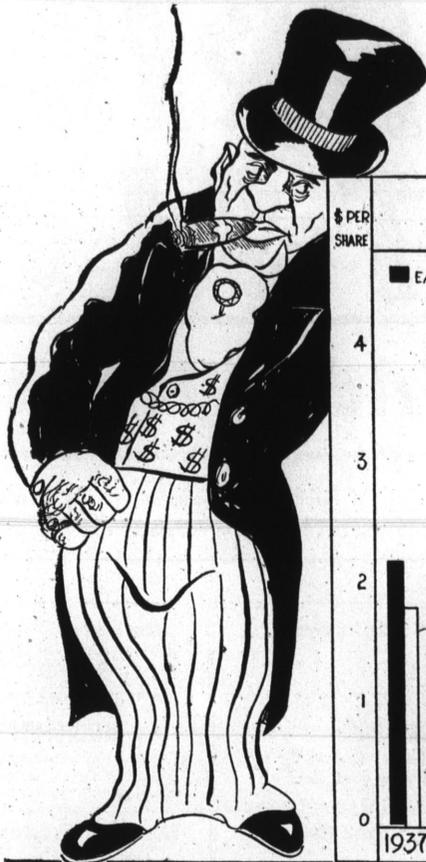
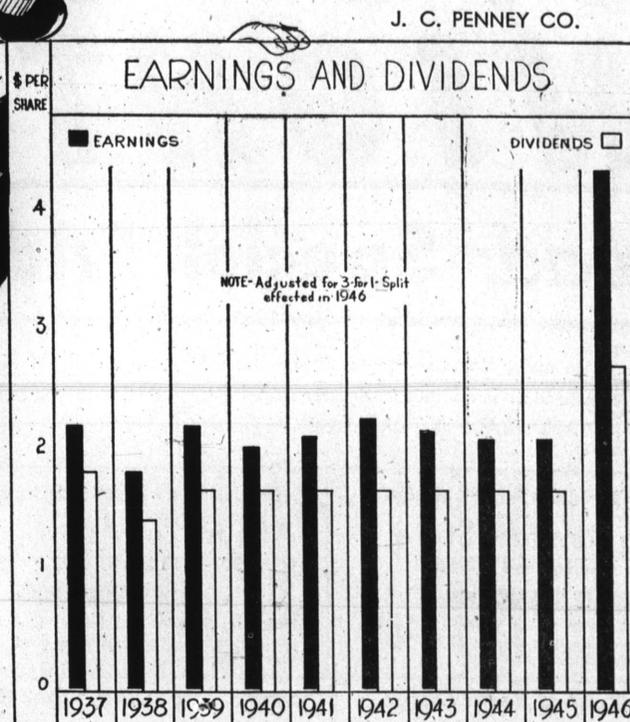


# Are Retail Clerks Entitled to a Living Wage?



J. C. PENNEY CO.



On August 25th, the Retail Clerks Union took a survey of its members to find what is costing them to live. Here is a breakdown of the figures and what an average showed the cost to be per week:

RENT	\$10.07
FOOD	20.11
CLOTHING	6.72
CLOTHING UPKEEP (Cleaning, Etc.)	3.10
DOCTOR and DENTIST	4.67
TRANSPORTATION	3.36
GAS, LIGHTS, WATER	2.63
INSURANCE	3.31
INCIDENTALS	6.47
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$60.44</b>

You will note that this is an average. Many are finding it impossible with a family to get by on this average. For instance, many are unable to rent a house, for \$43.63 per month.

During the first three months of 1947 the J. C. Penney Company made \$141,997,-205.00 in gross sales.

The women employees for this same company in San Pedro, Wilmington and Torrance were paid under a union contract, the huge sum of \$32.80 per week before taxes were taken out for this same period.

The Retail Clerks Union asked this company to pay its women employees \$45.00 per week. The company said that it would pay only \$35.88.

How can a retail sales lady live on \$35.88 without some outside source of income?

The Independent Merchants in February of this year recognized the tremendous struggle that white collar workers were having to survive under the high cost of living and increased the salary of its lady clerks to \$45.00 per week. The chairman of the San Pedro Civic Betterment Committee says that this is perhaps too high.

For five months the Retail Clerks begged the J. C. Penney Company to raise its wages to meet the high cost of living of its clerks. The last thing the members of this union wanted or wants to do is have an argument with the Penney Company.

We negotiated for 5 months. We begged for 5 months. We asked them to arbitrate for 5 months. Something had to be done. The situation was becoming desperate. We held four daytime meetings of our members to further discuss the problem and on July 3rd the J. C. Penney Company along with S. H. Kress, Woolworth and Newberry Companies, with whom we have no dispute, closed their doors and in effect told their employees and the public of San Pedro to go to blazes.

Their game is to sit tight until by misinformation the public will conclude that the Clerks Union is ruining the town. They are looking for champions and they have found one in the form of the chairman of the San Pedro Civic Betterment League. We believe that it is the solemn duty of such people as the chairman of the San Pedro Betterment League to tell the J. C. Penney Company that \$35.88 is not a living wage; to tell the J. C. Penney Company that the wage it pays its clerks is the only contribution it makes to the community; to tell J. C. Penney Company that millions of dollars each week flow into its coffers in New York City from towns like ours all over the country.

Mr. Chairman, the clerks can be wrong. Maybe we are asking for too much money for our work; tell the Penney Company that we are willing to arbitrate; to let a third party hear both sides and make a decision. Our clerks will abide by the decision. Mr. Chairman, is there anything fairer than this?

Mr. Chairman, if you can talk the J. C. Penney Company into this you will really be doing a lot of people a big favor. You will truly be helping our community.

## Retail Clerks International Assn., Local 905

*Haskell Tidwell, Secretary*