

Municipal Lib.

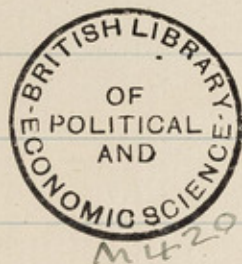


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Municipal Lab.



Municipal Lab

/ Booth, Life and labour.... 1902-3.

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Chap. II : municipal labour, etc.

second book

Interviews
etc.

Municipal Labour, Paritors etc.

Dec. 12th.

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Interview with Mr. Charles Street,
Secretary of the Limmer Hospital Packing Co.:-

Wages. The employees of this Company
are paid by the day, at rates ranging from
4/6 to 7/ a day; none earn less than 27/
a week and only a few foremen more than
42/.

Hours are 5-7 a week, 10 on the first
five days, and 7 on Saturday.

Regularity. Though work is much higher
in the summer & permanent all the men
are kept on throughout the year: in the
winter the majority of the men are in the
factory preparing stock for the summer
work. Whether at work or not all the
men are paid regularly their full wage, with
the result that they are thoroughly contented
and most loyal to the Company.

Health. The work is on the whole very

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Healthy especially the manufacturing portion,
the scent of asphalt being considered highly
healthy giving. No man is ever dismissed on
account of age: as they get old they are
given lighter jobs.

The proportion of foreign workmen
in the Company is from 10 to 15 p.c.
nearly all Italians. Englishmen will not
do the actual work of laying asphalt
on account of the heat. The Italians
are paid the same wages as English.

For if any of the men belong
to Unions: they are too contented. The
Company do a lot of work for the London
County Council: and some of the
Councillors tried hard some years ago to
induce them to join a Union. Councillors
came to Mr. Street and the Manager, and
asked them if they objected to the men
joining a Union: they were told that
the men were left free to do what they

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lit in the matter. The Councilors then
went to the men and told them that
the Manager and Secretary wished them to
join the Union.

Dec. 12th.

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Interview with Mr T. D. Cooper, Sec.
of the Val de Travers Asphaltic Paving Co:-

Wages. Men are paid by the hour
at the rate of from 16^d to 18^d
with the exception of a few foremen.
There are 150 permanent hands who are in
regular work throughout the year; the
minimum wage actually earned is about
35/- a week and it runs up to 50/-.

Hours. The recognized hours are 66
a week, but there is a good deal of
overtime, which is inevitable, as the
work has to be done at all sorts of
hours, and often under great pressure
to suit the convenience of customers
and builders.

Regularity. In the summer it is
necessary to take on a good many casual
hands who are paid at the rate of
16^d an hour.

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Health. There is nothing unhealthy in the
work, but the men suffer a good deal from
illness owing mainly to their reckless habits.
However the work is in some ways very
demoralising: owing to various causes, of
which rain is the chief work is constantly
suspended, when there is nothing for the
men to do but to adjourn to the public
house: as they earn high wages this leads
to a great deal of drinking. In addition
to this the men are constantly sent away
from home on jobs, which with men
of this class is always a bad thing.
The result is hardly a deterioration in the
men after they take to the work: they
become more drunken and imprudent:
few of them ever save anything. When they
are away from home the Company pay
a portion of their wages to their wives, and
it frequently happens that a man allows his
wife less when he is taking $\text{£}8$ an hour
than he did when earning $\text{£}6$ an hour.
In the hope of checking drinking the Company

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Some years since took to paying wages on Friday. This had some result but not much. The men all seem to look forward to the workhouse as their end: they say "When Mr. Val de Travers has done with us I suppose we shall go to the Big House".

Out of the 150 permanent hands 16 are Italians. Englishmen will not do the polder laying for any wage. The reason alleged is the heat to the feet; they say it makes the feet swell. This is true but the feet soon get accustomed. The real reasons in Mr. Cooper's opinion are (1) the intense consumption of the English working man who will not learn a new trade, and (2) his laziness; the work is very hard, in Mr. Cooper's opinion much harder than the English workman likes. The Italians are much more willing and industrious than the English.

