

Rare section

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Rare section

## INTRODUCTION

*Origin of the Committee.*—The present inquiry was instituted in consequence of the Report of the Society's Special Committee on the Relief of Distress due to want of employment, 1904, which had expressed its opinion that permanent improvement in the relief of such distress must be looked for in a better organisation of industry, bringing about a diminished fluctuation and casualty of work, and in a better organisation of the worker to meet such fluctuations as are inevitable.

*General reference.*—This committee was therefore appointed with the following general reference:—' . . . to inquire and report whether by modification of existing methods of engagement, contract, and remuneration, especially in the case of unskilled labour, industry may not be organised on some more stable and beneficial conditions than now prevail.'

*Scope of inquiry.*—Having regard to the fact that the problems affecting the unskilled workman were to be discussed as directly bearing upon the general question of unemployment, and that those 'in distress' from this cause are found to be chiefly engaged in one or other of the groups of casual labour, it was decided to examine more particularly the conditions affecting the most typical of these groups in London, viz. waterside, building, and carmen's labour.

In respect of these groups the committee has therefore received evidence and made certain investigations, paying special attention to the following points:—

- (a) The possible effect of centres of casual employment in forming and retaining large numbers of unskilled workers who find there employment sufficient to keep them from seeking work elsewhere, but inadequate as a complete support.
- (b) The extent to which casual employment habituates men to a casual life, making idleness, slovenliness, and irresponsibility a tempting.
- (c) The extent to which casual labour involves an expenditure of money rendering a complete explanation of expenditure almost impossible,

and causing the money earned, though often considerable, to be wasted in alternations of extravagance and starvation.

(d) The extent to which in England and elsewhere there are in force special methods of engagement, contract, and remuneration on co-operative or other lines, which tend to promote stability and well-being in the ranks of unskilled labour.

Following the reference, the inquiry has been therefore chiefly directed towards (1) ascertaining what unsocial consequences follow upon irregular employment, what influence it has upon the home and work of the labourer—in a word how far the 'casual' labourer is the product of his economic environment; (2) an examination of the industrial conditions affecting this class in order to determine how far they tend to improve and the extent to which they are a necessity of either natural conditions or profitable business; (3) the suggestion of methods of reform.

Before dealing with the conclusions suggested by the evidence on these several points, it may be well shortly to analyse the general conditions affecting the demand for and the supply of casual labour in modern industry in order to distinguish the different aspects of the problem.

*Definition of 'Casual' Labour.*—The term 'casual labour' first needs definition. It applies strictly to those who are engaged from hour to hour or day to day, and for whom it is a matter of chance whether employment will be forthcoming on the morrow. A large number of labourers at the docks are 'casual' in this sense.

In a looser sense the term may be used also of those whose work takes the form of a succession of jobs, each of which may last for a longer or shorter period, of from a few days to several weeks, or even months. But the jobs are discontinuous and of irregular duration, so that there is always the liability to considerable periods of 'leakage' between them.

A typical example is afforded by work in the building trade.

Still more loosely the term may be applied to those trades in which the work is seasonal rather than casual. But from the uncertainty as to the exact commencement and ending of the season, as also from the fluctuating demand for labour in one season as compared with another, the element of chance or casuality enters largely into the opportunity for obtaining work. Labour at painting and decorating, gas-works, fruit-picking, hopping, and much shirt-making and tailoring are typical of this third class.

It is evident that short and irregular contracts of engagement are common in varying degrees throughout all ranks of industry, from the man who holds a horse's head to the journalist, the actor, or the barrister. Such contracts are merely the result of the general desire to economise effort. With long labour contracts a labourer, like a machine,



is a potentially productive force in the hands of the employer. Self-interest will probably lead the employer so to organise his work that the labourer is constantly employed, just as it now leads him to run his machinery with the fewest possible stoppages. But with the rapid changes of modern industry the short contract has the advantage of enabling greater mobility on the part of the labourer, and greater elasticity in the productive capacity of the employer. It is, moreover, both a disciplinary and a selective force. Consequently the short contract has come to prevail not only in the more casual forms of employment but in work which is on the whole the most regular, such as in agriculture and coal mining. Moreover, it is noticeable that in the transition from the long to the short period of engagement, it was the workmen who took the initiative in breaking down the old custom of yearly 'hirings' and 'bindings' in favour of weekly or fortnightly pays.

The special characteristic of these short contracts consists in transferring to the employee the responsibility of finding sufficient work to enable him to earn a sufficient income. The employer gains from avoiding the necessity to pay wages for more labour than he needs at any given moment. If the labourer is successful in obtaining full occupation by the exercise of greater mobility or by combining work of different kinds at different seasons, the productivity of labour is clearly increased. But the shortest labour contracts are most commonly found in the hiring of those who render services requiring little character or skill, while it is just with the casual or seasonal worker that the greatest prudence and judgment is required to enable him to obtain full work and to spend his resources wisely. It may well be, therefore, that very short terms of engagement are the result of a transference of burden from the stronger to the weaker, which is not necessarily economical from the point of view of society as a whole. For if the enforced idleness of the employee and the irregularity of pay is considerable, there will ensue such a deterioration in the workman as will probably outweigh the direct gain to the employer resulting from a more elastic labour force. It might be argued that should this deterioration really take place, one of two things would follow. Either wages would fall in consequence of inferior work until the point was reached when the supply of casual labour was effectively checked and work would thus become plentiful for those remaining, or employers, seeing the inefficiency of the 'casual,' would organise their labour in order to get the advantage of regular men. But in those casual trades wherein large numbers are employed there appears to be an effective customary force which maintains the received minimum wage-rate. Consequently the supply of labour may be, and in fact is, frequently in excess without any change of wage-rate. The second alternative may also break down. For it is quite possible for an

uneconomic use of labour to continue merely from inertia, so long as it affects all employers alike. Moreover, the inefficiency due to deterioration in the workmen may not be felt by employers where the result is to substitute a rapid flow of workers through a particular labour market—the industrial life of each man being short, but his capacity sufficiently maintained during that life—for a smaller number of individuals, each maintaining his health and strength for a longer period. This is likely to happen the more when the supplementary expenses of the workman's life—*i.e.* in sickness, unemployment, old age, etc.—are met from other sources than his economic earnings. But it is clear that from the point of view of society as a whole the former alternative is in the highest degree disadvantageous.

It appears, then, that the short labour contract is on the whole characteristic of a healthy economic tendency, and is often as much desired by the employed as by employers. But it involves special dangers where it is of less duration than one week, and is open to abuse when affecting workers who are not in a position to secure continuity of employment.

*Causes affecting demand.*—Casual employment, used broadly to cover the three classes distinguished above, is due to fluctuations in the demand for labour attributable to the following chief causes:—

(a) Changing physical conditions :

*e.g.* Frost interfering with building operations, or fog preventing the unloading of barges, but increasing the demand for gas.

(b) Seasonal supply of commodities :

*e.g.* The corn harvest, spring flowers, imports of wool and fruit.

(c) Seasonal demand for commodities :

*e.g.* For gas, clothes, holiday traffic.

(d) Fluctuating demand for commodities :

*e.g.* For road, railway, and building construction. But such fluctuations are characteristic of industry generally in varying degrees.

(Casual employment due to irregularity in the supply of labour is negligible, because, although some men do not want regular work, they can, in the main, only indulge their preference when the employer is agreeable to the system of casual labour. The distaste for regular work is, of course, a prominent cause of the oversupply of 'casuals.')

When one or more of the above conditions prevails there is, other things being neglected, an inducement for the employer to seek a form of labour contract which will enable him to increase or diminish his labour force in response to rapid changes in his need for it. An examination of the causes of short period fluctuations in the demand for

labour shows that for the most part they spring from conditions that must be accepted as inevitable. More gas must be used on a foggy day than on a clear one. Barges are inevitably delayed by ice or fog. Hops must be picked when they are ripe. A severe moral code might condemn all changes of fashion in dress, but life would be the poorer. It is true that exceptional demands for gas could be met by greater storage, and that ships and barges could be kept waiting in the river until the normal labour force could deal with them. The loss so entailed would usually be very great, however, and in general irregularity in the demand for labour cannot be met by violently interfering with the economical processes of production. It is, however, of the utmost importance to recognise that the degree of irregularity in this demand is nearly always capable of some, often of very great, modification. As an illustration of what may be achieved in this way, Mr. Carpenter's evidence is of great interest. It is often sufficient to make much difference that employers should themselves consciously endeavour to organise their work with this end in view. In greater degree the extent of these modifications is determined by the comparative cost of alternative systems of industrial organisation. Certain considerations important in this connection may be noted.

1. The value of capital appliances, their nature, the amount of rent paid for factories, etc. Where expensive machinery is used, there is a strong incentive to reduce cost by continuous running. Hindrances to regular work are prevented. The work upon a large building involving large capital outlay will be less broken by bad weather than that upon speculative building in the suburbs. Even though demand may be fluctuating, goods will be made for stock during slack periods until the fear of over-production and the rent for warehouses overbalances the gain from continuous working. Labour is thus regularised. Again, where high factory rents are paid it will be desirable to make full use of the accommodation. There is a strong inducement, in the case of many seasonal trades, to combine in one business several occupations that will give continuous use of the factory. Thus the making of jam will be followed by the making of marmalade, and that in turn by pickle or sweet making. Where such combination is difficult, and machinery is little used, there is a tendency for the work to be done in the homes of the workers. Were 'home' work impossible it is probable that there would be greater regularity of employment in certain branches of the tailoring trade. Similarly, were expensive machinery needed for brickmaking it would soon be carried on all the year round.

In the case of discharging and loading ships, however, the effect of large auxiliary capital (*i.e.* in the form of ships) is, in part, to render the work more casual. It is necessary to maximise the capacity of a dock for receiving ships. They arrive irregularly on account of changes in

the volume of trade and in consequence of uncertain weather. For this reason the greater cost of irregular labour is more than offset by the saving in capital charges achieved by concentrating fluctuating amounts of labour upon the ships as they arrive.

2. The extent to which skill is required of the employee, which may be lost: (a) by transference to a rival producer; (b) by disuse.

The qualities in a workman that are valuable to an employer are broadly of two kinds: (a) personal skill in a craft, good physique, nerve, reliability, etc. Such qualities may be termed personal skill. (b) Familiarity with the ways and peculiarities of a particular productive group, including familiarity with foremen, fellow workmen, geography of a factory or warehouse. This may be called co-operative skill.

In a business requiring skilled workmen, the supply of whom is limited, the employer will seek to retain his employees by offering them regular work. But even in the lowest grades of industry a little personal skill and a fair measure of co-operative skill are needed. Entirely casual labour is thus always dearer than comparatively regular. For this reason it is always found necessary to retain as far as possible a nucleus of known and fairly regular men, even in trades largely dependent on casual labour. For the same reason employers will often seek to distribute their work in order to retain a maximum of workmen possessed of a fair measure of co-operative skill. It is therefore often found that a larger number of workmen are maintained in a moderate degree of casuality instead of a certain number quite regular and the rest highly casual.

3. To some extent even increased wealth militates against regularity of employment and tends to increase the number of those who can always pick up a living without the necessity of work. It also increases the number of those who indulge in fashions and travel from place to place, according to the season, demanding a rapid increase of special services at different times in different places.

Modern industrial conditions seem, therefore, to be affected by influences, some making for greater, others for less regularity of employment. Machinery must be counted among the more important of the former. The old complaint against machinery was that it replaced the highly trained handicraftsman by the man who was merely a machine tender. While this tendency is still frequently operative, it is now increasingly true that machinery is displacing the purely unskilled labourer, and causing a demand for men of more general ability and reliable character, and affording them more regular employment.

The 'scotchman' and the 'grab' in the building trade, the mechanical stoker in gas-works, the steam crane, the grain elevator, etc. at the docks, and the motor 'bus or trolley, are materially diminishing the demand for unskilled labour in London.

Again, it is a platitude in business that time is money. Competition between business-men compels them not only to introduce time-saving appliances in the shape of machinery, but to employ workpeople who can work steadily, and quickly, and who are possessed of a high degree of co-operative skill. Competition here serves not to depress but to improve the condition of the worker, and explains why, in recent years, the tendency of wages in many grades of women factory operatives has been upward, despite the fact that supply of labour has been probably permanently in excess of demand, in the sense in which supply means persons anxious for employment, but not in the sense of persons possessing the physical or mental qualities required.

A further point of some importance affecting the demand for unskilled and casual labour must be noticed. When employment is both irregular and at the same time of a kind demanding a fair measure of strength or skill, e.g. the work of the 'general labourer' in London, the hourly or daily rate of pay is high. This attracts a large supply of such labour, but the wastage through deterioration is great. Hence there is created a large supply of labour, of poor quality, able in busy times to obtain spells at the high rate, but subject to long spells of idleness, when lower rates of pay are willingly accepted. Hence there will be an attraction for seasonal or other casual labour trades to come into the district in order to take advantage of this cheap labour. Moreover, women's trades will tend to spring up, whereby the irregular earnings of men may be supplemented by the irregular earnings of women. In this way a compensatory action, as it were, is produced by which a number of casual employments come to be grouped together. The result is the formation of a large market for casual labour. The opportunities for finding casual work are increased. At the same time the chief stimulus to the decasualisation of any given industry is removed—namely, the difficulty of obtaining a fluctuating supply of labour of sufficient quality. On the other hand, the complexity now set up increases the difficulties of obtaining work for men entering the ranks of casual labour by any one channel, but not possessed of the knowledge or connections that will open up the way to the various supplementary occupations—as, for example, in the case of a skilled workman in time of depression. When centres of casual labour have thus been formed, it is clear that all artificial schemes for supplementing casual earnings by the offer of further opportunities for casual earning—for example, by a regular system of Borough Council relief work or by wood-chopping yards—only tend to aggravate the evils when once they have become permanent. They increase the demand for casual labour, while diminishing the force of such economic tendencies as make for greater regularity of employ-

ment. Their justification could only rest on the assumption that the opportunities for work which such quasi-charities afford are contracted and expanded in direct response to fluctuations about the normal demand for such labour. Even if this were the case, their justification would be very far from established. But the tendency in all works of this kind is to become permanent and in this way to increase the total demand for casual labour while doing nothing to diminish the total irregularity of the work.

The conclusions which seem justified by this brief review of the forces of demand for casual labour in modern industry are shortly these. Apart from large disturbing influences, there is a constant process of consolidation and organisation going on in any large group of industries, by which the total opportunities for employment tend to become more regular. Again, the increased use of capital in machinery displaces hand-labour, with the result that the demand for labour is, on the whole, regularised and in the case of the lower grades of employment the quality of the labourer demanded is raised. On the other hand, in so far as casual labour is itself a cause tending to produce a permanent over-supply in the labour market, there are likely to arise new forms of industry constituting a fresh demand for casual labour so long as this labour remains cheap.

At the present day one of the tendencies making for the increase of casual labour is the changes in fashion and in the manner of life, due in part to the increase of wealth in the community, which intensify the demand for irregular services at different times of the year.

*The Supply of Casual Labour.*—The flow of workmen into any particular trade is normally accommodated to changes in the demand for them through the rise or fall in wages acting as an attracting or repelling force upon the rising generation. Apart from great and sudden changes, the varying needs of any given industry should thus be met without the necessity arising for competent workmen of long standing to be dismissed. (Cf. evidence of Mr. Horn, that in a slack time he never needs to dismiss hands, it being sufficient to cease taking on new ones.) But with casual labour the supply is less easily kept in relation to demand. For even if the men so employed were as prudent on the whole as those of higher grades of industry, and regulated their numbers according to the prospects of maintenance, the fact that their ranks are constantly recruited by those who deteriorate from the superior grades of workmen must introduce a source of supply that has little relation to the demand. There is no doubt that among the better class of dock labourers or builders' labourers there are many who obtain sufficiently regular employment, and who deliberately bring up their children to follow them in the same condition. And, although it is difficult to obtain definite evidence affecting sufficiently large

numbers, it is probable that there is a steady process by which the sons of the more prudent and efficient casual labourers rise into the ranks of skilled workmen. But with a still larger number of casual labourers the influences which limit the size of their families are rather positive than preventive checks, and the only field of occupation open for the younger generation is in some form of unskilled and irregular labour. In addition, there is the steady downflow of those who, from misfortune or inefficiency, have failed to maintain their position in a higher social grade. It would be of very great value to know, for example, with respect to the London dock labourers, what proportion of the younger generation rise into regular occupations and skilled trades, what proportion continue as unskilled labourers, and in what proportion the supply of dock labourers is made up of the unfortunates and inefficient of other classes. It is said that one in ten of the children attending the London elementary schools is mentally defective or naturally dull.\* Although such children may often develop intellectually after a few years and thus become normal, they nevertheless are seriously handicapped during the years of their education, and are thus at a disadvantage when the time comes for making a start in life. To quote the report, this number represents 'those who, being dull, derive little or no benefit from the practical system of instruction in the elementary schools.' If there be added those who, from illness or vice, become unfit for the more exacting and strenuous occupations, it seems clear at least that a considerable proportion of those who gravitate to the least attractive forms of employment are determined as to numbers irrespective of demand.

These considerations suggest two independent problems. First, casual labour causing thriftless forms of life, and causing by its irregularity considerable deterioration within its ranks, with the consequent creation of inefficient and unemployables; second, casual employment regarded as itself produced by the existence of those whose work-value is so low that their only chance of employment is to fill up the gaps caused by the fluctuations of industry and to do the odd jobs for which neither brains, physical strength, nor character are required.

These two problems can hardly be considered apart, but they are nevertheless distinct. In the first case the remedy is found in a complete decasualisation of industry. The relation of cause and effect is from industrial environment to consequent evils of character, physique, etc.

In the second, cause and effect are reversed. It is the existence of inefficient and weak characters which accounts for the growth and continuance of such low-grade occupations as they can economically fill.

\* *Report of Education Committee of London County Council, 1906, p. 47.*

Inefficient and weak characters exist in considerable numbers whose condition is not due to the demoralising influence of casual employment. Such persons will, if left economically free, render those low-grade services of which they are alone capable. The offer of such labour creates a demand for it. The relation of cause and effect is from lack of character or efficiency to bad industrial conditions. It is very necessary to emphasise this double relation of cause and effect. There are found many who attribute all the evils attaching to casual labour to the thriftlessness or the inefficiency of the labourer, and ignore the essential truth that, so long as the present conditions of casual employment continue, it is idle to expect any other result than the wholesale manufacture of thriftless and inefficient workers.

On the other hand, it is equally one-sided to suppose that were industry decasualised, inefficienta would cease to exist.

The problem is indeed complicated by the presence of a vicious circle. Bad environment produces bad character; bad character perpetuates evil environment. But were this the only truth it would be sufficient to decasualise industry to stop the manufacture of the casual labour class. A thorough reform of industrial condition once effected would be sufficient. In fact the further truth has to be faced—that, independently caused, a new supply of persons only capable or willing to render the lowest paid and least efficient labour will be steadily forthcoming. If left free these persons will constitute an effective demand for partial employment, with the result that sooner or later the old vicious circle is once more set up. It is for this reason that no compulsory interference with the conditions of casual employment can be regarded as logically complete that does not go the length of forbidding anyone to offer or accept work upon less than the minimum conditions regarded as satisfactory. The position to be considered, therefore, is whether it is more desirable to leave the relatively inefficient class to render the economic service of which it is capable, accepting the fact that in so doing we are tacitly allowing the manufacture of further inefficient while endeavouring to minimise the evil by indirect influences, or whether we should refuse to all the liberty to work except under conditions approved by a social conscience. If the latter alternative is accepted, the further point is raised: Shall the inefficient who are forbidden to work be supported by families and relations, as is now done in wealthier grades of society, or will there be necessary a great increase in institutions for the maintenance of the industrially unfit?

In seeking an answer to such questions as these, obviously one important point to determine is the relative proportion among the casual labour class of those who have reached that condition through deterioration from higher industrial grades, and of those who are indi-



genous in the casual class. Of the latter, some, of course, will owe their position to the influence of bad industrial environment, some to natural inefficiency. If this further distinction could be made, a rough indication would be afforded of the extent to which a 'casual' environment is responsible for the existence of a 'casual' class. No material exists for making such a division with any degree of completeness or accuracy. An intensive study of the applicants for work under the Unemployed Workman Act would do something, nevertheless, to throw light on this point. It may be useful therefore to refer to the results of the special inquiry organised by the Charity Organisation Society into the cases of 4,000 applicants to the West Ham Distress Committee in the winter of 1905-6. The particulars of each case were first taken down from the applicant by the clerk to the Distress Committee. The statements thus made were verified as follows:—First, the special inquiry officers or Charity Organisation Society workers paid visits to the home, where the applicants were in all cases seen and questioned. Second, neighbours, references, and the occupants at previous addresses were visited or written to. Third, employers for the last two engagements preceding registration, and also the employer with whom the applicant had served his longest continuous period, were written to. Where such inquiries were insufficiently answered, further investigation was made, when possible, by correspondence with other Charity Organisation Committees in London or by a visit from an inquiry officer. Fourth, receipt of Poor relief was corroborated by reference to the relieving officer. When the information thus obtained was considered sufficiently complete, it was carefully reviewed by two members of the Committee independently, and classified. If the judgments disagreed, the case was referred to a Classification Committee of three. When the investigation had been completed 2,000 of the 4,000 dossiers were reviewed, and such information as appeared capable of statistical treatment tabulated, from which the following results were obtained:—

#### I. EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION.

i. Casual Labourers—			
a. Lower grade, not Dock	. 17.2 per cent.	} = 50.4 per cent.	
b. Dock	. 16.3    "		
c. General (7d. per hour)	. 16.9    "		
ii. Factory Labourers	. . . . .	8.8    "	
iii. Engineers' Labourers	. . . . .	5.8    "	
iv. Building Trade—			
a. Tradesmen	. . . . .	5.9 per cent.	
b. Labourers, including Scaffolders and Excavators	. . . . .	} 11.5    "	} = 17.4    "

v. Carmen . . . . .	8.4 per cent.	
vi. Miscellaneous—		
a. Skilled . . . . .	6.0	”
b. Unskilled—		
i. Normally regular . . . . .	4.6 per cent.	} = 8.7
ii. . . . . casual . . . . .	4.1	

The accurate determination of the employment distribution of the applicants is hindered by several difficulties.

*a. Faulty description.*—Applicants were probably led to describe themselves incorrectly by two motives. It was thought by some that labourers were more likely to be given work than skilled men. Hence it was occasionally found that men so described themselves when they were really following a skilled or semi-skilled trade. Inquiry has probably reduced this source of error to a negligible quantity. On the other hand, there were many instances of men calling themselves printers, carpenters, engineers, etc., when they were really labourers corresponding to those forms of skilled work. Employers' references and other inquiry has also minimised this error.

*b. Combination of occupations.*—A great many of the unskilled workers had from time to time followed very various callings and normally combined several season trades. Thus carmen often work at the building trade or at the Docks, or get a job in a factory during slack time. In such case what appeared the predominant occupation was taken.

*c. Present and predominant occupation.*—In not a few cases men who for a considerable time had followed a regular occupation were found to have descended to casual labour. Such descent was due to several causes, and the probability that the better work would be regained was in most cases doubtful. Where no strong probability was suggested, the present occupation has been taken as the true one.

The really important point to be ascertained in respect of the nature of employment is the proportion of applicants normally in casual employment.

From the table it will be seen that these include the casual\* labourer proper, the builder's labourer, and a proportion of miscellaneous workers, making a total of 66.2 per cent. If the skilled men of the building trade and carmen are also included, both being very irregular forms of employment, the total becomes 75.3 per cent.

(N.B.—The distinction of skilled and unskilled men is misleading unless carefully defined. In the miscellaneous group, those have

\* The 'casual' labourer, again, needs more accurate definition. There is the waterside labourer, a definite calling; the odd jobber, but not commanding a regular wage; and the general labourer, who gets 7d. an hour and is often in steady employment for longer or shorter spells.

been called unskilled only who were familiar with no trade processes—*e.g.* messengers, watchmen, window-cleaners, seamen, and hawkers.)

Of tradesmen there were 8·7 per cent., of whom 5·9 per cent. were in the building trade.

## II. INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER.

Since the majority of the applicants were of the casual labour class it has been impossible in very many cases to obtain a record of industrial character from previous employers. The classification here made is based upon definite evidence only. Thus many of those placed in the 'indifferent' class may have had bad industrial records, but few can have had good ones. For the most part they consisted of men following irregular or casual work which did not admit of a record.

The high proportion of men with good industrial records and character does not necessarily warrant the deduction that this is the measure of those who deserved help under the Act. Of these 16 per cent. were past work, 11 per cent. were not in distress, and 9 per cent. were suffering from illness or accident. Thus only 64 per cent., or 17 per cent. of the whole, were suffering from bad trade conditions. On the other hand, the figures prove that many men who had held good places in the industrial world were among those who registered. They were not all unemployable.

<i>a.</i> Good industrial character and record . . . . .	26·5 per cent.
<i>b.</i> Indifferent " " " . . . . .	55·1 "
<i>c.</i> Bad " " " . . . . .	18·4 "

## III. CAUSE OF DISTRESS.

<i>a.</i> Slackness . . . . .	48·4 per cent.
<i>b.</i> Age . . . . .	13·5 "
<i>c.</i> Not in distress . . . . .	12·6 "
<i>d.</i> Bad character . . . . .	9·8 "
<i>e.</i> Inefficiency . . . . .	4·6 "
<i>f.</i> Illness . . . . .	4·0 "
<i>g.</i> Accident . . . . .	1·9 "
<i>h.</i> Irregular timekeeping . . . . .	1·4 "
<i>i.</i> Threw up job . . . . .	1·4 "
<i>j.</i> Industrial change . . . . .	0·9 "
<i>k.</i> Starting business . . . . .	0·6 "
<i>l.</i> Disagreement with foreman . . . . .	0·5 "
<i>m.</i> Leaving army . . . . .	0·4 "

Under the heading 'slackness,' as the chief cause of distress, m

trade but many who were experiencing periods of seasonal slackness—*e.g.* painters, builders' labourers, etc.—also some for whom no other assignable cause of distress could be found, but who were probably lacking in efficiency, energy, or character of which there was no definite evidence. But, neglecting this uncertain quantity, the table shows that 50·7 per cent. of the applicants were either not in distress or owed their position to causes other than exceptional trade conditions, and not, therefore, legitimately coming within the provisions of the Act, since they were not suffering from slackness in the demand for genuine workmen.

#### IV. FINAL CLASSIFICATION.

Class I.—Regular skilled workman, of good character, suitable for help under the Act.

47=1·2 per cent.

Class II.—Men normally in regular work, of good character, semi-skilled or unskilled, and suitable for help under the Act.

616=15·4 per cent.

Class III.—Men with indifferent or purely casual records. Character on the whole satisfactory.

1,537=39·2 per cent.

Class IV.—Men past work, prevented from working, or unwilling to work.

786=19·4 per cent.

Unclassed.—Those in work, or who could not be found, or who were not wage-earners.

984=24·6 per cent.

The evidence obtained from the West Ham inquiry may be supplemented by the results of the careful investigation into the cases of 1,702 applicants made by the Stepney Distress Committee during the winter 1905-6. They were classified industrially as:—

(1) Skilled men=188=11 per cent.

(2) Semi-skilled (*e.g.* builder's labourer)=340=20 per cent.

(3) Unskilled=1,174=69 per cent. (of whom 162, or 9½ per cent., could give no verifiable employer's reference).

They were further classified as follows according to their suitability for help under the Act:—

Class A.—To be given preference in employment. Men who could show a record of regular or fairly regular previous employment.

1. 97 with record of regular employment.
2. 155 with record of fairly regular employment.
3. 48 with good past records.

300 of whom 66 found work between classification and offer of relief work.

Class B.—Men suitable for help, but not to be treated preferentially.

1. 256 with some record of casual employment.
2. 109 suitable, but not in urgent need.
3. 71 men dismissed work for slight faults.

480

Class C.—Men whose application was withdrawn before classification.

1. 192 who found work before classification.
2. 36 not traced.
3. 9 withdrew application.

177

Class D.—Men unsuitable for help under the Act.

1. 276 single men or widowers without dependents.
2. 144 physically unfit or too old.
3. 53 dismissed for grave faults.
4. 162 no verifiable record of employment.
5. 12 rejected by previous Committees.
6. 95 bad character.
7. 21 not qualified by residence.
8. 32 Poor Law cases.

795

From these figures it appears that only 17 per cent. of the applicants could show a combination of good industrial record, satisfactory character, and need of help. The very large proportion (69 per cent.) were purely unskilled or casual workers. Thus the Stepney figures corroborate those of West Ham in establishing the general conclusion that it is from the existing 'casual' class that the great mass of semi-dependents and under-employed men is drawn. How many of these owe their position to earlier deterioration it is impossible to say. But the figures also show that a not inconsiderable number of men who were real workmen, viz. in West Ham Classes I. and II.=16.5 per cent., and in Stepney Class A =17 per cent., were in danger of falling into the casual grade from superior industrial positions in consequence not of defects of character, but of economic misfortune.

The following analysis may be added of seventy cases of men wishing to emigrate investigated by the Poplar C.O.S. in the winter of 1904-5 on behalf of the Unemployed Committee :—

## I.—Industrial character.

- a. Men of good character, with decent industrial record = 26 = 37.1 per cent.
- b. Men of purely casual record = 9 = 12.9 per cent.
- c. Men of indifferent record, or about whom no evidence was to be obtained = 10 = 14.3 per cent.
- d. Men whose position was mainly due to inefficiency and dulness = 12 = 17.1 per cent.
- e. Men whose position was mainly due to failing in character = 11 = 15.7 per cent.
- f. Men past work = 2 = 2.9 per cent.

Here the double basis of division of character and industrial efficiency is used throughout. It shows that while 37 per cent. of the applicants were satisfactory workmen of good character owing their distress to economic misfortune, 32 per cent. were inefficient or men with a marked weakness of character, while 27 per cent. were of the colourless casual type who were probably indigenous in their class.

The following table further clearly brings out the fact that the majority have at some time or other had regular employment for a year or more. This confirms the evidence obtained in the West Ham inquiry, and goes to show that it is easy to obtain an entry into industrial employment even for those of lower grade, and that it is the smaller proportion of those who ultimately become casual labourers who begin their career in that way.

*Longest recorded jobs.*

Casual only	1 year and under	2 years and over 1	3 years and over 2	5 years and over 3	10 years and over 5	Over 10 years
20	8	4	8	7	11	12
28.6 %	11.4 %	5.7 %	11.4 %	10 %	15.7 %	17.1 %

If West Ham be accepted as a district fairly typical of those parts of London having a high percentage of unskilled labourers in their population, the inquiry there made may be taken to establish certain broad points.

First, it gives some indication of the proportion of the population in such a district who are unemployed. The total population of occupied males of ten years and upwards was, according to the Census of 1901, 83,101. The total male applicants to the Distress Committee were 4,456, or 5.4 per cent. There is little reason to suppose that any considerable number of unemployed able-bodied men, at least of the lower grades of workmen, refrained from registering. But from this total of four and a half thousand the statistics already quoted show

that 26 per cent. only were men able to give evidence of a good industrial record, together with evidence of good character, while 50 per cent. were either not in distress or were suffering primarily from causes other than industrial depression. It would seem, therefore, that even in a year of considerable trade depression those suffering seriously from lack of work are but a small proportion of those who can justly expect to find a permanent place in industry. Further, according to the Census of 1901, there were 5,581 dock labourers living in the borough. Among the male applicants to the Distress Committee there were 713 whose occupation appeared to be predominantly at the Docks—that is, 12·8 per cent. only of the dock labourers of the district had found occasion to apply to the Distress Committee. The age distribution of this group of applicants is shown in the diagram on page 25, from which it will be seen that the ages of the unemployed dock labourers tend to be considerably higher than the ages of the whole group. As a matter of fact, the inquiry showed that in the case of the dock labourers 19·5 per cent. of the applicants owed their unemployment either to age, character, or illness. It is well established that the Docks afford an opportunity to many old men who are really past work to earn an occasional day's or half-day's pay, but who in no way depend for their subsistence upon these earnings, since they live with their children, who are responsible for their maintenance. If these are deducted, only 10 per cent. of the dock labourers resident in the district, and *prima facie* capable of employment, registered. Again, the Census shows that 8,161 persons in the borough were engaged in the building trade as either skilled or unskilled workmen. The applicants to the Distress Committee belonging to the building trade were 779, or 9·5 per cent. of the whole. The age distribution of men employed in this trade, according to the diagram on page 45, shows that it was the younger men who seemed chiefly to be suffering. The explanation is, no doubt, that there had been a large increase in the number of young men entering the trade in the prosperous times prior to 1901, and also that the building trade is a favourite occupation for those unskilled labourers who are yet young and active, but whose absence of training and other disqualifications cause their employment to be highly irregular.

Except by experience gained through actual contact it is difficult to appreciate the variety of causes found at work as instrumental in creating this semi-employed casual class. It is important that this plurality of causes should be understood as, otherwise, it will be impossible to judge of the probable success of any proposed remedies. Perhaps the essential portions of various typical cases taken from the records of applicants to the West Ham Distress Committee will best make this point clear.

1. Types of men, past work, not in distress, but ready to seek casual jobs or register as unemployed.

(a) A man of sixty years of age, living with married son in regular work in comfortable home. The old man gets occasional work at road sweeping at 25s. a week, and is receiving 7s. a week out relief.

(b) Ship's carpenter of sixty-two, who is still a member of his trade union, constantly looks for work, but is told that he is too old. He lives with his wife in one room at 1s. 6d. per week rent. The home is well furnished and comfortable. For a year he has done nothing but a fortnight's work in connection with a newspaper fund.

He is spoken of as a man of good character who does not waste his money. He has had no poor relief. He and his wife are supported by three sons, who are all working.

### 2) Illustration of attractive influence of relief work.

A family, of gipsy type, who work in summer as itinerant farm labourers. In winter they come to West Ham in search of charity and casual work. They state that they have been in distress this year owing to the fact that the unemployed agitation occurred later than usual.

### 3. Instances of good workmen in distress from industrial depression.

(a) Man of thirty-three, a builder's labourer of good physique, out of work through depression of trade. He was formerly a member for five years of the United Builders' Labourers' Union. His employers speak well of him; as also his previous landlady, with whom he lodged for three years. She says he was out of work a good deal, but always paid his rent; she would be glad to have him as lodger again. He is married—no children. The home is clean and tidy though poor.

The wife earns a few shillings a week casually. No poor relief.

(b) A man, fifty-four, a labourer in a chemical works where he obtained work in irregular spells. For thirty years he was a member of the Oddfellows—and is still in. His wages were 25s. The employer stated that the man had been taken on and dismissed twelve times in the previous six months, being employed on short jobs which would not afford continuous work. He described him as such a good workman that they would employ him again as soon as they had any work to do. The man is very anxious not to descend to dock labour.

He lives in one room with his wife and a son. He has two married sons who are now out of work. The family was very highly spoken of as clean, sober, and thrifty by previous landladies.

(c) Man of thirty-nine, worked continuously for seven-and-a-half years up to 1897 for Thames Ironworks, when he was discharged through slackness. He has since worked for several employers for short periods. When in full work he earns 27s. a week, but he has had long periods of unemployment. He is married, with five children, between fifteen and one and a half. They have lived in their present home—three rooms at 4s. a week—for ten years; though very poor it is clean.



The landlady and shopkeepers' speak of them as very respectable. He does not belong to a friendly society. They have had poor relief. The wife occasionally does washing.

(d) Man, aged twenty-eight, has had long period of work as an iron-calker at 25s. a week. He was still a member of the Boiler-makers' Union at a weekly subscription of 1s. 2d., and for the first fifteen weeks he received 8s. 6d. a week as out-of-work benefit. He was then out of benefit. He has good private and employers' references. Between May and December he had practically no work. In December he lost a child, the funeral expenses being £2 10s.

He has a subsidiary source of income in painting photograph frames in the evening, by which he makes 5s. a week.

He is married—one child. They live in four rooms at 5s. 6d. The home is clean, but most of the furniture has been pawned.

The wife earns 8s. a week by needlework.

No poor relief. The man, who is strong and healthy, is compelled to seek casual jobs wherever they can be found until his trade revives.

#### 4. Instances of typical casual labourers.

(a) A married man of forty-nine, who has four children aged respectively sixteen, fifteen, eleven, nine. The wife earns 9s. to 4s. a week by washing and needlework. A daughter earns 8s. a week, of which she gives 7s. to her mother.

There is no evidence of thrift.

They have a house of six rooms, for which they pay 8s. 6d. a week; subletting two rooms for 3s. 6d. a week. The rent book shows £8 arrears, of which they are paying off small amounts gradually.

The man worked for eighteen years with one firm, leaving through disagreement with foreman. He now averages two days' casual work a week at the docks at 5s. a day. A son, who used to be the main contributor to the family income, was killed in an accident four years ago. The family received £26 in compensation. This money has all been spent.

(b) Man of thirty-eight, a general labourer. He has five children. They live in two rooms at a rent of 4s. a week. £5 of rent is owing. The man, who is strong and healthy, worked for eight weeks last year at the Trinity Settlement at Baldock. From May to September he was costermongering and earned about 10s. a week. In October he worked for five days at the Church Army wood yard, where he earned 18s. At present he goes out selling muffins, for which he earned 2s. 3d. on Saturday and Sunday. To-day he did a day's casual work, for which he was paid 1s.

During the last three months he has had 8s. worth of tickets from the relieving officers. There is evidence that the man drinks.

(c) The man, thirty-three, is a builder's labourer, not strong and rather

inefficient. He is recently out of the infirmary. He has had short periods of work at 29s. 2d. a week.

He is married, his wife also being delicate, and they live with one child, aged five, in one room, for which they pay 2s. a week.

The child receives two free meals a week at school.

There are no relations able to help. They have had occasional poor relief.

(d) The man, who is twenty-three, is physically fit, but until he was twenty he never earned more than 10s. to 12s. a week. He now gets four or five months' work at the docks in a year. He is married, with one child. The wife does no work. They live with his mother. The home is poor and dirty.

They are spoken of by neighbours as being respectable people. In summer they go hop picking.

(e) Single man of twenty-four. He lives at home with respectable parents.

He worked for three and a half years as a lad, and then for eight months as a labourer in a factory at 16s. a week, when he left to better himself. He has since obtained no work, and is gravitating to the docks as a casual labourer.

(f) Man of thirty-two, for twelve years casual labourer at the docks. Well spoken of by foreman as one of the best of the casual hands. He has occasionally worked at the gasworks, but does so no longer, as he thinks it makes him ill.

There are five children under thirteen, who receive meals and boots from time to time at school. They are generally underfed.

The wife earns about 2s. a week as a pawnshop runner.

They live in three rooms, at a rent of 4s. 8d. They have been repeatedly sold up for arrears of rent, and have received out relief from the guardians.

(g) Man, forty-four, an ex-soldier with exceptional testimonials from officers as groom and servant. For three years he was with one firm as chaff-cutter at 24s. a week, but had to leave because the dust affected his lungs. He has since tried to get work without success.

Married, seven children. The eldest, aged fifteen, earns 7s. a week; the second, aged fourteen, 6s. a week. They live in four rooms, the rent being 4s.

The family is spoken of very highly.

The man was in a slate club for eleven years, but has since run out.

5. Type of skilled man out of work from bad character.

Man of forty-two, a skilled carpenter. He is married, with four children, three of whom have received meals under the Education Act. They live in three rooms at 8s. 6d. a week, all dirty and ill-kept.

The wife earns 3s. a week by pawnshop running. The man has done

no regular work for ten years, but lives on the earnings of his wife, those of elder children, who pay 7s. a week, and on frequent outdoor relief, 3s. 6d. a week. An employer says that while the man is getting parish relief he does not attempt to do any work, and when offered a job asks an absurd wage.

He is frequently drunk in the daytime.

This section, dealing with the analysis of particular cases of men who have found it necessary to apply for state or charitable help, may be concluded with a table (see p.22) setting out the details of the early employment of nineteen men applying for emigration through the Distress Committee in the south of London. The cases were taken at random, and although few in number they are probably typical of the better class of such applicants.

*Analysis.*

1. Deteriorated from skilled grade of self or parents, to unskilled or casual . . . . .	4
2. Deteriorated from regular occupation to casual . . . . .	6
3. Never other than casually employed . . . . .	4
4. Retained regular industrial position, but suffering from lack of work in it, which may be due in part to failing in character . . . . .	8

(a) Classes 1 and 2 are mutually exclusive; thus  $\frac{10}{19}$  or 52 per cent. are cases of deterioration from various causes.

(b) Of the nineteen cases, ten were of men now casually employed; of whom 6 or 60 per cent. had fallen to it from regular employment.

(c) Of the nineteen, ten had no industrial opening other than as errand boy, van boy, etc.

While there is no evidence showing how far defects of character have contributed to the non-success of these men, there is a marked similarity in the history of the majority. After some years' early work as errand or van boy, employment is found of unskilled kind lasting a shorter or longer time, but from which, through trade slackness, change of industrial method, etc., the man is thrown out and is then unable to obtain further regular work. His fundamental lack of skill is often the reason. No longer quite young and fresh he is at a disadvantage in getting regular work in which neither special knowledge nor skill are needed, while he has failed to qualify for any specialised work for which there is a demand.

With regard, therefore, to the supply of casual labour, the complaint so commonly made that it is constantly in excess is true; and it is no doubt equally true, as Professor Marshall has said, that the great need is to render this class of labour scarce and dear. Only so can one be sure of a sufficient stimulus existing which will lead to the

*Industrial History of Nineteen Applicants for Emigration at Newington, Camberwell, Bermondsey.*

Present Occupation	Age (now)	Age (left school)	Standard reached	Indentured apprentice	Father's occupation	First employment	Time engaged	Reason for leaving	Subsequent employments
1. Mason's labourer	26	14	—	No	Bricklayer	Helper to father — bricklayer	6 years	Did not think brick-laying a good opening	Mason's labourer.
2. Casual labourer and tramp	35	—	—	—	Foreman builder	Builder's lab. under father	2 years	To join army	Army, 18 years; and odd work at Docks.
3. Warehouse labourer	38	—	—	—	—	Errand boy	5 years	To get men's wages	18 years warehouse labourer with one firm at 22s.; firm closed owing to slackness.
4. Carman	32	14	—	—	Labourer	Van boy	3 years	—	Bricklayer's labourer, 1 year; meat potting, 5 years; carman (reg.), 5 years; carman (casual, 3 year), getting 8s. per week for 2 days.
5. Merchant seaman	29	—	—	Yes	Printer	Bookbinding	6½ years	To get higher wages; left 6 months before indentures up	Bookbinder, 6 months; casual plumber, 2 years; merchant seaman.
6. Bricklayer	37	—	—	Yes	Foreman bricklayer	Bricklaying	3 years	Apprenticeship over	Bricklayer, £2-£3 full time. Says for the last 8 years out of work half his time.
7. Accoutrement maker	32	11½	—	—	—	Van boy	2½ years	To learn a trade	Accoutrement maker, 7 years; leather worker, 5 years; accoutrement maker, 5 years; then odd jobs through slackness of leather trade.
8. Engineer's machinist	37	—	—	—	—	Errand boy	2 years	Better wages	Army, 6 years; engineer's machinist, 10 years, averaging 8 months per annum; motor machinist 2 weeks, work too difficult; few days at Docks.
9. Labourer	29	13	—	—	Carpenter	Stable boy	½ year	To come to London	Errand boy, 2 years; glue labourer, ½ year; carter, 1 year; Army, 6 years; deal porter, 10 years.
10. Labourer	33	12½	—	No	Bootmaker	Errand boy	1½ year	Better wages	Warehouse lad, 4 years; porter and packer, 1 year; Army, 14 years.
11. Handyman	23	13	V.	—	Labourer	Van boy	1½ year	Summer slackness	Errand boy, 1½ year; office boy, 1 year; engineer's labourer, 2 years; handyman 5½ years
12. Casual labourer	37	12	VII.	No	Plumber	Cigarmaker	5½ years	Change of business	Waiter, 1½ year; shopman, 2½ years; carman, 2 years; carman, 8½ years; Docks, 2½ years.
13. Lighterman	25	13	VI.	Yes	Lighterman	Boat boy	5 years	Apprenticeship over	Lighterman.
14. Corn porter	35	14	IV.	No	Caretaker	Machine boy	1 year	Better wages	Engine man, 3 years; Army, 12 years; corn porter, 5 years.
15. Chemist	58	14	Secondary	Yes	Chemist and Druggist	With father	6 years	To take situation	Chemist, 8 years; shop of own, 20 years; travelled.
16. General labourer	39	14	V.	No	Labourer	Errand boy	3 years	Too old	General labourer, 2 years; Army.
17. Leather-dresser	24	13	V.	No	Leather-dresser	Errand boy	½ year	Better wages	Leather-dresser.
18. Bricklayer	47	12	—	No	Printer	Newspaper boy	½ year	Improve himself	Printer's boy, 2½ years; G.P.O. driver, 2 years; building trade.
19. Bricklayer	24	14	V.	No	Bricklayer	Tailor's boy	—	To work with father	Helped his father; bricklayer.

regularisation of industry and the improvement of methods, from the play of self-interest acting upon the employer. But this over-supply is only in part due to the existence of those who are inefficient and unable to hold their place in regular industry, and in respect of these the tendency is for them to compete for those marginal engagements which make up the difference between the normal and the excess over the normal. Their freedom to do this is, as has already been pointed out, very largely their only chance of obtaining occupation of any kind other than that offered by charity or the Poor Law. At the same time the effect of their competition no doubt acts harmfully upon the more regular employes in the branches of trade concerned. They introduce a demoralising influence and tend to perpetuate in their own children the evil conditions to which they themselves have become accustomed. If, therefore, the evidence so far suggests that of the very large numbers employed in the casual labour groups in London the large majority are able to secure an average amount of employment sufficient for maintenance, this does not mean that the system of casual labour is harmful only in the measure of the numbers of casual labourers who become dependent. It is very largely on account of the evil influences of irregular work that the measure of inefficiency and of bad character is so high; while from the point of view of the employer the apparent contradiction suggested by the facts that the casual labour market is constantly over-supplied, while the rates of wage prevalent in these employments are high relative to those in regular trades, and show a tendency to increase, can only be explained as due to the fact that, while the standard of requirement is rising, the deterioration among casual labour is very great. Casual labour is therefore nearly always dear labour.

The conclusions that may be drawn regarding the supply of casual labour seem clear:—

1. They are regularly in excess in large industrial centres, such as London. The evidence shows that neither at the docks or wharves, nor among the unskilled men in the building trade, is there ever a shortage of men, with the possible exception of the public holidays.

2. It is from the casual labour class that those who fall upon the Poor Law relief works or charitable funds are mostly drawn; 45 per cent. of the applicants to the West Ham Distress Committee either stated themselves, or the relieving officers reported, that they had been in receipt of Poor Law relief other than medical.

3. That even in this casually employed class the number so dependent is not a very large proportion of the whole, possibly 10 per cent. in a time of bad trade. No doubt the liability to distress affects a very much larger proportion. The evils of casualness cannot, therefore, be measured by the size of the marginal number who at any given time

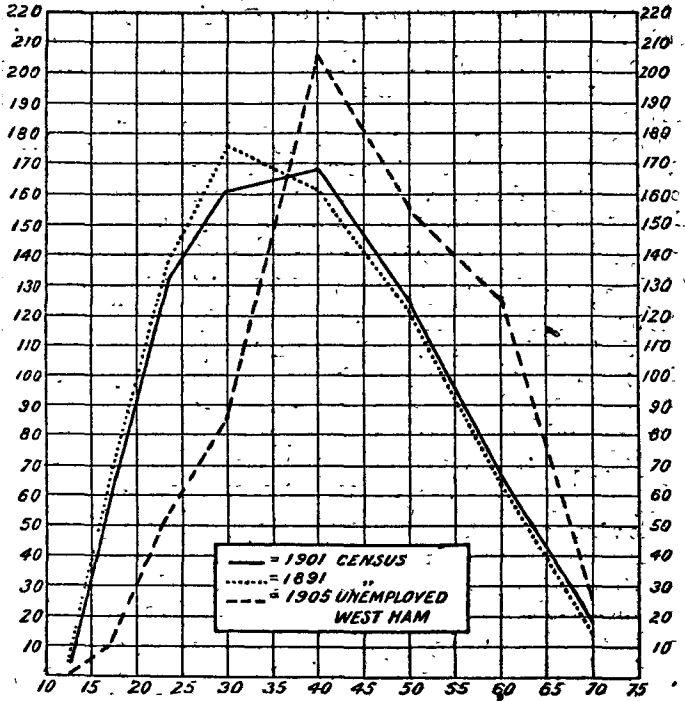
are in distress. Nevertheless, those in distress at one time would tend to be largely composed of the same persons as those in distress at another. The Register of the West Ham Distress Committee was reopened in 1906 on October 1. By the middle of November 2,819 persons had registered, of whom 1,879 had applied during the previous year. Thus a considerable proportion of the applicants were as badly off in 1906 as in 1905.

4. This casual class is formed of persons who owe their position to a variety of causes. Of these the most important are :—

- (a) Deterioration from higher industrial grades in consequence of:
  - i. Industrial change and cyclical depression of trade.
  - ii. Lack of character.
  - iii. Illness, accident, etc.
- (b) The chronic evils attaching to casual employment, viz. surplus labour supply, uncertainty of earnings, absence of a stable standard of life and measure of consuming power with consequent absence of prudence and thrift.
- (c) Innate inefficiency, mental dulness, etc., which are in part due to (b) but which would in part exist independently of these conditions.
- (d) Imperfect industrial training.

Before considering what remedies may be looked to for improvement in the condition of the casual worker, it will be well to consider in detail the industrial conditions affecting the three groups which have been taken as typical—namely, in dock, building, and carting labour.

### DOCK & WHARF. AGE DISTRIBUTION COUNTY OF LONDON



#### DOCK LABOUR.

Dock and wharf labour is numerically a less important form of casual employment than the building trade, but the nature of the work is for the most part less skilled, and the conditions under which it is done conform more closely to those of a purely casual kind. Again, dock labour is localised. As a result, it is in the districts adjoining the docks that casual labour bears the highest proportion to the total population, and in these districts the evil effects of casual labour, in the economic and social life of the people are most clearly seen in the resulting poverty. It is not necessary here to repeat the detailed description of dock labour which will be found in Mr. Chas. Booth's 'Life and Labour in London,' second series, vol. iii. The Committee has only attempted to obtain evidence concerning dock labour, calculated to show to what extent present conditions and tendencies differ from those set out by Mr. Booth.

Some inquiry has also been made into the condition of dock labour and its organisation in other places, with the purpose of ascertaining whether better methods exist elsewhere which could be profitably imitated in London.

The first point to consider is, then, the present condition of the London dock labour market, and the extent of the irregularity in the demand for labour at the many separate markets comprised within it.

These separate markets need to be briefly described. The first broad distinction to be drawn is that between the docks on the one hand and the wharves on the other. The docks proper consist of (1) those belonging to the London and India Docks Company. These are (a) the London Dock and the St. Katharine Dock, situated about one mile by road from London Bridge; (b) the West India Dock, the East India Dock, and the South-West India Dock, forming a group from four to five miles by road from London Bridge; (c) the Victoria Dock and the Albert Dock, the latter between six and seven miles by land from London Bridge; and (d) the Tilbury Dock, twenty-two miles by land from London Bridge. (2) The Millwall Dock. (3) The Surrey Commercial Dock. Into the docks owned by the Docks Joint Committee is received cargo of all kinds. That entering Millwall is predominantly grain, while that received by the Surrey Commercial Dock is nearly three parts timber, the rest being grain and coals almost entirely.

The wharves differ from the docks primarily in that they consist of large number of independent and relatively small centres of employment. The wharves on the south side of the river are almost completely separated from the wharves on the north side, in so far as an interchange of labour is concerned. On each side of the river, however, the wharves may be considered in groups, according to geographical position, e.g. those at Tower Bridge, Wapping, Limehouse, Millwall, Blackwall, on the North; and Southwark, Bermondsey, and Rotherhithe on the South.

According to the evidence given before the Port of London Commission there is no relative decline in the total volume of tonnage entering the port

Dock	1890-4	1895-9	1900-4	1904
St. Katharine's	180	199	182	175
London	441	442	421	404
West India	*	255	310	271
S.W. "	196	119	*	144
East "	209	215	295	276
Victoria	610	757	792	969
Albert	1,001	1,297	1,291	1,175
Totals, omitting W. and S.W. India	2,441	2,710	2,981	2,999
Tilbury	580	693	1,383	1,755

\* Under reconstruction.



The foregoing table gives the five-yearly averages of cargoes discharged in the docks of the Joint Committee (000's omitted).

A more detailed table is compiled by the Dock Company :

NUMBER AND TONNAGE OF SHIPS ENTERING THE SEVERAL DOCKS OF THE LONDON AND INDIA DOCK COMPANY FROM FOREIGN PORTS TO DISCHARGE.

Year	St. Katharine			London			West India			South West India		
	Number	Tonnage	Average Tonnage	Number	Tonnage	Average Tonnage	Number	Tonnage	Average Tonnage	Number	Tonnage	Average Tonnage
1899	326	300,781	616	571	447,988	785	185	392,084	1,579	88	182,373	1,504
1900	334	309,188	626	578	467,316	808	194	308,975	1,598	53	* 69,569	1,212
1901	300	178,884	594	617	470,294	762	310	365,987	1,748	74	* 110,988	1,500
1902	290	175,825	605	532	399,170	781	170	308,086	1,782	92	† 144,177	1,567
1903	294	174,036	592	585	376,528	644	153	302,625	1,978	75	122,950	1,639
1904	285	174,982	614	648	408,930	628	144	270,958	1,981	77	144,425	1,876

\* Entrance closed.

† Re-opened.

Year	East India			Victoria			Albert			Tilbury		
	Number	Tonnage	Average Tonnage	Number	Tonnage	Average Tonnage	Number	Tonnage	Average Tonnage	Number	Tonnage	Average Tonnage
1899	176	375,315	1,564	304	637,492	2,097	476	1,455,924	3,059	674	839,482	1,215
1900	160	255,379	1,596	294	628,966	2,139	429	1,517,697	3,071	760	1,064,394	1,406
1901	156	253,779	1,659	378	777,100	2,056	425	1,418,980	3,839	722	1,157,831	1,603
1902	190	319,356	1,681	355	711,513	2,004	386	1,399,607	3,866	782	1,421,677	1,818
1903	169	365,296	2,162	407	875,797	2,152	350	1,342,927	3,551	795	1,526,441	1,920
1904	138	276,429	2,003	484	969,344	2,264	337	1,174,392	3,487	862	1,754,668	2,036

The figures in italics are exclusive of two lines of small vessels from Ostend and Hamburg, and occasional small vessels from Flushing and Baltic.

From these tables it may be clearly seen that, while the tonnage as a whole is increasing, the increase is taking place almost entirely in

respect of the large vessels for which only the Tilbury Docks, and to a smaller extent the Albert Dock, have sufficient room. In consequence there is a steady growth in the demand for Dock labour in the lower reaches of the Thames, while that within the County of London is stationary or decreasing.

This development in the average size of vessels engaged in foreign trade is likely to continue. The upper docks will therefore be concerned increasingly with the continental and coasting traffic, and such increase as occurs will probably affect the wharves rather than the docks.

The following table shows how the average daily number employed at the Docks, excluding Tilbury, have steadily declined since 1901. It should be noted that the figures strictly represent the number of engagements made, not of separate individuals taken on. In so far as some men might work half a day with one firm, and the remainder with another, the figures would overstate the number of individuals employed.

Year	Estimated Daily Average Number of Dock and Wharf Labourers Employed at all the Docks and at the principal Wharves in London *											Daily Mean Number for Year	
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.		Dec.
1897	16,499	16,069	14,933	14,378	14,198	15,107	15,485	14,754	15,337	16,047	16,250	16,082	15,994
1898	16,333	14,017	14,380	14,372	14,232	13,532	14,061	13,810	14,982	15,728	16,778	16,890	14,750
1899	15,491	13,730	13,652	13,973	14,363	13,759	14,589	14,517	16,537	16,246	16,720	16,816	14,905
1900	15,717	14,120	14,968	14,170	14,066	14,064	14,854	15,050	16,920	17,620	18,564	17,233	15,130
1901	17,574	16,848	16,227	16,236	16,972	16,254	16,675	16,448	16,360	16,879	16,933	16,348	16,454
1902	16,360	14,247	14,159	14,054	14,572	14,659	14,926	14,199	14,556	15,235	16,085	14,551	14,716
1903	13,031	12,373	12,674	12,704	13,418	12,637	13,494	13,732	13,871	14,111	16,132	14,030	13,489
1904	14,164	12,841	12,962	12,834	13,085	12,296	12,758	12,227	12,798	13,575	13,462	12,936	12,988
†1905	12,999	11,441	13,239	11,682	12,007	11,349	11,634	11,301	12,237	12,091	12,370	12,926	12,106
†1906	12,336	11,327	11,637	11,543	11,971	11,464	11,908	11,772	11,847	12,251	13,060	12,210	11,944

\* Exclusive of Tilbury.

† Estimated from returns published in *Labour Gazette*.

But from the point of view of the decasualisation of labour it is important to consider the several employing authorities that are comprised within the docks and wharves. Any plans for the better organisation of riverside labour imply as a first necessity the co-ordination of these agencies in order that for the present large number of semi-distinct labour markets there may be substituted a single market within which mobility is complete. The present authorities acting independently may be classified as follows:—

I. *The London and India Docks Company*.—As fully explained in the evidence given by Mr. Watts, unity of control is already established in respect of the employees of this company. They employ about 20 per cent. of the labour engaged in the port, excluding Tilbury.

II. *The Surrey Commercial Docks, employing Corn and Timber Porters in Gangs*.—For dealing with wood goods the dock premises are divided into districts, and the work in each is let to a gang of men under

a year's contract. One of the gang takes the lead in each contract, & twenty mates are associated with him, and with each other, on terms of equality. The contracting gangs employ 'strappers' to help them busy times.

Corn discharging is also done by gangs of seven men, paid by piece work.

Since the ordinary docker would be of no use whatever in either the coal or the corn work, there is no very considerable gravitation of the ordinary casual to the Surrey Commercial Dock. About 10 per cent. of the total labourers of the docks are so employed.

The rest of the discharging in this dock is carried out by shipowners direct or through contractors.

III. *The Millwall Dock.*—The dock company only employs the men engaged on grain discharging. This is for the most part carried out by gangs (seven men in each) working at piece rates. The number employed is probably about 4 per cent. of the total engaged at the docks.

All other work is done by shipowners or contractors.

IV. *The Master Porters and Stevedores.*—As described in the evidence given by Mr. Scrutton, the special feature of this class of work is the rapid discharge of the larger steamers. The men employed are large picked men. In order to maintain a high level of efficiency the staff is as far as possible composed of the same individuals who are given a fair measure of regular work. About 12 per cent. of the total labour staff comes within this class.

V. *The Shipowners.*—A fair number of shipowners engage the men direct through foremen, according as they are needed. The permanent hands retained by each company are, as a rule, a small proportion of the whole, although the companies have each their special following as regards labour staff. There is, however, no organised co-operation between the different companies in the same dock or between the different departments of the same company discharging in different docks. Men not needed by the company by whom they are usually employed no doubt frequently find work elsewhere, but the opportunity to do so rests on chance and their own exertions. No system of labour organisation exists, as in the case with the London and India Dock Company. About 13 per cent. of the total dock labourers come under this head.

VI. *The Wharves.*—There are some 115 wharves on the London river side. The labour is engaged in nearly equal proportions on the north and the south sides of the river. The labour force comprises about 41 per cent. of the total. The method of engagement is, as with the shipowners, in the hands of the foreman at each wharf. In some cases there is a system of giving preference tickets to the more regular men which entitle them to work before the purely casual men. Sometimes

the more regular men have their names entered upon a list and are then given preference over the more casual. But, as a rule, the men are chosen according to ability and familiarity with the wharf, without the use of any ticket or list system. They are simply 'known to the foreman.' The engagement is normally from hour to hour, with a minimum pay of 2s. Wages are paid at the end of each day, or upon discharge, except that at many of the larger wharves a small proportion of weekly servants are regularly employed to act as sub-foremen or leaders of gangs. Here, also, there is no co-ordination between the several wharves for the purpose of facilitating a transference of labour or of minimising the total unemployment. Each wharf is a distinct unit.

And, just as the London dock labour market is not really one but many, so the labourers generically known as 'dockers' are, as has already been partly indicated, not of one homogeneous class but of several classes, who only to some extent compete with each other.

The different classes of labour employed at the docks include the following broadly distinguishable groups. First, the stevedore, whose work is properly that of loading and stowing the cargo in the hold. It is of a more skilled nature than that of the quay porter, who trucks it from the shed to the ship's side. The stevedores, however, cannot be distinguished as solely engaged in loading, as they now not infrequently do unloading also. They are in many ways the aristocrats of dock labour. They receive a higher wage, namely 8*d.* an hour instead of 6*d.* or 7*d.*, are fairly well organised in a trade union, and are to be carefully differentiated from the quay-side porter, whose work is less skilled and less arduous. According to Mr. Scrutton, the superior status of the stevedore is the gradual outcome of the free competition which has eliminated the purely casual and inefficient, through the experience of the higher value to the employer of the more efficient workman. In his evidence, he asserts that the chief evil of the Dock Company's system has been the insufficient competition, resulting in the continued employment of an inferior type of man, at low wage. On the other hand, there is undoubtedly more skill required in the work of stowing cargo than in the work of discharging. Selection has led to the better men obtaining employment at the better work, and the trade union organisation has helped to maintain the standard among the stevedores. The custom is spreading of employing the stevedores for the work of unloading, as well as of loading, and, when so employed, they receive a higher rate of pay for work of apparently the same kind as that done by the ordinary dock labourer. But it is work that has to be done faster. The difference of pay earned represents an economy to the employers in the discharge of large steamers. It does not necessarily follow that it would do so for wharfowners or in the smaller docks where there is less need to economise space and time.

After the stevedores there are the special classes of labourers—nearly always paid by the piece—engaged in unloading grain, timber, and coal. They are usually of a specially strong type, earning from 80s. to £3 a week. The irregularity in the employment of these men is due in the main to their own choice, and is probably inevitable, as things are, in consequence of the long hours and exhausting nature of their work.

There are next the ordinary dock labourers, or quay porters, who truck the goods from the ship's side to the warehouse. It is for this class that the problem of decasualisation is most urgent. But here, also, there are differences of grade of considerable importance. From the table given on page 24 of the Evidence it will be seen that 78 per cent. of the men employed by the Docks Company were weekly servants. From the returns furnished by the wharfowners it appears that from one-third to one-quarter of the men employed at the wharves are also permanent weekly servants. Again, from Mr. Scrutton's evidence, it is seen that the majority of his men work steadily from Monday to Friday. The same is true of many employed by the shipowners. There remains, however, the large class of casual workers, varying from those well known to foremen, who secure a fair measure of work (see Q. 1248) to the man who is unknown and casual in the fullest sense.

It follows that the earning power of the dock labourer also varies as between each of these classes.

The table on page 32 shows the earnings as estimated by the various witnesses.

From this evidence it is clear that a considerable number of those employed at the Docks, even apart from corn and timber porters, earn wages that compare favourably with those of the general labourer, or the labourers in the building trade, who receive 7d. an hour. The irregularity of the better-class dock labourer is, too, less rather than greater than that suffered in the building trade.

It is the floating margin that makes up the difference between the busy days and the slack days that suffer from uncertain and frequently insufficient income.

It may be well to attempt an estimate of the extent to which the present lack of organisation in the demand for dock labour involves an unnecessarily large margin of this kind.

Such an estimate may suggest the scope for decasualisation in this class of labour.

From the Board of Trade returns published in the *Labour Gazette* the estimated maximum number of dock labourers employed on one day by the Joint Docks Company, exclusive of Tilbury, was, in 1904, 4,085. At the Millwall Dock it was 1,293. At the Surrey Commercial Dock it was 2,108. Through Shipowners and Contractors, 8,488. At the Wharves, 6,999.

Employer	Class of Labour	Rate of Pay	Probable Earnings
Mr. Scrutton	Contractor's labourer	7d. an hour, plus bonus of about 3d. per hour. Overtime 1s. per hour from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. (men rarely engaged for less than the whole day)	a. Regular men 40s. to 48s. per week b. Less regular men, 34s. to 39s. per week
The London and India Docks Company	1. Permanent	a. Piece work. Minimum of 24s. per week, plus bonus averaging 1½d. an hour b. Day work. Minimum 24s. per week	31s. 3d. per week
	2. Registered	a. Piece work. 24s. per week plus bonus b. Day work. 24s. per week	29s. 10d. per week
	3. 'B' men	6d. an hour	14s. 8d. per week
	4. Casual	" "	11s. 1d. " "
Mr. Spurling	1. Stevedore	1s. per hour plus bonus 2d. to 3d. an hour	—
	2. Quay Porter a. Permanent	25s. to 32s. per week	25s. to 32s. per week
General Steam Navigation Co.	b. Casual	6d. an hour	—
	1. Stevedore	8d. an hour plus occasional bonus	—
Mr. Swartz	2. Porter	6d. an hour	—
	1. Wharf labour a. Preference	" "	30s. to 40s. per week
	b. Fairly regular	" "	23s. per week
	c. Quite casual	" "	12s. to 20s. per week

Assuming that there was no interchange of labour at all between these groups, the maximum number of labourers required would have been 17,918. From the Board of Trade returns it also appears that the maximum number employed on one day over the whole system, excluding Tilbury, was 15,616. Thus, as a result of non-intercommunication between the Docks and between the Docks and the Wharves, 2,302 more men would, upon the above hypothesis, have been retained to meet the maximum demand than would have been necessary had mobility been perfect throughout the whole. But this figure is not likely to be a very just measure of the excess. On the one hand no allowance is made for the fact that the Board of Trade figures refer to the number of separate engagements made, not to the number of men employed. Whenever one man succeeded in getting more than one engagement in the day the total number employed would have to be reduced. On this account some reduction would have to be made in the case of the Wharves, the London and India Dock Company, and the Shipowners.

Again, although there is not much mobility between dock and dock, there is no doubt some. The total would have to be still further reduced by a small number on this account.

On the other hand, the number is artificially reduced in consequence of the fact that within each dock, and within the wharf system as a whole, there are a number of independent employing agencies between which mobility is far from perfect. The extreme point of immobility would be reached if there were no transference of labour between wharf and wharf, or between shipowner and shipowner. Making this assumption, it is possible to form an idea of the maximum demand for dock labour from the following data. Returns were kindly made, in answer to a special inquiry issued by the Committee, by wharves employing some 80 per cent. of the total wharf labour of which statistics are obtained by the Labour Department of the Board of Trade. From these returns it is shown that at the wharves in question 1,700 men is the average number employed, while the sum of the maxima is 2,753, a difference of 62 per cent. Again, taking five of the principal steamship lines, discharging in the Albert Dock, the difference between the average number employed and the sum of the maxima is 150 per cent. Using these percentages as showing the difference between the average and the maximum number employed, we get the following figures.

Wharves—average, 5,788, plus 62 per cent., equals 9,295. Shipowners and Contractors—average, 2,188, plus 150 per cent., equals 5,345. Millwall Dock Company—average, 713, plus 150 per cent., equals 1,782. Surrey Commercial Docks—average, 1,569, plus 150 per cent., equals 3,922. Dock Company—actual maximum, 4,085 (owing to the organisation of labour employed by the London and India Docks Company the actual maximum on any one day is sufficiently near the total number employed by them), making a grand total of 24,429.

But for the year 1904 the maximum number of labourers employed on any one day, as estimated by the Board of Trade, over the whole system, exclusive of Tilbury, was 15,616. Thus the extreme limit of disorganisation would give a surplus of 8,813 men retained in the market over and above the number which would be required if organisation were complete.

It may be noted that the 1901 Census gives the number of dock and wharf labourers in the county of London and in East and West Ham as 26,000.

From this number a certain deduction would have to be made for crane men, shipkeepers, etc., but the total of these is small. Again, it is probable that some diminution in the number of dock labourers may have taken place since 1901; but assuming that those who return themselves to the census officers as dock labourers find their chief employment at the docks, there would seem to be a broad agreement between this

number and the sum of the maxima employed at all the centres of engagement within the system.

While these figures do no more than suggest the possible limits to the distribution of available work over an unnecessarily large number of men, there is no doubt that while the evil falls short of these limits it is nevertheless considerable. For example, from the returns from wharves, previously referred to, it is shown that the permanent staff retained is only 70 per cent. of the sum of the minima employed. The other 30 per cent. of work is consciously or unconsciously distributed among a larger number of individuals so as to keep men available for the busier seasons. It may now be well to sum up briefly the conclusions to be drawn with regard to this section of casual labour.

In the first place, the situation is not without hope. The condition of the average labourer at the docks has greatly improved during the last twenty years. The economy of employing men regularly and of giving them an incentive to effort by means of the bonus system, is being gradually appreciated by employers, especially in the work of loading and discharging the larger steamers.

Even under present conditions there are a large number of men so employed who earn good wages with very fair regularity. But this progress should not be made an excuse for shirking the duty of bringing about a still further improvement.

The central evil is the maintenance of a floating reserve of labour far larger than is required to meet the maximum demands of employers. This is brought about by the independent action of the separate employing agencies, each seeking to retain a following of labour as nearly as possible equal to its own maximum demand. The result is a mass of men chronically under-employed. To this chief evil there is attached the secondary one of the daily payment of wages, with the attendant practice of 'subbing.' It is difficult to over-estimate the difference between a weekly wage, paid weekly, and a daily earning as a factor in determining habits of thrift and economy in consumption. But a weekly wage for a great number is under the present system impossible. It would only become so were a single employing agency substituted for the present condition of things.

Again, the casual dock labourer suffers because, serving many masters, but none regularly, his industrial character is of little importance as an asset in the market. It has been objected that a list-system and weekly engagement renders the elimination of the unfit difficult. But the purely casual system of daily engagement confines the employer to a selection from among the unfit. There is no reason why the selection of competent dock labourers should be more difficult than the selection of good coal-hewers. If they cannot earn their share in a piece-work gang their fellow-labourers will soon refuse to carry them on their backs. If they are engaged on time work their control is more likely to be effective



when a single authority possesses a contiguous record of industrial character than when it is variously estimated by a number of engaging foremen.

There is no doubt that the evil of the present system is more clearly seen in London than elsewhere. By reason of the size of its population there is naturally a greater number of inefficient and improvident men who gravitate to the docks and swell the labour supply.

It is less necessary in the London Docks for the employer to take thought for the retention of a sufficient number of hands.

Again, the magnitude of the area covered by the London Docks makes it more difficult for the labourer to know his best market at any given moment without the mediation of some labour exchange or bureau. Nevertheless, the evils are found, if less in degree, yet substantially the same in kind at all our large ports. Nowhere has there been generally adopted a system of labour organisation or method of engagement that succeeds in overcoming the chief difficulty, viz., the retention of a larger supply of labour than is necessary, earning an irregular wage received for the most part in daily payments.

Some inquiry was made into the conditions existing in the other chief British ports and at the ports of Antwerp and Rotterdam, to the results of which a brief reference may be made.

At Glasgow, the very large majority of labourers at the Docks are engaged by the hour and receive their wages at the end of the day or upon discharge. A small number only of permanent weekly hands are retained. The dock labourers are, however, roughly divisible into three fairly distinct groups, differing in respect of capacity, earnings, and standard of life. There are (1) those engaged in loading or discharging the deep sea boats, including (a) general cargo hands, (b) grain squads, (c) coal trimmers; (2) those employed on cross channel and coasting vessels; (3) coal porters and mineral freight men.

