

A LIVING WAGE

FIXED AT 7/.

The Court of Industrial Appeals sat again on Saturday afternoon to decide the wages to be paid in the brushmaking trade. Justice Gordon presided. Mr. H. A. Parsons watched the proceedings on behalf of the employers. Further evidence as to the lowest wage to be paid to an unskilled laborer was called.

William Peters, greengrocer, Norwood, called by the court, said he did business with the working classes, and in his opinion the weekly expenditure for groceries for the average working man would be 11/4, as follows:—6 lb. sugar, 1/3; two packets S.R. flour, 7½d., ½-lb., tea, 4d.; 1 lb. butter, 1/; ½ lb. cocoa or coffee, 4d.; ½ lb. rice, 1½d.; 1 lb. barley or split peas, 3d.; 1 bar soap, 6d.; 1 lb. currants, 6d.; 1 lb. raisins, 4½d.; ½ lb. starch, 3d.; 1 bottle pickles, 6d.; ½ dozen custard powders, 6d.; ½ lb. pastry butter, 8d.; ½ lb. tea, 5d.; 1 tin herrings, 6d.; 1 tin jam, 7d.; 2 lb. salt, 2d.; 1 oz. pepper, 1½d.; biscuits, 6d.; glue, 3d.; oatmeal, 6d.; sauce or vinegar, 4½d.; 1 dozen eggs, 10d.; 1 dozen matches, 4d. He had spoken to several of his customers in order to obtain the information, and had averaged their bills for a period of several months.

William North, broom canvasser, Seamore-place, Adelaide, called by Mr. Parsons, said he had no children, there being only his wife and himself. His house rent for two rooms was 3/6; groceries would cost 2/6; bread, 1/9; meat, 1/4; milk, 10½d.; meat, 4/; fuel, 8d.; vegetables, 1/6; lighting, 4½d.; tobacco, 1/3; fruit and drink, 1/6; boots and clothes, 2/; total, 19/11. He was earning £1 per week, and was happy with his lot.

His Honor considered the rent below the average, which was 8/ to 10/ at least.

At this point the court adjourned for a quarter of an hour, and on re-suming Mr. Parsons intimated that the employers had no desire to ask their men to work for less than a living wage, and agreed to accept 7/ as the minimum.

His Honor said he was pleased to receive this assurance and that it would not be necessary to call further evidence on this point. He would therefore declare 7/ as the minimum wage at which a man could live, and the question of fixing the wages for brushmakers would now be calculated from this decision.

The court adjourned till Friday next to allow of a conference between the employers and employes on various other points.

On Saturday Mr. James Viant, organising secretary of the South Australian United Laborers' Union, was reported in connection with this case to have said on the previous day that he believed the ruling wage for laborers was 7/ per day. He informs us that he testified that the ruling rate for laborers was 8/, and he believed the rate in the Government employ was 7/ per day.