B (181)

Local Government
and Poor Law.

14

From Charles Booth,
9, Adelphi Terrace,
Strand, London, W.C.

London Municipal Society.
16, St. George St. Westminster.

Objects

Methods of Action.

Jesse Cargyle - May 5. 1897

(2)

London Municipal Society.

Interview with Mr. J. G. Hay Halkett, Secretary.

This is the central organisation of the moderate party in London municipal government, & was founded about 4 years ago. Its stated objects are

1.—To extend and complete the policy for the reform of London Government, initiated by the Unionist Ministry of 1886—92, in the creation of the London County Council, by the establishment of District Councils or Corporations, and their endowment with adequate authority, so that every part of London may obtain the reality and advantages of self-government.

2.—To bring municipal and social questions under public consideration and discussion with a view to reform. These questions include:—the more equitable distribution of the burdens of taxation amongst all classes and interests; the improvement of the conditions under which the industrial population live and work; the provision of pensions for deserving and thrifty old people; the supervision of immigrant aliens; the extension of the Merchandise Marks Act for the identification of goods manufactured abroad; powers to enable the working classes to become the owners of the houses they inhabit; the encouragement of better means of locomotion in and between London and the suburbs; and State recognition of conciliation boards for the settlement of labour disputes.

3.—And generally to improve the administration of the County Council and other local authorities in the Metropolis by the adoption of a higher standard of efficiency, economy, and consistency than now prevails.

The following are the methods of action stated to be adopted by the Society:

L.C.C. programme

The Society forms a centre of communication for Unionists and others who agree with the above objects; collects and disseminates information upon London questions; assists in securing, and supports, suitable candidates at municipal elections; watches Parliamentary and other proceedings affecting London interests; and generally brings together Unionists for consultation and combined action, with a view to ensuring to them adequate representation in the municipal affairs of the Metropolis.

The Society organises public meetings, & provides speakers & lecturers. It has established a library of municipal literature at its central office.

In regard to the London County Council, the Society endorses the following principles:—

1.—That with a view to economy the London County Council shall establish a real and effective control of its expenditure similar to that maintained by the Treasury over the expenditure of the State.

2.—That the widening of streets, opening of new thoroughfares, maintenance of parks and open spaces, &c., shall be systematically carried out on a general plan in all parts of London.

3.—That in arranging for the execution of necessary works, regard shall be had as far as possible to the desirability of giving regular employment to workmen.

4.—That proper provision shall be made for securing that all engaged in public work shall receive the rates of wages and observe the hours of labour and conditions recognised and in practice obtained in their several trades.

Local authorities.

Management.

Subscription.

Local Representatives

The Society would seek to add dignity to the Vestries & District Boards in order to induce a better class of men to serve upon them, but has come to the conclusion, as a result of the conferences held between the L.C.C. & the local bodies, that there are very few powers wh. can advantageously be transferred from the former to the latter.

The Society is managed by a president, 8 v. presidents, chairman of council, treasurer, secretaries, a Council of 50, & Executive Committee of 12 members. There are no branches.

The subscription is not less than 2/6 per annum.

The Society has 2 representatives on each local sanitary authority in London, who are appointed by the moderate party on each vestry or district board. They

supply the Society with agendas, minutes, reports, &c., relating to the local authority wh. they represent, & otherwise keep in touch with the central office. These various documents are looked over at the central office, & action organized where any matter seems of sufficient importance.

The Secretary gave me a complete list of these local representatives, marking those who were the best men to see. These special names have been copied into our address books, & the list placed in box, with various other papers wh. Mr. Halbert gave me.

[Mr. Halbert was most courteous, & willing to assist in any way]

London Reform Union
4 Arundell St., Strand.

Objects

Method.

Central Management.

Jesse Argyle – May 6. 97

C/1 (2)

London Reform Union.
Interview with Mr. C. H. Shillinglaw, Secretary.

This Union was established in 1892 on non-party lines, but has become the recognised headquarters of the Progressives in London.

To reform the existing Administration of the River, Docks and Wharves, the Markets, Water Supply, Means of Lighting, Locomotion, Police, the City Funds, Hospitals and other Charities, to disseminate knowledge concerning the unfavourable Conditions under which vast numbers of the Working Population Live owing to Defective and Insanitary Dwelling and Working Accommodation, irregular and ill-paid Labour, the Competition of Alien Immigrants, the Harshness of the Poor Law, the unjust incidence of Taxation, the Adulteration of Food, and other grave disadvantages, and to obtain for London full powers of Municipal Government.

The London Reform Union includes among its members adherents of every political party, and belongs itself to none. It proceeds upon no abstract theory, but endeavours to deal with each subject as it arises from the point of view of the improvement of London, and the provision of a wider and better life for London citizens. It aims at purity, unity and simplicity of administration; at the management by the people of their own affairs, and at a just distribution of the public burdens. In its local branches men and women of every religious denomination, economic creed, or political faith unite in the common work of disseminating a knowledge of local affairs, agitating for the specific reforms most urgently needed in each case, and co-operating with the local governing bodies in promoting efficient administration. By educational lectures, by public meetings, and by the circulation of literature, the Executive Committee of the Union, which is annually elected by its members, endeavours to foster and direct the growing sense of civic duty now stirring throughout the Metropolis.

The Society has issued about 80 publications or pamphlets.

The Union is managed by a President, v. presidents, treasurer, solicitor, secretary, executive committee & council.

Subscription.

Branches.

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The subscription is not less than 1/- per annum.

The Society has active branches at Chelsea, Fulham, East St. Pancras, East Islington, West Islington, Lassendes Hill, Paddington, South St. Pancras, South Hackney, & St. Georges, Hanover Sqre. Other branches have been formed but are in a somewhat moribund condition.

Each branch sends representatives to the Council of the Union, & receives small grants, if required, from the Union funds. But they are very nearly self-supporting.

The Union has also a number of Progressive Organizations - political associations, clubs, &c. - affiliated to it. These pay 5/- or more per annum.

The tie between the Union & these various bodies is generally a loose one, but they act together at election

Local representatives

times.

Mr. Shillinglaw gave me a list of representative Progressives on the Vestries & Guardian Boards in East London, who were the best persons to see. These names are entered in District Address Book, and the list placed with various other papers issued by the Union.

I obtained a few leading particulars as to the policy of the different East End vestries, both from Mr. Hallett & Mr. Shillinglaw, & these are embodied in the Vestry list.

Mr. T. Jefferson
Chairman Limehouse Bd of Works

Experience, &c.

The Limehouse Board.

Interview with Mr. Thos. Jefferson J.P. (Free Trade Wharf, Limehouse).

Mr. Jefferson is Chairman of the Limehouse district Board of Works, of wh. he has been a member for 12 years. He is also a member of the Stepny Bd of Guardians, but this is only his 3rd year on the Board. He is a quiet-mannered, affable man; a Wesleyan; ranks as a Progressive, but is apparently not an ardent reformer. Inclined to make the best of things, or not to worry over much about them, I shd say. Very fair-minded & kindly-disposed, but has no deep knowledge of the people. Several points wh. I put to him seemed new to him. He had not thought about them. A man of 40 to 45 years old, I shd say.

The Limehouse Bd of Works consists of about 40 members, who are elected by the 4 Vestries of Limehouse, Ratcliff, Shadwell, & Wapping. Limehouse, wh. is by far the

Mudland Hall

Housing & Sanitation.

largest District & sends 18 members, is very Progressive. The others are mainly moderate; in Shadwell & Wapping, consisting so largely of business places, it is difficult to get people to serve, & those who do so do not attend very well.

The population is a very poor one, the richer people who have businesses there living elsewhere; & its poverty is added to by the presence of Mudland Hall, wh. brings large numbers of the poorest into the parish. They have had to summon the authorities of Mudland Hall 3 or 4 times for overcrowding, & have not got the number to be accommodated at one time limited to 300. He believes Mudland Hall is doing good work, but its effect on the parish is lowering.

There is a great deal of old & insanitary property in the district. The class of property generally is so small & inferior that it is very difficult to

make them what they shd. be. There are 3 sanitary inspectors in the district, acting under the medical officer of health. These do not only the ordinary work of house inspection - drainage, water, disinfection, prevention of overcrowding, &c. - but also are the inspectors of bakehouses, cowhouses, slaughterhouses, canal boats, tenement or lodging houses, workshops & factories, &c. They also act as inspectors under the Food & Drugs Act, taking samples of foods for analysis. He thinks they are a sufficient number for the district (pop. about 65,000) & that the work is well done. There are very few factories in the district. The inspectors visit a certain number of houses each day, & each house is supposed to be inspected at least once a year.

The Board is very particular about drainage, & insists on the separate drainage of every house where possible.

Street Improvements

They have not many combined drains in the parish.

The Board has 2 improvement schemes under consideration or in actual working at the present time, viz.

(a) The Catherine Court area, comprising Queen Catherine Court, Little Qn Catherine Court, Susannah Row, & 2 or 3 houses in Brook St. & Dorset St. This area lies, I think, at the back of Stepney Station. Very old & insanitary property.

(b) King Johns Court area, Limehouse.

In both these cases the L.C.C. is assisting.

An improvement is also required in Narrow St., Ratcliff, where houses have been ~~condemned &~~ closed for a long time. The Board are acquiring the property in order to widen the thoroughfare, but the L.C.C. say they cannot help in

Municipal Dwellings.

Dust Removal.

Wages & Direct Employment.

this.

Few people have been displaced by these clearances, & the Bd have not found it necessary to find accommodation elsewhere for those displaced. They have, however, in contemplation the erection of cottage property on the former areas.

The L.C.C. has erected Beachcroft Buildings, Ratcliff, & Pembridge St. Buildings, & this has been of much help in enabling the clearance of some of the worst property.

The removal of dust & house refuse is performed by private contractors, but is efficiently done. Dust pails are supplied to the houses by the Board, & these are regularly put out & the contents taken away.

The Board does not employ very much direct labour, but pays trade

Old men employed.

Baths, &c.

Mortuary.

Union wages where it does so. Except for road sweeping, nearly everything is done by contract, the trade union clauses being inserted in each tender.

There are a number of old men employed as sweepers 3 or 4 days a week. Some of these are getting quite past work, & the Bd is now considering what can be done in regard to them.

There are no public baths, washhouses, or libraries in the District. These are matters for the local vestries, & are not under the jurisdiction of the Board. The Ratcliff Vestry has just acquired a site for the erection of baths.

A new mortuary, coroner's court, &c., of a very commodious & perfect character, has just been erected by the Bd in Stepney Branch Rd, under loan from the L.C.C. Since the opening

Bodies found in River.

Rateable Value.

last Oct. 1150 bodies have been received at the mortuary. The Bd recognises the evil of poor families living in one or two rooms keeping the bodies of their dead, & encourages the sending of these bodies to the mortuary, where everything is done for respect & decency.

It is not correct, as popularly supposed, that Stepney is bound to bury all dead bodies found in the Thames, but the parish has a very long river frontage, with deep docks & convenient landing stages, so it generally happens that the bodies are either carried into these docks by the tide or else are brought there by the watermen who pick them up, & so Stepney has to bury them.

Owing to the Tower Bridge, some of the wharf owners have moved their wharves lower down the river into Stepney. This has led to some fresh building on the

Religious Influences.

Charity & Poor Relief.

rive frontage, & so has slightly increased the rateable value of the parish. The District receives £1400 a year from the Equalisation of Rates Act.

