

Worthing Gazette 23rd September 1914 page4

The War and the Local Drapers.

AMONG the serious problems of the local Business men is how to keep their assistants, as far as possible, fully employed.

Reduction of staff, whether in the shop or workrooms, would only add the evil of unemployment to the other problems which have to be solved. If the public will help us by placing their orders and making their purchases, as much as possible, as usual, they will also help to a much greater extent the large numbers engaged in our shops and workrooms.

At a meeting of local drapers and members of Allied trades, it was decided that where economies were necessary it was desirable that they should be effected by other means than dismissals.

As a preliminary, we, the undersigned, on and after Monday, September 28th, will close our shops for one hour from 1.15 to 2.15.

Customers will greatly help by making their purchases early in the day, as early closing in the evening will also prevail.

It is very greatly to be hoped that customers will order goods as usual, will shop in their own town; and pay their accounts promptly.

T. H. Marshall, 23, South-street.
Bernard Baker, Chapel-road.
H. and L. Lynn, Shelley-road.
Bentall and Sons, South-street.
R. Hubbard and Son, South-street and Montague-street.
Leal and Co., Chapel-road.
Ford Ashdown, Montague-street.
H. E. Dale, South-street.
Walter Bros., South-street and Montague-street.
G. W. West, Broadway.
Morecraft and Son, Montague-street.
W. J. Holder, Montague-street.
Smith and Strange, South-street and Montague-street.
G. H. Smith and Son, South-street.

Chichester Observer 7th April 1915 page 7

EARLY CLOSING.

SHORTER HOURS FOR SHOP ASSISTANTS.

**HOW EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES BOTH
BENEFIT.**

As in the realm of national politics His most Gracious Majesty the King has set an example which all his subjects might do well to follow, so in this corner of the world the Right Worshipful the Mayor of Chichester has set an example which loyal citizens are found to be emulating in commendable manner.

The subject of shop hours is one of the greatest importance, and we make no apology for devoting some amount of our space to it in this issue of the "Observer".

A huge army of the nation's young men and women are employed in shops, and the character of the employment, together with the length of hours spent daily within the confines of business premises, can but have caused many misgivings to thinking men and women.

The matter of shop hours in Chichester was recently aired in our correspondence columns, and we have before commented on the subject.

Vendors of boots and shoes were the first to put into practice during the summer months the scheme that obtains during the winter of closing at seven o'clock on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and the Mayor has now given the lead to the bulk of trading citizens by announcing that his business establishment at Eastgate will close at that hour on the first three days of the week.

So far so good. But this should be but the beginning of a movement that will end in a permanent improvement in shop hours.

The question affects employers as much as employees, and in this connexion it will be seen that the question is not only applicable to the summer months, but also to winter. Why tradespeople keep their shops open so many hours after dusk, paying pounds for artificial light, when by co-operation they could close earlier and thus obviate the necessity for so much night shopping, one fails to see.

Tradesmen would be benefitting nearly all classes of the community by closing at six o'clock, provided, of course, the scheme was generally accepted. The public are, of course, greatly concerned in this question, for at the outset it would be found somewhat inconvenient, though after a time the altered state of affairs would become familiar, as was the case in regard to the Shops Act and the weekly half holiday.

The most important aspect from which the question should be viewed is that of the health of those engaged, particularly that of young people from 16 to 25 years of age, who are to be the future parents of a large percentage of our race.

Their hours at present, despite the laudable attempt at reduction, are unnecessarily long—long, not so much in that they run to a high figure in the aggregate, but because they invariably run so late into the night as to deprive in practically every instance those tied in the shops from outdoor recreation in daylight, except the weekly half day. The question, of course, does not exclude the dressmaker's assistants, who are among the worst victims of the long hour bogey.

While the general public, realising the benefits that might accrue from such a scheme, would willingly accustom themselves to the restriction in hours, there is a little doubt as to whether tradespeople, as a whole, will evince sufficient co-operation in putting such a scheme into practice. When the "half holiday" Act was being enforced there was all the glamour of the law—sundry threats and penalties, that made reluctant shopholders close their premises, and thus forego unfair business advantage over their fellow tradesmen.