The first group of men working, for example, at the Queen's or Prince's Dock, are engaged either by contracting stevedores or by the shipowners direct. In neither case is there any general use of the list system, nor any special attempt at regularisation of employment. The Dockers' Union is, however, recognised by some employers. When this is the case Union men must be engaged before non-union men. To some extent the Union seeks to prevent the overcrowding of the labour market through deterioration by refusing to enrol skilled tradesmen who fall back upon the docks as a last resort. Moreover the minimum engagement always given when men are employed by firms recognising the Unions is not less than three hours in the day, nor less than three hours' overtime, nor less than a full night's work if engaged after 11 P.M. Where the Union is not recognised there is no such minimum. Its value and the effect of dealing with Union labour seems apparent from an analysis of the average wages paid by different employers.

In firm A., not recognising the Union, the average daily earning was 4s. 6½d.

In firm B., not recognising the Union, but seeking to retain a good type of men by the offer of steady work, average daily earning was 5s. 10d.

In firm C., employing only Union men, average daily earning was 6s. 8d.

As in London, so in Glasgow, the contractors tend chiefly to undertake the rapid loading and unloading of large steamers. They employ rather a more efficient class of men to whom they pay 7d. an hour and 10d. overtime.

The shipowners, on the other hand, pay 7d. an hour, and 8d. overtime.

It may be noticed that, in busy seasons, overtime is very common and contributes towards the general casualty and irregularity of employment. It is not sufficient for the employers to retain even such a number of labourers as will cover their demand at any one time. Thus an employer on February 28, 1906, engaged 258 men. Of these, 121 worked ten hours day time, while the remaining 132 worked ten hours day time and eleven hours overtime. On the next day 250 men were wanted for ten hours day and three hours overtime; 129 fresh men were engaged to replace those who had worked the double shift on the 28th. Thus 382 men were more or less retained by this firm to meet a maximum demand at any one time of 258.

If the men engaged upon the larger ocean steamers be contrasted with those employed in the coasting trade, the difference is apparent. While not a few of the former, perhaps 30 per cent., earn good wages, and another 10 to 20 per cent. earn the normal labourers' wages, the men employed upon the coasting vessels are usually of a distinctly lower class, receiving wages of 5d. to 5½d. an hour, with 6d. overtime.

Thus in Glasgow, as in London, a clear distinction must be drawn between the forms of dock labour for which it is economically profitable to employ men of good physique and regular habits, and those for which employers are content to engage the lower grade casual worker at a correspondingly low rate of pay. The present free competition existing in Glasgow does not appear to be effective in proving the advantage to be gained by the employment of good-class labour at a good wage, except in those cases in which the work needs to be done very fast, in which economy of space is of first importance.

The conditions of employment at the docks in Liverpool has been thoroughly considered and presented in the 'Report of an Inquiry into the Conditions of Dock Labour at the Liverpool Docks,' published by Miss Eleanor Rathbone in 1904.

In Liverpool, as in London, the method of employment is casual, the very large majority being engaged from day to day with a minimum engagement of half a day. There are three broadly distinct labour markets, viz., the North End, the South End, and the Middle Docks, the last engaged mostly in the coasting trade. One important difference between the labour conditions at the North End and the South End is that the Trade Union is recognised at the latter, where only Union men are employed, while at the former it is unrecognised. Just as in London, the work available is not distributed so as to give the largest numbers possible a full week's work. It is to the interest of the foreman to keep such men as he has found to work well 'attached to his stand and to prevent them, even in slack times, from straying away altogether to other firms, so that they may be at hand when a press comes. Hence he will share out the work as far as possible amongst them.' In giving evidence before the Commission of Inquiry as to the Unemployed in 1894, the head of the Warehouse Department of the Mersey Dock and Harbour Board said: 'If we had twenty men applying and had only work for ten, we would divide the work among the twenty as fairly as we could.' Miss Rathbone pertinently remarks that what seems so remarkable about this practice is, 'That those who resort to it appear so often to be genuinely under the impression that it is in the interests of the men as well.'

Miss Rathbone estimates from the evidence obtained that the average employment of a dock labour in Liverpool is not above three days a week with overtime. If the labour were perfectly mobile and men were engaged in strict order of preference, the work could be organised with the following results:—

Might have worked		Porters	Stevedores
Days	Days per week	%	%
260 = 5	and up	58.8	63.6
208 = 4	"	5.0	4.4
156 = 3	"	5.7	4.4
104 = 2	"	4.1	4.8
52 = 1	"	5.8	5.7
less than 1	"	19.6	17.6

As explained in the case of Glasgow one serious difficulty in the way of any such ideal arrangement is the working of overtime. Miss Rathbone points out that 'when work at a ship has to go on all night, the master porter or stevedore has several ways of managing it. He may "break" the men who have been working all day and take on a fresh shift. This, to the outside world, would seem the more natural thing to do, as men who have been working all day cannot be very fresh and fit

to go on all night. In practice, however, it seems to be more usual to order the men, or as many as are wanted, back after tea, and work them through the night, taking on a fresh set in the morning. One reason given me for this practice was the difficulty of getting enough men to work two shifts; another, the necessity for continuity of the work. A third is that the men who have worked in the day consider that they have a right to take their share of night work with its higher pay. Some foremen seem satisfactorily to meet the two latter objections in the following way: They take on a full set of men in the morning; break half of them at noon, ordering them back at midnight; fill their places with fresh men for the afternoon and work these through the first half-night, when the morning set came back.

But the real difficulty in the way of improved labour organisation at Liverpool is not the prevalence of night work but the seeming impossibility of getting employers to co-operate in bringing about a better system.

In one important respect Liverpool has an advantage over London. The men, although engaged by the hour, receive their wages in exchange for tallies, showing the amount of work done, at the end of each week. There is a weekly pay-day, although engagement is by the hour.

At Southampton the general conditions of employment and method of engagement are much the same, although the numbers affected are of course smaller. The trade generally is less fluctuating, consisting mainly of lines of steamers to South Africa and the various parts of the Continent, the sailings and arrivals being normally regular. The chief exception is the trade in early potatoes which cause a great increase in the number of men required at the docks.

As in London, there are three classes of men employed by the chief shipowners. (1) The permanent weekly servants corresponding roughly to the minimum number required. (2) The preference, or ticket men, who, together with the permanent men, make up, in the case of the large steamship lines, the average number employed. (3) Those who are quite casual.

The following memorandum was prepared for the information of the Committee by the superintendent of a large employer at Southampton Docks:—

*Permanent Cargo Labourers* are invariably of provident habits, making some provision for rainy days. The same applies generally to *Preference (or Ticket) Cargo Labourers*.—Both are more or less influenced by the restraints and affections of their families, and the knowledge that the permanent nature of their employment would be jeopardised by improvident habits.

*Casual Cargo Labourers*.—There is usually little of family life amongst these. They comprise the drifters and wanderers from other

industrial paths, the ne'er-do-wells, the inefficient, the characterless, the "chucks-outs"—to use an expressive workman's phrase—from all the trades and professions. Any provident habits which existed became rapidly paralysed upon reaching this level. Their earnings are mostly spent as soon as made. After a prosperous turn of work they generally remain idle, of choice, seeking no employment, so long as the money holds out, or dissipating it otherwise in bouts of extravagance or intoxication.

Our casual labourers are the physically best and most reliable of the mass of casual labourers offering at the docks, by reason of the higher money they are able to earn, consequent upon the peculiar fluctuations of our work which enables them to earn more money at one stretch. We employ casuals principally on Saturdays, our busiest day, when with one incoming steamer and two outgoing steamers, they may work from twelve to eighteen hours or more. Typical single day's pay, for the Saturday only, is as follows:—Per casual cargo man, 13s. (exceptional 11s. (less 8s), 9s., 7s., 6s. So the casual, with two or three days of work per week, involving extra overtime pay, generally prefers to remain idle the rest of the time.

Speaking generally, the casual labourer becomes habituated to a state of mind favouring work provided that he can get it upon easy terms but with an ever-present feeling that, if he cannot, there is no necessity for effort, as one or other of the numerous private or public agencies for relief are at his disposal. He relies upon the knowledge that Society will not allow him to starve under any conditions or force him to work. That feeling is fostered by the numerous agencies which meet him at every turn, of which his low moral standard is not slow to take advantage; whilst the precarious nature of his daily existence saps any spirit of independence or energetic and reliant self-help he may once have possessed. He becomes more and more a drifter, growing physically less and less efficient with the alternations of starvation and comparative prosperity. As an illustration I might mention that on Wednesday December 27, a ship of ours required a number of men to discharge her but the men could not be hired, notwithstanding the great number lacking employment. All our permanent and preference (or ticket) men were there, but casual labourers were in very short supply all over the docks. It was holiday time and the casuals would not work. They were spending Christmas upon the various charitable moneys available.

*Training and Sources of Recruitment of Permanent and Preference (or Ticket) Cargo Labourers.*—These are mainly recruited from the ranks of seamen. A sailor's training more than any other produces the knack and handiness requisite for stowing cargo. These men, so to speak, are packers. They "pack" the cargo into the ship whilst the casual cargo labourers are those who pull and shove it along to them.

' *Sources of Recruitment of Casual Cargo Labourers.*—The "chuck-outs" from all trades and professions. The constant emigration of the last fifty years also accounts for a great mass of casual labour. The Colonies and U.S.A. admit only the best men physically, morally and industrially, the most enterprising and thrifty. All these countries take the strictest measures to keep out the industrial refuse which, in this country, is constantly being added to the ranks of casual labour.

' *Substitution of Permanent for Casual Employment* is, with us, economically—and consequently commercially—impracticable. Fluctuations of employment are the natural corollary of fluctuations of cargo arising from fluctuations of trade.

' *Permanent Employment of Casual Labourers.*—There is always more casual labour offering than is required. The physically efficient can usually obtain regular employment if so minded, as when not working for us there are other ships requiring cargo labourers upon which they can work. This happens here in actual practice. At the Dock Company's labour shed there is a mass of casual labour usually offering. The labour masters pick out the physically efficient and industrious (no brain or character is required) and these have always the preference. Larger demands bring in those of second rank physique, and in times of sudden pressure the third and lowest grades get a chance. The great majority of these men are mere human automatons, engaged in trucking cargo from shed to ship's side, or vice versa.

' *Conditions of Casual Cargo Labourers* seem hardly capable of improvement by any moral means owing to the nature of their precarious occupation and the character level of the men themselves.

'The casual is incapable of helping himself. Only compulsion can make him other than he is.'

In Antwerp and Rotterdam, where the secretary of the Committee obtained the following information by personal investigation, dock labour is engaged entirely by the shipowners and through contractors; the fact that at once attracts attention is the superior appearance of the men as compared with that of the London riverside labourer. This difference cannot be attributed to any superiority in respect of labour organisation, method of engagement, or rate of pay. The real cause of the difference seems to lie in the fact that the position of the dock labourer is less inferior to that of other forms of unskilled employment than is the case in London. And this, again, is due to the absence of a large class of inefficient and deteriorated men who form the lower strata of the London population, and who drift to the docks as their best chance of obtaining that intermittent work which they alone care to accept. In Antwerp, on the contrary, the docks attract a certain number of men who come because they can make a normal wage there.

A foreman stevedore, who was familiar with the London Docks,

fully confirmed this view. He stated that in Antwerp there was practically no semi-dependent class, no source from which men could supplement their insufficient earnings on the riverside, and that therefore only those were found who were self-supporting by their labour. No doubt this state of things is partly accounted for by the comparatively small population both of Antwerp and Rotterdam when compared with London. Moreover both ports are rapidly increasing, and in both the docks are more compactly situated, thus rendering the mobility of the men greater. There is, of course, every reason to suppose that proper organisation of the labour demand would raise the level of earnings and increase efficiency in Antwerp as elsewhere. The thrift and standard of living of the Antwerp docker are admittedly not at a high level.

To find large numbers of women employed as quay porters suggests a comparison in favour of English conditions. But it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that much of the evil attaching to the condition of London riverside labour is due to the existence of a large semi-dependent and casual class which is to some extent at least the result of the various causes which make it easy for its members to live only in part upon the earnings of their labour.

Although there exists in neither Antwerp nor Rotterdam any method of organising labour comparable to that practised by the Dock Company in London, there is nevertheless an institution at the former port which seems likely to take a prominent place in improving the general conditions of waterside labour. This is the General Association for the Protection of Labour in the Port of Antwerp. The Association was founded in 1899 with the prevention of strikes and disagreements between employers and employed as its main object.

Article 2 of the Statutes clearly sets out this primary purpose, and suggests the means by which it may be secured:—‘The object is the study, protection, and development of the purely professional interests of its members outside of all politics. The Association will tend to procure for its members good workmen to whom is assured regular work. In order to prevent stoppages for the former and strikes by the latter, it will endeavour to obtain the constant amelioration of the relations between labourers and employers, and the removal of those abuses of which the working classes complain. It will endeavour to settle, by way of conciliation and arbitration, all disputes concerning the conditions of work. It will tend essentially towards the amelioration of the material and moral condition of the Dock labourers of Antwerp, notably:—

‘1. By creating amongst those labourers, working regularly for the members of the Association, mutual Associations which will make allowances in the case of enforced idleness.

' 2. By creating Labour Exchanges to which the labourers, regularly working for the members of the Association, shall have access, as also others who shall be considered as deserving this favour, according to the rules to be established by the Association; by creating, within these Labour Exchanges, offices for the payment of wages.

' 3. By encouraging among the dock labourers of Antwerp principles of economy and foresight, and by the creation of mutual Associations, to be subsidised by the Association for the purpose of assuring to the labourers belonging to them some medical and pharmaceutic assistance in case of illness, pensions for the aged and for their families, and assistance in case of premature decease. In fact, nothing which relates to the material or moral welfare of the working-man will remain undealt with.'

Article 6 further states:—' The masters bind themselves to give the preference of work to labourers having asked the protection of the Association, being inscribed therein and having adhered to its rules and prescriptions. The Association particularly relies upon the spirit of good understanding between all its members to attain the realisation of its object.'

The Association consists of effective and honorary (or labour) members. The labour members may not exceed one-fourth of the effective members.

The funds are obtained (1) by the payment to the Association of  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. upon the amounts paid by shipowners to stevedores and contractors; (2) by the payment of a similar  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. by the stevedores upon the amounts received from shipowners; (3) by the payment on the part of the master porters of  $\frac{2}{3}$  per cent. of the amounts received from shipowners.

The labour members pay no contribution. Their representatives upon the Committee of the Association are elected by the Committee upon the nomination of labourers inscribed at the Labour Exchanges.

The Committee takes cognisance of any dispute arising between members of the Association concerning the conditions of labour; they receive the complaints of workmen against the masters as also those of masters against workmen, and make it their endeavour to settle all conflicts by way of conciliation. Should these efforts fail, the dispute must be submitted to a tribunal of arbitration composed of five persons, of which the President of the Committee shall be *ex-officio* member, and of which the parties at variance shall each appoint two arbitrators from among the members of their respective sections.

The successful development of the Association is attested in the annual reports of the Committee for 1905 and 1906. The number of workmen affiliated to the Association had steadily grown since the inception of the scheme. On December 31, 1905, there were 9,000 workmen affiliated.



There were then open four labour exchanges at different parts of the docks, substantial brick buildings, wherein those seeking employment could wait and obtain meals at low prices, wherein they were taken on by foremen, and where they received their pay. Two other exchanges have since been opened.

The following table shows the numbers of labourers presenting themselves monthly for engagement at three of the exchanges :—

	Quai St. Michel, Local II.	Rue d'Amsterdam, Local III.	Quai d'Herbouville, Local IV.
January	7,792	10,850	—
February	8,200	8,630	—
March	9,170	7,330	—
April	7,160	7,250	—
May	5,600	6,200	—
June	4,800	4,600	1,500
July	3,275	5,520	9,550
August	4,981	6,000	10,400
September	5,200	6,620	11,850
October	4,700	6,880	12,350
November	4,800	7,720	12,550
December	5,200	10,800	14,400

The following table shows the numbers who have visited the exchanges during their hours of rest :—

	Local I.	Local II.	Local III.	Local IV.
January	10,855	1,602	3,663	16,620
February	11,050	1,885	2,961	14,205
March	12,540	1,828	2,540	17,200
April	12,850	1,487	2,640	15,040
May	16,700	1,882	2,580	17,435
June	16,050	2,183	3,190	20,510
July	14,920	2,961	2,786	24,240
August	13,925	1,365	3,010	24,784
September	16,600	2,730	2,890	31,450
October	16,630	2,061	2,820	22,150
November	13,100	1,063	2,910	27,550
December	14,150	1,066	3,320	27,050

Attached to each Exchange there is a dispensary at which those who may suffer accidents may be treated. One thousand one hundred and thirty men were so attended in 1905.

Two forms of sick benefit are also provided in return for a small contribution. 1. An allowance is made to the worker in case of sickness; 787 men received 22,601 frs. in 1905, 819 men received 25,037 frs. in 1906. 2. Payment is made to the wife of the labourer during childbirth; 8,290 frs. were thus paid in respect of 829 births in 1905, 7,520 frs. for 752 births in 1906.

Moreover, during the sickness of the wife friendly visits are paid through the agency of the Association which are valuable not only for the sympathy that may in this way find expression, but because of the opportunity to give advice on the subjects of health and household management thus afforded.

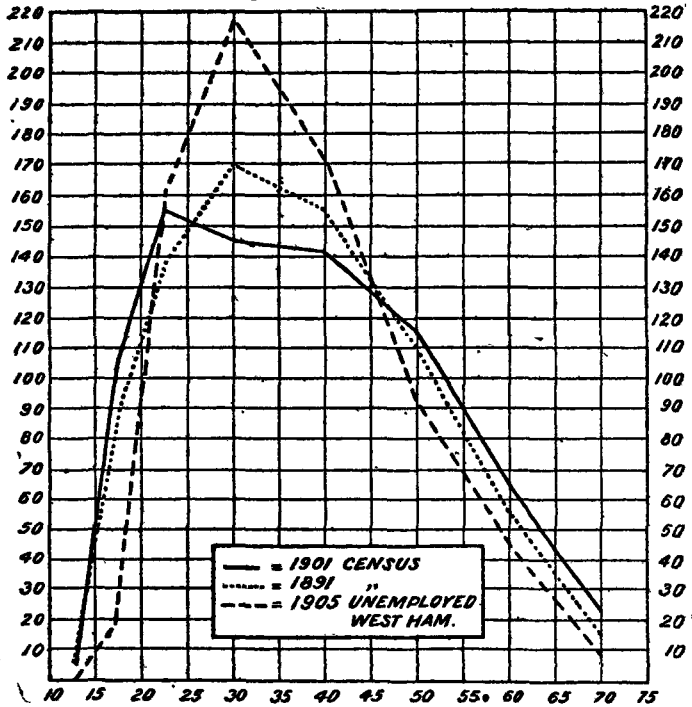
The Union for the Protection of Labour, in some ways partaking rather of the nature of *patronage* than of the purely workman's organisation, such as the Trade Union, or of the Independent Labour Exchange, as it is usually found under municipal control, appears to have within itself the possibility of providing all the means for the improvement of the condition of the dock labourer. It has certainly mitigated the degrading effects that inevitably follow the necessity for large numbers of men to wait idly at the wharf or dock gates, or around public-houses, for a chance of employment. As the inspecteur du travail said in his report for 1904:—'The exchanges have removed a large number of Antwerp labourers from the evil surroundings of the "Carabettier du port," wherein drunkenness and loss of wages were the familiar facts of every-day life. That the exchanges are so largely used during the hours of waiting proves beyond question that the labourers themselves are ready to take advantage of such an opportunity when it is offered.'

On the other hand the aim of securing preferential employment to members of the union has been but little realised in practice. The employers seem to have made no serious attempts to overcome the initial difficulties involved in such a system and have preferred to follow the easier course of engaging men when they were wanted from among those offering at the moment. This failure is doubtless also due in a large measure to the marked indifference of the labourers to the preference plan. The stimulus necessary to secure its general adoption has thus been lacking.

The Antwerp labour exchanges have so far served merely as centres of engagement, places of rest for those seeking work, and for a section of the men as the opportunity to obtain certain friendly benefits upon easy terms.

The history of the dock strike which occurred during the summer of 1907 bears very closely upon the question of the best constitution of these exchanges. The real issue at stake throughout this prolonged conflict was the recognition of the Union for the Protection of Labour as the sole body competent to consider and arbitrate upon disputes between employers and employed. This Union, as already explained, is in reality dominated through its constitution by the employers. It stands therefore for the principle of 'patronage' as opposed to the principle of 'parität,' of equality as between the two parties. However justly, the strike of 1907 appears to confirm the views maintained in the German report, which is later considered, that a stable constitution for labour exchanges can only be found when they are controlled by a joint management whereon employers and employed are equally represented.

### BUILDING TRADE. AGE DISTRIBUTION COUNTY OF LONDON



#### BUILDING LABOUR.

While dock labour presents a form of casual employment which is highly localised, and therefore, in one important respect, at least, capable of easy organisation, the building trade adds to the difficulties of being seasonal and of liability to great fluctuation in volume the further one of a high degree of decentralisation. In consequence the market for building labour has very little permanence in respect of place, changing its site with each new building operation, and tends to be focussed upon the person of the engaging foreman. Irregularity of employment in this trade depends in the main upon the following conditions: (1) the length of each job and the liability to seasonal interruption; (2) the mobility of workmen within a district, and from district to district; (3) the degree of specialisation in the work, determining the number of separate occupa-

tions available within the trade for any given employee. On the first point it is difficult to obtain exact statistical data showing the degrees of seasonal fluctuation for the various classes of workmen.

From the diagram at the end it will be seen that the percentage of carpenters and plumbers in the building trade receiving out-of-work benefit rises regularly every winter, and in general it is well known that from November to March is a slack time. The bricklayers' union pays no out-of-work benefit, and the painters' union pays only during the winter months. Seasonal fluctuations affect the bricklayer and the painter most severely, and the joiner least. Other branches are affected about equally. Without an exact knowledge of the normal liability to season slackness experienced by workmen in the trade no estimate can be made of the extent to which the risk is discounted in the higher wage rate that is paid. But the London wages of bricklayers, masons and carpenters (10½*d.* per hour), plumbers and plasterers (11*d.*), painters (8*d.* to 9*d.*), labourers (7*d.*) may be compared to fitters (9*d.* to 9½*d.*) and labourers (6*d.*) in the engineering trade. This comparison suggests that the season slackness is to some extent at least the cause of higher wages while work is available. For many men in the trade the problem is therefore reduced to a proper use of income by which earnings are economically distributed throughout the year.

It is doubtful, however, to what extent this seasonal slackness may be regarded as 'normal' in its incidence. It will probably affect the less efficient or less fortunate with exceptional severity, while the majority will suffer comparatively little. Mr. Fisher expressed it as his opinion that 'the labourer cannot earn enough in the summer as trade has been lately to keep him in the winter.'

If, however, the periods of enforced idleness to which men in the building trade are subject, present a serious difficulty, so also does the prevailing method of obtaining work. Mr. Fisher has clearly described in his evidence the existing method of engagement, and the ways in which work is found. Engagement is by the hour, although wages are actually paid at the end of each week. Work is found in three different ways. There is the Vacant book of the Trade Union, in which men seeking work register their names, and from which foremen may select men. This constitutes an imperfect form of Labour Exchange. Its usefulness is largely confined to the skilled workmen. There is, secondly, the practice of 'following up' foremen. Each foreman gathers round him a *clientèle* of tradesmen and labourers whose capacity is known to him. When work is started these men will be first taken on. But the size of the jobs upon which the foreman is engaged will constantly vary. He cannot therefore retain a number equal to his maximum requirements. The jobs being also discontinuous, some of his following may not be available when new work is started. He has then to take

on some men unknown in respect of both character and efficiency. This is introduced the third method of finding work, namely, by tramping in search of it.

The extent to which the third of these means is adopted is suggested by the returns made by a number of master builders in response to circulars sent out by the Committee. The following table gives the proportion of workmen unknown to the foreman when taken on—

	Labourers	Tradesmen
1 . . . . .	80%	50%
2 . . . . .	Greater proportion	—
3 . . . . .	50%	—
4 . . . . .	40%	40%
5 . . . . .	25%	25%
6 . . . . .	20%	—
7 . . . . .	15%	10%

The great discrepancy between these different returns points to differences partly accounted for by the different degrees of regularity in the work of different employers, partly by a difference of practice which is not dictated by necessity. But the figures at least show that in the majority of instances a large proportion of unskilled and a fair proportion of skilled men are engaged without previous knowledge of their industrial capacity, and without recourse to any organisation intended to co-ordinate supply and demand.

Not all these men who are unknown must be supposed to have found work by tramping. A certain number will have been brought in response to information given by companions. In one respect they are, however, all alike—namely, that their capacity is unknown to the foreman. Their engagement is from hour to hour, and the capable at the beginning of each job are selected by process of trial; the incapable dismissed at any stage of the work by the payment of an hour's wages. According to one witness, a very large number of the strangers who come on have to be discharged in less than a fortnight; they are either on tramp, corner-men, or public-house loafers, and only require a few shillings to spend.

It is clear that the present system by which the demand and supply of building labour is brought into relation is extremely imperfect. Over a large area such as London the rapid flow of workmen from place to place cannot possibly be effected by means of such chance opportunities of discovering where work is to be found. The waste of time to both employers and employed involved in casual engagement and in tramping must be enormous. Even when men are in the middle of a job the absence of properly organised means of communication often results in loss of time. Thus men living at Tottenham may be engaged at the

other side of London. If the morning is wet and the work seems likely to be stopped they will remain at home rather than incur travelling expenses for which there may be no return. Should the weather improve they will thus lose several hours' work. In every way the mobility at present secured involves a serious waste of time and effort that materially helps to increase the supply of labour and to diminish its efficiency.

The third condition determining irregularity is the degree of specialisation. Mr. Fisher has described the several different classes of workmen to be found on the larger building operations. The boundary between each class tends to be clear and impassable on the big jobs. There is thus greater need for mobility in these cases. But where the work is upon a smaller scale these divisions are less clearly marked. A scaffolder can, for example, when his special work is over, turn to other labourers' work.

Thus, while any one job is of shorter duration, the labourer has a better chance of being retained throughout the whole of it. Thus the advance of specialisation, making for less continuous work, no doubt takes place in proportion to the opportunities for each special class to obtain sufficient total work within a narrower sphere. Nevertheless, it suggests that with the increased size of the market new difficulties arise in the way of the workman obtaining regular employment which only serve to emphasise the need for a properly co-ordinated system for relating the demand to the supply of labour.

The two questions that need specially to be considered are, thus, the possibility of lessening the degree of seasonal fluctuation of employment in the building trade, and the best means for organising the supply and demand for labour.

In the first connection there is at least one marked tendency of the trade making for reduction in the number of casually employed labourers. The number of unskilled men seems to be decreasing in proportion to the number of skilled men. Returns made by employers gave the following figures, showing how their labour staff was divided between the two classes :—

*Proportion of Skilled to Unskilled.*

	Tradesmen	Labourers
1 . . .	75%	25%
2 . . .	34%	66%
3 . . .	34%	66%
4 . . .	50-60%	40-50%
5 . . .	60%	40%
6 . . .	50%	50%
7 . . .	50%	50%

[On road work the proportion is from 6-10 unskilled to one skilled man.]

Thus the proportion of unskilled to skilled seems to vary between one in four and three in five, the difference being largely accounted for by the use of labour-saving machinery.

As the use of machinery seems to be steadily increasing the average proportion will tend to approximate to the lower figure for the number of unskilled men. While this displacement of unskilled workmen inflicts temporary hardship, it is all to the good in the long run as tending to reduce the number of those whose condition is the least desirable.

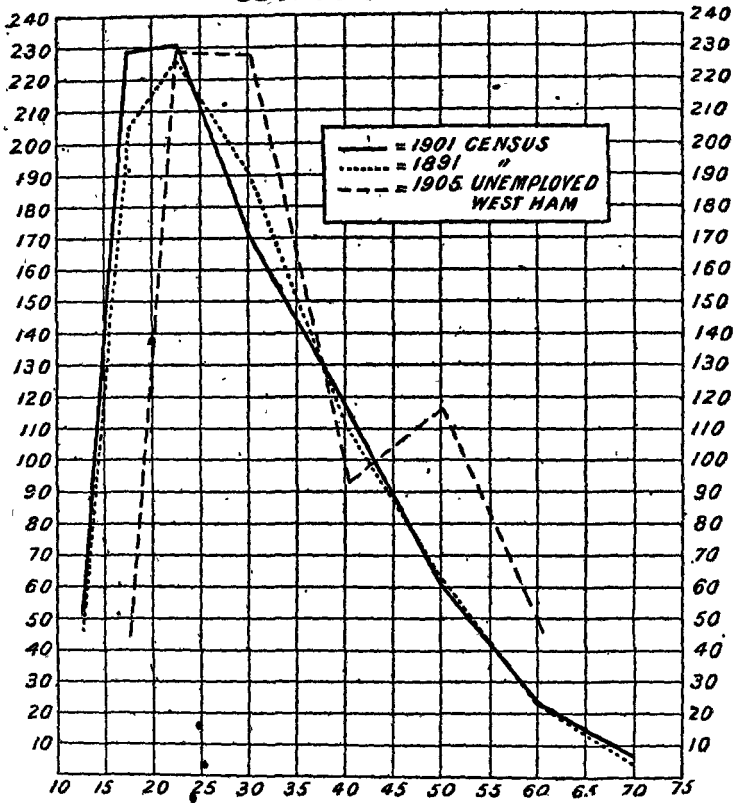
With regard to the interruption of building work in the winter the evidence given in the replies received from employers shows that this seasonal depression is not due to any impossibility of doing work, except when a severe frost stops bricklaying, masonry, and plasterers' work. But building work is more expensive in the winter, on account of the shorter hours that can be worked and the interruptions occasioned by fog, wet, or frost. With regard to painters, it is particularly due to the custom of decorating houses in the spring and early summer.

This greater expense has led to the custom of not starting new jobs in the winter. But contractors work right through the year with a job once started.

Two suggestions have been made in the replies which would result in a greater proportion of the work being done in the winter: namely, first, by reducing the rates of wage in the winter, say 10 per cent.; second, by working in three shifts in the twenty-four hours. The former suggestion would probably be effective to a considerable extent. The chief obstacle is the probable opposition of the Trade Unions. The second suggestion would appear applicable only to building on a large scale.

But the more important reform must be looked for in the better organisation of the market for building labour, for not only will this tend to diminish the surplus of semi-employed men and eliminate the present wasteful and degrading custom of tramping in search of work. It will also, in great measure, facilitate the flow of workmen during the period of season slackness to other subsidiary trades.

### CARMEN. AGE DISTRIBUTION COUNTY OF LONDON



#### CARMEN'S LABOUR.

The labour of carmen has been selected as one of the three groups typical of casual employment chiefly because it illustrates best one of the great difficulties presented in the industrial life of unskilled labour, namely, the proper co-ordination between boys' labour and men's labour.

The business of carting is itself far less casual than either that at the docks or in the building trade. The condition of the carman varies, however, very considerably from one section of the trade to another. Employees are generally divided into four different groups—viz., day men, night men, odd men, and van or tail boys. In many cases, however, no separate body of men are engaged on night work, but those who have



been at work in the day will have the night work distributed among them, and will thus add to their regular weekly pay by earning 'extras.'

With night-men proper, *e.g.*, those engaged in carting fish, there are also no very clearly defined working hours. Night and day work are thus not to be regarded as 'shifts' having a definite number of hours in each. A twelve hours' day is the broad rule, but a man may be booked on at 12 o'clock midnight, return at 11 A.M. next morning, and then be sent out on a job lasting until 4 or 5 P.M. After 17 hours' work he will have to be ready again at midnight.

The odd men are engaged from day to day to take the place of the regular men who are ill, or who lose time, or to meet special demands at busy seasons. They are engaged by the day, but with large firms and railway companies are often paid at the end of the week.

The proportion between the casual or odd men and the regular men varies very much from one employer to another, and depends largely on the nature of the trade.

Returns from employers obtained by the Committee show the following proportions:—

Firm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Regular servants . .	8	9	10	10	35	120	90	50	332
Casual servants . .	8	1	0	0	3	10	10	50	82

The van-boys, who are usually between the ages of 14 and 17, also vary very much in number relatively to the men employed. From information given by several large employers the proportion of van-boys seems to be falling. If motor trolleys replace horse vans to any great extent, this reduction in the use of boys will probably increase.

The table on p. 52 shows the proportion of men and boys employed by the firms making returns to the Committee.

These returns are probably too few to justify the conclusion that they are typical of the trade as a whole. It seems certain from general experience as also from a reference to the age distribution chart (p. 50), that the number of van-boys employed is greater than can be absorbed by promotion into the ranks of regular carmen. But the important consideration is that there will be a supply of boy labour roughly corresponding to the demand for casual and general unskilled labour of adult men. The supply of adult unskilled labourers may in some degree be checked by restricting the opportunity for boys to obtain work of a non-educative character between the ages of 14 and 18. But, however

Firm	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Men (Regular only)	8	9	10	10	35	120	90	50	332
Boys	6	0	0	0	7	8	8	12	41

desirable this step may be, it can hardly meet with any great success so long as the demand for casually employed men continues unchanged. If, on the other hand, the casual and low grade labour of men is organised so as to prevent the present chronic over-supply and under-employment, the demand for those forms of work which enable the boys of this class to put in the years between leaving school and entering upon man's work will be effectually checked.

The most serious evils affecting the employment of carmen are the long and uncertain hours and the low wages frequently paid. It is also a casual employment to some considerable extent. There were at the last census 59,515 carmen in the County of London. Of these many were regularly employed distributing goods for tradesmen. Nevertheless, a large number are men engaged by carting contractors and railways of whom not less than one in nine are casuals.

As with all low-skilled occupations, carmen are subject to the competition of men from other forms of employment, and, consequently, the remedy most frequently suggested as a means to improve their status takes the form of a limitation in this competition. The suggestion most commonly made is that carmen should be licensed in the same way as cabmen or lightermen. This suggestion is supported by the argument that it is dangerous to traffic to entrust a horse and van to unskilled and incompetent men. It is difficult, however, to see how the license would of itself do much to improve matters. In order to ensure an adequate selection and freedom of competition between carmen licenses would have to be granted freely.

They would, indeed, constitute some record of character. Men found drunk when in charge of a horse and van would find it difficult to secure employment. This would of itself be a considerable step in advance. Again, the license might do something to define more clearly the distinction between the work of the boy and of the man. In the evidence before the Labour Commission, one of the evils specially referred to is the custom of using lads of eighteen as drivers at wages superior to the van-boy's but inferior to those of the full carman. It would do nothing, however, to regulate hours or to solve the problem of the van-boy.

Improvement in the status of the full carman must be looked for

on the one hand in organising the market for the casual or odd men in order to reduce the number and to lay importance on character as a condition of employment; on the other hand, by the efforts of the men themselves, as, for example, through the exercise of collective bargaining.

#### THE SOCIAL EVILS OF CASUAL EMPLOYMENT.

Before passing from the description of the conditions of employment now existing in the three typical trades taken for examination to a consideration of possible reforms, it may be well to focus attention upon the evils which result from the present state of affairs.

##### 1. Casual employment reduces the productivity of labour.

It has been clearly established that the method of engagement now in force has the inevitable effect of perpetuating an over-supply of labourers, large numbers of whom are living in a state of chronic under-employment. The long spells of idleness in the building trade, the frequently recurring short spells at the docks, constitute a huge waste of labour power. In so far as the casual labourers are dependent solely on their irregular earnings one of two things must follow. Either they receive a wage sufficiently high to enable them to maintain their efficiency, not only during employment, but with a margin to cover the periods of enforced idleness, or such periods are attended by want, which is destructive of physical strength and skill. If the former, it is clear that the employer is paying for labour of which he is only in part making use. Any method by which any given man can be offered continuous work will thus enable the employer, while paying the same total wage as at present, to obtain for nothing an amount of labour force equivalent to the time which that man now spends out of work. If, on the other hand, the wage paid is not sufficient to cover these out-of-work periods, the employer obtains a labourer whose efficiency is constantly impaired. He has frequently to put up with a workman whose work is of a lower standard than that of the regular man at the same pay. In either case, then, casual labour is dear labour. But it should not be overlooked that even where wages are sufficiently high to give an efficiency income throughout the year, if properly averaged, the unthriftiness which comes of irregular earning produces deterioration and lack of efficiency, which represents a loss to the employer. It is obvious also that a casual labourer will take less interest in his work than a regular workman. He needs more supervision, cannot be relied upon to complete his job, and practises 'ca' canny' where he can. It would seem unnecessary further to insist that, for the employer at least, there is an obvious advantage to be gained from the regularisation of employment.

##### 2. Casual labour constitutes a social burden.

Q. 148,  
299, 1013,  
1090.  
Q. 1297.  
Q. 1007,  
1081.

Q. 383.  
Q. 305,  
1089.

It is well known that those districts of London wherein the problems of poverty present the greatest difficulty are usually those in which the proportion of casual labour is highest. The following table places in order those boroughs wherein the number of men engaged in 'casual' trades bears the largest proportion to the population. The numbers included under the heading 'Casual Labour' are those given in the census as occupied in the following ways:—Carmen, those engaged in conveyance on seas, rivers, canals, docks, and harbours; messengers, porters, and warehousemen (other than those employed on railways), costermongers, hawkers, street sellers, and general labourers.

Boroughs	Casual labour		Building labour		Infant mortality per 1,000 births av. 1901-5	Cor-rected death rate per 1,000 1906	Overcrowding per cent. population 1901	Outdoor paupers per 1,000 Jan. 1, 1906	All paupers per 1,000 1906	Applicants to distress committees per 1,000 1905-6	Applicants to distress committees per 1,000 1906-7
	Total	Per 1,000 oc. popn.	Total	Per 1,000 oc. popn.							
Average for London	—	—	—	—	188	15.9	16.0	10.8	31.6	8.5	5.9
Bermondsey	13,819	283	3,321	57	161	19.9	19.7	21.1	50.3	14.6	11.6
Stepney	30,389	267	6,368	47	149	18.5	33.2	7.5	42.4	6.6	4.9
Poplar	16,885	261	4,374	67	166	19.2	16.4	43.0	70.0	11.5	11.6
West Ham	21,819	230	3,131	82	—	—	—	24.9	33.6	16.0	16.1
Southwark	14,998	188	6,613	83	161	19.3	22.3	8.3	36.1	9.4	6.5
Greenwich	6,445	174	2,711	73	131	13.7	8.3	14.2	33.0	10.7	7.8
Bethnal Green	7,880	168	2,496	53	151	18.3	29.6	4.1	29.5	14.1	7.3
Finsbury	6,389	166	2,767	72	139	19.7	35.2	—	—	10.7	3.9
Shoreditch	7,010	158	2,359	64	179	20.7	29.9	7.5	32.0	13.4	4.9
Holborn	5,728	149	1,481	59	109	18.9	25.0	17.6	53.9	6.9	5.6
Deptford	6,033	147	3,610	88	137	15.0	9.1	—	part of Greenwich Union	8.8	6.7
Hammersmith	4,894	119	5,987	145	148	14.5	11.7	9.0	18.7	10.4	7.1
St. Pancras	3,221	108	3,411	92	144	16.5	24.0	5.3	28.4	7.8	6.3
Islington	12,336	102	11,821	94	131	16.1	17.0	14.7	27.4	5.9	4.3

These groups do not, of course, include all casual workers, nor are all those so included casually employed, but they are the groups in which the proportion of casuals is very large, and thus serve as a broadly accurate index.

It will be seen that the first six boroughs on the list all contain a large 'riverside' population of dock labourers.

It is clear, then, that casual labour tends to be grouped in 'pools' in certain of the London boroughs, and there forms a 'poverty mass' which reacts very seriously upon the life of the district. It has already been pointed out that the existence of a large supply of casual labour itself constitutes a demand for the further growth of casual labour trades. This conclusion is supported by Mr. Martley's evidence. The fact that the industries of a district are largely of the 'casual' type, while multiplying the opportunities for a casual life, tends towards the

creation of a stagnant mass of labour which reacts very imperfectly in response to changes in the demand for it. That the mobility of these unskilled and casual workers is very low follows almost of necessity. Not that they are necessarily immobile within the radius of their accustomed casual employments. From dock to dock, or from dock to gasworks the mobility may be fairly high. But it is extremely low when it becomes a question of taking an energetic step towards freedom from a permanently over-stocked labour market.

In West Ham to-day one is constantly meeting with families who trace their misfortunes to the closing of the Jute works nearly four years ago. The intervening period has neither seen their migration to other districts nor their absorption in regular occupation in West Ham itself. They have gone to swell the already oversupplied casual labour market. With the purely casual worker this lack of mobility could hardly be otherwise. He is accustomed to irregularity. He has no means of knowing when slackness of employment is the sign of permanent shrinkage in the demand for his labour, or when it is merely a seasonal or cyclical depression. He therefore remains relying upon the casual earnings of his family and assistance from charity or state relief. Assisted emigration steps in from time to time to relieve the pressure. If the shrinkage is a permanent one this may be effectual in some measure. But if it is cyclical the 'pool' is soon refilled.

The result is to place an undue strain upon the administration of the Poor Law, while it becomes only too easy to appeal with effect for charitable help, which is for the most part so used as to perpetuate and increase the very evils which it is sought to palliate.

3. Casual employment is demoralising to the labourer.

Of the evils of unthriftiness and low standard of living so prevalent among those casually employed it seems hardly necessary to speak. They are matters of commonplace to every experienced worker among the poor. Testimony is afforded in the small percentage of men of this class to be found in Friendly Societies or Trade Unions. The following is a typical instance of the difference in the standard of life and general well-being between a man in regular employment at a low wage—for example, a railway man earning from 23s. to 26s. a week—and the casual worker averaging the same wage throughout the year but obtaining it irregularly.

The following record of work done was obtained from a painter, aged 41, who had kept a careful account of his jobs during the year 1906-7 :

1906	Jan.	1 week, 45 hours a week, at 8½d. an hour.
	„ Feb.	4 weeks, 45 hours a week, at 8½d. an hour.
	„ March.	1 week, 55 hours a week, at 9½d. an hour.
	„ April-Oct.	6 months, 55 hours a week, at 8½d. an hour.
	Oct. 1906-Feb. 1907	out of work, and earned nothing but a few shillings for odd jobs.

Thus he averaged at least 23s. 6d. per week throughout the year. Nevertheless he was never out of debt and difficulty in the winter. Money earned in the good season was largely spent in working off arrears of rent and in redeeming his furniture from pawn. All his saving was, as it were, done backwards, involving heavy interest. He was a man of temperate habits, of more than average skill, and well spoken of by his employers.

The cost of living to such a man is largely increased. He is constantly paying high interest for small loans from the pawnbroker. He pays heavily for credit from the grocer. He pays a higher rent for his house to cover the risk of bad debts to his landlord and as interest on back rent.

Q. 134. Much evidence has been given before the Committee showing the  
168, 305, difficulty of obtaining steady and capable workers as builder's labourers,  
358, 1666, carmen, or wharf porters. This is in part due to the fact that men of  
1262. low skill or irresponsible character naturally drift into these trades. But the poverty of character is itself also directly fostered by the bad industrial conditions to which such men are subject. Mr. Martley says 'that casual employment is demoralising is a truism.' Mr. Fisher has pointed out that drunkenness is often worse during times of unemployment than when work is plentiful. Mr. Wood has also testified to the fact that where character is of little value in obtaining work it tends to be absent. What is not valued is not possessed. There is recounted in Porter's 'Progress of the Nation' (p. 459) an experience that seems so generally applicable as to be worth quoting.

Q. 211.  
Q. 700.

'The influence which these alternations (between poverty and plenty) have upon the moral character of the working classes is greater than would be conceived by any persons who have not had opportunities for observation or inquiry upon the subject. The following facts, which are given upon the authority of the gentleman who has had the chief practical direction of an extensive work, will serve to confirm the position here advanced, and will show how paramount a duty it is for those whose acts and deliberations must tend to the continuance or removal of so unfavourable a state of things to give their earnest and most careful thoughts for the introduction of a more certain and stable system.

'The formation of a canal, which has been in progress during the last five years, in the north of Ireland, has afforded steady employment to a portion of the peasantry, who before that time were suffering all the evils, so common in that country, which result from precariousness of employment. Such work as they could previously get came at uncertain intervals, and was sought by so many competitors that the remuneration was of the scantiest amount. In this condition of things the men were improvident to recklessness; their wages, insufficient for the comfortable sustenance of their families, were wasted in procuring for themselves

a temporary forgetfulness of their misery at the whisky shop, and the men appeared to be sunk into a state of hopeless degradation. From the moment, however, that work was offered to them which was constant in its nature and certain in its duration, and on which their weekly earnings would be sufficient to provide for their comfortable support, men who had been idle and dissolute were converted into sober, hard-working labourers, and proved themselves kind and careful husbands and fathers; and it is stated as a fact that, notwithstanding the distribution of several hundred pounds weekly in wages, the whole of which must be considered as so much additional money placed in their hands, the consumption of whisky was absolutely and permanently diminished in the district. During the comparatively short period in which the construction of this canal was in progress some of the most careful labourers, men who most probably before then never knew what it was to possess five shillings at any one time, saved sufficient money to enable them to emigrate to Canada.'

No better statement is needed of the effect of regular employment in contributing towards an improved method of life among the lower grades of industrial society. And it must not be overlooked that the present evils do not affect the labourer alone. Perhaps the greatest evil of all is found in the exposure of the children of casual labourers to recurrent periods of want and neglect. The man may have brought about his own misfortune. The child has the misfortune perpetuated in his own person as the result of stunted growth and lack of training.

Much is now being said of the evils of home work and the low wages paid to women. But these evils in the great majority of cases are effect and not cause. They generally originate in the fact that women, unskilled and unable, even not desiring, to work regularly, compete in low grade occupations at the time when their casually employed husbands and fathers are out of work. Reduce the extent of casual labour among men and the supply of out-workers will decrease except at wages and under conditions that are worthy acceptance. It is useless to give, by means of a minimum wage to women, the means for transforming the woman into the main supporter of the family, and so leaving the man free to accept even worse pay or more casual conditions.

But it is unnecessary in this report to take up space in further emphasising the manifold evils of industrial fluctuations and chronic uncertainty among the casually employed. They cry aloud to all who are familiar with their lives unless indeed too great familiarity has brought deaf ears.

It is often too loosely said that society is an organism. But at least the metaphor rightly suggests that men need to be secured in some measure from constantly changing environment if they are to grow healthy and strong. No permanence of character, no sufficient social habits

can be developed among those whose economic security is unseen from day to day. A measure of change, of risk, of responsibility stimulates progress and brings strength. The extremes are stagnation and irresponsibility. On all sides there is a clamour for the removal of the evils of poverty. Not chronic poverty, but irregularity and uncertainty are the real evils that demand a remedy, for if these latter were brought under control the former would exist only as a result of vice, and could then be dealt with in a way that is now rendered impossible by the very difficulty of deciding upon the true cause.

#### METHODS OF REFORM.

It remains shortly to consider in what ways remedies may be devised for these serious social evils which take their origin in the conditions of casual employment. Before coming to those proposals which most commend themselves to the Committee, it may not be out of place, first, to refer to certain courses of action which have been either practised or frequently suggested, but which the Committee feels to be either positively harmful or, at best, of little real value.

1. *Local Relief Work.*—From the issue in 1886 of Mr. Chamberlain's circular from the Local Government Board to Boards of Guardians, in which the local authorities were recommended to undertake in times of exceptional distress the execution of works on which unskilled labour might be employed, there has gradually come into existence a virtual duplication in the machinery for the offer of outdoor relief. For the provision of work, at first by the Vestries, and later by the Borough Councils, originally intended to be confined to periods of exceptional trade depression, has in the course of twenty years become the normal practice in several of the poorer districts of London. Moreover, the distribution of this work has frequently had for its aim the grant to as many as possible of a small share of employment, rather than the engagement of men, under ordinary industrial conditions, to carry out works of utility in an economical manner. For example, in 1904-5 Bermondsey spent £8,417 in wages in repairing certain streets, distributing the work among over a thousand individuals by allotting a turn of three days' work to each man. It is said that the majority of the men received not less than three turns in a period of five months. Each man was paid 5s. a day. In the same year Camberwell spent £26,674 upon a number of local works, such as painting, cleansing roads, paving streets, &c., upon which several thousand individuals received employment for periods varying from a fortnight to three weeks. The borough engineer reported that of those engaged many were 'very poor workers, and others were too idle to earn a living, but were yet desirous of benefiting under the scheme.' The work is said to have cost



from 50 per cent. to 75 per cent. more than would have been the case if it had not been carried out by the unemployed. In London, as a whole, £111,358 was spent by the Borough Councils upon works of this kind in 1904-5. The result was an increase in the number of opportunities for casual earnings, not contracting and expanding in response to exceptional trade conditions; but recurring regularly as each winter slackness came on. Moreover, the work was even more demoralising than the ordinary casual employment to be obtained under industrial conditions, for it ceased to be necessary for the workman to render an equivalent in service for the wage paid. No course could more certainly result in a permanent retention in a district of a mass of inefficient and casual workers without reference to the needs of the labour market. The evils of Borough relief work are now generally recognised. It is seen to be impossible to reconcile the two objects of (1) undertaking works of utility under economical conditions, and (2) employing a large number of unskilled labourers whose wages are paid in accordance with their needs and not in accordance with their market worth.

2. '*Back to the Land.*'—It is frequently argued that the under-employment of large numbers in the casual labour districts of London is the result of an over-population of those districts, and that the remedy is to be found in settling considerable numbers of such men upon the land. This proposal seems to suffer from two important misconceptions. In speaking of 'back' to the land, it would seem to be suggested that those who are suffering most from lack of employment have migrated to London from the country, and that it would therefore be desirable to restore them to profitable occupation in agriculture. But in the Report of the Departmental Committee on Agricultural Settlements in British Colonies Mr. Wilson Fox has clearly shown that the town unemployed are in a very small degree recruited by country-born men. In an analysis of several thousands of men out of work or in casual employment in London, relating to the year 1906, Mr. Wilson Fox found that from 14 per cent. to 6 per cent. only were country born. To attempt to place the London-bred casual labourer in a self-supporting situation in agriculture, even supposing that there were a large demand for labourers in the country, would be to ignore not only the psychological characteristics of the townsmen, but to overlook the necessity for a considerable period of training before such men could be self-supporting on the land. To render the large numbers of under-employed men—assuming them to be created as rapidly as they now are—fit for work on the land would certainly require an immense organisation in the shape of farm colonies, and probably would also involve the use of compulsion to prevent their subsequent return to town-life. But there is involved in the policy of 'back to the land' a fallacy similar to that implied in a reliance upon emigration. It is overlooked that the periodical removal of the unemployed

and the unemployable only creates a vacuum which, in the absence of any check placed upon the cause of their existence, will be rapidly refilled. The Colonies may be willing to take, for a long time to come, a constant stream of such people. The agricultural districts of England cannot be so willing.

3. *Subsidiary Industries*.—It is probable that by careful reference to the statistics of employment public bodies may contribute to the stability of trade by undertaking strictly necessary works at times when employment in the open market is slack. Such a policy is liable to the great danger that the work will be made for the unemployed rather than merely reserved for a time of slackness. Moreover, such work will nearly always require a number of specialised workmen who may not be those whose trade is depressed.

But the proposal usually goes further than this. It is suggested that national works should be constantly available, such as, for example, the reclamation of foreshores or afforestation, which could be rapidly expanded or contracted with changes in the demand for labour in private enterprise. The suggestion would, indeed, be worthy of adoption if any forms of work satisfying the canon of economy could be devised to suit the necessary conditions. Authorities on afforestation at least seem to agree that that particular industry is wholly unsuitable. No evidence is yet forthcoming that work on a sufficiently large scale can be profitably undertaken by the State for this purpose except at a very large financial loss. The proposal is still further condemned by the fact that it is a palliative and does not strike at the root of the evil.

We now pass to consider certain remedies which may be expected to achieve a permanent improvement in the condition of casual labour. In the reference to the Committee it was suggested (page 2) that permanent improvement might be found to lie in a development of the principle of co-operation. It will be well, therefore, to ask how far co-operation or profit-sharing is applicable to casual labour trades, and how far, if applied, it will tend to remove those evils which now belong to them.

It should be pointed out, however, that co-operation, in an elementary form, has already existed to a considerable extent in the building trade, but that the system gradually developed the evils associated with sub-contracting, a system which has almost passed away and is generally condemned. In a similarly elementary form co-operation still exists in connection with certain kinds of riverside labour, where butty gangs frequently undertake the discharging of coal and grain. In Leith, for example, the discharging of grain is almost entirely undertaken by the Company of Sworn Meters and Weighers and by the various companies of working porters. These companies are, in many cases, of long standing, and they contract with the shipowners or the consignees for the discharge of the cargo. They own such small capital appliances as the scales and the tackle by which the

grain is raised from the hold, excluding, of course, the power by which the tackle is moved. This system certainly results in the members of the companies earning high wages. It does not, however, seem to result in any thorough organisation of the labour employed. The members frequently are content to work for a part of the week only, and then employ substitutes at a fixed rate of pay. The practise of 'subbing' is also common even among the members. It was stated by one of the Company of Sworn Meters that there was considerable drinking among these men. In the case of coal-trimming, as, for example, at Cardiff, the work is similarly carried out by co-operative gangs, who are equally irregular in their working, and who maintain a considerable number of assistants paid at a fixed rate, known as 'hoppers,' who depend for work partly upon the fluctuations in coal exports, but partly upon the caprice of the trimmers for whom they work. It would seem that this system, at any rate for the 'hoppers,' is in no way superior to that now in vogue in the London docks, by which men are engaged by independent foremen according to their individual needs.

An interesting account of co-operative contracting for the discharge of cargo on a large scale by the branches of the Longshoreman's Union at the Lake ports in America is given in the Industrial Census of 1901. The contracts for the handling of freight in the lumber trade on the Lakes are made direct with the local branches of the Union, the total membership of which covers forty thousand men. It is said that the system works well, and that the Union exercises considerable control over the men, and has succeeded in very largely reducing the amount of drinking, which was formerly very great. All disputes relating to labour are settled by conciliation. In slack times the Union frequently arranges for a transfer of men from one Lake port to another.

It would seem that the method of co-operation, as exemplified in the small gangs previously referred to, does not afford a remedy for the present evils. To be successful it is necessary to have unified control of the labour force over a large area. Only so can the mobility of the labourers be increased through a proper system of transfer so as to render the work more regular and continuous.

In the case of dock labour, there is no necessity for expensive capital appliances owned by the workman. There is no obstacle therefore of this kind to hinder, for example, the Dock Labourers' Union from contracting on a large scale for the supply of labour on co-operative lines, as is done by the Longshoreman's Union. But it is very doubtful whether this development is possible in London, owing partly to the comparative weakness of the Union, and partly to the probable unwillingness of employers to treat with it.

In the case of the building trade the obstacles in the way of co-operative building are similar to those which hinder the spread of

co-operative production generally. Taking things as they are, there seems little ground for hope that, desirable as it may be, co-operation will soon become the prevailing method of productive enterprise. The advantages of co-operation, or rather of profit-sharing, are more clearly seen in the case of such undertakings as the South Metropolitan Gas Company, or of factory industries such as that described in the evidence given by Mr. Horn. In both these cases it has been proved possible to admit to the benefit of a share in the profits not only the regular workmen but also those who are seasonally employed. As a means to stimulate industry and develop thrift profit-sharing in well-established businesses has everything to recommend it.

If the principle of compulsory thrift be adopted, the bonus upon wages might well form the nucleus of a fund retained to meet periods of unemployment. It is to be hoped that with the more stable *personnel* of the factory it will become the custom rather than the exception for every business to have its provident and welfare institutions. But although there are many signs that this is actually coming to pass, *patronage* is not readily adaptable to the more casually employed. A great advance, however, would be made in the condition of this latter class if every employer regarded it as his duty to give regular employment to the fullest possible extent.

There are certainly considerable limits within which the good-will of the employer is alone sufficient to determine a greater or less degree of casuality. It is to be hoped that, as Professor Marshall has recently pleaded, the growth of 'economic chivalry' may be a marked feature of future industrial life.

#### ORGANISATION OF THE CASUAL LABOUR MARKET.

From among the many evils affecting the industrial and social life of the casual labourer, there stands out as chief the normal excess in the supply of such men over the demand for their services. Any methods of social reform which will serve to bring about a lessened rate of deterioration among higher grades of workmen, or that will promote thrift and prudence among the unskilled, will clearly tend to lessen the supply of casuals, and thus will make for improvement in their condition. Important as it is for every effort to be made thus directly to affect the supply side of the problem, it is even more important to lay stress upon the fact that, as things are, permanent good can only result from a reform in the conditions of demand proceeding either *pari passu* or in advance of the reform of supply.

As a first condition of improvement, therefore, a way has to be found for securing the continuity of employment of those for whom it is now so largely a matter of chance. One method of reaching this end would

be to impose restrictions upon the freedom of contract with the object of securing a minimum wage and a minimum engagement. To secure such a minimum of conditions is of the first importance. An instance of the improvement of the conditions of those casually engaged achieved by voluntary agreement is afforded in the settlement made between the London Society of Compositors and the Master Printers' Association in October 1907 by which compositors temporarily employed are guaranteed a minimum of two days engagement. Unfortunately there seems little hope of any immediate improvement being secured through the Dockers' Union, on account of the insignificance of its membership in London. But it is important to notice that, by whatever sanction such a minimum were secured, it could only be adopted on the condition that by means of an improved organisation employers could continuously utilise the labour which they had thus retained.

It has already been pointed out that a sufficient motive for the introduction of such organisation should be afforded in the gain to be derived from a more efficient labour supply. And it is strongly supported by the social benefit which must attend a decasualisation of labour in such occupations as those of dock or building labour. It is necessary therefore to concentrate attention upon the perfecting of such organisation.

The first essential is the substitution of a large area organised as a single market for labour in place of a number of small areas each in virtual isolation.

This change would indeed be completely efficacious were the fluctuations in the demand for labour in the present disconnected markets complementary to each other. That this is not completely so in the case of the docks for example is at once obvious from an inspection of the charts at the end. Mr. Booth in his evidence before the Labour Commission, proposed to meet this difficulty by replacing the unknown by the known in the matter of the quantity of work to be expected by the different groups of dock labourers. Thus he contemplated drawing upon a reserve of older men, not needing full work, to make up the supply when it exceeded the normal. Such men would know within fairly close limits the quantity of work to be expected. Given the means of communication they might then live at a distance, in agricultural districts, where rents would be low and a bye-industry secured in the cultivation of allotments or small holdings. This combination is a prominent feature of the life of many dockers in Antwerp, where the cheap workmen's trains render the system practicable. Further elasticity could be secured by the adoption of the shift system—a certain number of shifts constituting a minimum week's work entitling to a minimum weekly wage—while the number of shifts might be increased in order to meet fluctuations.

In order to facilitate the working of any such plans the first step is the discovery of the best means for rendering labour fluid throughout the

extent of a large market. There are three ways in which this result would seem likely to be reached.

1. *Through Trade Unions.*—These organisations attempted early in their history to improve the mobility of labour through such institutions as the Vacant Book and Travelling Benefit. They have never succeeded in organising satisfactorily for this purpose, partly for the reason stated in the recent German inquiry quoted below, namely that the Trade Unions have usually aimed not merely at facilitating the flow of labour, but at the acquisition of a weapon in the economic conflict. In any case, there seems little hope that the unskilled and casual worker will be organised sufficiently in the near future to justify the expectation that decasualisation will be achieved through their own efforts.

2. *Through the Employer.*—Where an individual employer has the control of a large enough number of men engaged in different places an increase of mobility may be secured by treating the business as a whole as a single labour market. The London and India Docks' Committee is by far the best instance of the possibilities of success to be obtained in this way. The history of the progressive decasualisation of employment under the London and India Docks Company presents an object-lesson of the way in which the condition of labour at the docks may be lastingly improved. In 1887, according to the account given in Mr. Charles Booth's 'Life and Labour of the People,' vol. iv., Series I., only 16 per cent. of the work of the Dock Company was undertaken by permanent labourers. This percentage is probably a little too low, but, broadly, it represents the proportion between permanent and casual employees. In 1891-2, according to the evidence given before the Labour Commission, the percentage of total work performed by the weekly staff was given as 45 per cent. In 1894-1901 the percentage of work performed by weekly labourers under the company averaged 64 per cent.; while in 1902-4 the percentage averaged 78 per cent., reaching a maximum of 82 per cent. in 1903. The methods by which these results have been attained are fully described in the evidence given before the Committee by Mr. Watts and Mr. Wood. This organisation not only regularises employment to a very great extent. It substitutes for the disastrous system of daily pay the payment of a weekly wage. It further makes possible the development of the thrift institutions which are connected with the Dock Company's work.

At the South Metropolitan Gas Company a further example on a smaller scale is presented (see Mr. Carpenter's evidence) of the decasualisation rendered possible by careful organisation within a single business. Thus, in December 1904, out of 6,127 men only 815 were casually employed; and in the following summer, out of 5,148 only 86.

There are certain difficulties, however, which attach to the organisation of labour solely through the employer; for, in the first place, this

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method will usually result in the extent of the organisation being limited by the extent of each separate business. In so far as this is the case, mobility of labour between employer and employer, or between district and district, is not affected. This difficulty may, indeed, be overcome by a union of employers, as in the case of the Maritime Federation of Antwerp. Such a union of wharfowners or master-builders in London could regularise employment and improve the methods of engagement to a very large extent. Such a union would probably have the best chance of securing the general support of the employers in a trade. This method is, however, open to several difficulties. It does not necessarily secure sufficient recognition of the trade unions. It confines the organisation to the limits of a particular trade.

3. *Public Labour Exchanges.*—For these reasons chiefly the Labour Exchanges in Germany have been gradually taken over by public bodies, and this plan is now in course of adoption in London. The movement is not yet sufficiently developed to justify any conclusion as to the success with which it will grapple with the problem of casual employment. This success would seem to depend on the one hand upon the efficiency of their management, and on the other upon the extent to which they enlist the confidence and support of the employers and of the workmen's unions. The use of the Labour Exchange is the first step towards the introduction of an intelligent system of marketing labour, a step which has long ago been taken in connection with the marketing of products. But there is no reason why there should be an exclusive development in one direction alone. It will probably be found that general public exchanges, organised upon no distinctive trade basis, will be necessary, working not in opposition to but in harmony and co-operation with the more specialised trade organisations provided by corporations of employers or employed.

It is clear that no precise model can be framed equally applicable to the needs of a localised trade such as dock labour and a scattered trade such as building. The first step, when the need for organisation has been generally appreciated, should be the consideration by each of the different trades of the best means for meeting the situation in its own case.

But the development of the labour exchange in Germany suggests that it is unnecessary to adopt any one of these alternatives to the exclusion of the others. There will probably be room for the co-operation of differently controlled exchanges. Experience will prove which system can best achieve its end. But when the Labour Exchange has done its work there will still remain long periods of trade depression and short-season fluctuations, causing irregularity of employment, for which no market organisation can afford a complete remedy.

It remains, therefore, to consider a further line of reform—namely, in the broadest sense, how to devise adequate institutions for thrift.

It has already been pointed out that the irregularity of employment, causing a wasteful expenditure of resources, is one of the chief evils attaching to casual labour. It cannot be too frequently insisted that the present casuality of life in general among people in this class is the greatest barrier to the improvement of their social condition and to their acquisition of habits of forethought and independence which must in the long run be the foundation of permanent improvement. Subject a man to the present chaotic conditions of life, and it is idle to expect, except in a few cases, the man to be other than chaotic in his method of life. The first essential is, therefore, to devise some means by which, periods of unemployment may be met from resources accumulated during periods of good work.

Hitherto it has been thought sufficient for the most part to preach the lesson of individual thrift. But it has long been recognised in the sphere of life insurance that the law of averages enables the method of insurance to be applied more economically and more certainly than by leaving each individual to bear his own responsibility in the matter.

In principle it combines group with individual responsibility.

The great need of the present is to apply effectively the principle of insurance and group responsibility in the solution of the liability to unemployment.

Not only does the group favour the general development of regular habit, which the mere practice of individual thrift fails to do, but it can afford an adequate provision against risk, where the individual system does not. The experience of many individuals, saving individually, who discover that their savings have been inadequate leads to the belief that saving is useless, and the belief is propagated. An efficient barrier is thus set up against the development of the general habit of thrift, on account of the number of instances in which it has proved of no avail. It is important, however, to realise that this absence of thrift at present existing does not relieve the poor from the expense of provision in times of stress. On the contrary, it only substitutes a wasteful for an economic method. In reality, periods of out of work or illness, except in so far as they are met by charity, are met by allowing rent to run in arrears, by pawning clothes and furniture, by obtaining credit from tradesmen, and loans from money-lenders. In this way rents and prices are raised, and heavy interest paid. It is probable that the increased cost of living so caused is equivalent to a substantial reduction in the weekly earnings of a vast number of casual labourers when at work. In the Liverpool docks the custom is not uncommon for fish-hawkers to advance money to dock labourers' wives by lending them a shilling and selling them a shilling's worth of fish. The fish is really of the value of about twopence, while a liability is created of two shillings, to be met in the course of the next week. In Edinburgh the custom is spreading of

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letting furnished tenements for which a normal rent is charged in respect of the room, while an exorbitant charge is made for a few scraps of furniture and odd pieces of crockery. It is to such tenements that the casual labourer goes after he has pawned all his own household goods.

Thus the cost of living to the very poor is very greatly increased by the absence of properly organised institutions for thrift and credit.

The point here to consider then is how such organisations may be most effectively secured. A recent inquiry has been carried out by the Imperial Statistical Office on behalf of the German Government with a view more especially of ascertaining the extent of unemployment and of examining the various means by which such risks may be met. The report was issued in 1906, and contains an elaborate review of all schemes of insurance against unemployment both in the German Empire and in the chief countries of Europe.

The first section of the report considers the extent of the lack of employment, most of which is not relevant to the purpose of this inquiry. But it tends to confirm the conclusions suggested—namely, that unemployment is for the most part marginal, but that this margin affects a considerable number acutely. The report points out the inadequacy of the statistics on the subject, viz. the figures of the Industrial Census taken in June 1895, and the Population Census in December 1895. The genuine unemployed, according to the census, numbered 1·11 per cent. of wage-earners (men and women) in June, and 3·43 per cent. of wage earners (men and women) in December, 1895. In those groups in which employment is most irregular, however, the percentages are far higher. For example, the building trade, as a whole, shows a proportion of 1·68 per cent. unemployed wage-earners in June, and 12·60 per cent. in December. Painters 2·38 per cent. in June, and 17·31 per cent. in December. General labourers 5·87 per cent. in June, and 20·83 per cent. in December. Generally in this group there is a very marked increase in the number unemployed in winter as compared with summer.

It is, however, stated that these figures are probably liable to an exaggeration of from 10 to 15 per cent.

The general conclusions reached as the result of the inquiry into the extent of unemployment are:

- (1) That there must of necessity be a permanent margin of unemployed in each group of industry.
- (2) This margin varies widely from group to group, and is predominantly due to climatic changes which cause interruptions to work, chiefly in agriculture and building. In so far as these climatic changes are of regular nature, they are allowed for, at least to some extent, in wages. Two-thirds of the total unemployed come from these two groups.
- (3) The increase of the unemployed in the winter in the towns is in

the main due to interruptions to work in the building trade and to the immigration of country labourers.

(4) That in so far as the phenomenon of unemployment is regular, provision against it can be made by the method of insurance.

The report next considers in detail by what means provisions against unemployment can best be secured.

First, through the Trade Unions.

In Germany there are four separate groups of trade union organisations—the Free Trade Unions, with a membership, in 1904, of 1,072,000; the Christian Unions, with a membership of 275,000; the Hirsch Duncker Unions, with a membership of 111,000; and the Independent Unions, with a membership of 75,000—giving a total of a little over one and a half millions.

Thus 20 per cent. of wage-earners are enrolled in one or other of the Trade Unions.

In 1904 Unemployed Benefit was established in the thirty-eight of the sixty-three Central Branches of the Free Unions, in all the Hirsch Duncker Unions, and in certain branches of the Christian Unions. The total expenditure in 1904 on Unemployed and Travel Benefit was over two million marks.

Among unskilled workers unemployed benefit, however, is, as in England, but little developed. The navvies have a union which paid in 1904 an average of 3 marks 4 pfennig per head, and the Dock Labourers' Union paid an average of 44 pfennig per head per annum.

Although, therefore, the Trade Union in Germany is becoming an increasingly useful institution for insurance against unemployment in respect of skilled workers, and of many unskilled but regularly employed, they have, nevertheless, not succeeded in coping with fluctuations due to seasonal causes, nor in any considerable measure with trades in which work is of a casual nature.

#### MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS.

There is in Germany no instance of attempts at compulsory unemployed insurance; but in two towns—namely, Cologne and Leipzig—private initiative, with the help of the municipal authorities, has endeavoured to organise banks on a voluntary basis for the purpose of providing insurance against unemployment.

(1) *Cologne*.—The scheme was inaugurated in 1894 by which an unemployed insurance bank was instituted in connection with the Labour Exchange. The municipal authorities were to provide premises and administration free, and those workmen who maintained their contributions to the bank were to be placed first upon the Vacant lists of the Exchanges. The payment of benefit was limited to those months when

seasonal and unskilled workers are most liable to unemployment—*i.e.* from December 1 to March 1.

The funds were to be obtained from the following sources :

- (1) Contributions of honorary members and patrons.
- (2) Contributions of the workmen.
- (3) Contribution of the town of Cologne.
- (4) Voluntary subscriptions and donations from the public, employers, &c.

The workmen insuring were admitted without entrance fee upon the payment originally of 25 pf. per week.

Later a distinction was introduced (in 1905), by which unskilled labourers paid 35 pf., and skilled workmen 45 pf. per week.

As at first proposed, no one was to be eligible who had not resided in Cologne for two years. This was subsequently modified to admit those who had resided for one year, and in the case of those who had just completed military service for six months.

Unemployed benefit could only be secured on the condition that contributions had been paid for thirty-four weeks in each year, and was then at the rate of 2 marks per day for married,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  marks for unmarried men for the first twenty days, and 1 mark per day for the following twenty-eight days. As a check to malingering, men were at first to be obliged to accept any work offered to them through the Labour Exchange. This rule was subsequently modified, with the result that only such work as was of the kind to which the workman was more or less accustomed had to be taken. Up to 1901, chiefly on account of flourishing trade, few workmen availed themselves of the bank. The membership in 1900-1 was only 536. With the decline in trade which followed, the membership increased so rapidly that in 1902, having admitted 1,205 workmen, it was necessary to refuse any more, since, according to its statutes, the bank could not undertake a liability for unemployed benefit exceeding two-thirds of its existing resources. In 1902 a similar limitation had to be imposed, with the result that, for that and the succeeding year, the municipality paid a contribution of 20,000 marks towards the funds, in order to extend the bank's operations. Further, in 1903-4, the municipality made itself responsible for the financial security of the bank in order that the statute referred to above should not act in limitation of the number of workmen permitted to join. The table on p. 70 gives the number of workmen who have taken advantage of the bank in successive years.