The Roman Catholics are very active in the District, & look well after the poor, many of whom are of their faith. Where young people have got into trouble, they generally succeed in getting the parties married, & do a good deal to improve the morality of the District.

The Rev Peter Thomson is also very active in St. George's & Ratcliff, & does much effective work. The Church of England he does not hear much about.

He does not know of any arrangement existing between the religious & charitable bodies in the District to prevent overlapping, nor does he know of any

understanding between the Guardians & these bodies as to the giving of relief. Thinks the clergymen, &c., have very little to give. There is an arrangement between the Guardians & the S.V.J. in regard to relieving the deserving poor.

He was not very favorably disposed towards the policy of the Guardians when first elected, but approves of it now. Thinks it inflicts very little hardship.

A considerable number of the poor come to the Guardians quite naturally when in any trouble; but in other cases there is great prejudice against the "House," & it is very difficult to get people to go even to the Sick Asylum, altho' they are undoubtedly ill.

He cannot say much as to the improvement or otherwise effected by the policy of the Guardians, but recommends me to see

Mr. J. F. Derby
Whitehorse St. (opposite Bd. of Works Office)

Police.

Amusements.

Temperance

Mr. Derby is a very old resident & guardian.

The police administration in the district is good, so far as his experience goes. The police understand the ways of the poor, & know how to deal with them.

There is no place of amusement in the district. Concerts, & other social gatherings take place in connection with religious organisations, & the temperance people are active in this respect.

There was a bad place in Cable St. (dancing saloon), but the licence has been taken away.

Mr. Boulton Smart
2 Portland St.
(Next to Stepney Tabernacle)
is an active temperance worker & guardian.

Character of Population.

The population, both as to numbers & character, is almost stationary. Drink is prevalent, & there are a number of disorderly houses, but these are gradually being closed, & there has been improvement in recent years as to morality, sanitation & health.

Mr. Jefferson gave me the annual reports of the Limehouse Bd. of Works & Stepney Guardians for year ending Lady Day, 1896.

Dr Alexander
(Medical Officer, Poplar)

Instances of Overcrowding.

See also page 51

Notes from Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for Poplar - 1896

I called at the Board of Works Offices, 117 High St. Poplar, by appointment, to see Dr. Alexander. He, however, had an unexpected meeting of the Sanitary Committee on, & could not spare time for a regular interview. I arranged to see him again on the 26th inst. I gathered that he considered surrounding the worst evil with wh. he had to contend & whilst in his office a poorly dressed woman, with a baby in her arms, came to appeal for more time in wh. to leave her home. She, her husband, & 5 children occupy one room, & the Board of Works having ~~taken~~ called upon the landlord to abate the overcrowding, he was for turning them summarily into the street. She complained of the difficulty of getting anyone to take them with so many children,

Population.

Deaths.

Births

Marriages

Zymotic diseases.

but was told that the <u>must</u> move as quickly as possible.

Dr Alexander showed me a [illegible] of his report for the year 1896 for Bromley & Poplar & from this I gathered the following notes:-

Since 1891 the population of Poplar has slightly increased & that of Bromley has slightly decreased.

Death rate:

Bromley - 20.3 per thousand
Poplar - 21.6 -"- -"-

a decrease on 1895.

Births:-

Poplar - - 2031 or 35.1. 85 illegitimate
Bromley - 2615 "37.4. 44 -"-

Marriage rate - 16 per thousand.

The zymotic death rate speaks most as to the sanitary condition of a district. There has been an increase in these as compared to 1894, but a decrease from 1895.

Infectious Diseases.

Cause of Typhoid.

Landlords & the Public Health Act.

Infectious diseases also have increased from '94, but decreased from '95:

	'94	'95	'96
Poplar -	10.6	13.6	11.3
Bromley -	12.9	11.9	13.8

Typhoid, wh. has been largely prevalent, is often caused by eating oysters wh. have lain in water liable to sewage contamination. A death sin against Nature's laws is committed by the present system of disposing of sewage – the land is deprived of its proper nutriment & the water is contaminated. (The doctors proceeds to quote Deuteronomy on this matter, & describes the provisions there laid down as the grandest of sanitary laws.

On account of the work they have had to do since the enforcement of the Public Health Acts, 1891, landlords in

Removal of Refuse.

Bromley have increased rents; so their tenants have had to go into cheaper districts, & overcrowding has diminished.

The report describes the practice of accumulating vegetable refuse in back gardens as common & very dangerous. All such refuse shd. be buried or removed by the sanitary authority very frequently. It advocates the erection of a dust destructor, as the most efficient means practicable of disposing of refuse. It wd. at any rate prevent what has happened in the past, of roads being made up of this refuse, to subsequently breed disease; it would also do away with the degrading spectacle of women & children digging for bones in the refuse heaps in the dust yards.

The necessity of improved sewer ventilation is insisted upon.

Model Dwellings.

Sanitary Work.

Grosvenor Bldgs has 535 occupied tenements. There were 44 deaths in them last year.
County Council Buildings has 48 occupied tenements with 175 inhabitants. 1 death during year.
Hanbury St. Buildings has 33 tenements with 140 people. 3 deaths in year.

The following are statistics of sanitary work performed in 1896:-

3995 intimations
1449 statutory notices
40174 drains tested.
6337 inspections.
23104 re-inspections.

J. T. Derby
(Old resident & Guardian)

Policy of Stepney Guardians.

Jesse Argyle - Mayor
Lodging 10.11.20 (2)

Interview with Mr. J. T. Derby, 62 Whitehorse, Stepney.

Mr. Derby is a very old resident & was a Guardian for many years, but gave up all public work owing to deafness. He is an elderly, round-faced man - shrewd but good natured I shd say. Of the tradesman type, & retired on a comfortable income from house property. He is very deaf, wh. made conversation difficult.

Mr. Derby was a member of the Stepney Guardians in the days when outdoor relief was usual, & remembers very well Mr. Jones first coming to them. He thinks the change to the anti-out-relief policy was beneficial & inflicted very little hardship on the poor. He does not, however, think the character of the class from wh. paupers are drawn is much improved, or that they are much more self reliant. They would

Condition of Population.

Religion

Education

like the old system to be given back to, or indeed under recent administration he thinks there has been some going back. The guardians are not as strict as they used to be.

He has a high opinion of Mr. Jones, & also of Mr. Lewis, the present clerk, who shd. be seen.

The general condition of the people has improved. They are better housed, clothed & fed, more temperate, healthier & thriftier, but he does not think their morality has improved. He thinks this because religion has lost its hold upon them.

He believes education has been for good, & strongly favours the Board School system. Spoke of the great advantage of having an educated women to work upon, & of the fairness of all

Housing, &c.

To see.

bearing their share of the expense.

House property & sanitation are better than they were, & landlords are a very big to give their tenants clean & healthy houses, but some tenants are so dirty & obstructive that the landlord cannot keep their houses in decent condition.

Mr. Hills, J.P., is doing very good work among the poor of Ratcliff. Has a club & gymnasium.

[Mr. Derby will try to give answers to written questions, if desired]

Dr. Alexander
(Medical Officer, Poplar)

Experience & views.

Jesse Argyle – May 26.

Local Gov. 10 11 12 CP (2)

Interview with Dr. Alexander, med. officer for Bromley & Poplar, under Poplar District Bd of Works.

Dr Alexander has been here 5 years, & was at Mile End for 8 or 9 years previously – about 2½ at the Infirmary & 6 years med. officer under Mile End Vestry. He is of Jewish origin, in early middle life, is democratically inclined, & takes a somewhat gloomy view of the condition of the people. "He cannot make out how they live at all" he several times said in regard to the poorer section. He is specially interested in preventing overcrowding & in creating open spaces, with plenty of music & flowers. Considers that the way in wh. people are crowded together is main cause of drink & other vices. Men fly to these for relief from a narrow & monotonous range of vision. The eye is in very close connection with the brain, & when the eye is narrowed in

Sanitation, &c.

its vision by close streets & small rooms it must have a depressing influence on the brain.

There has been considerable improvement in sanitation during the last few years, & this he attributes largely to the introduction of the democratic element on the Board & to the Public Health Act of 1891. The Labour members will report cases of insanitation wh. come to their notice, & give every support to the medical officer in any measure he thinks it necessary to take. He thinks this is the case in all the parishes wh. have a progressive sanitary authority. They think first of the general health, & not of the landlords pockets.

There are 6 sanitary inspectors under the ~~Limehouse~~ Poplar Board - 2 for each parish. They, each in their own district, undertake the periodically visit inspection of tenements & lodging houses, slaughterhouses, &c., & take samples under the

Overcrowding.

Food & Drugs Act. There is a separate inspector for Factories & Workshops, & he also looks after bakehouses & canal boats, of wh. there are not many now.

The inspectors have a pretty free hand & do their work well, but they could do with more of them — all poor parishes could.

There is a disinfecting staff of 4 men.

There is not much overcrowding in the legal acceptation of the term. They nearly always get to know of such cases, & deal with them. People "round" on each other. The landlord cannot get his rent, & then he comes to the sanitary officer & complains — "He has a big family in his top front room, & cannot get rid of them". There is a good deal of legal crowding, caused by the greed of landlords & the anxiety of people to live near their work.

Open spaces

Health

Water Supply

There is a recreation ground in the East India Dock Rd belonging to the Board, & the L.C.C. has one to the south of the Isle of Dogs. It has been proposed to make another recreation ground between Lever Rd & the river, ~~to~~ (near the gasworks) to serve for Bromley, but nothing definite has yet been done.

These open spaces are undoubtedly a great boon, & have an improving effect upon the people. The placing of the names & English equivalent on all shrubs, & flowers in Church was a happy thought, of much educational interest.

The general health of the district is improving. There was ~~some~~ an increase of the death rate in last 2 years as compared with 1894, but this was due to diarrhoea caused by the heat.

A constant supply of water is

Dust Removal.

Drink & Thrift.

provided throughout the district. There was great failure of this supply during the drought some time ago, but it is all right now. As a rule, the houses do not have cisterns, but in the few cases in wh. they exist, they are retained & kept covered up in case of emergency, which a tap is put on direct with the main & used in ordinary circumstances.

The dust is removed twice a week, each house being called at. Dust pails are supplied by the Board. The men employed are all in the employ of the Board, wh. employs it labour direct wherever possible.

A dust destructor is in course of erection in Flowers St., Bowenby.

Drinking habits prevail to about the usual extent, & it is not at all surprising, considering the conditions under

Prostitution –

Municipal Enterprise

wh. the people live. They must have some solace & amusement. Neither does he see how people can be thrifty on the wages most of them get. Consider the discomforts of home, with large families in small rooms.

The Jews do not drink. This he ascribes largely to their forms & ceremonies, wh. conduce to a better home life.

Has not noticed that prostitution or immorality have any particular prominence in the locality – much about the average he thinks. Disorderly houses come under the control of the Justices, who occasionally take action.

The L.C.C. has workmen's dwellings in the locality – not large, but very useful.

There are Baths & Washhouses in Bow & Poplar

Poplar has a public library, &

The Separation of East & West.

Bromley is erecting one.
Particulars as to these must be got from the Vestry clerks.
A public mortuary is being built by the Poplar Bd. of Works.