In this Company the Italians are paid lower wages than the English, ranging from

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25¢ to 30¢. The majority of them supplement
their wages by going out with Ice Cream on
Sundays.

Jan. 22nd. 1896.

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Interview with Mr Fitch:-

Mr Fitch is the Secy of the Municipal Labour Union; I have seen him several times, but have never been able to fix him to an interview till yesterday. The bulk of the information he gave me is contained in the various papers.

The Union number 4500. Mr Fitch estimates its possible membership at about 10000.

The chief difficulty in the way of the Union is the apathy and selfishness of the men, who are very apt to ship out as soon as their own grievance has been remedied.

Mr Fitch admits that the Union by its wage raising policy has made it difficult for the workers to retain men in their employ who are not all - bodied.

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Jan. 22^d. 1896.

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Mr. Fitch admits that the Union by its wage raising policy has made it difficult for the retailers to retain men in their employ who are not all - bodied.

But they do not wish to see men taken on from charity men, to save the rates. At the same time they strongly object to the dismissal of old seamen ~~men~~ merely because they are old without any pension, and they think any man should give a pension. The tendency in all notices now is not to take on men over 45.

The Union objects strongly to the employment of contractors. Even if bound down, as they are by many notices, to pay union rates of wages, they manage to evade this obligation in some way.

The two worst notices in London are Paddington and Wandsworth, which pay their seamen only 18/ a week. The best is Bermondsey which pays them 20/3, gives 15/ a week in sickness, and a pension. Mr. Ditch says that since Bermondsey adopted this liberal policy the rates for highway expenses have fallen, as the men do the

look much better.

Mr. Ritch has given me returns received from branch secretaries of the Union in reply to enquiries made by him after I first saw him some months since. They are of no great value, but I give them here for purposes of comparison with our various returns from official sources.

Personnel :- wages		S.	G.
Stewards.	28/2.	Hours 56 1/2	and 48
Carmen	29/3	62 1/2	54.
Dist. do	30/.	do	do
Doctors	30/.	Various	
Pickers	28/3	56 1/2	48
Lower Pickers	36/	45	45
Hammermen	33/	56 1/2	48.
Holidays :- All Bank Holidays, and a week in summer.			
15/ per week sick pay, and a graduated Pension list.			

Retinal fees:-

Shapers:-	25/-	Hours. 56 1/2	and 40
Janus	27/-	(4 mos.)	(4 mos.)
Larmen	28/-	65 1/2	53 1/2
Pickers	28/-	56 1/2	40.
Man do	23/-	do	do
Larmen	28/-	do	do
Pushers	30/-	40	40.

Holidays:- One week and Bank Holiday.

City fees:-

Shapers	12/ to 28/-	Hours 53	and 53
Larmen	21/ to 28/-	57	57.
Shapers	12/ to 28/-	57	57.
Wharfen	10/ to 26/-	53	53.

Holidays:- One week and Bank Holiday.

Fulham:-

Shapers.	23/-	57 1/2	and 55-
Larmen	27/-	62 1/2	60.

Holidays:- Bank Holidays if not wanted

for snow

Concessions this year: - 1/2 per week extra
for sweeps. Carmen all over time after
10'clock on Saturday.

Hammondsmith:-

Sweeps	20/- to 21/-	Hours	5-8 1/2 and 5-3
Carmen	25/-		6 1/2 5-9
Shetmen	1/8 per load.		
Galliesmen	23/-		5-8 5-3
Shakers	30/-		5 1/2 4 1/2

Holidays:- Christmas Day, Boxing Day,
Good Friday, and 1/2 day on other Bank
Holidays.

Hampstead:-

Sweeps.	1/5 per hour.	Hours	5-6 and 5-0
Pickers	1/5 1/2 per hour		5-6 5-0

Holidays:- All Bank Holidays this year.

Remarks:- So p.c. of the employees
voted for the August Bank Holiday and the
last Saturday in July in lieu of the
Bank Holiday.

be have got a class of Sweep that as
a found a huck hunter and summer.

