

No. 158.—Petition of E. G. OFFER, of Wellington, and 201 Others (representing the Retail Ice-cream Vendors and Shop-keepers of the Wellington City and Suburban Districts).

PRAYING for inquiry into the sale of ice-cream in Wellington City and suburban districts.

I have the honour to report that the member in charge of the petition having expressed a desire to withdraw same, the Committee recommends that he be allowed to do so.

13th October, 1936.

No. 48.—Petition of C. A. GARSIDE, of Blenheim, and 85 Others.

PRAYING for the regulation of the chain-store system with a view to ensuring reasonable protection of other traders, manufacturers, and property-owners.

I have the honour to report that the Industries and Commerce Committee has taken evidence on and carefully considered this and a cognate petition.

The Committee is presenting a special report dealing with the subject-matters of the petitions, and recommends that this petition be referred to the Government for consideration.

31st October, 1936.

REPORT ON CHAIN STORES.

I HAVE the honour, by direction of the Industries and Commerce Committee, to present the following special report of the Committee on Chain Stores:—

The Committee finds that the single-unit retailers are experiencing increasing difficulties in successfully competing with larger-scale organizations; that the latter form of organization is able to offer price advantages to the consuming public; that large-scale organizations tend towards monopoly, reducing the number of buyers from manufacturers and producers, and of sellers to the public.

The Committee is of the opinion that it is desirable to maintain the advantages of large-scale organizations in the interests of the consuming public, and recommends that the Government give consideration to the advisability of exercising some form of control over them when such action appears necessary to prevent monopoly and abuse of power over producers and purchasers of goods. The system of taxation as applied to chain stores in some countries is worthy of study in this respect.

The Committee is further of the opinion that—

- (a) There is too much differentiation in the wages paid to retailers' assistants handling the same related types of goods in different kinds of establishments, and that in the interests of fair competition there should be uniformity in this regard;
- (b) A definite case was made out regarding the lack of uniformity in the opening and closing hours of shops—the Committee recommends that the law should be amended in this respect;
- (c) That there should be specific standards for goods as far as possible for the protection of traders and the purchasing public.

The Committee regards the limitations of departments for specific trades as suggested by the petitioners as quite impracticable; and does not make any recommendation in this respect. The Committee commends the system of consumer co-operative trading as worthy of encouragement, and suggests to single-unit retailers the advisability of adopting co-operative methods for their own protection against the new forms of competition with which they are faced.

The Committee recommends that this report be referred to the Government for consideration.

J. HODGENS, Chairman.

31st October, 1936.

SPECIAL REPORT.

I HAVE the honour to report that the Industries and Commerce Committee desires to place on record the valuable services rendered to the Committee by the Chairman, Mr. Hodgins, whose courtesy, tact, and business ability has greatly assisted the harmonious activities of the Committee during the session; and it also desires that this resolution shall be recorded on the minutes of the Committee, and be reported to the House.

C. A. WILKINSON, Member of the Committee.

31st October, 1936.