Recommends us to see:
Mr. Butler, ast. clerk to Guardians
" Skeggs, V. clerk of Poplar.
" Lucas — " — Bromley

Dr. Talbot, 117 Bow Rd
(Med. officer for Bow)

Dr Alexander admits an all-round improvement in the condition of the people, but deplores the separation of West from East. Thinks if some of the educated & refined people of the West would come & live in the East it would be of considerable benefit in elevating the tone of the people.
Suggests

that if the Bishop of Stepney would have his palace in the District & get a number of educated people round him it would be a move in the right direction.

Mr. S. A. Lewis
(Stepney Guardians)

Experience.

The Jubilee Dinner.

Jesse Argyle - May 26. 1897 (2)

Mr. S. A. Lewis, clerk to Stepney Guardians.

Local Gov. 16.11.12 3

Has been in District ~~w~~ nearly over 30 years, & sees a great deal of the poor in an official & semi-official capacity. He was very busy in making arrangements for the dinner to the poor in connection with the Princess of Wales Fund, so could not spare much time. His Board & he hardly think the affair is injudicious, & that the money would be better spent in permanently benefiting a small number, but as the matter has to be carried through they are trying to arrange it as wisely as possible. Their intention is, so far as possible, to distribute the material for the dinners to the very poor in their homes, & only to provide for the homeless in a public way. A general public spread to wh. the loafers were invited would keep away the genuine respectable poor, & perhaps those who really

Present policy of Guardians

were most in need.

The policy of the Stepney Guardians has altered somewhat of late, as a consequence of wh. they are not so much in touch with outside charitable agencies. The policy formerly was not to give parochial relief in any case wh. was suitable for & cd. be helped by other agencies. Now the Guardians take up the more strictly legal position of giving relief in all destitute cases, ~~recovering from~~ recovering the cost from relatives where possible, & only referring to other organizations such cases as they could not themselves legally assist.

The Workhouse test is generally applied, & out-relief is very restricted, but has not been entirely abolished.

The policy formerly adopted tended to increased self-reliance on the part of the people, & the change now made

Improved condition of Population

Religion

Shelters

was not likely to do any harm. The system of migrating into & recording all applications is still kept up.

There has undoubtedly been an all-round improvement in the condition of the people. Free education, sanitary laws, poor law administration, municipal works, &c., have all worked together for good.

Overcrowding, wh. was largely a cause of immorality, has been greatly minimised; & sanitation is very much better.

The mass of the people are quite indifferent to religion – not antagonistic. Each religious organization has its small band of earnest devotees & workers, but the results do not seem to be at all proportionate to the exertions put forth.

The Salvation Shelter & Mudland Hall (London Congregational Union) have led to a considerable increase in the number of

Effect on Relief

Early marriages

applicants for relief, & have indirectly caused an expenditure of £16,000 in enlarging the Workhouse & Sick Asylum.

The applicants from these shelters were reduced from about 42 p/c of the total in previous years to about 34 p/c last year, this reduction being brought about he thinks because the Guardians insisted on a policy of ~~[illegible]~~ detention & a Task of work in all such cases. Those who come now are no doubt usually in genuine need.

The Guardians are able to get this extra outlay for relief from the Common Poor Fund, but get no help in regard to expenditure on buildings.

As Registrar, he noticed that there were a considerable number of early marriages in the district, & they formed a number of these afterwards coming to the Guardians for help. He regards them as an

Relations before marriage

Prostitution

evil.

Immoral relations before marriage are not unusual among the poor, & are indulgently regarded. Among the work-girls, a girl who has an illegitimate child does not seem to lose caste with her companions, who rather sympathise with her. A young mother, bringing her illegitimate baby to be registered, will often be accompanied by 2 or 3 of her companions.

There are a rather large number of prostitutes & disorderly houses in the district — it is almost bound to be so in a place so frequented by seamen. Now & then the overseers make a sporadic effort to clear some of these, but it does very little good. The people just move a little way & drift back again. They are a most troublesome class to deal with, & the police work at what is

Police.

Amusements.

going on in that way.

The police are, he thinks, on good terms with the people. There is no feeling of aversion, & they know how to manage their clientele.

Does not think the really poor get much amusement apart from that of the public house & streets. Do not go much to theatres – he did. Thinks the contrast between their own poor homes & the proper displays of the stage would make them unhappy & prevent their often going.

Victoria Park is much frequented & enjoyed, & so are the local churchyards wh. have been done up & thrown open to the public.

A good deal is done in providing holiday outings for children & people no doubt get into the country much more than they used.

It has never been of any case in wh. extravagant expenditure in holidays & outings was complained of by the relieving officers as a cause of subsequent distress.

Mr. Mead, Vestry clerk, Bromley.

The Work of the Vestry.

(2)

Mr. Mead. Vestry Clerk. of Bromley, the Vestry Hall. Bow Road.

I had some difficulty in getting to see Mr. Mead he being very busy with Vestry elections, & Jubilee Dinners, & being carefully guarded from intrusion by his subordinates, but the third time of calling I was successful, & was very affably received.

Mr. Mead has been 28 years in Bromley & a large part of that time Vestry Clerk. He had just finished his work connected with the elections, which had involved a party contest in each ward, & he has not a high opinion of the change brought about by the act of 1894, or the new men who have come in as a result.

Formerly 18 representatives performed comfortably the little there was to do, but now there are 108. Formerly 4 times a year was sufficient for the Vestry to meet, but now they have insisted on fortnightly meetings, although there is really nothing to do.

The only duties the Vestry have are to elect representatives to the Limehouse Board of Works (in conjunction with Bow & Poplar) to select overseers & churchwardens, & to appoint a library Committee all of which is done at the first meeting following the annual election. After that they receive once a month & discuss the report of the library committee, & there practically their duties end. For the rest they have been meeting & holding debates about, appointing committees to

The Overseers.

(The Representment Question)

inquire into, & passing resolutions in regard to matters over which they have no control. They can of course send recommendations to the Board of Works, but have no direct power.

At first the Progressives were in a big majority, but now parties are more evenly balanced & in all probability there will only be monthly meetings in future.

The overseers are the rating authority, & they value & assess all the property of the parish. Their duties are arduous, & formerly a considerable sum was allowed them for refreshments; & cigars, &c, got to be supplied sometimes at Vestry meetings, the privilege being in this way abused. The progressives made the abolition of refreshments grants a prominent point in their programme & intended to abolish it in the ordinary way, but to allow a certain sum for quinquennial valuation. But the 'old hands', on the new vestry, being themselves but a small minority, proposed the entire abolition of refreshments, & the new men being hardly able to go against this in the face of their electoral programme, it was carried. At the period of the Quinquennial valuation the overseers have to devote about 30 days to the work. It is hard; & tends to delay, that they should have to go home or elsewhere, after a long morning's work to get

(Registration)

The Churchwardens.

Board of Trustees.

their dinner. Probably in future a reasonable allowance will be made for this. Still the position of overseer is regarded as a desirable one & is largely competed for.

The overseers employ paid canvassers to see that all qualified householders are placed on the register of voters. There is a great deal of small property in the parish, the rates for which are paid by the landlords, consequently the tenants do not get their names on the rate-book in the ordinary way, & but for the work of the canvassers many would be disfranchised. The overseers have no power to look after lodgers in the same way.

The Churchwardens attend to all matters connected with the parish church & as with the overseers the Vestry has no control over them when once it has appointed them. There is a voluntary church rate.

The Vestry also has to elect annually a Board of Trustees. The duties of these Trustees have been entirely superseded ~~with~~ with but one exception: viz: the appointment of a Treasurer. They meet once a year for a few minutes, decide that a certain Bank shall be treasurer, & there their work ends.

Bow is in just the same position as Bromley, but in Poplar things are somewhat different. There the Trustees have certain powers which are here in the hands of the overseers.

Unsatisfactory position of
Local Government.

Baths, &c.

Libraries.

Mr. Wead considers the present system of local Government in this part of London an anomalous & extravagant one. Bow & Bromley & Poplar have each to keep up a Vestry Hall & a separate staff of officials, where one set of offices & one staff (somewhat larger of course as regards subordinates) would very well do all the work. Each parish pays from £1500 to £1000 a year for its office staff & the annual election in each costs nearly £100. Rates are also kept higher & municipal enterprise checked from the same cause.

Instances the case of Bow public baths as showing an extravagant result of the separation of & jealousy existing between Bromley & Bow. These baths have been built in the back part of Bow (Roman Rd.) at a cost of £44000 & are run at a considerable loss, whereas had they been erected in Bow Rd. they could have been fully used by the people of each parish & might have paid instead of being a burden on the Bow Rates.

The Progressives of Bromley came in full of the idea of erecting baths immediately, but the high rates & look of things in Bow caused them to put pour operations indefinitely.

In the erection of a public library which is now under consideration they are trying to avoid this mistake by

Housing, &c.

Blackwall Tunnel

Open spaces.

getting the two parishes to join hands & build a central library in Bow Road. A site has already been secured, but there is friction in settling details, & jealousy because it is on the Bromley side of the road. [The two parishes are divided by the Bow Road] It is proposed to erect branch libraries in North Bow & South Bromley.

Mr. Mead has great hopes of the promised Act of Parlt dealing with London Government, believing that it will abolish the present system & unite Bow, Bromley & Poplar under one authority.

A great deal of old property has been done away with of late years & model buildings erected. There is very little bad property in the parish now.

Excepting in the Amold Ins, South Bromley, no street improvement is at present going on in the parish.

The Blackwall tunnel will be of great service to the parish & district, the traffic passing through being expected to increase business, whilst Kent will be opened up to the people of the locality for recreative purposes.

Bromley has no open space, but there has been talk of acquiring a piece of land at about £[illegible] & laying it out as a playground. The L.C.C. have been approached in the matter, but nothing definite has yet been done. All the Board School playg

Mortuary.

Rating. — Compounding by Landlords.

Equalization of Rates.

grounds are kept open for the children to play in.

A small mortuary is provided for the parish by the vestry, who have to pay 5/- for each body recovered from the river & brought there. This is refunded from the County rate.

There has been recently a considerable increase in the rateable value of the property in the parish, but this is almost entirely owing to the rising value of public houses & to the extension of property belonging to public companies (such as railways).

A reduction of 30% is allowed to landlords who compound for the payment of the rates on their property — 15% (as prescribed by the act) for cost of collection, & 15% to cover loss on empty houses. A committee has just been inquiring into this allowance, with a view of reducing it to 20%, but has concluded to recommend no alteration [not, as I understand, because the allowance is a fair one, but because any reduction of it would put the parish on a higher scale as regards its contributions to the general rates of the Metropolis, L.C.C. &c. So apparently these particular landlords gain at the expense of London generally.

The parish benefits greatly by the Equalisation of Rates Act, Metropolitan Poor Fund, &c. But for the aid from these the rates would be about 18/- in the £. Now they are nearly 8/-. In Bow they are 8/5 the highest in London.

Mr. Mead's Point of View.

Improved Character of Population.

Education.

Bad Home Influences
(The Removal of Children from Bad Parents)

Turning to the discussion of matters other than local Government, Mr. Mead did not appear to be one who had thought deeply on ~~the subject~~ social questions. He is a family man & looks at things generally from that standpoint, referring two or three times to his own children & illustrating from them what could be done to bring youngsters into right habits. The properly training & influencing of childhood is eminently his remedy for social evils.

He believes there has been great improvement in the character of the people of late years, & particularly amongst the work girls. There is not the rowdyism & drunkenness in the street that there used to be. The Bow Road-crowds are better behaved, more rational! This he attributes primarily to educational influences & to the provision of more varied & healthy amusements. He believes in plenty of amusements to interest the people.

