

The contract of employment has an indirect bearing on the question of wages, in that it is not the custom to give or require notice. The smallest store is an exception, in that it gives one week's notice, or one week's pay, on dismissal. The other three stores oblige their employees to sign a contract on entering the service that they may be dismissed or may leave without any notice or compensation of any kind.

### **Hardships of the Occupation**

There are three principal ways in which the work of department stores bears heavily upon the women and girls employed therein: first, the constant standing; second, the bad air; the third, the nervous tension.

With regard to the first which is by far the greatest hardship, we have already given the provisions of the excellent law of the province. Were the provisions enforced, and could the customers be educated to the point of being sometimes served by a clerk who was seated, this hardship would practically disappear from Winnipeg stores.

The second hardship is one which is found in many public buildings other than the department store, and will probably not disappear until our methods of ventilation are completely revolutionized. This hardship generally bears with most severity on the cashiers of the tube system, who, as a rule in large stores, work in the basement. Only one store here has girls so working, and an effort is made to help relieve this strain by having them work week about in the basement and in an upstairs office.

This particular group suffer an additional strain from the glitter of the brass tubes and the constant noise. Your committee suggest that this strain might be relieved by painting the tubes, and that some system of periodic rest, such as is afforded telephone operators, should be arranged.

The ordinary shopper probably does not appreciate the extent of the nervous strain under which saleswomen suffer. To begin with, they must work at high pressure to keep up their sales because their wage and their promotion generally bear a fairly direct relation to the amount of sales. The saleswomen must be able to turn readily from one form of sale to another and to make out quickly the requisite sale slips. There are pay and take, C.O.D., deposit account, transfer and charge sales, all requiring different methods. Moreover, in each sale several operations are involved. There is the handling and measuring of the goods, the clerical work and the return of money or parcel or both to the shopper. In all these things speed and accuracy are the first consideration. This hardship