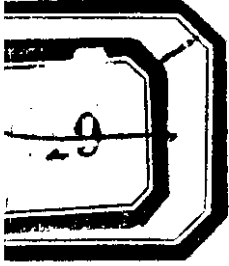


TRANSPORT WORKERS—COURT OF INQUIRY.



VOL. I.

REPORT
AND
MINUTES OF EVIDENCE
OF THE
INQUIRY

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



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**Appointment of Court of Inquiry and Rules of Procedure.
(Transport Workers—Wages and Conditions of Employment
of Dock Labour).**

Whereas by the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, the Minister of Labour is empowered to refer any matters appearing to him to be connected with or relevant to a trade dispute, whether existing or apprehended, to a Court of Inquiry appointed by him for that purpose :

And whereas negotiations have been proceeding between the National Council of Port Labour Employers on the one hand, and the National Transport Workers' Federation on the other hand, on the subject of standard minimum wages and other alterations in the conditions of employment of various classes of Dock and Waterside Labour :

And whereas the National Council of Port Labour Employers and the National Transport Workers' Federation, having failed to arrive at a settlement, have requested the Minister of Labour to refer to a Court of Inquiry the proposals set out in Part I. of the First Schedule hereto, and have agreed to the conditions for Inquiry (hereinafter referred to as the "Agreed Conditions") set out in Part II. of the said Schedule :

Now, therefore, the Minister of Labour, by virtue of the powers vested in him by the said Act, and of all other powers enabling him in that behalf, appoints the persons named in the Second Schedule hereto to constitute a Court of Inquiry, and hereby refers to them the said proposals set out in Part I. of the said First Schedule.

And whereas the Minister of Labour is empowered by the said Act to make rules regulating the procedure of any Court of Inquiry appointed thereunder :

And whereas it is expedient that, in addition to the said Agreed Conditions, certain other matters touching the procedure of the said Court should be regulated by rules, the Minister of Labour further directs that such matters shall be regulated by the following rules, that is to say :—

- (1) The Court may require any witnesses to give evidence on oath, and the Chairman or any person duly authorised by him may administer an oath for that purpose.
- (2) Five members of the Court shall form a quorum.
- (3) The report and any interim reports of the Court shall be made to the Minister of Labour in writing, and shall be signed by such of the members as concur therein, and shall be transmitted to him as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the Inquiry; and any minority report by any dissentient member or members of the Court shall be made and transmitted in like manner.
- (4) Subject to these Rules and to the said Agreed Conditions, the Court may regulate its own procedure as it thinks fit.

Dated this 22nd day of January 1920.

Given under the Official Seal of the Minister of Labour.



D. J. SHACKLETON,
Secretary.

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FIRST SCHEDULE.

PART I.

1. That the minimum for day workers and pieceworkers shall be 16s. per day on the basis of the National Agreement for the 44-hour week.
2. When working on there shall be paid time and a half, with a minimum of four hours, and the following conditions to be observed:—When the men take a half-hour for tea they shall cease work at 8.30 p.m. and be paid four hours at time and a half.
Where one hour is taken for tea the men to cease work at 9 p.m. and be paid for four hours.
NOTE.—The object being to arrange for three hours' overtime, for which four hours shall be paid at time and a half; and further, that if the men work any time after 5 p.m., and cease before 8.30 p.m. or 9 p.m. respectively four hours to be paid.
3. If men work any time after 8.30 p.m. or 9 p.m. a full night to be paid. "Full night" to be as defined in local agreements.
4. Where men work on regular shift-work, not less than time and a half to be paid for the second shift, and in the case of pieceworkers, rate and a half.
5. Saturday afternoons and Sundays up to starting time on Mondays to be paid for at not less than double time, at day or overtime rates.
6. Steps to be taken to secure the reduction of overtime to reasonable lengths, and systematic overtime to be abolished.
7. Where men work or are paid for two shifts in succession they shall not be permitted to recommence work for 24 hours, or two shifts, from the time of ceasing.
8. Permanent men shall have their wages adjusted in order that they shall be in the same relation to casuals as existed prior to the establishment of the 44-hour working week or the signing of the new national agreement.
9. Where overtime conditions as outlined in the present proposals vary with local conditions and are found after local negotiations to be impracticable, districts to be given power to vary the proposals, provided that the total amount paid for overtime shall not be less than herein proposed.
10. Where in any district the men are working under conditions more advantageous than the present proposals the new national agreement shall not operate to depress such conditions.
11. This application is deemed to and shall include all workers loading and discharging general cargo and handling same at quays and wharves, overside and in warehouses, and at docks and wharves. Such application shall include all employees embraced in existing local agreements and whose Unions are affiliated to the National Transport Workers' Federation and employed by the various authorities, Employers and Employers' Associations cited in the terms of application, and being in receipt of the above application. The application shall provide for, among others, dock labourers, cranemen, warehousemen, and all others employed in docks and river traffic, manipulators of machinery, and maintenance staffs employed by dock authorities and other employers engaging the afore-mentioned classes of labour and taking part in the various operations of transport.

PART II.

Agreed Conditions for Inquiry under Part II. of the Industrial Courts Act, 1919.

1. PARTIES—
 - (a) The National Transport Workers' Federation and its affiliated Unions, so far as representing workers concerned in the application.
 - (b) Firms and authorities, and those for whom they act as agents, or as stevedores, &c., directly or indirectly employing and paying the workers concerned in the application.

2. **REPORTS—**

Interim reports shall be issued from time to time on the various points of the application, so far as is practicable, in the following order :—

- (1) Minimum wage rates.
- (2) Overtime rates.
- (3) The other conditions of employment.

3. **EVIDENCE—**

Each side shall submit all books and documents thought relevant by the Court.

4. **COUNSEL—**

Counsel may appear on behalf of either party.

5. **FINAL REPORT—**

Inquiry to be concluded and Final Report to be issued as soon as practicable.

SECOND SCHEDULE.

The Rt. Hon. Lord Shaw of Dunfermline (*Chairman*).

Sir Joseph G. Broodbank.

Sir Lionel Fletcher.

Harry Gosling, Esq., C.H.

A. Pugh, Esq.

Frederic Scrutton, Esq.

John Smethurst, Esq.

Ben Tillett, Esq., M.P.

Robert Williams, Esq.

Secretaries :—

Mr. Norman Macpherson.

Mr. G. H. Ince.

TO THE RT. HON. THE MINISTER OF LABOUR.

SIR,

WE have the honour to submit the following Report :—

Preliminary.

2. The Court of Inquiry appointed by the prefixed letter of appointment, held a preliminary meeting in private on Thursday, 22nd January 1920 at St. Ermin's Hotel, Westminster, at which the procedure of the Court was determined. Subsequent to this meeting and before the opening of the inquiry visits were paid to the London Docks and the Liverpool Docks. On 27th January the Chairman of the Court, accompanied by Sir Joseph G. Broodbank and Mr. Gosling, visited the Royal Victoria Dock, the Royal Albert Dock, the West India Dock, the Millwall Dock and the London Dock; and on 28th and 29th January, the Chairman, accompanied by Sir Lionel Fletcher and Mr. Gosling visited the docks at the South and North end at Liverpool.

3. The Inquiry opened on Tuesday, 3rd February at the Royal Courts of Justice. Sir Lynden Macassey, K.B.E., K.C. and Mr. Bruce Thomas appeared for the National Council of Port Labour Employers, and Mr. Ernest Bevin and Mr. J. Sexton, C.B.E., M.P. for the National Transport Workers' Federation. The National Council of Port Labour Employers, a newly formed organisation, was for the purpose of the inquiry a comprehensive organisation representing all Port, Harbour and Dock Authorities and all the employers of Dock Labour who had been served by the National Transport Workers' Federation with the application which forms the terms of reference of this inquiry. The London Chamber of Commerce, the London Waterside Manufacturers' Association, the United Traders' Association of Liverpool, and the London Dock Pilots and Watermen's Union were also represented.