The Board Schools are doing a good deal to improve the rising generation but in many cases the home influences is bad. He thinks almost the greatest need now is some power to take children away from bad & drunken parents. He would like to see the law which

Religion.

Police.

Decline of Factories.

allows the authorities to take away children from brothels extended in some way to cases in which the parents are habitual drunkards &c. Admits there are difficulties in the way of so doing & would certainly enforce ~~some~~ from such parents payment for their children's maintenance but the future of the children should be the first consideration.

Some religious agencies are very active in the district, particularly Mr. Perry in West Bromley & Mr. Hazzard who gets hold of a very low class. Gordon Thompson the Catholic priest, is a great influence for good, he is so kind to the children & the effect is seen in their better cared for & cleaner condition.

In South Bromley Mr. Terrell is an active worker.

The police are much more popular than they once were, & are an efficient body. They always render assist-ance most readily & courteously in regard to meetings & election work.

Factory industries are Mr. Mead thinks, on the decline in Bromley. Some old firms have died out & there is often a lack of modern appliances & conveniences which are essential to successful competition.

Dr Talbot.

Experience, &c.

Health of District, Housing, &c.

(2)

Dr. Talbot. 117. Bow R^d.

The doctor is ~~a~~ medical Officer of health for Bow & has a good private practice.

He has been here since 1873, & has seen the population grow from 26000 to 42000 & has watched the building of a great many of the houses. Formerly he was ~~a~~ medical Officer for Bromley as well as Bow, but a few years back a rearrangement was made (with a view I suppose of getting a med. Officer who should give all his time to the parish work), & as he would not give up private practice & the Board could not turn him out, he was left with Bow only.

Dr. Talbot is a progressive in sanitary matters but decidedly conservative in other ways. He is a native of the district, his father having been in practise here before him.

Bow is the healthiest of the East End parishes, its death rate being as low as that for London generally.

It is a good open locality with a population averaging less than 8 per house. Cases of infectious disease are remarkably few, averaging only 6 to 8 per week. This altho' a good deal of the new property is built on made-up ground.

A word for Jerry building.

Marked difference between Bow & Bromley.

The Mile End District for instance, is built largely on Thames mud, & yet has no infectious disease to speak of. The houses are fairly well built.

He thinks that jerry building, provided the drains are all right, is rather a good thing, as it ensures more air & better ventilation. The most troublesome houses are the old, substantially-built ones in which the drains are defective & which exclude the air.

Bow & Bromley are only divided by the Bow Rd, but the difference between the two parishes is marked. Bow has the higher social standing & the better-class people come on that side. People always prefer to say they live in Bow, altho' they may be on the Bromley side.

Bow is healthier; this is even seen. He thinks in the faces of the people, they have more colour, something of a country look about them.

When he had Bromley he noticed that epidemics of scarlet fever &c, which broke out there rarely affected Bow. Speaking of epidemics it was often asserted that Board Schools were largely responsible for the spread of infectious disease, but such was not his experience. It had been his duty to investigate the cause of three epidemics - one of typhoid & 2 of diphtheria & in neither case had a Board School anything to do with the outbreak.

He had noticed of late the great desire of poor people

Sanitation.

Dust Removal.

to get their children away to hospitals in cases of infectious disease, whereas they used to have the greatest difficulty in inducing the parents to let them go. This change has been brought about by the good accounts the children have brought back of their treatment.

The parish of Bow had at one time a hospital at Plaistow, & found it very useful in 2 epidemics. It was the only one he thinks ever built by a local authority in London. After the establishment of the Metropn Asylum Board it became unnecessary, & was sold.

The sanitary condition of the parish is well looked after by two inspectors. 2 separate inspector attends to the two lodging houses, & the three blocks of buildings which are all well built & of good class giving no trouble. He insists on a separate W.C. for each family in model dwellings. This is a matter left entirely to the discretion of the Medical Officer.

The system of dust removal is quite efficient all the old dust bins are abolished & pails supplied, & the refuse is collected twice a week from house to house. Many find it most convenient to put their pails on the pavement ready for the dustmen.

Shop refuse is taken away on payment of 2/- a load.

Water Supply

Mortuary.

Baths.

Immorality.

The water supply is satisfactory now. The parish did not suffer so much during the drought because of the river + canal running through.

There is a small mortuary in each parish, but a large mortuary is now being erected for the whole Board of Works district + will supersede these for all post-mortem purposes

There is a separate dead house for infectious cases.

He recollects the time when post mortem exams had to be made in back bedrooms, + has had cases where the dead house was so unsuitable that he has had to have the body brought out on to the pavement of the Churchyard + has had to conduct operations whilst faces were peeping at him from over the wall.

The Parish has free baths + washhouses but they are not used to the extent they might be. Thinks they are in the **most** convenient spot – for the people of Bow. They are not convenient for the people of Bromley, + were not intended to be. Bow Ld is pay for them.

Prostitutes frequent the Bow Rd. Friends of his have complained of being accosted by them. Has not noticed any prevalence of immorality amongst the people or that early marriages are common. The people generally

Social Decline of Bow

Cheap Dispensaries.

live decent & industrious lives.

From a social standpoint, Bow is declined considerably of late years. The wealthier class of people have gone to live further out, a great many small houses have been built & there has been a large influx of Jews: Tradespeople of the old sort have suffered considerably, for the days of large profits & long credit are gone; but in their stead has sprung up a very cheap & thriving ready money trade in the Roman R., where the shopkeepers are making a good deal of money. This is probably as cheap a market as any in London. ~~& on the same system of cheapness~~ The doctors as well as others have thrown in this new district ~~seeing the amount of money which some chemists were making by prescribing for the poorer class, & by~~ & on the same system of cheapness. When he came there were only 2 doctors, now there are about 10, & nearly all keep their carriage - some with a pair of horses. Each one has made his money almost entirely by small fees & the dispensary system.

His father was the first to start a cheap dispensary, & was led to do so by ~~the practice then prevailing at some hospitals of giving~~ seeing the amount of money which some chemists were making by prescribing for the poorer classes, & by the practice then prevailing at some hospitals of giving

advice & medicine for a small sum. At one time it was a common thing to see in advertisements for Chemists assistants the words "Must be a good counter prescriber". Dispensaries kept by doctors have ~~been~~ become very general now, & ~~little~~ little prescribing is done by chemists.

Dr Stonham - (Stepney Union)

Experience.

Medical Relief.

The Chief Evils.

Jesse Argyle. June 4th 109

Local Gov 10 11 12

(2)

Dr. Stonham (med Officer of Health) (out door) to the Stepney Guardians.

I met Dr. Stonham by arrangement at the house of Mr. Wills. He is a young man, this being apparently his first public appointment. He has been here 5 years. Came from a West End Hospital. Was agreeably surprised at the character of the people here. Was led to expect a much worse condition of things than he actually found. He has a favourable opinion of the honesty & good conduct of the people he has come into contact with.

Dr. Stonham has a free hand in the supplying of medical relief, & may order nourishment when he thinks it necessary, though this is liable to revision by the Guardians. He may also employ a nurse when needed, she is paid 5/- a night by the Guardians. They do not get properly trained nurses for this, but those they have answer fairly. He of course would prefer trained nurses, but they probably would not stop in such poor places as they would be required for.

People have at first a repugnance to accepting even medical relief, & do not apply until other resources have failed, but once this feeling is overcome they apply very freely.

Drunk & intermittent work he regards as the main

Immorality.

Failure of Religion (Except Catholic)

causes of evil, leading to illness & general breakdown & next to these, a want of cleanliness. The work which many do is very dirty, & they bring the dirt into their homes, & never seem to get rid of it.

There is a good deal of sexual immorality — not to be wondered at considering the conditions under which the people live. They have had some shocking cases to deal with — incest, &c. As a rule the fall of a young woman is leniently regarded, but in some instances the mothers are greatly upset about it. Father Highley says he has married over 50 couples who were cohabiting together. In one case recently the child was christened & the parents married at the same time; & in another instance the wedding had to be postponed owing to the confinement of the prospective bride.

From his experience he should say that with the exception of the Catholics, religion hardly touches the great majority of the poor. The Catholics certainly do get hold of their own people & exercise great influence over them. When he has visited a sick Catholic he has found one of the first things asked for is the Priest, & has several times met ~~him~~ "his reverence" but during all his visits

Education.

Drink & Amusement.

to Protestants patients he has never known a clergyman or minister to be inquired for, nor has he once met with one on such occasions. The population seem to be quite indifferent to religion. The Salvation Army is no more successful in reaching them than any other religious agency - perhaps less so.

The influence of the Board Schools is undoubtedly good, but is often counteracted by the bad example of parents. If only the drunken & vicious parents could be got rid of, or the children entirely removed from them, the next generation would be thinks, show a vast improvement.

Temperance work he has not come into contact with at all. Great need for it but very little done.

He has however little faith in teetotal or any like propaganda, but believes the supply of varied amusements to be the best antidote to the influence of the public house. He thinks there is a need for teachers to train the people in wholesome ways of amusing themselves. In all his visits he has never seen a chess or draught board in the house or even a box of dominoes. In one or two cases a pack of cards, but

Housing.

Medical aid for the Poor.

nothing more. He thinks the people will have their beer, & will not go where it is excluded entirely. Thought the café style much better than the public house — places where beer could be had but was not made a prominent feature, ~~which~~ where there were games & amusements to occupy the peoples minds. [Mr. S. did not seem very clear about this, but apparently had a well regulated & attractive club in his mind, without the necessity for membership or formula of any kind — a public club, so to speak]

The old property (particularly near the river) is dirty & unwholesome. Much of it has been built in a way that would not be tolerated for a moment now. Streets of houses are built below the level of the roadway & are nearly always damp; you go down steps to enter them. Such houses are probably kept as well as they can be; the only really effective remedy is to pull them down. The newer buildings are good, & well looked after.

Mr. S. thinks the present system of medical attendance for the poor is unsatisfactory. At the cheap dispensaries the people do not get proper treatment; the doctors cannot possibly afford to give it. There are many cases in which ~~the~~ expensive drugs are

Out-Relief.

needed - drugs costing perhaps a guinea an ounce — & how can these be provided out of advice & medicine for 6d.

Then the nursing & the comfortment are lacking. Medical treatment under the poor law is undoubtedly the best that the poor people obtain. The system of club doctors he also considers unsatisfactory. The doctors are so poorly paid that they cannot do justice to their club patients. Nor is the treatment at hospitals much better. He believes that there is nothing for it but state paid medical men, the state collecting small fees from the patients in the same way as is now done by sick club. In no other way he believes can adequate medical treatment be secured.

The system of repressing outdoor relief he considers good in principle, but thinks it is too strictly followed in Stepney. Out relief would, in cases judiciously selected, be of more benefit than compelling people to go into the house.

Mr. F. Butler.

Description & Experience.

Local Govt

(A.)

Miss Isabel Argyle. 10 11 & 12 June 14.

Mr. Fred Butler, Asst Clerk to Poplar Guardians. 5

(2)

I was recommended to see Mr. Butler in preference to the head clerk (Mr. Lough) & met him at the Guardians Offices (Upper North Street, Poplar), a building with a quite showily - decorated entrance hall - coloured windows, inlaid tiles &c.

