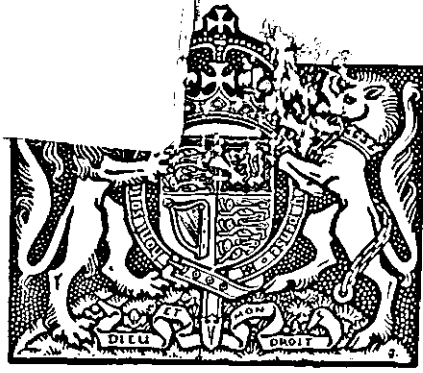


RETAIL DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES CONFERENCE
ON WAGES HOURS AND CONDITIONS OF
EMPLOYMENT.



Wages, Hours and Conditions in the Retail Distributive Trades

REPORT OF THE RETAIL DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES CONFERENCE *(England and Wales)*

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Following discussions in 1936 between the Minister of Labour and representatives of certain organisations in the retail distributive trades regarding employment, wages and conditions in the trades, a Joint Conference of the employers' organisations and trade unions was held in London in April 1937, at which a small joint sub-committee was appointed by the organisations to formulate proposals for the establishment of suitable machinery for regulating wages, hours and other conditions of employment. The sub-committee drew up proposals which the Joint Conference adopted with certain reservations and submitted to the Minister of Labour for consideration. As a result of the Minister's observations on these proposals, they were subjected to further examination by the Joint Conference, and after further discussions a Revised Report was approved in principle and submitted to the Minister on 17th February 1939 for consideration. In accordance with the undertaking given by the Minister of Labour in reply to a question by the Hon. Member for Westhoughton on 2nd March 1939, the Revised Report is reproduced below. A list of the various organisations of employers and workers which were associated with the discussions on the Revised Report is attached as an Appendix.

Ministry of Labour.

12 June, 1939.

RETAIL DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES CONFERENCE ON WAGES, HOURS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

REVISED REPORT, APPROVED IN PRINCIPLE BY THE EMPLOYERS' AND WORKERS' SIDES OF THE CONFERENCE AND SUBMITTED TO THE MINISTER OF LABOUR FOR CONSIDERATION.

We are of opinion that the regulation of wages, hours and conditions of employment in the retail distributive trades is practicable under a Scheme, subject to statutory enforcement, on the following lines:—

1. *Scope of Scheme*

To cover all persons employed in any capacity in connection with the retail sale and distribution of goods, whether carried on in a shop or elsewhere, so as to include all persons employed in connection with the service of customers, the receipt of orders, the handling, despatch, collection or delivery of goods, in the clerical work of the business, in carrying messages, or running errands, or engaged in any other retail occupations associated therewith.

N.B.—The Joint Committee desire the scope to be as comprehensive as possible and they suggest that a sub-committee be appointed from their number to be consulted by the draughtsman when the need arises.

2. *National Trade Committees*

The Minister of Labour should seek legislative power giving him requisite authority to establish National Trade Committees (hereinafter called Trade Committees) as may be necessary to consider and formulate minimum wages, hours of work and conditions of employment in any specific retail trade or appropriate group of retail trades and to make recommendations to the Minister. The number and scope (i.e., for a specific retail trade or appropriate group of retail trades) of the Trade Committees (so as to cover all persons employed in any capacity in connection with the retail sale and distribution of goods, whether carried on in a shop or elsewhere) should be decided by the Minister after consultation with the appropriate trades concerned.

3. *Constitution of Trade Committees*

The Minister should be empowered to appoint to the Trade Committee an equal number of representatives of employers and employees, after consultation with the appropriate organisations of employers and employees, and so that the majority of each Trade Committee shall be representative of the appropriate organised bodies of employers and employees, with due regard to geographical representation as far as is reasonably possible.

Subject to the consultation mentioned above, there should be no bar to a representative member serving on more than one Trade Committee if he and/or his organisation is concerned in more than one of the trades or groups of trades with which the Trade Committees are dealing.

In addition to the Representative Members the Minister should be empowered to appoint to each Trade Committee not more than three persons having no personal or professional connection with the retail distributive trades, one of whom should be appointed by the Minister as Chairman. As a matter of expediency and practice it might be necessary, desirable and helpful that the same independent persons should be appointed to act on more than one Trade Committee.

Although these independent members should have power to vote it should be their primary function to assist by advice, conciliation or otherwise, the two sides of the Trade Committees to arrive at agreed proposals or decisions.

4. *Functions of Trade Committees*

The function of each Trade Committee should be to consider and to make recommendations as to minimum wages, hours of work and conditions of employment for those employed in retail distribution within the trade or trades with which the Trade Committee are concerned, and to submit such recommendations to the Minister for publication to the employers and employees concerned. In formulating their recommendations the Trade Committees shall give consideration to any advisory reports submitted to them by the National Council (see Paragraphs 7 and 8).

Each Trade Committee shall, at its first meeting, nominate its representatives to National Council.

Each Trade Committee shall also consider any objection or objections to their recommendations referred to them by the Minister and shall make report thereon to the Minister. Each Trade Committee shall consider any revision proposals at the request of either side of the Committee.

5. *Publication and Confirmation of Wage Rates, etc.*

When the Minister has received initial recommendations from a Trade Committee he should publish same to the employers and employees concerned, allowing a period of two calendar months for objections and/or representations to be made. Objections and/or representations should be referred by the Minister to the Trade Committee for consideration and report to him. Upon receiving this report the Minister shall be empowered to confirm by order the minimum wage scales, hours of work and conditions

as then recommended by the Trade Committees, and such Order should give the recommendations statutory effect as from an appointed day.