Kensington:-

Sweepers	21/.	Hours	5-6 1/2 and 5-1
Carmen	26/ and 28/	63	5-1.
Shoemen	24/	5 1/4 to 5-8	
Labourers	24/ to 26/.	5-6 1/2	5-1
Masons	36/ to 42/	5-6 1/2	5-1
Painters	40/	do	do.

Holidays:- Nine days and all Bank
Holidays.

Marylebone:-

Sweepers.	23/4	Hours	5 1/4 and 5 1/4
Carmen	27/.		
Pickers	6 and 6 1/2 hours.	56	48.

Holidays:- One huck and all Bank
Holidays.

Trick and Branch:-

Sweepers.	25/
Carmen	30/.

Shetman . 25-

Pickers 20/.

Holidays:- the general holidays and
one week in summer after year's service.

Poplar.

Sheepers. 22/ and 24/.

Shetman 24/.

Pickers 24/.

Holiday:- Three days. Stop work at
one on Saturday.

Paddington:-

Sheepers. 18/	Hours 6 am to 5.30 and 6.30 to 5-
Carman 24/	5- to 6 5.30 to 6.
Shetman 18/ to 20/	All hours
Pickers 20/.	6 to 5.30. 6.30 to 5-
Harbour labour 21/	do do
Janitor 20/	do do
Repletors 20/	do do.

Rothenhithe:-

Shrimps. 27/ Hours. 6 to 5.30 and 6.30
 Others 25/- to 5-

Pickers. do

Holiday: One week and Bank Holiday

Sick Pay:- Half pay on production of a doctor's certificate.

Remarks:- Concessions this year:-
 Saturday afternoon time of leaving off
 work altered and breakfast time allowed
 in the short hours. 'Leppin's' coat, and
 'Sawcut' provided for wet weather

Dorchester, St George's Southwark:-

Shrimps. 27/ Hours. 5 1/4 for all
 Carmen 20/ through year.

Doctors 27/

Pickers 27/

Holiday:- One week and Bank
 Holiday.

Shorditch:-

Sweepers	24/-
Stopmen	25/-
Day Carmen	25/-
Machine Room men	26/6
Shoemen	24/-
Pickers	25/-
Wrench Carmen	25/-
Washers	26/-
Masons	25/-
Painters	25/-
Rammen	27/-

Concessions during year:- 1 1/2 hours for meals, and paid on Saturday morning instead of Friday night. Made bulky servants, and the right of joining before a committee before being discharged, a ~~to~~ weeks notice to be given on either side, and the shot-cenies made bulky men instead of hard work.

St. George's, Harrow Lg.

Swampers.	21/11.	58 1/2	and	58 1/2
Carmen	26/ and 27/.	68	and	62
Pickers	15/- per hour	57 1/2		52 1/2
Swampers	15/- per hour	do		do

Holidays:- All General Holidays, and conceded this year one bank holiday after two years' service.

St. Luke's.

Swampers	24/.	6 to 6	and	7 to 6.
Carmen	25/- to 28/-	do		do
Swampers	23/ and 25/.	do		do.

Chelsea.

Swampers.	16/- per hour.	10		9
Carmen	do	10		10
Swampers	1/8 per load.	do		9
Pickers	16 1/2 per hour.	do		do
Masons	1/9 per hour.	do		do.

Holidays:- Four days and Bank Holiday.

Goodrich: -

Shrapens	24/	56 1/2	and 48
Carmen	27/	65 1/2	5-7
Shotton	24/	56 1/2	5-1.
Pickers	24/.	do	do.

Holidays:- Christmas Day, Boxing Day,
and Good Friday, and 6 days leave: have
them how we like, 1 at a time or altogether,
or we can take the Bank Holidays out of
them.

Greenwich: -

Shrapens	20/.
Carmen	26/
Shotton	24/
Pickers	27/.

Holidays:- Nine days in summer.