Mr. B. is a tall man, under 40 I should say, & has not much of the official style about him. He holds strong & decided views & is not afraid to express them. Once, during our talk, after speaking in not at all complimentary terms of certain people he said "you need not publish that as my opinion" but added "No doubt they know though". He has lived in Poplar all his life, seems to know the people well. Is a teetotaller, & said he might be biassed on the drink question. He has a high opinion of Will Crooks, who is "one of those rare characters a thoroughly honest & trustworthy man" & has great influence for good upon the people. He also thinks well of Mr. Chandler's (rector) active work, though not liking his High Church doctrines; not has no sympathy with Lansbury & the S.D.F. whose action on the Board he thinks distinctly harmful.

For relief purposes, the Poplar Union is

Method of Granting Relief in Poplar.

divided into 8 districts, each in charge of a relieving Officer. The first 3 districts comprise Bow & all Bromley, north of the canal, & are administered by a Committee consisting of Bow & Bromley members, which meets at the Relief Offices Fairfield Rd Bow every Monday afternoon. The other 5 districts include Poplar & the portion of Bromley south of the canal, & are in charge of 2 relief Committees, both of which include Bromley representatives, but on which Poplar men predominate. These Committees meet on Monday & Tuesday at the Offices in Upper North St.

The method of relief adopted is as follows:- The applicant applies to the relieving Officer of the district in which he or she lives & the Officer then makes inquiries into the case & keeps a record of it. The applicant is told to appear before the Relief Committee on a certain date, & if the case is deemed suitable out relief is granted, usually at the rate of 3/- per adult (but occasionally 2/6) & 1/- for each child of school age. This relief is nearly always given in money but in addition there may be an allowance of bread, rice & milk in the case of young children. but relief is not supposed to be granted to the able-bodied.

Relief in Districts 4 to 8 is given for a month

Lax Administration in Bow.

generally, but in Bow [1–3.] it is granted for 6 months. The relieving officers are supposed to keep an eye on each case & to visit each home at least once a fortnight where there is temporary sickness twice a month in cases of ordinary relief. But where, as in Poplar, each officer has some hundreds of cases, it needs a very smart man, very strict guardians, to have this put in effect. It is much easier for R.O's to let the relief go on where you have Guardians in sympathy with this lax system & R.O's of quite medium order as is the case in Poplar, it naturally does so.

In Poplar (Dist. 4–8), under the guidance of Will Crooks, relief is carefully & judiciously administered & as a consequence, the number of applicants & amount spent is diminishing; but in Bow exactly the reverse is the case. Here Lansbury is the relieving spirit, seconded in every way by Mr. Wilson of the P.D.F.; relief is administered on a lavish scale, & if cases are not suitable the Guardians will find a way of making them so.

[Mr. Butler remarked on the great difference there was in Poor Law matters between Lansbury & Crooks, although both were practically brought up in the same school & hold almost equally advanced political opinions.

Socialistic Influence.

The change in policy in Bow was the result of the election of 1894, when the L.S.D.P. candidates were elected. The following table compares the amount spent in out-relief in the present week (15th of midsummer quarter) with the sum expended in the corresponding week 2 years ago in each of the 8 districts:—

District		1895.	1897.	Increase.	Decrease.
Bow Relief Counties	1	34	38	4	-
	2	30	34	4	-
	3	38	38	-	-
		102	110		
Poplar Relief Counties	4	20	17	-	3
	5	27	22	-	5
	6	21	18	-	3
	7	17	16	-	1
	8	23	21	-	2
		108	94		

In Number of Cases the difference is.

	1895.	1897.	Increase	Decrease.
Bow Relief Cm.	565	642	77	-
Poplar —"—	692	625		67.

Disapproval of Stepney System.

Imposition under Poor Law System

Boarding out. [About 80 children are boarded out by the Poplar Guardians, in 4 or 5 different country places. The plan has been in operation some years & is not always successful. It can only be adopted in the case of orphan or deserted children.]

As before said relief is granted on a 6 months basis in Zow, & at end of each half-year all the recipients are paraded before the Relief Committee & are passed through at the rate of 100 cases an hour, showing superficial nature of the examination made.

Mr. Rutter does not approve of the Stepney System of Relief. He thinks the law has allotted certain duties to them & that they ought not to shirk these duties although it is no doubt kind of the C.O.S. to come forward & help. [Mr. Rutter is I think referring to the system which did prevail at Stepney rather than to that at present in force. — vide interview with Lewis]

Under the Poor Law system a good deal of imposition no doubt goes on. Were the stories told by the people as to their circumstances true, they could not live. The Guardians recognise that people "do not tell all they get & allow a margin."

He thinks the "pauper taint" affects London children very little, & does not stand in the way of their advancement in life. Nor do they lose it by being boarded out. Everybody in the country knows where they come from, & speaks of each one, for instance, not by name, but as "a Poplar Child".

The "Barrack" system has been quite undeservedly abused &

Improved Condition of the People.

[Mr B's verdict based on a life experience of Poplar is that there is a distinct improvement among the people. Materially they may not be much better off but there is a great desire for a higher standard of life. This is more particularly the case with the old-stable part of the population, amongst whom he knows some grand characters – people who have struggled on patiently for years & have brought up their family this most respectably on very poor & precarious earnings. The new comers are more shifty set.

There has been a considerable increase of poor people in North Bow. Houses which used to be kept by one family are now let in tenements.]

Drink & Temperance.

Immorality.

Early Marriages.

Housing.

Ernest Hart of the British Medical Journal, has much to answer for in regard to his attacks on the Forest Gate & other schools. A good many deliberate lies were told. The Forest Gate children are thoroughly well looked after, & are as happy & healthy a lot of children as anyone could wish to see.

Until a short time ago, he thought there was a marked improvement in regard to drink, but his opinion was a good deal altered by what he saw last Xmas & Easter. He had never before witnessed such scenes of drunkenness & debauchery as then occurred. For a section of the people there had been too much work; trade was too good for them.

The Temperance movement is doing nothing. Its combination with religion was likely to & did lead to general failure.

Immorality is apparently on the decline in Poplar. Such cases of pregnancy as come to the workhouse are almost ~~now~~ invariably from other localities.

The standard of morality is higher among the factory girls than a good many seem to think. Some of Bryant & Mays Match girls are of very high moral character.

Early marriages are undoubtedly very unwise but he has not noticed them as an immediate cause of pauperism.

There has been of late years a large clearance of slums.

Amusements.

Religion.

& the people are certainly better housed. Instances the clearing of Wells St. area, & erection of Grosvenor Buildings on the site & the substitution of the L.C.C. buildings for the slums of Yabsley St.

Free lectures are given every Sunday afternoon at the Town Hall Poplar & are very successful, the place being as a rule crowded. There is music from 3.30 to 4, the lecture lasts from about 4 to 5, & 15 minutes are allowed for discussion. The discussion is eagerly entered upon & enjoyed, particularly if the lecturer is not a skilled debater, but the critics are chary now of tackling an old hand like Bernard Shaw: Will Crooks generally takes the chair supported by Rev. Chandler, the Vicar. The programme of lectures is of a most varied character, & is arranged by a committee consisting of Crooks, Chandler & Butler. The lectures have been going on for 4 years. Mr. Barnett sends singers & occasional lecturers.

The Poplar Music Hall does not pay well, & the management cannot afford to get the best artists. So soon as a man becomes popular he goes West. There has been much improvement in the character of the entertainments of late years.

Religion does not touch the masses to any appreciable extent. Indifferance to religion is the prevailing tone. The Salvation Army is no improvement, & has not grown at all here.

Education

Police.

Open Spaces

Libraries.

Local Government.

There are a very good lot of schoolmasters here, & they have the "wildest" set of children in the world for an industrial centre. They are really smart & quick to learn. Their greatest want is a technical institute & Crooks is working hard to obtain one.

The Police are on very good terms with the population – they are of the people & understand them. He was struck with the friendliness ~~he~~ which seemed to exist between the police & those who assembled at the dock. Late lectures – many of them of the poorest class. He had never heard of a case of over officiousness.

There is need of more open spaces, particularly in Bromley. There has been talk about getting the Abbotts' site (adjoining the Lea) since 1890, & children have been tumbling into the water ever since.

Poplar has a successful public library & both Bow & Bromley have adopted the Act & talk of joining together to build a central library but there is friction between them. Bromley has a larger rateable value than ~~Bromley~~ Bow. & would pay the larger share; it therefore claims a preponderance of Library Commissioners. But the Bow people will not allow this affirming that the social importance of Bow is equal to the rateability of Bromley. The site in Bow Rd was purchased by the Bromley parish.

He thinks there are at present too many local

authorities in Poplar. That consolidation would be a great advantage. There are 4 or 5 different sets of offices, which must have cost at least £100,000, but are located in back streets. For this they might have had a magnificent set of buildings in the main road.

There is great need of a Poor Law Board for London. The Local Govt. Bd. is too remote & terribly slow. Mention the case of a very small surcharge in the clerk's accs. which it had taken 2 years to get set right.

In Bromley there are no public men of importance very few in Bow. Mr. S. Wean, chemist late Chairman of the Poplar Guardians, would be worth seeing. He retired from the Board because he could not stand the new element.

[Seen by Inkell]

Mr Cahill [Written to three times]

" P. L. White — " — " —

" Clarkson. Chairman of Works Cmte for Poplar.

all of Poplar Board of Works.

June 15th.

(2)

Visit to Poplar Workhouse:-

Mr Elliott, who is the Chaplain, having expressed a great desire to take me over the Workhouse, I to-day called on him there.

Before going round he had some talk in the vestry of the Chapel, when a service was just over.

Mr Elliott, who, my previous interview in the Poplar Chgs. book will have shown, is simply overflowing with the milk of human kindness is still of opinion that the Guardians are going too far in making the house comfortable, and are giving the inmates 'comforts' which few or any of them could hope to enjoy outside. As far as the really old and infirm are concerned he does not repute this, but he thinks that it is extending to all classes, and that the old fashioned repugnance to the house

is breaking down. Some of the expenditure he looks on as absurd extravagance and he particularly instanced the purchase of first-class sofas and rugs for the lunatics' wards: formerly they had very comfortable wooden arm chairs and linoleum: all they do with the rugs is to spit upon them. It should be noted however that Mr Elliott for all his kindness is of a conservative turn of mind.

We first visited the sick wards: here as elsewhere everything was beautifully clean. The disease from which most of the sick were suffering seemed to be old age in an aggravated form: in one bed was an old woman of 99, and most of the old people were somewhere between 80 and 100. We went next to the wards where the young people as Mr Elliott called them - women with still some power for work - were doing needlework. Both here and throughout our journey it

was really delightful to see Mrs Elliott among the people; he had a kind word or a piece of chaff for everybody, and was evidently a universal favourite. One of the nurses told me he was a great contrast to Father Lankes, who never speaks to any but the R.C's.

We passed next to the rooms where the old women were just beginning their dinner. I suppose he saw in all 300 or more. Most of them looked tremendous old, and I was told that a large proportion were over 80. A few had had tea or mutton broth, but for the majority there was a large pie and potatoes: the pie was more crust than meat and most of them left the crust. I suggested to the nurse who was serving in one of the rooms that so much pastry was scarcely a suitable diet for such aged stomachs; she agreed but said that it was given as a change from the monotony of joints.

When we got to the married quarters Mrs Elliott said to one old lady "That pie smells very good" she replied "Yes sir, but I can't eat the crust: it gives me indigestion".