4. The Court held twenty public sittings, the evidence being concluded on 11th March. The number of witnesses examined was 53, which number included 34 on behalf of the National Council of Port Labour Employers, 15 on behalf of the National Transport Workers' Federation, two on behalf of the London Chamber of Commerce, one on behalf of the London Waterside Manufacturers' Association, and one on behalf of the Ministry of Munitions.

Scope of Claim.

5. The application contained claims under 10 heads, and it was in the hope of a settlement of these that this Court of Inquiry was set up. The first of the claims was in the following terms: "That the minimum for day workers and pieceworkers shall be 16s. per day on the basis of the National Agreement for the 44-hour week."

Limitation of Inquiry.

6. It became evident that there were public considerations which pointed to the great advantage of a Report being given at the earliest date on this head. The Court could not be blind to the fact that unrest upon a considerable scale might be allayed by such an individual answer, if promptly given. It addressed itself accordingly to limiting the Inquiry in the first instance to this issue, so as to enable the results to be communicated *ad interim* to the Ministry.

Upon the other issues to be settled, reliance was placed upon the good sense and goodwill of the parties in the direction of adjustment of matters of difference. As things have turned out, and after a full investigation, which was conducted with keenness but without acrimony, there seems good ground to hope that that reliance will be justified.

Interpretation of Minimum.

7. The language of the claim is open to a wide construction. Sir Lynden Macassey was well within his rights in interpreting "a minimum" as a universal national minimum which swept away all considerations of special circumstances and which admitted of no exception. In amplification of the grotesque results which he argued might follow from such a settlement, a table was put in of the small ports of the Kingdom, and it was added that there were in addition 874 creeks, estuaries, &c. in which loading and unloading and other forms of labour such as that performed by

one or other of the grades of dock labourers took place. In the opinion of the Court the matter must be approached by both parties in a sensible and practical spirit.

All that is meant by the fixing of a minimum by this Court is what Mr. Bevin, on behalf of the claimants, agreed was reasonable, namely, that the workers at all the greater ports of the Kingdom who have consolidated as claimants in the present case should be looked on as presenting a united front, but that while a figure upon that footing is settled, it is manifest that in regard to many at least of the smaller ports and all of those creeks and estuaries, these might be treated as exceptions to the application of a standard minimum, and no difficulty was expressed with regard to the possibility of preparing a schedule of these exceptional cases. After all, this will not, it is presumed, reach even 10 per cent. of the dock labour of the country. The report which is now made is upon the footing that the parties in this reasonable attitude will, with the assistance of the Ministry, see that a schedule of this kind is set up.

It would be improper to compare the minimum now asked to be set up with the lowest figure of wage obtained in the scheduled ports. A great evening-up of under-paid work will take place, and the parties indicated that, once the principle of the minimum was settled, this could be done by them without difficulty. In London, for instance, the Port of London Authority pays 11s. 8d. per day, whereas Ocean Shipowners pay 13s. 9d. per day, while in Glasgow the general rate of payment of a docker is 14s. per day. It may be noted that the pledge given on behalf of the men was in these terms (to use the words of Mr. Bevin addressing this Court): "I am conscious that whatever your decision may be, if the principle of the minimum be established some people in some parts are going to get more on the first settlement than others. We have faced that, and we have discussed it with the whole of our men. It was assumed by the Chairman of the employers at the previous meeting, to take a striking illustration, that if Liverpool received 12s. per day, and Glasgow 14s., if you decided on 16s. a day Glasgow would say '18s., because I was above Liverpool before.' That is not so, my Lord. That is clearly understood by every member of the Federation in every port in the country." In these circumstances to start with 11s. 8d. as a general datum of difference with 16s. while ignoring all the other cases of higher wages and lesser differences would be productive of serious error.

Elements directly bearing on Claim : Output and Casual Labour.

8. It became plain as the Inquiry proceeded that the question of a minimum wage could not be dis severed from two other considerations directly bearing upon it. The first of these had reference to the serious problem of output, and the second to the problem—equally serious—of casual labour. Both of these things are not only vitally connected with dock labour, but they are also of deep importance to the industrial and social well-being of the community at large.

Their bearing on the issue was quickly made clear. Unless increase of output could be obtained, the ports, it was contended, might be confronted with such a situation of financial strain as might seriously cripple trade, and destroy all the advantages which might be supposed to follow the fixing of the high minimum asked. The result might be to paralyse the very industry whose progress and development it was the interest of both parties to promote. As to casualisation, it met the Court at every turn as a specialty which bore fundamentally upon the main wages question.

9. The Inquiry, although thus conditioned, but affecting as it did every port, dock and harbour in the Kingdom, and a labouring population of about 125,000 men, was of necessity wide, and considerable detail had to be faced. Both parties respected the limits laid down, and showed a business-like determination to make the investigation helpful by its thoroughness. The Court was further assisted by the powerful advocacy with which each side supported its case.

Definition of Standard of Living.

10. The true and substantial case presented by the dockers was based upon a broad appeal for a better standard of living. What is a better standard of living? By this

is not meant a right to have merely a subsistence allowance, in the sense of keeping the soul and body of the worker together, but a right to have life ordered upon a higher standard, with full regard to those comforts and decencies which are promotive of better habits, which give a chance for the development of a greater sense of self-respect, and which betoken a higher regard for the place occupied by these workers in the scheme of citizenship. The Court did not discourage this view; on the contrary, it approved of it; and it is fair to the Port Authorities and employers to say that its soundness was not questioned. In the opinion of the Court the time has gone past for assessing the value of human labour at the poverty line.

11. The result of the evidence given was rather peculiar. At first it appeared that the figures laid down by the claimants were out of all proportion to any reasonable increase on pre-war figures of remuneration. A budget was presented in which the standard family was taken as that of a man having a wife and three children, none of the children being at the age of being able to contribute to the family income. It must be observed that a minimum fixed as applicable to such a type is fixed as for a period in the life of the family at which the outgoings are the heaviest, with no corresponding incomings from the family itself to lighten the burden. A minimum accordingly so fixed is one under which a bachelor workman at the one end of the scale, and a workman with one or two of his family in employment at the other end of the scale, would stand very largely to gain.

The Court mentions this because it must prove a modifying circumstance in consideration of the topic by employers and by workmen as a whole. And it has greatly added to the difficulty of settling a general and single figure, and has, in fact, given the Court much anxiety. If, for instance, the bachelor case could have been separately treated, probably no one would have seen any objection in principle to doing so. But to provide that that class of workman was to receive less remuneration than his married comrade would, in the conditions in which dock labour is selected, prove an impracticable proposal. The cheaper labour would tend to have the better chance of the job. And the ranks of the unemployed casual would be more and more filled by the very men whose needs were the greatest, namely, those with dependents.

Cost of Living.