From this table it will be seen that of the total membership roughly 25 per cent. only were unskilled labourers; while of the skilled men a very large proportion belonged to the building trade, whose period of seasonal depression corresponds to the period for which benefit was paid by the bank. It should further be noticed that even since 1901 the pro-

Year	Number of Workmen contributing	Of Workmen contributing there were			Number of contributors receiving benefit	Of those receiving benefit there were		
		Skilled	Unskilled	Skilled—Building Trade		Skilled	Unskilled	Skilled—Building Trade
1896-7	132	64	68	64	96	40	56	40
1897-8	236	134	102	126	151	87	64	84
1898-9	282	189	93	174	144	104	40	100
1899-0	226	177	49	165	154	124	30	120
1900-1	536	440	96	421	441	360	81	347
1901-2	1,105	855	250	796	842	667	175	627
1902-3	1,265	978	287	898	1,008	787	221	720
1903-4	1,501	1,146	355	1,064	1,164	900	264	830
1904-5	1,596	1,164	432	1,097	1,271	930	341	869

portion of men contributing to the scheme has been small when compared with the total number of employees in the city. Moreover, the financial burden of the scheme has fallen largely upon resources other than the contributions of the workmen and of the employers. Thus the percentage of amounts paid in benefit obtained from the contributions of the workmen averaged 48 per cent. between 1896 and 1905.

The great importance of connecting a scheme of insurance against unemployment with a system of Labour Exchanges is shown by the fact that in the winter 1904-5, out of 1,271 unemployed entitled to benefit, 59 found permanent employment during their period of probation, and 1,078 temporary work, making a total of 29,648 work-days, and leaving only 25,084 work-days for which benefit had to be paid from the funds. Only 109 of those qualifying for benefit failed to obtain any work at all through the Exchanges.

The following table shows the duration of unemployment during which benefit was paid to the respective numbers of workmen :

Days	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-47	48
Unskilled	40	43	67	48	20	23	17	9	12	11	29
Skilled	84	135	145	149	92	85	46	32	39	15	62
Total	124	178	212	197	112	108	63	41	51	26	91

In the working of the scheme there has been found little difficulty from workmen falling in arrears with their contributions; but this is explained by the fact that a large proportion of them belong to industries in which the wages received are high—a fact which suggests that the scheme has succeeded rather in relieving a well-paid section of

employees from the necessity of bearing the full expense of their seasonal slackness, than in inducing the unskilled and less well-paid sections to undertake proper provision against loss of work. In imitation of the Cologne scheme, there was formed in Leipzig in 1904 a voluntary association in connection with the Evangelical and Catholic Unions, but having no association with a Labour Exchange. No results of its working are as yet published.

*The Ghent System.*—This system, of which the principal feature is the subsidising of the Trade Unions by municipal funds, is one that has been made the model of many schemes for other places. Its inauguration followed in 1901 upon the report of a Commission appointed in 1898.

This report condemned the system of municipal management on the lines of the Cologne scheme, mainly on the ground that a municipal department can never successfully cope with the difficulty of detecting imposture on the part of those posing as unemployed. Nobody has so good a chance of avoiding the difficulty as an organisation of fellow-workmen, to whose interest it is to preserve corporate funds from misuse, and who from daily contact are able to maintain a surveillance over their unemployed fellows.

The report therefore advocated the subsidy of the Trade Unions by the municipality in aid of their unemployed benefit and for those who were not members of any union advised the formation of an institution for receipt of savings which were to be augmented in the same proportion as were the contributions of the unionists to their benefit funds. Only the man who helped himself was to be helped by the municipality. The scheme is primarily intended to stimulate organised thrift.

Moreover, by working through the unions advantage is taken of existing organisations grouped according to trades, and with risks more or less differentiated.

The objection that to subsidise a union is to compel all workmen to join it and thus to strengthen an organisation which has other important activities, as, for example, the conduct of strikes or the furtherance of a political party, is largely overcome by the fact that the saving institution for unorganised men is supported to an equal extent.

The judgment upon this scheme, pronounced in the report of its working up to the end of the year 1905 shows that it has largely succeeded in attaining its object—namely, to induce the Trade Unions to organise a system of unemployed benefits on an effective scale. Not only in Ghent but all over Belgium this result has been achieved.

The following tables summarise briefly the main facts indicative of the extent to which the Communal funds in Belgium are supporting the unions in their endeavour to develop adequate unemployed benefit funds.

Year	Number of Communes	Number of Unions subsidised	Amount of benefit paid by Unions	Amount of subsidy paid to Unions	Number of members benefited	Number of days of unemployment
1901	2	26	Francs 17,895	Francs 6,253	2,089	6,576
1902	8	98	65,274	29,166	3,211	32,219
1903	14	129	67,137	36,516	2,853	39,891
1904	15	128	81,150	43,362	2,825	50,604
1905	18	131	66,368	35,497	3,400	55,734
1906	25	229	89,716	46,663	5,019	71,969

Year	Average subsidy per workman benefited	Average subsidy per day of unemployment	Average length per man of unemployment	Proportion of subsidy to Union benefit
1901	f. c. 2.99	f. c. 0.93	Days 3.1	Per cent. 36
1902	9.08	0.90	10.0	44
1903	12.80	0.91	14.0	54
1904	19.90	0.91	18.0	57
1905	10.44	0.63	16.6	53
1906	9.28	0.64	16.3	52

In judging of the merits of the Ghent scheme the report already quoted lays stress upon points as of chief importance.

The objection may be raised that a State subsidy of Trade Unions will exert a powerful influence in driving men into their ranks. This is the complaint most commonly made against the system in Belgium itself. As has been pointed out, the answer given is partly that the danger of increasing the power of the unions is largely exaggerated, and, on the other hand, that there is no compulsion upon men to join a Trade Union as there is the alternative Savings Bank equally subsidised by the State. But in Ghent, at least, this subsidiary institution has not proved altogether successful. In the first place, it is associated with no Labour Exchange, and upon a man representing himself as unemployed, he is at liberty to withdraw his deposit together with the bonus. Although he is required to give particulars of his last employment, date of leaving, &c., there is no adequate machinery for substantiating the *bona fides* of the unemployment, particularly in the case of men whose employment is of a casual nature. Moreover, in Ghent, at any rate, the scheme, despite considerable advertisement, failed to prove attractive. In 1903 only thirteen members joined the bank, of whom one alone claimed unemployed bonus. This failure was attributed to the fact that it required too great an initiative on the part of the men. While the more prudent and farsighted workmen were already members of a union, the others took no thought until the period of unemployment was reached.

They were then ineligible, as no one was qualified to receive bonus he had been three months a member of the Savings Bank.

On the other hand, the evidence obtained of the working of Savings Banks in the years 1904-5, suggests that with simple machinery, coupled with the exercise of educational influence, the capable of being considerably developed.

Second, there is the question of exercising a certain supervision control of the Trade Union management of its benefit funds by municipality in return for the subsidy. It has been found possible in Ghent to devise an arrangement by which this control is effected, leaving the unions substantial freedom in the conduct of their affairs. The statistics already given suggest a third difficulty—namely, the offer of the subsidy will lead to an increasing expenditure on part of the State, and a diminishing payment on the part of the unions. This seems to have resulted in Ghent to some extent on account of an increase in the amount of unemployed benefit paid to old workmen, the result that the State is in reality paying superannuation benefits to old age pensions under the guise of unemployed insurance. As a result of the increasing proportion of the benefit paid by the State, the municipal authorities have been compelled to reduce the rate of their subsidy.

As against these difficulties, however, the plan of strengthening the Trade Union in its efforts to deal with unemployment has many indirect as well as direct advantages. The alternative methods of determining the relations between employers and employees would seem to be that of collective bargaining and voluntary agreement on the one hand, compulsory arbitration and legal enactment on the other. Every effort taken to relieve the Trade Unions of their chief responsibilities by substitution of independent municipal or State funds for the provision of superannuation benefits (old age pensions) and unemployed benefits will inevitably tend to convert the Unions from their mainly economic to predominantly political activity. This result will be a misfortune, because of the political consequences, but because the resulting determination of all the many issues implied in the collective bargain is likely to be effected in a manner rigid and inexpert and divorced from the valuable educative influences that now find scope in the activity of the effective Unions.

It is worth recording that Norway and Denmark have very recently adopted, with modifications, schemes broadly based upon the Ghent plan, and the experience gained as the result of these measures will soon yield valuable evidence upon the main difficulties which are involved.

*Co-operative Societies.*—In Hamburg the Consumers' Co-operative Society 'Production' has introduced the feature of providing against unemployment or distress through the reservation of 5 per cent. of bonus accruing to each member to form a fund. The fund is

person is distinct, and therefore depends entirely upon the amount of his purchases. The system is therefore really one of compulsory thrift; the amount saved bears no relation to the risk of unemployment. The principle of insurance is absent.

*Compulsory Thrift.*—It is seen that both the organisation of municipal unemployed funds administered by State authorities and the subsidy of Trade Unions are open to certain difficulties. To meet these the method of compulsory thrift has been largely supported in Germany. The essence of the scheme is set out by Dr. Schanz, who points out that its chief merit lies in obviating all difficulties connected with the discovery of the genuineness of unemployment, and involves no danger of the gradual reliance upon State funds in lieu of the workmen's own contribution. His proposal is that the machinery for the receipt and management of the funds shall be that already existing in Germany for the purpose of providing insurance against sickness. This machinery should be a charge upon the State, the cost of which represents the only element of public burden. The funds are to be provided by compulsory payments made by the workman (30 pf. a week, or 10 per cent. of wages in building and other specified trades), which shall in the first instance be retained by the employer. To this is added a contribution by the employer (10 pf. a week, or 10 per cent. of the weekly contribution in the case of the specified trades). The deposits remain the workman's property, but it is necessary to maintain a minimum amount (100. marks) which cannot be touched except in case of unemployment. The compulsory deposit can be increased by voluntary additions on the part of the workman. When unemployed, and after a probation of eight days, he can draw a weekly amount from his savings, which varies in direct proportion with the amount standing to his credit. It is thus to his interest to maintain his fund at a high figure. The notification of unemployment has to be made by the employer to the Savings Bank, as also the fact of re-engagement.

The advantages of this plan are found in avoiding the difficulty of determining the cause of unemployment, since a man will in any case only draw out his own money, the lazy will not profit at the expense of the diligent. Again, there is no difficulty in deciding how far a Labour Exchange is justified in compelling the acceptance of work as the alternative to the cessation of benefit.

On the other hand, the unions object that compulsory thrift will result in making the workmen independent of their trade organisations. And, again, the scheme, while not impossible, is difficult of application to those in casual employment.

While compulsory thrift has not as yet been adopted by any State, it has in Germany been put in force by several large employers of



labour. For example, by Messrs. Peters, of Elberfeld; Messrs. Tillmans, of Barmen; Messrs. Krupp, of Essen.

It will perhaps be of interest to point briefly the concluding remarks with which this section of the Report closes.

*Conclusions.*—‘The preceding description of existing institutions for insurance against unemployment in Germany and elsewhere has necessarily been involved in a mass of details, and the different points of view from which each scheme has had to be examined have prevented any unity of plan. Any attempt to formulate conclusions, and to give in a few words the gist of the experience acquired, is only possible at the close of the inquiry.

‘To propound any scheme was no part of the task of the statistical office. It had only to delineate existing schemes, actual and theoretical.

‘The first point to be made is, then, that no system of insurance whatsoever can provide that weapon against unemployment itself, which is only to be found in measures of a general kind, such as, on the one hand, the regulation of production, a far-sighted economic policy, a raised standard of popular education, regulation of apprenticeship, &c.; and, on the other, in practical expedients, such as the provision of employment, relief works, &c. Insurance is only a means of provision against the consequences of unemployment.

‘It is plain from statistics that unemployment, in the transitory form in which it affects certain classes of workmen, is a phenomenon recurring with so considerable a degree of certainty and regularity as to enable a tolerably accurate estimate to be formed of its cause, duration, and extent, such as should present no insuperable difficulties, of a technical kind, to the formation of an insurance system. Of course, the risk of unemployment in different occupations varies greatly, and consequently the need of insurance against it. On the other hand a cessation of work during a certain period of the year is normal in some occupations—*e.g.* agriculture, canal navigation, building, &c.; and while this special unemployment to some extent affects wages in these occupations, it demands special consideration.

‘The real difficulties of insurance against unemployment lie in rather a different direction; first, in the problem presented by the need of giving clear and rigid definition to the conception of the unemployment entitling to benefit, and of carrying out this definition in practice; second, in the problem of obligation on the part of the unemployed workman to accept such work as is offered to him. Indeed, no practical solution of the problem of the control of large bodies of unemployed workmen has yet been found.

‘With regard to the different schemes for unemployed insurance by public authorities, *compulsory insurance* (of which only one practical example, that of St. Gallen, exists) is a heavy tax upon men employed

in a large number of occupations in which the risk of unemployment either does not exist or exists only to a very inconsiderable degree, since to grade contributions proportionately to the degree of risk incurred is very difficult. Apart from the immense scale upon which any bureaucratic insurance scheme would have to be constructed, the elaborate safeguards and strictly limited definition of unemployment entitling to benefit that would be inevitable would readily appear to the workman an infringement of his liberty and a hindrance to the aims of his trade union. Difficulties would arise in connection with the reporting of unemployment when it arose, and in the regulations as to taking of work. And in so extensive a scheme the danger of abuse would be particularly great. The Labour Exchange has not, so far, proved itself an adequate organ of control; in spite of it, cases have been numerous where 'unemployed' have been doing work while in receipt of benefit. Moreover, it is open to doubt whether, in a large town, the Labour Exchange can bear the enormous burden that would devolve upon it under a compulsory insurance scheme.

'As to *voluntary* insurance systems, they of course only apply to those classes which have themselves realised the need of insurance; and these, outside the ranks of organised labour, are few in number. As far as one can judge, the worst paid labourer possesses neither the foresight nor the means to pay a regular contribution. Therefore, voluntary schemes, so far, have dealt only with a small proportion of the workmen who might be able to profit by them; and the main sphere of their usefulness is to be found in the building trade.

'Halfway between compulsory and voluntary insurance is the system already in operation in Belgium, where it is administered by the Communes, and in France where it was directed by the government.<sup>1</sup>

'According to this system, which possesses many points of advantage, the state or municipality pays a subsidy to the benefit institutions of the Trade Union, or other similar organisation, which in its turn pays out benefit through the medium of a public office.

'Of course, since in most countries the percentage of organised to unorganised labour is relatively small, this system does not touch the immense majority of workers. The attempt to obviate this disadvantage and create a counterpoise to the Trade Unions by the institution of subsidised savings banks, has nowhere met with great success. Such public insurance banks as would meet the needs of unorganised labour do not exist anywhere. The proposals for a further step in this direction, made by the joint commission appointed by Norway and Denmark to consider the problem, were directed mainly to the discovery of a more adequate solution presented by the subvention of organised labour rather than through the savings banks. In Belgium alone have any of these

<sup>1</sup> Note.—Scheme passed in 1905—no results published.

schemes advanced beyond the realm of theory. No data as yet exist for a final judgment; but as far as Belgian experience goes the verdict is, on the whole, favourable from the point of view of the municipality.

'The more detailed examination above will have shown that there are more or less weighty considerations on the other side.

'On one point all proposals agree, one point emerges clear in the adjudication upon every practical scheme, in every form of unemployed benefit or insurance an adequate system of Labour Exchanges is of the first importance.'

It will thus be seen that Germany has not as yet accepted as generally applicable any scheme for providing against unemployment by means of insurance. The inquiry is chiefly of importance as stating clearly the results of existing experiments and as drawing attention to the special difficulties with which each is beset.

But the need remains. If further experiment is required before this Committee could feel justified in making a confident recommendation of a particular plan, it is at least important to lay emphasis on the conclusion that the elaboration of suitable institutions for group thrift constitutes one of the most important problems in constructive reform affecting the condition of the casual labourer.

In concluding this report it hardly needs to be pointed out that many important questions bearing upon the problem remain untouched.

No evidence has been taken by the Committee on the aspects of casual labour presented in the home-work or 'sweated' industries. The problems there raised are, in the main, of a different kind, although, as has been pointed out, they are often intimately related to the general fact of casual employment among men. Similarly, no special attention has been paid to the question of apprenticeship. It has no direct connection with the organisation of the casual labour trades, although the direction of the rising generation into the best occupations, the improvement of efficiency, and the development of the sense of responsibility among parents for the future of their children, are all lines of advance that have a close bearing upon the problem in its broader aspects.

While recognising the degree in which it is true that a lasting improvement in the condition of life among the poorest industrial groups depends upon an advance in the 'standard of life' which implies moral and intellectual development no less than an improved economic condition, this report has aimed at emphasising one aspect only, and that perhaps the more important, of the Casual Labour problem—namely, the pressing need of affording to such workmen greater economic security and regularity as one condition for the attainment of such improved standard. I should like to add that although I have been responsible for the report as it stands, much of

any value that it may have is due to the general planning of the inquiry which was carried out by Mr. W. H. Beveridge, who acted as Secretary to the Committee during its earlier sittings.

C. J. HAMILTON,  
*Secretary.*

### REPORT.

The Committee are indebted to their Secretary, Mr. Hamilton, for the foregoing statement, which they have decided to print together with the evidence, as furnishing an analysis of and comment on that evidence, together with the substance of various inquiries undertaken by him on the Committee's behalf. Mr. Hamilton's statement contains what is intended to be an impartial recital of the various controversial points which arise in connection with the reference. The theoretical considerations which are thought to underlie and explain the facts attested by the evidence are an important part of the data which the general public has to weigh in forming an opinion, and the Committee know no better way of bringing these to the notice of the Society and the public than by presenting to them without comment their Secretary's statement. They might have attempted to revise and adopt as their own Mr. Hamilton's recital, but it will only be candid on their part to state that, when they attempted to do so, such wide differences of opinion became apparent that it was judged best to confine the report of the Committee to the following conclusions and recommendations, in which all could agree, and to submit that they had sufficiently discharged their obligations to the Society by laying before it the evidence, together with the points of economic theory arising therefrom as they are set forth in the Secretary's statement. The difficulties of the situation probably admit of no absolute solution. The inquiry has emphasised the importance of the general question of labour distribution, has brought together a certain amount of evidence, and has indicated the nature of the economic controversy which surrounds the subject, and to this modest end, it is to be hoped, not altogether useless part, the Committee have felt obliged to confine their work.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. The Committee is of opinion that the system of irregular engagement and the daily payment of unskilled workmen is largely responsible for the poverty and unthriftiness so commonly found in this class.
2. The Committee believes that lasting improvement can be effected by the organisation of the demand for and supply of workmen so as to

increase the extent of the market for labour, and of the mobility of workmen within it.

3. With this end in view, the Committee recommends that conferences should be arranged to consider, more especially in the case of the building trade and of employment at the docks and wharves, the best form of such organisation.

4. The Committee, recognising that employment cannot be rendered wholly regular over a series of years, or even for one year, emphasise the need for the extended organisation of societies for mutual thrift on the principles of insurance for the purpose of enabling labour to meet industrial risks.

5. The Committee would draw attention to the necessity for securing a large measure of industrial training to boys and girls during the years immediately after leaving the elementary school in occupations likely to lead to permanent employment in after life; and, also, for assisting and encouraging parents to make wise choice in selecting the occupations of their children.

6. With regard to the bearing of co-operation and profit-sharing on employment we are unable to satisfy ourselves that the use of these methods has a direct effect in increasing the regularity of employment. It may, however, in our opinion be fairly inferred that these methods have a valuable indirect effect in this direction through the favourable influences thus exerted upon the character and condition of the workers.

On behalf of the Committee,  
T. MACKAY.

The Committee would like to take this opportunity of expressing their deep regret at the death of Mr. W. W. Bruce, which occurred before the enquiry had been completed. He was a keenly interested and most valuable member of the Committee.

Friday, October 20th, 1905.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

### Special Committee

ON

### UNSKILLED LABOUR.

*Present*—SIR E. W. BRABROOK, C.B.

MR. CECIL M. CHAPMAN,	Mr. D. M. WATSON,	} <i>Secretaries.</i>
MR. JOHN CURRIE,	Mr. E. AVES,	
MR. J. PARSONS,	Mr. C. S. LOCH,	
MR. H. R. MAYNARD,	Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE,	

Sir E. W. BRABROOK in the Chair.

MR. W. G. MARTLEY: *Examined.*

Oct. 20, 1905.

Mr. W. G.  
MARTLEY.

1. The CHAIRMAN: You are Secretary of the Poplar Committee of the Charity Organisation Society, are you not?—Yes.

2. You are also a member of the Committee which has been locally formed for carrying out the provisions of the new Act?—Yes.

3. You are, accordingly, well acquainted with the proportion of unskilled to skilled labour in that district?—Yes.

4. Perhaps you will kindly give evidence upon it.—Sir, all I read my statement?

5. I think that that would be convenient.—The proportion of unskilled to skilled labour is high in Poplar. If we take the census groups VI. and XXII. "conveyance" and "undefined") as an index we obtain the following figures for the riverside boroughs:—

In Lambeth 21,982 of the employed males out of 93,504, or 23 per cent., belong to these groups.

' Southwark . . .	21,455	out of 68,202 = 31 per cent.
' Deptford . . .	10,316	" 34,006 = 33 "
' Stepney . . .	32,284	" 96,650 = 33 "
' Poplar . . .	20,941	" 53,615 = 38 "
' Bermondsey . . .	16,918	" 41,623 = 40 "

6. What do you infer from that?—I infer that the proportion of unskilled labour is high in Poplar.

7. Not quite so high as in Bermondsey, but higher than in other districts?—Yes.

Oct. 20, 1905.

Mr. W. G.  
MARTLEY.

8. Do you consider that the borough of Poplar is getting poorer as a whole?—I do not consider that the borough as a whole is getting poorer, though certain parts of it may be. There are patches of poverty in Poplar—Sophia Street, Union Street, and Orchard Place; in Bromley—the Fenian barracks; in Bow—St. Paul's and part of Hackney Wick. There is a certain ebb and flow of population. The more highly paid men move into the new suburbs, but the wage-earning power of those who remain is increasing.

The movement of the labourers to and from Poplar may be summarised thus:—

Canning Town: Considerable. The very poor drift out.

Homerton and Bethnal Green: Considerable. The very poor drift in.

Mile End and Limehouse: A small inward drift of workless poor.

The high wages paid by the Borough Council and the lavish relief given by the Guardians should induce immigration, but I cannot find that they do to any marked extent. They do, however, undoubtedly check emigration. I do not believe that there is now any serious drift to the docks, but dock labourers move from dock to dock and compete where there is work. The crowd competing in Poplar is often partly made up of non-Poplar men. Of course, the Poplar men in turn compete elsewhere.

9. What is your opinion as to the condition of the market for dock labour, taking London generally?—The market for dock labour has been decreasing in London (not in Poplar only) for years, and the men who look only to the docks for their living are a diminishing class. The market for factory labour is more difficult to estimate. The large shipbuilding yards of the past are gone, and all trades connected with shipping have dwindled down; but on the other hand an immense number of factories of different kinds has arisen. The Isle of Dogs is a ring of factories, there are several important ones in Bromley; and in North Bow new ones are still springing up. On the whole, I believe that the market for casual labour has steadily improved and (allowing for bad years, &c.) is still improving. I may put it shortly by saying that, whereas in the past Poplar has been principally a port, it is now mainly an industrial town.

10. I think that it would be convenient if you will kindly go on with your statement without interruption.—The casual labourer is of two kinds: (a) The man who is more in work than out; (b) the man who is more often out of work than in. The wives of both types earn, but it may be described as the special note of the second type that their wives always earn. The poorest work at home as matchbox makers, &c. Now, so far as my observation goes, the importance of the wife's earnings is decreasing, and men of the first type are tending to replace men of the second. I am quite sure that the unemployable class is decreasing. The figures of outdoor relief may be quoted against me, but I do not find them conclusive. The fact is that in Poplar Poor Law relief has been extended to men who would not receive it elsewhere. It is given to men of the (a) type as well as to men of the (b) type. The great mass of the casual labourers are real workmen (of a poor and unskilled kind, no doubt), but their work is worth something. The casual labourer of to-day compares favourably with his predecessor of fifteen years ago. He has been to school, can mostly read and write, and one can reason with him. He is not a degraded man, although type (b) tends to become so. The degraded class is very small. As regards morality and drink, he compares favourably with the regular workmen. The chief employers of casual labour in the borough are: (1) The Dock Companies; (2) the Railway Companies;

(3) the cartage contractors and wharfingers; (4) certain factories. The casual dock labourer usually has a B ticket, but too many of these are issued. At the best of times the B ticket man's chances are poor, and in bad times there is practically no work for him. These men tend to pass from type (a) to type (b). There is also much unfairness on the part of the foremen. Men without tickets get taken on sometimes. The larger railway companies all have depôts in Poplar, and all employ casual labourers—(a) on the bank and in the goods shed; (b) as carmen. On the whole the sections of casual labour remain distinct. There is a dock section, a railway section, &c. The tally clerks form a noticeable group. Here there still is a drift of men, who have failed in the city, often from faults of character. I exclude from this survey the builders' labourers and gas workers, because their work is rather seasonal than casual. The physique of the casual labourer is fair, though he is more often wiry than strong. The men who live in Bromley and work on and about Limehouse Cut are below the average. The builder's labourer and the gasworker are superior in type to the B men of the docks or the casual men of the railway and cartage depôts. The Borough Council staff of labourers is recruited from all these, and also contains a percentage of type (b) men. The casual labourers have little or no organisation. In the docks it is true that they form gangs and take small contracts. Where the men composing a gang are above the average they can generally get plenty of work. Gangs below the average fail to get work and in time break up. Overtime is a great evil in the docks. Men are encouraged and paid to work it. A system of shifts is much needed. Many accidents are due to overtime. Again, the foremen have too much power. Many of them are thoroughly bad, and insist on being treated by the men. Sometimes they accept bribes. But probably the foremen in the docks are no worse than others. There is no rigid line between the casual man and the regular man. Many once casual are now regular and many once regular are now casual. Probably as many go up as come down. The policy of the employers is to keep a portion of their work for casual men. In this way they have a reserve of labour to draw on in case difficulties arise with the regular staff. A firm (not in Poplar) thought of moving to the Garden City, but decided not to on the ground that there they would be at the mercy of their men. In trade crises the unemployed regular man is sometimes worse off than the unemployed casual man. He is less used to competing for work, and regular work is harder to obtain than casual. In bad times the regular man may fail to get work altogether, but the casual will probably find a certain amount. Three years ago, as Hon. Secretary of the West Ward Distress Committee, I saw the poorest class in the ward. The ward immediately adjoins the West India Docks. The percentage of type (b) was much less than I expected to find it. In fact, I often found type (a) when I should have said beforehand I should only find type (b). That casual work is demoralising is a truism. I think what Mrs. Sydney Webb wrote in 1889 in "Life and Labour" 1st series, vol. 1, pp. 198-9, second edition, is substantially true.

I have a table here of the people who were relieved by the Guardians in Poplar during the first quarter of the present year. I do not know whether you would like to hear it. It shows their usual occupations. There were 3,351 applicants, and they have been tabulated as follows:—

Building trade . . . . .	206
Tailoring, shoemaking, and clothing . . . . .	205
Printing, bookbinding, and other paper trades . . . . .	59

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Furnishing and wood-working . . . . .	125
Engineering, shipbuilding, and metal . . . . .	280
Food, drink, and tobacco . . . . .	93
Carmen . . . . .	136
Seamen, watermen, lightermen, and steredores . . . . .	60
Match factory hands . . . . .	81
Commercial occupations . . . . .	19
Professional occupations . . . . .	7
Domestic service . . . . .	206
General or casual labour . . . . .	1,676
Persons without known occupations . . . . .	108

Of those 3,351 persons 2,290 attributed their distress solely to want of work.

11. The proportion which would come within your definition of 'casual labour' is not so very large, is it?—'Casual labour' is put down as 1,676 out of 3,351, but I do not rely on the figures.

12. Mr. H. R. MAYNARD: In drawing deductions from those out-of-work figures, such, for instance, as you draw here when you say that the Poor-law relief has been extended to men who would not receive it elsewhere, do you think that it is necessary to make allowance for the fact that the Borough Council have adopted a different system of employment?—You mean allowance for the fact that they have given up employing men casually on the roads, and that sort of thing?

13. Yes.—The fact that the circumstances were exceptional last winter may have had something to do with the policy of the Guardians.

14. Would you consider it true to say that you ought to add the two together in comparing this year with another year or that district with another district?—I think that it is very difficult to compare one year with another, because the arrangements are so different year by year. I cannot speak for other districts.

15. In these 'patches of poverty' of which you speak, is the poverty increasing?—I should say that it may be in the Hackney Wick patch, and it may be in Bromley, but in the other patches probably not.

16. Are the poor in those parts composed of class (b), the lower casual, or of the unemployable?—You would find type (a) and type (b) side by side.

17. When you distinguish between type (a) and type (b) does type (b) exclude the unemployable? Would that be class (c)?—No; I should include them in type (b). I should take type (b) as mainly being the unemployable. I have not made my classification quite clear. I say that these people are not degraded, but they shade off into a degraded class. I mean that sometimes a degraded man stands much higher in the industrial order.

18. When you say that the market for casual labour has steadily improved, do you mean that the demand has increased or become less casual?—I should say that the demand for casual labour has increased in Poplar, and that in a good year a casual man can get more employment than previously. I cannot understand in any other way the decrease in the unemployable class. The men seem actually to belong more to type (a), therefore they must be getting more work.

19. Do you associate that with the factories?—Yes; with the growth of the factories.

20. Would the demand for casual labour take place in the factories or in subsidiary industries?—I think that there is a good deal of casual labour employed in the factories.

21. You speak of factories of different kinds. Would you give

instances?—The local food factories employ large numbers, and indeed, I should think that probably two-thirds of the factories employ, at any rate, a section of casual labour.

22. Would the new factories fall into different classes, representing definite trades?—A good many different trades are represented.

23. Can you give one or two of the main classes?—The iron trade is the staple trade of Poplar.

24. Do these factories employ boy labour to any extent, and discharge the boys as they grow up?—Yes, some do.

25. Do those boys become class (a) or class (b)?—That partly depends on themselves. They recruit both classes.

26. What is the position with regard to your classification of the (a) man? You say, 'Many once casual are now regular, and many once regular are now casual.' Does a man acquire an A ticket in the case of the docks?—It would mean that, or it would mean that, being an efficient man, he gets an engagement outside the docks. I might explain that connected with the docks there are many private employers. If a man is good as a dock labourer and if he is intelligent he may see his way to getting into one of these private firms.

27. Could you give any further description of the system of gangs taking small contracts?—I am afraid that I cannot, but it is a very wide-spread system, and it is one of very long standing.

28. Mr. D. M. WATSON: I suppose that in that case a leading hand takes the contract?—Yes, that is what is done.

29. He negotiates?—Yes.

30. Mr. E. AVES: In the earlier part of your statement you state it as your belief that the unemployable class is decreasing. Are you quite sure on that point? I have been wondering on what evidence you chiefly rely.—Mainly on my fifteen years' experience of the district. I see fewer unemployable men. The unemployable man, proper, is a scarcer man than he used to be. Three years ago when I was hon. secretary of the West Ward Committee that committee gave doles of soup, grocery tickets, and bread tickets—the very things that the soul of the casual man (b) delights in. They all came out of their little fastnesses and the darkest corners of a district which has some dark corners, and I was surprised to find how much better they were than I expected them to be, how much more of the workman they showed than I had expected.

31. You think that they are not kept away at all by a change of administration. I mean by knowing that it would be no good if they came?—I think that certainly we do not see the unemployable class in the C.O.S. office, but this Winter Distress Committee undoubtedly saw the very poorest class in that ward. They all flocked to us.

32. That means that the flux of the very poor, who go further east, is not counterbalanced by the very poor who come from further west. The two movements are going on—Yes, the two movements are going on.

33. Those who come are not quite so poor as those who go?—No. I ought to add that I know the southern part of the borough much better than I know the northern part. My evidence with regard to the northern part of the borough is not so good as it is with regard to the southern part. I cannot be so positive about what is happening in the northern part of the borough.

34. The northern part is nearer Bethnal Green, for instance, that you have mentioned as sending in its recruits?—Yes.

35. With regard to what you say of the market for casual labour having improved, is that accentuating the question of industrial training in the

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district?—If it is easy for a casual man to get labour as a casual man, a demand for industrial training is not likely to arise. Nor is the importance of it recognised.

36. No, but on the other hand I was thinking of children growing up, and I was wondering how it would affect families as families in the future, not in the immediate present. Mr. Maynard mentioned the point of the engagement of the young and their dismissal when they reached early manhood. I have heard that that is very commonly happening in that part of London and elsewhere, and I was wondering whether it was a problem of increasing seriousness from your point of view?—I am afraid that I cannot form an opinion as to whether it is increasing or not. There is a good deal of it.

37. Mr. H. R. MAYNARD: You refer to builders' labourers and gasworkers, excluding them from your survey because their work is rather seasonal than casual. Are they to any extent, or to any considerable extent, interchangeable?—Yes, to some extent, because the gasworker generally has some alternate trade. Sometimes he makes bricks. The gasworker ranks high in the scale of casual labour.

38. You speak of the Borough Council's staff as being recruited from all these, and as also containing a percentage of the type (b) man. Do I understand from that that they have on their staff of permanent men men that you describe as being more often out of work than in?—They certainly have men who have been recruited from the (b) class.

39. Men who have been recruited from it, I understand. They would cease to belong to that class when they got that employment?—Yes, when they became permanent.

40. In the statement you refer several times to these two classes (a) and (b), and you also state that there is no rigid line between the casual man and the regular man going up and down. Would that apply to class (a) and class (b)?—Yes, to some extent; but if a man once gets into class (b) the odds are rather against his getting back into class (a).

41. There is not the same movement up and down?—Not between (a) and (b).

42. Mr. D. M. WATSON: With regard to the statement that the market for casual labour has steadily improved, I must say that I was rather surprised to find that. I should have expected that owing to the introduction of machinery so largely the percentage of people in the casual market out of work would have been larger, due to that cause. May I put it in this way? Are these percentages which you give us with regard to Lambeth, Southwark, Deptford, Poplar, &c., larger now or smaller than they would have been five or six years ago?—At this moment the percentages are larger, no doubt, because we have had three bad years, but I question if they are permanently larger.

43. What you mean is that there is a greater demand for casual labour, probably?—I think that there is a greater demand for casual labour in Poplar in a normal year.

44. There will also be, will there not, a greater demand for machine labour ('skilled labour,' I may call it), on account of the introduction of machines?—Yes, very likely.

45. Machinery, we know, is coming into many trades now where it was not used previously. Take, for instance, gasworks. Instead of having a man for stoker they have a mechanical stoker now.—True; at the same time, in some trades that does not mean an increase of skilled labour, but an increase of machine minders, who are not very skilled men.

46. Mr. C. S. LOCK: You infer that the increase in the number of industries in Poplar has, in spite of the fact that there is more machinery, given more opening for the casual man?—Yes.

47. Mr. J. PARSONS: It seems to me that the statistics in paragraph 1 have no relevance to casualty, but to the type of occupation. I presume that a cartier, for instance, would be an unskilled man within the meaning of paragraph 1, and might or might not be casual within the meaning of paragraph 3, and so on throughout. There is no relevance between the two, is there?—With regard to the tables in paragraph 1, I took the two groups, because they contain, of all the groups, the largest element of casual labour. The group 'Conveyance' contains dock labour and casual railway labour. The group 'Undefined' contains a great deal of casual labour. I use them as an indication. I do not for a moment pretend that those percentages are the percentages of casual labour.

48. Mr. D. M. WATSON: You say that tally clerks form a noticeable group. Do railway and dock companies trust that sort of work to casual labour?—Yes, to supplement their regular men.

49. It surprises me very much.—My experience of casual tally clerks is that more often than not they are people who are rather shaky.

50. That is why it is extraordinary to find that they are trusted. With regard to your remarks about foremen, I would like to ask whether it is your opinion that generally foremen abuse their power and demand either payment from, or to be treated by, the men? Is that done in the factories in the East End?—I cannot give you first-hand knowledge, but it is a statement very frequently made by people who seem to be credible.

51. I have heard it myself on more than one occasion, and I was interested to find it here. It is very difficult to stamp out?—Yes.

52. With regard to boy labour, do you think that it directly tends to swell casual labour? Would women's labour, where possible, improve matters, do you think? Would it be better to employ women who would work up to the marriageable age and then be absorbed by marriage than to have these boys who are turned adrift at 18 or 19?—Practically all the possible wage-earning women in Poplar are absorbed by the market already.

53. There is no surplus of women labour?—I think that there is no surplus in a normal year.

54. Mr. J. PARSONS: I think that any evidence that could be brought of a definite character in support of the opinion that the unemployable class is decreasing would be of great value. We have it as your impression, derived from experience, not only as a C.O.S. secretary but also as engaged for more than a year on work in regard to the unemployed. Would it be possible to fortify your opinion by anything more telling?—I suppose that it would be quite possible to collect definite evidence, but it would take time. But broadly it comes to this—that if you take, one by one as they come before you, the very poorest class of people living in Poplar you find that they are doing more work than you gave them credit for doing. Take, for instance, a class of family which is referred to us by the Invalid Children's Aid Association—sometimes people of a very poor type indeed. The men seem to be doing more work than antecedently we should have given them credit for doing.

55. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You mean that the market for casual labour has increased and has thus absorbed men who formerly could get no work at all, practically?—Who became type (b)?

56. Yes.—Practically that.

57. That is the way in which you would connect it?—My argument is

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Oct. 20, 1907. that I cannot find type (b), and, therefore, from the absence of type (b), I infer that there must be a greater demand for labour, or else what has become of type (b)?

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58. You mean for casual labour?—Yes. Type (b) is here still, but in much smaller numbers than it was.

59. Mr. J. PARSONS: Would increased facilities for the work of women and young people make a difference? It would not eliminate type (b). It might help the family to get on better, but Mr. B. would be there still?—True.

60. You would find Mr. B. less frequently?—You would find him less frequently.

61. Mr. H. R. MAYNARD: Are you speaking quite apart from the question of the present depression of trade? Are you allowing for that?—I am taking a normal year. Of course, just now there is a good deal of abnormal distress.

62. For the last three years there has been?—Yes.

63. The improvement which you speak of is before the last three years?—I am talking of the normal situation with regard to many men one sees now. Some of them have had very little work or have been out of work during the last two years. Going a little further back you find that they have a very fair industrial record—a better industrial record than one would expect them to have.

64. The improvement, then, was taking place some years ago. When are you comparing it with?—I am taking my general experience—over fifteen years. There is room for great improvement still.

65. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Broadly speaking, might it be said that the numbers as regards general labour have remained about the same, but the proportion of labour, which hitherto has been casual, has been absorbed by more regular employment in these factories. Is that a proper conclusion?—Yes. The population of the borough is stationary, and the opportunities of employment, I believe, are increasing.

66. And there are not more men coming from the outside. Do you say that there is no drift in, no immigration?—Not more than I have allowed for. It is difficult to give a quantitative estimate. One only knows that the population remains stationary.

67. You say 'The fact is that in Poplar Poor-law relief has been extended to men who would not receive it elsewhere.' How far has that affected the question? How far has it influenced this question of casual labour? Has it done so to any great extent?—I should be disposed to say that at the moment it has not, because there is, and has been in the last two years, an undoubted surplus of casual labour. If the policy were continued in a good time it might very seriously influence it.

68. With regard to saying that overtime is a great evil in the docks and that men are encouraged and paid to work it; from what point of view are you saying that?—If a large ship comes in it is in the interest of the owners that she should be cleared in the shortest possible time, and men sometimes work for eighteen to twenty hours straight on.

69. You mean that it is an evil to those individual men?—A great evil.

70. Or do you mean to labour as a whole—that those individual men are doing too much labour, and that it should be spread among more by the shifts that you suggest?—I am sure that it is bad for the individual men.

71. Mr. D. M. WATSON: But they like it, I suppose?—Yes; they like it.

72. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: In suggesting a system of shifts you rather

mean, do you not, that it would to some extent relieve the position—that men should not be employed on the overtime work who are employed on the general work, but that it should be another class of labour?—My view is that it is wrong to employ men for these long hours. Whether it has a good effect on the labour market or not, I think it wrong to employ men for twenty hours at a stretch.

73. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: To have shifts would add to the expense, would it not?—Yes; quite so.

74. Because the men would not know the run of the work, and that, I suppose, is a serious consideration from the point of view of expense?—I really cannot answer that, I am afraid.

75. But have you heard it stated by employers?—No.

76. Mr. C. S. LOCK: Is it your view that this improvement that you have described is persistent, although at the present moment there is trouble owing to these two or three bad years?—I think that the conditions are improving, but that the two or three bad years, of course, have set things back.

77. There is a kind of industrialisation of Poplar going on, which, in your opinion, is practically improving the whole local position?—It seems to me that opportunities for employment are increasing.

78. You have made these minor suggestions, if I may so call them, but is there no major suggestion governing the whole of the relations of these casual men to the large firms which you could make?—I was asked to give evidence as to the actual facts of casual labour, and not to give evidence as to recommendations.

79. True; but I do not think there was any wish, if you have any statement, to preclude that, because you have known the place intimately all these years, and your experience, whether the Committee adopt it or not, is of value.—I think that I would rather not give evidence on that side now.

80. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You distinguish the builders' labourer from the casual labourer. Is it not your experience that the builders' labourer and the general labourer and the dock labourer are very largely interchangeable in the lower ranks of each. I mean you have people sometimes builders' labouring, sometimes wharf labouring, and sometimes casual labouring otherwise.—Yes, you have some men who go round in that way. The analysis of cases which I made for you shows that the men move from one kind of labour to another pretty frequently. At the same time a large number of men do not.

81. But have you any figures as to the proportion of low-skilled or unskilled casual labourers among the distressed unemployed applicants either to a Poplar committee or generally. What proportion of the unemployed problem as it is presented to a relief committee is contributed by casual labourers?—A very large proportion, I should say. The Guardians have 50 per cent. here.

82. Not more?—May I say that all these returns from unemployed committees as to occupation seem to me to be extremely untrustworthy. My experience of the applicant for relief anywhere is that he always begins by saying that he is a labourer, and if his statement is taken down by someone who does not want to trouble much about it that is accepted and he is written down "Labourer" at once. If he comes to a C.O.S. office he tells us still that he is a labourer, but we talk to him about it and we get a much more definite statement from him as to exactly what he is, and very often he turns out not to be a labourer.

83. Do you mean to say that if he has a trade he does not take the

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trouble to say that he has?—I think that very often when applying for any form of relief he prefers to call himself a labourer.

84. You speak of the growth of the casual labour market. That means, I suppose, that some of the unemployables have passed over into casual labourers?—I should hope so.

85. Is that a good thing or a bad thing?—It is a good thing. It is a step up. It means that a man who previously did no work is now doing work.

86. But the man you might have put under compulsory detention as an unemployable is now a casual labourer, which is not a high state of life?—No, but surely it is an immense advance on his previous state.

87. Yes, but does it not leave a permanent state of poverty which you cannot get rid of by any interference?—I should not like to say so. Of course if casual labour were gaining on regular labour, that would be an evil, but I do not think that it is.

88. These casual men are wanted by the work of the district—I mean they are not a surplus exactly?—Not in a normal year.

89. They are necessary to the work of the district. Is there much poverty among these casual men, the people who are necessary to the work of the district in a normal year?—Yes, I should say that there was. Even in a normal year their wives will be at work.

90. Have you any evidence as to the settling of women's industries in dock districts? That is a general statement that one hears of. Would you say that there is much women's work in Poplar?—Yes.

91. Do you think that women's work tends to settle in Poplar and similar districts because of the supply of men's labour?—I think that women's labour and men's casual labour certainly seem to go together.

92. You say that the employers find it necessary to keep a reserve of labour. Since when do you think that policy has been adopted? Has it any connection with the time of the strike?—My experience does not go back beyond the strike. I think that it has always been true of Poplar since I have known Poplar.

93. Do you think that the employers generally have a deliberate policy, or that any of them have a deliberate policy of keeping a reserve of labour?—Yes; I think that they believe in that.

94. In order to be sure of keeping the price of labour within limits?—I suppose that they themselves might give another reason, and say that they must be prepared for sudden expansions of trade.

95. I wondered upon what you were basing the view that they deliberately kept a reserve.—On both considerations.

96. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Do you know whether the dock companies pay a man for attending at the dock gates on any occasion?—Whether they give him a retaining fee, do you mean?

97. Yes.—No.

98. Do you know whether in any trade that is done?—No.

99. Mr. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you mean with regard to keeping a reserve of labour that they do it by means of giving the work out in rotation?—I mean that if they have a certain volume of work to be done they allot three-quarters of that work to the permanent staff. The remaining quarter they might equally allot to the permanent staff, but they prefer to allot it to three times the number of men they would require as a permanent staff, employing them in rotation. That is a rough illustration.

100. Mr. H. R. MAYNARD: Do you think that any of the improvement in the demand for casual labour is due to the adoption of that policy on a

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larger scale?—I doubt if the policy is being extended. It has necessary limits. But as regular employment increases irregular increases along with it.

101. In speaking of the movement of labour in relation to this increased demand for casual labour, you speak of a general upward movement amongst the casual labourers in Poplar and at the same time of a drifting out to West Ham. I am thinking of the conditions of Poplar industrially. Do you think that it means an improvement of the conditions of Poplar, the old conditions really moving to somewhere else?—I should think that the conditions of West Ham are much worse than in Poplar.

102. Are they like the conditions of Poplar fifteen years ago?—I should think that they were much worse.

103. The problem which you had in Poplar fifteen years ago is not relieved by this improvement, but it is really shifted?—The problem in West Ham is largely independent of that in Poplar. Distress would have arisen there in any case. It now affects a larger percentage there than ever suffered from it in Poplar.

104. If the demand is increasing in Poplar for casual labour, why do the poor move out to West Ham? Does a better class get the Poplar work?—That, I am afraid, I cannot answer.

105. You say in one place that in regard to morality and drink the casual labourer compares favourably with the regular workman. You say in another place 'That casual work is demoralising is a truism.' How do you reconcile the statements?—I was thinking of two quite different things. In saying that casual work is demoralising, I mean that a man gets out of the way of doing work and gets into the way of leaning against lamp-posts, losing the habit of industry. When I speak of drink and morality I am thinking of distinct vice.

106. The CHAIRMAN: You are thinking more of the French sense of the word *morale* in the second case?—Yes.

107. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: But does not leaning against lamp-posts come to leaning against public-houses? Does not the demoralising of the workman through casual labour very generally imply drink, or is it not likely to?—On the whole I should say not. The type (*b*) man leans much more against the outside of the public-house than inside. He has not money to spend inside. It is the highly-paid workman who, like Jeshurun, waxes fat and kicks. He gives way to vice and drinks very heavily if he is that way disposed.

108. This last winter you saw a great deal of what is meant by a time of exceptional distress. How large a proportion of those people exceptionally distressed would have regular incomes even in ordinary times and comfortable homes? Do you come across many people who have come right down from regular life to being quite unemployed?—It is very difficult to give percentages. I should say that there was a section of men who had been quite regular who have been thrown out by years of bad trade and brought down very low after being in employment for many years. This is especially the case where the introduction of new machinery is made in times of depression. There would also be, of course, many who had always been casual, and with them it means that they descend from a condition of comparative comfort to a condition of want, but the descent is not so great.

109. Is it not the fact that the great bulk of the people whom you have to deal with as unemployed applicants at a time of exceptional distress are people who, in ordinary times, are living very much from hand



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to mouth, and are really in chronic poverty or just on the point of chronic poverty, and that they get distressed by the extra pinch?—That is true of many, of course. It is true of the casual labourer.

110. That is why I wanted to get the proportion of casual labourers.—My experience in my own borough is that the great bulk of those in distress in bad times is of that type. But men who have been regular suffer also. I have a table here of the longest recorded jobs of seventy men. Of these seventy, twenty say that they have never had anything but casual work—that they cannot remember any regular job. Eight can remember no job longer than a year; four can remember jobs between one year and two years; eight can remember jobs between two years and three years; seven can remember jobs between three years and five years; eleven can remember jobs between five years and ten, and twelve can remember jobs over ten years.

111. Mr. D. M. WATSON: To what trades do those figures refer?—It is a miscellaneous collection of people who were applying last year mainly with regard to emigration.

112. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The jobs which some of them can remember may be their apprenticeship jobs, and perhaps they have never done anything but casual labour since?—It may be so.

113. You do not know how far back the longer jobs go. These figures do not show what they have been doing in the last three or four years?—No. In nearly all the cases there are particular jobs. It may be some years, it is true, since they lost their places. But my point is that of the people who apply in exceptional years you will find that a percentage at some time or other have had very good jobs, and very regular jobs. Here we have twenty-three men who at some time or other have had regular jobs exceeding five years in duration. I am rather surprised at that result. I should not have supposed that one would have got so many.

114. Mr. H. R. MAYNARD: Were they seventy casual applicants, or were they a party selected in any way?—We did not select them. I think that they selected themselves, because they had sufficient confidence in themselves to think that they might be chosen for emigration. They were not the average of applicants.

115. The Poplar Unemployed Committee would not find that proportion?—No.

116. Would you in the men selected by the Poplar Unemployed Committee?—One might.

117. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Can you get the figures from the Poplar Unemployed Committee?—They are sorting out the 900 cases, and they say that we shall have them when they are ready.

118. We can have those later if necessary?—Yes.

119. With regard to the Borough Council casual work, is it your experience that it is always a bad thing about a man if he has been employed casually by the Borough Council? Would you say that it dis-commended a man considerably?—Do you mean would it make other employers less ready to employ him?

120. Have you the experience that there are a good many very low class casual labourers who get occasional jobs on Borough Council work, in many cases through the influence of individual borough councillors?—When we had the three day rotation system in Poplar—

121. That is the ordinary Borough Council unemployed relief work?—I cannot say much about the casual men employed in the ordinary way. There is not a very large margin employed casually in Poplar.

122. There is not?—No. The establishment is large—some people think unduly large.

123. Then it is rather different there. In some boroughs they have a very large casual class?—Yes. Oct. 20, 1905.

124. Mr. E. AVES: Has the Blackwall Tunnel had any effect on Poplar, either by bringing fresh people in for Poplar employment that may offer or by opening up fresh fields of employment for those living in Poplar?—Very few of the men in Poplar that I have come across seem to work south of the river. A small number seem to come north from Greenwich. On the whole the passage from one side of the river to the other is very small.

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125. The CHAIRMAN: There is one point which I should like to understand a little better with regard to what you say about the overtime work. When men are employed for more than the normal day, is the rate of pay per hour the same, or is it more for the overtime?—I believe that it is greater. It is a temptation.

126. That explains one reason why the overtime is so great a temptation?—Yes.

127. And to a certain extent, I suppose, it would diminish the difference in the expense, having regard to a system of relays, because the relays would be paid according to the normal rate?—Hardly, because night-work is paid better than day-work.

128. The payment would be according to the pay for night-work?—Yes.

*(The Witness withdrew.)*

CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY,  
Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road,  
London, S.W.  
Friday, October 27th, 1905.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

### Special Committee

ON

### UNSKILLED LABOUR.

Present—SIR E. W. BRABROOK, C.B.

Mr. W. W. BRUCE,	Mr. D. M. WATSON,	} Secretaries.
Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN,	Mr. C. S. LOCH,	
Mr. J. J. DENT,	Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE,	
Mr. J. PARSONS,		

Sir E. W. BRABROOK in the Chair.

MR. J. FISHER: *Examined.*

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129. The CHAIRMAN: We understand that you are General Foreman in the employ of the eminent building firm of Messrs. Ashby & Horner. Is that so?—Yes.

130. We take it, of course, that you are a man of long experience and great practical knowledge.—I have spent a great many years of my life in the building trade, and I have had experience as foreman for something like twelve or fourteen years.

131. Will you kindly tell us about the terms of employment there, and the other matters upon which you have drawn up a statement?—Shall I read it?

132. If you will.—I may not have quite understood what you gentlemen wished, but I have done the best that I could in regard to it. The first question put to me was with regard to the terms of employment in the building trade. 'Men are engaged by the hour only. In all trades if they are not satisfactory one hour's notice is given. This applies also to leaders of the various sections, but as these men are the pick of the various trades, they are kept on as long as possible.' There is no length of time given to any man. It is simply one hour's notice either way. If he is not satisfactory or is not efficient we give him an hour's notice, or if he is not satisfied he gives us an hour's notice, and the thing is finished. Men are not even promised one week's work, except in the case of older hands whom we travel about with and train in our various styles as far as we possibly can. Do you wish to know anything more on that question?

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133. Members of the Committee in turn will ask any further questions that occur to them; meanwhile perhaps you will continue your statement and tell us about the classes of workmen?—*Mechanics*—Bricklayers, carpenters, masons, plumbers, painters, gasfitters, electricians, hot-water engineers, tilers, slaters. Each of these trades has a foreman, usually paid 1*d.* per hour extra. *Labourers*.—Scaffolders and hoisters. They are the same. These men must be trained and accustomed to erecting scaffolds, gantrys, hoisting girders, blocks of stone, or any other material likely to be used in building operations. They are the most expert of the labourers, and as this is the most dangerous part of the trade they are paid the higher rate. Only a small number of scaffolders are required on each job, not more than six or eight on jobs of ordinary size. That varies considerably. Some jobs want much more scaffolding than others. The above have a leading scaffolder, usually paid 1*d.* per hour extra, under whose direction they work, after having what is required explained by the general foreman. Then there is another class of men called *Timber Men*.—This is a distinct section, receiving the same rate as scaffolders, employed in constructing staging, heavy timber structures, assisting in shoring, forming the timber framework required to hold back the earth in digging, foundations, drains, &c. The rate of pay is the same as for scaffolders. These men are only required at the start of the job, not after reaching the height of the first floor; about the same percentage as scaffolders, slightly less. Then there is another class called *Masons' Labourers*. Masons' labourers or hoisters, same rate as scaffolders. There is usually one man to every fixer. A fixer is the mason who lays the stone on the wall after being prepared by ordinary masons. Very few of these are required. Then come *Bricklayers' Labourers*. These men are a class of what are termed "general labourers." They are specially trained in climbing ladders while carrying hods, boards on head loaded with bricks, &c.; mixing and gauging cements, mortar, plaster, concrete. A man must also have a good knowledge of different building materials; he must know the different bricks, cements, plaster, sands, &c. This work would take a man at least two years to become efficient. The men work chiefly under the instructions of the bricklayer foreman. Percentage about one to each bricklayer; paid ordinary rate. Then there are the *Carpenters' Labourers*. This, again, is a distinct section. Generally one of the quickest of the general labourers is chosen and trained to know the names of the tools used by the carpenter, which is a big list. He must also know the different names and sizes of timbers, the classes of woods, screws, nails and brads, be able to get long timbers through windows, scaffolding and other difficult positions quickly and alone, and have a keen eye to what will be required next, so that the carpenter may not be kept waiting, as the mechanic, as a rule, will not move far to get material for himself, and if not specially watched there is a serious leakage in the cost of labour. Then there is the *Plumbers' Mate*. These men are paid the same rate as a general labourer, but are specially trained, and are not the least use for other purposes. The same applies to *Painters' Labourers*. They are paid the same. General labourer. These are the common gang engaged in concreting, digging foundations, loading and unloading material, &c., from which the other classes are selected. The percentage varies greatly. One week you may require twenty and the next week ten. Paid ordinary rate.

134. Mr. W. F. BEVERIDGE: Is the ordinary rate 7*d.*?—Yes, the ordinary rate is 7*d.* Then the next head is *Ways in which men find jobs*. There is always such a plentiful supply that the trouble is having to

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'refuse applicants who attend early morning and throughout the day, 'waylaying the foreman at every turn.' To-day, for example, I have had fifty-six applicants, and mine is not a new job, it is only an alteration. I do not know what on earth it is like round new jobs which can be well seen. 'They will follow a builder's cart should it have material until they find out where the job is, and also report same to trade unions, so that on going to an entirely vacant site to commence operations you will often find it surrounded with men of all trades. Should there be a slackness of men the foremen of each trade are asked to supply same from the various trade unions. The foreman of each trade is held partially responsible, not only for number of men but quality. The same remarks apply to labourers, as the ganger is taken from job to job if possible. Should a casual hand be taken on, he is questioned as to his capabilities before starting. Very seldom would a labourer think of asking for employment in any other section but that which he was accustomed to. He can be judged in a few hours, and then if he is not satisfactory one hour's notice finishes him. The next is a very difficult point upon which to give an answer: '*Proportions in which men though not nominally engaged by the hour* (1) *are practically permanent*: foremen only for the time of job; (2) *are well known and employed again*: Gangers, scaffolders, and most of the labourers, as each general foreman has a distinct system, and whenever employing a recommended man would have to teach him. General foremen when slack often send men to each other or borrow a particularly smart man for a special job.' No. 3 is with regard to the number that are quite unknown. 'Very few indeed.' We have a great objection to giving work to anyone we do not know, because we have to train him. Each of us has his fad, I suppose, and we do not often give a man we do not know a job unless we are very much pushed, a state of things which I have not known for the last ten years. 'The busy or slack state of the time varies for mechanics more than for labourers. There may be a lot of buildings of stone, so masons are busy. The labour required is the same. Bricklayers may be slack. Again, if all buildings are fireproof, concrete, or iron structures, then the carpenter is slack, and so on.' There are fashions in buildings which alter considerably. Sometimes you get a lot of hotels, and that sort of thing, with iron floors, concrete, &c., and then the carpenter has nothing to do. The bricklayer and mason may be very busy during the time, and the labourer then is busy. '*Characters of men employed*.—The only character required is quickness and efficiency, more especially quickness. 'A good many are discharged for losing time, inefficiency and drunkenness.' I am very sorry to say that the drunkenness business is a big item in the building trade. Perhaps I am a little bit prejudiced, as I happen to be a life-long teetotaler. Perhaps I ought not quite to say what I think about it, but I think that one of the biggest curses we have is the Bank Holiday. Nearly all the men have to be sacked that we have only had for a little time. They are generally no good for a day or two after Bank Holiday, and very little good on each Monday. We have to keep our eyes a little closed on the Monday and to try to make them do more on the Tuesday. '*Supply of men*.—As far as my experience goes, I have never known a shortage of skilled or unskilled labourers except a slight difficulty in obtaining bricklayers in 1899, and carpenters during such times as the Jubilee or similar occasions for a few days only.' '*Seasonal depression*.—Winter affects the bricklayer chiefly, but in turn the other trades about equally, the joiner in the shop lastly.' It works right round. '(2) There are very few subsidiary occupations available for builders' employes a:

'they are trained for that alone.' That is a special thing. There is no doubt that the casual labourer will not do for building. He is a danger to himself and to everybody else, and is no good to us at all. He must know the business. 'There are a few employed in the gasworks, but the majority walk about looking for work and are supported by their various Unions, the gifts of fellow-workmen, or starve.' I might say that the builders' labourer is a very generous chap. If he has sixpence he will give threepence away to his mate who is out of work. 'The labourer cannot earn enough in the summer, as trade has been lately, to keep him in the winter without his wife going out to work, charing, washing, sewing, matchbox-making, and all sorts of things. The mechanic can scarcely make both ends meet the whole year, so he gradually drifts into a listless state.' That is the evil of a lot of it. 'He can hardly be blamed for not hurrying to get himself out of work, knowing full well that the sooner he gets his job done the sooner he will be walking about. I do not believe that natural laziness is the cause of it.' It is simply due to the hopeless state that the trade has got into, I do not know for what reason. I do not know whether my statement has met your views in any way.

135. The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We may take it, generally, from your experience, that there is always a greater supply of labour than demand?—Always.

136. And therefore there is always a percentage of persons more or less, according to circumstances, who are necessarily unemployed because there is no work for them to do?—Yes, that is so.

137. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: As a matter of fact, do you engage men on the spot where you happen to have your work, or do you have, as a rule, a set of men who follow you from one job to another? Speaking of the trade, generally, take for example a builder in Bow who is doing work in this South-Western part of London. Would he come here and engage his men, or would there be a certain number who would follow him from Poplar?—The whole of his leaders would follow him from there.

138. But would the ordinary unskilled labourer?—You trust the foreman to find you men, and he generally finds those that he knows, and they would be those in the district that he lives in.

139. So that, as a rule, it would be the case, supposing that a Poplar builder took a big contract elsewhere, that that would assist Poplar to a certain extent?—Yes, to a certain extent.

140. Mr. J. J. DENT: Do I understand that plumbers' mates' wages are the same as those of ordinary labourers?—Yes, the same, 7d.

141. I suppose that the irregularity of employment affects the character of the workman as much as anything?—Yes.

142. The general character with regard to thriftiness, and so on?—Yes, right through. It seems to affect him in all ways—both in his work and character, and everything else.

143. And I suppose that any long spell of unemployment means, too, a deterioration of the man's skill to a certain extent?—Yes, because he does not get enough food for a start and is not half worth his money. It is doubly against him should he be a casual hand—I mean one that is not known. I naturally have to get a job out as quickly as possible; it is my duty to do so. If I employ a man who cannot do his work and he fails in an hour or two because, perhaps, he has not been fed for weeks as he ought to have been, I have to dismiss him. I do not know the cause of the failure, and I do not ask the cause. I cannot go to him and say, 'My man, have you not had anything to eat for a week?' or something of that sort. I simply say, 'Come to the office and get your money.' Some-

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times we do not give the hour's notice. We give 7d. and away he goes. That is recognised.

144. In the case of mechanics who have been out of work for any time, how far are they short of tools and in difficulty on that account?—More than I know. There is a lot of freemasonry among them, and they lend each other tools. If you looked in the baskets you would find ten per cent. of them deficient in tools. I know that I am well within the mark.

145. Mr. R. ROBERTS: I ought perhaps to tell you that I am a member of a building firm. I gathered from your evidence that it is the gangers of the labourers who take on the labourers, not the general foremen. Is that the system?—No.

146. Do you, as general foreman, take on the individual labourers?—Yes.

147. You spoke of gangers bringing other labourers with them?—It is in this way: in time of slackness I should go to a ganger, being a trusty man, and say, 'Can you supply me with a good labourer?' rather than take on anyone who came along. That is my system.

148. I am anxious to know how far a labourer is a casual labourer or casually employed. The difference that I would make is this: take a painter's labourer, who might be doing other work in winter and working as a painter's labourer in the summer?—Yes.

149. There may be building labourers, for instance, who are always building labourers but are only casually employed? Have you any notion what percentage of your labourers is in fairly constant employment? Take twelve months. Are half of the labourers that you employ from year to year, or one-third, or a quarter of them, in employment all the year round?—Speaking of those that I know personally, that is, of my own gang, I should say that quite half has been continuously employed. I can go back five years. I have had plenty of the men for five years.

150. Half of the labourers in your special department are the same men from year to year, and are constantly employed by your firm?—Yes.

151. So that there are 50 per cent. of your labourers who are from year to year employed by your firm?—Yes.

152. That seems to me rather a large percentage. That is only with regard to towns, I suppose. If you had a country job, for instance, it would be different, would it not? Would they go to the suburbs, say Putney and Wimbledon, and as far as that?—I have never been any further than Bow from the City the whole of the time that I have been with Ashby & Hornex, and that is the whole of the time that I have been in London. The labourers come from a very long way, so I presume that they would go. In fact, of my own particular gang the 50 per cent. would go wherever I went.

153. They follow a particular foreman?—Yes, they follow the foreman not the firm.

154. The personal link is with the foreman, not with the firm?—Yes, with the foreman.

155. If you went to another firm they would come to your job?—Yes. They are not engaged by the firm at all.

156. That is the link; so that you know the individual merits of the men you select?—Yes.

157. What would be the proportion of mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers, practically permanently employed? Is it higher than that of the labourers?—No; it is considerably less in my case.

158. Do you understand me? Say that you have twenty carpenters; do you mean to say that they are less permanently employed than twenty labourers?—Yes.

159. And joiners too?—And joiners too. It is my experience that you can keep a mechanic a little bit too long. Oct: 27, 1905.

160. That is your special view?—Yes; I only speak my personal views; nothing further than that.

161. You think that it is desirable to change the mechanic?—Yes.

162. You do not think it desirable to change the labourer?—No; because there is a big percentage of those that are no good. If you get a good labourer he is worth sticking to, and earns his money.

163. You can get a better selection of mechanics?—Certainly; from one point of view you have plenty of those. Many good mechanics cannot get work, I am sorry to say.

164. You say that there is a greater abundance of those out of employment than of unskilled men? I call a labourer an unskilled man, although you may say that he has some special knowledge?—Yes.

165. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: You mean the efficient unskilled man who knows his work?—Yes; I am speaking of him.

166. Mr. R. ROBERTS: Do you consider it rather rare to get an efficient labourer?—Yes.

167. Is it because of his moral character; because he is liable to form drinking habits? Are you guided by his personal character?—No; not his personal character at all. All that I require is that he shall be able to do his work quickly and well.

168. You referred to drink and to trouble on Mondays. Is that so?—Yes, it is so; speaking generally, I am not referring now to my own particular fellows: I can fully trust them, and that is why I carry the gang about. When I spoke of drunkenness I was speaking generally of the builders' labourer and the whole of the building trade.

169. You keep 50 per cent. of your labourers in permanent employment?—Practically so.

170. We all know that there is a special labourer, for instance, attached to a foreman, generally a labourer, who looks after the place where the men's meals are made up and such like matters. He is permanent. But you are speaking of the general labourers in the trade.—Of what you understand as the general labourer:

171. This statement of yours about the comparative permanence of the unskilled rather surprises me. Do you have a good deal of factory work with fireproof floors, and so on, where there is much more unskilled labour required than in very elaborate work? Has that been your experience?—Not my personal experience, but I belong to a Society of General Foremen, and we discuss these matters considerably, and that is the general experience of the majority.

172. There is more fireproof flooring and that kind of work done now?—Yes.

173. So that that increases the number of labourers as compared with fifteen or twenty years ago when there was so much woodwork?—Yes; considerably.

174. Does that account for the abundance of unemployed carpenters?—Yes; it accounts for the abundance of carpenters at present.

175. Good fixers?—Good fixers.

176. I am surprised to hear it.—It is the case.

177. Mr. J. J. DENT: Has that been especially the case during the last twelve months?—Yes; I cannot say that it was so bad up to then.

178. Mr. R. ROBERTS: Five years ago was there this large percentage of continuously employed labourers?—Yes.

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Oct. 27, 1905. 179. Do you think that the state of things with regard to the carpenters is growing worse now?—It is growing worse every day.

Mr. J. FISHER. 180. Was the proportion of labourers the same five years ago? You say that half of your men are in practically permanent employment, and a greater proportion of labourers than of carpenters and joiners?—Yes.

181. Was that the same ten years ago?—No; about half of the men who went with me were mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers. They went with me the same as the labourers.

182. Your experience is that the skilled men are becoming abundant and falling out of work?—Yes.

183. While the labourers, according to your evidence, are becoming rather more permanently employed than less?—No; they seem to be stationary, but mechanics are going down.

184. The unemployed, according to your evidence, are the skilled people who have increased, the unskilled having remained fairly stationary.—Yes; fairly stationary.

185. The relatively unskilled. Nobody is really unskilled. Now there is a General Labourers' Union, and they do not pay the men when they are out of work?—No; not from the Union funds. There is rather a misstatement. I meant not from the Union funds. They have concerts and whips round, and collections on Saturday, and so forth.

186. A friendly lead?—Yes, I think they term it a 'friendly lead.'

187. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Is this hour's notice regarded as absolutely sufficient? You say in the first paragraph under 'Terms of Employment,' 'Men are engaged by the hour only.' Do you engage the men only by the hour right through all and turn them off at an hour's notice?—Yes, everyone.

188. Is there no exception?—No.

189. Mr. J. PARSONS: What are your regulations about overtime? Is there much overtime in the building trade?—In City work there is a lot of overtime, because there are things which you cannot do during office hours, and so forth. The regulation is time and a quarter, and so on, according to what is laid down by the trade unions. We have printed rules with regard to time and a quarter, and time and a half after eight o'clock, and so on.

190. Does mischief arise, in your opinion, in consequence of overtime?—No, I do not think so.

191. Overtime is not indulged in, you think, where it is not necessary?—No.

192. Making building dearer. We have heard it stated that overtime is indulged in to an injurious extent in some trades. I should like to know whether it is so in the building trade?—No, I do not think so. It rests with the general foreman. If he thinks it necessary he asks the men to stop, and keeps them back. If it is injurious to the trade it is the general foreman's fault.

193. Mr. J. J. DENT: It is really limited by the penalty of time and a quarter and time and a half after certain hours?—Yes.

194. Mr. D. M. WATSON:—Is there any extra pay for labourers?—Not until seven o'clock.

195. Does the foreman get anything extra for overtime?—No.

196. That is a check?—Yes, it is a check in a sense; but it is not a check if a man is merely doing his duty. He must get his job done. He takes it on those conditions. He is the first there and the last away.

197. If a foreman was paid overtime it might be an inducement?—It might be an inducement, certainly.

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198. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: When you speak of overtime, owing to the work being chiefly in City offices, it may mean that the men do not come on until everybody has left. It does not mean that they have been working all day necessarily, and that they then go on with the other work?—That is not quite what I mean. Suppose, for instance, that you have alterations to make in a large set of insurance offices. There are parts that you can keep the men on all day. They get on with certain sections of the work during the day, and then in the evening and early morning, before nine o'clock, go through the offices that are occupied in the day.

199. Mr. J. PARSONS: There is little or no boy labour in connection with building?—No.

200. I gather from what you say that there is not much interchangeability. The workmen do not exchange their different duties in the building trade? It is done a little in the case of labourers, but not at all in the case of mechanics?—No, not at all in the case of mechanics.

201. Should you consider it possible to bring about greater interchangeability, so that men may get more regular employment by changing the work which they do?—No, I do not think so.

202. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: All the trades will go slack together, I suppose?—Yes.

203. Mr. J. J. DENT: I suppose that it would be practically impossible for a bricklayer to turn his hand to carpentering, and *vice versa*?—He could not do it. A carpenter has to be six years before he can earn his living.

204. Mr. R. ROBERTS: May I ask what you are by trade?—A carpenter, so I speak feelingly.

205. Mr. J. J. DENT: A large proportion of builders' foremen are carpenters, are they not?—No, there are bricklayers and masons. I think that we have a fairly good average.

206. Mr. J. PARSONS: I gather that the system of conducting business that you speak of places immense power in the hands of the foreman?—Yes.

207. Have you in your experience known that power to be abused to any appreciable extent?—No.

208. Nothing in the nature of bribery or taking advantage or of treating demanded by foremen? You have the safeguard which you have told us of, but have you ever heard that other people are less scrupulous?—I have heard that they were years ago. The tale always is told that So-and-so many years ago used to do it, but in the present day I have not known it. I think that they are more keenly looked after. If they are not they ought to be. The labourer knows his power too much. A foreman would hardly keep his job for ten minutes if he attempted to do such a thing, and neither should he.

209. He would lose his position?—Of course.

210. Mr. CECIL CHAMMAN: You spoke rather depressingly of the character of the workmen having changed, and you said that it was due to irregular employment. Is there any change in regard to that at the present time in comparison with the past?—No. It has been always the same, as far as I know.

211. There is nothing peculiar about that. It has always been so?—Yes. It seems rather funny, but I think that the more men are out of work the more drunkenness there is. A fellow who is out of work goes and meets Tom, Dick, or Harry at dinner-time coming from work, and instead of his being given a pennyworth of bread and cheese, or something

Oct. 27, 1905. of that sort, he is given a half-pint of beer, and the man who gives it to him has one with him.

