Australians Fight Coolie Rates

American and English short stories are being offered to Australian magazine publishers at six shillings each. Illustrations are thrown in free.

Incredible, isn't it? But, if you want documentary proof of what can happen—and is happening—here, turn to page 3. Read, mark, and inwardly digest!

AND, IF, IN THE READING OF IT, YOU DON'T GET A BAD ATTACK OF INDIGESTION, WE MISS OUR GUESS.

The letter we've reproduced for you is from United International Features of London and Philadelphia. It was sent out, not so long ago, to Australian newspaper and magazine editors.

You will note the prices sought, the advertisements offered:
* "Treasure Island" story strip (published in "The Sydney Morning Herald"), 16/- each. "Baby Joy" strip, 10/- each. "Who is Who in Crime," 10/- each; a full Wotton's page, including illustrations, 21/- each.

And you'll note the qualifying paragraph—

"Economical graduating discounts on publishing a number of our features. . . ."

And if you've got any sense of fair-play in your makeup, you'll ask your- 
self this:

"How can Australian writers and artists compete against coolie rates such as that? And if they are allowed to continue, how can Australian standards hope to survive?"

Don't get the idea that United International Features is a monopoly in this Syndicate racket. It's almost as old as the double-sceptre trick, and it's getting worse every year.

It's getting so bad that it's time YOU started doing something about it.

Overseas short stories, sold by syndication agencies at ridiculously low rates, appear with monotonous regularity in Australian magazines. And here, in the art field, are some of the children that Syndication has spawned:

Superman. Dick Bradford, Joe Palooka—not forgetting Polk see Grl—the Kat- nockers Kice, Nancy, Harry, the Little King, Jim-Gorham Annie, Baraboo, The Pussycat Princess, The Lone Ranger, Batman, (Consolidated Press), Popeye, Blondie's Family, Pop, Rip Kelly, Popeye Valiant, Tarzan, Roy (Associated Press), Little Orphan Annie, Archie, Li'l Abner, Minnie Miny Moos, Tiny Treasure Island (Sydney Morning Herald), to name only a few.

Not forgetting the 16-page American comic-papers now being reprinted in Australia under licence—American "culture," that, on a "duty-free" basis, is threatening to drive independent Australian artists out of business.

"Economical graduating discounts on publishing a number of our features. . . ."

"How can Australian writers and artists compete against coolie rates such as that? And if they are allowed to continue, how can Australian standards hope to survive?"

"They undermine educational standards (don't forget that Lenny and his "foil friend, Poil Affopher" are read every day by thousands of impressionable Australian children). They're just about as un-Australian as anything could be."

"Today the Australian Journalists' Association stands foursquare against the four great evils that threaten both Australian literature and the development of a worthwhile Australian way of life."

"Syndication of oversung stories, articles and comic-strips that permits syndicated material to compete against
Reasons why it should be established:

1. Radio has a Standing Committee, yet publishing, with greater ramifications, has none.

2. Quotas for Australian films and broadcast music have been fixed, but any syndicated literary and art material are freely distributed to Australian news media.

3. Investigate all phases of the Australian publishing industry by taking evidence on the other hand, admits American books duty free.

4. Place a tariff upon imported books (fiction) to bring them up to a price at which the Australian article could compete, or alternatively place a quota upon overseas books.

5. Control the reprinting of overseas works of fiction in Australia. This could only be done by making it necessary for publishers to make application to a central body for permission to print. The central body would then grant permission, insisting that local works were not left on the shelves unsold for years, while the limited resources of paper and printing were made available to overseas works.

6. To secure adequate rates of pay and payment on acceptance.

7. To ensure adequate standards of work by Australian authors of adequately remunerated in Australia.

8. To bring about a proper display of their own and wise doses of the works of Australian authors.