12. When the case of the employers was presented, however, no attempt was made to object to the typical standard of family just mentioned. On the contrary, that standard (one often chosen in economic discussion) appeared to be accepted. On behalf of the workers a figure of 6*l.*, and on behalf of the employers a figure of 3*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* out of London and 3*l.* 17*s.* in the London area, was presented to the Court as the expenses of procuring a decent standard of life for a family of man and wife and three children, and Professor Bowley defended these latter figures with great ability. With much frankness he stated the great difficulty of settling with accuracy the clothing figure of 12*s.* 6*d.*, and he said that a figure for household expenditure could not well be estimated. He certainly did not exaggerate it when he allowed this item, on which so much of the comfort of even the most frugal household may depend, to be entered at 3*s.* 4*d.* a week. On the other hand, Sir Leo Chiozza Money, a witness for the claimants, suggested a poverty line budget so high as 5*l.* 3*s.* As often alluded to, there does not seem to be for some years what might be called a reasonable expectation of a substantial cheapening of the cost of living. The Court was accordingly confronted with the problem at once elementary and far reaching of the standard of life as already defined. On this, as mentioned, both parties led their evidence and submitted their views. The difference between the parties thus stood, say, between 3*l.* 17*s.* on the one hand, and 6*l.* on the other. The claim made is for a minimum daily wage of 16*s.* It has been difficult to obtain accurate information as to the exact number of hours, or say of half-days, worked per week by the docker who comes under the ordinary denomination of a casual worker. It appears to the court, however, that that average may stand at about 8 half-days out of the 11. The 16*s.* per full day claimed would, on this average, reach a sum of 3*l.* 4*s.* per week. Upon the footing that the workmen obtained work and continued at work, however, during the whole of the 11 half-days a sum of 4*l.* 8*s.* would be reached.

Items of Budget.

13. There is a difficulty in coming to a fixed figure in view of the necessarily shifting elements of the calculation. It should be mentioned, however, that the subject of rent is one which can hardly be treated apart from those general considerations which must be before the mind of the Government of this country in any schemes for the proper housing of the people. It is in this view that the claim for rent was made the subject of special handling by the witnesses, and of special inquiry by this Court at the Ministry of Health.

In one of the schedules of family expenditure put forward, namely, that of Professor Bowley, the figure was stated as 6*s.* 6*d.* for provincial towns and 10*s.* for London; in one put forward by Mr. Sexton as applicable to Liverpool it was stated as 7*s.* 6*d.*; in one relied upon by Mr. Bevin it was stated as 10*s.*, while remarkable evidence was given from Preston and from Leith that all of these figures might be considered much too high. A communication was therefore directly addressed to the Minister of Health, and a reply was received from that department to the effect that a figure of 10*s.* could not be said to be in any respect an over-statement of the sum of money likely to be required for decent housing of a family of this class. The Court does not see any reason to question this authoritative view.

14. This is a sample item, taken from the budget, of what are, so to speak, the considerations on the spot. But as applicable to the more general items of food, clothing and the like, there are wider considerations which are vital to the problem of the cost of living and not only beyond the range of the question of output to be presently referred to, but also beyond the control of the best disposed employer or worker.

15. Such are the effects of the war. These include the ravages of productive territory, the destruction of human and mechanical power, and the locking up, and lack of replenishment and transport, of supplies, especially over great spaces of Europe, while in our own country there is the one outstanding fact: we are confronted with a colossal obligation, a debt of nearly 8,000 millions sterling. These things need not be elaborated; they will test all the nation's recuperative power. And during the ordeal it would be foolish to base calculations upon the footing of a quick return to easier conditions of life. In these circumstances the question of a sliding scale does not arise.

Casual Labour.

16. It was strongly contended that the minimum now to be set up would be pointed to as the ground for claims in other industries. This may be the case, no doubt, but the following consideration has to be kept in view: dock labour is in a very large proportion uncertain labour. The employees in that branch of industry often run the risk of finding themselves without work at the end of any day or even any half-day. This raises the whole question of casual labour, and it has serious relations to the claim of the workers. This is said for this reason: that, as will be presently explained, the Court is of opinion that the time has arrived when the industry out of which the payment of wages will come must also bear a charge in respect to maintenance of unemployed casuals. The amount of that charge no doubt will depend upon the energy and enlightenment with which the casual problem is tackled by all concerned. With such energy and enlightenment it may be reduced to small and vanishing proportions and expense. But meantime the position, even on the point of finance, is one which has to be faced, and which enters into the problem of a general wage fixing.

The Court therefore makes no apology to the Minister for dealing with this question of casualisation. In its opinion, to decline to deal with it or to treat it as irrelevant would be to shirk a difficulty and a trouble of large dimensions and of wide social ramifications, but yet one without a settlement of which the prospect of peace at the docks or of amelioration or of contentment will be hopeless.

17. The Court is of opinion that labour frequently or constantly under-employed is injurious to the interests of the workers, the ports, and the public, and that it is discreditable to society. It undermines all security, and is apt to undermine all self-respect upon the workers' part. It is only among those who have sunk very far, and whom the system itself may have demoralised, that it can be accepted as a working substitute for steady and assured employment. In one sense it is a convenience to authorities and employers, whose requirements are at the mercy of storms and tides and unforeseen casualties, to have a reservoir of unemployment which can be readily tapped as the need emerges for a labour supply. If men were merely the spare parts of an industrial machine, this callous reckoning might be appropriate; but society will not tolerate much longer the continuance of the employment of human beings on those lines.

The system of casualisation must, if possible, be torn up by the roots. It is wrong. And the one issue is as to what practical means can be adopted of readily providing labour, while avoiding cruel and unsocial conditions.

So serious has the position become that it has evolved habits of mind and body on the part of the workmen themselves which are detrimental to them and on a wide scale deeply injurious. Many workers have got into the habit of thinking that day labour is a sign of independence, and that labour secured even for a week leaves them devoid of that liberty to do nothing which they have come to prize. As in so many other cases mentioned in this Report, this habit of mind is in no respect sanctioned by the leaders of the men, and as properly urged by them, one of the true lines of reform in this trade will be the abolition of the daily wage system and the substitution therefore of the payment of wages weekly.

Weekly Payment of Wages.

18. The practical difficulty in the way of this conversion is that men have become habituated to subsistence money so as to enable them to avoid hunger. A notable pledge was made by the representative of the claimants to the effect that if a weekly payment of wages were instituted—which it was agreed would carry in its wake responsibility on the part of the workman for making his own subsistence a matter for thrifty outlook—the leaders of the men would counsel the abolition of the old bad hand-to-mouth habit of pay. With the assistance of a joint industrial council and the correlative local bodies to be hereafter recommended, the Court does not think that the Ministry need fear the elimination of the old method.

As matters stand, however, the daily wage asked to be fixed is the wage of a class upon the footing that this unemployment and under-employment, lamentable as they may be, do actually exist. Casualisation, in short, and that on a large scale, seems to have become part and parcel of the dock industry, and this has been accentuated since the outbreak of war. It was, and it remains, one of the most appalling problems which confront all those engaged in social amelioration or philanthropic effort. Since the war it has reached the dimensions of a serious social disease. The spectacle of men who, after all, have the obligations of citizenship resting upon them, being assembled at the dock gates, uncertain whether they are to enter the ranks of labour for even half a day or be left a prey to those temptations which spring from idleness, poverty and a sense of neglect, is not one which can be treated by any independent and humane mind with equanimity.

Remedies :—(1) Registration.

19. The beginning of a remedy, and the condition of it, is a system of registration of all workers at the docks. The Government is not without most substantial aid upon this subject. The Court begs to report its opinion that such a system of registration should be adopted, and that the plan now in operation at the Port of Liverpool, and that recommended for London in the most valuable Report recently of Mr. Justice Roche's Committee, afford assistance in laying down the lines on which registration should proceed. It may be mentioned that four members of this Court were also members of that Committee.

Remedies :—(2) Maintenance.