Mr. J. FISHER. 212. Mr. R. ROBERTS: Do you not notice a great improvement in habits in that respect?—Very much so.

213. You very rarely have a man coming drunk to a job?—No, not in my lot.

214. So that there is a distinct improvement, is there not?—I can only speak of my own jobs. I must say that I am very much prejudiced in regard to drunkenness, and perhaps I am not fair.

215. But still you think the state of things better than it was five or ten years ago?—I have very few cases myself.

216. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: The feeling generally is that it is better.—I believe it is.

217. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Do you say that drink is not a trouble now?—It is not a trouble now because there are so many mechanics and labourers out of work that it would not do for a foreman to be messed about by drink at all. He would not stand it. It is not necessary.

218. Mr. J. PARSONS: With regard to seasonal employment, has not the increase of the number of buildings in which iron and girders and concrete are used made it easier for work to be obtained in the winter than it used to be?—No. I generally find that the clerk of the works stops the work at the first sign of frost. Concreting, plastering, bricklaying should not be done when freezing more than two or three degrees.

219. Mr. C. S. LOCH: With regard to the 50 per cent. that are not regular, how do they manage to live?—That is a very difficult question to answer. It is a thing which I never could understand.

220. I suppose that you know some of the other 50 per cent. who are not attached to you?—Only as workmen. I never speak to them. I know their capacity.

221. Do they depend upon members of their family to keep them going?—I am sure of it.

222. That is the main source of help?—Yes, that is the main support.

223. With regard to carpenters out of work, are they generally connected with the Union, in that way getting money when they are out?—Yes.

224. So that practically that acts as a sustentation fund?—Yes, as far as carpenters are concerned.

225. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Does that extend to bricklayers?—No, the bricklayers do not get anything out of a society. It is only the carpenters and plumbers that have out-of-work pay.

226. Mr. C. S. LOCH: Would the bricklayers be kept going by 'friendly leads' and that kind of thing?—Yes, and collections.

227. And by the family, again, of course?—I do not know about that. I think they have a little more of what they term 'pride.' I do not think the wives go out to work. I do not know of it personally. Very few of them do. In a very few cases they might carry on a dressmaking business or something of that kind.

228. They would be earning well?—Yes. They do not go out daily, I think, in many cases.

229. Have you any kind of suggestion to offer as to how these people might live in the winter? I understood you to say that at any rate, with regard to the lower 50 per cent., it would be difficult for them to earn enough in the summer to carry them through the winter?—Yes.

230. If they are to support their own families with no other help it means actual shoer earning?—Yes. I am not speaking of outside help. Oct. 27, 1906

231. Practically, with the inside help I suppose these people manage. They do not apply to the Poor Law?—No, they would lose their votes. They are English you see.

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232. Do they apply to the Poor Law as a matter of fact?—No. They keep as far from the 'Big House,' as they term it, as possible.

233. Do they get relief from any other quarter?—I think not; only among themselves.

234. Practically it comes to this—that on the family system they manage to get through?—They manage somehow—they have to.

235. Take last winter, for instance, did you find men coming to you out of the 50 per cent. who were distinctly unable to do a day's work by reason of lack of sustenance?—No. They have always managed it, or the majority have. I have had very few as bad as that because, as I say, there are so many out of work that you can pick the best, naturally.

236. True. Are those who are rejected by you stranded, do you think?—Yes, very often, particularly this year. That applies to a lot of carpenters this year.

237. This year is exceptional you say, taking the last ten years as an average in this respect?—Yes, this year is exceptional.

238. More so than last year?—Yes, more than last year.

239. It expressly affects the mechanic?—Yes.

240. More than it does the unskilled labourer?—Yes.

241. Taking even the lower 50 per cent.?—Yes, I think so.

242. Do you think that the system of remuneration that is now adopted is the best plan of working? Have you ever thought whether any other would be of any service, such as giving a bonus or premium, or anything of the kind, to the men who stayed on to work? Is there any way of giving material assistance (out of their earnings, of course) by which they could pass the winter better?—No. I have to take the building trade as it stands and make the best of it. I have never thought of it in that way. We do not give a bonus incentive, but those who are energetic and try to do the best that they can get all the pickings. If a man is wanted for an hour or two more, for instance, the man who was energetic and tried to do his best would be kept behind. That is all that we do.

243. I suppose that the building trade five years ago was making very large profits?—I have nothing to do with the profits.

244. I thought that, as a matter of fact, you would know whether it was not a booming time in the building trade?—No. We always lose on every job as far as I am told.

245. I was talking to a man in another business, who told me that they had arranged to give a bonus in their very good years to the men. Do you think that any such thing as that would be possible and advisable, taking the employers' standpoint, quite as much as anybody else's?—Personally, I have always felt ever since I have had anything to do with the trade that I cannot see why one man should work alongside another man who was not as good a man and yet receive only the same rate of wages. I cannot understand that.

246. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: That is according to trade union rule?—Yes, that is the true reading of the rule.

247. Mr. C. S. LOCH: If that is not the best system, do you think that the building trade in itself would prevent the adoption of a principle such as I have suggested? Is there anything in the nature of the trade that

Oct. 27, 1905. would make it impossible?—Yes. I do not think you could alter the state of things nicely. It would leave it in the power of the foreman. He would be the one to say that one man was better than another, and I think that that would probably be abused. Speaking with a view to both sides of the question, I do not see how you could alter it nicely. I might have a fancy for a man, and recommend a master or employer to give him more money or something of that sort. You cannot keep each man separate in his work on a building and say that one man has done so much more than another.

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248. Let me put it to you in a different way. Granted that there are other foremen who have also 50 per cent. of comparatively permanent men, and supposing that the comparatively permanent men are taken as a group, and that there is a certain dividend or profit or bounty distributed amongst the permanent group, that would get away from individual distinctions and make it a group distinction. Do you think that that would be advantageous?—No, I do not think so.

249. Why not?—It would tie the hands of the foreman. He would never get on at all. That is what it would mean. Supposing that you had 50 per cent. to distribute the bonus to, you would be pretty well bound to keep the 50 per cent. until the job was finished, and they would soon take advantage of that.

250. Could there be no arrangement that during the time that the job lasted the bonus was to go on, commencing again on another occasion?—I do not think so.

251. Mr. J. J. DENT: Granted the comparative injustice of the present system, one man working well, as you said, and another side by side not working so well but receiving the same, can you not make a suggestion on the side of a division of profits which would be fairer?—No. If it were a recognised thing in the building trade for a foreman to say that one man was better than another and should have a halfpenny an hour more it would give rise to abuse. The trade unions have a tendency, instead of raising to one level, to bring down to one level.

252. Is the sole objection to that the trade union rules? Is that what prevents this being done?—It is the tendency, whether it is a trade union rule or an agreement I would not say. It is a building trade rule rather than a trade union rule, I should say.

253. Therefore it is not practically open to modification?—I do not think so.

254. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Is the rule an absolute rule or is it merely a minimum? Is there anything to prevent a builder giving a halfpenny more to a man?—No.

255. Nothing whatever?—No, except objection on the part of the men.

256. But why should the men object?—Before I got as far as I have got my employers tried it, but the men threatened to strike against me because I was receiving more money than other men. I think that I worked harder. I tried to at all events, and I got one halfpenny an hour more. The men did not openly protest, but I could soon see that first one and then another would not speak to me, and all that sort of thing. Then you get this kind of thing: 'Oh, he is the bell horse. He does this, that, and the other.' I do not know what they do not say.

257. Mr. J. J. DENT: I suppose that it is done as a matter of practice in the suburbs?—Yes, I am very pleased to say that it is done, but it is not the general rule.

258. I was talking last week to a man in the Ilford district, and he

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told me that he paid the whole of his men one halfpenny an hour more, and that he got the pick of the district?—The firm that I work with on a recommendation recognise one man as better than another, but it is not the general rule in the building trade except with regard to leading hands.

259. The trade union would not object to a builder paying some of his men one halfpenny an hour more, would they?—No, not the trade union.

260. Would the men?—Yes, they would.

261. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: It is really the jealousy of the men, then?—Yes, that is it.

262. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: If a man, for instance, laid more than the usual number of bricks, would he get half a brick dropped on his head?—Very likely.

263. Mr. J. PARSONS: In the slating trade there is a rule by which a certain quantity of slate is treated as a contract. It is called a 'bargain.' They let it out to the men. The men arrange among themselves how the work shall be done, but it is done by regular contract with the foreman of the job. Those men are all partners together on the job?—Yes.

264. Is there any possibility of adapting that to the building trade?—No, not at all.

265. Mr. R. ROBERTS: Is there any piecework in your firm?—No; not that I know of.

266. You have no piecework?—No.

267. You do not sublet brickwork?—No.

268. If you have competent men you retain them to the last, so that the most skilled man really gets the preference. He earns, on the average, more, because he is the last to be sacked and the first to be taken on. That meets Mr. Loch's point?—Yes, that is how it works.

269. He does get more money, but not more per hour?—No. As I say, if I want to keep a bricklayer or carpenter or mason or a man of any trade back for a few hours for a special job the best one is kept back.

270. With regard to what you said about two men working side by side, and one working better than the other but receiving the same money, the point is met by the man who works better getting more money because you prefer him and keep him on longer?—Not in the joiner's shop.

271. Do they work in pairs in the shop?—Yes, and one has very often to father the other.

272. That system of working in pairs is going out for the very reason that you have given?—Yes. That is what I had in my mind when I spoke.

273. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You say that it is quite natural for a man to want to make his job last longer because he is paid by the hour, and when the job is over he goes out?—Perhaps I did not express myself exactly correctly there. I mean that as the trade is so very, very bad now, if you do not continually keep driving the men and raving at them the whole day through, being constantly there, it is only natural that they will say, 'This job will only last a week or two, and what is the good of doing 'this, that, or the other?'

274. It is directly to the interest of a man to do as little as he can in the hour?—It is.

275. Because he has no security of employment?—Yes.

276. He knows that if he can do just enough to satisfy you during a job he will be kept on until the end of the job, but that he has no security after that at all, so he likes to make the job last as long as possible?—That applies to the 50 per cent. who are not continually employed.

277. You think that perhaps your 50 per cent. who are continually

Oct. 27, 1905. employed will work better because it is not so much to their interest to make a particular job last?—Certainly.

Mr. J. 278. You think that it makes them work better to have greater security of employment?—Yes, and they are better men all round.

FISHER. 279. It helps them?—Yes, it helps them.

280. You think that greater security of employment induces them to work better?—Yes, I do.

281. A reason for their objecting to a 'bell horse' would also be that if the job was done quickly they would get less money because they would go out at the end of the job, and that is the result of payment by time?—Yes, I think so. I cannot see what other reason there is.

282. I feel that there is always a great deal of reason and common-sense in those objections to the 'bell horse,' although I do not think they are good for the trade. A man has no security, and when his job is over he goes out.—Yes.

283. So long as you have this hourly payment and irregular employment you will get this difficulty, will you not?—Yes, you will.

284. Now I may pass from that. You said that a recommended man is no good to you. Do you mean by that recommended by a Charitable Society?—I do not think I said so.

285. Yes, you said that you had to teach him his work—'as each general foreman has a distinct system, and whenever employing a 'recommended man would have to teach him.'—I should have put in the word 'even.'

286. You say that you hardly ever have any strangers?—No.

287. It means that you do not take a stranger if you can help it—that is all, is it not?—Yes.

288. But you do in fact, I suppose, have a good many new faces from time to time?—Occasionally we have them.

289. Fifty per cent. are not regularly with you. Some of those come back constantly, but some are quite unknown to you, are they not?—Very few. You might say that they were unknown with regard to the face, but they will come to you and say, 'I was working for So-and-so,' mentioning, as a rule, a man that you personally know or some firm that you personally know. They are unknown in a way, but they come with a half recommendation and say that they have been there for so many months, or something like that.

290. With regard to general labourers, I suppose that on the whole those are a lower class of men than the special labourers, because they have not quite the special skill. They pass from one thing to another, and they get less regular employment, I suppose?—Yes.

291. Say that you employed ten or twenty on a job, how many would be general labourers, taking an ordinary job, of all the labourers? What is the proportion?—It varies considerably. You might have a dozen general labourers on an ordinary sized alteration job, because of the difficulty of getting the material through occupied places, on roofs, and down alleys. I am now speaking chiefly of the City. On a £10,000 to £15,000 new job which was fairly easy to get at there would not be more than four or six general labourers, providing that the concrete was done.

292. Does the fact that so much of your experience is gained in the City make any difference to the proportion of practically permanent men that you have? A foreman who was working on a large contract which was not City work, we will say, might not have so large a permanent staff, speaking of building alone?—No. I do not think he would have such a permanent staff, so that perhaps 50 per cent. is rather more than would run

through the trade generally. It may be so. Of course I have to rely a good bit on the personal character of the man. I work at banks and places of that sort.

293. The real difficulty about a division of profits which you have made in a good year is that in a bad year the men do not stick to you. Many of the men move about, and that is a great difficulty, is it not?—You could not possibly keep them with any idea of that at all.

294. They are sometimes with you and sometimes not?—Yes. There is nothing like having a free hand, so that men can go when you want them to go.

295. The bonus would not necessarily interfere with your dismissing the men?—I cannot quite see that.

296. You said that you sometimes had to dismiss a man because he had nothing in his stomach and could not work?—Personally I have plenty of my own fellows who are really known hands, as I might say. I cannot give all men work. I have known such cases as you mention.

297. Men who you think would have been able to work if they had had food?—I think so.

298. But who were simply too weak to work?—Yes.

299. I met a case myself, and that is why I am asking.—I had one to-day. I did not give him a job. The man hardly got away from the job before he went down, and it was not through drink.

300. With regard to your own people, do you try to keep this body of men round you by sharing out the work between them?—No.

301. Say that the time is a particularly slack time for most people, does a foreman ever in a slack time share out the work, as it were, among those habitually working with him to keep them together against a busy time?—No; he cannot do that.

302. Can he not?—No; he has one job alone.

303. But he might take one man on a job for a week, and then another?—No; if you dismiss a man you do it for some other reason.

304. If a man is taken on a job he stays till the end of the job, unless he is dismissed for incompetence?—Yes.

305. There are a good many people dismissed for incompetence, are there not? Is that fairly common, or quite unusual?—It is not unusual, it is very often.

306. It is very often with strangers?—Very often.

307. Or is it only fairly often?—I perhaps may be unfortunate, but I think that it is very often.

308. Does that depend at all upon the district of London in which you are working?—You can hardly call the centre of London a district.

309. You work all in the centre of London?—You may say so. It is a very small radius from the Bank.

310. I was told by a foreman that the worst builders' labourers in all London were to be found just by Lisson Grove.—That is more of a joke among ourselves. Such statements should not be made. We say that if a scaffolder comes from Brixton he is no good, and so forth.

311. The man who spoke to me was not joking.—I do not think it is quite right to condemn a district.

312. Mr. J. PARSONS: One question on quite a different subject: Can you tell us at all what number of your men came in from the country, and whether you think that the fact of men coming in from the country has anything to do with this slackness amongst mechanics that you have spoken of?—Well, I am a countryman myself.

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313. So are most of us.—I was going to say that the majority of the better fellows amongst mechanics are country men.

314. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: It is only in the country that they have education in their trade, is it not?—They do not take them as apprentices here much.

315. Mr. J. PARSONS: I was thinking of that when I was asking whether there were more country men competing for work here than there is work for, thus causing difficulty to an undue extent.—Yes; that may be so. Take the East End of London. If you are working towards the East End of London you get a lot of men who at some time or other, many years ago, were farm labourers. They have probably spent a lifetime, almost, in the building trade, but they have come from Essex and the surrounding counties. If they were employed there it would not be so bad for London.

316. Is not the influx of country men to London very much the result of apprenticeship dropping out in London, but remaining in the country? Do not men get a better all-round training in the country than in London?—There is not so much apprenticeship here.

317. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Is not the reason that the work is too specialised in London?—Yes.

318. A man is not always a carpenter. He may be a sash-frame maker, for instance.—He only puts the work together. In the country he has to prepare it from the first start. There are few machine shops.

319. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Are wages much higher than they were fifteen years or twenty years ago, and does that hold good with all branches of the building trade?—Yes, I believe so.

320. They are higher in all branches, and not only in the skilled?—Yes.

321. Mr. J. J. DENT: They are about three halfpence an hour more than they were twenty years ago.—Yes; 10½d. instead of 9d.

322. Mr. D. M. WATSON: If the American method of inducing the men to work very hard by giving them a very much larger wage than is at present in vogue in this country—that is to say, very much in excess of trade union rates, thus enabling them to earn more money in shorter periods than they can now, was introduced, do you think that that would injure the position of working men generally or not? You know possibly that the Savoy Hotel and one or two other buildings have been built on those principles lately. What do you say, as a general foreman, to that?—If the American workman that I have employed is a sample of what it has done for them I hope it will be a long time before the system is introduced here generally, that is all.

323. Would you amplify that answer because it is interesting?—I hardly know how to express myself. I think that a lot of what you hear talked of is simply the art of advertisement, with nothing else in it. I do not believe for a moment that they work so well as the English workmen do, or so quickly.

324. I was thinking more of the introduction of the system here than of American workmen.—Exactly.

325. Have you ever employed any?—Yes.

326. Mr. D. M. WATSON: American working men?—Yes.

327. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you think that they were fair samples of American working men?—I believe so. I was not prejudiced, but the less I say about them the better.

328. Mr. R. ROBERTS: Was your objection to them that they were bad workmen though quick workers, or were they both slow and bad?—Both slow and bad, and that is the worst you can say.

329. It was not a question of being quick and scamping the work?— Oct. 27, 1905,  
They were a long way from being quick.

330. They were neither good nor quick?—Only with the tongue. They were very good with that, and did a lot of talking. I was not prejudiced before, but I am now.

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331-334. I thought that your objection was that they did their work quickly, but badly.—No, neither quickly nor well.

335. Mr. R. ROBERTS: Did you give the men bonuses and great-coats and watches, and follow the American system at the Savoy?—No, I did not.

336. That may account for the failure?—Probably it may, but our jobs will not afford that.

337. The CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to you for the evidence which you have given. It is very valuable.

(The Witness withdrew.)

MR. EVANS: Examined.

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338. The CHAIRMAN: We understand that you are Foreman, employed by the well-known firm of Messrs. L. H. & R. Roberts, and we gather from that that you have had considerable experience in the matter of employment in the building trade, and are able to give us some information. Would you kindly tell us what are, in your experience, the terms of employment in the building trade?—I do not know of any special terms.

339. Are men always employed by the hour?—Yes.

340. And are they liable to dismissal at an hour's notice?—Yes; at an hour's notice.

341. The workmen are practically of two classes, mechanics and labourers?—Yes.

342. Can you tell us what are the classes of labourer?—They are excavators, scaffolders, bricklayers' labourers, and plasterers' labourers.

343. In each class of that labour a certain amount of skill is required, I take it.—Yes.

344. And more in some than in others?—Yes.

345. But skill is required in any case?—Yes.

346. What is the proportion of labourers to mechanics, taking the men employed on an ordinary building?—It all depends on the nature of the job. In some cases we have employed more labourers than mechanics, and I should think on the whole there is about an equal number of each.

347. What is the method by which you give employment to men? I take it that the employment is always given by the foreman?—Yes.

348. You select your own men, and it is entirely in your own hands to give them employment?—Yes.

349. How do you find the men out?—I generally find the men out, after putting them on, by watching them doing their work.

350. But what steps do you take to get men? Suppose that you wanted fifty men now, what steps would you take to get them? Would you apply to the Trade Union registers?—No; I have never done that. I generally ask those that are employed to bring men with them, if they know of any.

351. Do you get voluntary applications from people wanting work?—Yes.

352. Is there always a supply of that class of people applying to you voluntarily for work?—Yes, always plenty.

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353. And do you in point of fact make a selection from those who apply, or how, otherwise, do you select them?—We have to chance it when we want a number of men.

354. When you have once engaged a man do you practically keep him on?—Yes, if he deserves to be kept on.

355. You only discharge him for incompetence or irregularity, or something of the kind, I suppose?—That is all.

356. Do you find it necessary to make inquiry into character beforehand, or do you simply inquire into efficiency?—If some of the other men bring a man with them I generally ask for the character beforehand, otherwise I have to take them on trust.

357. Do you find much necessity to discharge them for drunkenness or any offences of that kind?—Yes, sometimes I do; about one in every dozen, I should think.

358. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: One in every dozen of those discharged, or one in every dozen labourers?—One in every dozen labourers, for irregularity or incompetence.

359. The CHAIRMAN: Has there ever been a time when you have had a real shortage of men, and when you have not been able to get the workmen that you have wanted?—No, I do not think so.

360. The supply is always greater than the demand?—Yes.

361. Is there a seasonal depression in your trade in your experience?—Yes.

362. I suppose that in winter-time the trade is not so active as in summer-time?—No.

363. How does that affect the different classes? Does it affect the labourers or the mechanics most?—I believe that it affects the labourers more than the mechanics.

364. Would there be any good in trying to find other occupation for those who are out of employment in consequence of the seasonal depression? Could they do gas stoking or anything of that kind?—There are a good many of them now that do that sort of work in the winter-time, but I do not know what good a builder's labourer would be for any other work if he has always been brought up to building.

365. He requires certain skill in his own particular occupation, and that is such a special occupation that he probably would not be good at any other that he took up?—Just so.

366. Mr. R. ROBERTS: You began life yourself as a labourer, did you not?—Yes.

367. Then you became a bricklayer?—Yes.

368. Now you are a foreman?—Yes.

369. For how many years have you been foreman?—Fourteen years.

370. You came from Wales?—Yes.

371. You came up to London as a labourer?—Yes; I came as a labourer, but I had learned a trade before I came to London.

372. What trade did you learn before coming to London?—Mason.

373. The trade of a general mason in Wales?—They call them 'nobblers' in Wales, but when I came to London I could not find that occupation.

374. Did you attend any evening class or anything of the kind?—Yes; I have attended classes. I have attended the County Council Classes in the evening where I live at Edmonton.

375. In about fourteen years you practically raised yourself from labourer to general foreman. For how long have you been general foreman?—I started laying bricks as a bricklayer about twenty years ago.

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376. You came to London as a labourer?—Yes.

377. Did you take labouring work because trade was so bad that you could not get skilled work? Was that the reason?—I could not get the kind of masons' work that they do in Wales.

378. You were a mason, but you could not find work in London as a mason; therefore, rather than be idle, you took work as a labourer?—Yes; that is it.

379. Now you have been for ten years a foreman?—It is fourteen years since I started at Greenwich. It is about ten years since I have been regularly a foreman.

380. You have done contracts up to about £20,000, have you not?—Yes.

381. The men are entirely taken on by the foreman, are they not? The firm never interfere with the foreman in the taking on of the men, do they?—No.

382. With regard to taking on labourers, do the labourers follow you from job to job?—Some do.

383. Can you give us any notion of what proportion would follow you from job to job?—I really do not know, but about a dozen, I should think. Generally, if they are good labourers they find other work. Very often after we finish a big job, if they are competent men, they find work, and it is a difficult thing to get them back as a rule, but I generally keep their addresses if they are good men, and I write to them. Sometimes, if they are on a short job, they turn it up and come to me.

384. There is a certain class of labourer that you consider specially qualified and specially attached to you, a good man who will come to your job if you send for him?—Yes.

385. And so that class of man is in more permanent employment than the other?—Yes.

386. About what proportion of your labourers would be, in that sense, permanently employed?—I should say about one in every twenty.

387. That is only 5 per cent. Your work has not lain much in the City, has it, but in various districts?—Exactly.

388. It has been in the East End of London and in the country, and only about 5 per cent. of the labourers that you know are in permanent work?—Yes, as near as I can say.

389. Those men, even if you cannot find them work, generally get work elsewhere?—Yes, as a rule they do.

390. Is the casually employed labourer the 95 per cent., which is a large proportion, in other employment elsewhere much? Do they drift about?—I do not know, I am sure, about those.

391. Have you any notion by their appearance whether they are in fairly permanent work or whether they are simply drifting about?—Yes, you can generally tell whether a labourer is as a rule in work or not by his clothing. For instance, a man's trousers will not get greasy if he is dealing with bricks and mortar.

392. Are there more labourers out than mechanics?—Yes, I believe so.

393. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: More efficient and competent labourers?—Yes. At the present time there are more than mechanics.

394. Mr. R. ROBERTS: Has there been an increase in the employment of labourers in London since you have known the building trade? Are there more labourers employed now because of fireproof flooring, and so on, than there were ten years ago?—Yes, there seem to be many more.

395. More are wanted now than were wanted ten years ago?—Yes.

396. And less skilled mechanics?—No; more mechanics, too.

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397. Is the work done a little faster so that there are more men employed than there used to be ten years ago? Is there a tendency to crowd the men more than then?—No, I do not think so.

398. There is not a larger proportion of men on a job now than there would have been ten years ago, you think?—No.

399. How about the habits of the men? You say you have to sack one in every twelve for drunkenness or incompetence. That is only at the beginning of a job, I suppose?—At the beginning of a job, as a rule. As a job goes on you generally find the right men and keep them on.

400. Are their habits better now than they were when you first came to London?—I believe that, on the whole, they are, especially with regard to the labourers.

401. Is there less drinking?—Yes, there is less drinking.

402. When you first were foreman, for instance, did the potmen come on the job?—Yes.

403. Does he do so now?—No, he never comes on my jobs. I do not allow him to.

404. Is tea provided on the jobs?—Not now.

405. Tea does come round sometimes, does it not?—It has been done, but not in the last two or three years.

406. It has dropped out again?—Yes.

407. Mr. J. J. DENT: Would a mechanic who is out of work at this season of the year present himself, say, at a gasworks, where they were preparing for the winter and seek work as a gas stoker?—No, I do not think so.

408. Would he rather starve than do that?—I believe so. I think that he would not present himself.

409. Do you think that pride of profession is a good thing for a man or a bad thing? Do you think that a man would really be losing his place in his profession, as I will call it, by going to another and rougher kind of work during the winter to save himself from starvation?—It would tell against him in this way: if he was a mechanic and went to work in the gasworks in the winter, that would be against him on the next job. They would say: 'He is only a gas stoker. He is no mechanic.'

410. He would be asked what he had been doing during the winter, and would have to say: 'I have been a stoker at gasworks.'—It is generally found out.

411. It would hurt him physically in the exactness of his handiwork, I suppose, if he were shovelling coals into a gas furnace and came to carpentering afterwards?—Yes.

412. It would be a real detriment to him?—Yes.

413. Mr. D. M. WATSON: A good number of stokers at gasworks, as you know, are men who are bricklayers' labourers—a very large proportion. Is there any class in the building trade who go regularly each winter into the gasworks; is there any interchangeable class?—Six or seven years ago I had two or three such chaps along with me. I have known it, but not of late years.

414. How has that dropped out?—I have lost sight of the men by shifting from one place to another.

415. Mr. J. PARSONS: Do you find that many men come up from the country and apply to you?—Yes.

416. Do you find that that is going on now, and that men come up from the country and apply to you?—Yes; at the present time, and as a rule they turn out to be better men than the London men.

417. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Has there been any change in the pro-

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portion of labourers employed owing to the introduction of machinery? Has any machinery come in which has enabled you to dispense much with labourers?—I do not know of any.

418. Does the 'Scotchman,' for instance, not do away with a good deal of hoisting?—Yes, undoubtedly.

419. On a large job?—Yes; a 'Scotchman' would only be employed on a very large job.

420. You think that the increase in the proportion of labourers owing to the use of fire-proof floors, and so on, would probably more than counter-balance that?—Yes.

421. It would compensate for it?—Yes.

422. You say that a mechanic would not go into the gasworks; but a builder's labourer would, would he not?—Yes. There are some labourers that go periodically to the gasworks.

423. Yes, I know there are.—I do not know of any who have gone from building work that have not been there previously. Those that I have been acquainted with have been there before they have come to me.

424. Might I ask you just to imagine yourself on a job with about fifty labourers. That would not be an out-of-the-way job, would it?—No.

425. What proportion of those would, in the ordinary way, be people who followed you about regularly from job to job? Do you say not more than one in twenty of those fifty? How many would you expect to have known for years, on and off, taking the fifty?—There would not be more than about one in twenty.

426. Do you mean to say that every time you start a fresh job with twenty men you take on nineteen more or less complete strangers to you?—Yes.

427. Do you go very much from one district to another?—Yes, as a rule I do.

428. And do you take the men from the locality?—Yes.

429. The men do not move about with you much?—No.

430. At the beginning of a job you have a few men who go with you, and you get a lot of strangers. Do you find any large proportion of those strangers unfit to be employed regularly, and that after a few days you have to get rid of them?—Yes, as a rule.

431. I suppose that after a time you make up a gang of reliable men by continually weeding out the unreliable men?—Yes.

432. Do you say that there are going about London a great army of unemployable men who call themselves builders' labourers, who mostly work as builders' labourers, but who cannot be trusted to get up in the morning and to keep time, and so on?—Yes.

433. You have never known any shortage in the supply of men?—No, never.

434. You have always had men when you have wanted them?—Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. We are very much obliged to you for your kindness in coming here.

(The Witness withdrew.)

# SPECIAL COMMITTEE

ON

## UNSKILLED LABOUR.

NOTES OF EVIDENCE to be tendered by Mr. H. H. WATTS, Staff Inspector, London and India Docks Company, to the Special Committee on Unskilled Labour on Friday, the 3rd November, 1905.

The Establishment consists of:—

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| 1. The London and St. Katharine Docks and East Smithfield Depôt . . .  | } | Shadwell, Wapping, St. George's-in-the-East, St. Botolph.                                    |
| 2. East and West India Docks . . .   |   | Poplar, Bromley.   |
| 3. Victoria and Albert Docks . . .   | } | East Ham, West Ham, Woolwich.  |
| 4. Tilbury Docks . . . . .   |   | Chadwell, Little Thurrock.   |
| 5. Town Warehouses, comprising Cutler Street and New Street Warehouses, Crutched Friars Warehouse, Commercial Road Warehouse . . . | } | St. Botolph, St. Bishopsgate, St. Olives, Hart Street; All Hallows, St. Mary's, Whitechapel. |
| 6. West Smithfield Refrigerators . . .   |   | St. Sepulchre.   |

The Total labour staff on January 1 of this year, exclusive of labouring boys and girls, consisted of the following:—

1,305 permanent labourers. *Guaranteed Wages:* 24s. per week of six days of eight working hours between 6 A.M. and 6 P.M. Overtime pay at current rates. *Leave:* Three days annually, in addition to general holidays. *Pension:* After at least fifteen years' service.

1176. List A.—*Registered Labourers.*—*Guaranteed Wages:* 24s. per week of 48 working hours in summer, and 21s. per week of 42 working hours in winter. Overtime at current rates. *Leave:* Three days annually after twelve months' service on the list.

2077. List B.—*Preference Labourers.*—*Guaranteed Wages:* 6d. per working hour between 6 A.M. and 6 P.M., and 8d. per hour between 6 P.M. and 6 A.M.; no man discharged with less than 2s. pay, except in regard to special short engagements in the afternoon.

Casual men, as required, are employed when there is pressure of work, and at the same wages as those on List B.

I propose to take the clauses in that part of the Committee's memorandum of reference which relates to waterside labour, and to supply the information I have in respect to each seriatim.

(1) *Waterside Labour.*

(a) '... the amount or ... the fluctuation of employment.'

I subjoin a statement giving particulars of the numbers of men employed at each set of docks, and for the system as a whole, for each year from 1894 to 1904:—

Year	L <sub>o</sub> & St. K.	R. & W.	V. & A.	Tilbury	Town Ware-houses	System as a whole
<b>AVERAGE</b>						
1894	2,054	862	844	623	698	5,076
1895	2,213	964	851	628	674	5,330
1896	1,804	1,020	905	575	713	5,017
1897	1,775	1,112	878	927	655	4,947
1898	1,752	869	645	860	806	4,233
1899	1,653	852	671	851	600	4,127
1900	1,824	853	819	889	598	4,483
1901	1,924	965	758	805	627	4,579
1902	1,494	888	684	915	608	3,889
1903	1,256	669	587	231	547	3,230
1904	1,082	636	584	230	522	3,054
<b>MINIMUM</b>						
1894	1,009	403	651	187	465	3,407
1895	1,044	495	654	166	461	3,388
1896	868	551	674	129	509	3,330
1897	878	717	651	125	491	3,589
1898	936	459	494	130	231	3,390
1899	806	542	409	150	378	3,235
1900	905	557	532	162	413	3,512
1901	819	556	581	181	447	3,161
1902	855	567	446	108	284	3,043
1903	656	441	486	138	324	2,717
1904	574	369	439	119	279	2,346
<b>MAXIMUM</b>						
1894	4,105	1,635	1,023	1,232	869	7,258
1895	3,611	1,676	1,122	1,207	826	6,971
1896	3,364	1,938	1,254	1,500	848	6,789
1897	3,700	1,818	1,298	778	852	7,032
1898	3,349	1,882	916	848	774	6,481
1899	2,949	1,349	972	654	761	5,780
1900	3,095	1,305	1,314	859	780	6,208
1901	3,162	1,382	1,114	640	807	6,311
1902	2,834	1,485	905	512	759	5,032
1903	2,233	1,122	779	534	634	4,311
1904	2,048	1,061	755	601	669	4,322

It will be observed that the average number of men employed has declined from 5,076 in the year 1894 to 3,054 in the year 1904.



There has been a decrease at each set of docks so far as the Company's men are concerned; but as other employers within the docks have in some cases employed more men, the gross decrease within the docks is not as large as the figures suggest.

At the *London and St. Katharine Docks* the principal causes are: (1) The change in the character of shipping business whereby colonial and other cargoes are no longer carried in any appreciable quantity in comparatively small sailing ships, but are conveyed in steam vessels of ever-increasing size, which on account of their dimensions have to discharge and load at docks lower down the river. (2) Some shipowners at these docks now undertake to discharge and deliver from the quay by their own labourers the cargoes of their vessels. (3) A decline in the warehousing business through the tendency on the part of consignees to take immediate delivery of their goods. And (4) Improvement in the organisation and quality of the Company's labourers.

At the *East and West India Docks* the decrease is not as large as at the upper docks, but it is attributable practically to the same reasons.

At the *Victoria and Albert Docks and Tilbury Docks* the discharging and quay work is now almost entirely undertaken by shipowners, stevedores, and master porters, which accounts for the number of men employed by the Docks Company being less. At these docks the Company's warehousing business always has been a comparatively small matter.

At the *Town Warehouses* the reduction is smaller than elsewhere, and is due in part to a diminished volume of business and to administrative action.

(b) ' . . . the proportion of permanent, regular, and casual hands.'

The following figures give the percentage of labour performed by each class of labourers:—

Year	London and St. Katharine				East and West India			
	Perma- nent	Regis- tered A	B	Extra	Perma- nent	Regis- tered A	B	Extra
1894	27.3	30.7	33.6	8.4	31.5	42.7	23.0	2.8
1895	24.2	30.0	33.8	12.0	29.3	39.3	26.6	4.8
1896	29.6	33.1	30.0	7.3	27.3	38.1	28.5	6.1
1897	27.0	30.0	31.7	11.3	27.9	33.6	31.3	7.8
1898	29.9	33.9	30.2	6.0	32.4	38.9	24.9	3.8
1899	29.7	33.1	31.1	6.1	32.5	39.2	24.3	3.5
1900	26.4	30.5	32.0	11.1	31.6	39.4	24.2	4.8
1901	25.6	30.3	34.3	9.8	27.2	39.7	27.7	5.4
1902	33.3	33.2	26.3	1.2	34.0	43.5	20.1	2.4
1903	40.6	39.3	19.1	0.4	40.5	45.2	13.8	0.5
1904	44.2	29.1	25.3	0.9	41.3	39.9	17.7	0.6

Year	Victoria and Albert				Tilbury			
	Perma- nent	Regis- tered A	B	Extra	Perma- nent	Regis- tered A	B	Extra
1894	31.3	40.7	22.9	5.1	26.2	28.0	40.8	6.0
1895	30.7	39.8	20.7	8.8	25.7	6.2	54.6	18.5
1896	29.6	38.5	23.1	8.8	26.9	7.2	54.4	11.5
1897	30.0	39.1	21.7	9.2	30.5	10.0	30.9	28.6
1898	37.3	40.4	18.6	5.7	26.7	12.6	35.5	25.3
1899	34.1	34.8	21.8	9.3	28.0	26.4	28.0	17.6
1900	25.3	30.9	23.0	20.8	24.4	28.3	26.4	20.9
1901	26.4	37.7	26.8	9.1	27.0	29.8	27.9	16.3
1902	30.7	41.4	23.4	4.5	35.9	39.8	21.0	18.8
1903	34.8	46.4	16.7	2.1	35.4	30.7	22.2	11.7
1904	33.9	44.4	19.7	2.0	37.6	36.4	20.2	5.8

Year	Town Warehouses				TOTAL					
	Perma- nent	Regis- tered A	B	Extra	Perma- nent	A	Total weekly	B	Cas.	Total extra
1894	39.3	41.3	18.0	1.0	30.7	34.9	65.6	28.8	5.6	34.4
1895	40.3	40.8	13.2	0.7	28.4	31.8	60.2	30.9	8.9	39.8
1896	39.2	39.2	16.8	4.8	30.2	33.0	63.2	29.4	7.4	36.8
1897	39.5	39.6	18.2	3.7	29.4	32.4	61.8	28.0	10.2	38.2
1898	39.8	42.4	15.9	1.9	22.7	35.4	69.1	25.7	6.2	31.9
1899	38.3	41.5	17.6	2.6	32.1	35.3	67.4	26.0	6.6	32.6
1900	39.5	44.0	13.8	3.7	28.8	33.9	62.7	25.8	11.5	37.3
1901	38.8	43.9	14.0	3.3	28.0	35.4	63.4	28.4	8.2	36.6
1902	40.1	45.3	18.0	1.6	34.4	40.6	75.0	22.2	3.8	25.0
1903	44.4	45.1	10.2	0.3	39.8	42.4	82.2	16.8	1.6	17.8
1904	44.2	42.8	9.8	3.7	41.2	37.2	78.4	19.7	1.9	21.6

The work performed by weekly men increased from 65.6 and 60.2 in the years 1894 and 1895 respectively to 78.4 in 1904, and the 'B' list of preference men and casuals performed 34.4 and 39.8 in 1894 and 1895 respectively, as compared with 21.6 in 1904. If we regard the casual men apart from the preference men it will be seen that whereas their proportion of work in the year 1894 was 5.6, a rough average for the eleven years gives 6.4; last year their percentage was as low as 1.9. General explanations can be given if needed in respect to the differences in the figures as indicated when one set of docks is compared with another.

That the proportion of labour credited to the preference men and the casuals has materially decreased is due principally to two causes:—(1) *As to the course of work*, there has been a smaller volume, more even flow, and fewer periods of pressure. (2) *The result of the policy of the Company during the past few years* has been directed to the distribution of the work with a view to as much as possible of the labour being carried on by the

weekly men, and as a consequence the curtailment of the number of preference men and the elimination of casual workers.

- (c) ' . . . the methods of selection and engagement, especially with regard to the preference list system, and of obtaining or directing supplies of labour when required.'

*As to the selecting and engaging of preference men.*—The 'B' or preference list consists of the names of chosen casual and recommended men. Tickets are issued to the men and renewed every quarter; they are signed by the Superintendent of the dock. A certain number of these men are allotted to each department of a dock or town warehouse. The authorised numbers of 'B' men are fixed for each department according to the amount of work actually undertaken, and on a basis of about 40 to 45 per cent. of the number of men generally at work. For instance, if a department on an average employed 100 labourers per day, it would have appropriated to it forty to forty-five preference men in addition to the men on weekly wages.

*'As to obtaining or directing supplies of labour where required.'*—Every afternoon the head of each department forwards to the office of the Superintendent of the dock a labour indent-form attached, which gives an estimate of the number of men which will be required on the subsequent day. The form also shows the number of weekly men actually employed on the date of indent. By comparing the number of weekly men employed on the current day with the requirements for the following day the prospective surplus or deficiency is ascertained, and at the foot of the form instructions are inserted by the Superintendent's clerk as to how the surplus is to be disposed of or the deficiency made up. The forms are then returned to the department, the figures in respect to the weekly men on the returns from each department are put together, and made to balance for the whole dock.

When the requirements exceed the available number of weekly men, which is usually the case, forms are issued to the departments—specimen attached—showing not only the number, but the registered numbers of the preference men needed in order of priority, and these forms are posted in conspicuous positions at each department in order that the preference men may learn how many will be required, and where they are to attend for work next morning. If next morning it is found that more men than were indented for are wanted, the department is at liberty to engage additional preference men from their own list, but the numbers must be called strictly in the order in which they appear on the list. When a department has exhausted its own list it is the rule for the officer to only engage further men in the order in which the numbers appear on a special list, which is arranged to give sets of 10 per cent. of the men of each other department in the order of their priority. It is arranged thus in order to ensure the distribution of the excess work of any one department amongst the men highest on the lists of the other departments.

The question may now arise as to what is done if any one of the controls has not sufficient work in its own departments to employ the whole of its weekly labourers. The answer is that when the day's returns are put together in the Superintendent's office, and it is found that a number of weekly men will not be required, the Superintendent of each of the other controls is telegraphed or telephoned to, and he is offered the surplus men. He is bound to take the men offered in lieu of employing his own preference men, which he would otherwise do.

But a further question may be put, viz. as the preference men appear

to be employed in regular order within their own control, how do they fare when there is no work at their own control, but plenty of work at other controls? The reply is that a taking-on foreman can only engage preference men in the following order. First, his own departmental preference list must be called; secondly, the lists of other departments within his own control are to be taken; and thirdly, preference men from other controls have to be engaged before local or any other casuals are booked.

The carrying-out of this practice has involved the following movements in addition to transfers within each labour control :—

*Transfer of Weekly men from Dock to Dock (reduced to one day's work in the year).*

PERMANENT MEN.

Year	Total transferred to					Total
	London and St. Katharine	East and West India	Victoria and Albert	Tilbury	Town Warehouses	
1894	777	77	46	—	80	930
1895	261	129	42	32	—	464
1896	144	716	789	—	139	1,727
1897	325	1,088	510	441	140	2,504
1898	1,908	576	494	558	439	3,969
1899	1,510	793	1,076	871	390	4,050
1900	1,697	585	885	1,301	80	4,399
1901	1,134	316	159	59	60	1,798
1902	1,913	1,601	1,160	679	116	5,474
1903	2,308	1,145	884	1,292	620	6,799
1904	2,353	1,427	1,548	1,112	346	7,366

REGISTERED MEN.

Year	Total transferred to					Total
	London and St. Katharine	East and West India	Victoria and Albert	Tilbury	Town Warehouses	
1894	10,819	399	662	—	685	13,579
1895	9,924	707	373	67	—	11,071
1896	8,186	3,106	2,693	41	222	9,248
1897	4,366	1,870	1,255	1,838	186	9,010
1898	17,857	1,490	1,141	1,894	580	23,262
1899	8,894	1,646	2,488	1,549	893	15,415
1900	8,376	1,921	2,519	4,085	17	14,718
1901	7,348	712	333	100	248	9,741
1902	9,375	4,461	8,390	1,075	459	19,660
1903	15,477	8,420	2,320	3,445	1,140	26,302
1904	10,224	2,445	3,001	707	675	16,952

*Movements of 'B,' i.e. Preference men* (unlike weekly men who move from dock to dock under orders, the movements of 'B,' or preference men are voluntary).

'B' OR PREFERENCE MEN.

Year	Total transferred to					
	London and St. Katharine	East and West India	Victoria and Albert	Tilbury	Town Warehouse	Total
1894	12,781	244	1,579	1,100	55	15,709
1895	23,085	1,740	1,231	8,778	289	35,118
1896	5,704	5,675	2,797	6,379	813	20,868
1897	7,623	6,735	1,825	1,989	—	18,159
1898	4,380	4,359	202	6,683	—	15,574
1899	5,805	2,978	2,141	1,641	40	12,605
1900	3,626	1,011	2,154	975	—	7,766
1901	11,941	1,541	1,254	306	—	15,042
1902	5,075	731	556	1,156	—	7,518
1903	1,060	230	150	2,678	703	4,821
1904	1,792	178	479	2,893	266	5,608

Occasionally objections are made by *departmental officers* to taking men temporarily sent from other departments or docks on the ground that the men lent are not used to the particular work required. This arises largely from a preference for extra men they know who have more or less followed up their departments. As a rule an officer would sooner take on one of his own 'B' men than an 'A' man from another department. These objections have to be overruled, and the staff are required to loyally carry out arrangements which are conceived in the interests of the whole establishment. Sometimes *the men* do not like being transferred, but as the alternative is to reduce the staff there is no difficulty in this respect. The more the men are moved about the better all-round workmen they are. There are some special lines of work for which one man is decidedly not as good as another, and discretion has to be used; but as a department is never required to take strangers until after full employment has been given to all its weekly staff, it is evident that the strangers are an addition to and not in substitution of its own special men, and can generally be employed on work for which particular knowledge is not needed.

The effect of this method is that employment for the weekly men is first ensured either at their own or another control, then preference men have a claim to work, first, at their own Department, secondly anywhere within their control, and thirdly at any other control. As casual men only come in after this, their chance of obtaining work is reduced to a minimum. Then, as every afternoon all over the establishment the probable requirements for the following day are posted, preference men and casuals can form a very good idea as to whether their services are likely to be required on the morrow, and this guides them as to turning up or not turning up at the dock gates.

(d) '... The methods of remuneration (contract, co-operation, piecework, timework).'

The permanent and registered men are paid weekly, and the 'B' or preference men and casuals receive their wages daily.

The labour work is divided into two classes, viz. daywork and piecework. The percentage of labour performed under these heads has been as follows:—

Year	London & St. Katharine		East and West India		Victoria and Albert	
	Piecework	Daywork	Piecework	Daywork	Piecework	Daywork
1894	75.3	24.7	77.4	22.6	18.8	81.2
1895	78.4	21.6	81.1	18.9	20.7	79.3
1896	75.6	24.4	86.5	13.5	21.5	78.5
1897	79.6	20.4	89.4	11.6	29.9	70.1
1898	80.7	19.3	88.2	11.8	68.1	31.9
1899	80.7	19.3	86.9	13.1	79.0	21.0
1900	82.2	17.8	85.2	14.8	80.2	19.8
1901	86.8	13.2	89.7	10.3	78.7	21.3
1902	86.7	13.3	85.5	14.5	78.9	21.1
1903	85.6	14.4	87.2	12.8	80.9	19.1
1904	87.2	12.8	87.9	12.1	80.8	19.2

Year	Tilbury		Town Warehouses		Total	
	Piecework	Daywork	Piecework	Daywork	Piecework	Daywork
1894	94.5	5.5	66.7	33.3	67.2	32.8
1895	95.5	4.5	61.8	38.2	69.5	30.5
1896	95.0	5.0	63.4	36.6	68.6	31.4
1897	84.2	15.8	64.8	35.2	74.0	26.0
1898	79.0	21.0	75.9	24.1	79.4	20.6
1899	60.3	39.7	77.2	22.8	81.1	18.9
1900	80.0	20.0	78.8	21.2	81.7	18.3
1901	72.2	27.8	78.9	21.1	82.2	17.8
1902	65.4	34.6	78.4	21.6	82.5	17.5
1903	76.4	23.6	80.5	19.5	83.6	16.4
1904	77.2	22.8	78.9	21.1	83.9	16.1

*Day-pay* men include weekly, preference and casual men. They receive the guaranteed wage of 2*s.* per week, or 6*d.* per hour as the case may be.

*Piecework* men may include weekly, preference, and casuals. They receive the guaranteed wage of 2*s.* per week, or 6*d.* per hour as a first charge on the particular piecework job on which they are employed. The amount which a job yields over and above the total sum paid out as guaranteed wages is the bonus. The bonus is reduced to tenths of a penny,

and is equally distributed amongst the men according to the number of hours which each has been booked on the job. For instance:—

*City of Corinth* @ Calcutta—2,000 tons cargo discharged @  
 9d. per ton . . . . . £75 0 ( )  
 Guaranteed wages drawn . . . . . £65 0 ( )  
 Bonus £10 = 24,000 tenths of one penny.

*Men's Time.*

	Hours.
Jones . . . . .	80
Brown . . . . .	100
Smith . . . . .	20
Other men's time . . . . .	2,200

2,400)24,000

10 = 1d. per hour bonus.

*Appropriation of Bonus.*

	Hours.		£	s.	d.
Jones . . . . .	80 @ 1d.	=	0	8	8
Brown . . . . .	100 @ 1d.	=	0	8	4
Smith . . . . .	20 @ 1d.	=	0	1	8
Other Men . . . . .	2,200 @ 1d.	=	9	3	4
	2,400		£10	0	0

This systems encourages the men to reduce the time occupied on ea job in order to increase the amount of bonus available for distribution.

It is found that the men generally are shy of taking on piecework, a until they have had more or less prolonged experience of it they do respond as readily as might be imagined they would do; when they realised that they are being treated fairly, and that it is money in th pockets, they much prefer it to day-pay work.

There are different terms for piecework, such as contract, co-operati and piecework, but now almost identical lines are followed in all cases. most instances fixed and known rates are worked on, and in other cases special jobs rates are agreed for each occasion. Under no circumstance one man allowed to take all the money earned on a job for distribut amongst his co-workers. Every man receives direct from the Compa paymaster the amount due to him, whether as guaranteed wage or bon

Figures show a gradual improvement in the proportion of piecework in the average rate of bonus which has accrued to the men, and which averages about 1½d. an hour.

For work requiring the exercise of skill a 'contingent allowance granted in addition to ordinary pay to each man. For most of t services the allowance is 6d. per day.

(e) ' . . . the amount of machinery used.'

Electric, hydraulic, steam, and hand cranes and lifts for raising lowering goods are working all over the premises. There are also motive engines, floating cranes, and machinery for generating power, l and cold air, &c. Machinery is used to a somewhat larger extent formerly, but there has not been such a development in this direction cause any material displacement of labour during the past eleven year

(f) ' . . . the industrial and social character of the men empl with special reference to their earlier training and the so from which they are recruited.'

It is obvious that when referring to such a mixed multitude as dock labourers one can only generalise. If the average labourer at Tilbury Dock and the docks in and near London be compared the men at Tilbury will strike the casual observer as being the more respectable, and this I attribute to the incidentals connected with life in the country.

The dock labourer who is employed by the Company is, as a rule, industrious, steady, and honest. The system which obtains has the effect of shaking down to the tail end of the lowest list the men who cannot be so characterised; they only get work in emergencies, and the tendency is for them to drop off altogether.

Men do not attend at the India and London and St. Katharine Docks and at the Town Warehouses on the off chance of work as numerous as heretofore, and those who do attend appear on the whole to be of a better class and character than formerly.

Appointments to the permanent list are made from the labouring boys as they become of sufficient age, and from amongst the registered men. Men for the registered list are as a rule selected from the best of the preference men. From 120 to 150 labouring boys are employed, and on attaining a certain age and rate of pay they are drafted direct on to the staff of permanent men.

*The men who obtain regular or frequent employment* are drawn from two sources: (1) Families who have followed up dock work for a living for a generation or longer; and (2) introduction to the docks by merchants, brokers, dock directors, officers, foremen, &c., and outside employment agencies. The social character of these men varies, but on the whole it is not as good as that of the artisan class. Many of the men reside, and their families before them have resided, in the East End, in the neighbourhood of the docks. Others, especially of the weekly men, reside away in the nearest and most accessible suburbs, and as a rule they are the better class men. Whether the superiority noticeable in these cases is the cause of their living away or the result of it I am not able to state. Perhaps the truth is that the character that appreciates better living conditions gets them and also profits by them.

The men who only obtain occasional employment may be also stated to consist of two classes, viz. those who do want work and those who do not want work; as to (1)—those who do want work—they comprise fairly respectable men of the dock labourer class and also a sprinkling of 'out of works' and unfortunates of other trades and callings (the latter section is constantly changing in its *personnel*), but they are not efficient in the same sense as men who obtain regular or fairly regular employment; (2) those who do not want work consist of a number of men who are indolent and shiftless, and who when there is the opportunity work only to obtain money sufficient for their own personal needs, such as for beer and tobacco. They are generally artful and lazy, and in the absence of resources, charitable or otherwise, sponge on their fellow working men and relatives for their meagre needs. They are degenerates from the dock labourer class and from other vocations.

(g) 'The probable existence of a considerable reserve of floating labour.'

The average number of preference men employed during the year 1904 was 800. As there were on the preference list the names of 2,100 men, the reserve of floating labour, so far as the Company was concerned, may be regarded as 1,500 men; but it cannot be said that these men devote their whole attention to the Dock Company's requirements. The lists



published every afternoon, as before explained, enable the men to seek work elsewhere when not likely to be required by the Company, and, of course, they often find employment with shipowners and stevedores in the same dock.

- (A) 'The actual earnings of individual men over considerable periods with a view to considering their adequacy to provide slack times.'

The average weekly earnings of each of the weekly men may be taken as: Permanent, 31s. 3d., and registered, 29s. 10d. Particulars of the wages paid to extra men on seven different weeks extending over a period of four years show that *on an average of those employed* the 'B' men received 14s. 8d. and the casual men 11s. 1d. per week.

- (4) Other types of casual labour.  
 (1) . . . substitution of permanent for casual labour.  
 (a) The extent to which work could in different occupations be more evenly distributed so as to keep together a body of practically permanent men.

I suggest that there is hardly any class of employment which is subject to such rapid and frequent changes from pressure to slackness as so-called *waterside labour*, and, so far as the Docks Company is concerned, I doubt whether much more could be done in organising to meet the vicissitudes of such work without changing the character of the system from the commercial to the philanthropic.

I propose to remark further upon this point in relation to other employers when dealing with the clauses in paragraph (2).

- (b) The extent to which in different classes of work a greater nominal cost of permanent labour might be covered by improvement in the quality of work done.

My experience is that permanent men are better workers than extra men and casuals. They not only become more familiar with the details of their employment, but as the result of regular wages they are better able to perform the manual labour required of them. It is said sometimes that after being put on weekly lists men are inclined to relax their efforts, feeling that their livelihood is fairly well assured. But this can always be corrected by weeding out men who do not appreciate the value of their engagements. I contend that, given an equal desire on the part of two men to serve, the man who is extra and receives casual pay cannot in the nature of things do as well as the man who is permanent and has regular wages.

But, after having provided men fairly well fed and physically fit, too much must not be expected from them. As a matter of fact men cannot be depended upon to put forth their best efforts for the love of doing it. Therefore to bring out the latent energies that are known to exist in a regularly or frequently employed labour staff it is desirable to institute some system of payment by results. If this is arranged on fair lines it will operate in favour of the men as well as that of the employers, who will also be relieved of the necessity of much of the control and driving which must be resorted to with masses of men on day pay.

The conclusion I arrive at, therefore, is that the incidental expenses connected with a well-managed permanent staff are more than covered by improvement in the quality of the work done, but the extent to which that is so must vary with the circumstances of each case.

- (2) . . . development of the preference system so that casual employment might be allotted to a limited number of individuals, and the number of persons relying on these occupations reduced. (a) The list system. (b) The possible functions of labour bureaux.

Originally at the docks each of the forty-five departments was a labour unit. There were comparatively few weekly men, and each department had a number of men waiting about on the chance of work. Subsequently each dock was made the unit, and latterly the whole establishment has been regarded as the unit. I have often thought that it would be beneficial if the same principle could be extended and applied to other employers of similar labour.

- (c) ' . . . the exchanging of men from one form of labour to another.'

I cannot say how this would answer in other trades, but a considerable step forward would have been taken if a systematic exchange of labour could be arranged for in groups of employers in the same classes of business.

I think I have dealt with each of the clauses that have a direct bearing upon labour at the docks, but I shall be happy to answer any questions put to me or to furnish any further information I may possess.

H. H. WATTS.

October 30, 1905.

(Copy.)

(NORTH) WOOL DEPARTMENT, LONDON DOCK.

LABOUR INDENT FOR OCTOBER 24, 1905.

	Permanent	Registered	'B' List	Casual	Total
No. of men on Departmental Lists ... ..	49	80	180	—	309
No. of men required to-morrow... ..	14	—	—	—	14
Surplus to be provided for	5	6	—	—	11
Deficiency to be made up	—	—	—	—	—

(Exclusive of Labouring Boys.)

Department	Weekly men from other Departments employed here to-day			Weekly men belonging to this Department employed at other Departments to-day		
	Perma- nent	Regis- tered	Total	Perma- nent	Regis- tered	Total
Crescent Vault ... ..	—	—	—	—	1	1
No. 5 and East Quay ...	—	—	—	—	2	2
No. 10 and Eastern Dock	—	—	—	5	6	11
No. 11 Warehouse ... ..	—	—	—	9	7	16
St. Katharine Dock ... ..	—	—	—	—	2	2
Exports, Victoria Dock ...	—	—	—	6	4	10
North Quay, West India Dk.	—	—	—	10	2	12
				80	24	54

No Lower Division Staff to spare.

(Signed) J. TERRELL,

Head of Department.

October 28, 1905.

SUPERINTENDENT'S INSTRUCTIONS  
(for to-morrow).

Weekly men to be sent from or to your Department to-morrow.

Department from which to be received	Perma- nent	Regis- tered	Total	Department to which to be sent	Perma- nent	Regis- tered	Total

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS AS TO 'B' MEN

'B' men are not to be taken on in the morning. Please let me know how many men you have to spare first thing.

G. H. HARRINGTON,  
for Superintendent.

October 28, 1905.

(Copy.)

## LONDON AND ST. KATHARINE DOCK.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF 'B' MEN ON  
SEPTEMBER 22, 1905.

Wine	Wool	1/4 and West Quay	8 and East Quay	South Quay	No. 10	No. 11	St. Katharine Dock
Crescent Vault 3 and 4 @ 7.45	North 32 to 390	632 to 678	372 to 1,054				
		@ 7.45	@ 7.45				
		1,352 to 1,410	} No. 10 30				
		1,542 to 1,594	} No. 11 27				
			57				
		South 392 to 630					
		6 to 12	{ Wines 4				
		680 to 732	{ No. 1/4 27				
		1,252 to 1,280	} S. Quay 15				
		1,722 to 1,770	} S.K.D. 28				
	@ 7.45	69					

NOTE.—Men applying for work at the Wool Department must be provided with hooks suitable for wool.

Heads of Departments will arrange for men to be transferred as above stated.

G. H. HARRINGTON.

September 21, 1905.

NOTES OF EVIDENCE to be tendered by S. WOOD, a Taking-on Foreman, London and India Docks Company, to the Special Committee on Unskilled Labour, on Friday, November 3, 1905.

- (c) . . . the methods of selection and engagement, especially with regard to the preference list system, and of obtaining or directing supplies of labour where required.

I am the taking-on foreman of Nos. 1 to 4 and West Quay, London Dock, one of the largest departments of the London and India Docks Company, and I have been employed in that capacity for thirteen years.

At 1 o'clock each day it is my duty to estimate the number of men required on the following day for the particular jobs under my control, also to ascertain the number of men required by the various foremen of the department. A statement is then placed before the head of the department. When this is approved I make up the departmental indent, showing the number of men required or to spare, and it is forwarded to the Superintendent of the Dock not later than 2 o'clock.

At about 3 o'clock the indent is returned with the Superintendent's instructions as to the disposal of the spare men, or particulars as to men to be received.

If all the permanent and registered men in the different groups of docks are employed, and more men are required, a form is issued from the Superintendent's office, showing the numbers of the preference men that are to be taken on at the various departments. This form is posted in a prominent position at the department.

The following morning I present myself at the place of call, take on the men in the order in which they are placed on the list.

If the call extends beyond the departmental list, a percentage of men belonging to other departments is called, until all the men belonging to the London and St. Katharine Docks are taken on; then men belonging to the other groups of docks and town warehouses are next called for, until all the preference men that have presented themselves have been taken on. If more men be required the casual labourers then get a turn, and they are selected according to my opinion of them. After the call I divide the men, placing them to the jobs they are most suited for.

(Signed) S. WOOD.

October 28, 1905.

# MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

## Special Committee ON UNSKILLED LABOUR.

Present—SIR E. W. BRABROOK, C.B.

Mr. W. A. BAILWARD,	Mr. D. M. WATSON,	} <i>Secretaries.</i>
Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN,	Mr. C. S. LOCH,	
Mr. J. CURRIE,	Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE,	
Mr. T. MACKAY,		

Mr. T. MACKAY in the Chair.

Mr. H. H. WATTS (Staff Inspector, London & India Docks Company): *Examined.*

Nov. 3, 1905.

Mr. H. H.  
WATTS.

435. The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps you will take your statement and go through it, making a sort of running comment in explanation of it. Read as much of it as you think fit. Most of us have read it, or, at all events, are going to read it, if we have not done so.—I am here to represent the London and India Docks Company. I am Staff Inspector of the Company, and I have been in the employ of the Docks Company for thirty-three years in charge of departments and controlling a considerable number of men at different times. The London and India Docks Company's establishment for this purpose consists of: (1) The London and St. Katharine Docks and East Smithfield Depôt, (2) East and West India Docks, (3) Victoria and Albert Docks, (4) Tilbury Docks, and (5) town warehouses, comprising Cutler Street and New Street Warehouses, Crutched Friars Warehouse, Commercial Road Warehouse, and West Smithfield Refrigerators. I put the parishes at the side, because I thought that perhaps it might be interesting for you to know the parishes which are concerned. I have given the total labour staff on January 1 of this year, exclusive of labouring boys and girls. It consisted of 1,305 permanent labourers, guaranteed wages 2*s.* per week; and 1,176 registered labourers, guaranteed wages 2*s.* per week in the summer and 2*s.* per week in the winter. Then we have a list of preference labourers, or (B) men, and on that list there are 2,077 names. Then there are the casual men, who are taken on when the (B) list is exhausted at any dock or department. I have followed the clauses in the reference

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paper of the Committee which refer to dock and to waterside labour. The first one is (a) 'The amount or the fluctuation of employment.' I have furnished a statement extending over the past eleven years showing the average number employed at each dock and the system as a whole, giving the minimum and the maximum number. It will be seen that, taking the average number of men employed, it has declined from 5,076 in the year 1894 to 3,054 in the year 1904. 'There has been a decrease at each set of docks so far as the company's men are concerned, but as other employers within the docks have in some cases employed more men the gross decrease within the docks is not as large as the figures suggest.' I want to point out that, although the Docks Company have given up certain discharging work and quay work, it does not follow that there has been less work done in the docks. Master porters and stevedores have employed the men.

436. Men who formerly were employed by you?—Yes, by us. 'At the London and St. Katharine Docks the principal causes are: (1) The change in the character of shipping business whereby colonial and other cargoes are no longer carried in any appreciable quantity in comparatively small sailing ships, but are conveyed in steam vessels of ever-increasing size, which on account of their dimensions have to discharge and load at docks lower down the river.' These large steamers have to go to Tilbury Docks and Victoria and Albert Docks.

437. Are the minimum and maximum given, the minimum and maximum on given days?—Yes.

438. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The minimum of course excludes holidays?—Yes. They are working days.

439. Ordinary working days?—Yes.

440. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Is 1894 the year in which you reorganised the labour at the docks?—It was started about 1892. It was getting a bit into form in 1894. Then I go on to say that some shipowners at the London and St. Katharine Docks undertake to do the work that we used to do, and that that accounts for a decline, and that the warehousing business of the Docks Company has declined through change of the mode of business. Many merchants now do not have stocks of goods in port as much as formerly. They are able, by easy means of communication, the use of the telegraph, and so on, to get them over as they want them, and in that way we do not do so much warehousing as we did a few years ago. Then the improvement in the quality of the Company's labourers has certainly had some effect in reducing the number of men employed at the docks.

441. Mr. C. S. LOCH: Do you mean in the docks as a whole?—Yes, in the docks as a whole. The remark applies generally. At the East and West India Docks the reasons are practically the same as at the London and St. Katharine's. At the Victoria and Albert and Tilbury Docks the company do very little work indeed compared with the volume of work that is dealt with there. As I have stated, 'the discharging and quay work is now almost entirely undertaken by shipowners, stevedores, and master-porters, which accounts for the number of men employed by the Docks Company being less.' It is markedly less, because a year or two ago we were doing work at those docks, which we have now given up. The shipowners rent quays from us. There has not been very much difference in the course of things at the town warehouses, but some improvements in the labour arrangements have enabled the Company to work with comparatively fewer men.

442. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: May I interpose? Do you mean that

men who had been employed at one warehouse in the morning would be transferred to another warehouse in the afternoon, thus reducing the apparent number of men employed? Do you think that the fact that whereas two different sets of men were employed formerly on a single day now only one is employed has had any effect?—No. I think that we have rather a better set of men. We have improved the men, and they have done their work better during the last year or two in consequence.

443. You do not think that there is any reduction due to the fact that many of the men formerly represented only a half-day's work, whereas a larger proportion of them now represent a whole day's work?—It might have an effect with regard to the docks, but not with regard to the town warehouses.

444. I asked with regard to the docks generally.—Quite so. It has something to do with it. The next clause that I refer to is 'The proportion of permanent, regular, and casual hands.' I furnish a table for the same number of years—the past eleven. It shows the percentage of labour performed by each class of labourers. It will be observed that the work performed by weekly men increased from 65·6 in 1894 (in 1895 it was 60·2) to 78·4 in 1904. For 1904 it is 78·4, against 65·6 in 1894. The total extra (that is the preference men and the casual men together) decreased from 34·4 in 1894 to 21·6 in 1904.

445. The CHAIRMAN: There was a greater decrease in the year 1903 in the extra people employed, was there not?—Yes.

446. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: There is more work done by extra men in 1904 than in 1903? The figures are 21·6 in 1904 and only 17·8 in 1903?—Yes.

447. But it is quite clear that the general tendency is to increase the regular work and to decrease the irregular?—Yes.

448. Individual years may go back again, of course?—We reduced our weekly staff a little. That would make a difference too.

449. Because of the falling-off in business?—Yes. You cannot work with too large a weekly staff, or else you get the weekly men on your hands at times. We arrived at a point when we found that the work was not likely to increase again and so we had to reduce the men somewhat.

450. Mr. C. S. LOCK: Would you say that this great steadiness, so to speak, this larger number of permanent men, the figures being 30·7 in 1894 and 41·2 in 1904, is due to organisation of the work?—Yes. We could not get such a large proportion of the work done by weekly men unless we had a very complete organisation.

451. That is what I want clearly brought out. It is the organisation of the work that makes you able to have a larger permanent staff?—Yes. It is perhaps anticipating, but I might say that originally, years ago, we regarded a department as a labour unit. There are about forty-five separate departments in the whole establishment. Each had its own permanent men and extra men. Then the dock came to be regarded as the unit, and latterly the establishment as a whole has come to be treated as the unit.

452. CHAIRMAN: Men were not formerly transferable from one unit to another, but they are now?—Yes, they are now. We even send men to Tilbury, although we do not care very much to do that. I say in my statement: 'That the proportion of labour credited to the preference men and the casuals has materially decreased is due principally to two causes: (1) As to the course of work, there has been a smaller volume, more even flow, and fewer periods of pressure. (2) The result of the policy of the



Nov. 3, 1905. ' Company during the past few years has been directed to the distribution  
 ' of the work with a view to as much as possible of the labour being  
 ' carried on by the weekly men, and, as a consequence, the curtailment of  
 Mr. H. H. ' the number of preference men and the elimination of casual workers.'  
 WATTS. ' In 1901 and 1902, when there was a strike, and when the South African war  
 was on, things got a little bit upset, but during the last few years, at any  
 rate, the general trend has been for the work to take a more even course  
 than it used to do. So much of the shipping is done by steamer now that  
 perhaps that has something to do with it. We are not subject to having  
 whole lots of shipping coming in at once. The ships come more evenly  
 and regularly.

453. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: I am not quite clear; what is the  
 difference between permanent men and (A) men?—They are both weekly,  
 but the permanent men are more permanent, if I may say so. They are  
 entitled to a pension and to certain privileges which the (A) men do not  
 enjoy. Originally, when the (A) men were appointed, it was intended, if  
 we saw a period of slackness coming for a few weeks, to give them a week's  
 notice and let them stand by, but it was never carried into effect. We  
 have always kept the registered men on. So that really the (A) men are  
 practically in the same position as the permanent men, except for one or  
 two privileges which the permanent men have.

454. You practically always have enough work for your permanent and  
 your (A) men?—Yes. We are sometimes aground even now with our weekly  
 men because, with a vast establishment like ours, you cannot ensure that  
 there shall not be a single extra man employed before the weekly men are  
 used up. There may be an emergency. To-night they may not think that  
 they will want any (B) men at the Victoria and Albert Docks, but to-  
 morrow morning at eight o'clock they may find that they do and they may  
 take on extra men there, although we have a few weekly men to spare  
 at another dock. Such a thing as that will sometimes happen, but it is  
 righted during the day.

455. That only happens occasionally, I take it?—Yes.

456. The CHAIRMAN: Are the permanent and (A) men paid by the  
 job?—They are paid weekly at the rate of 6*d.* an hour.

457. But if they are not employed they are not paid, are they?—Yes,  
 they are. We have to give them 2*s.* or 2*s.* a week minimum.

458. Do all these men attend regularly?—Yes, and they are subject to  
 discipline if they do not.

459. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: I see that the minimum number of men  
 employed in 1904 was 2,348. If you add together the numbers of per-  
 manent and registered men you get 2,381, so that practically your permanent  
 staff is really about the minimum that you employ on your slackest days?—  
 Yes.

460. Just about?—Yes, just about.

461. You have, actually, as big a permanent staff as it is possible for  
 you to have?—Yes, that is so. If we are having much more than 75 per  
 cent. of our work done by weekly men we are taking risks which we  
 ought not to take, and we are subject to having them on our hands more  
 frequently.

462. Mr. J. CURRIE: Does this guarantee of 2*s.* extend to cases of  
 absence through illness?—No. The men lose their pay during illness, but  
 the company generally allow the permanent men half-pay. That does not  
 apply to the registered men.

463. It only applies to the first set of men?—Yes. The company  
 encourage the men to belong to some society.

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Mr. H. H.  
WATTS.

464. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Have they a provident society of their own?—They have, but they are not under any obligation to belong to it. The company encourage them as much as possible to belong to some society, and they allow the permanent men half-pay in addition to the pay that they get from their society.

465. In addition?—Yes.

466. So that a man may be getting almost full wages?—Very nearly so, sometimes, but we take care that he does not get more than his wages.

467. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: You take into account the relief which he gets from the society?—Yes. We take care that it is not better for him to be away than at work, but he is nearly as well off sometimes as if he were at work. By watching the cases we find out whether a man is taking advantage. He is subject to discipline. He is not allowed to play with us.

468. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Do you give a man anything beyond the Workmen's Compensation Act allowance, which is half wages up to 20s., if he is injured by accident?—If he does not have that a permanent man has half pay. Then there is a small accident allowance—about 6s. a week. The men do not always take advantage of the Act of Parliament. The Company treat them fairly well, and they do not resort to that.

469. You do not use the Act of Parliament automatically, so to speak. That does not form your standard to work to?—No, because, you see, under this arrangement a permanent man in nine cases out of ten would be getting more money than is guaranteed under the Act.