From the women we passed to the large hall where the pies were just being served out to the men. The women I had thought on the whole a very decent looking lot, and they seemed fairly contented and happy. The men were far less prepossessing: many of them looked very bad specimens, and the general impression was one of utter brutishness and sullenness.

We went next to the married quarters. These seemed thoroughly comfortable and cosy: the rooms being fitted up quite as well as those of the best of the working class. I had some talk with one woman of about 65 who told me that she and her husband had come down in the world: they had been well-to-do shopkeepers: she had been blind that she would live for a month in the

House, but had really nothing to complain of, and was much more comfortable than she could have believed possible.

We finished in the lunatic's ward and I agreed with Mrs Elliott that the poor creatures there - most of whom are simply lodgers on their way to the Asylum - would be quite as comfortable without their caps.

Mrs Elliott told me that there used to be some moral compulsion to attend the Chapel services; ~~but~~ now there is none but still he gets good congregations.

The general impression left on my mind by the visit ~~&~~ was that, apart from the loss of liberty, the inmates here have little or nothing to complain of. Mrs Elliott says the Master and Matron are excellent people and I was struck by the smart and pleasant appearance of the nurses and attendants.

Baths & Washhouses

July 1. 97. J.A. 145

CP (2)

Mr. R. Newman, 67 East India Rd. member of Poplar Board of Works for last 6 years, chairman of Baths & Wash-houses Commissioners 4 years & of Library Commissioners 2½ years.

I had previously met Mr. Newman at the Adam Smith Club. He is an elderly man of quiet, studious disposition & his chief interest centres in the libraries.

The Poplar Baths & Washhouses were opened in 1852 (almost the first in London) & were greatly enlarged in 1886. The accommodation now is as follows:—

Men's Private Baths. — Special baths at 4/-, 6. 1st class @ 6d, 11. 2nd class @ 2d, 25. (Children are admitted to 2nd cl. baths @ 1d.) Total 42 baths.

Women's Private Baths. — 1st cl. at 6d, 4. 2nd cl. @ 2d, 6. Total, 10.

Swimming Baths. — 1 first cl. @ 6d, & 1 2nd cl. at 2d. (Thursdays set apart

for women).

Tickets admitting to gratis el. swimming bath are sold to swimming clubs in packets of 20 for 4/-; & to schools in packets of 26 for 4/-.

School boys may obtain a 6 mos. swimming ticket for 5/-, but only available before 6 p.m.

Annual tickets at 21/- for either private or swimming are also issued, but only 2 or 3 of these are sold.

The total number of single tickets sold during the year ending March last was

men - -	90421
women - -	7476
Children -	14584
	112481

The receipts for these amounted to £1496. 14. 4

Books of tickets (including a small amount for use of towels & drawers) realized £214. 1. 2, making the total receipts £1710. 15. 6.

Averaging the tickets in books at 1£ 5s each, they represent about 34,000 additional bathers, thus making the

Gross Total of Bathers - about 146,500.

The baths are open on week days all the year round, & during the 4 summer months on Sunday mornings from 6 to 10 a.m. Last year they were open on 17 Sunday mornings, & the total attendance was 5288. This Sunday opening is a recent innovation, & the results are considered very favorable.

The Committee had intended to add 6 more private baths, but owing to the position in wh. they wd. have been put wd. have been obliged to make them first class baths. They approached the Local Govt. Board to obtain sanction to a loan for the purpose, but were refused on the ground that the Act of Parliament specifies that there must be twice as many 2nd class as first class

baths. They have really a larger proportion of first-class baths now than they did have.

The Laundry was established at the same time as the baths, but was curtailed in 1886, on the enlargement of the 1st cl. swimming bath. They now talk of enlarging it again. At present it has 31 tubs & a like number of drying horses. The latter are heated by hot air on an old fashioned principle, the effect being that the heat is not evenly distributed to the horses, altho' they have recently improved this a good deal by alterations to the furnace. The wringer & mangler are also out-of-date, being worked by hand, & so heavy that only a strong woman can use them. They are hoping, in conjunction with other alterations to have these propelled by power, as no doubt they militate against the success of the laundry. The charge for use of the wash-houses is 1½d per hour, wh. includes hot

& cold water (hot water being laid on to each tub, & water to whatever degree is required by steam from the boilers), & use of racks, brush, board, horse, wringer, mangler, drier, &c., but each woman has to find her own soap.

Last year 9731 tickets were issued for 52976 hours, an average of 5 hrs. 26½ min. for each washer. The receipts were £331. 2.

There is a loss on the laundry of about £300 a year. The baths pay expenses, & if they have got the additional 1st cl. baths they required, they wd have made some profit in reduction of loss on laundry, there being a large demand for additional 1st cl. baths.

A good many of the women who use the laundry do washing for neighbours, & so partly make their living in this way. Occasionally a tradesman's servant will bring washing to do there.

The baths were built under, & till a year ago were managed by, Commissioners ap-

pointed each year by the parish Trustees. Last year they were taken over by the Vestry & a Committee appointed to manage them. He (Mr. Newman) is was the only one of the old Commissioners on the Committee, wh. is elected annually, & consists of 12 members. The Committee meets once a month.

The staff of the Baths includes a clerk, paid £40 a year, but he is an old man, & only attends 2 or 3 evenings a-week. The practical management is in the hands of an engineer, who has £120 per annum, with house, coals, gas, washing, & uniform. In addition he has an annual gratuity of £10 (given at Xmas), & is paid 5/- for each Sunday morning the bath is open.

The other employees are:-

A Cashier, at £80, with £2 gratuity & 3/6 for each Sunday open

A stoker, 33/- a week, with 7/6 for laundry & a helper each Sunday open.

4 male bath attendants at 25/- a week &

overtime; gratuity of 21/- each at Xmas & 2/6 for each Sunday morning. The average wage of the men is about £71 a year, & they have some uniform.

A lad at 16/- a week.

Females { A woman with attendant - about £1 a week.
- " - laundry - " - ——— " ———

Several women are casually employed in towel washing & in cleaning. They are chosen from the women who ~~come~~ use the laundry pretty regularly, & are paid about 3/- for a full day's work. Nearly £200 a year is expended in this work.

The attendants have not much to do in the winter, & fill up with any odd work of wh. they are capable, such as painting & whitewashing of the building, &c.

The total wages bill is over £780.

Holidays are granted the attendants of a week or ten days each, taken as soon as convenient after the press of summer work is over. They are always

paid their wages when ill, tho' there is no rule laid down on the subject. The men have been in the employ of the baths for many years.

As showing the difference between the attendances in summer & winter the following figures are of interest: -

Week ending		Week ending	
May 29. 97 --	2415 bathers	January 30. 97 --	913 bathers
	139 washers		275 washers
Receipts	£42.13.1	Receipts	£24.7.9
May 30. 96 --	2863 bathers	February 1. 96 --	1172 bathers
	120 washers		268 washers
Receipts	£45.8.7	Receipts	£28.2.2

The Public Libraries Act was adopted by Poplar in Dec., 1890, the majority in favour being unique. The voting was: -

For the Act - 3301
Against. 314
majority - 2987

Libraries.

The Commissioners were elected in Mch. 1891. They purchased the site in High St., Poplar, for £2000, & the building cost £6847. £7000 were borrowed for the purpose, & donations were received to the amount of £1635, besides £50 subscribed for preliminary expenses. Mr. Passmore Edwards gave ~~£~~ one thousand volumes, & donations of £350 were received for the purchase of books.

A temporary reading room was opened in 1891 & the Central Library in Oct. 1894.

In Nov. '95 an evening branch library was opened in the Island Gardens (Recreation ground, opposite Greenwich Hospital), the L.C.C. having granted the use of two floors of a house in the gardens, at a nominal rent of £1 a year. This branch consists of lending library (replenished from the Central) reading & news rooms.

There are in the libraries over 11,000 vols.; 75,000 vols. were borrowed last year for home reading, & 9232 vols. con-

ended in the reference library.

The attendance in the reading room was over 1200 daily, & the number of borrowers nearly 3000.

The Library was taken over by the Vestry in Mar., '96, & is now managed by a Committee of 15, elected annually by the Vestry, he being, again, the only one left of the old Commissioners. [There is on the Vestry a great desire "to give everyone a turn," leading, Mr. Newman thinks, to more change than is desirable.]

The practical work of the Libraries is carried out by a Books Committee of 6, & this really resolves itself into 2 or 3 people doing the work.

The Libraries have an income of £1300 to £1400 a year, derived from a penny rate.

Mr. Newman has no doubt of the usefulness of both Baths & Libraries, or

that they are used & appreciated by nearly all classes.

Dr. Murray Leslie.

Experience, &c.

Strikes – the great evil.

Lorne Lpw 10.11.12

July 12. 97. – J. A.

Dr Murray Leslie, 41 Glengall Rd, Cubitt Town, E.

A very active, shrewd & able man. Carries on a West End practice, & has, with a partner, a large connection here. Holds also several public appointments, being a divisional surgeon of police, an outdoor medical officer under the Poplar Guardians, a public vaccinator, & surgeon at the docks. Lives partly here & partly at Grosvenor St., W.

Has a very nice house here, the back overlooking the Millwall athletic ground & the allotment gardens, to both of wh. he several times referred.

Dr Leslie has known the Isle of Dogs for 15 years. Has also experience of Limehouse, Bromley, & other parts of Poplar, & considers the Island to be for the best place of any. The people would get along very well were it not for strikes. These he emphasises as the greatest evil from which

Trade Revival & Social Improvement.

Drink, & Counter-acting Influences:-

(1) Athletics.

the people of the Island suffer.

Until about 18 months ago, there was deterioration in the material condition of the population. Whenever trade was brisk, the men struck, ~~and~~ bringing great suffering upon themselves & their families, as well as driving away trade. Some 18 months ago there was a great revival of trade, & this has continued, so that, with no disputes, the people were doing well. Now he fears much evil from the dispute in the engineering trade.

Next to strikes, the greatest evil has been Drink, but here again there has been considerable improvement. He notes that when trade is good the people do not drink so much; it is distress & discontent which drives men & women to drink.

The improvement in regard to drinking habits has been due to three causes:

1st The strong hold which athletic exercises have taken upon the people since the establish-

(2) Allotments.

ment of the Inchwall Athletic Club. (Of this Club, Dr Leslie claims to have been the originator, aided by Mr. Clarke, of the George Hotel, who gave £100). Men & boys are all great enthusiasts of football, & even many of the women are interested in it. This has taken the place of the old habit of finding their amusement in the public house, & has prepared the way for other forms of outdoor recreation. Thus in the summer, when football is past, many now turn to the cultivation of vegetables & flowers, in connection with Wh. comes the

2nd influence, viz., the Allotments, wh. were secured mainly by the exertions of Mr. McDougall, L.C.C. There is now a great taste for gardening among the people, & what was formerly a wretched waste of weed & rubbish has ~~now~~ been transformed into very pleasant & useful gardens. (I referred to the capital manner in wh. the whole ground by the side of the line at

3. Recreation grounds,

&

Live Stock Club.

Early Marriages &
Immoral Relationships

Midlands Junction had been cultivated, & the doctor considered it as evidence of this acquired taste, tho' I shd. think it is more likely due to country-bred employés of the Railway Company).

The 3rd influence the doctor considered to be the Recreation Ground, secured largely through the efforts of Mr. Pickles, of whom he spoke very highly.