20. It is not for this Court to enter into these details. As bearing, however, on the financial question before it, it feels that it is its duty also to record its view in favour of the adoption of the principle of maintenance. The amount can be settled by the parties or upon reference to the industrial council machinery already alluded to. It may be pointed out that once maintenance is part and parcel of a registration scheme, the objections to registration may quickly disappear. The Court accordingly reports its opinion that registration and maintenance should both be adopted, and this in regard to all the labour employed at all the ports of the Kingdom.

In this system the workmen as well as the ports and employers are deeply interested. It would impart, in the Court's view, steadiness to the industry as a whole, together with great improvement in its conditions. It would become a matter of interest both for the port and for the employers that all the available labour on the register should be employed, so as to avoid a mere dead-weight of pay to casuals. With regard to the workmen themselves, admission to and retention on the register would become an object of just effort; and it would equally be an object of effort upon their part, when once on the register, to adapt themselves, by such mobility as is possible, to the requirements of the port, and rise from the maintenance list on to the list of full employment. This matter of mobility is of no slight importance, whether as bearing on the question of casuals or on the question of output, and the conditions facilitating this could be well remitted to the care of those acting under the industrial councils scheme.

Alleged Effect on other Industries.

21. Entertaining these views as to casual labour, it will be seen that the Court is not in a position to give much effect to the argument derived from other industries. A serious problem of readjustment confronts the dock trade; and as matters stand, the analogy with other industries fails at the crucial point, namely, that, in those, regular and steady employment prevails. It must be added, however, that, a substantial number of the employees who are claimants in this inquiry do have regular employment, and that the Court has had to do its best, in view of the solidarity of the claim as presented by all classes of dock labour, regular and irregular, to reach a daily minimum which shall be just all round. The Court now finds itself bound to face the question of output. It confesses its view to be that this question is of more importance than the claim itself.

Output.

22. It desires to state broadly that unless a reasonable hope can be entertained that output shall be largely increased, it remains extremely doubtful whether the industry could justifiably be charged with the amount of the claim put forward. The Court, however, is of opinion that such a reasonable hope exists; and it thinks it to be its duty to submit to the Government the result of its investigation and labours upon this topic.

The radical connection between output and the wages' claim is this: Witness after witness indicated that the increased debit for wages was a thing which the industry could stand if only output were attained. A fair sample of the evidence may be given from Lord Devonport. When asked: "Supposing you had an arrangement—I just want you to try and suppose it so as to get some light on the subject—which would be honoured by the men, and the loss, which has been put at no less than one hour per man per day, were avoided, that would be a very substantial help to all the ports in which that occurred, would it not?" His Lordship answered: "Yes. I have heard it said over and over again: 'We would not mind high wages if we got the work.' I am not imputing anything, but that has been said at every street corner in the kingdom—'we would not mind high wages if we can only get the work'—they mean by that the output."

Payment by Results.

23. In order to facilitate the desired output of which the country stands in imperative need, attention should be given to the system which has given satisfaction

in many of the aspects of dock labour, namely, payment by results. It is understood that payment by results is impracticable in some aspects of dock and waterside labour, but, where practicable and desirable, consideration should be given to the extension of the system. The Court recommends to the Joint Industrial Council the consideration of the extension of this system of payment by results.

Responsibility for Loss of Output.

24. It need not be concealed that great alarm is felt on the subject throughout the country, and by port authorities themselves. It would be a mistake on a very large scale to lay the blame for all the decrease of output upon the men. No unprejudiced hearer of the evidence would venture to do so. Various causes, in addition to the reduction of hours to 44 per week, have contributed towards this disastrous result.

Responsibility for loss of Output :—(1) Government Departments.

25. In the first place it is right to begin with the action of the Government departments themselves. Congestion at the ports of this Kingdom means immediate loss and possibly suffering to all who are either consumers of produce or engaged in commerce. The Chairman of the Port of London Authority roundly charged Government departments with producing congestion by a lack of due consideration either for the requirements of our people or the accommodation of our ports. The departments to whose laches he appeared to make allusion were as follows, viz., the Ministry of Munitions, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Shipping, the Board of Trade, the Royal Commission on the Sugar Supply, and the Ministry of Food. The Secretary of the Court was accordingly directed to offer to each of these Departments the opportunity of appearing and making any explanations.

Only one department gave evidence in response to this invitation. Sir Arthur Goldfinch, the Director-General of Raw Materials, was good enough to appear and to give evidence on behalf of the Ministry of Munitions with regard to the alleged congestion in the case of wool.

It is not for this Court to enter into any controversies between Lord Devonport and the departments or between the departments themselves, or to permit any political considerations or political utterances to divert its mind from the one issue, which was very serious, namely, the production of confusion, delay and disorganisation at the Port to such an extent as to increase the hazards of the employment, its uncertainties, and the amount of casualisation. In the opinion of the Court such an increase did occur. In Sir Arthur Goldfinch's evidence, which was firm and frank, he admitted that the enormous storage of wool, a bulky article apt to incommode the general storage at the Port of London, was accounted for to a considerable extent by the fact that the auction sales for the article were suspended. It is to be borne in mind that the Government was itself the owner of the article to be sold, and the Court does not see its way to accept the suggestion that if the familiar auction sales were not carried on during the war the Government was thereby excused from otherwise disposing of its own property.

While the other departments did not send evidence, note may be taken of the reply of the Secretary to the Royal Commission on the Sugar Supply. In an outspoken communication he said he was not prepared to dispute the substantial accuracy of Lord Devonport's statements, and he added that all that his department "could do would be to show that it is in no way responsible for the heavy demands on the Port of London Authority's warehousing accommodation that is threatened in April in respect of raw sugar. The blame, such as it may be, must be with the Ministry of Shipping."

The charge with respect to meat was very pointed and grave. It not only affected the congestion at the Port and the relative casualisation mentioned, but it affected also, as indeed did wool, the cost of living, which is at the foundation of the claim in issue. The charge made was that the Government, also the owner of an overwhelming supply of meat, has declined to realise the same or to throw open the stocks to consumers, but preferred, and prefers, to store in refrigerator stores or turned valuable vessels into floating warehouses.

With the motives of the departments, administrative or financial, this Court has no concern, and is able to offer no explanation, because both of those departments alleged to be responsible in the matter of meat, namely, the Ministry of Food and the Board of Trade, to whom letters by the Secretary of the Court were addressed, have not answered the communication. It must not be taken that the Court presumes to express any derogatory opinion on these matters. There may be and there may have been reasons of State of a cogent character which forced the line of action commented on. No one except those possessed of the most intimate knowledge could venture to treat lightly the enormous difficulties and confusions with which during and immediately subsequent to the war these departments were confronted. The Court contents itself with passing from these matters with the statement that in its view the action of the Government departments has substantially contributed to the loss of output and the increase of casual labour.

The element of hope in the situation on this head, however, is very strong. Probably the results of this Inquiry may be followed by still further attempts upon the part of the departments to relieve the congestion, to meet the immediate needs of the consumers, and so to remove that disorganisation which is so costly, and so different from the smooth and regular conduct which this industry requires. This will be the Government's contribution to that reasonable hope of increased output upon which the solution of the problem depends.

Responsibility for loss of Output :—(2) Port Authorities and Employers.