470. Mr. C. S. LOCH: The Company can afford to do that?—Well, they do it. I think it is very good of them.

471. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Do the majority of your men belong to your own provident association, or otherwise?—I should think that at the present time the majority of them do not belong to it, but then it is only right to say that a few years ago we used to put a little compulsion on them, which we do not do now. Under the recent Act we are not permitted to, and they are perfectly free, but up to a year or two ago we practically compelled them to belong to it. It was not that we had any fancy for a society of our own, but it was because the societies which the men belonged to so frequently failed. We started a society at considerable expense to provide against that. Now we are told that we must not require the men to belong to it.

472. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Does the Company subscribe a capitation grant to the Provident Society or anything of that kind—that is to say, so much per head, or is it entirely supported by the men themselves?—The Company meet a lot of the expenses of maintaining the Society. It was started in the interests of the men.

473. Mr. C. S. LOCH: Do you pay a fixed proportion of the expenses?—I have not the statement by me, and I cannot answer as to exactly what we pay, but I know that it is a considerable amount.

474. You could let us know, perhaps?—Yes, I could.

475. Mr. D. M. WATSON: It would be interesting to have the rules of the Society?—Certainly.

476. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Have you a large number of pensioners?—Yes, we have a large number.

477. Could you give me a rough idea, offhand, of the number?—No, I could not, but I will get that. We have a number of men apart from pensioners who have allowances not by right. There are weekly allowances made to extra labourers, (B) men, who are not regular men at all, but who are on our list.

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478. A gratuity?—No, not a gratuity, but a weekly allowance. If a man represents that he has been employed for twenty or thirty years and we can prove by our records that he has been more or less employed at the docks during that time, the Directors generally allow him 5s. a week. We have a number of cases of that kind.

479. Mr. D. M. WATSON: With regard to the pension, is there any limit of age. You say here 'after at least fifteen years' service,' but you would not pension a young man, would you?—We should not pension any man under sixty-five unless he was incapacitated owing to accident or to severe illness. If he was not likely to be able to resume his employment he would be pensioned at any age after fifteen years' service.

480. Do you limit the age at which you take on men. Speaking of the permanent labourer, you would not take a permanent labourer on, with a pension scheme of this kind, who was forty-five years of age, would you?—No. We expect to take the permanent men between twenty-three and thirty years of age. There are a few exceptions. They must be between those ages on appointment. If they have been registered men before, part of their time is allowed to count. We are not so strict about the age if they have been working for some time as registered men, which they usually have.

481. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Are most of your permanent men taken on as boys?—Yes, recently. We have about 150 'labouring boys,' as they are called.

482. They go on and become permanent men?—Yes, as a matter of course. They must be made permanent men when they come to the age, whether we have a vacancy or not. We do not wait for vacancies, but we draft them to the class.

483. Mr. C. S. LOCK: At twenty-three?—When they get to 22s. a week, then the next is 24s. a week as permanent labourers.

484. Are they mostly the sons of existing labourers?—A good many of them are. The messenger boys go up for examination to become junior assistants. They go on to be junior foremen. If they do not pass the educational examination they are put into the labouring boy class, and that is how we get the labouring boys. We take a few outside labouring boys, too.

485. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: If you take a boy as a labouring boy, and he behaves well, he is quite certain to become a permanent labourer, is he not?—Yes.

486. It is a complete livelihood for him?—Yes. Some of the boys go off in physical condition, and if we find that they are not physically fit to become permanent labourers, we do not make them so, of course, but the rule is as I have stated, and there are not many exceptions to it.

487. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: What is the wage that the boys begin at?—10s. a week is the rule for a labouring boy. There are slightly lower rates for some boys. The regular labouring boys commence at 10s. a week and rise by 2s. a week up to 22s. They are allowed to participate in the piece-work after they have been there a year or two.

488. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Do you pension them automatically when they reach sixty-five years of age?—Yes. Sometimes, if a man is in very good condition indeed, he is allowed to remain on if he wants to, but if he wishes to go he is pensioned, and, as a rule, we require men to go at that age. We prefer it.

489. Mr. J. CURRIE: Do you find as a general rule that they are fully

as capable up to sixty-five?—No. Generally, if they are kept, it is because of their experience. They are drafted into some particular leading work, where their experience is more useful to the Company than their actual physical capabilities.

490. The CHAIRMAN: We will return now to your statement. What you have said has all arisen out of the terms of engagement, and so on.—

(2) The result of the policy of the Company during the past few years has been directed to the distribution of the work, with a view to as much as possible of the labour being carried on by the weekly men, and as a consequence the curtailment of the number of preference men and the elimination of casual workers. That is the policy which the Directors have wished to have followed, and which has been followed, and it has had a bearing on these figures. Then (C), 'The methods of selection and engagement, especially with regard to the preference list system, and of obtaining or directing supplies of labour when required.' We come now to the extra men. 'The (B), or preference list, consists of the names of chosen casual and recommended men. Tickets are issued to the men and renewed every quarter; they are signed by the Superintendent of the dock. A certain number of these men are allotted to each department of a dock or town warehouse. The authorised numbers of (B) men are fixed for each department according to the amount of work actually undertaken, and on a basis of about 40 to 45 per cent. of the number of men generally at work. For instance, if a department on an average employed 100 labourers a day, it would have appropriated to it forty to forty-five preference men in addition to the men on weekly wages.' Then, 'As to obtaining or directing supplies of labour where required.' 'Every afternoon the head of each department forwards to the office of the Superintendent of the dock a labour indent form attached, which gives an estimate of the number of men which will be required on the subsequent day. The form also shows the number of weekly men actually employed on the date of indent. By comparing the number of weekly men employed on the current day with the requirements for the following day, the prospective surplus or deficiency is ascertained, and at the foot of the form instructions are inserted by the Superintendent's clerk as to how the surplus is to be disposed of, or the deficiency made up. The forms are then returned to the department. The figures in respect to the weekly men on the returns from each department are put together, and made to balance for the whole dock.' That is the course that is followed.

491. Mr. W. H. BAYNE: We have an indent at the end of this.— Yes. 'When the requirements exceed the available number of weekly men, which is usually the case, forms are issued to the departments (specimen attached) showing not only the number but the registered numbers of the preference men needed in order of priority, and these forms are posted in conspicuous positions at each department in order that the preference men may learn how many will be required, and where they are to attend for work next morning. If next morning it is found that more men than were indented for are wanted the department is at liberty to engage additional preference men from their own list; but the numbers must be called strictly in the order in which they appear on the list. When a department has exhausted its own list it is the rule for the officer to only engage further men in the order in which the numbers appear on a special list, which is arranged to give sets of 10 per cent. of the men of each other department in the order of their priority: It is arranged thus in order to ensure the distribution of the

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' of the other departments.' That is followed out very strictly all round  
the docks.

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492. Mr. C. S. LOCH: Do you put up a list of the men by name when you make your arrangements?—Yes.

493. A list giving the names in their order?—Yes. We put up a list of names, but, of course, there are many exceptions. There are alterations by the next morning.

494. The CHAIRMAN: The figures given in the earlier tables of the percentages that you have worked out give the number of (B) men employed?—They represent the whole of the labour.

495. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Are they not the percentages, for each year, of labour done by certain classes?—Yes.

496. The CHAIRMAN: Have you any knowledge of what the number of (B) men is?—That is on the list. Do you want the number employed?

497. I want to know what relation the number employed has to the number on the list?—The average number of (B) men employed last year was only 600.

498. That is less than one-third of the total?—Yes.

499. Are the tickets renewed quarterly?—Yes.

500. Do you find a great change in the *personnel*, or are the men the same always?—There are a few changes at each department, not many.

501. With regard to the other two-thirds, what are they doing if they are not employed. Have you any sort of knowledge?—A good many of them get employment about the docks with other employers of labour.

502. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Is it the case that 600 (B) men are employed fully, and the others are not employed at all?—No.

503. It simply means that work employing an average of 600 a day is distributed among 2,000 odd?—Yes, that is so.

504. That is what it comes to?—I might say that our work has gone down but we have not reduced the (B) list correspondingly, really out of regard to the men. It is an advantage for them to have a ticket. It is not a disadvantage even if they cannot get employment with us, and if they get to another dock they have a prior claim to anyone else. It gives them a chance. We have considered the question very much during the last few months. We have felt that the fact that some of these men hold a ticket in a kind of way gives them a little claim, and that it would hardly be fair, I was almost going to say, to give a man a ticket and not give him work; but we thought, on the whole, that it would be better not to interfere just at present with the number of (B) men, or else we really ought to be reducing the number, because the number that we have here is practically the number which we should require if we had a great deal more work. Then I go on to say in my statement: 'The question may now arise as to what is done if any one of the controls has not sufficient work in its own departments to employ the whole of its weekly labourers. The answer is that when the day's returns are put together in the Superintendent's office, and it is found that a number of weekly men will not be required, the Superintendent of each of the other controls is telegraphed or telephoned to, and he is offered the surplus men. He is bound to take the men offered in lieu of employing his own preference men, which he would otherwise do'—and, I may say, which he would otherwise like to do. They have to take these men, and we consider that on the whole we are better served by the weekly men than by the (B) men who are picked up.

505. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: What do you mean by a 'control'?—A labour unit.

506. Is that generally a dock, or something like a dock?—Yes. The units are given at the head of my statement, 'The London and St. Katharine Docks and East Smithfield Depôt, East and West India Docks, Victoria and Albert Docks, Tilbury Docks, Town Warehouses.'

507. They are big controls?—Yes. Each has one Superintendent over it.

508. The CHAIRMAN: I suppose that you never find it difficult or impossible to get all the hands that you want?—No.

509. Never?—Not in the last few years, any way.

510. It used to be so, or at least I have heard it stated. I suppose that that would be at a given point if two or three ships came in together?—Yes, just for the moment. I do not remember any time when we were actually short of men. Of course, in years gone by, we have had to take very inferior men when we have been very busy.

511. Supposing that you had a shortage of men, or supposing that the (B) men not regularly employed found employment elsewhere and went off, could you extend the steam machinery and so on, and replace the labour in that way?—Extend the machinery how?

512. Instead of having men to unload, could you extend the machinery and replace the labour in that way?—No, I do not think so.

513. Not to a large extent?—No.

514. Or to any extent?—To a very slight extent, I think. We should like to do it now, but we do not see any way of doing it to any very considerable extent.

515. Do you find any objection on the part of Trade Unions to your doing it?—No. We have never had any difficulty that I can remember on that score.

516. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Trade Unions are not very strong in London, are they, as far as your men are concerned?—Yes.

517. With regard to unloading?—Yes. There is the Dockers' Union.

518. But still you have no trouble with them?—No, no trouble. 'But a further question may be put, namely, as the preference men appear to be employed in regular order within their own control, how do they fare when there is no work at their own control, but plenty of work at other controls? The reply is that a Taking-on Foreman can only engage preference men in the following order. First, his own departmental preference list must be called; secondly, the lists of other departments within his own control are to be taken; and thirdly, preference men from other controls have to be engaged before local or any other casuals are booked. The carrying out of this practice has involved the following movements in addition to transfers within each labour control.' We keep a record of transfers that are made, and I show in the following statement transfers that were made of permanent men, of registered men, and of (B) men. I have said that the movements of preference or (B) men are voluntary, but that ought to be qualified a little. The movements of the first set of men are ordered in a way—that is, we publish the numbers of men and where they are to apply next morning. But after that their movements are perfectly voluntary and, although we do not punish them if they do not turn up according to the order and some other men take their place, and we do not take notice of it, we have a record. Each department keeps a book of attendance of (B) men, and if a man's attendance is shown not to be fairly good he is dropped at the end of the quarter to a lower number in the list, and if it is repeatedly the case he is dropped out altogether.

519. The CHAIRMAN: The list begins with '1, 2, 3'?—Yes.

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Nov. 3, 1905. 520. And Nos. 1, 2, and 3 have the best chance every morning?—Yes, every morning.

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521.—You do not begin lower down next morning?—No, we never allow that. We are sometimes pressed to do so to let somebody else have a chance and so on, but we say on principle that it is not good, although it is rather hard on individuals. We much prefer to see a few men get a week's work than a lot of men get not sufficient to keep themselves on. I continue: 'Occasional objections are made by departmental officers to taking men temporarily sent from other departments.' To put it briefly, we overrule their objections. We tell them that they must do it and they have to fall into line. The weekly men sometimes do not like being moved, but, on the other hand, they begin to realise that they are liable to be shortened down if they make any difficulty, and so we do not have any serious difficulty on that score.

522. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The objection, of course, is, I suppose, that the men do not know special sorts of work?—Yes.

523. To what extent are there very great differences in your work, making that an important objection. I suppose that as a matter of fact with regard to a great deal of your work it is quite possible for any able and willing men to do it?—Yes, a great proportion of it.

524. There is a small proportion in each dock which may be quite special to each dock and which is done by the permanent men at that dock, but the fringe which moves about from one place to another need not know much about the work?—No.

525. The men can do it quite well?—Yes, as a rule they can do it quite well. I have said: 'There are some special lines of work for which one man is decidedly not as good as another, and discretion has to be used; but as a department is never required to take strangers until after full employment has been given to all its weekly staff, it is evident that the strangers are an addition to and not in substitution of its own special men, and can generally be employed on work for which particular knowledge is not needed.' I refer to trucking and that kind of work.

526. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Are the goods unloaded out of the holds chiefly by cranes on the docks or by machinery on the ships?—Chiefly on to the dock quays by the dock cranes, but if a ship is in a very great hurry it will use its own gear as well.

527. Do the men whom you describe as permanent labourers include the men who work the cranes?—Yes.

528. The engineers and men of that kind?—Yes. We have a certain number of men who can work any cranes—donkey cranes, hydraulic cranes, and so on. We regard that as a little special, and they are allowed a contingent allowance of 6*d.* a day in addition to their ordinary pay for doing special duties like that. 'The effect of this method is that employment for the weekly men is first ensured either at their own or another control; then preference men have a claim to work, first at their own department, secondly anywhere within their control, and thirdly at any other control. As casual men only come in after this, their chance of obtaining work is reduced to a minimum. Then, as every afternoon all over the establishment the probable requirements for the following day are posted, preference men and casuals can form a very good idea as to whether their services are likely to be required on the morrow, and this guides them as to turning up or not turning up at the dock gates.'

529. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Is that efficacious? Does that reduce the number of men who turn up at the gates?—That notice has had a considerable effect. This is quite noticeable even by casual observers.

530. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The reduction of the crowd at the dock gates has been quite noticeable?—Yes. A Taking-on Foreman will attend to give evidence, and I think that he will be able to tell you that he has very much less trouble than he did a few years ago with regard to that. Then I come to *methods of remuneration*. 'The methods of remuneration (contract, co-operation, piece-work, time-work). The permanent and registered men are paid weekly, and the (B) or preference men and casuals receive their wages daily.' The labour work is divided into two classes, namely, day-work and piece-work. The statement shows the progress. The piece-work has increased from 67.2 in 1894 to 83.9 in 1904, and the day-work has correspondingly decreased from 32.8 in 1894 to 16.1 in 1904. The day-work men may be weekly, registered; or extra, and some may be piece-work men. We make no distinction. There are generally weekly, registered, and (B) men if the work is of any considerable size. 'They receive the guaranteed wage of 24s. per week, or 6d. per hour, as the case may be. Piece-work men may include weekly, preference, and casuals. They receive the guaranteed wage of 24s. per week, or 6d. per hour, as a first charge on the particular piece-work job on which they are employed. The amount which a job yields over and above the total sum paid out as guaranteed wages is the bonus. The bonus is reduced to tenths of a penny, and is equally distributed amongst the men according to the number of hours which each has been booked on the job.' Then I give an illustration. I go on to say 'This system encourages the men to reduce the time occupied on each job in order to increase the amount of bonus available for distribution.' If the men on piece-work are short of their ordinary pay we stand the loss. Sometimes jobs are overdrawn, and we do not exact anything from the men in any way. We stand that:

531. Does that happen often?—No, not often.

532. Mr. J. CURRIE: When you refer to what a job yields, do you refer to the amount which you actually receive without taking off anything?—No. This is dealing with the cost of the work. 'City of Corinth at Calcutta—2,000 tons cargo discharged at 9d. per ton.' That has nothing to do with receipts; it is simply the piece-wage paid to the men.

533. Mr. C. S. LOCK: It is a calculation on their work?—Yes. If it is agreed as piece-work we pay each day, or at the end of the week the guaranteed pay on that job, and the difference between the total of the guaranteed pay and what the job yields at 9d. is the bonus. In this case I have shown it at £10. It is not a real case, but an imaginary one.

534. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You say, 'If it is agreed.' Could they, if they preferred, take it as day-work?—Yes.

535. You encourage them to do it as piece-work?—Yes.

536. Piece-work has grown?—Yes. They do not thank you for day-work now.

537. They begin to understand that piece-work is better?—Yes.

538. You say that they generally get a bonus averaging 1½d. an hour?—Yes.

539. That means that, on the whole, there is very much more often a bonus than not?—Yes.

540. There regularly is a bonus?—Yes. I have the figures here, although they are not given in my statement. When we introduce piece-work where the work has all been day-work before the men are often a little shy about it. They want a little coaxing, and that kind of thing. They do not rush at it at once, but when they get into the run of it and find that it is so beneficial to them, they like it, and will not hear of its being given up.

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541. Mr. C. S. LOCH: What would a man get by way of bonus in the course of a month, we will say?—I show that the average now is  $1\frac{1}{4}d.$  Taking it on that basis, if he worked for 48 hours a week it would be about  $6s.$  a week, supposing that he only worked for his bare time, with no overtime.

542. In the course of a month he would receive the equivalent of a week's wages extra by bonus?—Yes.  $1\frac{1}{4}d.$  is a quarter of  $6d.$ , and if a man is paid  $6d.$  an hour  $1\frac{1}{4}d.$  is a quarter. It often runs to more than that.

543. Does it?—Yes.  $1\frac{1}{4}d.$  is an average figure, and takes in all the losses and the times when there is only a small bonus. It takes in times when the work has been very hard and difficult, or, perhaps, the weather has interfered, or something of that kind, which has had the effect of reducing the surplus. The  $1\frac{1}{4}d.$  covers all those cases. This is an average for the year of the whole payment.

544. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The average bonus has increased in recent years?—Yes, from about  $\frac{1}{2}d.$  It has really doubled during the past few years.

545. Mr. C. S. LOCH: The bonus is paid as if it were wage at the same time?—Yes, in some cases. The extra men are paid every day, and we cannot always distribute the bonus every day. It has to remain until the end of the job. We find that it encourages the men if they get their bonus quickly. Some of our people used to hang these jobs out and not settle them up for a month. We have strongly objected to that, and discouraged them from it. We find it very much better to have quick reckonings with the men. We have in some cases taken the average of work done in the day and gone as far as distributing the bonus at the end of the day, regulating the difference at the end of the job. We get as near as we can to the bonus of the day and distribute it. The men very much approve that. Quick reckonings make long friends. I say 'There are different terms for piece-work, such as contract, co-operation, and piece-work, but now almost identical lines are followed in all cases. In most instances fixed and known rates are worked on, and in other cases for special jobs rates are agreed for each occasion. Under no circumstances is one man allowed to take all the money earned on a job for distribution amongst his co-workers. Every man receives direct from the Company's paymaster the amount due to him, whether as guaranteed wage or bonus.' When contractors were employed and the job was given to one man, who then employed his own men, it often occurred that the men thought that advantage was taken of them. Perhaps there was nothing at all in it, but they felt that he was making a good thing out of it, and was not paying them all that they ought to have had, and so on, so it is a very strict rule with us that each man must be paid separately his wages and his bonus by the Company's paymaster.

546. Mr. D. M. WATSON: May I ask what sort of wages a man will earn at piece-work on unloading. What will he be taking a week?—It varies a great deal. He might get a bonus of  $3d.$  or  $4d.$  an hour. Sometimes jobs yield as much as that. That would be  $6d.$  plus the bonus of  $3d.$  or  $4d.$  an hour, and that would be  $9d.$  or  $10d.$  an hour.

547. Do you only allow the men to work for eight hours?—No, that does not follow. That is a nominal day, but if a man works for nine hours we pay him another  $6d.$  We pay him up to six o'clock at the rate of  $6d.$  an hour, his ordinary day pay, and after six o'clock he has  $8d.$  an hour.

548. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: I see that later on you give the average weekly earnings. You say that they are about  $31s. 3d.$ ?—Yes.

549. That is including the piece-work?—I say 'Figures show a gradual

'improvement in the proportion of piece-work and in the average rate of Nov. 3, 1905.  
 'bonus which has accrued to the men, and which now averages about  
 '1½d. an hour.' Then I say, 'For work requiring the exercise of skill a  
 '“contingent allowance.” is granted in addition to ordinary pay to each  
 'man. For most of these services the allowance is 6d. per day.' That is  
 'for crane-driving and sorting goods, acting as foreman, or any special work  
 'of that kind. An extra 6d. a day is allowed. '(e) “The amount of  
 '“machinery used.” Electric, hydraulic, steam, and hand cranes and lifts  
 'for raising and lowering goods are working all over the premises. There  
 'are also locomotive engines, floating cranes, and machines for generating  
 'power, light, and cold air, &c. Machinery is used to a somewhat larger  
 'extent than formerly, but there has not been such a development in this  
 'direction as to cause any material displacement of labour during the past  
 'eleven years.' '(f) “The industrial and social character of the men  
 '“employed, with special reference to their earlier training and the sources  
 '“from which they are recruited.”’ That is a very wide subject, and I felt  
 'some little difficulty in putting down any remarks upon it. What I say is,  
 'If the average labourer at Tilbury Docks and the docks in and near  
 'London be compared, the men at Tilbury will strike the casual observer  
 'as being the more respectable, and this I attribute to the incidentals con-  
 'nected with life in the country. The dock labourer who is employed by  
 'the company is, as a rule, industrious, steady, and honest.' That might  
 'strike someone as giving the men a very good character, but it is to be  
 'read in connection with my subsequent remarks. The system which  
 'obtains has the effect of shaking down to the tail-end of the lowest list  
 'the men who cannot be so characterised; they only get work in emergen-  
 'cies, and the tendency is for them to drop off altogether.' By this (B)  
 'list system the man's attendance and his character generally are under  
 'notice every three months, and he gets dropped lower and lower down if  
 'he is known to be a very indifferent character as a worker and so on. He  
 'soon drops out altogether, and then there is no work for him at all. At  
 'the present time, and for some time past, the good men have not been  
 'getting very much work, so that the very indifferent men at the bottom of  
 'the list have no chance at all.

550. It is very good for the men to know that they are under observation like that?—I think it has a good effect.

551. It makes them feel responsibility?—Yes.

552. The criticism before always was, and I suppose you have heard it, that the men had no sense of responsibility?—Yes.

553. Nothing was known of them?—When the department was a unit and the local foremen had their own way, a man had only to play up to please the foreman and he was kept on, whether good, bad, or indifferent, but under this system a man comes more under the notice of responsible officers, and it has a good effect. 'Men do not attend at the India and 'London and St. Katharine Docks and at the town warehouses on the off- 'chance of work as numerous as heretofore, and those who do attend 'appear, on the whole, to be of a better class and character than formerly.' I do not mean that the men who used to come do not abound. I only say that they do not show up.

554. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: They appear every day before me as a Metropolitan Police Magistrate, and they always say that they come from the docks. I say, 'What are you doing?' 'I am a labourer.' 'What do 'you labour at?' 'At the docks.'—They must say something, I suppose.

555. Yes, I know, and I want to find out the truth if I do not believe them.—Perhaps it is that they would like to labour at the docks.

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556. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: There are many places at the docks or the riverside where they might be employed, apart from the London and India Docks Company?—Yes.

557. So that it does not necessarily refer in the least to the men that you are speaking of?—No. I cannot bring myself for a moment to believe that there has been any very great change in the men generally. I can only say that the system has had the effect of sorting them out for us, and we do not get them so much as before.

558. The CHAIRMAN: What is the amount of work given by other companies and agencies of the same class as yours by the riverside. Can you give us any sort of estimate?—I notice from the Board of Trade returns, in regard to 108 wharves and warehouses, that it runs to about 12,000 men, if I recollect rightly.

559. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: I have studied those and can give the figures with accuracy. In the last year it averaged about 13,000 including these. (*To the Witness*): You only discharged, according to the Port of London Report, 18 per cent. of the cargo coming into your docks?—Yes, that is very likely. On the other hand, we do warehousing business that the stevedores do not do. They simply do discharging, but we do something in addition.

560. You only employ an average of 3,000 men out of 12,500 in the *Labour Gazette* returns, and that does not cover the whole of the docks?—No.

561. Mr. J. CURRIE: At these particular docks that we have under review?—That is so. Appointments to the permanent list are made from the labouring boys as they become of sufficient age, and from amongst the registered men. Men for the registered list are as a rule selected from the best of the preference men. From 120 to 150 labouring boys are employed, and on attaining a certain age and rate of pay they are drafted direct on to the staff of permanent men. The men who obtain regular or frequent employment are drawn from two sources: (1) Families who have followed up dock work for a living for a generation or longer; and (2) introduction to the docks by merchants, brokers, dock directors, officers, foremen, &c., and outside employment agencies. The social character of these men varies, but on the whole it is not as good as that of the artisan class. Many of the men reside, and their families before them have resided, in the East End, in the neighbourhood of the docks. Others, especially of the weekly men, reside away in the nearest and most accessible suburbs, and as a rule they are the better class men. Whether the superiority noticeable in these classes is the cause of their living away or the result of it I am not able to state. Perhaps the truth is that the character that appreciates better living conditions gets them and also profits by them. The men who only obtain occasional employment may be also stated to consist of two classes, namely, those who do want work and those who do not want work. As to (1) those who do want work—they comprise fairly respectable men of the dock labourer class and also a fair sprinkling of "out-of-works" and unfortunates of other trades and callings (the latter section is constantly changing in its personnel), but they are not efficient in the same sense as men who obtain regular or fairly regular employment; (2) those who do not want work consist of a number of men who are indolent and shiftless. They are mostly known. It is almost unnecessary to go into that. They are degenerated from the dock labourer class and from other vocations. (g) "The probable existence of a considerable reserve of floating labour." The only way in which I could supply that information was by taking the

average number of extra men employed, which I found to be 600, comparing that with the number on the list of 2,100 and saying that the balance is the floating labour. It is desirable to notice in connection with that that 'the lists published every afternoon, as before explained, enable the men to seek work elsewhere when not likely to be required by the Company, and, of course, they often find employment with shipowners and stevedores in the same dock.' I might go further and say that at Tilbury Docks, for instance, and it operates at the Victoria and Albert Docks, if the shipowners want men and we also want men, the men will probably go to the shipowners before they will come to us, notwithstanding their tickets. They are paid a little more.

562. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: 7d. p—7d., and they are paid for their dinner-time, for which the Dock Company does not pay. Shipowners' work is more regular. There is more of it in those docks than there is with the Dock Company. The men do not like to disappoint the foreman of a shipowner, because he may not take them on when we do not want them, and so they will, as a rule, go to him before they will come to the Docks Company. Our (B) men at Tilbury Dock are probably getting a very good living out of the shipowners although they hold our tickets. When we have been in a difficulty, when there has been an emergency, we have had a trouble to get them. They would not come because they had a job. We have met that by sending some of our weekly men down. That has not occurred lately, but it has occurred within the last two or three years.

563. Mr. J. CURRIE: Do you make any attempt to make them suffer for that?—No. We have recognised that we could not command the men, and that it would not be fair to punish them, because we could not guarantee them a continuous run of work. We have not thought it fair that they should spoil themselves with other people for the sake of our wanting them only just now and then, but of course we have considered how far we ought to require them to attend.

564. The CHAIRMAN: Do shipowners have permanent staffs?—Some, I think, have a weekly staff answering to our registered men, but none of them, I think, has any men answering to our permanent men. They have changed their attitude about it. Some of them have had staffs of weekly men and paid them all off, and then, a few months afterwards, have started weekly staffs again, and so on. You cannot lay down a rule for that. I continue my statement by saying, "The actual earnings of individual men over considerable periods with a view to considering their adequacy to provide slack times." The average weekly earnings of each of the weekly men may be taken as: Permanent 31s. 3d., and registered 29s. 10d. Particulars of the wages paid to extra men on seven different weeks extending over a period of four years show that on an average of those employed the (B) men received 14s. 8d. and the casual men 11s. 1d. per week. (4) Other types of casual labour. (1) Substitution of permanent for casual labour. (a) The extent to which work could in different occupations be more evenly distributed so as to keep together a body of practically permanent men. I suggest that there is hardly any class of employment which is subject to such rapid and frequent changes from pressure to slackness as so-called waterside labour, and, so far as the Docks Company is concerned, I doubt whether much more could be done in organising to meet the vicissitudes of such work without changing the character of the system from the commercial to the philanthropic. I think that the Dock Company runs it as close as possible now. We occasionally have to pay for unemployed labour, and if we had a larger weekly staff I am afraid that we should be paying more out of pocket—that is all.

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565. Mr. C. S. LOCH: Nevertheless, you find that what you have done is economically sound?—Yes.

566. From a purely business point of view it is an advantage?—Yes. We consider that it is certainly a great advantage. We consider that the number of men employed by the Dock Company has been materially reduced by limiting the number of men actually brought into the work. My experience is that permanent men are better workers than extra men and casuals. They not only become more familiar with the details of their employment, but as the result of regular wages they are better able to perform the manual labour required of them. It is said sometimes that after being put on weekly lists men are inclined to relax their efforts, feeling that their livelihood is fairly well assured. But this can always be corrected by weeding out men who do not appreciate the value of their engagements. But after having provided men fairly well fed and physically fit, too much must not be expected from them. We cannot expect the labouring class to go along unless they have some very direct inducements to put forth their efforts. As a matter of fact men cannot be depended upon to put forth their best efforts for the love of doing it, therefore to bring out the latent energies that are known to exist in a regularly or frequently employed labour staff, it is desirable to institute some system of payment by results. If this is arranged on fair lines it will operate in favour of the men as well as that of the employers, who will also be relieved of the necessity of much of the control and driving which must be resorted to with masses of men on day-pay. The conclusion I arrive at, therefore, is that the incidental expenses connected with a well managed permanent staff are more than covered by improvement in the quality of the work done, but the extent to which that is so must vary with the circumstances of each case. Then, later on, I have said, Originally at the docks each of the forty-five departments was a labour unit. There were comparatively few weekly men, and each department had a number of men waiting about on the chance of work. Subsequently each dock was made the unit, and latterly the whole establishment has been regarded as the unit. I have often thought that it would be beneficial if the same principle could be extended and applied to other employers of similar labour. (c) "The exchanging of men from one form of labour to another." I cannot say how this would answer in other trades, but a considerable step forward would have been taken if a systematic exchange of labour could be arranged for in groups of employers in the same classes of business.

567. The CHAIRMAN: I am sure that we are very much obliged to you for the very careful statement. It is most full.—I am only glad to have been able to supply some information.

568. The statement is so full that I can hardly see what we want further. I should like to know what you think about the numbers of people who are hanging about the neighbourhood looking about for a chance day's employment. How are they influenced by the system of administration of relief that prevails there? I do not know whether that has come under your observation at all?—No; I am afraid that I cannot answer very definitely about that.

569. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Have you met any opposition from the Trades Unions to payment by results—Trades Unions do not like piece-work?—I have seen it recorded that they do not. We have not been interfered with at all on that point.

570. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You do not realise it?—No; It is not a question of driving a man to do two or three men's work, or anything of

that kind. What we say is that if we can introduce a system that will save the waste that occurs without requiring a man to put forward very great special effort, and if we can keep him fairly well at work in the morning and in the afternoon and give him an interest in the work so that he will not want to be told when to start and what to do next, and that kind of thing, but has sufficient interest to take those matters into his own hands, it pays us and it pays him.

571. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Does the bonus apply to officers?—No.

572. Do the foremen participate in any advantage?—Not as a rule. In one or two cases the foremen are allowed to participate, but it is quite the exception. We do not allow it unless there is a very distinct understanding with the men, who prefer that the foreman shall be in it, and he is a man who can influence and control the work in a direct way.

573. What is the objection to giving foremen a bonus? I should have thought that it tended to increase the amount of work done?—The point is: Why not the officer above the foreman and why not the superintendent, the manager, and so on? Why should not the principle go on? You have to draw the line. It was thought that the men would be better satisfied if the thing was kept entirely in their hands, and if any benefit that was obtained was divided amongst the men and the men only. The rates are so framed. If you put the foremen in we should have to increase the rates. There are various objections. The foremen are a kind of check on the labourers. If the labourer was to go on at a break-neck pace and that kind of thing the foreman would interfere, but if he had this interest in the job he would not exercise sufficient supervision. There are one or two exceptions, but we do not like it as a rule.

574. Mr. C. S. LOCH: The permanency of work has increased as the area of labour has been enlarged; that is to say, your permanent system has increased as your separate controls, as you call them, have been considered as one control?—Yes, quite so.

575. You suggest practically that if you get a still larger area, not necessarily connected directly with the same business, the same system by which permanence would intervene should be extended?—I think that the same principle applied to groups of employers of similar labour might be very useful indeed. What has been beneficial to a company which controls a dock here, a dock there, and employs an average of 3,000 labourers, ought to be beneficial to other people.

576. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You could do it by groups of wharves?—Yes.

577. Or you could combine groups of wharves with your work?—It could be done.

578. By a sort of clearing house?—Yes; but I do not think that my company would care to be associated with others in it. I think they would take the view that our unit was sufficiently large.

579. Yes; but there would be no harm in your taking your outside men from one particular centre, as it were, which would send them to you when they had just finished working somewhere else?—There might not be any harm in that. According to the Board of Trade Returns there are employed at all the docks and 108 wharves about 13,000 men. We employ 8,000. If the wharves could be split up into two or three groups of 3,000 labourers, and each one of these was made a unit according to the geographical position or character of the work, you would get pretty much what we have, but you would have the disadvantage of a number of employers who might or might not view it favourably, whereas with us everybody

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580. The separate employers would be something like your different departments, each with its own nucleus that knew the work. The outside fringe would go from one employer to another?—Yes.

581. And it does not matter much to the employer who his fringe is. That is what it means?—Yes. There would be lists and returns sent to different places, and those would give preference in different groups.

582. Is the labour at the wharves mostly ordinary labour?—Yes.

583. The work at some of the docks is not ordinary labour. There is grain portering and timber portering?—That would be different.

584. You have a good deal of grain to deal with?—Yes.

585. Are the men who deal with that specially skilled men or ordinary men?—In a way. They are our own men.

586. You do not pay for it differently?—No; the piece-work rate is perhaps more liberal. It gives them as a rule a better bonus than for ordinary trucking work. A corn-man will earn 4*d.* or 5*d.* bonus as a rule in addition to his pay. He does not consider that he is over-paid if he gets 11*d.* or 1*s.*; I mean he would think that he was under-paid unless he got that.

587. Is there any special time of year when you take on a larger number of casuals? Is it seasonal at all? You have certain seasons, of course?—The seasons with us balance themselves a good deal.

588. Is it fairly even all round?—Yes. At one set of docks there may be less work at one time of year and more at another.

589. If you take the *Labour Gazette* figures for all the docks there is certainly a busier time in November and December?—That is because of Christmas.

590. August is very slack?—Yes.

591. Does that apply to you?—It does to an extent; but, by having several places we are able to rectify that in a great measure.

592. It might be possible, might it not, for men to have regular subsidiary trades, as it were—a summer trade and a winter trade, supposing that your work was quite seasonal? You do not agree?—I do not think it is so definite as that. We notice that July and August are slack times for us at the upper docks. The lower docks, the Victoria and Albert Docks, and Tilbury, where the P. & O. and Orient boats come and go regularly, are quite apart from seasons.

593. To what extent can you tell how many men will be wanted the next day? Do your foremen not make mistakes as to the number?—We cannot absolutely foresee, but we get pretty close to it the afternoon before.

594. Is there not difficulty caused owing to the uncertainty of a ship getting unloaded because of barges?—No.

595. You know within a tide or two when a ship will come in?—Yes.

596. Supposing that a ship has come in, is there ever obstruction?—Not now. It occurred three or four years ago when the war was on.

597. London being a large port, does it not affect it. Is it the case sometimes that barges cannot get there?—It has been made a good deal too much of.

598. I ask you because that is a common remark?—The Company at the instance of certain authorities have obtained Parliamentary powers to control the barges more than they could previously.

599. Do you say that they have the Parliamentary powers already?—Yes, and they are wanting more.

600. I am not asking with regard to the dispute between shipowners

and the Company, but to know whether it makes the work more irregular, and whether it makes it harder to foresee what labour is wanted?—No, it does not. It does not affect that at all.

601. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Fogs in the depth of winter make a difference, do they not?—Yes. The Suez Canal being blocked made a great difference to us. We were quite aground for work a fortnight ago on account of it, and then Tilbury Dock had more ships than it could deal with.

602. I understand that you do not pay anything for overtime?—Yes, after six o'clock. They work from six o'clock in the morning until six at night at the ordinary 6d. an hour, and between six at night and six in the morning it is 8d. an hour, and that is a first charge on any piece-work, but in order that the men may not be discouraged we generally arrange on a piece-work job to allow 2d. extra, so that they shall not say 'Our bonus will be swallowed up by the extra 2d. an hour.' In order that they may get that at the same rate we allow them the 2d. on the piece-work job and say: 'That is yours anyway. You would have it under any circumstances, and we do not consider it right that it should come out of your bonus in any shape or form.' It goes on as in the day-time.

603. Mr. C. S. LOCH: Has there been any conference between employers as to the adjustment of labour on the lines just now mentioned?—I am not aware of anything of the sort.

604. Would it be to the interest of several wharves to join in the manner suggested?—I think it would be in their interest.

605. In their own interest?—Yes.

606. Mr. W. H. BURNBURN: Do you think that they might get better labourers?—I think so.

607. Just as you do?—Yes. I do not say that they would think so. They might have differences with their own people. Our own leading officers often say: 'If we could only have got men at the gate, and so on. Sometimes we have to look them up about expenses, and it is said: 'The weekly men system involves us in extra expense, and that kind of thing. On the other hand, if we get a particularly smart piece of work, and we say, 'How is it that it has been turned out so well,' they say, 'We had our weekly men on it.' We say: 'The other day you said that you did not like weekly men.'

608. That instance is very good as showing that your weekly men are better. This table only goes back to 1894, and it does not quite fairly represent the change that has taken place. If you went back a little beyond that you would find a smaller proportion of permanent and weekly men, would you not?—Very likely.

609. The figures for that are probably in the Labour Commission, are they not?—I might have a year or two before 1894, but I have not much before that.

610. I will see if I can get them from the Labour Commission. If I cannot I will ask you if you can supply them?—With pleasure.

611. This started some time before 1894, and although the table is very interesting it does not quite represent all that you have done?—But before this commenced we were not altogether in a state of chaos.

612. No. I know you were not?—We were working on some kind of system.

613. Yes. You had "Royals," and that sort of thing?—This is not entirely an innovation. It is a considerable improvement on what had gone before, but there was some system.

614. The innovation is the increase of the unit?—Yes.

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Nov. 3, 1905. 615. You had a preference list before, but the larger unit is quite  
new?—Yes, quite.  
Mr. H. H. 616. It is a complete innovation?—Yes.  
WATTS.

Sir E. BRABROOK in the Chair.

617. The CHAIRMAN: I can only say again that we are very much obliged to you for the excellent information you have given to us.—It has been a great pleasure to me to attend to supply any particulars that may be useful to you.

# MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

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## Special Committee

ON

## UNSKILLED LABOUR.

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*Present.*

Mr. CROIL CHAPMAN,  
Mr. T. MACKAY,  
Mr. J. PARSONS,

Mr. D. M. WATSON,  
Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE,  
*Secretary.*

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Mr. T. MACKAY in the Chair.

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Mr. S. WOOD *examined.*

Nov. 10, 1905,

618. The CHAIRMAN: We understand that you are a Taking-on Foreman in the employ of the London and India Docks Company.—Yes. I have been employed in that capacity for thirteen years.

Mr. S. Wood

619. Would you describe what your work is?—Yes. Shall I read my statement?

620. If you would, please.—‘At 1 o’clock each day it is my duty to estimate the number of men required on the following day for the particular jobs under my control, also to ascertain the number of men required by the various foremen of the department. A statement is then placed before the head of the department. When this is approved, I make up the department indent, showing the number of men required, or to spare, and it is forwarded to the Superintendent of the dock not later than 2 o’clock. At about 3 o’clock the indent is returned with the Superintendent’s instructions as to the disposal of the spare men, or particulars as to men to be received. If all the permanent and registered men in the different groups of docks are employed, and more men are required, a form is issued from the Superintendent’s Office showing the numbers of preference men that are to be taken on at the various departments.’

621. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Is that form issued to all the departments?—Yes; it is issued to all the departments.

622. It is made up in one central office and issued to all the departments—is that it?—Yes; that is quite right. ‘This form is posted in a prominent position at the department. The following morning I present myself at the place of call, and take on the men in the order in which they are placed on the list. If the call extends beyond the department list, a

Nov. 10, 1905. 'percentage of men belonging to other departments is called, until all the  
 'men belonging to the London and St. Katharine Docks are taken on.  
 Mr. S. WOOD. 'Then men belonging to the other groups of docks and town warehouses  
 'are next called for until all the preference men that have presented them-  
 'selves have been taken on. If more men be required, the casual labourers  
 'then get a turn, and they are selected according to my opinion of them.'

623. Mr. J. PARSONS: Does that include the (B) ticket men?—No. The casual men are those beyond the (B) ticket men.

624. After the (B) ticket men?—Yes. 'After the call I divide the  
 'men, placing them to the jobs that they are most suited for.'

625. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: How can you form any opinion of the casual men?—We know them.

626. What sort of work do they do?—We have to select the men for warehouse duty, trucking on the quays, and working at ships' holds. It is more than some of the men dare do to go down a ship's hold or go near it.

627. You look at the men and decide what they are to do?—Yes. We have known many of them for years. I have been in the service for over twenty years now. Dealing with them day by day, we know what they are really suited for.

628. How do the casual men know when to be there? Are they pretty often in attendance?—They are there when there is an idea that we are likely to want them.

629. How do they learn that?—They simply learn for themselves when a department is likely to want more men, and they follow that department accordingly. They drift from dock to dock.

630. The CHAIRMAN: What means have they of ascertaining?—They find out.

631. Where is the notice put up?—It is posted at each department. We put ours by the pay-box.

632. Inside the dock?—Inside the dock, and also outside the dock at the front gate.

633. That notice gives information as to the number of people wanted the next day?—Yes. Should a man, for instance, not have presented himself at a department on any day, he could find out by walking up to the department and looking at the notice whether he was likely to be wanted the next day. Men travel from department to department to ascertain whether they are likely to get work.

634. Mr. W. H. BURNIDGE: If your departmental list is exhausted, a percentage of men from other departments is taken?—Yes.

635. How do you get them? Do you send for them?—No. They drift to departments where there is likely to be work.

636. The (B) men?—Yes.

637. If a man is No. 30 at his own department and only twenty men are wanted there, he knows that he has to go somewhere else?—Yes.

638. But he does not know which particular department to go to, does he?—No; but, as I say, he forms his own opinion of the work. A ship will come up to-night, say, and he will find out.

639. The (B) men of two different departments may find out that they are going to be slack, and they may all decide to go to one particular other department, and may overcrowd that department, may they not?—Yes.

640. Yet a fourth department might not have the right number of (B) men?—Just so.

641. That might happen?—That might happen.

642. There is nothing to guide them?—There is nothing to guide them.

643. There is nothing to let a man know how many others are likely

to apply?—No. There is the question of absentees. If, for instance, we posted up 100 numbers we might have twenty or thirty short of the hundred, getting work elsewhere.

644. The CHAIRMAN: Is that a usual occurrence?—Yes, during the slack time when they work at other places.

645. Mr. J. PARSONS: What class of men would they be?—The (B) men—the preference men.

646. The (A) men are always there, and you arrange that they shall be sent about from place to place wherever the work demands it?—Yes. When we have too many at our own department we transfer them to other departments.

647. The CHAIRMAN: What is the tenor of the notice? Do you say that so many men will be wanted at such and such a place?—No. Every man has a (B) ticket in his possession with a number on, and we post the numbers we want.

648. Not the numbers of men wanted, but the men's numbers?—Yes. If 100 men are wanted we post 100 numbers.

649. But you do not say on that notice that at such and such another dock there are extra hands wanted, do you?—Yes, we have done that often. For instance, we have often posted a notice on the notice board stating that (B) men are wanted at Tilbury, where there may be a scarcity. A notice is put on the board and we give the men a chance at Tilbury or the Victoria and Albert or any other of the docks. A notice is posted up at each department showing the requirements for all the departments.

650. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Are the men taken on at all times during the day or at special times?—Our work starts at 8 o'clock in the summer months. That we call the first call. After that the men are taken on at one centre for the whole of the London and St. Katharine Docks. The foremen of all the departments have to go to the one centre to get their odd men.

651. After 8 o'clock?—Yes.

652. Would they get their odd men at any time of the day?—Every hour. What we call our first call would be 9 o'clock now. That is when our work starts in the winter. It is often started at 8 o'clock.

653. A man failing to be taken on at 9 o'clock may wait on for a chance of being taken on at 10, 11 or 12 o'clock, and so on?—Yes.

654. The CHAIRMAN: You say that, supposing that you want 100 men, you may be twenty short. Have you begun to discount for that when you want eighty men, for instance, posting up for 100?—No, you cannot.

655. The absenteeism, or, rather, the failure to appear, is not so regular that you can calculate on its being 20 in 100, or anything of the sort?—You cannot calculate it near enough. When I post up the list I very often make out the statement for twenty or thirty more to allow for absentees.

656. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: If the whole of the men appeared, would you consider yourself bound to take them on?—No.

657. Supposing that one day in making this allowance, you asked for 120 men when you only had work for 100, and 110 or 120 appeared, they would expect to be taken on, would they not?—They might expect it.

658. You would not regard that as binding you to take them on?—No.

659. It is not a binding agreement?—No. We might arrange for a steamer to come up, and a fog might prevent it from coming. There would then be 100 shut out, not merely 20.

660. The notice is really information, merely?—Yes, that is it.

661. You are not bound by it?—We are not bound by it, but it is very

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Nov. 10, 1905. rarely that any alteration takes place. Usually more men than less are wanted.

Mr. S. Wood. 662. Mr. J. PARSONS: There is a preference for those men, at all events?—Yes. It gives them a chance.

663. You know many of the men by appearance?—Yes.

664. Do total strangers often come?—Yes, when we are taking on casual men.

665. Total strangers appear very often?—Yes, very often—men of all classes.

666. The CHAIRMAN: Are the casuals chiefly total strangers?—No, there is a class of men who hang round the dock gates who do not apply for a (B) ticket. They do not want it. It is really too binding for them, too constant. You will always find them round the pubs.

667. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: They are not strangers? You know their faces?—I know them, oh yes!

668. The CHAIRMAN: Do many of your permanent staff absent themselves from work?—No. They have to come regularly.

669. Or go?—Or go.

670. You cannot expect the (B) men to come regularly, can you?—No. We never expect them to do so. We did at one time when work was more constant. Then they lost their tickets if they did not, but now we are not so hard.

671. You cannot do it?—No.

672. Have you any knowledge at all of what they are doing at other times?—Yes.

673. Are they men who can follow any other trade?—Not any particular trade, but they get taken on at wharves, I know.

674. To do the same class of work?—Yes.

675. Mr. J. PARSONS: From your experience can you say whether the men that you fail to provide work for or do not provide work for have other means of employment in connection with the docks similar in character?—Yes, they work at the different wharves.

676. And inside the docks?—The wharves are outside the docks.

677. But is there not a great deal of similar work going on in the dock in connection with it?—Not at the London and St. Katharine's.

678. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You keep a register of the attendances of (B) men, do you not?—Yes. [The register was handed to the Committee.]

679. Is this a list of all the men?—Yes. There are 170 names here, and we mark every man's attendance as he turns up. 'N' means 'Not called at own or any other department.' 'I,' in red, means 'At work at some other department.' 'I,' in black, means that the men are at work at their own department. 'A,' in red, means that the men are absent when called at some other department to which they have been ordered; 'A,' in black, means that they were absent when called at their own department.

680. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: That is, absent without leave, and in a sense it is a bad mark?—It refers to the case of a man being ordered and not turning up.

681. It means that he is not available?—Yes. This shows our slack times.

682. Mr. J. PARSONS: Nothing like 50 per cent. of the (B) men would get employment in the last two years?—No. You will understand that I am only speaking departmentally. I am speaking of one department out of a group of docks.

683. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: I have here a table which I should like to get into the evidence. I see that it states that on a particular day, September 22, 1905, 494 men were called and only 365 of them appeared. That is to say, you were 129 short. Would that be typical, do you think? Is it a fairly ordinary thing to call 490 and get 360?—Certainly.

684. You think that it is quite usual?—Yes.

685. At slack times there will be a larger proportion of men not turning up than at busy times?—Yes; certainly.

686. This looks like a busy day.—It is not generally busy that day, but there must have been work at a wool sale. With 300 (B) men on there must have been a wool sale.

687. At the time of wool sales you get men from everywhere?—Yes.

688. A large number of casuals are taken on?—Yes.

689. Some men hardly do any work except once or twice a year at wool sales, do they?—It is not so now. It used to be so. They have to have a ticket, and we claim their attendance at other times than wool sales.

690. You think that better?—Yes.

691. The CHAIRMAN: Are you anxious to increase or to decrease the number of (B) men at the dock. Do you see a prospect of making their work more regular, or has it gone as far as it possibly can? What is the policy of the dock?—We would increase the number of (B) men as the work increased, but at present I think we have sufficient, and more than sufficient (B) men.

692. You cannot systematize it any more?—No.

693. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: From this book it seems as if you had more than sufficient.—Yes. I have a further statement here that I thought would be interesting to you gentlemen with regard to my experience of the calls before these preference tickets were introduced.

694. The CHAIRMAN: In the old days?—In the old days.

695. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Before the strike?—After the strike.

696. But before the preference system?—Yes.

697. Would you give the year?—About 1892 or 1893—about eleven or twelve years ago. I have put it in this form:—“Since I was nineteen years of age I have been connected with the labour in all its branches, ship, quay, and warehouse, of the department to which I am attached, and will be pleased to give you some information in connection with the system of management of the labourers before the preference tickets were introduced. Not only was every department separated, that is with regard to men who followed it for a chance of work, but every ganger and foreman had his own little following, and generally speaking the class of men then employed, physically and morally, was much inferior to the class now employed. The position of “taking-on foreman” was an extremely dangerous occupation, and whilst he was thus employed it was advisable to look after his money and valuables, also look to himself; in fact it was necessary to know a little of the art of self-defence. Several foremen I could name have had to defend themselves against this class of men. There is a place in the London Dock which was called the “cage,” where men were taken on after the first call. When I went there for the first time I was astounded. Firstly, the constable unbarred the door, then a gigantic roar went up from hundreds of throats calling my name. A long platform about a foot from the ground was erected, upon which I stood to give out the tickets. A great mass of faces and hands through iron bars appeared before me, fighting and struggling, so much so, that it was difficult to detect which hand the face belonged to. Some would be struggling to secure as many tickets as possible, so

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Mr. S. Woo

Nov. 10, 1905. ' that they might be able to sell them to other men who had not been  
 Mr. S. Wood. ' fortunate enough to get one. Then, after I had got rid of all the tickets,  
 ' a gate was opened, and in trooped the men who had been taken on, also  
 ' those who had managed to secure a ticket at a price. Then again, we  
 ' always had to take on more men than were actually required, to allow for  
 ' the "dodgers." Many a time have men secured their pay-tickets, then  
 ' disappeared, with an understanding with a "pal" that he would let him  
 ' know when there was a check, and by this means it was possible for one  
 ' man to get taken on by two or more departments, and secure pay from  
 ' each, either by paying himself off at different times, or getting another  
 ' man to draw his money. Then, again, when there were ships which had  
 ' cargoes that contained wines or spirits, it was quite a common thing to  
 ' see men brought out of a ship's hold in a basket or on a scaleboard.  
 ' "Pony riding" or "sucking the monkey" was another practice which had  
 ' to be looked for where the casks were open for gauging.'

698. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You mean that you have not now to be as careful with respect to the character of the men?—No.

699. Even the casuals?—I go on to explain a little with regard to the casual men. It is the (B) men who have taken the place of casual men.

700. And they are a better sort of men—more reliable?—Yes, much better. 'These men had nothing to lose. If they got in disgrace with one foreman, they went to another. Now the preference ticket has been introduced, the man has something to lose, he knowing that it is almost useless coming to the dock gates without a preference ticket. Therefore, the taking on of men has been simplified, so that it is possible to take on hundreds of men without the slightest disturbance. The greater number of men getting either permanent, or much more constant work than hitherto, has made the average docker a respectable man. Then again, the extra pay he gets from the surplus has made it easier for the foreman to control, so much so, that a genuine man, knowing that he is working for "Plus," will very often see that men do not dodge the work, and report the man to the foreman. So you see that the piece-work system is a very great assistance in the management of men, for where there is a gang of one hundred men, sometimes going in all directions, trucking to warehouses on a department covering nearly half a mile, it is impossible to keep a check on every man.'

701. The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. That makes very clear the difference between the two systems, and it is a material assistance.—I am glad of that.

702. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: With the sort of crowd that you have described, you could not choose your men at all?—No. As I say, you simply had to put the ticket into a hand, and you did not know which hand the face belonged to.

703. It was really all chance?—Yes; it was all chance. There were a lot of fellows there who used to fight over the bars in order to secure tickets. They did not do work. They made a day's money by selling the tickets to men who did not care about getting into the crush. It was disgraceful. Talk of going into the lions' den—it was awful.

704. Now when you go to the dock gates to take on men you do not find a crowd, do you, but you always find enough men?—Yes. There have been one or two instances where we have not had sufficient men, but it has soon got about, and we have found men there perhaps an hour, or two, or three hours afterwards. That was in the time of the wool lies, perhaps the first two or three days when, possibly, the work came on suddenly. That has not happened in the last seven or eight years.

705. You do not have this sort of fighting crowd outside now?—No, Nov. 10, 1905. certainly we do not.

706. You find enough men but not a crowd? You find too many men, Mr. S. WOOD.

in fact?—Yes; you find too many men.

707. But not a fighting crowd?—Not a fighting crowd.

708. Why do they not fight? Is it because there are not so many men or because the men are more orderly?—Because they have a ticket with a number, and the foreman stands and calls the numbers.

709. I was thinking of the taking on of casuals.—There is a little disturbance in the taking on of casuals.

710. Do you take on casuals every day?—No, not now.

711. Once a week?—No not now.

712. Once a month?—No. It might happen that we took on casuals on about three or four days during a wool sale. Those are not many times during the year. I am speaking of present conditions with work slack.

713. That would only come to a week or two's work in the year altogether, really?—I doubt whether casual men would get that.

714. Mr. J. PARSONS: That refers to your own department only, I suppose?—I am speaking of our own department entirely.

715. Your own control?—Yes.

716. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You said that all the departments take men on at one centre?—Yes. That only refers to the hour calls after the first call.

717. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: That is what I thought. There is no centre at the first hour—8 o'clock?—No. Each department takes the men on at the same hour at its own particular calling place.

718. The CHAIRMAN: As far as your experience goes you have very little employment for these casuals?—Very little.

719. Is it the general experience that there is very little employment for them in the docks? Would you say that your experience was the same as others, speaking generally?—I should say that from London to Tilbury there is very little chance for casual men.

720. Do they not begin to appreciate that, and to disappear as a class?—They appreciate it, and behave themselves on the chance of getting a preference ticket.

721. It is a very off-chance?—Yes.

722. Is that sort of population increasing or diminishing at the docks?—It is diminishing, I should say. You do not see so many lieabouts round Ratchiff Highway and so on as you used to.

723. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The great thing that has made the people better is that they have more to lose. The preference man is a better workman because he has more to lose?—That is just it.

724. The CHAIRMAN: Are the men satisfied and pleased with the régime?—Yes.

725. They like it better?—We look after their interest. That is why they like it better.

726. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: What would you calculate the average employment in a week for a (B) man beyond the first twenty? He would not get more than two days' work in a week, would he?—Yes.

727. The lower men would not, would they?—No, it would not be more than that taking the last year or so.

728. The CHAIRMAN: We may take it generally that there is a fringe of only uncertainly-employed labour. You do your best, no doubt, to make it as small as possible.—Yes, we do. We employ the top numbers first, you see.



Nov. 10, 1905. 729. Mr. J. PARSONS: Have you any means of knowing (perhaps you have not) whether the men who are not employed by you are employed elsewhere in other ways?—Yes. I have seen them at work with stevedores and at wharves.

Mr. S. WOOD.

730. And at other casual work?—Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to you.

(The witness withdrew.)

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Mr. — examined.

Mr. —.

731. The CHAIRMAN: Are you giving us evidence now as a stevedore?—I am giving you my evidence as a stevedore.

732. We have heard from two gentlemen who represent the London and India Docks Co. the methods of employment. I understand that you are now going to tell us about the work of people who are not in the employment of Dock Companies, but who are in a sort of private employment—the work of stevedores as opposed to labourers. Will you describe to us, please, what the stevedore's work is?—Practically the stevedore is our employer.

733. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The master stevedore?—Yes.

734. But you are a stevedore?—We are the stevedore's labourers, practically.

735. You are called 'stevedores'?—We are called stevedores. I belong to what they call 'The Amalgamated Stevedores' Society.' We thought when we formed the Society that it would be as well to call ourselves 'stevedores' because we were the actual stevedores who did the labour, and therefore we called ourselves 'The Amalgamated Stevedores' Society.'

736. The CHAIRMAN: Would you describe the work which they do as skilled work?—Yes; I would describe the work as skilled work, because it requires a good amount of knowledge to get into the way of the work, although stevedores are practically recruited from all classes—from the highest to the very lowest. We have some very learned men and good men among our members, and, unfortunately, we have some of the very lowest type that could possibly be found. On some occasions we have amongst us men who have been convicted of murder and who have been reprieved and have come into the stevedores' labour market.

737. Will you tell us what a stevedore does, because we are very ignorant on the subject?—A stevedore loads or discharges ships, as the case may be. If it is a question of loading he does the loading of the ship. He puts the cargo into the ship, placing in position the various kinds of cargo, keeping each cargo as separate as he possibly can and also stowing it up as near as he possibly can, so that the ship shall take as much as possible.

738.—Who employs the stevedores? What is the method of employment?—As far as the method of employment of stevedores is concerned, there are several methods.

739.—Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: But who is the employer? Is it the shipowner?—No, the shipowner does not employ. Some is done out of office, and some by contractor.

740.—'Some is done out of office' you say. What do you mean?—Large shipping firms, I may tell you, do their own stevedoring. They

have a man who is well up in the knowledge. He has either been a captain or a mate of a ship or something of the kind, and he is well up in the knowledge of stevedoring work and he takes over the work to do for the office. He employs foremen under him and those foremen then take on the men. Nov. 10, 1905.  
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741. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You are taken on by the foreman, but you are employed by the shipowner and paid by the shipowner?—No, not by the shipowner.

742. By the shipper?—The merchant.

743. But in some cases by the shipowner?—No, not by the shipowner at all. If there is a foreign ship, or a ship that has not got what you may call a line running in and out of the Port of London, a master stevedore is engaged.

744. But in your particular case you are working for a line of shipowners?—I am working for the line of —.

745. They are shipowners.—That work is done out of office.

746. Mr. D. M. WATSON: What is exactly the difference between a stevedore and a dock labourer?—The difference between the stevedore and the dock labourer is that the stevedore is the man that practically does the stowing of the cargo. The dock labourer trucks out the cargo from the warehouses to the quay and the stevedore takes it in and stows it up.

747. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: But the stevedore also discharges sometimes from the ship on to the quay?—Yes. There is a great deal of that done now.

748. Is not the difference that the stevedore, if he is a union man, will not take any discharging under 8d. an hour, and that a great deal of discharging is done for 6d. or 7d.?—We do not take discharging in that light at all. If the stevedore is going to discharge it is generally done as piece-work.

749. The CHAIRMAN: Let us have a description. We will take first the case of a ship coming up and having to be loaded. Someone on behalf of the shipowner—a manager or foreman—engages men. Now, are they permanently in the shipowner's service?—Some foremen are permanent men.

750. I am not dealing with the foremen, but with the ordinary labouring stevedore, which we understand you are?—I am an ordinary stevedore, working for 8d. an hour.

751. Are you regularly in the employment of a firm of shipowners?—I do no work except for one particular firm. That applies to late years. I am not regularly employed, because I never go to work until a ship comes in, and as soon as the ship is done with I am discharged.

752. Are you engaged all the week?—No. I work when there is any work to be done for the firm, and I am engaged by them then, but when there is nothing to be done for them I do nothing else whatever.

753. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You are first choice for the firm—sub-permanent?—I am what they call on the sub-permanent staff. I am one of the first to be employed when there is anything to be done.

754. The CHAIRMAN: What number of stevedores is there generally applying at the Port of London? Can you give us an idea?—Society stevedores number something over 3,000, taking the Port of London. They are divided over a vast area. They go over the whole of the docks.

755. Is that the majority? Can you give us an idea of the number outside of the Society?—Outside of the Society there are what they call 'Federation' men.

756. How many do they amount to?—I should think that the Federa-

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tion men amount to something about the same number. The Federation men are not divided as the Society men are. They simply keep to the Victoria and Albert Dock. They load and discharge the British In the P. and O., and some parts of the New Zealand ships.

757. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do they go to other docks?—They work at the West India Dock a little while ago, loading and discharging ships of the American Transport Line, but there was some disagreement between the Dock Company and the shippers, and as far as I know the American Transport Line have left the West India Dock now. On their leaving the West India Dock the Federation people left also.

758. Do you mean that there are as many as 3,000 Federation stedevores working in the Victoria and Albert Dock alone?—I do not say there are as many as 3,000 working there. I say that there are 3,000 applying for labour. There is a vast difference between the Stevedore Society and the Federation, because any man who comes along the road he has been a builder, gasfitter, plumber, joiner, tinker or tailor, as the case may be, simply makes his way down to the Federation offices to be taken on there.

759. But he would not be called a 'stevedore,' would he? Would not be called a 'labourer'?—I do not know what they call him, but call them stevedores. We call anybody who loads or discharges ships a stevedore.

760. The CHAIRMAN: We understand that you may be employed piece-work or time-work. Is piece-work the more usual?—Piece-work is done by small men like me. Piece-work is done by what I call the rest of the stevedores, that is, men who are robust, burly men, the kind of who do not care what they do. They are not very particular, and they are prepared to do anything that brings in money.

761. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: I suppose that they can get a lot of money at once out of piece-work?—A great pile at one time. They are men who are very fond of drink and very fond of betting, and very fond of anything where they can get rid of their money. They get into the know of the kind of thing by meeting the foremen at night-time in the public-house, that is where it is generally done.

762. The CHAIRMAN: We want to get at the state of affairs with regard to the 3,000 stevedores of your own Society. Please stick to them, because you know them. Are they regularly employed?—No, not by any means.

763. What, for instance, are their normal wages, taking men like that?—When they are employed on ordinary day work they get 6s. a day and they work from 7 to 5.

764. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: 8d. an hour from 7 to 5?—8d. an hour from 7 to 5; working an hour after 5 and before 7, that is day work. 765. Time work?—Yes.

766. The CHAIRMAN: Is there a great deal of unemployment?—Many of these men unemployed?—I cannot say there is a great number unemployed, although there is a good few living in a state of what I call semi-starvation. You must understand with regard to stevedoring that it is not the man who keeps himself respectable, who tries to keep a respectable home, and tries to look after his wife and family, and go on for to-morrow, who gets on. Those are the kind of men who get on little. That is not the way if you want to get on with the Federation the Stevedores' Society. Mind you, I am not saying anything detrimental to the Stevedores' Society, because if the men would only act up to the rules of the Stevedores' Society, they would be better men to-day than there would not be half the poverty and misery in Poplar that the

But, unfortunately, they will not act up to the rules. They give way to drink. Nov. 10, 1905.

767. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You were saying that the way to get on as a stevedore was to meet the foreman at night?—Yes. Mr. —

768. The respectable man who goes home at night and stays at home at night does not hear where work is to be got?—That is quite so.

769. That is the bad thing about the taking on by foremen?—Yes.

770. Because it puts too much power in the hands of the foremen?—Because it puts too much power in the hands of the foremen.

771. The CHAIRMAN: Do you know the system pursued with regard to their labourers by the Docks Company? The men are all employed by the Docks Company and not by the foremen, and the Docks Company take them on, not the foremen?—There are foremen to take them on.

772. But they are taken on for the Docks Company. I am not referring to stevedores, but to labourers.—They must have a foreman or a clerk of some kind to take the men on.

773. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The Chairman is speaking of the list system and of permanent men being moved about by the Docks Company in order to ensure greater regularity of work. Do you know that?—Yes.

774. The CHAIRMAN: Would it meet the complaint if something of the same sort obtained in your own calling? I will put it in this way: If it was in our power, for instance, to say that it would be a good thing with regard to stevedores' labourers that the large employers should make lists and instruct their foremen to use the lists, would that meet the difficulty?—Yes; that would be a very good system. I have been interested in the labour question for a number of years, and I talk on the question very much. I talk to the men. When the firm for which I work are very busy, say that they have eight or ten, or perhaps more, gangs, those gangs are employed by eight or ten foremen, as the case may be, according to the number of gangs required. Each foreman takes on his own. If that foreman is very fond of beer, you may rest assured that all he takes on must be fond of beer too. If they are not, they need not apply to that foreman for work. You might stand there and stand there for a week and he would not take you on, because he would know his pals, and those pals he would take. I said to one of the men to-day, 'Do you not think it would be better if there was one man in each firm who took on all the men instead of having Jack, Bill, Joe, or Harry taking on whom they liked?' He said that it would.

775. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: It is better to have one man, because he is likely to be in a better position and not to want to drink with the men?—Quite so. One of our men put it very plainly to-day when I said, 'Would it not be better if we had one man in each firm to take on the whole of the men?' He said, 'That would be better, because one man cannot drink all the beer.'

776. Mr. D. M. WATSON: From what you have said I take it that you do not go to public-houses to drink with the foremen. How do you get to know of the work?—I have been thrown into the labour market accidentally.

777. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: What Mr. Watson is asking you is, How do you know where to go for work; I understood you to say that you are sub-permanent for one firm, and never go anywhere else?—I never go anywhere else.

778. Is that because you do not drink with foremen that you do not hear of other work, is it not?—Just so.

779. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Does he send for you, or how is it? You

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know when a ship is coming in, do you not? A ship comes in regularly each week, does it not?—It comes in each week regularly. We know very well that next week's boat will not be here until Tuesday or Wednesday.

780. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Could the foreman suddenly decide not to take you on?—Not practically, and I will tell you why. I was with the firm before some of these foremen came in at all, and really the stevedore is my supporter. If anything happened to the stevedore I do not suppose I would be required any more.

781. Mr. J. PARSONS: The stevedore of the firm?—Yes.

782. The CHAIRMAN: We may take it from you generally that you think the engagement of labour by foremen is not a good system?—It is not good.

783. Mr. J. PARSONS: It exists in this particular case. Do you know whether other firms have the same system?—Yes.

784. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The system of engagement by foremen goes all through stevedoring?—Yes.

785. All stevedores are taken on by foremen?—Yes, all stevedores, Federation and otherwise, riverside labour and all.

786. You are paid every day, are you not?—We are paid directly we have done labour.

787. Do you think that a good or a bad thing?—I think it a very bad system—very bad.

788. Why?—Because our class of people do not think of providing for to-morrow. When they get their money, all they think they have to do is to spend it, and spend it as fast as they can.

789. The CHAIRMAN: Why should they want to spend it more when they get it every day than when they get it every week?—When they get their 6s. they spend it. I was speaking of the method this morning when talking to a man. 'It would be far better for the men of Poplar, and there ' would not be so much distress if the men would keep more out of the ' public-house than they do.'

790. We are all agreed about that.—He said: 'It is like this here, ' Bill. It's all very well for you to talk that do not like beer. Take my ' case, for instance, I like a glass of beer when I get my money at night- ' time. I go in to have a half-pint. When I get inside somebody in there ' says "Hullo! going to have a drink with me?" Well, we must return ' it, and that is returned again. Two or three more come in, and so we go ' on drinking, drinking. When we get home we find that we are about 2s. ' short. It is all very well for you.' I can say this, that if they were not paid every night they could not do that.

791. Would it be a popular thing if the payment was made weekly, and would it not rather tend to more regular employment?—It would do so.

792. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: In Liverpool men are paid at the end of the week. A man may have worked for three different masters during the week, and he has to spend all Saturday morning collecting his week's money.—Yes. That is where the evil comes in. If the men were to be paid at the end of the week they would have to find a different system from that, because men would not stand it.

793. It would not affect you to be paid every week, because it is always one employer.—No, it would not affect me because it is always one employer; but most of our men sell their labour in what they call the best market. They are working for one employer to-day and for somebody else to-morrow.

794. If a man is well in with the foremen it is better not to become sub-permanent with one employer, but to go about from one to the other.—Yes. He can earn two or three pounds a week.

795. If he keeps in with the foremen?—Yes, if he keeps in with the foremen. There are most respectable men whose average comes to not more than 2*s.* a week. Nov. 10, 1905.

796. Not to more than that?—No.

797. Things are very slack now, are they not?—Yes, very slack.

798. Before now men were making more?—Yes, before things got so bad.

799. Three years ago they were doing better?—That was the time of the war. It was better then.

800. Mr. D. M. WATSON: How many days' work do you get on an average in the week?—I have not taken any account of my average earnings, but I should think they were about 26*s.* to 27*s.* a week.

801. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: That means about four days' work?—A little more than four days—four days and a half.

802. But if you had overtime you would get much more at once?—Yes, with overtime, of course. I have worked half a day to-day. It is not very often that we work half a day on Friday. We worked until eleven o'clock to-day.

803. You practically never do any work on Fridays and Saturdays?—Never.

804. Do you think there are a good many other people like you who, if a census of the unemployed were taken, would appear to be unemployed? An enormous number of people would be out of work on Saturdays who are quite regularly employed on other days of the week.—Yes, taking Fridays and Saturdays, that would be so. I will give you an instance. I had occasion yesterday to go up to the Blue Post. That is where we are taken on.

805. By the firm you work for?—Not by them only, for other firms as well. At every principal gate, at every dock, there is a taking-on place. At the Victoria and Albert there are two places. The London Docks have two, the West India Dock one, and the East India Dock one. They wanted men at nine o'clock yesterday morning. All the permanent hands were engaged, and they sent me up for some men at a quarter to nine o'clock yesterday morning. We are allowed to take on from a quarter to nine until nine o'clock every morning. I must say that the rules of the Society are very good indeed. If the Federation and Dock Companies followed up the same rules that our Society follows it would be far better for them. I wanted a gang of fifteen men at nine o'clock. When I got there there were about two hundred men standing idle. They knew very well that I had come up for some hands, but it was about eight minutes to nine before anyone came across at all to be taken on.

806. Why was that?—About twenty came across and I wanted fifteen out of the twenty. All the rest were standing idle. I said to somebody that I took on, 'What are they all standing idle for? They do not come across when there is work for them to do.' 'Ah,' he said, 'they are waiting for one of Bucknall's boats coming. They do not want 4*s.* 8*d.* when they can get a day and night.' A good many of these men went to work on Bucknall's boat when it came up and they worked the day and night. If you took a census of the unemployed to-day the men would be at home. They would say, 'We are out of work.' If you asked a man how long he had been out of work he would say 'I did three quarters yesterday,' but he would not say that he worked all night as well.