Out of these there had been side issues, such as a great live stock club, in connection with wh. many persons spent much of their spare time.

In short, the people had been learning how to amuse themselves rationally, & so did not rely so much on the public-house.

There are still too many early marriages, & they always mean improvidence. But both as to this & as to immoral relationship of the sexes there is imp--

Agencies for Moral Improvement.

Girls Clubs, &c.

Religion.

provement. Usually such relationships finishes in marriage, & then nothing is thought of it. But it is severely regarded by the people where marriage does not result. Marriage under such circumstances rarely effects the after happiness of those concerned.

The moral tone of the people has become healthier of late years, due largely to the untiring efforts of clergy & ministers, & to Miss Price & her lady co-workers, who look after the factory girls. A new institution called St. Andrew's House has ~~lately~~ been established to work among the young of both sexes, but more particularly the girls. Miss Barry & other ladies conduct this, & the headquarters are in West Ferry Rd.

Probably about one half of the people are affected by Religious agencies, the work of chapels & mission halls being the more effective, & low church doing better than high. A plain service, with good singing.

Education

Temperance Societies.

touches the people, but Ritualistic practices arouse their antipathy. The Catholics work well after their own flock, nine-tenths of whom are Irish. The Salvation Army has very little hold here.

Taking it all round, the proportion of religious persons in the local population has remained about stationary for some years past.

Board schools have exercised a great influence, & mostly, though not entirely, for good. There is a ridiculous aversion to corporal punishment, wh. affects adversely the behaviour & discipline of the children. The Evening Schools have been especially beneficial.

There are two or three active Temperance organizations in the district, particularly the Sons of Temperance, but their influence is small compared to that of the district

Thrift.

Local Government.

Libraries.

agencies already alluded to. A change in the direction of temperance, for wh. probably the teetotal party are largely responsible, has been the holding of sick benefit clubs in chapels & schoolrooms instead of public-houses.

The doctor doubts whether habits of thrift have yet become very common among the population. There is certainly great extravagance in regard to funerals. A widow will draw £10 or £12 from a club & spend the whole of it on her late husband's funeral.

The Poplar Board of Works has exercised a very wholesome influence. There has been a great advance in sanitation & in cleanliness, & the work of the parish, generally speaking, is well done.

The Free Libraries are well attended

Parochial Relief.

& are a great boon. You see a library book in nearly every house you enter. The people read, & read intelligently.

On the question of parochial relief the doctor, on account of his official position, did not care to speak freely. A good deal of relief is given, & with a certain section the more they get the more they need. As a general rule, the people do not apply readily for help, but only as a last resource. They only come when trade is bad, & then not to the extent that might be expected.

They come more easily for medical relief, but this may be because he & his partner are considered popular in the neighbourhood.

The people are well looked after, & get a good deal of help, apart from the Poor Law.

Police

Factory Sanitation.

The action of the police is much to be commended. They are a thoroughly efficient body.

The recent Factory Act has been the means of remedying many evils, & both factories & workshops in this district are now in a good sanitary condition.

Personnel of Board.

Local Government. – Summary of Evidence.

Poplar Board of Works' District.

Great change for better in class elected. Labor representatives have done good work. Few things r little jobbery. – Chandler, Bk I, p. 37.

Well administered. Crooks here – an excellent fellow. Refer things o persons to him. Regard him as a very efficient sanitary officer. – Beardall, I, 241-5.

Administration much improved. Some unseemly dealing – arbitrary & tyrannical in some cases; dilatory & lenient in others, especially where members of Board are concerned. Petty officials principal offenders. Not so bad as was, because working men on; but latter are hard & exacting with officials, of whom they are jealous. Think only of own class – cannot take all-round view. Crooks excellent, but handicapped by others. Is slowly educating them. Dr. Alexander very superior. – Neill, II, 41.

Electors callous o labor representation strong. Labor men extravagant; make work & put fools into jobs. – Williams, schoolmaster o Vestryman, Poplar.

Interest dead, owing to indirect election to Board.

Public Health.

abolish Schedule B Vestries. – Parry, VII, 65.

As much jobbery & nepotism under new conditions as old. Workmen employing work for own class, & get votes for relatives. But a number of straight men not before eligible have got on, & their influence increases. – Eversleigh, C.O.S., X, 1 &c

Board of Works a very wholesome influence. – Dr Leslie, XIV, 167

District healthy, but a good deal of bronchitis & consumption. – Chandler, I, 42-3. (Poplar)

Health good. – Cowan, I, 87. (Cubitt Jn)

Decidedly healthy. No slums. – Beardall, I, 241-5. (Poplar)

Good. – Neill, II, 41 (Poplar)

Poplar very healthy – Fletton, III, 56

Pretty good. – Mrs Brown (Orchard House Peckham) VI, 5

Throat affections common; otherwise wonderfully healthy. – Oxley (Isle of Dogs) VI, 17.

Many cases of typhoid. – Mason, VII, 41 &c (Poplar).

Health good. – Hare (Bow) VII, 219 a

Great hindrance to health is folly & ignorance of parents. – Wickenworth, X 57

Bow very healthy. Marked contrast to Bromley. – Dalton, X

Housing & Sanitation.

Health endangered by accumulations of vegetable refuse in back yards. — Med. Officers Report, 1896 — XIV 35

Death Rate: Bromley 20.3; Poplar, 21.6. Decrease of infectious disease from 1895. — Report, 1896, XIV, 37.

Bow healthy — Lansbury, X 125 a

Improving — Dr Alexander, XIV, 51

Bow healthiest East-end parish. Open, & less than 8 to a house. Little infection, tho' some of houses are built on Thames mud. Very distinct from Bromley. — Dr Talbot, XIV, 92.

Board of Works does the work well, & sanitary inspectors active & energetic. Houses generally good, & no insanitary area. — Chantler (Poplar), I, 42-3.

Room for improvement in drainage. Houses good & little crowding. — Cowan (St. John Street Young) I, 87-9.

Houses very bad & jerry-built. — Mackenzie (Isle of Dogs) I, 139.

Houses low, & areas flooded in heavy rain. Difficulty with drains. — Beardall, I, 241-5. (St. Saviour's, Poplar)

Court of Appeal advocated, like the LCC, open to any who feel unfairly dealt with in regard to sanitary

Housing, &c. (contd.)

orders made by the Board. Little housing difficulty in his parish. – Neill, II, 41 (St. Matthias, Poplar)

Housing & sanitation better than in past, chiefly due to L.C.C. Drains well looked to. – Brown, III, 12

Regards rents as excessive & houses unsuitable, but speaks from experience of Scotland. – McQueen, III, 27

Sanitary officers strict. – Gretton, III, 56.

Certain streets deteriorated thro' leasehold system. Landlords will do no repairs when leases nearly expired. Burcham St., Poplar, an instance. War to keep between landlords & sanitary authorities; latter winning. – Galt (missionary) IV.

People well housed. Very little fever building. Drainage was defective & flooding prevalent – now remedied. Authorities active. – Bullwant (employed) IV, 1.

Houses on whole good. No overcrowding. Streets generally wide. Very few courts & alleys. Few slums, & are disappearing, but certain streets & district show signs of becoming slums.

Sanitary administration effective. Good medical officer, & inspectors much better than used to be. Much fort done by L.C.C. in main drainage improvement. – Maxtley, C.O.S., V, 15.

Housing &c (cont^d)

Many houses in bad repair. Landlords won't do much, because tenants destructive. Sanitation was bad, but improved. L.C.C. surveyor active & efficient. No complaint of local government. – McCann (school) (I. of Dogs) V

Slums cleared. – Williams (school), Poplar. V

Sanitation very good. Housing good. Sufficient dwellings – no one need live in a slum. – Barge, school^r. overseer, &c. V 93

Sanitation, &c., well looked after by vigorous local Board, backed by capable & vigilant officers. – Barge (2nd interview)

Sanitation much improved. Always meeting authorities inspecting the houses. – Sister Hyande (Nurse) V 209

Houses in Orchard House Place like pigsties. Fault of tenants. Sanitation was abominable; now better. Houses terribly crowded. 57 children from 5 houses. – Mrs Brown, VI 5

Many old houses bad. Flooding sometimes. – Oakley, (I. of Dogs) VI 12.

People pretty well packed, but any insanitation

Housing &c. (Contd.)

fault of tenant. – Noyes, VII, 15 (all Hallows Bromley)

Small houses. Not much overcrowding. Sanitation not very satisfactory. – Mason, VII 41-5 (St. Stephen, Old Ford)

Housing very fair. No overcrowding – No blocks – in his parish. – Parry VII 65 (Bromley St. Leonard)

Housing fairly good, except in slums south of Bow church (Bakers Alley, &c.). – Hare VII 219 (Bow)

Overcrowding in Furze, Fale, Eastwood, & Box Streets. 4 families in 6 roomed house. – Hazzard, VIII, 17.

Houses ill-built, compared with Leeds. – Bowker, VIII.

Sanitary inspectors have checked crowding. Not allowed to pig-in like used to. – Mrs Davies (Devons Rd) IX, 20

Medical officer very efficient, & comes down quickly on any insanitary area. Bad streets off Devons Rd. – Ewelejh, X, 1

Small houses. Only one block. Only slum an area south of Bow church, which shd. be cleared. – Dalton (Chk Bow Vestry) X

Housing, &c., pretty good & well attended to. – Wickworth, X 51

Housing 82 (Cont^d)

Very little back to back building in Boro. Some bad parts – Lansbury, X.

Franklyn & other streets off Devons Rd. very crowded. 3 or 4 rooms & 3 or 4 families. – Little Sisters of Poor, XI 15, & Nurses XI, 41.

Devon's Rd. ultima thule of poverty & overcrowding. Houses owned by publicans or pawnshops, & let at small rents to those who deal at these shops. Rooms 8^d – to 1/- each – Gordon Thompson, XII 21

Landlords in Bromley, owing to enforcement of Public Health Acts, have raised rents; poorer tenants have moved into cheaper districts, & so crowding decreased. – 6337 inspections & 3995 intimations served in year. – Med. Officer's Report, Bromley & Poplar, XIV, 35.

Sanitation much improved. Democratic element on Board & Public Health Act largely cause of this. Labour members give great help. 6 sanitary inspectors – 2 for each parish. Separate workshop inspector. Could do with more inspectors. Good deal of legal crowding – not much illegal. Soon get to hear of any. Due to landlord greed & desire of people to live near their work. – Alexander, med. Officer, XIV, 51

Housing 82 (contd.)

Dust Removal.

Water Supply.

Little bad property. Great deal been demolished & models erected. Improvement in Ann St. projected. – Head (Clerk Bromley) XIV 81

Sanitation well looked after by 2 inspectors. 3 blocks of good models. Separate inspector for these & lodging houses. – Dr Talbot (Bow) XIV

Large clearance of slums & people better housed. – Butler (Poplar) XIV.

Great advance in sanitation. Work well done. Factories & workshops looked after. – Dr Leslie XIV, 167

Dust destructor needed. Roads have been made up of refuse – bad thing. Degrading spectacle of women & children digging for bones in refuse heaps in dust yards. – Med. Officers Report, 1896 – XIV, 35

House-to-house removal of dust twice a week. Pails supplied. Dust destructor being erected. – Alexander XIV, 51 (Bromley & Poplar)

Dust pails supplied & cleared twice a week – Talbot XIV (Bow)

Water famines not infrequent & very serious. – Martley, II.