26. The next class of persons to some extent responsible with regard to the loss of output are the port authorities and the employers themselves. The Court cannot see its way to make any pronouncement derogatory to these institutions and classes of citizens who share with the great bodies of men employed the credit that under their aid and by their efforts the trade of this country has risen to its enormous dimensions. Nor would anyone desire to observe upon the handling of traffic and upon the administration of trade at our ports during the war without a grateful realisation of the enormous services which, in combination with the shipping industry of the country, were rendered during the war. It will never be forgotten how those authorities and that industry faced calamities of unforeseen dimensions in the loss of ships, and difficulties in the commandeering of property in ports and on the high seas by the Government which might well, under less able and courageous management and work, have imperilled the continued existence of our world-wide commerce, of the supplies of the necessities of life to our island people and in particular of that *entrepôt* trade which is the envy of the world.

Representation of Labour on Authorities.

27. But there is—and it is a serious matter—a defect. The port authorities and employers are engaged in daily contact with enormous bodies of men, and with a system, to which they cannot be blind, under which the fringe of unemployment is great and under-employment is greater. In the opinion of the Court the organisation of all the ports in the Kingdom would be strengthened by the admission of, or an increase in, the direct representation of labour on the governing bodies. It appears to the Court manifest that the labour situation might be ameliorated, conditions of labour might undergo advantageous reform, and loss of output might be avoided, if the direct representation here recommended in principle were introduced. The extent and manner of such representation would be for the national council to determine.

Absence of Confidence.

28. There is, in short, a fact of much significance which the parties and the Government have to face, namely, the absence of confidence between employers and men. The men's memory has not to go far back to recall conditions of labour which were such as made their minds revolt against an employment which recognised such conditions, and even against a society which permitted them. Members of this Court can recall a period when men, gathered at the dock gates, fought fiercely for a tally which when obtained might only enable them to obtain one hour's work and so limit their earnings for the day to 4*d.* Such days are past: but while causes disappear, effects linger. And among these effects is that confidence is not yet created or not yet restored. And while the war has undoubtedly raised the public estimation of the value of dock labour, it has unfortunately, with all its confusions, prevented employers and authorities from devoting the attention which might otherwise have been given to the problem still outstanding and still serious of the amelioration of the conditions of labour. That such conditions require to be ameliorated no one can doubt. When it is mentioned that men failing to obtain labour at 8 o'clock in the morning are driven on to the streets or back to their homes

for five hours till the next chance comes, with no certainty even then of any other result, and when it is remembered that there does not appear even yet to exist on any appreciable scale within the docks, ports and harbours of our Kingdom any refuge, place of rest, or even proper or sufficient canteen accommodation, although in the case of thousands of men their homes may be miles away from their place of labour, it will be seen that a sense of umbrage is almost bound to linger, manifesting itself it may be in breaches of contract which are in terms indefensible.

Industrial Councils, &c.

29. No proper machinery has existed which could mitigate this conflict or smooth a way for the arrangement of differences and the removal of troubles; the task has been hard in many cases upon employers relying upon contracts being obeyed, but finding themselves, in the absence of such machinery, up against hostilities which might otherwise have been removed. It is in this view that the Court thinks that the time is ripe for the immediate formation of a Joint Standing Industrial Council applicable to the dock workers of the United Kingdom, and for District Councils and Works Committees, all as set forth in the invaluable Report of the Committee presided over by the distinguished Chairman of Committees of the House of Commons, the Rt. Hon. J. H. Whitley, M.P. When in the present Report reference is made to Joint Industrial Councils, it may be understood that the whole Whitley Scheme is referred to. The questions before this Court were limited in the manner already described, yet over and over again it has been made manifest that the principal issue now to be determined depends upon a whole series of considerations, and the removal of a whole network of difficulties, to which, with singular forethought, the Interim Report of that Committee, dated 8th March 1917, applies. We desire not to make this reference one of vague approval, but to refer in particular to Head 16 of that Report. From a perusal of that elaborate and carefully thought out section, it will be seen that of the eleven suggestions therein contained, all, or at least eight or nine, would appear to bear directly on those problems the failure to solve which, in the direct relations between employer and employed, is as now reported by this Court a cause of serious conflict, difficulty, delay, and loss.

Labour Saving Machinery.

30. On this subject the Court is pleased to note that no difference in policy was suggested by the parties to the issue. Much enlightenment was displayed on the subject on both sides, and it appears fairly clear that the old suspicions as to the introduction of new methods, up-to-date machinery, even the mobility of labour from dock to dock, and other matters of avoidable friction, have disappeared, and that with the introduction of these Councils and a better remuneration for labour, employers will be enabled with greater security than before to bring all the ports of this country in point of organisation and appliances up to the level of the best equipped ports in the world.

In the address made to the Court on behalf of the workmen a real enlightenment was also shown as to their true interests in connection with the question of machinery, and the Court thinks there can be little doubt that sounder views now prevail among the body of the workmen upon that important matter. To increase the output by the introduction of machinery is ultimately a benefit to the nation at large, in which those engaged in labour share, but it necessarily and almost always involves a displacement of labour, and this, owing to the fact that working men, like other classes of the community, are apt to take short views, causes a resistance to changes and new methods and a postponement of that benefit which they bring.

31. The Court reports its opinion that it is within the power of port authorities, more particularly if representative working men are taken into counsel upon the subject, to make some provision for positions being found for labour so displaced. Were this done, the course of bringing the industry and the particular ports up to date and so putting our trade abreast in its working conditions with the best in the world would be facilitated. The loss which would thus arise in any port by our being out-rivalled by the adoption of more advanced methods elsewhere would be avoided. The admirable evidence of Mr. Spencer, of Glasgow, shows how in such particulars a new era of consideration, confidence, and co-operation may be at hand. This part of the subject accordingly lends its contribution of reasonable hope for higher output.

Responsibility for Loss of Output : (3) Men.

32. The Court desires to report with equal frankness upon the responsibilities of the men themselves.

The Court is unwilling to enter upon isolated cases of breach of contract, however gross, such as the refusal to clear up the small remains of a cargo except by dishonouring the bargain and exacting extortionate terms. It can easily be understood how even single instances of such a thing become a demoralising example on the one hand, and produce a loss of confidence and a sense of umbrage on the other. As confidence is restored, such conduct will be repudiated with greater and greater freedom by all decent men.

33. Other instances producing serious consequences were mentioned. Of these one will be given : In Avonmouth the arrangement for the opening of hatches before 8 a.m. so as to permit the general body of workers to enter upon their avocation, was as plain as words could make it by local agreement. Yet the rule to which the men through their representatives were pledged was disobeyed. The hatchmen not merely failed to attend, but declined to attend in terms of the bargain. The result was that considerable bodies of men who were ready and willing to proceed were unable to do so, and dislocation and delay took place, involving, of course, great loss. These, however, are special cases. The creation or renewal of confidence will produce an increased sense of duty and discipline, and such instances derogatory to the honour of the men will tend to disappear.

Breaches of Contract.

34. There are, however, breaches of contract which most unhappily are of a far wider and more general scope : one, a failure to give the contract time, and the other, a deliberate slowing down of work. Both of these cases of breach of contract are extremely serious, and they have an effect, which the outside public fails to realise, of lessening the output of work to such an extent as in the opinion of the Court materially to increase the charges upon industry and the prices of supplies to our people.

Failure to give Contract Time.

35. The arrangement between the parties on the important subject of hours of labour was not left merely to a general understanding. It seems to have been clearly present to the minds of the negotiators that it was necessary to make plain in writing the exact position in which the workmen and the employers stood on the subject notably of working hours. This reduction to definite agreement is not an old affair, with regard to which some radical change of circumstances might be brought forward as excusing or justifying a departure from its terms by either party. The National Recommendation upon which local agreements were based was made upon 7th March 1919. To give the actual words, an example may be taken of the local agreement of 22nd April 1919, for the Port of Glasgow. The provision with regard to hours is as follows :--

“ The standard working week shall be 44 hours, made up of eleven half-day periods of four hours each, viz. :—

Monday to Friday (inclusive), 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with dinner hour, 12 noon to 1 p.m.