Whether there exists sufficient good feeling as would lead all to follow the example of the Mayor if he closed at six o'clock on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, instead of seven, is open to the question, but for the present there is some consolation in the step which his Worship has taken—a decided step which, at least, is leading in the right direction.

Mid-Sussex Times

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Tradesmen in Haywards Heath and Cuckfield are asking whether steps are going to be taken to secure the closing of the shops during the winter months at six o'clock. Well, this is a matter which the tradesmen must decide for themselves. They have only to show themselves friendly towards each other, chat the matter over, and the thing can be done. But somehow or other there does not seem to be that unity among traders in the towns above named that there should be. At Burgess Hill they manage things better. They have a Chamber of Commerce, and at the meetings members discuss questions affecting their interests, and a vote having been taken they abide by the result. That's business. And it is very good business. Also at Burgess Hill the tradesmen have greatly lessened the creation of bad debts by limiting credit. Now at Haywards Heath one hears again and again of this tradesman and that being let in for a good round sum, and yet, instead of profiting by their sorry experience, these very same shopkeepers continue to give credit. If that is business, then it's very bad business.

It is one thing to secure a customer: it is quite another thing to secure the money for the goods delivered! If all the tradesmen in the town agreed to give no credit to strangers the latter would pay up as a matter of course. There are some people who deal at a shop until they find out that the shopkeeper wants payment for the goods, and then, instead of making an effort to settle up, they coolly go somewhere else and "patronise" another Simple Simon until he turns round and says "I really cannot let you go on any longer. I must have some money." Not at all disconcerted the bad-principled customer goes elsewhere and runs up another bill! Of course it's a shameful thing to do, but one must not talk of shame to evildoers: it is waste of breath! They are out to "do," and all the while tradesmen will not combine to protect themselves they will be "done." It is no kindness to allow people to run up bills—especially when it is known that they are weekly wage-earners. If these people cannot meet their liabilities week by week or every fortnight it will not be easier for them to meet them if given credit for a month or longer.

Going back to the question of early closing during the winter months, would it not be as well to call a meeting of tradesmen in the respective districts and arrive at a decision! With the streets in darkness and stricter lighting regulations everywhere, will it pay shopkeepers—going the rise in the price of gas—to keep open until half-past seven every night! On Fridays and Saturdays it might be worth while to do so, but even that is questionable. If the public knew they could not be served after six o'clock they would do their shopping earlier. Look at the dinner-hour closing movement! At the start that was pook-pooked. But first one place and then another announced that no business would be transacted during the dinner-hour, and other localities quickly followed suit. The public took the innovation lying down, and it has proved a boon to hard-worked and under-staffed traders and also to their assistants. The war has altered many things and many views. It has given people a better vision of life. It has caused them to see that not everything that they considered necessary was necessary. It has made them more human. It has brought home to them the cash value of human welfare.

Mid-Sussex Times

19th September 1916 page 1

THE EARLIER CLOSING OF SHOPS.

At the last meeting of the Burgess Hill Chamber of Commerce it was unanimously decided that as on October 2nd reversion to "Sun" time would take place and shop windows and the streets would be in darkness at 6.6 p.m., and at a few minutes earlier each evening till after Christmas, it would be to the traders' interest to close their establishments at 6 p.m. and at 8 p.m. on Saturdays. It was considered that there are many reasons why this time should be adhered to, such as the saving of gas, electric light and coal, all of which have considerably risen in cost and all of which we are frequently urged by the Government to use as little as necessary. An additional reason, deemed of great importance, is that by closing at 6 (and let it be 6 sharp in the same way as it is 1 sharp on Wednesdays) it will be possible to delay the tea meal till that time, and that will allow four hours of uninterrupted attention to business—from 2 till 6. This should prove a great boon, as has been the dinner hour closing, which has been such a great success. It is hoped that all will agree to these hours, without exception, and that all will pull together.

Last (Monday) evening we were informed by Mr. S. A. Moon, of the Broadway, Haywards Heath, that forty tradespeople of the town had signed the petition in favour of closing at 6 p.m. nightly and at 8 p.m. on Saturdays from October 1st, and two had declined to do so. In consequence of the attitude of these two—their names are well known—the proposal has been dropped for the present.

Should Haywards Heath, however, adopt this early closing, leading tradesmen of Lindfield—grocers, butchers, &c.—have expressed their willingness to fall into line.