807. There are only four or five permanent men with the firm for whom you work, and they are really the foremen of the ganga, are they not?—Yes they are permanent foremen.

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808. When there are eight gangs on they would take someone on like you?—Yes, by the stevedore's orders.

809. You act as foreman for the time being?—Yes.

810. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Are you paid extra for being foreman?—Yes. I get 7s. a day when I am foreman.

811. Instead of 6s.?—Instead of 6s.

812. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You have spoken of the times of taking on, and you have said that the stevedores are better now. In what way has the alteration come about?—The stevedore knows very well that he cannot be employed before a quarter to seven in the morning, and he knows very well that directly it strikes seven if he is not taken on he may go until nine o'clock or a quarter to nine.

813. After a quarter to nine when can he be taken on again?—He will go home until a quarter to one.

814. The times are a quarter to seven, a quarter to nine, a quarter to one, and a quarter to six?—Yes.

815. Four times in the day?—Yes.

816. It prevents people from hanging about?—Yes, it prevents them from hanging about. It is not so with the Docks Companies or with the Federation. The riverside men, as we call them, only get 7d. per hour in the day and 9d. at night. They are taken on as the ship comes in on the tide. If the ship is not there one tide they can go home and rest contented until the next tide. The Dock Company and Federation pay off and take on at any time and keep men hanging about, which demoralises them as much as ever it can and brings them to mere serfs. They keep them hanging about until the men really do not care whether they are living or not, or whether they work or not, such a state do they get into.

817. You would like your evidence to be regarded as confidential, because you think that if the foremen were to hear of your giving evidence you would not get work?—I am sure of it, because most of our men, if they are not Socialists, have Socialistic opinions.

818. But would it make them object to your getting work?—Yes; because you see it is very bad to tell tales out of school, as they say.

819. Do you think that they would have the power to prevent you from getting work?—Yes.

820. Why should they prevent you?—Supposing that my evidence went down before the work in the morning, or they read it in the papers, they would say, 'What do you think he has been doing? He has been up giving evidence against us, and he has been saying this, that, and the other.'

821. What would they do?—The result would be that they would say, 'We must shut him out.' How are they going to shut me out? I am rather a friend of the stevedore. I have no opportunity of defending myself, and they would say, 'Mr. C., we do not think — is up to standard. He has been down in the hold putting cases of glass on very soft, and something else on something else, and oils on top of heaven knows what, and we think he wants shifting.'

822. The CHAIRMAN: I can assure you that it will not go any further.—The result would be that I would find myself out of employment.

823. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: But as a matter of fact the stevedore would know that you had not been doing that?—No; the stevedore would not know.

824. He has employed you for fourteen or fifteen years?—That may be.

825. The CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to you for what you

have told us. We quite understand your point. We will be careful that it does not get you into trouble; you may be quite sure of that.—I am very thankful to you. Nov. 10, 1905.

826. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: I think that you have told us all we want to know, but we are very much obliged to you for coming.—If there is any more information you want on the subject I shall be only too pleased to give it to you. Mr. — .

827. Perhaps you will give it to me personally?—I will give it to you personally. May I say that as far as giving charity away is concerned, I feel sure that a lot of it is given in the wrong channel. There are men to my knowledge who receive charity who should not. It would be far better if they put their hands in their pockets and gave some away, because they could afford it if they liked to keep themselves from drink.

(The witness withdrew.)



# MINUTES. OF EVIDENCE.

## Special Committee

ON

## UNSKILLED LABOUR.

*Present.*

Mr. W. A. BAILWARD,  
Mr. J. J. DENT,  
Mr. T. MACKAY,

Mr. J. PARSONS,  
Mr. D. M. WATSON,  
Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE,  
*Secretary.*

Mr. T. MACKAY in the Chair.

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Mr. CHARLES CARPENTER (Chief Engineer of the South Metropolitan Gas Company): *Examined.*

Mr. CHARLES CARPENTER.

828. The CHAIRMAN: Have you made any notes of your evidence?—  
No. I have the heads which Mr. Beveridge sent to me, and I have a few figures on this paper, prepared in the form of a statement, which I will hand in. I think that, perhaps, I shall be better able to give you the information which you want if I proceed step by step.

[*The Witness handed in the following table:*]

SOUTH METROPOLITAN GAS COMPANY, 709 OLD KENT ROAD, S.E.

### NUMBER OF MEN EMPLOYED

Arranged under their respective headings.

	Twenty-four hours		Increase	Decrease
	commencing Friday morning, December 23, 1904	commencing Friday morning, 23rd June, 1905		
Coals ... ..	353	278	—	75
Carbonising ... ..	1,337	827	—	510
Coke handling... ..	339	240	—	99
Mechanics ... ..	564	657	93	—
Labourers ... ..	1,202	1,226	24	—
Foremen ... ..	120	114	—	6
Lightermen ... ..	73	66	—	7
Slot Collectors... ..	128	130	2	—
Index Readers... ..	172	234	62	—
Services ... ..	926	775	—	151
Mantle Maintenance ... ..	43	45	2	—
Lamp-lighters ... ..	195	202	7	—
Mains ... ..	106	77	—	29
Odd Men ... ..	315	86	—	229
Balance ... ..	254	191	—	63
	<u>6,127</u>	<u>5,148</u>	<u>190</u>	<u>979</u>

829. We want to know, first of all, the sort of number of men that you employ. Will you explain the statement?—It is interesting as giving the various kinds of labour which we employ, and also the fluctuations between what we may consider our summer minimum and our winter maximum. I think that it is generally considered that gas companies are larger employers on the average during the winter months than in the summer. To a certain extent that is still true. You will see from the table that, whereas the number of men employed in midsummer is 5,100, roughly, in the winter time it is 6,100 odd, or about 1,000 more. In the past that difference was greater. If I may be allowed to explain the table a little, you will see that the difference is under certain headings. Under the second heading at the top—'Carbonising'—there is a very considerable difference—510 men. That used to be much greater in the past than it is now, the reason being that a good deal of work that used to be done by manual labour is now done by machinery. The same applies to 'Coals.'

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830. The carbonising is hand labour?—Yes. The figure represents the number of men employed on hand labour or in working stoking machines for carbonising. One point I want to make is that the proportion of difference between the winter and the summer is less than it was at one time owing to the greater amount of machinery that is used.

831. Do you mean that the total amount is smaller altogether?—That is so, but that is not the point which I want to make. I was rather dealing with the question that gas companies are larger employers of labour in the winter than in the summer.

832. I perfectly follow that.—That is not the case to the extent that it was at one time, the reason being that a good deal of our carbonising work, which was at one time done wholly, or nearly wholly, by hand, is now done nearly wholly by machinery.

833. Mr. W. H. BEVEIDGE: You mean that you have replaced hand labour by machinery, and your machines are there winter and summer? That is what it comes to.—Quite so, the machines are there winter and summer. At one time the men were there winter and summer.

834. But the machines are there in the summer although not working in the summer, whereas you never had men in the summer not working?—Quite so.

835. That is the difference?—Yes; that is one way of putting it. Then with regard to the nature of the work done by each class. If I take them in the order in which they appear in this table it may be convenient. 'Coals.' That refers to the usual labour involved in unloading coal, including driving cranes and filling coal into buckets, where the work is by hand.

836. Is that coal portering?—It is not coal portering in the true sense of the word. A coal porter, I suppose, is a man who carries coal, but none of these men carry coals. They shovel coal and drive cranes and push coal along in small trolleys from one part of the works to another, but they are not coal porters in the strict sense of the word. Although they are generally included in that class, they are not really coal porters.

837. I think that all through coal portering, the man who carries it on his head, has gone out of it and yielded to the machine?—Very much. Thirty years ago a great deal of the unloading of coal was done by men who carried sacks of coal on their backs. They may stick to the same kind of work, but they no longer carry coals. Carbonising accounts for a large proportion of our men. They work under two or three conditions as regards the length of the shift. In some cases they work two shifts in

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the twenty-four hours, beginning, say, at 6 o'clock in the morning and leaving off at about 4.30. In some cases they work three shifts. They begin in that case at 6 and leave off at 1.30. In some other cases they work the short shift in the summer and the long shift in the winter. With regard to the amount of experience required, that varies with the natural faculty of the man employed for picking up something new. Sometimes a stoker will be made in about twenty-four hours; sometimes will take him a week before he is able to do the work required of him. Sometimes it may take him two or three weeks, but on the average I would think that inside a week a man from the country could be turned at a good stoker. That will give you an idea of the amount of skill and experience required to make a gas stoker.

838. He wants special strength, does he not?—No, he does not require special strength over and above what is required by a navy or by a farm labourer. Some of the men fall into the way of working better than others. I think that the heat sometimes frightens some of them. They see the gas flaring out of the retorts and are rather afraid of it. *Coke handling* is one of our own specific items, but I think that it might be included, in a sense, under coal portering. It is really carrying coke. A good deal of the coke is carried in sacks. The amount of skill required in that case does not differ greatly from that required in the carbonising. It is less, on an average, than that required for coals, because the weight of coal, bulk for bulk, is considerably less than that of coal, so that it does not always follow that a man who can handle coke readily can handle coals. On the other hand, a man used to handling coals will expect to work at that sort of work and to be paid on that scale in preference to working on, and being paid on, the scale pertaining to coke. We employ a good number of mechanics—500 or 600. They include a great variety—blacksmiths, bricklayers, slaters, engine fitters, and engineers of all classes.

839. Mr. J. PARSONS: Why is there an increase of mechanics in the summer?—The increase in the summer is because there are more repairs. As was just now said, some of the machines are standing still in the summer and working in the winter, and therefore the summer is the better time for repairs. So that extra hands are put on during the summer time to cope with those machinery repairs which are only possible in the light summer months of the year.

840. The CHAIRMAN: I suppose that none of the ninety-three increase could be taken from the decrease? I mean you could not draft in any of the discharged people?—No.

841. The ninety-three are skilled mechanics?—Yes. The ninety-three mechanics are men who would not come under any of the other headings or we should transfer them. As a matter of fact, we carry out that principle as far as possible. For instance, a bricklayer who is a mechanic we find work for in other capacities during the winter time. Some of them are put into the retort-houses to look after those, and some of them are put as timekeepers on account of the extra number required in the winter, and many things of that kind. We endeavour to fit them in as far as we possibly can, but it is not possible to do it completely, otherwise the increase would not be as it is.

842. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: There is one point that I want to put to you. 564 mechanics in the winter means people employed as mechanics in the winter? It does not mean the bricklayers that you put in as timekeepers, does it?—Yes, it does. In all cases their rate of pay is not less. They are still mechanics, although not working in that capacity. They are

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getting at least the rate of pay that they would get as mechanics; and in some cases more.

843. It includes the men for whom you find other sorts of work to keep them there?—Yes. It does not represent the number of men actually working as mechanics at that time of the year, but it includes the number of men on our books who are rated as mechanics. With regard to foremen, lightermen, slot collectors, and index readers, there is not much difference.

844. You have left out labourers. Are you coming to those later on?—I beg your pardon. There is a difference of twenty-four. That is not very much. The labourers include men who work in a great many capacities, although they are all called 'labourers.' For instance, the labourers working with the bricklayers, the labourers working with the fitters, the labourers working in the streets on mains digging trenches out for inlaying, the labourers working on the trenches for the services, and the labourers that the mechanics have with them. The rate of pay is about 6½d. an hour. Some of them get somewhat less; some of them get more, but 6½d. an hour is a very fair average.

845. Do you not do the same sort of thing with the stokers as with the mechanics? In the summer you put some of your stokers to labouring work, do you not?—Yes, that is so, but the heading is the same.

846. They are kept under the heading of 'carbonisers' still?—Yes, if they are working at carbonising. If they are working as labourers they are under the heading of 'labourers.' They do not appear in two capacities on this table. For instance, we have men who are working as labourers in the summer time who go into the retort houses in the winter because that is a better rate of pay. Their places would be taken temporarily by other labourers who had come on for the winter season. When the winter season was over they would be discharged and the retort-house men would go back to their position as labourers. Then from the labourers a certain amount of recruiting of mechanics is done. Now and then you come across a man who, if I may say so, is a born mechanic, and his abilities in that respect are brought out by the fact that he has had the opportunity of working with a mechanic—it maybe with a bricklayer or gasfitter or plumber, or in a good many other ways, so that there is a certain amount of prospect for a man whose abilities are above the average, even though he has only started life as, and has worked for a considerable time as, a labourer.

847. The CHAIRMAN: The odd men show a decrease of 229.—There is not much to be said about that.

848. Then 'Services.' Does that refer to clerks?—I am afraid that that is an expression which is not very clear to the average person. It refers to the men who are dealing with the distribution of gas in the district. It includes men who are laying on gas and who are looking after the consumers, meters, and fittings, and generally keeping all that sort of work going.

849. Mr. D. M. WATSON: With the aid of a certain number of labourers attached to them?—Yes. There are labourers of the better class and the average class with them too.

850. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The men included under 'Services' have to be more or less responsible men, have they not?—Yes, they are more or less responsible men. They are used to dealing with service pipes, laying on gas and clearing stoppages, and matters that an average gasfitter, I suppose, would be capable of doing. They are not of the best class; otherwise they would be included under 'Mechanics.' 'Mantle maintenance' does not show much increase. 'Lamp-lighters': the figure is very much the

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same. It fluctuates a little. The figure for mains is somewhat more in the winter than in the summer. That is due to abnormal circumstances, I should think. Then 'Odd Men,' an item which has been already mentioned, show a considerable decrease. In the summer time we have only 86; in the winter we have 315. That arises from two reasons. One is that a larger number of men are employed in the departments to which odd men are attached—such as carbonising, coke handling, and so on. The other thing is that, on the whole, the men who are put on for the heavy winter months are not quite so regular in their time-keeping as those who have been attached to the company winter and summer, and therefore a greater reserve of men has to be provided in order to make up for their absences. You see, a gang of stokers, for instance, cannot work unless it is complete. You require three or four men to work in a gang of stokers, and unless you have those three or four men (whichever the gang may be) you are not able to carry on the work. If a four-handed gang is to work you cannot carry on the work with three, and if a three-handed gang is to work you cannot carry on the work with two. So that you have to have a certain amount of odd men available to make those gangs complete and set them to work.

851. What do you mean by having them 'available'? You are not paying them, are you?—Odd men differ from all the others in the list in this respect—that they are paid daily. They attend at the works at the various times when, as they know, shifts are made up—at 6 in the morning, 2 in the afternoon, and 10 o'clock at night. They have a night's work or a shift's work, and they are paid for the work at the expiration of it. In that respect they differ from all the other men in our employ, who are paid once a week.

852. The CHAIRMAN: The 315 odd men mentioned here were actually working on that Friday morning?—Yes; they were actually working there.

853. None of them were exactly in reserve, were they? If working, you would not so describe them?—No, not the 315, but there may have been twice or three times that number in reserve for aught I know. There may have been 500 or 600 odd men, or even more than that, available and ready and wanting work, but we only required to make up 315.

854. Mr. J. J. DENT: They correspond to the casual labourer in a grain warehouse?—Yes. They are quite casual hands. Some men prefer that life. I do not know why it is that they prefer to take odd chances. I think it is that they have other ways of making up their wages. When not working for us they may be working for greengrocers, for all I know, or engaged in some other kind of trade which involves a certain amount of irregularity. They come and place themselves in the rank when it is convenient to them, and take odd chances.

855. The CHAIRMAN: What proportion of the 300 odd men could you get to be regular hands?—It is rather difficult to say.

856. You do not draft men from that lot into more regular pay, do you?—Yes. Every season there is a certain amount of leakage. A man either betters himself or he puts himself in a worse position. If he betters himself it means that he is able to leave our service and start something fresh, where he will get a better rate of pay.

857. Supposing that you were taking on new men, as you would naturally do occasionally, would you look to these odd men to recruit your regular ranks, or are they recruited from elsewhere?—They are recruited in both ways. In some cases our regular men are put on by recommendations from men who have already worked for us. For instance, the winter stoker has very often worked in the brickfields in the summer time. He

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has had a mate working with him, and he has told him that if he writes up in time he may get the chance of a winter's work, and we prefer a man recommended like that to a man that we know nothing whatever about.

858. I take it that you do not go out of your way much to select the odd men, and that they are rather an irregular sort of workman.—As a rule they are, but if we found a good one among them we should say, 'You are a very good chap. We will give you a regular job,' and put him on to the regular job. That would be left to the foremen to settle.

859. MR. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The odd men really represent all your casual labour?—Yes.

860. And you have to rely on casual labour more in winter than in summer?—Certainly.

861. Because the regular labour that you can get in the winter is not certain to be quite so regular?—That applies only to the proportion, not to the numbers. It can be dealt with in two ways. We have a greater number of men employed. If it were only dealt with on that basis we should require the same proportion of odd men in the winter as in the summer; but the fact is that the men employed in the winter time are less regular in their habits and attendance than the men who are with us all the year round.

862. Therefore you have a larger number of pure casuals in the winter than you have in the summer?—Yes.

863. You have a lot of men on simply for the winter, but you are dealing now with your regular hands?—Supposing that a man sees his way clear to taking a month's work with us in the winter, he is far less likely to put himself out in cases of emergency than a man who is employed by us for twelve months. The man who is not with us all the year round may want an evening off, and he takes it without asking us, but a man regularly in our employ would know quite well that if he did that sort of thing he would be 'called over the coals.'

864. That illustrates the increase in the sense of responsibility of the men when they are more regularly employed?—Yes, quite so. That is a very fair deduction to make from what I have told you. I have nothing more to say with regard to the number of men.

865. How are these men taken on? Does the foreman take them on?—In 99 per cent. of the cases, I should think, the foremen take on the men who are in the list which I have handed to you. Sometimes a letter of introduction is brought. Sometimes a clergyman of one or other of the parishes writes a letter. Sometimes an interested tradesman writes a letter, or sometimes a Borough Councillor writes a letter. I should think that not more than 1 per cent. of the men are taken on other than by the foremen. There is another way in which the increase of our staff is brought about, and that is by the sons of those who are already in our employ. We have a father in our employ for a good many years, and when his sons come along he is in most cases anxious that they should obtain employment with us as he has done, and he speaks to his foreman. That is how they get put on.

866. You have not many boys in your employ?—No, we have not many boys. We have practically only boys in one of our shops—the stove-repairing shop.

867. At what age do they come to you—eighteen or twenty?—They come at eighteen. We found that the regulations of the Factory Act were so irksome that the directors issued the regulation that we should not take on any lads younger than eighteen, at which time they are old enough to look after themselves.

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868. The CHAIRMAN: How many men is a foreman set over? That varies, I suppose?—It varies. There is no rule whatever. Sometimes he may have a dozen men under him and sometimes he may have a 100. It all depends upon the particular work which they are doing. There is no rule or regulation with regard to that at all.

869. Is payment made through the foreman?—No, no money whatever passes through him. It is a very bad and pernicious system. I believe that at one time the foreman used to draw from £40 up to £100 on a Saturday, and he used to pay the men. It was a very wrong principle altogether. That is now altered. Although it is an exceedingly troublesome thing to do, every man's money is worked out for him by the office. He goes to the office for it, and it is paid to him.

870. What length of employment is it?—The terms of employment are these: there are the odd men whom we have already dealt with; then the weekly engagement—that is to say, a week's notice on either side. Those are what we may call our general conditions. Then the special conditions are for those who are what we call co-partners—the men who work under agreement. The agreement is a definite engagement on our part to give a man work for a period varying from three months up to twelve months, and the great bulk of our men work under such agreements. The origin of it was, as perhaps you may have heard, in order to prevent a large number of men giving notice to us at the same time. At the time of our strike in 1889 all the stokers gave notice at one time. In order to obviate that we instituted a series of agreements, to fall in so many every week. It is not compulsory. The men can sign them or not as they please, but those who do sign partake in the prosperity of the Company. At present the men who have signed are getting ten per cent. on their wages as a result of being under agreement, so you may realise that there is no difficulty in getting the bulk to sign.

871. When you say 'the bulk,' you have to take off the odd men. Would it be 5,000, or not so many?—No, I should think about 4,000.

872. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: That is under agreement?—Under agreement.

873. Any of these classes can come under agreement?—Yes, and they do.

874. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Except the odd men?—Yes. They are hardly a class.

875. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Mechanics, labourers, foremen, lightermen, &c., can all come under agreement?—Yes, and they do avail themselves of it.

876. It is not compulsory, is it, to come under agreement?—No, it is not compulsory.

877. Therefore, supposing that you found a set against it among the men, and that fewer and fewer people would sign the agreement, your system would gradually fade away, would it not?—Under those circumstances it would; but as the agreement operates to our mutual advantage, that case does not arise.

878. You have not been faced with that difficulty?—No, we have not; and I do not think we shall be.

879. Mr. D. M. WATSON: The men would lose the 10 per cent. if they did not sign?—Yes. Our difficulty is to keep the agreements under, and to be sure that we have not more men under agreement than we can find work for. We have that experience on the other side.

880. The CHAIRMAN: How is the bonus paid? Is it paid yearly or

half-yearly?—It is declared yearly after the 30th June. It is credited to the men half in cash and half in shares in the Company.

881. How is the work paid for? Is it piecework or timework, or what?—There is a certain amount of piecework, but the great bulk of the work is day work paid for by the hour. The unloading of coals is nearly all piecework, and the coal handling is piecework. That is practically all the piecework. All the other work is day work, paid for at day work rates.

882. We have already dealt with the question of winter and summer staffs. Perhaps you can tell us something about the summer occupations of the people who leave your service in the summer. Do they go to brickfields, for instance?—I think that the bulk of the stokers go bricking. Our best stokers, at any rate, do. They give us notice early in the year—some time in February or March—and then they go to the brickfields in the summer.

883. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You say that your best stokers do. Your best stokers are men under yearly agreements, are they not?—No, not necessarily. Some of them prefer to come to us in the winter to do stoking, and to go to the brickfields in the summer.

884. I suppose that they can make more money in the brickfields?—Yes, they can make more money in the brickfields.

885. But they come back to you regularly every winter?—Yes, they come back to us. They are regular winter men.

886. The CHAIRMAN: They are not profit sharers, are they?—Yes, they are under agreement. If we can see our way clear to allowing a man to sign an agreement for three months (that is the minimum) he comes under the profit sharing.

887. You meet them in that way, and make it easier for them to go to the brickfields?—Yes.

888. Do you know whether they go to the same places every year?—Pretty well so, I think, just as in the same way they come to us every winter.

889. That accounts for a large number—500?—Yes.

890. This is a general statement?—Yes.

891. What about the other men?—It is difficult to say what the other men do in the summer time.

892. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do many of them come from timber work at the Surrey Commercial Docks, because that is slack in the winter?—Yes, some of them do. Men have written to me to say that they work at deal carrying and dock work in the summer.

893. The deal carrier is a strong man and just the type of man that you want, is he not?—Yes, he is the type of man we want. He makes a good stoker. Some of the men are employed on London buildings in the summer. Some of them act as bricklayers' labourers and some even go house-painting and decorating in the summer, and they stoke in the winter. There are a great number of cases, and I am afraid that I cannot particularise them any more than that.

894. You do not keep the places of these regular winter men open for them, as it were, do you?—We do in effect. We know at what time of the year they are coming back, and they generally write to the foreman saying when they are coming back. When they come they are put into the yard as yard labourers until the time comes for their place to be ready in the retort house. Then they are transferred from the yard to the retort house.

895. If one of them said that he was coming back and you wanted him

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Dec. 14, 1905. before he came, and someone else was there, that one would be taken on, would he not?—The one who was there first would be taken on.

Mr. CHARLES CARPENTER. 896. I suppose that the absent man would get to know if he was likely to be squeezed out in that way?—Yes. I do not think that any get squeezed out in that way. They know too well the state of affairs.

897. Mr. J. J. DENT: If they have worked for you before you give them the preference, I suppose?—Yes. A man who has worked with us before always has the preference. The same principle applies in discharging men in the late winter or early spring. We get rid, first, of those who have come on last.

898. The CHAIRMAN: The men go from one kind of work to the other in quite a businesslike, regular way?—Yes. They know exactly how to set about it.

899. What it comes to is that they are men with two trades?—Yes. They know exactly our conditions and when they will be wanted, just as they know the conditions in the brickfields. They know how we do business quite as well as they know how it is done there.

900. And they take precautions accordingly?—Yes.

901. What sort of rates of pay do such men get when working with you?—They vary. Six shillings a shift is about the most pay. They work six and a-half shifts on an average. That is 39s. a week. The highest pay is about 7s. 4d. a shift, and there again they work six and a-half shifts.

902. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Is that according to the class of work?—No, not quite. I may mention that some are working two shifts in the twenty-four hours, and some are working three shifts in the twenty-four hours. Those working two shifts, who start at six and finish about half-past four, earn 7s. 4d. or thereabouts. Those who start at the same time and finish about half-past one earn 6s. They are doing the same class of work, although not quite the same as regards quantity. They take longer over it. The amount of money paid for work done is proportionate in both cases. It does not matter to us whether we spend 1s. on a man who is earning 7s. 4d. for work or whether we spend it on a man earning 6s. We get the same amount of work done for the shilling in both cases.

903. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do the men decide whether they will have three shifts or two shifts?—They decided in the beginning when the work of the particular stations was settled, and it has been kept to ever since. They have not raised the question, and they have not been asked to alter it.

904. It is merely a question of whether they would like to do more work for more money?—Yes.

905. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Do your men subscribe to a Pension Fund?—Yes. That is voluntary. They can subscribe if they like.

906. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Do many of them subscribe?—I should think that 25 per cent., perhaps 30 per cent.—not more, subscribe to the Pension Fund.

907. Is there a Sick Fund as well?—There is a Sick Fund as well, and everyone, practically, subscribes to that.

908. The CHAIRMAN: Is there any compulsion?—No; it is not compulsory. We have also an Accident Fund, which was formed to meet the obligations imposed by the Employers' Liability Act; and that, too, is voluntary. Nearly all subscribe to that. It is very rare to have a man who objects.

909. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Is that a regular, sanctioned scheme?—Yes; that is a regular, sanctioned scheme. It has the official sanction as being, on the whole, not less favourable to the general body of workmen and their dependents. It is sealed by the Registrar of Friendly Societies.

910. Mr. J. J. DENT: Under the Workmen's Compensation Act?— Under the Workmen's Compensation Act. I will hand to you a copy of the rules. [*The rules were handed to the Committee.*]

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911. The CHAIRMAN: What is your opinion of the social and industrial character of the men?—On the whole, I can give a very favourable reply to that. I think that I might say that the social and industrial character of the men has improved enormously in the last twenty-five or thirty years. I was very much impressed with that some ten years ago, although the change has been going on for a longer time. About ten years ago I had to get the men's signatures at one of the works to some document or other. It really does not matter now what it was. I got the signatures of about 95 per cent. of them; but twenty years ago it was a very rare thing indeed for a stoker to be able to write his name. They almost invariably made their mark. Then, the amount of drinking that goes on now bears no comparison whatever to the amount of drinking that went on twenty or twenty-five years ago.

912. Do you think that public opinion amongst the men themselves is stronger against it?—That is one reason.

913. Mr. J. J. DENT: I think that the same thing applies in all trades nowadays. There is much less drinking amongst workmen than there used to be?—Yes. I think that there is now more to occupy their minds than there used to be. The workman now is less (I was going to say) of a beast of burden than he used to be, and was looked upon as, twenty-five or thirty years ago. He is intelligent, and he takes an interest in the current topics of the day. He reads the papers intelligently, and I think that he looks upon life very much as we do ourselves, feeling that he is here to make the best of the circumstances in which he has been placed.

914. The CHAIRMAN: Do you attribute that to your profit-sharing scheme, to some extent?—To some extent only.

915. Do you get a better pick of workmen, do you think, than people who do not adopt such schemes? Would you be inclined to say that?—I think that we do, because the thriftless man automatically gets outside of the arrangement. For instance, a man came to me about a month or five weeks ago to know whether I could put him on. I asked him where he used to work. He said: 'I used to work with a man named Bowley.' I remembered, after thinking a little, that Bowley was a riveter. I thought: 'If this man was working in a riveting gang, he must have been earning very good money'; so I said: 'You were earning very good money?' 'Yes. When I left I drew out about £17.' I said: 'Perhaps if you had not had that £17 you would not have left?' He said: 'There is a good deal of truth in that. I do not think I should.' There, you see, is a case where a thriftless man automatically puts himself outside. The temptation is too strong for him.

916. It is a sort of automatic sifting process that you have?—Yes; that is so. Unless a man shows that he appreciates the arrangement of the system, and saves up his money and keeps his stock when he has it appropriated to him, he puts himself outside the pale of it, as in the instance that I gave you.

917. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: There is always the possibility that a man, after saving with you for some time, may feel 'Here, I have £20. I will get it at once and spend it'?—Certainly. You cannot alter human nature. All that you can do is to improve it. I know that our men are thrifty to an extent that no one would have dreamed in days gone by they would be; £240,000 of our stock, I think, is in the hands of our workmen.

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918. The CHAIRMAN: If a man leaves your service what happens? Does he sell out his stock?—Sometimes he does.

919. He is not obliged to?—No, not any more than you would be obliged to sell out stock which you had.

920. Mr. J. J. DENT: He ranks as an ordinary shareholder?—Exactly the same. He has his share certificate just as anyone else would. Of course when a man has saved £100 or £150 he may sell out to buy a business, or do things of that kind. It is always for some good reason.

921. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: In fact they do not sell out?—They do not.

922. The majority of your men keep their money in the business?—Yes. We have some who do not. One or two men have pawned their stock. They have raised money at the pawnbrokers on their certificates. We have a few of such cases at some of our works, but, at the very most, they are under 2 per cent.

923. The CHAIRMAN: With regard to the tone of public opinion, a man who got drunk at his business would probably be cashiered in most businesses, would he not? If the foreman knew that he was a man in the habit of getting drunk when not at his business would he dismiss him then?—No, I do not think he would.

924. Public opinion would not back him up in that?—No. As long as a man behaved himself at work, and worked properly I do not think the foreman, except in some special case, would go beyond that. If the man's conduct had become a scandal among his fellow men and he was always drunk when away from work, or was known to knock his wife about or behave disgracefully, in all probability he would be cashiered and discharged, but that would be quite an exceptional case.

925. Can the foremen dismiss men?—Yes, they can in a sense, but the real practice is that no man is discharged without written notice, and that written notice is signed by the superintendent of the works as well as by the foremen. The foremen are a very excellent set of men, but they are put on from the better class of workmen themselves, and I think that sometimes, perhaps, they may be rather hard taskmasters. So that with regard to a matter such as discharging a man we think it is just as well that it should be in the hands of someone who is above foremen's rank.

926. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: The amount of stock in the hands of each workman depends on the amount of time that he has been with you, does it not?—Yes, it does, and it also depends on his rate of pay. Some of them earn 50 per cent. more than others.

927. The CHAIRMAN: Some of them leave in the whole of their bonus, do they not?—The great bulk of them leave in the whole of it.

928. Mr. J. J. DENT: The amount of stock that they have pretty well equals, I suppose, the total amount of bonus which you pay?—Yes.

929. It has nearly all been left in?—Yes, nearly all.

930. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Are the holdings pretty even, or have some large and some small holdings? It must vary, of course?—It varies. Some men are naturally more saving than others, and they have bought stock with what they have put by in addition to what has been appropriated.

931. They have bought stock in addition?—Yes. That will always happen. If we started again to-morrow it would happen. There are some who have the habit of saving and the knack of putting by.

932. The fact of having a nest egg induces them to put by more?—Yes.

933. Mr. J. J. DENT: There is a good deal of difference in the possibility of saving?—Yes.

934. It is much easier for some to save?—Yes, a man may have nine or ten children or a sick wife. It is not always the man who earns most money who saves most, and it is not always the man with the least family.

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935. MR. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You say that the social character has improved very much?—Yes.

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936. How about the industrial character. Have you evidence that your men work more than they used to do?—Yes, I think that as they become more intelligent they do not loaf as a matter of principle. When I was a boy it was, I think, a matter of principle among the workmen to do as little as they possibly could.

937. Do you refer to workmen generally, or to gas workmen?—My experience was with engineers, with mechanics, and to some extent with gas workers. I should apply it pretty well all round to those with whom I came into contact.

938. MR. D. M. WATSON: Do you find that the bonus helps you considerably in the way of making the men zealous workers?—Yes. They take an interest in their work, and they realise that they are just as well off in body when the day is finished if they have done a fair day's work as if they have not, and they have the great satisfaction of knowing that they have earned their money and done something to entitle them to the bonus which they will get at the end of the year if the Company is prosperous. I am sure that it has put a better spirit and better feeling into the men than existed before. Another thing is that we have their co-operation in many other ways. A man never hesitates now to tell us if something is being wasted or if something could be done in a more economical way, or that a man named 'So and So' is a loafer and a disgrace to profit sharing. You get help in all sorts of such ways.

939. MR. W. A. BAILWARD: Perhaps the question was asked before I came in whether you employ any casual labour. You must, I take it, at times like yesterday and the day before, which were foggy?—I explained earlier that out of 3,127 men in December, 1904, we employed 315 odd men on casual labour. In the summer time, out of 5,148, we employ 86.

940. But on a foggy morning how would it be?—That would not make any difference. We do not increase our men on account of fog.

941. MR. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You do not?—No.

942. How is that?—We do not require to.

943. You increase the service of gas?—We have a very large storage, and then, you see, we have always a certain amount of work to do other than making gas, and in times of great pinch we should draft in so many men to the retort house from another kind of work to get us over the peak of the load. When they had helped us in that way we should put them back again.

944. You find it quite possible to have your staff unaffected by fog?—Yes.

945. You do not increase it in times of fog?—Practically not. I may say with regard to casual labour that at one time there was a tremendous amount of it. I dare say that 20 per cent. of our retort-house labour was casual.

946. MR. W. A. BAILWARD: Do you intentionally de-casualise your labour?—Yes.

947. MR. J. J. DENT: It is not necessary to have the same proportion of casual labour as you used to have?—No.

948. MR. W. H. BEVERIDGE: When did the change take place?—Twenty years ago.

949. THE CHAIRMAN: Before the strike?—Yes.

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950. How far has machinery altered the memcers that you employ?—With the increase in machinery our business has increased. Machinery has helped us to make gas at a lower price and consequently more people are able to use it, and therefore we have to make more gas; so that although machinery has reduced our charges for handling a ton of coal, yet the result has been that we are able to buy and handle more tons of coals.

951. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You have not reduced the size of your staff in the last ten years?—No; on the contrary, our staff has increased as the business has increased.

952. The CHAIRMAN: As compared with ten years ago you employ more men?—Yes.

953. Mr. J. J. DENT: It has increased enormously?—Yes.

953a. The main effect of machinery on the numbers employed has been to make the work more regular in winter and in summer?—That is the main result with regard to carbonising.

954. Mr. D. M. WATSON: If you had not had machinery the number of men employed would have increased enormously?—Yes.

955. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you find any very significant difference in efficiency between your casuals and your more regular people?—When a man is working in a gang he has to do his fourth of the work if it is a four-handed gang, no matter what he is. If it is a three-handed gang he has to do his third of the work. I would rather not have casual men, because they want more looking after than regular men.

956. You do not make up a whole gang with casual men, but you put casual men in with the others?—Wherever there is a vacancy. With four men working here and four men working there, if a vacancy occurs he goes to this one or that one, as the case may be.

957. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: You can only employ men who are physically pretty capable?—Yes.

958. It is hard work?—It is hard work.

959. Do you have a large percentage of sickness?—No. I cannot give the percentage, but it is small. That is shown, I think, by the cost of the Sick Fund. I am afraid that I cannot give you the figures, but I can tell you as a fact that the result of the Sick Fund shows that sickness is very low. Another important thing that is brought about by our co-partnership method of working is that since that system has been introduced the number of accidents has decreased something like 30 per cent. or 40 per cent.

960. There is more care about the men?—Yes. There, again, the men help in the matter. They see something that is not right or is not safe, and they do not mind telling you about it. We have a jury to sit every week to inquire into the accidents, if there are any, which have happened during the week. Every accident is inquired into, and in very many of those cases recommendations are made by which accidents of a similar character may be obviated in the future. We have found that very helpful indeed. It is very difficult for either a superintendent or a foreman to have his eyes open to every weak spot in a large works.

961. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Do you mean a jury of stokers—a jury of your own men?—Yes, a jury of our own men. That has worked most excellently.

962. Mr. D. M. WATSON: With regard to the employment of these odd men, I suppose the foreman takes them on?—Yes, the foreman takes them on at the various shifts.

963. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: When did you make the change about the foremen not paying the money? Was it long ago?—I should say that it was completed about ten years ago.

964. You have found that a very great improvement?—Yes, very great. Dec. 14, 1865.  
 What happened was that the foremen mostly paid it in public-houses, and  
 a great deal had to be paid to the good of the publican. It was most  
 barbarous treatment. Mr. CHARLES  
 CARPENTER.

965. Mr. J. J. DENT: The foreman took his men to the house that  
 treated him best?—Yes. It is stopped by Act of Parliament.

966. The CHAIRMAN: I think that it is. At any rate it ought to be  
 stopped.

967. Mr. J. J. DENT: It was a common practice twenty-five years ago?  
 —It was.

968. The CHAIRMAN: You have given us most useful information, and  
 we are much obliged to you.—I am afraid that it has been too skeleton.  
 If I can supplement it at any time by giving written information, I shall  
 be glad to do so.

969. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Perhaps you will allow me to communi-  
 cate with you.

*(The Witness withdrew.)*

# MINUTES OF EVIDENCE:

## Special Committee

ON

## UNSKILLED LABOUR.

*Present—*

Mr. W. A. BAILWARD,  
Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN,  
Mr. J. J. DENT,  
Mr. C. J. HAMILTON,

Mr. T. MACKAY,  
Mr. D. M. WATSON,  
Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE,  
*Secretary.*

Mr. T. MACKAY in the Chair.

Jan. 11, 1900. Mr. JOHN SPURLING (Master Carman and Wharfinger): *Examined.*

Mr. JOHN  
SPURLING.

970. The CHAIRMAN: I think that you know generally the sort of errand that you have been good enough to come to us upon?—Yes.

971. First of all, perhaps we can take your view as a wharfinger. Would you tell us where your wharves are, and where you have had experience?—Yes. There is the Victoria Park Wharf on the Regent's Canal, in Bethnal Green.

972. Is that close to where the canal runs into the Thames?—Yes. It is about a mile and a half inland from the Thames.

973. Is yours the only wharf there, or is it one of a number of wharves?—The one that I occupy is the only one that does a general wharfage trade. I introduced that trade into the neighbourhood myself. There was no general wharf there. There were only private wharves. There is a range of warehouses in Regent's Canal Docks where we can berth a steamer up to 2,000 tons register.

974. So that you can speak to us as to two different wharves?—Yes. There are two wharves there—Durham Wharf and Victoria Park Wharf. They are on the canal. When I found that one wharf worked well I succeeded in obtaining another. Then, after that experience, I got a third one.

975. How many men have you at this group?—This paper will give you the number of men.

976. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Perhaps you will go through the paper and state what you have written down in answer to the questions and develop it, so that we may get it on the Shorthand Notes?—Certainly.

977. The CHAIRMAN: What sorts of ships do you unload there?—We have Norwegian ships regularly. Jan. 11, 1906.

978. Steamships?—Steamships of 1,000 tons burden.

979. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: This is not in the canal, but in the Regent's Canal Docks?—In the Regent's Canal Docks. I have a range of warehouses, as I say.

Mr. JOHN  
SPURLING.

980. The CHAIRMAN: That is at No. 3. At the other two there are barges, I suppose?—Simply for barge work only. We collect *ex*-ships in dock or river, and convey the traffic to those wharves.

981. What sort of cargo—one special sort of cargo or general cargo?—The majority is paper from the Continent, and then there are wood and iron.

982. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: What sort of iron?—Mostly Belgian iron.

983. \*Manufactured bars—angle irons, and so on?—Yes, manufactured iron.

984. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: That is all import?—That is all import.

985. Have you much export as well?—No, no export.

986. The CHAIRMAN: What becomes of the ships then?—They go back empty at present, until the end of the year. We have export goods carried in barges from Regent's Canal Dock to steamers in the Tilbury, Albert, and Victoria Docks.

987. I suppose that you could load steamers there?—Yes.

988. But they go away empty?—For the moment they do.

989. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: There is no facility for getting export cargo?—No. We ship very little to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and other places. It is principally paper that we have in these steamers that I have been speaking of.

990. The CHAIRMAN: As to the class of work that is done, is the stowage what you would describe as skilled work?—No, it is hardly skilled work, and yet it needs some one who is used to it.

991. Is that work done by stevedores?—The discharging of the steamers is done by stevedores. The receiving from a ship and storing into warehouses or into barges is done by casual labourers.

992. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you employ these men yourself?—Not the stevedores. That is done by a contracting man in most cases.

993. The unloading from the ship is done through a contractor?—Yes, but not in all cases. At times I have done it myself, but you know the cost of a steamer per day is rather heavy, and it is necessary for the ship-owners to get the work done as quickly as they possibly can, and for that reason they employ men on piecework, and those men earn about 1s. an hour. At times there is a bonus given to them if they get the cargo out within a certain time.

994. The CHAIRMAN: But does the same set of men do this trade at your place always?—Yes, always.

995. Practically the same men?—Yes. You understand that they only work at the ship. They do not work ashore as we call it. They do not do anything on the quay.

996. One or two of them are heads of the gang, and they enter into the contract with the shipowners, I suppose?—Yes.

997. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: You say that they get a bonus. What sort of bonus is it?—Some work it in this way: the contractor will say, 'I am getting so much' (for instance, 1s. per ton) 'on the whole of the cargo. Now, if you, twenty or thirty men, get this out in a certain time it will amount to so much, and I will give you a percentage over and above what I am paying you per hour.' The men go for it.



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Mr. JOHN  
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998. Could you say at all whether that bonus is usually earned? Is it usual for them to have a bonus?—As a rule it is earned.

999. Does it come to a large proportion of their hourly wages?—Yes, providing that there is nothing to stop it, such as anything happening to the ship's crane or the weather being bad or something like that.

1000. Usually, they earn more than 1s. per hour?—Usually, they earn more than 1s. per hour.

1001. The CHAIRMAN: 3d. or 6d. more?—Probably 2d. or 3d. more.

1002. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Are they guaranteed 1s. per hour?—Yes.

1003. The stevedores' men are guaranteed that for unloading paper, wood, and iron?—Yes. If the traffic is in bulk, if it is all one, and a very low class of traffic, they will not get quite so much.

1004. 1s. per hour is very much more than an ordinary labourer gets? Yes, it is. 1s. per hour is the full price for a union man. I am speaking now of union stevedores.

1005. You know that the stevedores' union for loading get only 8d. an hour and 1s. overtime?—Yes. For instance, the General Steam Navigation Company have a great number of ships coming in. They pay their men only 8d. an hour, but the foreman gets more. Then, if they get the cargo out very quickly they have, I believe, an arrangement whereby they give the men something extra. Why I should say that is this: We regularly have from certain of the General Steam Navigation Company's steamers cargo two or three times every week, and sometimes when we want the various packages sorted, or rather some put on one part of the barge and some on another part, there is a complaint, and we cannot get it done because the men say 'No, we want to get this out.' If the whole is cleared away in a certain time they get a little extra.

1006. The CHAIRMAN: But, then, why do they get rather better terms? Is it because the General Steam Navigation Company has more regular work, and there is a longer spell of work?—I do not think they are quite so good terms.

1007. But is it because the work is more regular? How do they get men for 8d. when you pay 1s.?—Because the work is more regular. There are more boats coming in. In the cases that I am speaking of the contractor who takes it entirely has casual work on only one or two ships a week.

1008. The stevedores are not continuously employed; I understand?—No.

1009. Would you say that they are employed on three or four or five days a week on an average?—It depends very often on the men whether they are engaged. For instance, there are certain points where they are taken on, and each contractor likes his own men if he can get them; but if he is not there, and some other contractor comes along wanting some more stevedores, he will take those men on. I do not think the men altogether would care about working every day in the week. I do not think they would do so if you asked them to.

1010. It is no doubt very hard work?—It is hard work, or some of it.

1011. Partly because they cannot get it, and partly because they do not care about it, they only work for three or four days a week?—Yes, they get into this kind of rut, this kind of groove: 'It does not matter. If I do not get it to-day, I will get it to-morrow.'

1012. You have been speaking of the stevedores?—Yes.

1013. Now, take the shore man.—The men on the shore are a very unfortunate class from every point of view. They are very often physically unfit to do the day's work—first, because they do not earn the money to

support themselves; secondly, because they do not take care of what little money they do get. As a rule, the ordinary casual dock labourer is hardly fit for the work that he is put to.

1014. Would you think that that description applied to the people employed at the London Docks? We have heard from them that they have attempted, with some success, to give regular work to their casual men, or to men who were formerly casual, and they seem to think that they have rather an improved set of men now. Would the description which you give apply to such men?—It would naturally improve the condition of the man if he was to have regular work. That would come about. If he had regular work, and he was a man of grit at all, it would improve his condition naturally.

1015. What number of these men is there regularly employed in your three places? Take the Regent's Canal first.—(No answer.)

1016. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: To what extent are the shore men that you employ yourself quite unskilled men?—There is no need to be skilled, and we call them 'unskilled,' although probably they may have a trade. For instance, I belong to a Young Men's Christian Association, and I have had a good number of men under my notice in the years past. The last time that I walked down there I saw a butcher, a man who really knew his business. I was surprised to see him. How it was that he came to such a condition I do not know, but there he was with the others with a truck. There was a clerk from a stationer's warehouse, and there was a man who held a position as a traveller for a baby linen place in the City. He had been out of work for twelve months. Those were three men that I knew personally. The other men we do not know.

1017. That means that for this work no special skill is needed?—Yes.

1018. How do you pay the men? Is it 6*d.* an hour?—6*d.* an hour.

1019. Do you pay them yourself every day?—Our foremen pay the men they take on. Each foreman pays his own men.

1020. The CHAIRMAN: About what number have you there?—We employ about thirty extra men when a steamer is discharging. We keep, I think, seven regular men, and we have about thirty extra men for about three days. We discharge a steamer in about two days.

1021. How many steamers a week?—We only have at the present time one a fortnight, but at that particular dock we do barge work also. We have two or three at a time sometimes, and then we may want eight or nine men.

1022. Eight or nine more?—Eight or nine more. That would not be in addition to the thirty. We try to avoid working barges and steamers at the same time if we can. We cannot always do it; but we try to do so.

1023. You have always seven permanent men, and with a steamer in thirty extra men. When you have no steamer in you sometimes have barges with eight or nine extra men?—Yes, and that goes down, perhaps, to one or two extra men.

1024. Are the permanent men paid weekly?—Yes.

1025. Are they labourers or foremen?—We commence at about 25*s.* or 26*s.* If we find that a man is a good man, and a man whom, when loading a van, we can depend upon not to give twenty-one packages for twenty, we give him from 30*s.* up to 32*s.* a week. He is only an ordinary man, but we feel that you cannot expect a man to be honest unless you pay him 30*s.* a week.

1026. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: With regard to the odd men, the other thirty, are they very much the same each steamer?—If we can get the

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- Jan. 11, 1906. same men we prefer it, because they know something about the work and the marks and numbers.
- Mr. JOHN SPURLING. 1027. Do you find that you can get the same men to come?—Yes, a good number of them. They wait, and look out, and arrange in some way for even two days' work if they cannot get any more.
1028. The CHAIRMAN: Is it known on which day a steamer will come in? Is it always the same day?—Yes, nearly always.
1029. The men know that?—Yes.
1030. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You know beforehand when it will come in?—Yes.
1031. And the men know?—Yes.
1032. How do they know?—They inquire at the office of the foreman and he is only too glad to tell them if he knows. Ships are always reported at Gravesend. It may be six or seven hours after before a ship is actually in for working, so that there is time to give the men notice.
1033. You do not send anyone to give the men notice, as it were, but you wait for them to come and ask?—They nearly always come and ask. At times a man out of the regular men may know of somebody who wants a day's work and he may tell him, but as a rule these odd men generally wait. Sometimes they go to our other wharves. We prefer men who understand the work.
1034. Your other wharves are in Bethnal Green?—Yes.
1035. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Have you ever, under any circumstances, failed to get as many casual men as you have wanted?—At Bethnal Green we have.
1036. But not at this particular dock?—No.
1037. The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other similar businesses in the neighbourhood?—There are other similar businesses; we are surrounded with wharves.
1038. Do these men go from one wharf to another, or do they stick to yours pretty much?—They go probably from one place to another.
1039. Could you say, or is it impossible to say, how many days' work in a week they get?—I could not say.
1040. I suppose no one could really?—No.
1041. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: The men are not all taken on; they can leave you and go elsewhere on the same day?—All who apply are not taken on. I have known fifty men to apply for work when we have only wanted twenty.
1042. Is fifty about the most you have had applying?—Yes, I should say it is.
1043. If you took on thirty of those, the remaining twenty might quite likely go off and get work elsewhere?—They could do so.
1044. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you take them on for less than four hours at a time, or have you a rule that you must take them for at least four hours?—It would be generally half a day or a day—more often a day than half a day. We seldom take them on for as little as four hours. The foremen arrange the work, and they either want a man for a day or not at all generally.
1045. The CHAIRMAN: Is this all the year round?—Yes.
1046. You are not busier at one season than at another?—No, it is all the year round.
1047. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You say that you are getting only one steamer a fortnight. Were you getting more before?—At times we get a large sailing barge carrying from one hundred and fifty to two hundred tons. That would mean, perhaps, seven men for two days. You must understand that where we unload by barge or by sailer it is not so quick,

because we have to do the whole thing. The men who are paid 6d. an hour do not work so quickly or methodically as the ship worker or the stevedore does. As they discharge the ship so we have to take hold, and where they do perhaps five tons an hour the men we take on at the wharf only do perhaps about one.

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1048. When a barge is being unloaded you are employing all the men?—Always. That is so with regard to sailing barges where there is no ship's gear or steam crane as they have on steamships.

1049. You have not any regular list of casual men from which you take them, have you?—No.

1050. Your foremen naturally give a preference to the men you know?—The foreman always gives the preference to the men that he knows. Out of many men he may know which are the best. There are always some men better than others.

1051. With regard to the places where men are taken on, are there other employers at the same place taking on men? Is there a sort of common stand from which you and other employers take on men. There are certain taking-on places at big docks?—Yes.

1052. Do you take on men at the gate of your premises or do you go to a common taking-on place?—The bulk of the business carried on at Regent's Canal Dock is coal. That is almost another business, as it were. Those men are paid per ton, and they earn from 10s. to £1 in eight or ten hours. The amount of money they earn is surprising, but it is very hard work. They unload a steamer of one thousand tons in a night.

1053. The CHAIRMAN: You have not much to do with that?—Nothing at all to do with it. The colliers are a class of men by themselves.

1054. With regard to the other two docks that you have, what is the class of work there?—Our traffic is mostly in paper. We have very little wood and iron, but we have some. Out of the twenty-eight or thirty thousand tons that we get a year to those wharves (say thirty thousand tons for the two) we only get about 10 per cent. of wood and iron. We generally have seven men to a gang unloading a barge. If we were unloading two at one time it would mean fourteen odd men. There again we have almost always the same men, and they depend on that casual work. If it is only two days' work they are there. If it is three or four, or whatever it may be, they are there. I may say with regard to some men that we have as odd men, we at one time tried a number of men weekly, but we found they did not serve us so well as weekly servants as they did as casual servants. They seem to want a day off. Whether it was because of their past experience or not we do not know. We thought that it would suit them better, and that they would serve us better if they were regular men, and we tried it, but we found that we did not get served so well, and we have not tried it since.

1055. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: How long ago is that?—That is about four years ago.

1056. They did not work so hard?—It was not so much that, but they lost time. We have nothing to say against their work. They worked fairly well.

1057. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: They did not turn up regularly and to time?—They lost time. They seem to want a day.

1058. Mr. J. J. DENT: They get accustomed to casual work?—Yes.

1059. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Is all your work up there done by odd men?—No. Each wharf has regular men.

1060. How many?—I think that it is ten regular men between the two wharves, and the rest are odd men.

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1061. About how many odd men do you think?—Seven to a barge. We may be working three barges, one at one wharf and two at another. At Victoria Park Wharf we have nearly always got men. Now here comes the difficulty. Suppose for instance we will say at Victoria Park we had one wharf and took seven men on regularly, then odd men perhaps would not turn up. We may have to find odd men again, and it causes a bad impression amongst the other men who are on. They say, 'The governors give them a chance, but they do not give us a chance. We will not go there to-morrow.'

1062. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You always have some odd men and these ten permanent men?—Yes, always. At these canal wharves we are employing more or less odd men.

1063. The CHAIRMAN: Are the two wharves close together?—Very close.

1064. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: What number are you always employing do you think—seven?—I should think six or seven odd men always. There is a difficulty with regard to transferring men from one wharf to another. Foremen become jealous. You understand what I mean. One says, 'I do not want to let my men go to the other wharf,' and the foreman at another wharf says, 'If I can hold them in I will do so. Let the others get strangers. I have just got men who understand the work,' and so between the two there is a demand for odd men who know their work. Yet, if there happens to be a want of only two or three men at any time your men go. There may be a job somewhere else for a day or two.

1065. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: You do not adopt the system of an A or B ticket at all, or anything of the kind?—No.

1066. The CHAIRMAN: What amount of the men are there at the second place? Are there a number of similar businesses in the neighbourhood?—Not on the canal.

1067. You have the only two of this class. It would not, therefore, be a feasible suggestion to make to you that there might be some system of tickets not issued by one but by several firms so as to make these men's work more regular and let those who are not employed get away to something else?—I think it could be done.

1068. If several smaller employers could do something in the same way as the Dock Companies had done for themselves, such as issuing tickets, a system, which of course you know, and giving these men a preference, how would that work?—As far as we are concerned, I do not think that it is necessary, because the foremen know their men, and where foremen know their men you may expect as good results as can be got from each foreman. Every week I have a return from each wharf showing the cargo dealt with and the cost, so that the foremen have to look out to see that they get the best men to get the best results. Naturally the foremen know the best men, and they will always give them the preference, so that in our case we do not want the tickets.

1069. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do you find that in times of industrial depression you get a new supply coming down of casual men who have not been hitherto particularly used to dock labour?—Yes.

1070. They may be gradually becoming accustomed to it. Do you get men, for instance, who cannot find work in the building trade or some other trade taking to dock labour as a last chance?—Yes.

1071. Do you find that you get a better supply of labour in a time like this when trade has been bad than you do when trade is brisk?—We get more men and we get men of the building trade. You can tell them by

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their dress. In such cases, although the work may not be heavier than their normal work, it is different. Unloading a barge is different from using a tool in the building trade, and secondly it brings into action muscles that have probably lain dormant. Therefore, the new men may have a good heart to work but are less handy than the old hand. It may be pushing a truck which they are not used to, or picking up parcels. If you say 'Come to-morrow and you will have a job,' you do not find them sometimes.

1072. Mr. J. J. DENT: The work tires them?—Yes. The particular part that has been brought into play begins to ache, and they will not come, and yet you see men not much more than half their size doing the work with ease.

1073. The CHAIRMAN: So that it is to a certain extent skilled work, after all?—Only skilled by practice.

1074. Is there anything that you would like to suggest to us? You know what our object is. It is to see if anything can be done towards regularising work.—I have made some suggestions, and I will read the outlines. 'As wharf labourers: First, I would suggest a labour bureau or office where physically fit unskilled men could register their names. 'Second, the bureau to be situated near the demand for labour'; for instance, at the present time, there are certain taking-on places, as I told you, for stevedores. 'Third, same men where possible to be sent to the same firms, they having some previous experience.' It may be, as I say, pushing a barrow, or it may be discharging a ship from a wharf. Let that wharf have the same men if it can, because they know the traffic. The traffic differs. It is important to know the handling of certain traffic. Each wharf has its particular traffic.

1075. It may be general traffic, but yet it is different from another wharf's traffic?

1076. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: You would have that regulated by the bureau?—I think that that would be best, each wharf understanding and knowing its men. 'Fourth, wherever possible, employers to make men permanent and transfer them from one place to another rather than each place taking on casual men at various times.' Personally, we are going to try it again.

1077. To try again what you thought you failed in?—Yes.

1078. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: To transfer from Regent's Canal Wharf to Durham Wharf and from there to Victoria Park Wharf, you mean?—Yes.

1079. A transfer between your three places?—Yes. We are paying out to odd men that we employ all the week about 5*s.* more per week at 6*d.* per hour than the dock employers are paying their men to whom they pay 25*s.* per week.

1080. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: You think that it would be an economy in employing certain men?—Supposing that we can afford to have a few extra men to compensate for those losing time, it will pay us.

1081. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: How do you arrive at the fact that you are losing 5*s.* per week?—In this way, several wharves employ men at the rate of 25*s.* per week for sixty hours work and 8*d.* an hour over sixty hours. If we were to employ men on the same lines as several of the large wharves do it would be an advantage to us because sixty hours means 30*s.* paid to odd men and we do not get so well served as by men regularly there at 25*s.* per week.

1082. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You think that it would pay you and would also be better for the men?—Yes.

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1083. Mr. J. J. DENT: Provided that you have work to keep them regularly employed?—Yes.

1084. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You think that you will have few transferred men?—We intend to try it. It will not meet the whole of the case because we must employ some casual men; but we are considering it, and shall probably start it soon. We shall re-engage men.

1085. What you are going to do for yourself you think might be done by different wharves owned by different employers? A lot of different employers might have the sort of labour bureau that you suggest?—Yes.

1086. You think that would be possible?—Yes. I think it would meet the views of others.

1087. Have you talked to other wharfingers about it at all?—No. It will mean that the men will not come round the gates of the wharves and the docks in a quantity like they do. Nearly all wharves and wharfingers within a few instances know within a few men from day to day what they want. They are mostly on the telephone and it seems to me very easy.

1088. The effect of that will be that some of your men will get more regular work; but altogether fewer men will be employed?—Yes.

1089. Some who now get a little work will get none at all and others will get more?—No doubt. It will weed out a great number of men who are really physically unfit to do the work. You do not know a man until you take him on. It disheartens one sometimes to see how a man will scheme not to do the work because he is physically unfit to do it. Men make all manner of excuses. If they are in a gang and have to 'follow your leader' as it were, the shifty one, who will try to get out of his work, will cause a lot of delay.

1090. With regard to the man who is physically unfit, do you think that sometimes it is because he has not enough food in him?—That is the great reason.

1091. Do you think that the work of these men is very bad because they have had no work the day before and therefore no food the day before? Is that your experience?—That is almost the whole reason.

1092. The CHAIRMAN: Would there be any jealousy between the different employers? You would all want to have the best men. How would you arrange that if you were all getting your men from one central bureau? Would it not be rather difficult?—I do not think so at all.

1093. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Is not this what you suggest: Each wharf has a certain number of men whom it employs pretty frequently. They would be marked down at the labour bureau as belonging to this or that wharf, and if they are wanted those will be the men that the employer likes and they will go to him. He will practically get him whenever he wants them. When he gets extra pressure and wants outside men he will have to put up with what he can get?—Exactly as we do now.

1094. Only instead of getting men who have not had anything to do for a week as he does now he will get men who on the previous days have been working as outside men for another wharf?—Yes.

1095. The CHAIRMAN: Do you think that there is any disposition on the part of any other wharfingers to fall in with a plan of this sort?—I think so.

1096. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: May I ask you how you came to think of this plan, because it is very much what I myself have had in my mind? I am wondering how it came to suggest itself to you. Is it from your experience?—It seems to me to be a means whereby we can employ men who are wanting work for one thing, and it will, perhaps, weed out the lazy wasters, as we call them. If it is carried out entirely the waster,

the man who will not work, will be noted, and we can advise the bureau. You would get rid of that man. You would gradually weed him out, and he would have to do something for a living. You could deal with that man as he is, but at the present time you do not know him. Jan. 11, 1906.

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1097. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: The bureau would do what you cannot do—namely, eliminate the unfit?—That is just it.

1098. The CHAIRMAN: Have you any more suggestions to make?—Not with regard to the wharves, but I have with regard to cartage.

1099. Perhaps you will tell us in the first instance in regard to cartage how many men you employ?—Shall I read what I have written?

1100. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You have some general suggestions. We should like the facts about the employment of carmen first.—I have had rather a long experience of carmen—years ago as an employée and afterwards as an employer. I have had just over forty years' experience, and that is pretty long, is it not? This is my first suggestion: 'Men who register their names as carmen at our labour bureau are not carmen in any sense of the word.' When I speak of 'labour bureau' at the present time I mean the labour bureau at our Borough Council. That is a note which I have made for my own guide. 'We employers find it difficult to get good men.' Those are two of my items. 'It will take a man nearly three years to fit himself for a general carman.' A man who can come to us as general carriers must have at least three years' experience as a general carman. It may seem a long time, but he must have it.

1101. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: For what purpose—not to learn to drive?—Of course not altogether. Driving is a small part of a carman's business. He has to do all the work incidental to carmen in London. He may go to one place to-day, and he may not go again for a month. There is a lot of men who call themselves carmen who do not know what office to go to at a dock or wharf or railway, or how to go or at what time. They do not know their business. It takes a long time to learn. It takes three years.

1102. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: To get geographical and practical experience?—Yes. A tradesman, a packer, a butcher, corn merchant, or anything like that who takes a man on to-day has his regular customers, who are learned in a few months.

1103. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You mean that for a master carman it is difficult to get good men?—For a master carman, an ordinary general master carman or wharfinger who has goods supplied as we do for distribution all over London to the various docks, wharves, and other places. It would take three years, I am sure.

1104. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: What is a man's wage when he is familiar with the work?—Really good drivers who understand and take care of their horses and who know London and are sober and industrious do not get sufficient wages. They should have at least 35s. per week for driving a pair of horses. That is what I say. I have contended that that should be so. Ever since the dock strike, about sixteen or seventeen years ago, I have been a member of our Master Carmen's Association, and I have been a member of the Council. I have always maintained that 24s. a week is not sufficient wages for a single horse driver, or 26s. for a pair.

1105. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Is that the recognised rate with the Master Carmen's Association?—That is the recognised rate. Some men, I am sorry to say, are only paid 22s. a week as single-horse drivers, or 25s. per week for a pair. That is not sufficient when you consider that a man has to be at the stables at six o'clock in the morning and out until nine, ten, or eleven at night, sometimes in all weathers, and that he never gets time for his meals, but has to get them out at a coffee-shop. He



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sometimes has to wait for two or three hours with a public-house or coffee-shop staring him in the face. A man says sometimes, 'My wages are low. I have not money,' and if there is anything that he can steal, whether his master's or anybody else's, he takes it. You cannot wonder at it. He is put to extra expense—expense beyond that of the ordinary man who works in a warehouse, or wharf, or dock.

1106. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Expenses attached to his work?—Yes. He wants more food.

1107. Mr. J. J. DENT: You say that the 24s. or 26s. are recognised by the Master Carmen's Association?—Yes, but not by the Union. The Carmen's Trade Union say 30s.

1108. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: The Master Carmen's Association says 24s. or 26s. ?—Yes, and less if they can get the men. Consequently, sometimes the men strike, and I do not wonder at it.

1109. Mr. D. M. WATSON: I suppose that it is not a strong union?—It is not very strong. I wish that it was stronger than it is. I wish that it was strong enough to turn out some of the men who call themselves carmen, but who are not, and that we got a better class of men. For many reasons I would like to see every driver licensed. Why not license a man who is driving a horse and van just as you do a cabman or the driver of a motor car?

1110. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: I have often wondered how it is that they are not licensed.—If these drivers were licensed and we had a man or two short in the morning, all that we would have to do in taking a man on would be to say, 'Where is your licence?' and it could be produced. It is endorsed with any bad or irregular thing that he has done, and it shows his character at once. Then, again, if a man had done anything very wrong he would have lost his licence at once, and not been able to come to us. We should certainly have to pay more money, but so much the better. We should get our horses attended to better, and we should get a better class of man altogether. I am now speaking of the last few years. Many cartage firms like ours have very little work on Saturday, and many master-carmen and horse-owners who want drivers take them on daily. It is an unfortunate system for the men. It is retrogressive. They say to a man, 'We have very little work to do on Saturday, and you will have to stand off.'

1111. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you mean that men are becoming more daily because they are taken on in that way?—Yes. The reason is because the public say, 'We will not take any goods to-day.' They deliver with their own vans. Many people say that, and that is so very often on Thursday afternoon. The public is, on the whole, confining the time of collection and delivery to very short hours every day. On Saturday the public largely will not take in goods at all. Railway companies do not take in after twelve, and there are many reasons which cause employers of drivers to say, 'You are a daily servant, and if we do not want you on Saturday you will have to stand off.' With the present wage which men get five days' work is not sufficient to keep them. The system of taking drivers on daily is, unfortunately, a very bad one to all concerned, especially the horses. Why I say that is this: A man says, 'It does not matter. I shall not go up to-day.' Some other man takes the horses, and they do not get cared for. The man who only has a day's work to do says, 'What do I care about the horses,' and they suffer.

1112. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Do carmen ever have overtime paid to them?—We do not pay overtime. I think that it would be a bad system to pay overtime.

1113. I think it is a bad system but it is done sometimes?—We say to a man, 'If you do an extra load we will pay you so much for it. If you do a second extra load we will pay you so much.' Where we have a good run of work and a man can do more than two loads, which we find is the average for a man if he is a pair-horse driver, we say, 'We will give you 1s. for the third load. If you do a fourth load we will give you 1s. 6d.' That is half-a-crown above the usual wages which a man is earning. It pays us and it pays the men. We do not do that in the case of journeys that would distress the horses, but with regard to short journeys.

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1114. It is not regular enough to raise the standard of any number of men?—No. I am referring to seasonal work such as with regard to wool or something of that sort.

1115. You prefer to see carmen on weekly wages?—Yes.

1116. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: What does the daily wage amount to, 5s.?—No. A pair-horse driver would get 4s. or 4s. 6d. He would not get more because he was a daily man.

1117. The CHAIRMAN: There are one or two points that we want specific information about.—I do not know whether you want to know why there are more men employed in the summer than in the winter.

1118. Yes.—Job masters and pleasure work in the summer make extra work for men such as trouncers and helpers. A driver of a pleasure van or brake generally has a man behind him to do the work when he gets to his journey's end. The man gets something and the people generally give him something. There are also coachmen wanted in the summer. In the winter they are out of work and they sign on as carmen or anything in the casual unskilled line. In a sense they are a sort of carman, but they are not a very desirable kind of men. We find them rather lazy.

1119. Mr. D. M. WATSON: When you state that 30s. is the union rate, is that for driving a pair of horses?—Yes.

1120. And for a single horse 26s.?—Yes.

1121. And the Master Carmen's Association's figure is from 21s. to 25s.?—Yes. I go on to say, 'Hundreds of tons of perishable goods and food to come to London by rail and water are carried by contractors who work their horses and men day and night, and the drivers are paid a day's money for the night's work'—as well as for the day. That is so. 'If rates were made by the railway company so low that it would not pay the private contractor to do it, but the goods were carted by the railway company, the railway company could be approached to consider the question. I do not think the railway company would expect or ask the men to work in the day when they work at night. That would give a good number more men work. It is a question on which you would have to approach the railway companies, but it is a thing I should like to see because in meat carrying and one thing and another some master carmen do not care a penny about their horses, and if they can get the drivers to work day and night they will do it. I know firms that do. One man is doing probably three night's work in a week, whereas another man could come along and do it.'

1122. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: How do you suggest that that could be avoided by rates being lowered by the railway companies?—There is the railway companies' C and D rate, as it is called—that is, collecting from the country and delivering in London from the station to the destination. If the railway companies, who have the power to fix the cartage rates, said: 'All that we shall allow is rebate, or all that we shall allow to any consignee who carts himself will be 2s. or 2s. 6d. a ton,' you would not get contractors to do it; but where the rebate is 4s. or 5s. the contractor

Jan. 11, 1906. comes in and says: 'It will pay me if I do that and get half a crown out of it.' The companies employ contractors to the detriment of the men. There are hundreds of tons carted every night by men who work in the daytime as well.

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1123. The CHAIRMAN: But how do the men get sleep?—They are at work mostly at market work.

1124. But they cannot work both day and night. Are those all the suggestions?—That is all.

1125. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you employ many casual carmen, or are they mostly permanent?—All permanent, with the exception, perhaps, of four or five men, who are weeded out. They may be good carmen when at work; they may be splendid men for two or three days a week or a fortnight or more. We boil them down if we find them out to four or five or six men, to whom we say: 'You are odd men. We will take you on 'when we want you.' They are satisfied, and that suits us. On the other hand, it would be better for us if they kept in work, because they are good men.

1126. All the other men are permanent?—All the other men are permanent.

1127. The bulk of your carmen are permanent men on weekly wages?—Permanent men.

1128. Is that the case of most master carmen or is it peculiar to yourself?—Most master carmen have got into the rule of saying in employing their drivers: 'We shall consider you a daily servant, but we will pay you 'on Friday or Saturday for convenience, as it is wished.'

1129. But they are practically permanent?—They are really permanent, but they are made daily servants not because they do anything wrong or are found out to be very bad men. In that case, instead of a man having to be paid wages for the whole week he can be discharged at once.

1130. There is a great number of casual or odd carmen apart from these, as one sees from the registers of Borough Councils?—Yes.

1131. What do you say about those?—These men who call themselves carmen, and register themselves at the Borough Councils' bureaux, are not carmen in the proper sense.

1132. A great many of them get a day's work of a sort now and again as carmen?—Yes, they do.

1133. What need do they meet when they are employed now and again for a day?—If a man who is a bricklayer's labourer can drive a horse, as he sometimes may have done, he prefers to put his name down as a carman. If he is a rubbish carter he is in a sense a carman.

1134. You would not say that a rubbish carter in general is not a carman?—No. I would not say that. He is a carman in a sense, although he is only a rubbish carter.

1135. It is a very low class?—It is a lower class. It is more unskilled.

1136. The CHAIRMAN: With regard to your own class of business, you can serve your purpose with these regular men, but other carmen whose business fluctuates so much that they must take on extra casual men?—Yes.

1137. That is a condition which cannot be got out of, I suppose?—Not very well with some master carmen, who make a speciality of a certain article. For instance, a man who makes a speciality of carting wool, which is only seasonal cartage, may not want men at other times; in fact, he really does not want them.

1138. Could some system, such as you have suggested to us with regard

to labourers at the wharf side or the dock side, be applied to these carmen also?—Yes. It would be better still if each man was licensed. I have often wondered why we could not get that through.

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—  
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1139. What do you say about your carboys?—We have some boys behind vans. There are contract vans where we contract for a firm. As a rule we make carmen of them, but we find more often than not that after about a year's experience of driving we lose them. We have made the boy a carman, and we think that there is something due to us in the shape of time. We have taught them, we have put up with all the breakages and loss of time in teaching them, and we think that the boys ought not to jump into men's wages at once; but they go away to somebody else, who gives them more than we have been giving them, and we lose them. Perhaps they only get 1s. or 2s., or whatever it may be extra, but we lose them.

1140. Mr. D. M. WATSON: What do you give the tailboard boys?—From 6s. up to 9s.

1141. What do you give a man who is a van guard?—We do not have van guards.

1142. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Until what age do you consider him a boy? How long does he remain a boy?—Up to sixteen or seventeen. We have them from fourteen. Why we do it is that the contracts that we have do not allow us more for the boy.

1143. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is there an intermediate step in promotion between the van boy and the driver?—No, I do not think so.

1144. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you get most of your carmen from the country now?—No, we do not.