Cambridge:-

Masons	35/.	Grandifines	32/6.
Masons' Labor	25/.	Carpenters	35/7.
Women Sayers	35/.	Shet Drivers	21/.
Bookb, do	30/.	" Collectors	17 1/2 per ton.
Pickers	26/.	Washers Sayers	28/.
Tar Paries	26/.	Washers	24/.
Unloading Sayers	6/ per day.	Galleyman	27/.
Gardners	27/.	Disinfecting men:-	
Carman	27/.	Women	40/.
Sweepers	25-6.	Drivers	25-6.
Old men Sweepers	20/.	Assistants	35/.
Horsekeepers	44/.	Washing Sayers	40/.
Cheff cutters	30/.	Ham men	17 ^d and 7 1/2 per ton.
Harness Makers	40/.		
Famians' Women	42/.	Roller Drivers	27/.
" Doormen	33/.	Wapmen	25-6.
Whal nights	40/6.	Watchmen	20/.

Holiday:- Bank Holiday and one week
after one year's service.

Interview with Mr. Mason:-

Mr. Mason is Secretary of the Foot and Carriage Way Masons' Society, which he tells me is in a decadent condition, and is not likely to survive much longer. It now numbers 33 members. However, Mr. Mason views the situation with equanimity, as he thinks that the Union has really done its work, and before long will not be necessary. It was necessary in the past because the Municipal Labour Union refused to take in men who worked for contractors. But the public bodies are all coming round to the policy of doing their own work and before long Mr. Mason thinks that all the paving of London will be done without the intervention of the contractor. At present there are approximately 800 Street Masons and Paviors in London of whom probably 500 still work for contractors. The recognized rate of pay is 1/5 an hour. This sum is the least paid by any

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Contractor: in some cases they pay more if the men do the work very quick. Men who work for contractors are very irregularly employed and though they earn high wages while at work probably do not average more than 26/ or 28/ throughout the year. Work for the District is very regular, and the average rate throughout the year is about 26/ a week. When men are not actually engaged in the roads, they are employed in stone-dressing (i.e. repairing old paving stones) and other jobs in the yard.

The Parish stone masons it is to pave the roadway as distinguished from the footpath is now of course largely supplanted by wood and asphaltic paviers.

In the mason's opinion only a few months are required to pick up the business of a street mason or pavier. They are all recruited from general labourers, and many of them drift back to that class.

Masons and Paviers generally are a very rough and drunken lot.

The Society of Operative Stone Masons will not admit Street Masons, looking upon the work as unskilled.

The rather peculiar name of the Mason's Society is due to the fact that it is an offshoot from an older Society (since dead) called The Street Masons and Painters' Society.

March

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I have seen Mr Frank Sumner the
Surveyor of the Portsmouth Vestry. He tells
me that no man is permanently appointed
without being seen by him, though
practically the choice of men is that
his Vestry is in other words with the
forman.

The number of applicants for places
under the vestry is very large, but Mr
Sumner does not think that any but
labourers apply.

Mr Sumner says that one result
of paying better wages has been to
get a better class of men, and
about 150 men have been got rid of
in the last two or three years. When
Mr Sumner came to Portsmouth the
men were a very rough lot; Mr
Sumner however doubts whether the new
men do any more work than the old.
The human nature is much the same
everywhere, and they won't do much
more than they can help; their view

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is not that they are highly paid:
they fairly earn their money. Men
dockmen are badly paid and deserve more.
Mr. Sumner thinks he ~~it~~ could get the
work equally well done for 25/- at the
most.

Mr. Weston the Surgeon of Paddington
writes me "I always make a practice
of engaging the permanent workmen. Any
extra odd labour such as Drivers for stop
or water vans are put on daily by the
Chief Superintendent. A list of applicants
for employment is kept. No difficulty is
experienced in obtaining as many men
as are wanted - in fact the applicants
far exceed the requirements."

I had a long talk with Mr.
Ditch several days ago. He quite agrees
that the higher wages are ~~driving~~
out the men of a lower class. The
Paddington Surfers for instance are certainly

a low lot, and no doubt if the
waters were raised many of the present
lands would be gradually overtaken. What
would become of them he cannot say.