Saturday, 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

“ There shall be 44 hours of actual work in the standard week.

“ Men shall present themselves for work during the first half-day period at 7.45 a.m., and shall be ready for actual work to start at 8 a.m.

“ In the second half-day period, work shall proceed at full swing until 5 p.m., men remaining, if required, till 5.15 to complete operations.”

This is an example of the quite definite arrangements made all over the country.

36. Yet the case of a breach of this contract is so general and widespread as to have become, in the case of a large percentage of all the dockers in the Kingdom, almost a habit. It is the chiselling off, so to speak, of fractions of time at the beginning and end of each half-day. One could understand this in exceptional cases where, for instance, the strain has been exceptionally heavy, or where the workman was seized by illness, but the system of giving short time has become, unhappily, so general, so deliberate and so habitual as to produce results which are of national significance.

In a word, it has, in the opinion of the Court, been established that the agreed upon 8-hours day has been improperly, and in violation of the bargain, reduced by 1 hour. Apart from the exceptional cases just alluded to, nobody excuses this, and the Court is happy to record that the trade unions as such and the whole body of their officials have no complicity with this departure. When it is reflected that the body of men engaged who are actually, through their leaders, parties to the present issues before the Court, numbers 125,000, it is not difficult to see that the loss, taken in the gross, which thus occurs to all concerned, and in particular to the consuming public, is bound to be heavy.

37. It would be of value to ascertain with exactitude the proportion of these 125,000 men from whose labours this deduction of 1 hour out of the 8 applies. The evidence of the exact extent of the mischief is not clear. Considerable bodies of them are on the regular staff, and in general terms it may be said that the deduction does not apply to those. On the other hand, the percentages of the deduction in some cases run into a very high figure. In the case of one of the greater ports the figure was put as reaching as high as from 60 to 80 per cent. Upon the whole, a moderate estimate would appear to be that with regard to 25 per cent. of the number of workmen employed the loss alluded to occurs. This means that in each ordinary working day in the ports of this Kingdom 31,250 hours are lost of labour which is of the utmost value not merely to the prosperity of the ports but to the needs of the nation. As a matter of figures, it may be added that, to convert that loss into a yearly one, our people at large suffer in the course of twelve months from this system to the extent of 9,375,000 hours.

It is impossible to reckon up the consequences of this loss of hours in money. Large figures were here and there suggested by individual ports, and there can be no doubt that the gross figure, direct and indirect, caused by these practices which have been reviewed would run up to many millions of pounds sterling per annum.

38. When in the ordinary business of life the common standards, say, of time, money, weight or measure are made matters of bargain, they, of course, become for each of the parties standards of honour; and there is just as little justification, say, for one man giving short time as for another giving short weight. Each is upon the equal footing of being condemned by contract, by law, and by the principles of fair dealing. These things are quite well known, and the habit of ignoring them in any department of life is a habit against which all enlightened men, and amongst these the Court emphatically includes the leaders of labour, resolutely set their faces.

39. There are, however, three elements in the case which are here again of hopeful significance: One is the improvement in wages and conditions; the second is the increase of confidence; and the third is the fuller measure of duties and responsibilities cast upon the men through their representatives in the arrangement of working conditions. Of this last, a case by way of example may be given. The payment of the men is a tedious process, surely too tedious. As pay time arrives men leave their work too soon—tempted to be first in the queue. By the daily pay system, for which of course the casual system is largely responsible, this temptation is increased five or six fold.

Slowing down of Output.

40. Upon the second point, the course of enlightenment does not seem to have made the progress which might have been anticipated. The Court cannot be blind to the fact that there is, not arising from exceptional causes but as part of a deliberate policy, the adoption in not a few cases of a system of slowing down of output. Blame in this respect can only be imputed to a minority of the men interested in this Inquiry. The great majority see the system in its true light. The system known as "ca' canny" is loss on every side. The workman gains nothing in time. Even with regard to his habits and character as well as the dignity of his calling, the things which to every decent man are really precious, loss and deterioration and injury occur. It must needs be so under a system which substitutes for honest work a scheme of make-believe. To take the illustration given, it is not a case of short time in the apparent bulk, it is time adulterated, just as the other case, say, the case of a merchant, who would make up weight by moistening his sugar or mixing it with sand. There is one answer, and one only, to all such devices: honesty forbids.

The system may be difficult to eradicate; it may need courage and great manliness to resist the temptations to it. Yet the Court is impressed with the fact that the responsible leaders of the men do not sanction it, and treat it not only as wrong but as a mistake.

41. In short, just as in the case alike of Government departments and the authorities and employers, so in the case of the men the radical changes and reforms here recommended are accompanied by a consciousness on the part of the Court that in the past, mistakes, it may be of administration or it may be of policy, have occurred as to leave great scope for most beneficial change. Upon the subject last dealt with, that of output, unless such change occurs, loss and damage to the community and to all parties engaged in the trade, with a possibility by no means remote of a serious lowering of our commercial international position, may ensue. Rival nations are legitimately in the field, and the *entrepôt* trade in particular stands much to gain and much to lose according as output is raised or is lowered.

Minimum Standard.

42. To a trade thus situated it does seem a strong demand that a claim for 16s. a day should be made upon the part of labour; but to labour, situated as described, it seems a natural and just thing to demand that its conditions should be made to square with the circumstances and the pressing and vital needs of the hour as already described. After much consideration, the Court has come to the opinion that the claim of 16s. per day should be conceded, on the footing that the hopes held out on behalf of the men of increased output shall not be frustrated; that on this footing the claim is supported by justice, and should be granted, as it is now recommended by this Court, with a broad appeal to the honour of the men.

Foreign Rivalry.

43. Indications were given that the industrial rivalry, especially between the ports of this country and those of Scandinavia, Germany, the Netherlands and France, will not very much longer be conducted under unequal conditions of labour. So that as by international effort conditions are evened up, the contest between the nations will be one more and more largely on the issue: among these nations, which shows the more efficient, intelligent, well organised labour; and, in short, as among workmen, who is the better man? It would be a desirable and advantageous circumstance that in the equipment for this fair and legitimate struggle, good habits and practices should be formed and evil habits and practices and the things which go to make and encourage them should be eradicated. The Court is quite well aware that there are risks attaching to the course which it has recommended, a course in which an appeal to honour holds a definite place, but the strength of the case on the standards of living and the reasonable hopes entertained in regard to changes in the policy and practice alike of the Government, the authorities and employers, and the men, have led to the conclusions mentioned in this Report.

Further Procedure.

44. On the point of further procedure, the Court expresses this view: it will be seen from a perusal of the remaining heads of the claim that each and all of these would be eminently suitable, failing private arrangement, of which there seems good hope, for determination by the industrial council and their correlated bodies.

It ventures to express this further opinion: this Court is the first Court of Inquiry to report under the recent Statute, and it was no doubt right that the very large questions of principle involved in the claim should be thoroughly threshed out before it. But matters of detail would, in its opinion, be better handled by bodies under the Whitley scheme, in which both parties were represented, and which will be possessed not only of general but of local knowledge, than by a Court such as that now constituted. Should the Government agree with this view the result will be that this, which is formally an Interim, will be really a Final Report.

Summary.

45. The Court, having inquired, reports to the Minister of Labour that in its opinion the results are as follows:—

- (1) That with a view to establishing a national minimum standard (to use the words of the claim) the minimum for day workers and pieceworkers shall be 16s. per day on the basis of the national agreement for the 44-hour week.

