents. |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|-----------|---------------|
| Wylies .. .. .           | 1         | ..        | 2           | ..     | ..        | 1             |
| Reduction .. .. .        | 1         | ..        | 3           | 1      | ..        | ..            |
| Phillips .. .. .         | 1         | ..        | 1           | 1      | ..        | ..            |
| Jennings .. .. .         | 1         | ..        | 3           | 1      | ..        | ..            |
| Barleys .. .. .          | 1         | ..        | 1           | 1      | 3         | ..            |
| Self-Help --             |           |           |             |        |           |               |
| Gordon Street .. .. .    | ..        | 1         | 1           | 1      | 2         | ..            |
| Riddiford Street .. .. . | ..        | 1         | 3           | 1      | ..        | ..            |
| Star Stores .. .. .      | ..        | 1         | 2           | ..     | ..        | ..            |
| Hoopers .. .. .          | 1         | ..        | 2           | ..     | ..        | ..            |
|                          | 6         | 3         | 18          | 6      | 5         | 1             |

I was first hand in Campbell's city shop for eighteen months. Campbell's staff were just as efficient as the assistants in the three big chain store firms that I worked for in England.

There are some districts without an award. The groccers in those districts especially need this amendment to protect them against the excessive overtime worked by some managers where there is no restriction. The departmental stores are now selling groccers' lines, and with the cheaper girl labour they are cutting prices so low that they will seriously retard the reintroduction of married assistants into the trade. The fixation of some proprietary lines will protect employers from unfair competition and help the trade to employ more senior employees. Since the advent of these stores some big wholesale crockery and hardware firms have had to go out of business, and wholesale drapery firms have had to dispense with married employees to cut down their overhead to meet this cheaper girl labour.

The departmental and chain stores are dispossessing the married men. These men, their wives, and growing families are not nearly the market they should be for primary producers, manufacturers, and all kinds of traders. Our young men are prevented from entering the state of matrimony, and that affects the builders and their eighty allied trades. These firms are depopulating the Empire. There are 12 per cent. less children in British schools than twenty years ago, and our educational authorities anticipate a serious fall in the number of children in our schools. The Act wisely says that the welfare of the public means the people engaged in the trade. To deprive employers and employees of their just remuneration and employment is to the detriment of the public. The departmental stores will make all the distributing trades a blind alley if left uncontrolled.

Dr. R. Dey says:—

The birth-rate of Great Britain and New Zealand has now fallen below that of France. On the basis of the present figures there will be 4,000,000 children in British schools in 1948, compared with 6,000,000 in 1913. By 1976 the population of Great Britain will be 33,000,000, against 45,000,000 to-day. Italy and Germany will have 90,000,000 by 1976, and to increase her population she has suppressed departmental and chain stores, but that is too drastic. To save the country from decay like Rome, Egypt, and Babylon, or a violent revolution like France and Russia, the same proportion clause will have to be introduced into shops, offices, factories, and warehouses. Overtime unpaid for, short weight which firms have got away with for years, and the inability of the department to stop illicit and Sunday trading is seriously retarding the propagation of the race and curtailing the internal trade of the country enormously and throwing the burden of relief on the State. Only the Government can bring in this reform, but in the meantime this amendment will save some businesses from bankruptcy and protect employees from loss of employment.

Mr. Healy.] You heard the evidence yesterday? Mr. Sutherland, senior, or some witness, gave evidence quite contrary to your evidence here. You state that some districts are without an award, and that the groccers in those districts especially need this amendment to protect them against the excessive overtime worked, especially by managers?—I would like to point out that when the chain stores started in Newtown excessive overtime was worked by the managers and staff, and quite recently there was a case of excessive overtime in Kilbirnie. A policeman walking along the street at two o'clock in the morning happened to go to a chain store and saw a light in the shop. He asked the man what he was doing there and was informed by the man that he was the manager. The policeman wanted this particular man to bring someone along at two o'clock in the morning to identify him. I would point out that in one particular chain store in Newtown the manager worked all day Sunday for nine months. I can give you the name of a Justice of the Peace who will corroborate that statement. I can give you the name of a groccers' assistant who will corroborate it also. The Justice of the Peace lived close to this particular man and he has seen him go to his business. I happen to be a trustee of the church next door to the shop, and the man I refer to was in his shop nine Sundays out of ten.

The Chairman.] How long ago?—That would be about nine or ten years ago. An award would get over this difficulty. The managers work this overtime, and I do not think the executives of the chain stores know actually how much overtime these men work. They have no idea of it.

Mr. Wilkinson.] The witness has given us figures in regard to the decrease in the birth-rate in different parts of the world. Does he think these chain stores are largely responsible for that?—Absolutely. I am convinced of it.

If the general public is getting goods so much cheaper, would it not tend to increase the birth-rate?—No, for the simple reason that warehouses and manufacturers have had to put off hands because these people are getting their trade.