A similar procedure should apply in the case of revised minimum wage scales, etc., which may be recommended by a Trade Committee from time to time.

6. *Enforcement*

In order to secure effective national enforcement power should be given to the Minister of Labour to deal with the non-observance of the Order by proceedings before Courts of Summary Jurisdiction. To make enforcement effective, an adequate record of wages paid should be kept by all employers and Inspectors empowered to inspect these records. There should also be fixed in a conspicuous position in every establishment affected a copy of the Order.

7. *National Retail Distributive Trades Council*

The Minister shall, as part of the scheme, establish a National Retail Distributive Trades Council (hereinafter referred to as the National Council), which should be as fully representative as possible of all the interests in the retail distributive trades, to act as a consultative and co-ordinating body.

The body of the National Council should consist of an equal number of representatives of employers and employees, of whom not less than three-fourths should be nominated by the respective sides of the Trade Committees and the balance by the Minister, after consultation with the organisations of employers and employees, so as to secure as full a representation as practicable of such organisations.

In addition to the representative members the Minister should be empowered to appoint to the National Council three persons having no personal or professional connection with the retail distributive trades. One of these independent members should be appointed by the Minister as Chairman of National Council.

8. *Functions of National Council*

The functions of National Council should be to assist and consult with Trade Committees and, where appropriate, to promote co-ordination of the following matters:—

- (a) the definition of areas for wage proposals;
- (b) the relation of weekly working hours to wage rates fixed by Trade Committees, and overtime rates;
- (c) the relation of wage scales to particular ages and/or years of service;

- (d) indentured apprentices, learners and sub-normal labour (compassionate employment);
- (e) holidays with pay;
- (f) any other question referred to it by a Trade Committee; and
- (g) any question referred to it by the Minister.

The National Council may also consider and consult with the Trade Committees upon the co-ordination of wage rates and other conditions of employment for types of labour which may be deemed common to several trades.

The National Council shall have power to appoint committees for any of the above purposes.

The National Council shall make a yearly report to the Minister.

9. *Consideration of Possible Grouping of Trades*

For the purpose of considering, in co-operation with the Ministry, the possible grouping of trades between which there is a close relationship it is suggested that a Special Committee be appointed from the Retail Distributive Trades Conference, such Committee to consist of an equal number of representatives of employers and workers.

Addendum by the Employers' Side:—

A. The machinery for the regulation of wages, hours and conditions of employment provided for in the Scheme should be brought into operation simultaneously in all sections of the retail distributive trades.

B. In view of the desirability of ensuring that the initial schedules of wages, etc. shall be generally operative in all sections of the retail distributive trades at the same time, it is hoped that by co-operation between the Minister, National Council and the Trade Committees an agreed date may be arrived at by which the schedules will become operative.

Addendum by the Workers' Side:—

The Trade Unions urge that the machinery proposed in the Scheme for the regulation of wages, hours, and conditions of employment shall be brought into operation as speedily as possible. While recognising that there may be technical and administrative difficulties which may prevent the Minister bringing the Scheme into operation simultaneously in all sections of the retail distributive trades, the Unions express the hope that the Scheme will be applied in the first instance to as many

sections as practicable. The Unions believe that certain sections are ready for immediate attention. These include those in which there is already a substantial measure of regulation by voluntary collective agreement.

On Behalf of the Retail Distributive Trades Conference.

(Signed) W. HERMAN KENT,
Secretary, Employers' Side
4, Endsleigh Street, London, W.C.1.

G. MAURICE HANN,
Secretary, Workers' Side,
Dilke House, Malet Street, London, W.C.1.

17th February, 1939.

APPENDIX.

I.

EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS OF THE RETAIL DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES CONFERENCE REPRESENTED AT THE MEETING AT WHICH REVISED REPORT WAS APPROVED.

British Furniture Trades' Joint Committee.
 Co-operative Union Limited.
 Drapers' Chamber of Trade of Great Britain and Ireland.
 Incorporated National Federation of Boot Trades' Associations.
 Ironmongers' Federated Association.
 London Employers' Association.
 London and Suburban Traders' Association.
 Multiple Shops' Federation.
 United Kingdom Association of Multiple Shop Proprietors (Grocery and Provisions).
 National Association of Master Bakers, Confectioners and Caterers.
 National Association of Outfitters.
 National Chamber of Trade.
 National Federation of Boot Trades' Association.
 National Federation of Credit Traders.
 National Federation of Fish Friers Limited.
 National Federation of Fishmongers Limited.
 National Federation of Grocers' and Provision Dealers' Associations.
 National Federation of Meat Traders' Associations.
 National Federation of Off Licence Holders' Associations.
 National Federation of Retail Newagents, Booksellers and Stationers.
 National Union of Retail Confectioners.
 National Union of Retail Tobacconists.
 Retail Distributors' Association (Incorporated).
 Retail Fruit Trade Federation.
 Wireless Retailers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland.
 Photographic Dealers' Association.
 Stationers' Association of Great Britain and Ireland.

II.

TRADE UNIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF WAGES AND CONDITIONS IN THE RETAIL DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES.

National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks.
 Retail Book, Stationery and Allied Trades Employees' Association.
 National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers.
 Transport and General Workers' Union.
 National Union of Clerks and Administrative Workers.
 Journeymen Butchers' Federation of Great Britain.