- (2) That a system of registration of dock labour should be introduced into all the ports, docks, and harbours of the Kingdom.
- (3) That the principle of maintenance of unemployed casual labour is approved.
- (4) That wages of dock labour should be paid weekly, and that this system should be introduced at the earliest possible date.
- (5) That the constitution of a national joint council and its correlative and local bodies should be undertaken for the dock labour industry on the lines of the Report of the Whitley Committee.
- (6) That these bodies should, failing agreement by the parties, be charged with the settlement of the incidental matters mentioned in this Report, and of the remaining items of claim.

Legislative Facilities.

46. The powers of many of the Port and Harbour Authorities concerned to impose tolls and charges are regulated by Statute. If effect is given to the recommendations contained in this Report, these Authorities may find it necessary to have their powers amplified. The Court accordingly recommends that the Government should give immediate facilities for the enactment of the alterations found necessary in the Statutory powers of such Authorities.

47. In thus reporting to the Minister, the Court desires to record its sense of satisfaction with the services of its Secretaries. Mr. Ince's ability, coupled with his contact with the department and with the sources of official information, has been of much value, and the labours and ability of Mr. Norman Macpherson have been ungrudgingly expended, not only to the Court but to the parties, in such a measure that the Court feels bound to declare that without Mr. Macpherson's services it might have been impossible for many months to come to arrive at this stage in its deliberations.

We have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servants,

SHAW OF DUNFERMLINE (*Chairman*).

E. LIONEL FLETCHER.

HARRY GOSLING.

ARTHUR PUGH.

JOHN SMETHURST.*

BEN TILLET.

ROBERT WILLIAMS.

NORMAN MACPHERSON.

GODFREY H. INCE.

Secretaries.

30th March 1920.

* **Reservations by Mr. Smethurst.**

I append my signature to the Report subject to the following reservations. On the evidence presented to the Court I cannot agree to the recommendation that a minimum daily wage should be granted, but I am in favour of recommending a substantial percentage advance on earnings, and am of the opinion that, wherever practicable, piece-rate working should be established.

JOHN SMETHURST

Minority Report by Sir Joseph G. Broodbank and Mr. Frederic Scrutton.

SIR,

1. We are unable to sign the Report as approved by the majority of the Court.
2. We do not propose to criticise or refer to the detailed statements or comments in the report, and we therefore confine our observations to the recommendations.

3. *Recommendations Nos. 2 and 3, viz. :—*

“That a system of registration of dock labour should be introduced into all ports, docks, and harbours of the Kingdom. That the principle of maintenance of unemployed casual labour is approved.”

We support the proposal relative to registration and generally approve of any scheme for allowances to registered dock workers during unemployment, subject, however, to the condition that the workers participating in the benefits should be prepared to work regularly, to be mobile as to the districts they will work in, and also be willing to accept other than their usual employment within their ability when their ordinary work is not available.

4. *Recommendation No. 4 :—*

“That wages of dock labour should be paid weekly and that this system should be introduced at the earliest possible date.”

We are entirely in sympathy with the object in view but in some ports any scheme presents practical difficulties which are much accentuated by the attitude of the men to the proposal.

5. *Recommendations No. 5 and 6 :—*

“That the constitution of a national joint council and its correlative and local bodies should be undertaken for the dock labour industry on the lines of the Report of the Whitley Committee.”

“That these bodies should, failing agreement by the parties, be charged with the settlement of the incidental matters mentioned in this Report, and of the remaining items of claim.”

We agree that the question of setting up a national joint council is of great importance but it does not appear to us to be within the scope of the reference to the Court.

6. Although not mentioned in the recommendations, the Court in the body of the Report suggests direct representation of labour on the governing port bodies. We consider that this question also is outside the reference to the Court.

7. There remains to be dealt with the first recommendation, viz. : “That the minimum for day workers and piece workers shall be 16s. per day on the basis of the national agreement for the 44-hour week.”

We are unable to assent to the proposal to establish a national minimum rate and we object to the amount at which it is proposed this rate should be fixed.

In setting out our reasons in the following paragraphs we would point out that employers in the transit industry in which increased charges are immediately passed on to the traffic claim that they can have no selfish interest in the rates of wages, and that their views are given in the national interest.

- (1) In ports representing approximately nine-tenths of the business carried on, the minimum pay is now about 11s. 8d. per day. This compares with rates of 4s. 6d. to 4s. 8d. before the war. To raise this pay to 16s. would make it nearly 3½ times what it was before the war. It must be emphasized, moreover, that the present 11s. 8d. a day is the minimum which is paid to the least experienced worker. Men can earn much higher pay by piece-work and by qualifying for better paid work. It was shown in evidence that at present many thousands of men can and do earn from 4l. 10s. to 10l. a week.
- (2) Our opinion is that if the 16s. per day were conceded to the lowest-paid workers, corresponding increases would be claimed by all the higher grades of dock workers. An undertaking was given that the full “differentials” would not be insisted upon by the unions, and that the strength of the

transport workers' executive would be used to carry out this undertaking. But the experience in the numerous awards during the war is opposed to this expectation being fulfilled, and the claims of the higher grades, after so many precedents to the contrary, would be difficult to contest.

- (3) We estimate that the cost of admitting the claim of 16*s.* per day, including proportionate increases to the clerical and supervisory staffs, but not including the vast labour or staff employed on maintenance or new works, would be not less than 15,000,000*l.* per annum.
- (4) We direct special attention to the effect of this recommendation upon the recent national settlement of railway wages. Under this, the minimum wages of porters at goods depôts are fixed at from 57*s.* to 61*s.* a week of 48 hours, varying with district, giving an hourly rate of from 1*s.* 2½*d.* to 1*s.* 3½*d.* This contrasts with 64*s.* 2*d.*, the lowest rate of pay current in the great ports for 44 hours' work being at the rate of 1*s.* 5½*d.* per hour. The minimum rate now demanded for dockers is 16*s.* a day, or 2*s.* per hour. This is more than 60 per cent. above the average minimum of the railway goods porter. Would those railwaymen who work alongside the dockers on the same class of work (many of them for the same employer), and whose union is in the same Triple Alliance, be content with their present settlement?
- (5) We must, however, look beyond railway workers. Dock wages have always been an important element affecting wages in urban districts. Dock work may for the most part be described as "unskilled." Engineers and other craftsmen who have served an apprenticeship are recognized as following a calling superior to that of the docker. To increase the minimum pay of the dockers throughout the country by 23*s.* 10*d.* a week (*i.e.* 5½ times the difference between 11*s.* 8*d.* and 16*s.*) would be to raise it considerably beyond the level of many grades of skilled workmen and would inevitably lead to such workmen throughout the country agitating for corresponding increases in their wages. The Prime Minister has recently enforced the same point in his reply to the miner's demands (which are for 15*s.* a week) saying that if they were conceded it—

"would knock the whole wage system of the country absolutely endways because it could not possibly end with the miners."

The experience of the notorious 12½ per cent. advance to munition workers would be repeated even more disastrously, for the docker's claim is not for 12½ per cent., but for a 37 per cent. advance. An advance on this scale (23*s.* 10*d.* a week) to the 12,000,000 workers of the Kingdom would entail an addition of 750,000,000*l.* to the annual national wage bill and the cost of commodities. A new vicious circle would be created still further inflating currency and enormously increasing the cost of living.

