

Documents from the Swing Riots

Characters:

Laborers – want 12s/wk even though it takes 13s9d/wk to live

- (J-4) going to jail for arguing for increase in wages
- (J-4) bribed laborers with 2/6 to stop violence

Farmers – (J-5) farmers had a say in wage

Gentry – (J-5) a nightly watch to guard against destruction of the machines

Local government – (J-7) Magistrates impossibility of equal wages

- (J-5) threatened by laborers

National government – (J-6) Melbourne acts like he cares

- (J-5) accuses local government of giving into laborers demands
- (J-5) local government calls for end of use of old machines and the national government disagrees

Who do you sympathize with? Who's side do you take?

Laborers – make less money than they need to survive in a week

- Farmers try to lower wages even further

National government – if wages are fixed, there is nothing for laborers to work for because everyone is paid the same no matter what

- laborers should not have destroyed everything

Local government – told laborers that they would go to the national government to attempt to raise wages

Farmers – wanted machines back

- did not want the wages to raise

Was the introduction of machines beneficial or not?

Benefit to Farmers – more productive

- don't have to pay as much wage

Disadvantage to Laborers – less jobs and lower wages

Benefits the Gentry

Differences between Gentry and Farmers?

-machines and wage changes affect farmers more

-farmers have to pay laborers

-does not affect gentry directly

-farmers are taking the risk of profit/loss

Things might be better if laborers worked by commission instead of daily pay.

Should setting wages be strictly decided by the government, or should it go to free market and farmers?

- yes, the government helps pull these people out of poverty

-free market would not solve the poverty problem...or laborers might start dying
off

Why is the local government trying to suggest wages?

- they are closer to the people in poverty and can see how bad it is
- the national government is unattached to the people