1145. You used to do so?—We used to do so. We are always glad to have country men, but we do not get them now.

1146. Where do you get your men from now?—Unfortunately many of the men are men who do not like too hard work. They perhaps have had some experience of a factory or as labourers in some way or other. They find that sitting down driving is easier work, and they like to be out of doors. Unfortunately we have not the class of men to-day that we had a few years ago. They have deteriorated very much.

1147. Do you get many men from the army?—We have had them. We have some now.

1148. Men who have had experience of driving horses in the army?—Yes, but the percentage of them that turn out good drivers is not very large.

1149. Have you any idea why that is?—I do not know. We do not find many of them teetotalers.

1150. You do not find that people who have been in the army are good workmen?—We find that for a month or two they will serve us well, but after that they do not.

1151. Do you think that that is the effect of being in the army or because of the character of people they were before they went into the army?—I think it is both.

1152. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: My association in Victoria Street, which investigates the character of the soldier, has very few failures; but then the men are very much weeded out. We have nothing but the best characters. We never get any complaints.—I think that if you keep a soldier indoors during working hours you get a fairly good man from the army; but let him get outside where he has a free hand and that is another matter.

1153. The CHAIRMAN: You said that you thought that the wages which are paid are often too low. Do you find it to your interests to

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secure a good man by paying rather more than the market rate?—We give a man the top wages. If one man is better than another we give him 1s. or 2s. extra at the end of the week. We have to be careful that other men do not know that or they want to know why. They cannot understand that it is because the man has served us better. You cannot say openly, 'I will give you 2s. more.' The man would be considered a favourite, and he would have a warm time in the stable at night. You have to be careful. When there is extra money given for work in that way you have to be very careful to give it to a man who will not spend it in drink, and that you know you will see the next day. You have to study the character of the man and of the horses. You have to study both.

1154. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do the men often get money from the people who have the loads delivered to them?—Yes. The public say, 'Put that down there,' or 'Take it up there and we will give you so much.' It is not just to us, but it is done.

1155. Mr. D. M. WATSON: With regard to the delivery of heavy goods, if you only have the driver on the cart does he pick up help in the street?—As far as we are concerned if there is a long carry after they get inside the gate or the door our carmen will very quickly tell us, and we sometimes give them so much for carrying themselves which we charge to our customers. The public will get the men to do what I have described. They have no right to ask them to perform those services. I wish that they did not have to do it. Our vans and horses are delayed. It is extra for the carman; but this action of the public is not just to us. It is very unfair. It almost amounts to dishonesty.

1156. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is it on account of the considerable tips that carmen get from their customers that they have low wages? Is that taken into account generally?—Very much so by many master carmen.

1157. They say, 'We will pay you 24s. and you will make it up to 32s. or 34s.'?—Yes. You may go down to a single horse flour carter getting 12s. a week in wages and the rest he gets in pitching money as it is called. For carrying a sack of flour he gets a penny.

1158. The CHAIRMAN: I suppose that it depends very much on what trade a carman is in whether he gets tips or not?—A carman may be allowed so much a basket or so much per sack for carrying each load.

1159. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You say that the Master Carmen's Association recognises 24s. and 26s. Does that mean that if you are a member of the Association you must not pay more?—It is supposed to be so, but I have never adhered to it. Years ago I moved a resolution that we should see the trade union delegates, but we have never been allowed to see them at our meetings. I have always said that if we pay a better wage we shall get a better class of man.

1160. Are you allowed as an individual member of the Master Carmen's Association to pay more?—It is not a question of being allowed. We do it.

1161. You spoke of the recognised Master Carmen's rate. It is intended that you should not pay more?—Yes. If there were a strike they would say: 'You must not pay more than this,' but I should certainly resign at once.

1162. You would take your own line on this question?—Yes. It would be very well for some men. It depends on the class of traffic you are doing. You cannot make a hard and fast wage altogether.

1163. The CHAIRMAN: We have been very much interested by your evidence, and we are much obliged to you.

(The Witness withdrew.)

MR. THOMAS COLLIER *examined.*

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1164. The CHAIRMAN: Do you represent master carmen?—I am manager for Messrs. Young.

MR. THOMAS  
COLLIER.

1165. Their business is principally that of carting coke, is it not?—Yes.

1166. Would you describe the sort of work? Where do your vans or carts ply? Do they take coke from the gas works?—Yes. The stables and our office are at West Ham. We cart the coke from Bromley and from Bow Common to wherever it is needed. The men go away from the yard in the morning as nearly as possible at 6.30. It might be earlier sometimes, or it might be later.

1167. How many men do you employ as carmen?—Thirty regular men. If any of them do not come to work in the morning we have to have, plainly speaking, what we can get. Sometimes one or two of them cannot be got there every day. There are so many out of work that we know that we can always get a carman or two.

1168. Do you get very good men in that way? Probably the unemployed people are not very good?—I cannot say about that. It is not everybody you can send out with a horse and van.

1169. No, certainly not. It surprises me to find what queer people are sent out with horse and van sometimes. Do you have boys on the carts?—No, only men.

1170. About what wages do you pay?—They are all one-horse vans at the present time. We have had pair-horse vans. The men have 24s. a week. Some of them who have been with us a matter of twenty-five or twenty-six years get 27s. or 28s.

1171. Do the men get tips at the other end, do you know?—They do if they take coke to some places. They do not get it at factories.

1172. On taking it to private customers they get something for putting it into the cellar?—Yes.

1173. Would that bring their wages up another 3s. a week, should you say?—Yes.

1174. To thirty shillings?—I daresay in one way or another. If they are out late at night they get extra, or if they do extra work.

1175. Would what you say of your business be true of other smaller businesses, do you think? Is most of it regular employment?—Yes, it is with us.

1176. You have the same number of carts out every day?—Yes, as a rule. We have more just now. Sometimes we hire. In the winter time more coke is demanded than in the summer.

1177. Mr. D. M. WATSON: What do you pay a casual carman?—We pay the master.

1178. When you pick up a casual carman, what do you pay him?—4s., and he generally gets a little extra.

1179. Your regular men are weekly servants?—You might say that they are weekly servants.

1180. The CHAIRMAN: Are they paid once a week?—Yes. They have a sub if they require it.

1181. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: They are engaged by the week and paid by the week?—Yes.

1182. All the thirty that you have normally in your employment, have most of them been with you for many years, or for some time, at any rate?—Yes. The majority have been with us for many years.

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1183. These are not at all what you would call casual workmen?—No, they are not.

1184. In the winter you employ a good many casual men, I suppose, as compared with the summer? Your regular number is regulated by the summer trade?—In the summer we are slack. There is not so much need of firing.

1185. What becomes of your regular men?—We have to keep them going somehow or other. The missus finds them something to do. We have a large place at Chingford. We never allow a man who works for us to stand off. He always has something to do. We have a harness-maker and cartwright and a nice place at Chingford. There is always something for them to do.

1186. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do you say that you take on extra men in the winter and extra carts?—We have more going in the winter. We hire horse, man, and cart.

1187. From whom?—Our neighbours.

1188. Master carmen?—Yes.

1189. Do you pay the man yourself?—No. I really do not know what the firm pays the man.

1190. Mr. D. M. WATSON: What do you pay for overtime?—Whatever is the Union rate we pay it, according to the time that they are out. In the summer time we do work for the West Ham Coporation. That is always 5s. a day for the men, no matter how long they are out, or what they are.

1191. If they only do an hour's work?—Well, there you are.

1192. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: Do your men come from the country much?—They are all natives of West Ham.

1193. You do not find many carmen who come up from the country?—Some of ours who have been with us for years have come up from the country. We have about three or four country chaps who have come for a job and have stuck there, and there they are now, and very good chaps they are.

1194. I suppose that these people from the country have a good deal of experience of horses?—Yes.

1195. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Is the unloading of the coke all done by the driver?—By the carman, except where we have City jobs. In the City—and we send to the City—there are places where you cannot yourself unload. You must get help, and whatever is attached to that we pay. There is one place in the City where they only take twelve sacks. No man breathing can unload that in two hours. It has to be taken up ninety-seven stairs, five flights. Up at the top there is a bin, and you have to put it in there. You can imagine how it is done.

1196. How many hours a week will the ordinary men work?—They go out at about half-past six in the morning, and as a rule are in by six, but not every night. Sometimes they are earlier.

1197. The CHAIRMAN: Have you any delivery in the suburbs?—Yes. There are only two loads on Saturday.

1198. People will not take delivery late?—No; and besides that, the gas works close early.

1199. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Is there any regulation with regard to coke as there is with coal in the City limiting the time of delivery?—Yes.

1200. It must be done within certain hours?—Yes. I had some sent away from Copthall Buildings the other morning. It was ten minutes late.

1201. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: How long does it take a man to become

a carman?—Some will learn very quickly, others will never learn. A man has to learn a horse. Jan. 11, 1806.

1202. And he has to learn his way about?—Yes. When we have a new man we send him out with another man if we can, so that one can help the other. We put the loads together. Any man used to a horse can pick it up very quickly if he is a sober man. You have to find them out.

1293. I suppose that mostly your men are sober men?—Yes.

1204. On the whole they stay with you?—Yes.

1205. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do they stay, whether they are sober or not?—That is so. We have to look over a lot of things.

1206. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: I suppose that they have to turn up every day or be dismissed?—They are supposed to.

1207. Do they not?—Not always. It is of no use saying that they are regular.

1208. If they are losing time, what do you do?—Make them lose the next day also. You say, 'You were away yesterday, you can stop away to-day also.' That is, if you have another man and horse to do the work, but the work must be done.

1209. The CHAIRMAN: Most of your people, luckily, are pretty regular?—Yes.

1210. We are most concerned here with those who are not.—A man who works with our firm can stop with us as long as he likes.

1211. As long as he behaves properly?—If he is near the mark. You cannot get a man to behave properly. That is a fact—you cannot.

1212. Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE: You do not see much of the employment of casual carmen?—Not now.

1213. Used you to?—No.

1214. You have no experience of that?—No, I should not care to send a man out unless I knew him.

1215. But it is done in some cases?—Yes. If you have work to do, what are you to do?

1216. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: You hire man, cart, and everything else. Is the one from whom you hire responsible?—Yes; but sometimes he has your vans. That is a different thing. That alters it again.

1217. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: In your experience, has the general character of carmen been deteriorating in the last dozen years, or improving?—They are not so good as they were. They are too fond of drink.

1218. Do you think that they are more fond of it now than they were six or eight years ago?—Yes.

1219. Mr. J. J. DENT: Do you think that they drink more?—Yes.

1220. Do you say that you cannot get sober men?—It is a job to get them.

1221. Is there a greater number of carmen than there used to be?—There is a great number out of work.

1222. I am not referring to that, but there are more carmen driving van than there used to be perhaps?—Not in our part.

1223. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Would it be a good plan to have carmen licensed as cabmen are licensed, so that if they came before a magistrate he could endorse their licences if they did as your friend did?—I do not know.

(The Witness withdrew.)

Mr. THOMAS  
COLLIER.



CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY,  
Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road,  
London, S.W.

Friday, February 2nd, 1906.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

### Special Committee

ON

### UNSKILLED LABOUR.

*Present.*

Mr. JOHN CURRIE,  
Mr. W. A. BAILWARD,  
Mr. J. J. DENT,  
Mr. E. HOWARTH,

Mr. T. MACKAY,  
Mr. J. PARSONS,  
Mr. C. J. HAMILTON,  
*Secretary.*

Mr. T. MACKAY in the Chair.

#### WATERSIDE LABOUR.

Feb. 2, 1906.

Mr. SCHWARTZ (Wharfowner): *Examined.*

Mr.  
SCHWARTZ.

1224. The CHAIRMAN: Have you prepared a statement which you would like to put before us?—Yes. I have dealt seriatim with the items suggested in your reference. Shall I read my paper straight through, or take each item separately?

1225. Perhaps you will read your statement indicating as you read it the items that the different portions refer to.—(a) Changes in the amount or in the fluctuation of employment. 'I am of opinion that the larger proportion of the riverside wharves which deal with coastwise and short sea Continental traffic do not vary from month to month more than other trades. Many have one to two slack days each week, however, notably Tuesdays and Thursdays. There are also certain season trades for ripe and dried fruits, potatoes, &c., and there are also the wool sales; but these are fairly evenly distributed over the year among the various wharves, so that monthly totals do not vary much.'

1226. What sort of craft have you?—We have three steamers a week from Holland. We landed last year 36,000 tons of goods.

1227. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: When you say 'landed,' do you mean landed at Victoria Wharf?—Yes, at Victoria Wharf, direct from ship.

1228. The CHAIRMAN: Is that the whole tonnage that you deal with?—Yes. The remainder of the cargo goes overside into lighters.

1229. Do they carry any particular sort of cargo?—No. It is quite a general cargo. There is a great deal of glass and iron from Belgium. Feb. 2, 1903.

1230. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is it entirely Belgian trade?—No. A good many German goods come through. Mr.

SCHWARTZ

1231. Your steamers all load from one port in Holland, do they not?—Yes.

1232. The CHAIRMAN: What sort of labour do you employ?—I have about fifteen permanent hands.

1233. Are they dock labourers?—Yes, and they act as a sort of semi-foremen, checkers, and so forth. The others I take on by the hour, as I require them, which is the custom along the waterside.

1234. Mr. J. J. DENT: What is your average number of casual men?—The number varies a good deal from day to day. I have put in my statement the number that we took on during the first week of each month last year.

1235. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: With regard to loading overside, are you responsible for that?—No.

1236. You have nothing to do with that?—No.

1237. The CHAIRMAN: With regard to fluctuations in employment, would you just read your note?—‘The larger proportion of the riverside wharves which deal with coastwise and short sea Continental traffic do not vary from month to month more than other trades. Many have one to two slack days each week, however, notably Tuesdays and Thursdays.’ They are generally slack days.

1238. Not only in your trades, but in all trades?—Yes, along the waterside generally. Boats mostly sail on Wednesdays and Saturdays both from Continental and from north country ports. They are travelling to England or from the north, and that makes Thursday a dead day. Tuesday and Thursday are the slackest days of the whole week.

1239. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Bad weather would affect it, would it not?—Yes, and fogs, of course.

1240. But you can rely on the weather to such an extent that you can consider Tuesdays and Thursdays the slack days?—Yes, particularly Thursday. I have taken the first six working days of each month last year and totalled them up. I will read the figures: January to June, 153, 166, 130, 140, 145, 170. July to December, 205, 175, 185, 180, 210, 230. The lowest, you see, is 130, and the highest 230.

1241. The CHAIRMAN: That averages very nearly 200?—Yes.

1242. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: That is for your own wharf?—Yes. That is only on the wharf, not on the ships. ‘Those wharves which take Colonial and long voyage oversea produce are on a par with the docks regarding employment.’ Wharves like Hay’s and Cotton’s really deal mostly with Colonial goods. They take into craft from ships in the docks what would otherwise go into the docks. A large proportion of the river wharves are situated like my own.

1243. The CHAIRMAN: I suppose that the Colonial trade is not quite so regular?—Not quite. It would vary when two or three big ships came in together.

1244. It would be more irregular than yours, would it not?—Yes.

1245. Your boats come in pretty regularly to time?—Yes; except when there is a fog they are as regular as a train service.

1246. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Are you able to determine accurately the number of labourers that you will want a day or so ahead?—No; not quite so long as that, because with our particular boats it is only an eighteen hours’ passage. The day before we get a list of what is probably

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coming. That is not always accurate; but still we can form a very good idea of whether it is a good cargo or a bad one.

1247. That would apply, roughly speaking, to all the Continental traffic?—Roughly speaking, no doubt.

1248. The CHAIRMAN: Now go on in your own way, and then we can ask you questions afterwards.—‘(b) In the proportions of permanent regular and casual hands.’ ‘Roughly, I consider that about one-quarter of the labourers are in permanent employ, one-half have a preference, shown them, and the remaining quarter are casuals in the strict sense of the word, taken on to adjust fluctuations.’ Or they are taken on to take the place of men who absent themselves. I have spoken to half a dozen of my friends on the subject, and that is the conclusion that we have arrived at. We all employ a nucleus of permanent men. About half of the total are fairly regularly employed, and about a quarter are absolute outsiders. We may see them for a week and then not for a fortnight, when they come back again. ‘(c) In the methods of selection and engagement, especially with regard to the “preference-list” system, and of obtaining or directing supplies of labour where required.’ ‘As far as I know the preference list is adopted by practically all, and a steady, capable man is singularly unfortunate if he cannot get four days’ work a week. There are, unfortunately, a great number of incapable or lazy men who drift down into the casual class. These men have no wish for constant employment, and will work just enough for a lodging-house existence, or to supplement the earnings of their wives and children.’ I think that any steady man who is known on the waterside and who has been there for some years can gradually get on to the preference list of some wharf and get four days’ work a week. That is my impression.

1249. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do you mean that an actual list of names is kept?—No. It is a general impression. I have consulted Mr. Greig, of Free Trade Wharf, and the London manager of the Manchester Steam Boats.

1250. You speak of a preference list. Does it contain the names of men?—The men are known to my foreman.

1251. They are not in receipt of a special ticket?—No. In the docks it may be necessary, but a trade like mine is sufficiently restricted for the men to be known even by name. ‘With reference to obtaining or directing supplies of labour when required, there has unfortunately been such a superabundance of unemployed labour for several years past that I have met with nobody who has had difficulty in obtaining supplies except after public holidays and perhaps during the hopping season.’ The hopping season is the only time when there is any difficulty except after the public holidays. Then there is terrible difficulty.

1252. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: The hopping season is a holiday for that class?—Yes.

1253. It is from that class that your casuals come?—Yes; they go hopping.

1254. The CHAIRMAN: Would that apply to the preference men as well as to the casuals?—Yes; to all of them. Mr. Greig, manager of the Free Trade Wharf, writes to me: ‘I do not think the organisation of the labour supply through an exchange would work. Men follow up their work at certain places where they are known to the foreman and taken on accordingly. The men have a pretty good idea as to when they would be wanted to be employed and when not.’ It was your secretary who brought that question before me. If there were any difficulty in getting men it would be a most excellent thing, but, unfortunately, there has been such an abundance of casual labour.

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1255. To put it from another point of view, would it benefit the men to know that there were a certain number of them who could not possibly get employment? Would it not make more marked the margin that must remain unemployed?—I deal with that with regard to (c) and (d), (d) in the methods of remuneration (contract, co-operation, piece work, time work). 'Time work is general, and is the only possible method with general cargoes. I do not approve of piecework for this class of men. The work is scamped when possible, material wasted, and the work done by too few men who overwork themselves, and generally waste their surplus earnings.' The only piece work that we have on the boats at my wharf is when they bring macadam for road work. That is dealt with by piece work. One of the great troubles that we have is that the men are in such a hurry to bundle it over board into craft that they sometimes spill 5 or 10 per cent. of it into the river. The result of that is that it forms a little hummock in the river bed, and the barges do not lie properly. Perhaps I am rather more annoyed at the idea of piecework on that account than I should be otherwise. That is one of the difficulties that we have.

1256. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is there any practical method of selecting the men that could get over that difficulty?—They are all of a kidney. They are all in the same boat.

1257. Would it be possible with regard to that particular work to revert to a system of day work?—It would, but it is a very heavy job. We have three ships a week. They come one day and go the next. By working piecework you get an advantage in regard to time, but you do not get the work so well done. Very often the men can earn 10s. or 12s. in eight hours, but as far as my experience goes the next day they want 1s. sub at dinner time just as everybody else does. They are no better off than the men who have taken only 5s. or 6s., such is their nature in the locality. '(e) In the amount of machinery used.' 'Machinery is not directly used in handling of general cargoes; but grain elevators and, I believe, dead meat elevators have lessened employment. The large increase of steam towage of barges has thrown out a great number of lightermen, many of whom take casual work. Steamships are filled with better gear, which enables a quicker discharge of the cargo.' So that no doubt a little more work is done in less time.

1258. Does this apply particularly to coal discharging?—It applies to everything. Every year there are dodges and tricks and improvements in machinery.

1259. Do you think that machinery could be adapted to such cargo as the macadam that you spoke about?—No, I do not think so. It is very heavy stuff to handle.

1260. Could a grab be used?—They lift it with a derrick. A bucket holds from 16 cwt. to a ton. The macadam is sent down a shoot and the men are in such a hurry to shoot it that they often spill some.

1261. Mr. E. HOWARTH: Do they unload cement with a grab?—Cement is almost always in bags. You could have a sort of elevator for bag work, but the only ones in general use are the grain elevators. Down at the docks they have a huge elevator.

1262. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: That was until recently done by hand?—Yes. '(f) In the industrial and social character of the men employed, with special reference to their earlier training and the sources from which they are recruited.' 'I cannot speak very highly of the casual. The fairly regular ones who have followed it for years are mostly Irish, robust and willing, but improvident and unstable in character. Those who drift to casual work from other employment are the less satisfactory men who get

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discharged first when trade slackens. The riverside casual has been recruited from carmen and lightermen, ex-policemen, &c., who are well acquainted with the riverside. I think that the inshore 'out-of-work' goes almost invariably to the docks. I quite agree that irregular employment encourages thriftlessness. The wife, unless she is Number One, never knows what he earns, and he is tempted to indulge himself when he has had an extra good run of work.' No doubt it is a very bad thing for the men. There is not the least question about that. They have not the restraint that an educated person naturally has.

1263. With regard to any distinction drawn between wharf labour and dock labour, I understand that you consider wharf labour to be more local than dock labour?—Yes. Men in the neighbourhood know the different points where labour is engaged all along the riverside.

1264. Mr. E. HOWARTH: Where do you take your men on?—At the entrance to the Regent's Canal dock.

1265. I came across several instances in which men were taken on at neighbouring public-houses. Have you come across that sort of thing at all?—No, I have not had that experience.

1266. I found three or four cases of that in another part of London.—In regard to proprietors of private wharves, or of docks?

1269. The CHAIRMAN: Do the men come to your gates for work?—One of the taking-on stations happens to be practically just outside my wharf. The next one is the Free Trade wharf. If we were short, which has not happened for a long time, we should send word to the next station, but we are only short at the hopping season and after Bank holidays.

1270. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: These stations are really labour bureaux, or depots?—Yes.

1271. Mr. E. HOWARTH: Do you have definite calls?—At six o'clock, and then at eight o'clock. After that the men would go away, knowing that at one or two there would be another call.

1272. There is a call at one or two?—Yes; with most riverside work people can form a pretty good idea in the morning. There is more middle-day labour taken on at the docks than at wharves. Very seldom do we take labour on after eight o'clock.

1273. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: What would you say would be the shortest day that your men would work, as a rule? I understood the other day that from eight o'clock to one would be the shortest?—Yes, five hours. We never take them on for less than four hours.

1274. More usually it is for longer?—Yes: the average at my wharf would be from eight to nine hours, I should think.

1275. The CHAIRMAN: Would that represent the hours in the trade generally? Do your neighbours in the same trade do the same sort of thing?—Yes, as far as I can judge. I should think that the average dock labourer would take 4s. 6d. on the waterside. A few would take only half-a-crown, but some would take 6s., taking the work right through.

1276. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Would those who took 6s. be likely to take 6s. normally, and those who took half-a-crown be likely to take half-a-crown normally, or would they sandwich about so as to average 4s. 6d.?—They would not sandwich about. The preference men would get more than the casual men. There are a few casuals who get as much.

1277. The preference men would normally get more than 4s. 6d., and the casual men would normally get less?—The preference man would get 5s. and the casual about 3s. 6d.

1278. The CHAIRMAN: Because he does not work for such a long time?—You saw him off first. You want to make it worth the while of

reliable and satisfactory men who understand your work to come and wait outside your place. If we take 40 on at eight o'clock and we find at three o'clock that we have finished with one of the ship's holds, all the strangers are the first to be paid off. We have little interest in them. We do not care very much whether they come again or not.

1279. Do you find that the men ever go off before you want them to? Do they go out for lunch or a midday meal?—They have an hour.

1280. Do some of them not come back?—It is not very often that a man takes himself off, although we have had terrible cases where men have earned a shilling, sufficient to pay for their "doss," and had enough.

1281. You would not say that that was a general thing?—No.

1282. Mr. E. HOWARTH: Do you keep a list of, say, 35 men, and do you revise it at intervals? Do you do it every quarter?—My foreman does that; he practically knows all the men by name, and he does not need to refer to a list such as you speak of here.

1283. There is no revision?—No.

1284. He puts in the people he hears of from other men?—Yes. Then '(g). The probable existence of a considerable reserve of floating labour.' 'The population in the East of London has increased much faster of late years than the demand for labour, and as I am under the impression that other industrial centres are in a similar position, on the principle that half a loaf is better than none at all, I fail to see the advantage of concentrating the work further in fewer hands unless you are prepared with some scheme for the employment of the men thrown entirely out of work on the land or unless you emigrate them.' These poor creatures are thrown out from the building trade and carting trade, and other trades. It is true that there is not a good living for them all. I must admit that a good many of them do very badly; but it seems to me, as a matter of common sense, that it is best for what work there is to be shared round unless some good person is prepared to say, 'Let half of them earn double the wages that they are earning, or 30 per cent. more, and we will deal with the others.' To throw the others absolutely into the workhouse seems to me doubtful policy.

1285. The CHAIRMAN: That presupposes that they cannot get anything else to do?—I am afraid that there is a great surplus. I know that there is in East London, and I think it is so in provincial towns.

1286. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: For how long have you noticed this state of things? Is it worse now than it used to be?—For the last three years it has been materially worse.

1287. We are now rather at the bottom of a wave of depression. Is there not some hope that we may see a better state of things?—I should be pleased to see it, I am sure. Practically ever since I was seventeen I have been in the East End of London, and certainly things are much worse.

1288. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: I take it that the supply of labour is in no sense referable to the demand? You have this excess because other factors constantly lead to people drifting down to this kind of work and living in that district?—Yes, I think so. I had a chat with my foreman upon this question, and he said, 'Well, sir, I can assure you that during the last month or two I have very often brought my dinner with me instead of going home, for I cannot get home. Sometimes half a dozen men who know me by sight stop me and say, "Cannot you give me a job, Jack?" It has never happened before in my experience.' He says that it is so unpleasant to say 'No' to them, that he brings his dinner and has it on the spot.

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1289. The CHAIRMAN: You know the change that they have made at the docks since the great strike. They have tried to make work much more regular, giving fuller employment to a limited number?—We all do that in a sense.

1290. It has been represented to us that that has been a great advantage to the people who get more or less regular work, and that it marks out more definitely the people who cannot get work. Possibly some of them go away. At all events, dock labour is not, so much as it used to be, an inducement to people to throw up regular work which they do not like. You cannot be responsible for people who want to be employed who cannot be employed?—There is not the least doubt that the better men get put on the preference list, and the ones who will not work or cannot get regular work, poor fellows, are taken on to fill up odd gaps.

1291. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Are casual men taken on often found to be physically unfit to do a hard day's work—too faint or too weak?—No doubt it is very tiring to some of them. They do not look up to it very often, but they get through it.

1292. Have you any idea as to the age at which the docker usually drops out of work? Does he last on as a fairly good man until sixty or seventy years of age?—Never until seventy, I believe. I have a man in my employ who is sixty years of age.

1293. Is that rather an exception?—Yes, I think so. He is very hard. It all depends upon whether a man has been a steady liver. A drinker goes to pieces sooner. There are many good men at sixty, if they are steady.

1294. You have no dislike to taking on older men as long as they can do their work as well as younger men?—No, certainly not.

1295. The CHAIRMAN: Have you any knowledge of what these men who sometimes work for you do at other times? Do they go about to the different wharves and work?—No doubt they do.

1296. Do they go to any other trades?—Yes. A good many of them are carmen. That trade is much slacker in the winter than in the summer. There are many carmen who knock about as casuals when they cannot get a carman's job.

1297. Mr. E. HOWARTH: Is it your experience that when you are busy and your list is exhausted the men you take on after are not really very good? Is the value of their work about 4*d.* an hour instead of 6*d.*?—Yes.

1298. Would not keeping more permanent staff, cutting down the numbers employed, pay you in the end better by giving you more efficient men?—No. There are disadvantages in connection with a permanent staff.

1299. I did not mean a permanent staff, but a larger preference list.—Yes. I consider that my preference list practically covers the average employment.

1300. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: About a quarter of your own men are *bona fide* casuals?—Yes.

1301. They are not a superior class?—We could only get half as many workmen as we wanted for two days after Christmas. Two-thirds of the preference were away. We had to take on Dick, Tom, and Harry. I am certain that the work took half as long again, and we had broken glass and all sorts of trouble.

1302. Your work does not fluctuate much, I understand?—No. When the wool sales are on we get an increase, but I do not think it fluctuates more than the generality of trades.

1303. Are there generally a larger number of men hanging about to be

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taken on than you can take on?—Always. My foreman makes a rule, if at the beginning of the week, on Monday he takes men on when he forms his gangs, to give the preference through the week to those particular men if they turn up. We have to send away about thirty men on Monday generally. We take on about forty, perhaps. On other days they know that all the extra labour that we shall want will be to fill up the places of men who are stopping away, or because there is a little spurt, and we do not get more than a dozen, perhaps.

1304. Is that more than in former years?—Yes

1305. The CHAIRMAN: Supposing that you and your neighbours were to agree to regularise the surplus that you required, and you could make a sort of supplementary preference list, would not that provide you with a better class of men?—I do not think so.

1306. I see your point with regard to cutting out some completely, who would have to go to the workhouse or find some other trade, but they would not be hanging about half employed, and would not that be a good thing?—Really there is not much fluctuation, but there is enough fluctuation to need a certain amount of men who are not fully employed. Unfortunately the slack days with everybody come on Tuesday and Thursday.

1307. But you described Monday as being a day on which you would send away thirty, perhaps.—Yes.

1308. If you and the wharves round you had a common centre for engaging these men (say three wharves, thirty at each, which would be ninety), you might reduce the margin to forty or fifty. You would have forty marked off who never could hope for any work there?—No.

1309. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Have you any view as to whether the development of unskilled labour trade unions would do any good or any harm?—There is an informal sort of union, but it is quite moribund now, I think.

1310. I know that it has no practical force. Have you any view as to whether its resuscitation would be of value to the men?—No. The men who want to work are actuated by necessity. They know where there is work just as well as employers know that they want men, as Mr. Greig says.

1311. The Out-of-Work Benefit Fund might be developed. Their earnings might be averaged for the period of unemployment.—I do not think they earn enough to put money by.

1312. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: They are too poor a class?—Yes. Engineers and so on earn sufficient money for that, but these men do not.

1313. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Supposing that the State were to try a system of compulsory unemployed insurance, would you be in favour of it?—It would be an excellent thing.

1314. In some way to be devised, it does not matter how, the employer would contribute so much for every man employed. He would stop it out of his wages, and, in addition, he would be asked to contribute something on his own account, and that could be dealt with as out-of-work benefit.—As far as I understand it I think it would be an excellent system.

1315. It would have your sympathy if it could be tried?—Certainly it would have my very strong sympathy.

1316. Even though possibly it might cause greater expense in your labour?—I do not care what my labour costs as long as I am in the same position as my neighbour. I should not care if I paid fifty per cent. more in wages. It would not make any difference to me if everybody else in the same line of business did the same thing.

1317. It might affect you in competing with foreign ports?—Yes.



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1318. If it affected all your competitors the difference would be so small that, as you say, it would not matter?—No.

1319. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Are the conditions in your wharf similar to those in other wharves? You were saying that your slack days are Tuesdays and Thursdays. Would that be the case in other wharves as well?—It would be more so in other wharves. I have three boats a week, and most of them only have two. A boat from Edinburgh leaves there on Wednesday, and one leaves London on Wednesday. The one that leaves Edinburgh on Wednesday is travelling all day Thursday, and it does not get to London until Friday. That makes Thursday a very slack day. The same thing applies with regard to Hamburg or Antwerp, or wherever the boats come from. Two services a week are more usual than three.

1320. The CHAIRMAN: Is any wharf so fully engaged that it always has a boat there?—My particular wharf is. Boats are unloaded on Monday, reloaded on Tuesday, unloaded on Wednesday, reloaded on Thursday, unloaded Friday, reloaded Saturday.

1321. The slackness is not very great?—In the wool sales season unfortunately the boats which come in full take very little out except wool. They are not half loaded outwards between the wool sales.

1322. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: The slack days are Tuesday and Thursday not only for yourselves, but neighbouring wharves also?—Yes.

1323. Why do all the boats start and arrive on particular days?—They all spend Sunday at sea. Work cannot be done on shore on Sunday, but they can steam at sea to good account. That is the reason.

1324. The CHAIRMAN: Now would you finish your statement, please?—  
(A) The actual earnings of individual men over considerable periods, with a view to considering their adequacy to provide against slack times.  
'The men working in the ships alongside this wharf range between 48*l.* and 106*l.* per annum.' That is the lowest man and the highest man. The larger bulk earn between 70*l.* and 80*l.* a year. Those on the wharf range from 17*l.* to 65*l.* A man who earns 17*l.* sometimes does not come near us for a week or ten days.

1325. He is working elsewhere?—He is working elsewhere. A man could not exist on that. 'It is impossible to get with any accuracy at the earnings of an absolute casual, as they work at various places. The above figures are above the average, as we have to unload and reload three steamships per week. Taking a very broad view of the matter, half-a-dozen men of considerable experience concur that the figures for waterside labourers' average earnings are as follows:—

Rather less than one-quarter earn 30*s.* to 40*s.* per week.

Rather more than one-half " 20*s.* to 30*s.* "

While one-quarter " 12*s.* to 20*s.* "

I fear that those who save anything against slack times are very few in number. It is an invariable rule even for men who have taken 10*s.* on the previous day to require 1*s.* sub. at dinner time as usual. These strictures do not apply to a small minority of steady respectable and capable men whom it is a pleasure to deal with; but it is the natural tendency for the inefficient, reckless, and intemperate to gravitate down to the casual class. I have met an ex-doctor, also a church organist, in that unfortunate position.'

1326. Do you think that the men are much the same as they were, or do you see any improvement? Are they better or worse than they used to be?—I think they are about the same as far as I can judge.

1327. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: You say that very few of these people save anything. I was going to ask whether you thought it possible that they could be made to save by any system of State insurance such as Mr.

Hamilton referred to just now. They do not do so voluntarily. You said that it would be a very good thing that something on the basis of the German system should be adopted?—That would be an excellent thing, but that class of people is very conservative and very difficult to deal with. If you have anything in the way of benefit or slate clubs a few of the respectable ones join, but you cannot get in the multitude.

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1328. Whether you could apply the compulsory principle to men of that class is what I want to get at.—From what little I know of the German system, the employer and the employed both contributing to a fund, it is a most excellent thing.

1329. The CHAIRMAN: Would you like to be called upon to collect the subscriptions of the people you employ?—It could be stopped from their wages, but for the first few weeks there would be trouble, I am sure. It would be a difficult thing with casual men who work here, there and elsewhere.

1330. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: There would be no mechanical difficulty. Instead of paying out 1*l.* you would pay 19*s.*, and send a cheque for so many odd shillings to somebody?—The great difficulty with absolute casuals is that they earn a third of their living at one place and two-thirds at others.

1331. I do not know that there would be difficulty if you had a regular scale of so much in the shilling?—If a system could be devised it would be an excellent thing.

1332. The CHAIRMAN: Do you think that attempting to stop money from the wages of the men would contribute to the harmony of your establishment?—I am certain that there would be a very rough beginning.

1333. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Do you not think that they would want the shilling deduction put on their wages?—I am sure that if they thought they could get it they would. I quite see that there would be ructions at first, but if once you got over the initial difficulty of starting it would be different.

1334. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Granted that you had the advantage of knowing that thereby you would have a better class of men, I take it that anything that regularises labour and keeps the man from starvation during unemployment would make an improvement in his capacity, and you would get a better return in the shape of work?—Yes.

1335. Mr. E. HOWARTH: You both export and import? You unload and you load?—Yes.

1336. Do you use the same men?—Yes.

1337. Do they get a higher rate for one than for the other?—No; very often loading is going on in one hold and unloading is going on in another; or in one and the same hold, even 'tween decks, there is unloading and loading.

1338. Men can do both equally well?—Yes.

1339. If you get a pressure of work and have to take on extra people, do you find that the extra people cannot load a ship?—Invariably they cannot do it. If you get a rank outsider he is a nuisance.

1340. What do you do then? Do they go ashore?—Probably you put up with such a man. His mates have to do his share of the work and their own too. They have to get through the work somehow. If a man was very, very hopeless, we should pay him off.

1341. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: I take it that the other men would take care to make it unpleasant for a man if he did not do his share of the work, if he turned up again?—Yes, naturally.

1342. At the docks they get an extra penny?—Yes.

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1343. There is no difference at wharves?—No; if a ship is going to Australia, you want men who stow with very great care; for a short journey of only a few hours it does not matter much.

1344. But space is a consideration?—It is not so important. Unfortunately, very few boats go out to the Continent full; they come over laden with foreign produce, but they only take waste paper, wool, rags, and such things back.

1345. They may half load at your place and half at another?—No.

1346. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Have you any night work?—Not in our normal hours; but if there is a fog or anything that delays a boat, and it comes up late, we have to work on Saturday and Saturday night, and perhaps Sunday morning. We have done that, I know.

1347. Is it the same gang or gangs who do that night work as you employ during the day?—Yes; the same men, unless they pay themselves off, and they do not often do that.

1348. The CHAIRMAN: It is a very long run?—It is a very long run, but they are greedy. I believe some would work at piece work until they killed themselves.

1349. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Would there be any possibility of employing different gangs for the night work?—Roughly speaking, I do not suppose we work for three nights a year after nine o'clock at night, so that it is really not worth considering, because it is so seldom. We have to pay more money, and men cannot do so much work in the dark as in the daylight, so that night work is avoided as much as possible.

1350. You find that they do not work as well?—No; they do not and they cannot.

1351. Mr. J. J. DENT: There is greater risk, of course?—Yes.

1352. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: A difficulty which you feel in regard to piece work, if not your only objection, is, I understand, that it is liable to induce the men to overwork?—I think that they overwork, and also if there is a chance of doing so they work wastefully. For instance, to take the macadam, if 95 per cent. goes into the barge and 5 per cent. into the river, if they can do it quicker that way it suits them just as well.

1353. If you could do away with greediness and anxiety to overwork would it be cheaper to engage the men on piece work where cargoes lend themselves to it?—I think so. If you can give a man an interest it is always an advantage. Cargoes vary. For example, we can only take 6 cwt. of glass at a time with the crane. We can take 16 cwt. of iron.

1354. Could you not contract with a gang for the loading and let them do it as quickly as possible, sharing the proceeds?—You could; but with a thing like glass it is the last thing I should ever think of doing.

1355. But with a cargo consisting largely of crates and barrels?—With a very rough cargo, cement for instance, very often it is the practice on the river to make a contract, but with general cargoes such as mine always are you would have to have a number of prices and so much calculation that it would not be practicable, nor would it be wise in my opinion, because the men would not use sufficient care.

1356. The CHAIRMAN: I was wondering whether the fringe of men that get irregular employment is partially maintained by the poor rate?—I should imagine so.

1357. What union are you in?—The district of Limehouse.

1358. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: They live a good deal by the work of their wives?—I think so. Their wives do charring and work of that kind, and their boys get partial employment.

1359. The CHAIRMAN: Do you pay the men daily?—Yes.

1360. Your foreman pays them?—They are paid at the office.

1361. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Does that apply to all your men? Does it apply to the permanent staff?—It applies to the preference list and the absolute casuals.

1362. The permanent staff are paid weekly? You said that ships went out half empty except at the time of wool sales. Has it been the custom at any time to carry coal cargoes?—Not from London. Certain ships that used to bring cargo from the Continent to London went down light to Hartlepool or some near port going a triangular course, but I do not think many do now.

1363. It does not come into this inquiry, but I was told the other day that the coal export duty had had a very bad effect.—You would have to tranship into barges, and then into ships. It is better to spend the time in going to Hartlepool and loading in two or three hours under schules.

1364. Mr. E. HOWARTH: When you were telling us about the earnings of men in the first week of each month last year, how many wharves was that based on. Was it only your own wharf? Perhaps you have dealt with that; I was not here in time to hear your evidence on the subject.—I chatted with about half a dozen people.

1365. People employing as many men as you do?—Yes, and more.

1366. Would it be 150 altogether, or 200?—I should think that the six people would employ quite 400. It was not based on figures; but it was what we considered to be the case, looking at the thing broadly. A quarter of the men earned 30s. or a little over, and the average between 20s. and 30s. would be about 23s. or 24s. It would be rather nearer 20s. than 30s. I am afraid that a large proportion of the men in this unfortunate position have themselves to thank for it, but still there are a certain number of honest, straightforward, willing men who are, I am sorry to say, out of work.

1367. The CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to you for your evidence.—It has been a great pleasure to come here, and I hope that your deliberations will come to something.

*(The Witness withdrew.)*

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Mr.  
SCHWARTZ.

CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY,  
Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road,  
London, S.W.

Friday, March 9th, 1906.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE,

### Special Committee

ON

## UNSKILLED LABOUR.

*Present—*

Sir E. W. BRABROOK, C.B.,  
Mr. W. H. BEVERIDGE,  
Mr. JOHN CURRIE,  
Mr. J. J. DENT,

Mr. HOWARTH,  
Mr. T. MACKAY,  
Mr. J. PARSONS,  
Mr. C. J. HAMILTON, *Secretary.*

Sir E. W. BRABROOK in the Chair.

Mr. FRED SCRUTTON *examined.*

Mar. 9, 1906,

Mr. FRED,  
SCRUTTON.

1368. The CHAIRMAN: You are the Manager of Scruttons, Ltd.?—  
Yes.

1368A. And partner in the firm of Scrutton, Sons & Co., shipowners  
and West India merchants?—Yes.

1369. Your father was chairman of the Shipping Federation, was he  
not?—Yes. I do not know whether it comes in at this point, but I may  
state that after the dock strike in 1889 the rate of wages paid in London  
and the existing scale for discharging on the north side of the river, which  
was then done entirely by the dock companies, was entirely upset. Evidently,  
if the dock company had to pay higher wages to the men they  
could not afford to discharge ships at the same rate per ton as had been in  
force before. The men got entirely out of hand. Although the dock company  
very largely increased the rate to shipowners they were still making a loss by  
the increased wages paid their own men. The men were working badly.  
Some of the directors of the dock company were Liverpool men who were  
used to the Liverpool system, and they persuaded the other directors to  
adopt that system entirely in London. They gave us notice that after  
December 30, 1890, they would not discharge our ships any more, whether  
we liked it or not. They gave it right up. That suited some of us. We  
had been contending for a long time that they had no right to reserve  
the discharging as they did. Some of us were glad and some of us were  
sorry. Then it was that I organised a small service to discharge our own

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West India ships. I had no sooner done it than I found that I had something that was more expensive than was necessary for my West India ships, and would do a great deal more work than we required. I found that other people did not want to be bothered with their discharging, so I said, 'I will do it for you,' and I did. Then it spread. The dock company repented of what they had done. They thought that they had given up a source of profit, and they sought to take it up again. They did, and for years I was in very active, friendly business competition with the dock company. The struggle was with regard to whether their system should prevail, or whether what was being done by shipowners and contractors should. There were others besides myself. Eventually the contractors won. The dock company's discharge is now confined to what they can control from their own premises. Where discharging is free on the north side of the river, the shipowner does it himself or by contractor. So if you investigate the facts with regard to the dock company's system you will find that it has been tried and has failed. It is a system which no one would think of going back to. I will come to that presently.

1370. Will you give figures with regard to the number of men that you employ?—I have 5 superintendents, 42 foremen, 123 permanent labourers (who are employed very much as the dock company's labourers were), 30 tally-clerks, and 11 on the clerical staff as paymasters, and so on. I used to have many more permanent labourers, but I found that it was not necessary and they have gradually dropped off.

1371. What is the average number of men employed per day?—I find that the average number of men I employed per day throughout London from July 1904 to June 1905 was 724. The most I ever had on any one day was 1,420 at Tilbury, in the Victoria, Albert, and Upper Docks and river 677, and at the Surrey Commercial Docks 230. Those figures do not all relate to the same day. The least number that I ever had was 90 in the Tilbury Dock (nearly all my own permanent men), 31 in the Victoria, Albert, Upper Docks, and river, and 2 in the Surrey Commercial Docks. So there was a fluctuation.

1372. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Those, again, are not the same day?—No, those are not the same day.

1373. The CHAIRMAN: The figures give the maximum of any day?—Yes.

1374. Mr. J. PARSONS: Would the figures vary very much round the average?—No. That gives an altogether false impression. I took the extremes as the Committee asked me to do.

1375. Could you tell us in any way what is the extent of variation, because that is rather important from our point of view. Would you often have about 724? Is there employment generally throughout the year?—Yes. Speaking quite generally, I should think that there is good general employment throughout the year. The odd day in the week we get caught.

1376. Mr. HOWARTH: Do your men shift about from Tilbury to the Surrey Commercial Docks, and from there to the Victoria and Albert? I refer to the permanent staff?—No. It costs me half-a-crown or so every time that they do, so I try to avoid that. The permanent men are nearly all at Tilbury. We never bring labourers from Tilbury to London if we can possibly avoid it. If men go down temporarily they do not go up and down daily, but they go for the week.

1377. Most of your permanent staff are at Tilbury?—Yes; more than three-quarters, but my permanent staff is a small matter.

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1378. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is the 724 the average for all the docks?  
—Yes.
1379. The CHAIRMAN: Have you any information to give us about the bonus system?—The bonus system that we employ is practically the same as Mr. Watt has described to you with regard to the docks. It is universal throughout London. He estimated his bonus at about 1½d. an hour in addition to the men's pay. Mine is not less than 3d. as a rule, and perhaps more.
1380. Your men get more than 1½d. an hour bonus?—Yes.
1381. Not less than 3d. an hour?—Not less than that, as a rule.
1382. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: They start at 7d.?—Yes. My men set a job to make 10d. They work for that. They might be wrong in the result, but that is what they work for. If it was not that it would not be worth doing, and we should expect them to work harder.
1383. Mr. J. PARSONS: Your permanent labourers are 123, and the average employed per day is 724. That is a difference of about 600?—Yes.
1384. Would the 600 be, generally speaking, the same men?—Yes; they would be—almost entirely. At Tilbury we have about 500 men who are nominally casual, but who come to us in all cases first as a matter of fact.
1385. Although not nominally permanent, they get regular employment from you?—Yes. I could find a large staff of men in that way who would be practically the same as permanent men if I dropped the permanent men as a class.
1386. Mr. HOWARTH: Are the people who are not permanent men on a preference list?—No, there is no preference list.
1387. They are in the foreman's head?—Yes. There is no preference list at all.
1388. The foreman probably keeps one?—Only as the men work—that is all.
1389. He knows them, probably?—Yes, he knows them well.
1390. They are, to all intents and purposes, on a preference list?—I would rather avoid the expression 'preference list' altogether, because that means something definite in the nature of organisation.
1391. There is no organisation, but he probably knows them and takes them on?—He knows them, and takes them on because he knows them.
1392. Mr. T. MACKAY: Do they differ from the (B) men at the docks?—The dock company work on this system: they say that all the (A) men must be employed before the (B) men start to work.
1393. They are very much the same as the (A) men, but they are not enrolled?—The difference between the systems is that we can select men from day to day, and if a man is not working well he would stand off, whereas if a man is with the dock company as an (A) man he is an (A) man until something in the nature of an earthquake happens.
1394. But still they would select their (A) men unless there was full employment for them all, would they not?—The dock company would take the whole of the (A) men before they would start the (B) class.
1395. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Would the men not employed regularly by you, the balance that is required to make up your maximum, have a very good chance of getting work elsewhere when not wanted by you, or do they practically rely on your work?—Tilbury Dock is a unit by itself. Practically about as many men live round there as find they can get a living out of the place.
1396. Mr. HOWARTH: Is the majority of your work in the Tilbury

Dock?—I should think something like two-thirds, or perhaps a shade more. I have not the exact figures. Mar. 9, 1906.

1397. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: If they were not wanted by you in the Tilbury Dock, would they probably try to get work from somebody else there?—Yes. Mr. FRED.  
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1398. You do not do all the discharging in Tilbury Dock?—No.

1399. It is probable that they would seek work elsewhere if you did not want them?—Yes. The best men from the other ships would come to me directly if they wanted work, in the same way.

1400. Mr. HOWARTH: Is there loading as well as discharging at Tilbury?—There is very little loading in Tilbury at all. It is almost entirely discharging.

1401. The figures that you gave just now only referred to discharging?—They referred to both, but there is far more discharging than loading.

1402. Mr. J. PARSONS: The ships go out light from Tilbury?—Yes.

1403. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: What are the calls that you have for your men?—Practically we take them on every hour.

1404. And do you discharge every hour?—No.

1405. Is it four hours' work?—It is nearly always a day's work, unless a ship is finished. We do not take a man on for an hour's work or anything like that.

1406. Do you frequently take him on for only half a day's work?—Very seldom, unless a ship is completed.

1407. Mr. J. PARSONS: Can you give us any information about the wages of the men?—We pay 7*d.* from 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. at Tilbury if there is work; 10*d.* from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M., and 1*s.* from 10 P.M. to 6 A.M. At the Victoria and Albert Docks it is the same, except that the 1*s.* begins after 6 P.M. There are two rates at the Victoria and Albert and three rates at Tilbury.

1408. Mr. HOWARTH: Do you pay at tea time or at supper time?—We pay at meal hours.

1409. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: The rate which you mentioned is exclusive of bonus?—Yes, the minimum rate. Any bonus which they get is on top of that rate.

1410. Would you be able to say at all what the annual earnings of any given men are? I suppose you do not know the men sufficiently well for that?—It is rather difficult to get at. I got my people to put together the returns made under the Workmen's Compensation Act lately. We have to give what they have earned for fourteen days previous to the accident. The difficulty is that the good men do not often meet with accidents; it is the more casual men who do. Our good men very seldom get an accident. It is the weaker men, or the men who are not so clever, who meet with them; so that these figures give an unfavourable result. Only one of the men in the returns is a regular man. One man earned £1 19*s.* 1*d.* one week of six days. The next week of six days he earned £1 14*s.* 7*d.* from me. I am not certain that he did not earn elsewhere. On two days he earned 15*s.*, and then he met with his accident.

1411. Are those periods of a week?—They are periods of fourteen days, which have to be taken under the Compensation Act. The compensation is based on what a man earns in fourteen days before the accident. This deals with rather an unfavourable set of people.

1412. The CHAIRMAN: The permanent men earn more and do not come under the Act so often?—That is so. There is a case of a regular man who earned £2 0*s.* 7*d.* one week and £2 8*s.* the next week. In four days he earned £1 15*s.* 4*d.* Some of them earn quite high rates. One



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man at piecework earned 11s. on December 14th last and £1 1s. the next day. That was 32s. in two days.

1413. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: He was working all day and all night, probably?—I am guessing a little bit. It is not necessarily so. Some of them would earn that between 7 and 10, or 7 and 8 perhaps.

1414. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: The men may be working for someone else. They very often register with me under one name and with somebody else under another.

1415. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: How do you manage for the purposes of making a return under the Compensation Act?—As best we can. We have to comply with the law to the best of our ability.

1416. Mr. T. MACKAY: Does a man earning that sort of wages work pretty regularly or every day for you?—Yes.

1417. There is generally the work for him?—Yes.

1418. Do the men come regularly to take the work, or do they absent themselves?—Five hundred men at Tilbury work for us from Monday to Saturday right through the year if we have the work for them.

1419. Which you generally do?—I should say yes; but I would not like to imply that I use 500 men every day of the week.

1420. Mr. J. PARSONS: No; the lowest is 90; it is anything from 90?—Yes; but the 90 is not a common case at all.

1421. Mr. T. MACKAY: It is fairly regular work?—Yes.

1422. You do not find that they earn good wages for two days and stay away for the rest of the week?—That sort of thing is getting less and less. It is very much better now.

1423. To what do you attribute that?—To the fact that we are paying them better. If the committee are considering how far the dock company system of (A), (B) and (C) men is a good system, I would ask them just to look at the difference between the men who loaded the ships and the men who discharged the ships up to the time of the dock strike. Applied to the discharging of the ships, you had the system of government of labour by a big group, or corporation. With regard to the loading of the ships you had it left entirely to each individual owner to arrange for. The result of 80 years of that is, that to load the ships you have stevedores, not casual labourers, but skilled workmen and highly paid, and as well off for labourers as any could be. On the other hand, with reference to the discharging, you know the effect of trying to work by a corporation on a big scale. No one would ever have thought of associating stevedores with casual labourers in London. The classes are altogether different. Why did casual labourers come to do the discharging work? It was because of the dock company's system.

1424. Mr. J. PARSONS: Greater skill is required in the loading, is it not?—No, I do not think so—not to anything like that extent.

1425. The CHAIRMAN: You said just now that it was the inferior sort of workman to whom accidents happened and who wanted compensation. Does that imply that those to whom accidents do not happen often would have even higher rates of wages than those that you have mentioned?—Yes. The man who had the £2 0s. 7d. and £2 8s. was a good workman. It was a curious accident, the sort of accident which will happen even to good men. Lots of the poorer kind of men come on me for compensation for an accident which a man in good health, or earning good wages, would not consider an accident. The inferior men use the opportunity of a very trifling matter, a cut or something of the kind, for making a claim, whereas better men would stick to their work and get it done.

1426. Because it provides them with a permanent income? Was the

man who earned 28s. in four days a good type of man?—He was a very fair fellow,<sup>2</sup> and I should think a very good type. With regard to piecework rates, I see 7s. 6d., 7s. 6d., and 19s. 3d.—three days' work, two days not on piecework and one day on piecework.

1427. Mr. HOWARTH: You employ Union men for stevedoring, do you not?—Not entirely. We do as long as there are enough of them, but when there are not we take free men. That is the general rule.

1428. How far could one say that because the Dockers' Union is weak the men are worse?—It could not be said at all, I think. The union does not make the man.

1429. If the Dockers' Union was strong, would you not get men who were more analogous to stevedores?—Why?

1430. Would they not see that the men were better?—I do not think so.

1431. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: The trade union would demand a higher rate of pay, and the only way in which to get a higher rate of pay is to get better men to work for it, is it not?—It would work the other way round. If you got better men they might form a union, but no union ever made better men.

1432. Mr. HOWARTH: We are talking of the difference between a stevedore and a docker, and you attribute it all to the dock company's system. But is it not also due to the weakness of the trade union?—You think that the trade union makes the man, but the man makes the trade union. A body of skilled workmen, well paid, may form a strong trade union, but the moment they cease to be skilled workmen and well paid the union becomes weak.

1433. You think that it would not have any effect at all?—None whatever. It works the other way.

1434. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: If it is to the advantage of the stevedores to have good, skilled workmen, why was it not equally to the advantage of a large corporation like the dock company?—You may very well ask why it was not, but you must get the dock company to answer that.

1435. The CHAIRMAN: Is there anything else that you wish to mention to us?—You ask my views as to the possibility of any centralised control of labour, with a view to maximising the permanent hands. I do not think there is anything to be done in that way at all. In my opinion, the dock companies' system leads to a great waste of time, and is not any advantage to the men. It is not the way to keep men up to the mark. We pick a foreman for the ship and a foreman for the quay, and we say, 'Get as many men as you want,' and he does so. He picks his gangs, and if a man does not work well on Monday he does not get put on on Tuesday. The men all know that if they work well they get on better. It is a common-sense arrangement, and it is the way in which individual employers go to work. I am sure that it is raising the class of labour. There is a marked difference, to my own knowledge, between 1891 and the present year. I have every hope that this system, employed not only by myself, but by other employers, in discharging ships, will lead in the long run to the men engaged being much the same class of men as load the ships. The classes are assimilating. There is a change taking place. I have stevedores working for me who have quarrelled with the union or in one way or another have come over. If that is so, you will still have, I am afraid, the unemployed problem in London, but it cannot be tacked on to the dock trade in particular.

1436. Mr. T. MACKAY: I understand that your objection to the dock system is that they call people A, B, and so on, and lead them to suppose

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that they will get employment which they very often do not get?—You handicap your superintendents by handing them, say, a thousand men. Their occupation is to see that the thousand men are employed somewhere. If I have a ship discharging in the dock, and another gang is wanted, the superintendent, under the dock system, will say: 'I must not take any other men on while there are (A) men unemployed. There are some 'unemployed at J jetty.' We telephone there, and there is an interval of ten or twenty minutes, or even an hour. Then we find, perhaps, that the (A) men have gone elsewhere and are employed. Then a message has to be sent to C jetty for (A) men. In that way time is wasted. The effect on the men is this: A man knows if he is on the (A) list that he is sure of getting work. All that he cares about is to get on the (A) list. When he is once on, he may not be bad enough to be turned off the list, but yet a bad workman. This thing cannot be managed on a large scale. It works out better for private people to arrange for their own labour, whoever they may be. You cannot get officials of a corporation to take the same interest in getting your ship out as you take yourself. It is not human nature. Officials only want to show a decent return. They just want to make things go quietly, with a margin of profit to the company. The two systems were tried side by side. There was very keen competition, and the result is that the dock system exists nowhere now in London except where they can absolutely control it on their own premises.

1437. Mr. J. PARSONS: You think that the dock company ought to have dropped the loading and unloading of ships?—I think that if they had dropped it they would have saved money.

1438. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: The main criticism of the docks companies' system, from the point of view of shipowners and those who are most interested in the commercial aspects of it, is on the score of expense and bad workmanship?—Yes.

1439. Could you say anything about the comparative time of your work and the dock companies' work?—I have tried to get some figures. I think that it is about two to three. If the dock company took three days, my figures show that I did the work in two. Then another very important thing in London is the space. A few years ago London was crammed full, and the amount of room which you took up to do your work was very important. There is a little easier time now. Tilbury Docks cost about four million pounds. Now, if you can only berth sixteen boats at Tilbury you have a very heavy capital charge. By berthing thirty you reduce the capital charge. I very nearly halved the space that was previously needed for the work. If you halve the space you halve the capital charge. I am telling you facts which you can check for yourselves. It is very important in London. In connection with casual labour, for the sake of doing a little good to 400 or 500 men at a cheap rate you may involve the Port of London in millions of expenditure in all sorts of ways that do not occur to you. If a dock costs four or five millions, you must use it at high pressure, or the capital charge becomes excessive, and the people are swamped by the rates.

1440. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Were you able to halve the space by having better stowage after the cargo was out of the ship?—By going faster at it and having better men. You have 50,000 chests of tea, for instance, to deal with. They are in a shed, and they have to be delivered to marks and to different consignees. Now, a very clever man can make his shed a kind of chessboard with squares marked out. As the tea comes out of the shed it goes off to its own square. There is a separate set of

men moving the tea from the shed to the barge. A clever man will arrange the sorting and the handling in such a way that he can save space; whereas another man who is not so clever will muddle his shed and his sorting, and move the tea from here to there and from there to his barges, and take three times the room. My business was to find clever men who would work it out, and that was how the room was saved.

1441. The CHAIRMAN: Is it piecework, or do you put the especially clever man on at a higher rate?—I pay the foremen highly. The men's wages went up from 6*d.* to 7*d.* They get all sorts of allowances. It is not exactly piecework, but there is so much extra for a day.

1442. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do you find it very difficult to arrange your rates for different classes of cargo?—I do not. There is a rate all round.

1443. Whatever the cargo is?—Yes. The dock company have graded their rates.

1444. Mr. HOWARTH: Sometimes the dock company's rates go up to 2*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes. In the dock company's charge they have to cover a charge for the use of their quay. I do not know whether you are familiar with the working of the quay. When the ship-owner goes in he hires from the dock company the use of their quay and shed. The dock company gave up discharging because they found that in competition they made more by taking simply the hire for the quay and the shed than by discharging the ship and applying the balance of profit towards the rent of the quay and the shed.

1445. Does this account take in the rent?—No, that is additional.

1446. Mr. J. PARSONS: The benefit to the cargo-owner is that he gets his goods dealt with so much quicker?—The cargo-owner is only indirectly consulted, but it suits him.

1447. The ship is cleared quicker?—Yes, and that is an advantage.

1448. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: These so-called comparisons are not really comparisons?—No, I have tried to make that clear. A ship would probably be four days, and her quay space, at a guess, would be about £30 or £40.

1449. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Your plan, supposing that you were entrusted with the duty of improving the condition of the labour employed by the dock company, would be to do away altogether with the preference list system and the permanent man system and pay a higher wage, trusting to getting a better class of man?—Supposing that there were a Port of London Trust Board, and I was Chairman of the Trust, I should make it the policy of the Trust not to employ any labour at all—not to work on that line. I should let everybody make his own arrangements for labour, the Trust providing the machinery and providing the dock. If a ship-owner wanted a shed it could be put up, and he could be charged with it, but I should let everybody make his own bargain with the men.

1450. Are there many others doing this class of work on the same scale besides yourself?—There are two others on something like the same scale as myself.

1451. Are their wage payments the same as yours?—Yes, roughly.

1452. And would the general conditions with regard to bonus and so on be about the same?—I should think so.

1453. Mr. HOWARTH: How do you compare with shipping companies doing their own work like you do?—I could show an advantage with regard to some people's work. If the work is not very fast driving work, and if they have plenty of superintendence, which they must in any case

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pay for, then ship-owners can do the work cheaper than by a contractor; but if it is very hard driving work, and the ship-owner has to organise a staff to do the discharging, then a contractor can do it cheaper, because he has other work on which to employ the staff.

1455. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: With regard to the 500 men, I cannot quite understand the position; the 500 you consider as a semi-permanent nucleus. Can you give a rough idea of how many days a week, year in and year out, these 500 men are employed?—I should say that I generally have 700 men going, judging by my wages sheet, but it would be the odd days that would bring the average down. We work to finish off on Friday, very often. It would be the slack days—the Saturdays—that would bring the average down.

1456. Mr. T. MACKAY: Are they the same 700 men, do you think?—Very largely.

1457. The CHAIRMAN: I gather that the 123 labourers are permanently employed by you, and there is a floating number of 600 who are virtually permanently employed—that is to say, they have something which very nearly amounts to permanent employment?—Very nearly.

1458. If they are not wanted by you they are wanted by your neighbours?—They are wanted by me sufficiently to make it continuous employment.

1459. They are virtually in the position of having permanent employment without any guarantee of permanent employment?—Yes.

1460. Mr. T. MACKAY: Does the work require great physical strength?—That of an ordinary labourer.

1461. Could an old man do the work?—No, I do not think he could. If he is brought up to it he very likely develops special skill for lighter work. He can attend to a gangway or look down a hatchway and make a signal. Then sight comes in.

1462. Mr. J. PARSONS: Where do the excess men come from when you go up to 1,400 at Tilbury. That is a great increase?—I have not checked it exactly, but in that case I brought down 300 or 400 men, I think, from the Upper Docks, and the rest came from other Tilbury people. I can generally get a thousand men from Tilbury itself.

1463. Other people might not be busy when you happened to be busy?—There is always more labour than the bare quantity wanted. If men know for certain that they will get a job you will get the whole of them down, whereas if there is only a probability of work you only get three out of four. We find that more men will turn up if they know that they will get work. They will come down then.

1464. Is there any machinery for giving the men notice?—The men themselves know as much as we do. They follow the boats right across, through the Canal, and up the Mediterranean. They can generally tell where such and such a ship is. It is quite marvellous how they know it. There is no machinery for sending round papers.

1465. The CHAIRMAN: The margin of those waiting for employment and not getting it is much smaller than the figures show?—Very much.

1466. Mr. HOWARTH: Do you ever employ stevedores for discharging?—Yes.

1467. Do you pay them a higher rate than if you take on ordinary men for discharging?—Yes.

1468. That tends to make the employment of stevedores more permanent—because they have two jobs?—I hope that the two classes will come together. Some men like one work better than the other. That would make the margin smaller.

1469.—The rates for discharging and stevedoring would have to be uniform?—No; because the value of the work would be different. Mar. 9, 1906.

1470. Do you mean that it is different, or would be different?—It is now.

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1471. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Granted that all the discharging were done by private competitive effort, such as your own, there would still be a very large number of people who would only be able to get casual employment—that is, employment for a few weeks per year, owing to the busy seasons and the slack seasons?—Why should it be worse than it is with regard to loading?

1472. I do not say that it is.—There is no such element in the loading.

1473. You are able to attract the aristocracy of the labour, if I may say so, to yourself, by paying higher wages?—I should always do that, and everybody can do it.

1474. If everybody paid the same rate you would have a certain nucleus getting fairly regular work and a certain number who could not hope for more than twenty weeks' work in the year, probably?—I think that we should get labour to such a pitch that the casual man could not hope to do it. The men work in gangs of 6 or 7 on piecework. If they put in another man it spoils the plus-money, and they will not have a duffer with them; then the men exercise tremendous pressure on each other. Once you get it to be the thing for the men to work at a certain pace they all go the same pace. They get interested, and even the duffer has to fall in with it. They line up directly.

1476. The CHAIRMAN: Is there a process of natural selection?—Yes. If a thing is going well the men get interested, but if it is being slackly done they get slack.

1477. Mr. T. MACKAY: Do the foremen pay the men?—We pay at the office. If a ship is in the river the foremen pay, but at the docks we have an office, and pay there.

1478. Mr. J. PARSONS: Have you had any trouble with the trade unions with regard to increased rapidity of the work?—As far as the dockers are concerned there is practically no trade union.

1479. You said that some of your men belonged to a trade union?—That is the stevedores, and they do not mind. They value it.

1480. Mr. J. MACKAY: With regard to the fringe of unemployed casual people that you say you hope will ultimately be eliminated, do you think that it is decreasing?—I do not know enough about the question to say that.

1481. Around your own centres of employment you are rather starving out the casual man, I understood?—Yes, with regard to some of the men; but we still find that an unemployed demonstration makes work very slack. Last December we could not get men at all.

1482. Mr. J. PARSONS: Were some of the men who earn £2 a week affected by the demonstrations?—Not those men. For the Japanese mail boat about twenty men were wanted, but they could not be got at all. There was an unemployed demonstration going on, and we saw our casual men there. They went to our foreman with the collecting boxes and laughed about it. That kind of thing went on.

1483. The CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to you.

The WITNESS: Unfortunately my evidence seems to be an attack on the dock company, but it is not in the least meant for that.

Mr. T. MACKAY: We certainly do not understand it to be so.

• (The Witness withdrew.)

CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY,  
Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road,  
London S.W.

Friday, March 23rd, 1906.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

### Special Committee ON UNSKILLED LABOUR.

*Present—*

Mr. W. W. BRUCE,  
Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN,  
Mr. J. J. DENT,

Mr. JOHN CURRIE,  
Mr. T. MACKAY,  
Mr. C. J. HAMILTON,  
*Secretary.*

Mr. T. MACKAY in the Chair.

Mar. 23, 1906. Mr. GEORGE LAVINGTON (Managing Director of Messrs. Lavington Brothers, Ltd.), *examined.*

Mr. GEORGE  
LAVINGTON.

1484. The CHAIRMAN: About what number of people do you employ?—We average about 108 at the busy times. That number is reduced to about 90 at slack times.

1485. Are they more or less permanent men?—Yes. You may say that about 90 out of 100 are permanent men.

1486. Does that include men and boys, or only men?—We have very few boys. About six to eight are as many as we employ.

1487. You do not have boys perching up behind the carts?—No. We find that they do not perch up behind. If they did, it would be another matter. They perch in the front and interfere with the driver and the horses, getting the drivers into difficulty. That is the trouble.

1488. Do you employ many casual carmen?—No.

1489. We have been told by some witnesses that a large number are casually employed.—We have a steady business at two or three branches. When the swings are slack with us the roundabouts are going. It is very steady.

1490. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Which period of the year is your busy season?—I might almost say that the busy times are about May and June and October and November. As regards one branch of our business, we are busy in May and June when the new potatoes come from Jersey. They keep us going. In June we get to the strawberries, and that makes us busy again for the London and South-Western Railway Company.

1491. The CHAIRMAN: Is your principal business fruit traffic?—Yes. We work for the London and South-Western Railway Company. Mar. 23, 1906.

1492. Have you one-horse and two-horse vans?—Yes.

1493. What payments are made to the men?—We had a strike of our men some time ago, and it was then arranged that we should pay 24s. for a single-horse van and 28s. for a pair-horse van, but I may say that we have somewhat reduced that. We are doing similar work for the South-Western Company that other master-carmen are doing for them. We divide the work. The others have never increased their wages. I appealed to the men at our Vauxhall depôt, and told them to appeal to the Union and say that it was not fair that we should pay an increased wage under the circumstances. I said that if they did not do something I should have to reduce the money. The reply which I got from the delegate I told to go, was that the Union really could not do anything—that the men must look after themselves. Then I said, 'Very well. What I shall do is 'reduce you.' I have reduced any new men.

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1494. Did you lose men over that?—No. The old men that I have had for years I have kept on the same wages. Over and above their wages, we pay by results. That is to say, if they do three loads we give them a shilling for a pair-horse van, and for a single-horse van sixpence if they do three loads.

1495. Taking all that into consideration, what is the average pay per week, do you think?—There is also the night work. Some of our pair-horse men earn as much as £2. 10s. a week. Perhaps five or six men earn regularly £2 to £2. 10s. a week at market work.

1496. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: That is by doing night work?—Yes.

1497. The CHAIRMAN: Would a man be doing that continuously, or only once in six days, say?—Four or five days during the week.

1498. Doing market work?—Yes. They get 2s. a day extra for that.

1499. Would he be doing that all through the season?—Yes.

1500. Mr. J. J. DENT: Would the same half-dozen men be working at that?—No. We confine it practically to half-a-dozen men, but we may have on a Monday morning twelve to fourteen. We have never less than about five or six. They are our principal market men—our standing men. The others are not, but they get the same—2s. extra for turning up at night. If they do their three loads and get in as quickly as they can (the men who like to do their work quickly can get in at 9 or 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning) they earn the better money that I have spoken of. Some of the younger ones like to loaf about afterwards, or they go to sleep after market and do not get back so early. They do not earn as much, but it is their own faults.

1501. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Between what hours is the market work?—Starting at 12 o'clock at night they are supposed to work from 12 to 12.

1502. Would they begin at 12 o'clock their ordinary day's work?—No. The odd market men who turned up to-night at 12 o'clock would finish to-morrow, and if they were not wanted when they had done the market work they would start again at 6 o'clock the following morning—not the same day. They would have from the time they got in until 6 o'clock the next morning.

1503. The CHAIRMAN: Do the men drive into your yard and put up the horses when they leave off work? Have they their own horses?—They have their own horses entirely.