- (6) It has been assumed that transport employers could afford to pay any enhanced wages out of their profits without passing the cost on to the community, but as a fact three-fourths of the dockers are the employees of public authorities, public warehousekeepers, and cognate port industries. The public authorities do not work for a profit, and in their case there could be no possibility of the extra charges being paid by anyone else than the consumer. As an example, Lord Devonport stated to the Court that if the demands were conceded the Port of London Authority charges, which are now 85 per cent. above pre-war level, would have to be increased to at least 140 per cent.
- (7) We desire to emphasise the inimical effect of increased charges on the international trade of the country. When the channels of foreign trade are free and the competition of the near continental ports is again resumed, the maintenance of this entrepôt trade will be endangered by the present charges due to the high cost of labour and low output. Any further increase of those charges would create a very critical position. We direct special attention to the evidence given as to the efforts now being put forth by Antwerp to re-establish her position as a trade centre, and as to the efficiency of labour now shown at that port.

(8) Considerable importance appears to have been attached during the inquiry to the presentation of rival budgets of weekly expenditure in a docker's family. These budgets seem to us to be inconclusive. They assumed the same earnings for every man—the same number and class of dependants, and the same thrift in the docker's *ménage*. The employer's budget was obviously too restricted for a family of 10 children, whilst Mr. Bevin's budget of 6*l.* a week was as obviously superfluous for a single man. The fact that work at the docks at existing rates of wages is attracting and holding more than enough men of entirely satisfactory physique appears to us to be better evidence as to whether the pay is sufficient for maintenance than any number of theoretical budgets.

8. Our suggestions for dealing with the present situation are—

- (a) That the rise in prices since the rates of wages were last fixed in October 1918 warrants a further immediate increase in the present rates, and we recommend that the previous methods of agreeing the amount of this advance should be followed now and repeated as occasion arises.
- (b) We recommend that a scheme of maintenance should be at once jointly considered—and after its effect on the ordinary rates of pay has been estimated, the parties by agreement should fix permanent standard rates of pay.
- (c) We recommend that pending such agreement (and in no case before the 1st January 1921) no reduction should be made in the rates of pay.
- (d) We are in entire agreement with the Majority Report as to the urgency of increasing output, but having regard to the experience of the 44 hours agreement related at length in that Report, we are persuaded that better output will not be secured by merely giving an all-round increase of wages irrespective of results actually achieved. We think that in many cases existing piecework rates might be increased in the hope of encouraging better results and to safeguard piece-workers we recommend that no reduction of their rates should be made unless some radical change of working has occurred.

9. It is with great regret that we have been unable to concur in the most important recommendation made by our colleagues. No one can be more convinced than we are that the future success of the transport industry depends upon the most cordial co-operation of employers and workers, but the proposal of the national minimum wage of 16*s.* a day appears to us to entail consequences so grave not only to the industry itself but to the nation as a whole that we cannot accept the responsibility of supporting it.

We have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servants,

JOSEPH G. BROODBANK.
FREDERIC SCRUTTON.

30th March 1920.

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF WITNESSES EXAMINED.

Name.	Description.	Pages.
ALDRIDGE, H. R.	Secretary to National Housing and Town Planning Council	148-151
ALLEN, D. H.	Chartered Accountant, London	443-447
BAERNARD, A.	Representative Dockers' Union, Avonmouth	155-156
BOASE, W. H.	Director, Walter Nelson and Sons, Limited, Master Porters and Stevedores, Liverpool	391-406
BONHAM, D.	Representative Dockers' Union, Port Talbot	161-162
BOOTH, Sir A.	Chairman, Cunard Steamship Co.	86-114
BOWLEY, A. L., D.Sc.	Professor of Statistics, London University	178-205
BRAMMALL, L.	Docker, Birkenhead	140-145
BRITTON, Mr.	Superintendent Stevedore for Swansea Harbour Trustees	326-327
BROOKS, A.	Member of the Council of the London Waterside Manufacturers' Association	453-458
BUBBEAR, H. K.	Chief Assistant to Traffic Manager, Bristol and Avonmouth Docks	222-238
BUCKNEB, A. W.	Clerk to Tilbury Urban District Council	145-148
COOKE, T. W.	Chairman, United Trades Association of Liverpool	415
COX, C. E.	Partner of C. J. King and Sons, Master Stevedores, Bristol	238-242
DAVIES, J. B.	Representative of G. and J. Burns, Ltd., Glasgow	306-310
DEVONPORT, Lord	Chairman, Port of London Authority	330-354
DONOVAN, J.	District Secretary, Dockers' Union, Cardiff	162-164
FARRAH, B. H.	District Secretary, Transport Workers' Federation, Hull	164-166
FENTON, W.	Chairman, Humber Employers' Sub-Committee	245-263
FITT, W.	Marine Superintendent of Charles Hill and Sons, Steamship Owners and Stevedores, Bristol	242-245
GARMSTON, J.	District Secretary, Dockers' Union, Bristol	151-155
GOLDFINCH, Sir A.	Director General of Raw Materials, Ministry of Munitions	430-437
HAWSON, M.	Transport and Stevedoring Manager of Rea Ltd., Liverpool	412-413
HESELTINE, G. W.	Managing Director, Scott Ltd., Wharfingers, Hull	267-269
HOPKINS, D.	Mineral Traffic Superintendent, Clyde Navigation Trust	302-306
HOPPERTON, H.	General Traffic Manager, Port of Preston	379-387
HOPPINS, D. G.	Principal Cargo & Warehouse Clerk at Great Western Railway Docks, Plymouth	321
HOUGHTON, J.	General Secretary, Scottish Union of Dock Labourers	158-161
IRVING, J. A.	Member of Liverpool Warehousekeepers' Association	413-415
JOHNSON, D. ROSS	General Manager and Secretary, Bristol Docks	205-220
LATIMER, A.	Managing Director, Manchester Ship Canal Co.	437-443
LEWIS, M.	General Manager and Secretary, Gloucester Docks	374-377
MACDONALD, M.	Honorary Secretary of Leith Dock Labour Employers' Association	448-453
MACFARLANE, J.	Treasurer, Clyde Navigation Trust	292-299, 356
MCKIBBIN, P.	Liverpool Dockers' Union	135-138
MATTHEWS, M.	Assistant Dock and Warehouse Manager of the Port of London Authority	357-371, 458
MONEY, SIR L. CHIOZZA	Late Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Shipping	168-178
MORGAN, H. W.	General Manager, Swansea Harbour Trust	321-326
MURDOCH, H. G.	Chairman, Plymouth Employers' Association	310-321
NEWBOLD, J. T. WALTON	Lecturer in Economic History to the Central Labour College allocated to Lancashire	128-131
ORR, R. W.	Harbour Master, Ardrossan	387-390
PALMER, W. O.	Director of Humphrey and Grey, Ltd.	371-374
PAUL, W.	District Secretary, Dockers' Union, Southampton	156-158
PILLOCK, W. H.	President, National Cattle Food Trade Association	463
PRITCHARD, G. R.	Member of Liverpool Coastwise Employers' Association	408-412
PROCTER, S. J.	Manager and Secretary, Alexander Towing Company, Liverpool	415-420
REID, M.	Liverpool Dockers' Union	131-135
SPENCER, J. S.	Principal of James S. Spencer and Co., Stevedores, Glasgow	269-292
STONEHOUSE, Capt.	Assistant Dock Superintendent for Ellerman-Wilson Line at Hull	264-267
TETSALL, E. P.	Chairman, Dock Labourers' Association, Ipswich	377-379
THOMPSON, F.	District Secretary, Dockers' Union, London District	460
TREDWEN, E.	Senior Partner of Gilbert McCaul and Co., London	461-463
WARNER, L. A. P.	Assistant General Manager, Mersey Docks and Harbour Board	420-428