1504. Do they feed them and everything?—They do not feed them. As a matter of fact the food is already put out by the stableman—and the



- Mar. 23, 1906. water. There is a tap that turns on and they are supposed to rub their horses down a bit when they come in, but I do not think they do it very much. They simply unharness the horses.
- Mr. GEORGE LAVINGTON. 1505. It is their duty to do that?—Yes, and to clean them in the morning and harness them.
1506. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is it part of their work to clean the harness?—It is part of their work, but it is not very much done. Some do it. You get the difference between a steady man who takes a pride in his horses and the man who does not.
1507. The CHAIRMAN: Do they have the same pair of horses always?—They have their regular horses. We keep a number of them.
1508. What I meant was that probably, if they had their own regular horses, they would take more interest in them?—Yes, that is so, and they do.
1509. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Men like to show their horses on Whit Monday?—Yes. A horse does better with one driver than with two. It is more to our advantage to keep to one.
1510. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: You did not say to what you had reduced the wages at the Vauxhall depot?—A man starts at 22s. and works up to 24s. If we put a man on to-morrow he would start at 22s., and he would know that he could work up to 24s.
1511. For a single-horse van?—Yes.
1512. And for two?—He would start at 24s. or 25s., very seldom 25s., and he would work up to 28s.
1513. The CHAIRMAN: With the extra money that you have described, what are the average earnings of your men? Take first the earnings of a man with a one-horse van, with night-work and overtime?—There are only pair-horse men on night-work. A man would be twenty-seven or twenty-eight years old before we put him on to a pair.
1514. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Although there is the chance of earning extra, many men will just earn the 23s. or 24s. all the year round and no more?—Yes.
1515. The better-class men earn more?—The better-class men can always earn more if they like. Some will not do it, and there is a class of men who go for the other men who work well and call them 'sweaters,' and make all sorts of trouble. We find out those men. I look for the men who systematically will not earn extras. I see that by the time sheets, and I get rid of them because they do not do any good for themselves or for us.
1516. Do they get anything extra from the people to whom you deliver goods?—It is an old saying with the carman that he can always leave his money at home—that he never wants to bring anything out.
1517. He gets a meal or something from your customers?—He always gets so much a load or something of the sort.
1518. You have no official knowledge of that?—No, we do not recognise it.
1519. But the men do get it, as a matter of fact?—Yes. With regard to our removal business, I insist on our men not asking for any money for moving. I give every man a shilling extra when he is moving furniture, so that they shall not ask our customers for money. I give them the shilling extra to encourage them to behave. If they do not behave themselves they are not put on that work. It is the extra shilling that induces them to keep right.
1520. You engage the men yourself, do you not?—Either myself or my foreman. I am responsible, entirely, for the men. We do not take

any men into our employ unless they furnish characters. We go into their characters. Mar. 23, 1906.

1521. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: That is unusual, is it not, with regard to ordinary carting business?—It is, but we look on ourselves as carriers of fine goods. A man has a lot of valuable stuff. Mr. GEORGE  
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1522. The CHAIRMAN: Do you hurry very much? Somebody said that some of the Covent Garden carrying had to be done at tremendous pressure.—It has to be done quickly. You go up with a load, and directly you get there you want to get it out. In the strawberry season, for instance, if twenty loads come up for twenty people the railway company do not send any out of the station until they are all unloaded. The vans are all sent away at one time so that one salesman shall not get the stuff before another. There is a shilling or so for speedy delivery.

1523. Do the men knock their horses up in consequence?—The salesman gives the man a shilling for a load of strawberries if he gets it in good time, because, naturally, the first up there the first to sell.

1524. Do the men knock the horses about?—We notice the condition of the horses to prevent that. If a horse gets out of condition you can easily tell. He soon gets out of condition. He may be good now, but in a week's time he may be knocked out altogether.

1525. Are the men paid weekly at the office?—Yes—at each end—the stables.

1526. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do you have any considerable number of men showing up for the chance of a job?—We have a few men whom we know. They will come to ourselves from another carman. We generally have a few odd men standing about in case the regular men do not turn up to work.

1527. Do you pay them for showing up?—No.

1528. It is customary in many cases to have a first call, say at five in the morning, and pay men a shilling for waiting until eight o'clock.—We do not do that. We put them on directly if we want them. If any of the regular men were not there at half-past six we should put odd men on. Six o'clock is the time, and we give them to half-past six. Nearly everyone takes to half-past six. It is astonishing how many get in just at the half hour.

1529. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Are they weekly servants?—Yes, with a week's notice.

1530. Do they lose a day's money if they do not turn up?—Yes.

1531. The CHAIRMAN: The men who come on casually are paid by the day, I take it?—Yes. We pay those at the end of the week. There are very few of them but what have work for three or four days of the week.

1532. These are only a small proportion of your whole?—Yes.

1533. There is a margin of ten or fifteen or something of the sort?—Yes. There are very few but what are regular men.

1534. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: If men do not get a day's work with you, have they the opportunity of going with someone else?—Yes. I will give you an instance which occurred this morning. I saw a man whom we had employed, and I said, 'Put that man on. Give him a day's work. 'Do not wait for one of our men to turn up.' We put him on there and then, and we should do that if anything turned up. There were two or three men there. I went to look over some new horses I had bought, and when I got back about ten o'clock I telephoned that I could do with two extra men on our goods vans. The men had cleared off. We could not find them anywhere. They had got jobs. So it shows they soon get work.

1535. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: What do the casual men get?—We give

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them between three and four shillings. Mostly they are single men. They would rather work in that way. They would not come every day.

1536. The CHAIRMAN: What you would call a good man is probably a permanent man. The casual men are not very good men, are they?—They are fairly good men. They do good work when they are there, but they would not come regularly. If you said, 'I want you every day,' they would think that it was not good enough. Three or four days' work a week is quite as much as they want.

1537. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: You said that you did without the boy on the tail of the van. Does anybody replace him, or do you run the risk of something being missing?—We run the risk. We find, after some years' experience, that it is better than having a boy. We raised the men's wages when we did away with the boys, because, at that time, the men were only having 22s. for a pair-horse van. Then we gave them 2s. extra to do the work of the boys. I had a meeting with the men years ago when wages were very much lower than they are now. We had had trouble enough with the boys. We could never get them to work properly. They were always playing about and doing this, that, and the other. I said that at the end of the week I would give the men 2s. extra and do away with the boys, and they agreed to that.

1538. The CHAIRMAN: Is it the usual practice?—It has become quite the usual practice with our carmen to do without the boys. You cannot get them.

1539. They have disappeared?—Yes. They all want to be clerks nowadays.

1540. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Where will you get your rising generation of carmen from?—I do not know where we shall get them from by and by. Last night I put a notice outside for a lad in the office. Twenty-one lads came in, nine of them boys whose fathers were labourers, bricklayers, and so on. They could just about write and that was all they could do. They had a little education and did not want to be labourers. They wanted to be clerks in an office.

1541. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: When a van is unloading and a man goes into a place with goods, is he not liable to be had up by a policeman for leaving his cart unattended?—Yes.

1542. Unless he has a boy on the cart?—We get summoned very seldom. I investigate all those cases, and if it is the man's fault he has to pay the fine, but I always pay the fines otherwise. There are very few.

1543. I have had a lot of such cases brought before me as a magistrate. I treat them very lightly. A man says 'I am alone; what am I to do?'—Nine times out of ten, when a carman is summoned it is his own fault. He has no business to loaf about inside. In London especially it is a growing thing for warehouses to keep the carmen, but a man should wake them up and say, 'I have left my van outside, I cannot wait. I must go out.' It is his own fault half the time. I always send a clerk to investigate the case on any summons, and always pay the fine, as I have said, if it is not a man's own fault. The City is where we get fined more often, but it is very seldom. I do not suppose I get fined once in two months.

1544. At Dalston we had about twenty the other day. What they were doing I do not know.—I had three at the Crown Theatre at Peckham. I was delivering scenery, and the men were early. They left their vans right in the main road, and had their breakfasts. There are plenty of side streets where they could have gone to, or they should not have waited. Directly one was unloaded it should have come away. There was an instance of wasting time. The police took their numbers. The men did

not expect the summons, but the summons came in. In that case I let them pay the fine themselves. Mar. 23, 1906.

1545. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Do you suppose that the boys who were formerly employed became carmen?—Yes. Mr. GEORGE  
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1546. The CHAIRMAN: Is there any difficulty at all now in getting carmen?—None at all. I have no difficulty, because our work is so regular. We can always get our pick.

1547. In spite of the large number of boys who want to be clerks there are still enough who become carmen?—Yes.

1548. I suppose that a man would earn more as a carman than as a clerk, would he not?—Yes. Lots of railway clerks only average about 25s. a week, so that a carman is undoubtedly better off. He has the chance of something extra, but the poor clerk does not have anything extra. He does not get a chance. If you went to Nine Elms station, or St. Pancras, or any of those stations, you would find that the average invoice clerk only got about 25s. a week. We have some railway hands that we have had for a number of years. The other day at the Staff Dinner I was proposing the health of the staff. I said that out of nineteen the shortest time that I had had one with me was six years, and he was a lad who had come to us and had never been anywhere else. I have had two of them for twenty-six years. I pay them pretty well.

1549. I suppose that you have been for a good long time in this business. Do you think that the sort of men that you get is the same class of men that you have always got?—No.

1550. Are you getting better men or worse?—An entirely inferior class of carmen compared with what they used to be. They are not the carmen they used to be, who took an interest in their work. Some who have been with us for over thirty years are all right. They know their work and do it well. They are carmen, but the others are simply machines. All that they care about is getting their money at the end of the week, and as to troubling themselves in the interests of the horses, it is quite a thing of the past.

1551. Such a man does not take an interest in his horse?—No.

1552. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Do you get many men from the country?—We take very few from the country; because if a man came to-morrow for dock work, and said that he was from the country, I would not touch him.

1553. The CHAIRMAN: You want a man who knows London, for delivery round about London?—Yes; we want a man who knows London.

1554. Is the comparison quite a fair one? The men that you are getting now are more casual than the men you have had for a long time, are they not, and you cannot expect them to be the best?—Although I am particular about their characters and so on, they are a different class of men, inferior to what we had twenty years ago.

1555. Do they drink more, or so on?—No. I am down on that quicker than on anything. Our men do not drink. I do not allow it. If a man is intoxicated he gets a week's holiday immediately. You can only reach a carman's heart through his breeches' pocket.

1556. Is drunkenness more frequent now than it used to be?—No. The men that I employ are not a drunken lot.

1557. But have you more trouble now, with regard to that, than you used to have?—No. I can safely say that of our men.

1558. Are you obliged to get rid of more men that you take on to try, because of that, than you were twenty years ago?—I do not think so. We

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take what we can get. If a man who knows his work and can do it goes we get an inferior one, perhaps.

1559. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Do you consider the men you speak of less intelligent than they were formerly, or that they know their work in regard to horses, for example, less well?—It is the Trade Union idea to do as little as you possibly can for your wages—to get as much as you can and do as little work as you can. If I am not wearying you, I will give you an instance of a man who came to us.

1560. The CHAIRMAN: That is just what we want.—He had a bright bay horse. It looked very well indeed. The man had not been with us very long, and his horse improved wonderfully. In fact you might say that it was £10 or £15 more valuable when that man had had him for a little while. The man did his work well. He looked after the harness well, and he was always in good time. He came to the foreman at Vauxhall one day and said, 'I am going to give you a week's notice on Saturday.' This was about Friday. 'What is that for?' said the foreman, 'we are very well satisfied with you.' The man said, 'I am satisfied with you, and I am satisfied with the governor, and satisfied with the money. It is better than I have had, but I shall have to go away.' 'But why?' The man said, 'I cannot stand the other carmen. Life is not worth living with them. Things are thrown at me. They smear my clean harness over as soon as I clean it. They put things over my horse and say that I am a "b—sweater," a "master's man." I called the man up and said, 'Who are the men?' He said, 'I cannot tell you; that would be more than I dare do; it is not worth it. They would know very well that I told you if they got to know.' I said, 'Do not tell me. Will you put it down, and I will tear the paper up and put it in the fire.' He said, 'I would rather not. Perhaps you will find them out directly. They are a rough lot, and you have better than most men.'

1561. Is that sort of thing more the case with the newer men than with the older men?—Yes. The older men do not care so much about the Union. The Carmen's Union is a little bit dead, because men get higher wages. A carman does not like to pay more than he can help, and when he gets better wages he stops paying. He only paid when the excitement was on, and directly the excitement was over he would not go further.

1562. The CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether the Secretary has explained to you the reason of our Committee. We want to find out the conditions, not so much with regard to regularly-employed men as with regard to irregularly-employed men. We want to find out the terms upon which they work, and to get, if we can, suggestions from persons like you for making their work more regular.—The people who take on irregular men as much as anybody, I think, are Pickford's. They have a very rough class of men. They take on lads.

1563. Is that a necessity of their business, do you suppose?—I think that it is more due to cheese-paring—to not paying more than they can help.

1564. Would you say, as a general proposition, that regular work makes a better man?—I think so.

1565. Although you say that some of these fellows who only come on for a day or so do very well, they like the leisure of the other days?—Yes.

1566. What do they do on the other days—amuse themselves or work elsewhere?—If they have a shilling they go away. If I paid them in the middle of the week I should not see them again that week. The most casual men, as carmen, would be in the building trade. Building contractors are the men who take on the most casual men for the rougher class

of carmen's work. You may take it that our carmen are regularly employed. Two or three years ago, if we discharged a man one day for loafing we would find him on somebody else's van about two days afterwards. That used to be the system. I drew the attention of the Carmen's Association to that, and asked them to stop the taking-on of men without characters. I got all the members there to pledge themselves that they would stop it, and they stopped that business of men running about from one employer to another and so on. It made the men more attentive to their work. If they leave us now they know that they cannot go next door but one to another carman and be taken on without a character, having left us. The other employers would not take them on without knowing they were good men. In the old days they would. A man would say that he was put off because work was slack.

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1567. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do all large employers require references from the last employer?—Most of the better class do. I know that, because we exchange reference forms with each other.

1568. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Are you always able to insist on a character with the most casual class?—We should not take even a casual man on if we knew that his character was not right. I would not let a van go out unless we knew the man, unless he was taking a load of iron, which he could not dispose of.

1569. The CHAIRMAN: Would you say that insisting on a character was a better protection to you than having carmen licensed? Would you view the licensing of carmen with any favour?—We have had the matter brought up at our Carmen's Association. I, for one, believe that it would be the better thing. If a man had a licence he would know that he had the chance of losing his licence if he appeared before a magistrate for being drunk or anything of that sort. He would have to be a little more careful. I am rather under the impression that it would be a good thing.

1570. Just the same as with a cabman?—Yes.

1571. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Could you tell us anything more about the casual men? Does the same man, who comes casually one day, come back again?—Yes. If he came on the Monday he would not be paid until Saturday night, and therefore on the Tuesday money would still be due to him, and he would look in. Perhaps he would know very well that on Tuesdays and Wednesdays we are busy. He would know that on Fridays we are busy. He would be sure to turn up on those busy days, because he would be likely to get work. Then, if a man works on Friday a little longer hours, I always give him work on Saturday. That is a *sine qua non*. Saturday is practically only a half day. If a man is there for long hours on Friday he comes on Saturday. The hours are shorter, and if he has worked longer hours on Friday it is only fair to employ him on Saturday, when the men finish at about three o'clock in the day.

1572. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: What sort of hours would the men work on Friday, not counting overtime?—Take the shipping business, for instance. At this time and in September, during what we call the rag trade, the soft goods trade, there are Sales. It would be nine or ten o'clock before the men had finished at the Old Bailey. Most likely some of the odd men, as we call them, the casual men, would be put on to-morrow morning.

1573. The CHAIRMAN: Have you, during this winter and earlier, had large masses of men applying to you for employment?—Not at all.

1574. You have not seen a great increase of these casual or odd men?—No, not a bit. We had some difficulty while the Boer war was on in

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Mr. GEORGE LAVINGTON. 1575. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Do you keep a record of the names of these casual men and the length of time for which they are employed?—Yes, and their addresses.

1576. So that you could say, in any one year, what amount of employment these casual men, or semi-casual men, had had?—I could certainly do that.

1577. The CHAIRMAN: But you could not tell what a man had been doing with anyone else?—No.

1578. So that it would not be worth much, perhaps?—If they are working with us on Monday, perhaps we may not see them again on Tuesday. Some of them do not turn up. I never ask them what they have been doing. They know that Tuesday is with us a busy day, and they will not turn up at all. They turn up on the Wednesday on the chance of getting a job because they know that it is a short day, and so is Thursday.

1579. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Do you give preference to a man that you have employed before?—If a man was on the day before we should give him the preference for the next day. He would most likely be put on the same horse and van.

1580. The CHAIRMAN: Do the regular men often absent themselves?—Only a very few. There is always a few of the younger men who do that. Their wives perhaps are earning money.

1581. You would not keep a man who did not turn up regularly, I suppose?—No. I get them up to the office and talk to them. Perhaps for a month or two they go on all right, and then they start again losing a day or two.

1582. What becomes of the horses in the day or two?—We send them out with a casual man if we can, but if not we keep them in.

1583. They are fed and cleaned by someone else?—By the stableman.

1584. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us to enlighten us on the subject?—No.

1585. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Have you, generally speaking, had much opportunity of considering how far the statement with regard to the unemployed has been genuine in those parts that you have had to do with? We have heard very much of the unemployed this winter.—I noticed one thing with regard to that. I saw a procession of unemployed starting from Vauxhall one morning. I knew a good many in that procession who had never done a day's work for some years. I knew a good many of them who had worked with us and that I had had to discharge for dishonesty, or something of the sort.

The CHAIRMAN: We are much obliged to you.

(*The Witness withdrew.*)

Mr. T. W. DONOVAN (Branch Manager, Messrs. Cubitt & Co., Builders), *examined.*

Mr. T. W. DONOVAN.

1586. The CHAIRMAN: With regard to seasonal fluctuation in employment, to what do you attribute that? Is it a regular winter occurrence?—I think myself that the questions which you have drawn up state the position very fairly. The probabilities are that it is on account of the weather, and because people dislike men coming into their houses in the winter.

1587. People do not like starting a building job then?—No, not until the weather breaks and is fine. It is also due to habit or fashion.

1588. That is your experience?—Undoubtedly.

1589. There is depression every winter, no doubt?—There is more or less depression every winter. This winter it has been more, and last winter it was more than sometimes.

1590. Can you tell us why it has been worse this year?—People have invested their money in building and have not had a return for it. That is my experience. They can get more in mines, for instance. They do not care about going on with building which only yields a profit, say, of four per cent. They want more.

1591. Are you talking of London now?—Yes, generally throughout.

1592. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Considering the present circumstances of South Africa do you think that people will again begin to invest money in house property?—Well, I think it is a probability, or possibility, anyway.

1593. The CHAIRMAN: Is not London in a good many parts rather over-built? Is that your experience? There is an immense number of houses to be let?—Not necessarily. There are a good many houses now on the market. The reason of that is that people crowd into one house and into flats to cut down expenses. I think that it is caused a good deal by taxation. People curtail expenses. It is a commercial advantage. Everybody wants as much as he can get for his money.

1594. I take it that there is always depression in the winter?—Yes, always.

1595. It is a little more accentuated this year than usual?—Yes, undoubtedly. We had a winter like this in 1873. That was a very bad winter.

1596. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is this depression in the winter due to the fact that it is more expensive to build in the winter?—Undoubtedly, and people do not like the bother and annoyance.

1597. The CHAIRMAN: Building operations, of course, may be stopped by frost?—Yes.

1598. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: But frost is a minor consideration, is it not?—It has a great deal to do with outdoor work. If you start work in the summer time, and get your house roofed in above, there is not much danger, but if, when you get it up to the second or third floor, frost gets on it, it pulls your work all to pieces.

1599. It has been suggested that we might overcome the difficulty of slack time in winter if workmen would take a lower wage in the winter on account of working shorter hours?—A workman could not very well do that. He wants more than in the summer. He wants more hot food, for instance.

1600. But if he is not employed at all he does not get any wage, so that a lower wage with regular work would be better than no wage at all?—In the summer time many are thrifty and save up for a rainy day and use from that fund during the winter.

1601. Mr. J. J. DENT: In the winter workmen earn less money owing to the shorter hours?—Yes, and there is loss of time. Sometimes they lose two or three days during the week.

1602. The CHAIRMAN: The next question is whether the winter depression affects all classes of the building trade?—Yes.

1603. Plasterers?—Yes. It does not affect joiners or carpenters so much, unless you have prolonged frost. If you have a frost of six weeks it affects them. We have not had one lately, but I remember six weeks'

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1604. The houses having got to the stage when their work was wanted?—Exactly. When the carpenter has finished the flooring and the jamb-linings and the skirtings, then the plasterer can come along.

1605. Could not a man plan out his building to be done during the summer time in such a way that there would be work for carpenters and inside people during the winter?—Exactly; but many works last for two or three years. A job lasting for six months and costing two or three thousand pounds is different; but if you put up a mansion which costs £70,000, it takes two or three years. It is two years before you get the roof on.

1606. You think that the depression affects all, but not quite so much the people who work indoors?—Exactly.

1607. Mr. J. J. DENT: Carpenters and joiners have been in a much worse position, have they not, during the last two years than for many years past?—Yes.

1608. What is the explanation of that?—Everyone has an idea of making his son a carpenter or joiner. It is clean and nice. A good many come up from the country. A premium is paid for them and the market is flooded out. During the last ten years there has been no difficulty in getting carpenters. When we have been busy I have been able to place my hand on a hundred at any time. There has always been an enormous number of carpenters on hand when things have been busy.

1609. The CHAIRMAN: Is there any way that you can suggest by which the numbers of people wanted in the different branches of your trade could be better arranged than at present. Is there a call for younger people?—It is the elderly man who gets buffeted now.

1610. He gets buffeted because there are too many young people in the market?—Yes, and they work at a cheaper rate because they have not the experience. That is the point.

1611. You think that there are too many carpenters?—Yes.

1612. Can you suggest anything that you or employers can do to prevent that, such as giving parents warning that the market is full?—No. I have tried that many times. I cannot suggest anything.

1613. Do the wages go down, or are they kept up by the Union?—They are governed by the Trade Union rate.

1614. Supposing that wages went down?—The wages go down in regard to speculative builders, because they do not conform to the Union rate.

1615. Is that a large market?—Yes, it is very large—much more lately than has been the case with our business as contractors.

1616. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Do you do all your joinery in London?—Yes, in Gray's Inn Road.

1617. Do you consider it right, or otherwise, for that to be done outside of London, where dwellings are very much cheaper and there is more space?—Undoubtedly things are very much cheaper; but whether it is wise or not I am not prepared to say. It is not wise for the town mechanic.

1618. I have had this said to me by carpenters that I happened to meet on one occasion: 'We come from Devonshire. Why are we brought up to London, to live in London slums, when we could just as well live in Devonshire and have cottages and gardens and do this carpentering.' The difference in the cost price would pay amply for the carriage.' That was the practical suggestion of those carpenters. Now, would that be a

right move?—Against that you have what we call the machine-shops. Highgate is full of them. They make a door for 4s. 6d. That cannot be done by a joiner in the country; it is impossible. Machinery runs through the whole thing. They have boys to whom they pay 15s. a week, and with a little bit of hammering and glue the door is knocked up.

1619. The element of machinery would prevent what I put to you?—Yes.

1620. The CHAIRMAN: 'Has any change taken place in your experience in the relative proportions of winter and summer work. Is any change in methods or materials causing more work to be done in winter, and, if so, what change?' What you have described must make a great change generally in the conditions of work?—Yes.

1621. It would not be a question of season?—No. I think that general stagnation is the thing.

1622. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: You said that you found that the supply of carpenters' and joiners' labour was in excess of the demand?—Undoubtedly.

1623. You attribute that, in part, to the fact of people being anxious to get their sons into the trade and being willing to pay a premium?—Yes, because it is clean.

1624. Would it be a good move to do away entirely with premiums for apprenticeship. Are there not many small carpenters and small builders who merely take apprentices for the sake of the premiums?—Yes, undoubtedly; but it would be difficult to do away with them, because you would have to treat with individuals.

1625. Mr. J. J. DENT: Is the apprenticeship system, with premium, common in London?—It is dying out a great deal in London.

1626. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: In the country it still pertains?—Yes. In London you have a boy at 1½d. per hour. He works as a glue boy for a year or two, or in the nail room, and then goes on from that.

1627. Are not most of your workmen trained in the country and not in London?—The best mechanics come from the country, undoubtedly, because they have facilities for working at the bench and doing everything by hand, whereas in a London shop the whole thing is practically done by machinery. The only things that are not are scribing and cleaning-up. In the country they have no machinery, and the man has actual experience. A countryman is the best mechanic, I find.

1628. Mr. J. J. DENT: You do not get the same amount of division of labour in the joiner's shop as in London?—No. In London if you take a joiner out on a building he is absolutely lost as to carcass work. We call them 'carpenters and joiners' in London. In the country a man is called a 'carpenter.' That constitutes the whole thing. He is undertaker and joiner and the whole bag of tricks.

1629. The CHAIRMAN: With regard to seasonal work, I should like to know whether anything has occurred to you that would make the work more level, or is it a thing that one must take as inevitable?—Undoubtedly.

1630. You think so?—Yes.

1631. With regard to the supply of men, have you ever at your works been stopped through want of men?—No, I have not, unless there has been a strike, or anything of that kind.

1632. Neither with regard to any of the skilled men nor the labourers?—No, never.

1633. How do the men move from one job to another? If you have a job in the north of London, do you send them from the south of

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Mar. 23, 1906. London?—If we have a job in the West and they are in the East, if they are decent fellows we make arrangements for them to start down West. If they are not worth looking after we simply put them off and let them go.

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1634. Have you a large number of more or less permanent men that you send from one job to another?—Yes. I have had men in my employ for about eighteen years I suppose without a break. That is exceptional.

1635. Mr. W. W. BRUCE: Do they shift their lodgings?—No. They live usually at one place. I have men living at Highgate Hill, and they work principally right down in the West End.

1636. The CHAIRMAN: Do you consider where they live in sending them to a job?—No; that is never taken into consideration.

1637. Mr. J. J. DENT: It is their look out?—Yes.

1638. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Are those highly paid men?—We take into consideration the foremen's addresses. With regard to the other men we employ, we take no heed of their addresses.

1639. The CHAIRMAN: Supposing that you were starting a job in the West End, would the people down there find all the men that were wanted to-morrow morning?—If we start a job in the West, word goes round, and we have plenty of applicants.

1640. You have more than you want?—Yes. The men who are working with me now tell others who have worked with me before, and they come along, so that we practically get the same staff of workmen.

1641. Are these daily or weekly men?—They are hourly men, but we generally keep them on for a week.

1642. Do you pay them daily?—No. We generally pay them on Friday. Of course, sometimes we discharge men after two hours if they are very crude.

1643. Would it be of any assistance or use to you if there was an exchange, or something of that sort, that you could apply to for labourers if you wanted them?—Undoubtedly it would be useful if there was an exchange for country work. Take, for instance, the Salisbury Plain work, and so on, and all those large jobs where you have to advertise in the papers for miles round to get men.

1644. You do not send your men from London in such cases?—No. You only send the best class of men—the foremen and the sub-foremen, perhaps. If you have high-class work you have to send your joiners down.

1645. Have you much country work?—Yes; a great deal. We employ mostly local men, bar the foremen. We send down a foreman plumber, a foreman joiner, and foreman plasterer.

1646. Have you had much difficulty in getting the men that you wanted for the work on Salisbury Plain?—I gave Salisbury Plain as an instance because I worked out the estimate and the scheme. I had about six months on the scheme. I know there was a great deal of difficulty.

1647. Have you generally difficulty in getting men on your country jobs?—No; none whatever.

1648. In spite of that, you think this suggestion of an exchange worth considering?—Yes, having regard to large works where you employ 1,000 or 1,200 men for five years.

1649. In spite of the fact that you do not find much difficulty in getting the men, do you still think it worth the while of a public body, say, to establish an exchange?—Yes, I do undoubtedly.

1650. You think that it would be worth the expense and trouble?—Yes.

1651. Do you think that a man would get employment if he put his name down there?—Yes. If employers knew of such an institution they would undoubtedly send there.

1652. Do you think that a man would have much chance?—Yes.

1653. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: At present do you have to discharge a large number of your men owing to their not being efficient or not turning up?—Yes.

1654. Would not an exchange be a guarantee of character?—Yes.

1655. It would separate the men who were bad from the good ones?—Yes.

1656. It would be beneficial in that way?—But you would not get many bad men on the register.

1657. It would keep them off?—Yes. A good mechanic has no difficulty in getting work. You recommend him to someone else.

1658. If a good man always gets a job and a bad man does not go to the exchange, what is the good of the exchange? That is my difficulty. You think that it would be a useful thing. We have had different opinions on the question.—There are reasons for and against, of course. In busy times no man would put his name down at an exchange and when things were slack you would not want an exchange.

1659. You have not thought it out, perhaps?—No. I only had this paper placed in my hands this afternoon.

1660. You have not a strong opinion one way or the other upon the point?—No, I have not.

1661. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: I suppose that the men are generally engaged by the foreman?—Yes; they are found by him.

1662. And they stick to him?—Yes, exactly. You have a leading man in charge who is called the 'General foreman.' He engages the men, and they are under his supervision. If the builder or the employer sent the men there the foreman would simply 'pooh-pooh' it and have nothing to do with them, or they would be sent away at the slightest excuse.

1663. The foreman is really the employer?—Yes; and we send a pay clerk to pay the wages. That is a check.

1664. The CHAIRMAN: The question at the top of page 3 is with regard to the men who come and apply for employment: 'Do you normally find that any considerable number of these applying for and receiving employment at the beginning of a job (a) have to be discharged after a few days as inefficient, (b) fail to turn up regularly and apparently do not desire continuous work?' Are you troubled with a great many men who are of no use and have to be discharged as inefficient after a few days?—Yes. You would be surprised at the number of men that we have to discharge after two or three days. Some of them do not want the work.

1665. Could they work?—Undoubtedly. In Princes Street we had a job outside the Bank of England with excavators. We are continually discharging men. They will not do the work. They say that it is too hard.

1666. Mr. J. J. DENT: Is it inefficiency or laziness?—Laziness, I should say. A good many of the wives of the workmen are ironers and washers. They work at the wash-tub and earn a good wage. The unskilled men in the building trade spend their money in the public-house. I do not say that all do, but the men that we call 'wasters' do.

1667. Do you get many of what we call the ordinary unskilled labourer—the casual unskilled man—in the building trade?—Yes.

1668. Are most builders' labourers men who are constantly at that sort

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of work?—They go as general labourers, carpenters' labourers, or bricklayers' labourers. Bricklayers' labouring is more cut up now. At one time of day a bricklayer's labourer had to carry the hod. That was essential. Now we have barrows, and what we call an 'excavator' can serve a bricklayer. At one time it was hod on the shoulder and up the ladder. Then they were special men.

1669. Would the ordinary man that we see loafing about street corners be of much use on a building?—No; but most of them are builders' labourers.

1670. The CHAIRMAN: Have you any of that sort?—Yes.

1671. You said just now that we should be surprised at the number that you have to discharge. Will you extend that?—I meant to convey the impression that many of the men now refuse to do the work, and it is surprising, seeing the slackness of trade. You would expect to get more men.

1672. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Painters come to my relief committee more than others for work?—They go and get a can and wash down, and call themselves painters. You have to put up with it, but the foremen know the men and pick them out.

1673. The CHAIRMAN: Do you get a lot of people from other trades who call themselves painters?—Yes.

1674. And also builders' labourers?—No, not many of that kind.

1675. People who used to go to the docks when there was more casual labour come to you instead now, do they not?—The worst class of unskilled men come from Marylebone and Lambeth.

1676. Mr. J. J. DENT: What is the cause of that?—I do not know. I have had practical experience of it. At one time I could tell whether a man came from Lambeth by the streaks down his waistcoat. I was rather a good judge.

1677. Is there any special reason why those two districts supply that poor class of men?—No; I do not know why it is.

1678. The CHAIRMAN: The fourth question on page 3 is this: 'On ordinary work what is the proportion of labourers to skilled operatives required in the trade generally? Has this been affected at all in late years by the introduction of machinery? To what extent and in what kinds of work?'—I turned my book up before I came here with regard to a job that we have just done of £120,000, and I found that two-thirds were skilled men and one-third unskilled.

1679. Is that normal?—Yes

1680. Has it been the case for many years?—Yes; you may take that as normal.

1681. Without changing at all?—No, I do not think so.

1682. That proportion is a permanent condition of the trade?—That is my experience. I daresay that with others the proportion of unskilled is rather more.

1683. Mr. J. J. DENT: That is taking a job right through?—Yes. I called in the foreman and took the figures out of the prime cost book. The proportion was got at by taking them all round, right through the job.

1684. The CHAIRMAN: Has that been affected at all by the introduction of machinery? You mentioned a door made by machinery?—That will not affect you outside the joiners' shop.

1685. Mr. J. J. DENT: What are the proportions of skilled and unskilled men now, as compared with twenty-five years ago?—Then it was

half skilled and half unskilled. We use Scotch cranes and hydraulic hoists. May. 23, 1906.

1686. You require much less unskilled labour now than you used to?—Yes. The Scotchman costs us £500, and we have to save that in unskilled labour.

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1687. You now take as much stuff up in one skip as a dozen men could take up formerly?—Yes, we can take a ton up at one time.

1688. The CHAIRMAN: That applies all through the trade?—That applies all through the trade.

1689. Mr. J. J. DENT: That accounts for the larger surplus of unskilled labourers at present? Now you can use three or four, instead of twelve men?—Yes. Where they are doing excavating they can use a steam cutter.

1690. The CHAIRMAN: Is there any branch where you have not enough unskilled men and can do with more?—We have not so many plasterers.

1691. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is that the result of the Union?—No. Years ago they had the hawk boy, and he became a plasterer. Now he is done away with. The Union only allow one boy to about seven men, and the boy's father must be a plasterer.

1692. The CHAIRMAN: Does that interfere with work generally? What are the wages of a plasterer compared with those of a carpenter?—Plasterers get 11½d. and carpenters 10½d. Plasterers always get more than carpenters, and more than bricklayers.

1693. By the arrangement of which you have spoken, they keep a sort of monopoly of the work for themselves?—Exactly. Carpenters now do more than they did twenty years ago, or quite as much, but plasterers do 50 per cent. less, I should say, and have more money.

1694. What is the process by which a young unskilled man gets into a skilled trade. He begins as unskilled, and how does he progress?—There is a labourer to two plasterers. If he is industrious he will, while the plasterer is having a rest, get hold of the tools and help with the work. He goes on and gets rather handy. He is like that for a year or two. Then he gets away into the outshirts to work for a speculative builder and starts 'roughing in' as we call it, at a cheaper rate, where the Union has no power.

1695. Mr. J. J. DENT: He goes where he can do rough work, because they are not particular about the quality of the work?—Yes.

1696. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: Does he become a skilled labourer in the end?—He becomes a skilled labourer in the end, but he is never so good as a boy apprentice brought up to the trade.

1697. The CHAIRMAN: Are boys brought up to it now?—Yes; but not so much as they used to be.

1698. Supposing that an unskilled labourer wants to become a carpenter can he do so?—It is most difficult.

1699. And the same with regard to all the skilled trades?—Yes; with the exception of bricklaying.

1700. He can easily become a bricklayer?—He can become a bricklayer in twenty-five minutes, you might say. You have to take a trowel and work along the line; but it requires five years to make a bricklayer who can cut arches, who knows the bonds and can set out the work. Many men work on the line. A corner-man gets the corner up, and then the other men lay on the bricks one after the other along the line. Of course, if they have to do difficult work they do not last long.

1701. You do not see any prospect at all in your trade of there being any more demand for unskilled men, but rather the reverse?—Yes.

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1702. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Have you any experience of technical schools?—I think that they are very good. If a boy works at a trade during the day he can get technical knowledge at night.

1703. Do you think them a good substitute for apprenticeship?—Yes, if a boy is intelligent and takes a liking to his trade, undoubtedly.

1704. Do you think that employers might encourage and stimulate technical schools?—Yes. I have a boy myself that I have just started as a carpenter. I think that he will make a very good man. It is the same with plumbers.

1705. The Unions do not put any difficulties in the way?—No.

1706. The CHAIRMAN: Now what proportion of your men are practically permanent? That is the question. Give us, if you can, a rough estimate of what your firm is employing normally, or tell us about the department which you know best yourself. We only want to get at comparative figures?—I suppose that I have now about 250 men in my department, on the outside work. Then, of course, we have the Peabody works and large works at the docks, and in the country, which the partners manage.

1707. You could hardly tell us what the whole number is, but 250 would be a good basis for us to go upon?—Yes.

1708. How many of these are practically permanent, always working for you?—I should say that you can take about fifty of those as permanent.

1709. How many are well known to your foremen, and are employed off and on?—Seventy-five per cent., I should say, are known to the foremen.

1710. That is about 230. One-third is entirely unknown?—Yes.

1711. It really only leaves twenty. Fifty would be permanent, and 180 you would know about, because they had worked for you, or for someone else that you knew?—Yes. We never have actual strangers. We know something about the men.

1712. Are the men paid by the foreman?—No.

1713. Are they paid at the office?—We send a clerk to pay them.

1714. Did you ever try paying by foremen?—Yes, but it is not wise. Some are honest, of course. In the country we are bound to trust the foremen. Then we send a cheque down and open an account.

1715. You are in the foreman's hands, then?—But we know the men that we send as foremen.

1716. Mr. J. J. DENT: It is quite unusual in London for the foreman to pay, is it not?—We never allow the foreman to pay in London, but in the country we have to. In one instance a foreman for five years in the country paid his men, but directly he came back to town he did not pay his men. We sent a clerk to pay them. We have a duplicate book, the same as a cheque book. If a foreman wants to discharge a man he writes his name in the book, 'Allow' (so-and-so) (so many) 'hours.' The man comes to the office with that, and draws his money. We pay him over the counter.

1717. The CHAIRMAN: Can you make any suggestions as regards unskilled labour as to how fluctuations in employment may be diminished or provided against (a) by steps taken by the employers themselves, (b) through modifications of the present system of engagement and remuneration? If you have yourself made or contemplated any experiments in this direction, or any modifications of the ordinary system of engagement, please describe them.—I am afraid that that is rather a ticklish question.

1718. Yes, it is a big question.—I came to a full-stop when I came to that.

1719. We agree that some of the fluctuation is inevitable?—Yes.

1720. Do you find that any of your men get other work?—Yes, they go from job to job. Mar. 23, 1906.

1721. Not in another line of business altogether?—No; they follow their own groove.

1722. Stokers, we were told, make bricks in the summer time?—We get men who come to work in the winter, and when the summer comes on they go brickmaking. I have men like that now.

1723. Summer is your busy time?—Yes. The brick men are very good workers, and we always give them a job. They come and go.

1724. Do you know at all any other job that the men who are slack in the winter work on?—No, there is nothing much.

1725. So that the only thing for them to do is take care of what they make in the summer?—Yes.

1726. 'Through modifications of the present system of engagement and remuneration.' Can you say anything on that?—No.

1727. Can you do anything to make the work more regular for these unskilled people, speaking from an employer's point of view?—No. I cannot see what can be done.

1728. Neither do I. I feel the difficulty.—We naturally do our level best to get the best we can.

1729. You might represent to your customers that you could do the work cheaper in the winter.—We do that sometimes.

1730. Mr. J. J. DENT: Is it possible to work much cheaper in the winter than in the summer in the building trade?—Not much.

1731. The CHAIRMAN: You have to have light and so on?—Yes. It is sometimes more expensive.

1732. The next question you are asked is: 'If you have yourself made or contemplated any experiments in this direction or any modifications of the ordinary system of engagement please describe them?' Have you any plan in your own work that you think would be useful for other employers to go on in the way of getting your unskilled men to work more regularly by giving them better conditions?—I have thought that matter over, but I must say I cannot see anything to suggest.

1733. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Have you any experience of the system of profit-sharing or bonus or anything of the sort?—I think it would not do for building; the men come and go so often. It is all very well for manufacturers, jam makers, and so on, who have Government contracts and run so many things through; or Lever's soap works.

1734. Supposing that you had a job that would take a year and you knocked off the unsuitable men and kept the suitable men, could not you offer them a bonus?—We could only do it with the foremen.

1735. Is it a common thing with the foremen?—Yes. That is the only point where we can do it.

1736. I should have thought there would be plenty of scope for it if you could devise a scheme?—We thought of it two or three years ago, but we found it was most difficult.

1737. It was first started in connection with painting?—I do not know.

1738. The CHAIRMAN: I suppose there is no such thing in the trade as a gang of men coming and offering to do a job for such and such a price?—No; we do not take that class of work on. On the outskirts, where they have a contract for a factory or a foundry, they do that in certain trades; but with regard to our work it is rather complicated, and it is a job to get a clear road, because so many different trades are working one over another.

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1739. Mr. J. J. DENT: Sub-contracting is on the decrease?—Yes.

1740. The system of one man taking the whole of the brickwork and one the whole of the plastering is dead?—Yes.

1741. The CHAIRMAN: Was it not satisfactory?—It lead to what is called 'sweating.'

1742. Mr. J. J. DENT: It was quite common twenty or thirty years ago?—Yes.

1743. The CHAIRMAN: The skilled men are probably regularly employed, I presume. It is the unskilled men who are not?—Yes; if it is the unskilled men. The only thing I have told the men myself is that they should be more speedy. They hang work out so that people will not invest their money. They get on a job, and they do not care whether it is finished this week or next.

1744. There is not much encouragement to invest?—No. What people say is that if they could get a fair return for their money they would invest it, probably. They say that they 'have had some.'

1745. You are referring to the building of small houses?—Fair-class houses, too.

1746. Dwellings for workmen?—Houses up to £70 and £80 a year.

1747. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do you consider that the lack of interest on the part of the men is owing to the policy of Unions?—Yes, a good deal.

1748. You do not think any system of profit sharing or bonus or piece-work could be devised to overcome the difficulty?—No; I do not think so. If they could impress on the men to give twenty shillings in the pound—to give an equivalent to what they have—then I believe the whole thing would be solved, but not before.

1749. If you tried a profit-sharing scheme now, do you think they would expect to share profits and do no more work?—Exactly. I have said like this to them: 'Suppose you go in for an ounce of tobacco and a man gives you three-quarters of an ounce, you kick up a row and say, "This is not right, Guvnor." They say "Certainly." Well, I say, 'I pay you twenty shillings for a certain amount of work and it costs me ' forty shillings. Is that fair?'

1750. What does a man say to that?—He has no answer.

1751. Mr. J. J. DENT: You know you ought to have an ounce of tobacco when you pay for an ounce. There is a standard. If you get three-quarters you know that you are short. But you have no standard for twenty shillings' worth of work. Is not that the answer?—I will give you an instance. I sent a plasterer to do some work. I saw him on the Friday. I said, 'Is that finished?' 'No.' I turned round and said, 'Have you finished?' He said, 'No.' I said, 'I suppose your hand will shake to-night when you hold it out for your wages?' He said, 'I do not know so much about that.' I said, 'You are forty-five years old. You are old enough to know better. You know the time when you had to work.' 'Yes,' he said, 'I do know the time, but I would rather sweep a crossing than I would work now.' That is how he expressed it then. I must say that employers oftentimes do not know when a man has done a day's work. A man who does a day's work and does a fair amount of work, if he wants to straighten his back will do so. If his employer comes in he will stand and look at his employer. But the man who skulks directly he sees you runs. That is the point. Many employers do not know who does a good day's work. Until employers or foremen or men over other men are competent to know when a man has done a good day's work it will never be right.

1752. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON : Do you think the secret is to increase the number of foremen ?—Until we have competent and practical men it will never be altered. Now we have drapers and chimney-sweeps and upholsterers all doing building. Mar. 23, 1906.  
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1753. Mr. J. J. DENT : You mean by 'practical' men, men who understand the technicalities of the trade ?—Yes; men who understand the technicalities of the trade.

1754. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON : That can only be by a strict system of apprenticeship, or else attendance at technical schools ?—Yes.

*(The Witness withdrew.)*

CHARITY ORGANISATION SOCIETY,  
Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road,  
London, S.W.

Wednesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1906.

## MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

### Special Committee

ON

### UNSKILLED LABOUR.

*Present—*

W. A. BAILLYARD, Esq.,	E. J. HOWARTH, Esq.,	} <i>Secretaries</i>
Sir E. W. BRABROOK, C.B.,	D. M. WATSON, Esq.,	
CECIL M. CHAPMAN, Esq.,	C. S. LOCH, Esq.,	
JOHN CURRIE, Esq.,	C. J. HAMILTON, Esq.,	
J. PARSONS, Esq.,		

Sir E. W. BRABROOK in the Chair.

Oct. 17, 1906.

Mr. ALEXANDER HORN, *examined.*

Mr. ALEXANDER HORN. 1755. The CHAIRMAN: You are Directing Manager to the great firm of Messrs. Clarke, Nickolls & Coombs, manufacturing confectioners? Yes.

1756. Who have their factory at Hackney Wick?—Yes.

1757. They have, I suppose, a great number of establishments where they sell their manufactures?—No, we have not a large number. We have only two or three places where we sell.

1758. Is your trade in any degree different in different seasons?—does vary slightly, but not very greatly.

1759. What is the nature of the workpeople whom you employ?—Mostly unskilled. We employ a good many skilled workmen as well, but they are mostly unskilled workmen.

1760. The larger number are the unskilled?—Yes.

1761. Is there much casual labour?—No, there is very little among the male workers.

1762. They are, I may take it, mostly in steady employment with you?—Yes.

1763. You said that there is very little casual labour amongst the male workers. Does any point of difference arise with regard to female workers?—Yes, the employment varies considerably.

1764. Do you take them on as you require them?—Yes.

1765. Your trade is not to be defined really as a seasonal trade, is it?

Well, we have several seasons in the course of the year. We have the Easter trade, the Christmas trade, the autumn trade, and the jam trade. We have four or five special season trades.

1766. There are times when you are more busy than at others?—Yes.

1767. But, speaking generally, the work goes on?—Yes. If you like, I can give you the minimum and maximum figures for the last five years.

1768. Any definite information of that kind would be very valuable to the Committee.—In 1901 the lowest number that we had on at any time during the year was 1,596, and the maximum was 1,807. In 1902 the minimum was 1,560 and the maximum was 1,918.

1769. That is males and females together, is it not?—Yes. 1903: minimum, 1,776; maximum, 2,073. 1904: minimum, 1,812; maximum, 1,926. In 1905 the minimum was 1,776 and the maximum was 2,020. These are the numbers not including the staff.

1770. The clerks?—And the carmen. They are just the numbers of those employed in the works. We have two other factories in London. The figures do not include those employed there, but only in our main factory at Hackney Wick.

1771. Are they girls or women who are employed?—Both. The variation in numbers, as I said before, applies mostly to the females. There is very little variation in the male labour at any time.

1772. As I followed the figures, they showed an average variation of 300 a year?—Yes; roughly that is it.

1773. Have you any difficulty in obtaining casual workers when you want them?—Not the slightest.

1774. There is always a large supply beyond the demand?—Yes; there is a superabundant supply. The supply is too plentiful.

1775. Exactly.—A great many come and stay only one or two days. Little girls come to get a feed, and as soon as they are surfeited with sweets they betake themselves elsewhere.

1776. Yours is an attractive business?—Yes.

1777. Have you observed, with regard to the women's work, any effect upon the comfort of their homes or the industry of their husbands? Is it within your experience?—No; I am afraid that that is outside my experience.

1778. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: What are the proportions of men and women that you employ?—Roughly, I should think about one-third male and two-thirds female. Perhaps we do not employ quite so many males, but you may take it that that is somewhere near the mark.

1779. As I understand, you have a system of profit sharing, have you not?—Yes. We have a scheme which owes its origin to my colleague, Mr. Mathieson.

1780. Would you mind describing the working of it?—After we have paid our ordinary shareholders 6 per cent. on their capital the surplus profits are divided in equal proportions between the workpeople and the shareholders. That is the essence of the whole thing.

1781. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Are you pledged to that? Suppose that by some means you made as much as 20 per cent. profit in a year?—We frequently make a good deal more than that.

1782. And the workpeople get as much of the surplus as the shareholders?—Yes; they get the same as the shareholders. We have had that system in operation now for sixteen years. If you care about it, I can tell you what the share of the profits has been for each year.

1783. The CHAIRMAN: That would be very interesting indeed.—In 1890 the amount of bonus paid to labour was £1,400; in 1891, £1,400;

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- Oct. 17, 1906. 1892, £1,550; 1893, £1,700; 1894, £1,700; 1895, £2,762; 1896, £2,762;  
 1897, £9,500; 1898, £5,750; 1899, £7,000; 1900, £9,500; 1901, £9,500;  
 Mr. 1902, £14,000; 1903, £15,750; 1904, £8,500; 1905, £12,000.  
 ALEXANDER 1784. With fluctuations, that shows an evident increase from year to  
 HORN. year?—Yes. In the sixteen years we have paid £104,775.  
 1785. If I may depend upon my memory, the increase in the bonus has  
 been greater than the increase in the number of persons employed?—Yes;  
 very much.  
 1786. So that the share of the profits of each person has been a growing  
 thing?—Yes.  
 1787. Could you give me any idea by way of a percentage of what it  
 would come to on their wages?—Last year we paid £12,000, and we paid  
 without the bonus, £71,666 in wages.  
 1789. On the average, that is about one-sixth?—It is just about 16 per  
 cent.  
 1790. Which, of course, is a material addition to their earnings?—Yes.  
 1791. What do they do with this addition? Do they save it, or do  
 they spend it?—Some of them save it, but not many, I am afraid.  
 1792. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Might I ask you how this is divided?  
 Who partake or participate?—Everybody who has been with us for twelve  
 months.  
 1793. Managers and salaried clerks?—The ordinary clerks do, but not  
 the managers at all. We directors have no share in it, and our principal  
 travellers and the principal members of the staff, who are partly paid by  
 results already, get no share in it at all. The ordinary clerks, who are  
 simply paid a weekly wage, participate the same as the other workers.  
 1794. Of course this might have been contributed very largely to by  
 the managers?—Quite so, that is perfectly true; but the managers get  
 absolutely nothing out of this.  
 1795. The CHAIRMAN: The others all get it in proportion to their  
 ordinary wages?—Yes.  
 1796. Mr. J. PARSONS: Is it paid to them in a lump sum?—Yes.  
 1797. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Are they asked to leave any of it in the  
 business?—They are asked to leave it if they care to. We allow them  
 5 per cent. on what they leave, but I am sorry to say that there are not  
 many of them who leave anything. I may say that when we turned our  
 business into a limited liability company sixteen years ago, we gave them  
 all the opportunity of becoming shareholders, and not only that, but we  
 offered to lend them the money to take up the shares with. It was not  
 because we wanted money that we turned our business into a company.  
 We offered to lend them all as much money as they wanted to take up  
 shares, but there were very few who took up shares at that time. Our  
 ordinary capital is only £50,000. We have paid over twice that in  
 dividends during the time that we have been a company.  
 1798. The CHAIRMAN: Have you anything in the nature of what we  
 may call a shop club?—Have you an institution for thrift, of any kind,  
 in connection with the works?—They have a loan club which is managed  
 entirely by themselves. I am treasurer, or chairman, or something or  
 another—I really do not know what. I know that the whole thing is  
 managed without my interference. We do not allow any other clubs in  
 the place at all. It came to my knowledge many years ago that there  
 were several moneylenders in the place, and that the recognised rate of  
 interest was 1*l.* a shilling per week, so I put a stop to that and allowed  
 them to have a regular loan club. They share out the money at Christmas  
 always.

1799. The loans are small, I take it?—Yes.

1800. Mr. D. M. WATSON: You will understand that the question is not meant at all impertinently, but I should like to ask whether you pay the full rate of wages that the class of men or women earns as a rule?—I think so.

1801. You do?—Yes. I engage practically the whole of the hands myself. I have mentioned the matter of the bonus only occasionally. I went down to Liverpool one day last week to engage a man, and I mentioned the matter of the bonus to him; but I am certain that during the whole of these sixteen years I have not mentioned the bonus to half a dozen people in engaging them. I am absolutely certain of that. So that it is not held out as an inducement to anyone.

1802. Does the system result in great permanence with regard to your staff?—I should think that you have very few people leaving if you pay in that way?—We find that now, but it was a good many years before we found that there was any effect in that way.

1803. I should think that it would result in attaching them to you?—There are also other advantages. We have a superannuation fund, and it will be available in 1915 for those who have worked for us for twenty-five years. The employés and clerks do not contribute anything towards that. I may say that the superannuation fund is made up in this way: only those who have worked for us for twelve months benefit from the bonus, but then there are a great many who have only worked for two weeks, or two months, or six or ten months. Their share is taken off, the same as if it were paid to them, and that goes to form the superannuation fund.

1804. The CHAIRMAN: But the superannuation fund will be a comparatively small one, will it not, with regard to the great bulk of the members?—No, it will not. It now amounts to £21,000. We have accumulated that in sixteen years.

1805. How do you deal with your workmen in the event of sickness, may I ask?—In the event of sickness they are paid two-thirds of their wages for six weeks, and in case of death there is a payment of £5.

1806. From the funds of the company?—No; from the accumulating Provident or Superannuation Fund. A man gets just the same as a girl, that is to say, a man gets no more than a girl.

1807. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: I suppose that the profit-sharing really only applies to the male workers?—No.

1808. How much of the female labour does it benefit?—The whole of those who have been with us for twelve months.

1809. But then is not most of your female labour rather fluctuating and casual? You said that there is more fluctuation with regard to the female labour.—I have mentioned what the fluctuations are. The highest fluctuation is only about 300, and we employ at least 1,400 females.

1810. Are they employed for the whole year?—Yes.

1811. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: How many have you in benefit now?—You can get at it in this way: if you take 300 off 1,400, that is 1,100.

1812. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: Are the people who work at the different season trades the same people or not? You have one season at Easter, another at Christmas, another in the autumn, and a season for sweets and jam. I want to know if the people are interchangeable?—To a certain extent they are.

1813. Is the season worker for the Easter trade the same as the season worker for the jam trade, for instance?—We change them about when they are willing to be changed. As a rule they prefer to go home rather than work in another department.

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1814. That would make the fluctuation rather more, and lessen the number of people who come under the bonus system?—Yes.

1815. So that the raw figure of fluctuation of 300 in the aggregate might not really represent the true fluctuation? That is what I wanted to get at.—I think that it does, roughly.

1816. It would only represent the true fluctuation as far as the season workers are interchangeable?—Yes.

1817. And they are not all so?—Not altogether, but at any rate more than a thousand girls participated in the bonus last year. That I know.

1818. How many women?—Women and girls. When I say 'girls,' I mean females.

1819. Mr. J. PARSONS: Supposing that a woman worker had been with you for twelve months and had got in for the bonus, and supposing that for the second year her work was not continuous, that she was only employed by you for nine months, say, would she get a bonus on that nine months?—It would all depend. She would not be entitled to it, but she might get it all the same. We have a hard and fast line, but we do not stick to it.

1820. Your hard and fast line is that she must be employed continuously for twelve months?—Yes, that is so. We have also another rule that we go by. The Secretary, in making up the bonuses, without applying to us at all, either to myself or my colleagues, if anyone has not lost more than six weeks during the year, passes the bonus paper. If more than six weeks during the year have been lost, then the bonus paper is brought before me, and I exercise my judgment. Frequently they get the bonus if they have worked for only nine months.

1821. If, I suppose, it is not their fault?—Quite so.

1822. But on account of slackness?—Then, again, if I cannot conscientiously pay them out of the bonus fund, if I think it is a deserving case I pay them something out of the ordinary wages.

1823. Mr. D. M. WATSON: Do you differentiate between good and bad workers at all?—Not at all.

1824. You have never tried to put force on them to leave money in the business?—No.

1825. It seems to me that, paying a fair wage, it would be quite easy to say, as they do, I think, in the South Metropolitan Gas Company, 'You must leave something in.' You do not attach importance to that?—No.

1826. With regard to sickness, you say that two-thirds of the wages are paid for six weeks?—Yes.

1827. Does the payment stop then?—It stops if it is a case of ordinary sickness. If it is a case of accident or anything of that sort that is a different thing.

1828. You are not under the Workmen's Compensation Act except for men, are you?—Yes.

1829. Are the women under it?—Yes, they are all under it. We insure and the insurance companies have always treated us very well. They only pay half, I think, and then we make it up.

1830. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Is the bonus paid in a lump sum at the end of the year?—Yes, as soon after our annual meeting as possible. It is usually paid just before Easter.

1831. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Is the two-thirds that you speak of in case of sickness paid in addition to anything which they are entitled to from the insurance companies?—No. They get nothing from the insurance company for the first two weeks.

1832. Quite so, but after that?—We simply make it up to two-thirds.

1833. Including that, you make it up?—Yes.

1834. The CHAIRMAN: They would get half from the insurance company?—Yes.

1835. And you would increase it to the two-thirds?—Yes.

1836. Mr. J. PARSONS: With your experience of sixteen years, in your judgment has this system of giving these bonuses inured to the benefit of the workpeople? Have you noticed a difference in their tone? Do you think that it has benefited them morally?—Yes, I think so. We have a very good class of workers anyway, and always have had during the sixteen years. I am pretty certain that we have a higher class of workers than we had before.

1837. Mr. D. M. WATSON: I suppose that you find what the idea at the bottom is—that you get better work out of your workpeople?—Yes.

1838. There is not the same inclination to be slack and to take things easy; in fact, they see that each other does his work?—Yes. That was the idea, and there was also the sort of idea that we had that, if we were fairly prosperous, they ought to share in the prosperity.

1839. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: Can you tell us what the husbands or fathers of your women and girl workers do?—Everything.

1840. Are they drawn from the casual labourer class, or artizan class?—From every class—artizans, casual labourers, police inspectors, station masters, and all sorts, even parsons.

1841. What I want to try to get at is this: do you find that the profit-sharing system has produced a higher class of female worker—that whereas you had the wife and daughter of the casual labourer in the past, you now get the wife and daughter of a higher class of person?—I cannot say that they come from a higher stratum, but that they themselves seem to be improved.

1842. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: You say that the work which they do is unskilled work. What is the nature of it? What is the principal part of it?—It is unskilled and it is skilled too—that is to say that they are all unskilled when they come to us. They have to learn to do the work.

1843. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: How long does it take them to become efficient?—I could not tell you that. It depends upon what sort of work a girl is put to. In certain classes of work, and fairly well paid work, a girl might become as efficient in six weeks as she would in six years; in other branches of the business, again, it takes years to become thoroughly efficient.

1844. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Do you pay by piecework?—Yes.

1845. What do they earn?—Lozengé cutters earn the highest. They earn up to 24s. a week.

1846. Mr. J. PARSONS: The women?—Yes.

1847. Is it exceptional to earn as much as that?—Yes, it is.

1848. What would the ordinary female worker earn on the average?—About 10s.

1849. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: Would the girls earn that?—Girls and women together—taking them all.

1850. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: And the men?—Well, I do not know. The men mostly start as lads. The confectioners, the skilled workmen, unfortunately, are nearly all foreigners. They earn about £6 a week. We do not give as much as that to an Englishman, of course.

1851. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do the confectioners learn their work with you?—No, they do not learn it with us, and they could not learn it in this country.

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1852. The CHAIRMAN: They get the £6 a week and a bonus of something like £50 at the end of the year—£350?—Yes. Only a few get so much as that.

1853. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: What would the ordinary labourer get?—Up to about 26s. a week.

1854. Mr. J. PARSONS: What would be the work of the men who earn the very highest wages?—Superintending, mostly.

1855. Superintending the making of the sweets—writing the prescriptions for them, I suppose, as a doctor does with regard to medicine?—Yes.

1856. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: You mentioned that your business was really a combination of several separate seasonal trades?—Yes.

1857. I should like to know, if possible, if there is any general tendency amongst seasonal trades to dovetail in that way. Is it necessary in the employer's interest to have a group of trades which more or less fit in to give continuous running to his machinery?—With regard to interchangeability we always find that there is a great objection to going from one department to another. As a rule girls would rather go home for a week or two than go to another department.

1858. Is there any employer's reason for not transferring them from one department to another?—Not the slightest. I do not see that there would be any reason at all.

1859. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: Are the girls capable of doing first one work and then another?—Certain classes. Of course, in the seasonal trades there is always a good deal of work that does not require any skill at all. Our own girls in other departments could do it just as well as an outsider; but then, although they would get the same wages as they are getting in their own departments, they feel that it is *infra dig.* to do what they consider practically labourers' work—rough work. It is a lower class of work than they are doing in their own departments, and rather than do it as a rule they would stay away for two or three weeks until their own departments became busy again. I have found that repeatedly.

1860. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: The fashion is against it, I suppose?—Yes.

1861. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: When you are busy the last people that you take on are of rather lower skill than the people who are already on?—Yes, that is so.

1862. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Is there any necessity, in view of the fluctuations in the numbers engaged from one part of the year to another actually to dismiss people, or are you able to make up for your fluctuations by what we may call the natural shrinkage in your staff?—We very, very seldom dismiss people for slackness.

1863. It is really met by natural shrinkage which you do not make up?—We rarely dismiss for slackness. We simply stop taking on.

1864. That is what I mean. You said, I think, that you never found anything like a scarcity of labour?—No, never.

1865. Does that mean that your standard of piecework rates has remained the same for a very long period of time—over a good many years, for example?—Yes.

1866. Is it quite unusual amongst trades of this kind to raise or lower the rates according to your supply of labour? I mean, do you think that probably you might attract quite as good a class of labour since the supply is so plentiful at a lower rate of wage?—That I do not know. I have never considered the question of lowering the wages. The wages have risen considerably during these sixteen years.

1867. Have they?—Yes.

1868. Does that mean that they have earned more or that the piece rates have been changed?—The old piece rates have not been changed. I am not aware of any of the old piece rates having been changed; but, fixing new piece rates and comparing them with others of a similar nature, they are raised. Oct. 17, 1906  
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1869. Was that because you felt that you wished to encourage a better class of labour, or because you found it necessary in order to obtain labour?—It was to encourage a better class.

1870. It was commercially to your advantage. You require a better class for the work?—They look better in the place. That is the principal thing.

1871. It was not, strictly, commercially and economically necessary?—No.

1872. A business man, running a business on the cheapest possible lines compatible with efficiency, need not have paid the higher rate?—No, quite so.

1873. You pay a girl 4s. as a learner?—Yes, at 13 or 14 years of age.

1874. I have found that that is a wage that is very commonly paid in a number of different industries to girl learners. Is it a customary wage in London?—I do not know at all. It has been customary with us.

1875. I am trying to get at whether there is a customary wage for this class of labour, which always seems to be over supplied, although there does not seem to be any competition which ever sends down the wages. I cannot quite understand it.—I do not know.

1876. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: For how long do they remain learners—a year?—Well, it all depends. We employ a good many girls at caramel wrapping. A girl will be taken on at 4s. a week, and a bright, active girl may be earning 7s. in six weeks' time.

1877. There is no definite period for which they remain learners?—No. As soon as ever a girl can earn more than 4s. she gets it.

1878. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Have you any idea as to the number of people who are likely to qualify per annum for your superannuation fund?—I know at home, but I cannot tell you now.

1879. Your fund, increasing at the present rate, seems to me to be likely to be more than you will want.—No.

1880. Mr. J. PARSONS: What is your superannuation promise?—We have not made any definite promise, but I think that we suggested paying up to £1 a week to a man—not more than half a man's wages, and not more than £1 a week. I think that that was how it was.

1881. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Have you any idea as to the age at which a man generally finds himself too old to do your work?—No. They usually die when they are too old to do the work.

1882. Is it lifelong employment?—Yes. They stick to us.

1883. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Not too old at forty?—No. We have some over seventy.

1884. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Could you tell me whether the sort of organisation that you have, such as the thrift and the superannuation and so on, would be possible with most of the other factory industries in the east end of London?—I do not see why not.

1885. It does not depend on making very considerable profits? Could it be regarded as a normal thing for a factory to have these beneficiary adjuncts?—Yes.

1886. Mr. J. PARSONS: Does the description which you have given of your Hackney Wick house apply to your other houses in a very similar way?—Yes, it applies to all of them except one that we have in

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Birmingham. That is a business which we bought three or four years ago. We carry it on, not under our own name, but the original name. We lose three or four thousand a year there.

1887. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: Is there any interchangeability between the different branches in the matter of labour—between Birmingham and London, for instance?—No.

1888. Mr. D. M. WATSON: With regard to the fluctuation in bonus between 1903 and 1904, I suppose that there was a great deal of grumbling?—There was a great deal of difficulty in 1904.

1889. There always is, although some, Sir George Livesey, for instance, think that they will not grumble; that you may safely launch a bonus scheme of this kind, and that they will take the reductions quite in good temper?—They always grumble.

1890. They always grumble?—I thought that they would not, but I found out my mistake in 1903-4.

1891. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Had you made it clear beforehand that there would be these fluctuations?—Yes. At one time we made a public distribution of the bonus annually, and I used to say a few words to them. I always impressed it upon them that the time might come when there would be nothing at all. Invariably I tried to convey that to them. Of late years we have not made a public distribution at all.

1892. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: Do they have the figures before them to show how it is worked out?—Yes.

1893. Mr. D. M. WATSON: You did not find that it resulted in their bearing a grudge?—No. None of them ever complained to me personally about it.

1894. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: You did not find that it affected the quality of their work?—No.

1895. They have not got to look upon it as so much a right that they regard themselves as being defrauded of part of their wages? That is the danger of such funds. You do not get any thanks.—No.

1896. Mr. J. PARSONS: They behave very much like ordinary shareholders, I suppose?—Yes.

1897. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: I should like to ask your opinion as to the advisability of making compulsory the retention of the bonus, it being only distributed, for example, during periods of out of work?—If we had started in that way I think that it would have been a very good thing; but I do not think it would be wise to introduce it now.

1898. Would it be possible, do you think, to organise a committee of your employees to manage what you might call their welfare institutions, you co-operating with them? Could not you try to bring about a change of this kind by gradually educating them? I can understand a difficulty if you pressed it upon them; but could not you try to bring it about through themselves, or do you think that there would not be sufficient cohesion?—I am sure that there would not.

1899. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: Are they organised in any way? Have the men and the female workers a union?—No; they have no union at all.

1900. They are not organised for any purpose?—No.

1901. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Do you get employees from other sweet factories or similar industries?—Yes.

1902. Are they generally an inferior class of worker?—Yes. We select only a very few of those who have worked at other places.

1903. Do you find that they have acquired bad habits?—Yes.

1904. Mr. D. M. WATSON: You said that the bonus was 16 per cent. on the wages, did you not?—Yes.

1905. On the average number of years?—No. It would not be nearly so large. Oct. 17, 1906.

1906. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: It was on the last year?—Yes.

1907. Mr. J. PARSONS: Are there any circumstances that make this very generous system specially easy, do you know?—None whatever. Mr. ALEXANDER HORN.

1908. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: It requires that the employer shall look at the question from another point of view than that of strictly economical interest?—Yes.

1909. He must have a social interest in his workpeople?—Yes.

1910. Mr. D. M. WATSON: And the business must not be over capitalised?—Exactly. That is really the crux of the whole thing. A good many companies who have adopted profit sharing have been obliged to abandon it on that account—because they are over capitalised. Others, again, fix the limit too high before the workers participate in the profits.

1911. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: They reserve to themselves too high a percentage of interest?—Yes, quite so. We have a very large business for a pottering trade like lollipop. We do about half a million, and our ordinary capital is only £50,000.

1912. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Have you a large export trade?—Not so very large.

1913. Mostly a home trade?—Yes, it is mostly at home.

1914. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: I notice that your workpeople have been increasing in numbers even during years of depression?—Yes.

1915. That means, I suppose, that your business is rapidly increasing, does it not?—It is not increasing much now.

1916. I think that you also undertake such things as making your own boxes, and so on?—Yes.

1917. Do you find that that is economically desirable?—Yes. It is absolutely necessary.

1918. It certainly should have the effect of steadying fluctuations in labour?—Yes.

1919. Particularly if you have many subsidiary departments?—Yes.

1920. Why is it absolutely necessary?—It might not be so much so now as it was a matter of fifteen or twenty years ago. At that time we were continually being upset through strikes in the box-making trade outside. We could not get boxes to put our stuff in. On one occasion I went down to Hull and organised a supply of sawn timber from there, and we had the boxes nailed in our own place. After that difficulty was got over at that time, I decided that we should go right into box-making ourselves, and we have never had any trouble since. I may say that the Box-makers' Union is one of the very aggressive unions. Sawyers and box-makers were always quarrelling with their employers at that time, so I erected a saw-mill in our works to make sure that we should be upset as little as possible in the case of any future trouble. I arranged to saw one-third of the timber that we used, and to buy in one-third ready sawn, and to buy one-third of ready-made boxes, so that, in the event of a strike among the box-makers outside, it should not affect us to a very great extent. If we had had trouble with our own people the outside box-makers would still have been willing to oblige us all they could. We have never had any trouble with our own workpeople at all—not even with the troublesome element, the sawyers. We have never had the slightest trouble with them since we started, but I still think it advisable to keep on that system.

1921. Mr. J. PARSONS: Are they in the profit-sharing scale?—Yes.

1922. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: Do the subsidiary trades tend to fluctuate

Oct. 17, 1906. rather more?—No. We naturally consider our own people first, so that there is never the slightest fluctuation in the subsidiary trades.

Mr. ALEXANDER HORN. 1923. The box-makers are going all the time?—Yes, they are going all the time, because we do not make all the boxes we want. It is the same with the wheelwrights and harness-makers and people of that sort that we keep. They have always plenty of work. There is no casual labour there, because they do not do all the work of that nature that we want.

1924. Mr. C. J. HAMILTON: Has there not been a considerable development in what you may call factory industry in the east end of London in recent years?—Yes, I think so.

1925. Factories have been very rapidly growing up?—Yes, round about our district.

1926. Is that because there is a great supply of cheap casual labour in the wives and daughters and so on of dock labourers?—Yes, I should say so. Then, down our way, in the east end of London, about Poplar and Hackney Wick, land has been very cheap comparatively. That has been an inducement for manufacturers to start there; but now that the rates have gone up to such a tremendous height that will act as a deterrent.

1927. Do you think that a tendency of high rates will be to drive out industries in which labour of a high quality is an important factor, and perhaps to attract industries in which labour is very cheap? The high rates partly go to maintaining an extra number of people through the poor law and so on, so that manufacturers can get their cheap labour in large quantities, although they may be paying part of the wages in rates?—Yes. We have been negotiating for some time for land about 10 miles down the Lea valley. In the meantime the matter is at a standstill. We think that we should do better by moving away on account of the rates.

1928. Mr. E. J. HOWARTH: Would you get the labour there?—I think so. I believe that it would even pay us to run a special train for the first few years to take the labour down there, if we had difficulty in local labour.

1929. From West Ham?—Yes.

1930. Mr. W. A. BAILWARD: Are you in the Poplar part of Hackney Wick?—Yes; not in the Poplar district, but the Poplar Union.

1931. Mr. D. M. WATSON: I know something about the disposal of land, and that there are absolutely no buyers in the east end of London round the Poplar neighbourhood. You cannot sell land?—No. Five or six years ago we bought five or six acres, forming the site of part of our works. We bought the freehold at £1,000 an acre, with access to the canal and a good main road. That is very cheap for land.

1932. Mr. CECIL CHAPMAN: How long is it since you contemplated removal on account of the rates?—It is about two years ago since we first considered the question. We have bought some land. We have bought ten acres. We should only use that if things got very desperate. We hope to be able to get land much more convenient than the ten acres that we have bought, but we have bought these two plots of land as a sort of stand-by.

1933. In the Lea valley?—Yes.

1934. Mr. JOHN CURRIE: I hope that you will not consider these two questions in any degree impertinent, but I should like to ask, first of all, whether your capital is mostly held by yourselves?—Yes.

1935. Secondly, I should like to ask you whether these arrangements in regard to profit sharing were instituted prior to your forming yourselves into a limited liability company?—At the same time. Really, when we formed the business into a limited liability company, we took powers for

the purpose, but it was three years later before we actually did this, Oct. 17, 1906. because we could not organise the two things at the same time.

1936. The CHAIRMAN: We are very much obliged to you indeed for the excellent evidence which you have given to us.

Mr. —  
ALEXANDER  
HORN.

The WITNESS: I hope that it may be of some service to you.

*(The Witness withdrew.)*