Supply constant. Trouble in times of drought. – Alexander XIV

Improvements.

Open Spaces.

Labour Policy.

Great scarcity of water during July & Aug '95. Effect on public health not very serious. Companies building new reservoir, & doing best to provide against future contingencies. – Report of Government Inspectors.

Opening of Blackwall Tunnel by L.C.C. Clearance of Canal St. area, off East India Docks Rd, at joint expense of Poplar Board & L.C.C. Proposed widening of E. India Docks Rd. – Two new dock bridges constructed. – Report, p. 5–7 (1896)

Two open spaces. One required for Bromley. – Alexander, XIV.

No open spaces in Bromley. School playgrounds kept open. Blackwall Tunnel opens up 1 Acre to the people here. – Mead XIV. 81

more needed, particularly for Bromley. much talk about getting Abbotts Rd site. Meanwhile, children tumbling into the water there. – Butler XIV

Is against direct employment, because it is extravagant & leads to friends of members being put into berths. – Williams (Poplar)

Labour for dust removal employed direct. – Alexander

Disorderly Houses.

Mortuary

Personnel of Vestries.

No brothels or prostitution. – Cowan, I 87-9

Some prostitution – perhaps 9 or 10 bad houses. – Beardall, I 244

Loose women on streets are a safeguard to the married. Has cleared his parish of disorderly houses, but had no local support. The people move elsewhere. Keepers once convicted ought to be on ticket of leave. – Neill, II 41 &c

Bad houses in W. India Dock Rd., Farrance St. & Stainsby Rd. – Mc Queen, III 27.

Prostitution about E. & W. India Dock Rds. Not so bad as many think. – Lee, III 41

Black bit, with several brothels, just at back of Bromley High St. – Eveleigh X, 1 &c

Site obtained, & very good mortuary being erected. – Alexander

Vestries in Poplar.

Men elected by working classes are of the worst type. – Cowan, I 87-9

Poplar Vestry improving – Martley, l.o.s.

Baths & Wash-houses
Bow.

New Vestrymen most contentious. Very illiterate; manners abominable; are obtrusively working men, & working man erected into a little god. Constantly trying to execute jobs for their own class. Tried to dock his own salary of £400. Speaks well of Lansbury. – Logan (Vestry clerk of Bow) X.

Small jobbery & self interest prevail on Poplar Vestry. – Gordon Thompson XII, 21.

108 men elected to Bromley Vestry to do very little. System anomalous & extravagant. A lot of time spent in discussing matters over wh. Vestry has no control. Schedule B districts shd. be abolished & whole system reformed. Powers very limited. – Mead, Bromley V. Clk. XIV, 81.

Consolidation in local government greatly needed here. Very wasteful now. – Butler XIV.

Bow baths & wash-houses largely used. Latter largely by professional laundresses – fee 1½d. hour. Loss £500 a year. Well spent. – Dalton, Chn. Bow V.

Fine baths in Bow, but not so well used as shd. be. Convenient for Bow; not for Bromley – not intended to be. – Dr Talbot, med. offr., Bow.

Baths & Wash-houses

Poplar.

Libraries – Bow & Bromley.

Poplar baths opened 1852; about first public baths in London; greatly enlarged in 1886. 42 men's baths; 3 classes: 1/- 6d & 2d. 10 women's baths; 6d & 2d. Two swimming baths: 6d & 2d. Reductions to clubs & schools. 146500 bathers & £1710 receipts last year (1886). Open all year on weekdays; Sunday mornings in summer, 6 to 10, very good results.

Laundry has 31 tubs; 1½d hour, everything provided but soap. 9731 tickets issued; £331 received. Machinery old-fashioned, & insufficient. Alterations contemplated. Many of women wash for neighbours.

Baths pay; £300 a year loss on laundry.

Good wages, holidays, sick pay, &c., to employees.

Not half the number of bathers in winter that there are in summer, but double the number of washers. Employees fill up time in painting, cleaning, &c. –

Newman, XIII 149

Both the Bow & Poplar baths are managed by Committees appointed by Vestries.

Joint library proposed for Bow & Bromley. Difficulties about settlement. – Dalton.

Libraries – Poplar.

Population, rating, &c.

Trying to get Bow & Bromley to join in erecting libraries. Both parishes adopted Act. Site secured, but Bow jealous because it is on Bromley side of Bow Rd. Friction between the 2 parishes as to representation, &c – Mead

The Social importance of Bow is set against the rateability of Bromley – hence the disagreement. – Butler.

Poplar adopted Act by 3307 to 314. Centres & branch libraries. 1d rate producing £1300 to £1400 a year. 11000 vols. 75000 borrowed in '96 & 10,000 consulted. 3000 borrowers. 1200 attend reading room daily. – Newman XIV 159

Libraries well attended & great boon. Constantly see the books in people's homes. The people read well & intelligently. – Dr Leslie, I. of Dogs.

	Population, 1896	Rateable value, 1896
Poplar	57759	£335451
Bow	41687	£160422
Bromley	70002	£243611
	169267	£739484

No. of houses: 23,000. Inhabited 21982. uninhab. 1017.
– Report, 1896 p. 1.

Rateable value of Bromley risen thro'

Poplar Guardians

Personnel, &c.

public houses & public companies. Rates 8/- in £; would be 15/- but for the Common Poor Fund & Equalization Acts. 30 % allowed for compounding; not lowered because by so doing Borough wd. be raised in rating scale for metropolitan purposes. Borough landlords benefit at expense of London generally. — Overseers heavily worked at time of quinquennial valuation, & no refreshments allowed — misuse economy. — Paid canvassers employed to get householders on register of voters. — Mead, XIV, 81 &c

Poplar Guardians.

Poplar Bd. well spoken of. Due to influence of Crooks.

Great changes in 1894. mistakes being made by new men, but are learning better, & improvement noticeable. Good hopes of future. — Martley, C.O.J.

Labour men not satisfactory public workers. more open to temptation & apt to follow best talkers. — Harrington (employer) VI, 25

Out Relief.

Poor Law very laxly administered. Excessive lattitude allowed to Guardians, often inexperienced, in giving out relief – Chandler, I 37.

Very fair in ordinary times, but relief overdone in severe weather. Fault of working-class members. – Neill, II 41 &

Applicants for relief mostly Irish. – Brown (overseer, &c), III 12

No serious fault in Poplar, if must have out-relief. Lax in Bow. – Marcley

Poplar out relief properly administered. Strict investigation. Insist what is given shall enable recipients to live decently. 6/- to aged couple with other means. Wasteful in Bow.

Stoneyard demoralising. Found out 3 7/8 of those who used it were rightieus. – Crooks, V.

Lax in Bow. Is not against out relief, but difficult to discriminate. – Williams (schoolmr) V.

Outreliefs extending. – Corner, V 155

Outreliefs difficult to get. Very hard for respectable old people to be sent to "House." – Sister Maude, V 209.

Out Relief (cont'd)

Out-relief in Poplar given on wrong principles. Poor, careful people who have retained house & furniture cannot get it; thriftless & improvident can. - Gale (schedule) V. 235

Out-relief given too easily in Poplar. Work of Socialists. - Harrington VI 25

Poor Law administration in Bow abominable. 50% increase in 3 years. No signs of improvement. - Anson

P. L. administration in Bermondsey perfectly dreadful - heartbreaking. attracts people from outside - Parry, VII 65.

Out-relief too lavish, especially in Bow. Not enough inquiry. But policy generally approved. - Hare VII 219

Poor Law very generous. Old people live on out-relief. - Hazzard VIII 17

Too much O.R. Old well cared for. Good cases sent to C.O.S. Ladies Visiting Committee - Schmalhorst (N. Bow) VIII (on C.O.S.)

P. Law generous. Fully approves. - Roe VIII

Labour men gone a little too far in O.R. Population increasing & rateable value falling. Dean (late Chairman of Bds) VIII 127

O.R. rather too easy. Many impostors. - Farman, IX

Administration of O.R. very lax, but still inadequate - 2/6 to 3/6 where before it was 2/- & 3/- Guardians elected

Out Relief (Contd.)

or "free & unlimited O.V.", but found that impossible. This assures that person receiving relief is more to be trusted than Relieving Officer. – Eveleigh, X 1.

Unlimited O.V. having an effect on wages. Drapers helped freely, on ground that their wives & children cannot be left to starve. – Logan X

O.V. given to all over 60 who apply if nothing against them at time & have reasonable prospect of keeping decent home. Past offences & thrift not considered, but must not be drunkard. Is chairman of Bow Relief Committee, & admits he practically "runs" it. There are 8 members. No moral obligation on part of children to maintain parents, & do not enforce it, unless it can be proved they can do so without distressing themselves. 30/- or 35/- not enough. – Inquiry not satisfactory. R.O's old & not observed, but standard of investigation is being raised. Admits mistakes have made, but denies people being attracted to district – not one in a hundred. Methods criticised, but no specific instance of blunder or failure produced. Only people who can get O.V. are men & women over 60, infirm, & widows with children. Latter for not more than 6 months. – Lansbury, X 125 &c

Out Relief (Contd)

members of Bow Relief Committee. Eversleigh allowed to join in, but not to vote. Eversleigh advocates adequacy to impossible extent, but he generally supports them when he is for refusing relief. Lansbury & supporters much too lenient. Are imposed on & people attracted to Bowish by relief system. L. a recognised court of reference for applicants; but he is becoming more reasonable. P.O's old men, & handicap guardians in their work – Wyatt, X 165 &c

O.R. given freely in Bow. Keeps home together. Workhouse intensely disliked. – Little Sisters of Poor, XI 15

Much O.R., but not given freely. Too proud to go in "House" – Dr Sullivan, XI 33

O.R. given easily. Approves. Objects to P.O.'s methods. – Lawless, XII, 65

O.R. taken readily. "House" disliked. – Thacker, XII

8 relief districts. 3 Committees, formed from local guardians. Laxish in Bow under Lansbury, careful in Poplar under Crooks. Rise in Bow, decrease in Poplar. Imposition under Poor Law recognised & allowed for by guardians. – Butler XIV

People in S. of Boro well looked after. Get a

Indoor Relief.

good deal of relief apart from P. Law, wh. is liberal. – Dr Leslie.

Workhouse better administered. – Markley
– " – very comfortable. – Williams.
– " – – " – " – – Dr. Corner.

Many reasonable comforts secured to inmates, thanks to Lansbury. – Hare.

Very good alterations in workhouse, but fare too far with luxuries. – Loveleigh.

Very comfortable. Vastly improved. Called "Poplar Hotel" Many privileges for old. Have old than ever before. Increased firmness with able-bodied. Excellent officials. Suggests almshouse at Woodford for aged couples. – Lansbury.

House being made too comfortable. Comforts extending to all classes of inmates. Beautifully clean. Many very old inmates, especially women. Dinner good, but difficulties with pie-crust. Old women fairly cheerful & contented; old men give impression of terrible ennui & sullenness. Very comfortable married quarters. Lunatics quarters have unnecessary

The Sick.

Pauper Children.

Poor Law Board.

luxuries – as cushions & rugs. Nurses smart & pleasant. Nothing to complain of, save loss of liberty. Elliott (chaplain) much beloved. – Visit to Workhouse with Elliott XII. 137.

Sick asylum much improved. Much more to be done. Want more doctors & nurses. No intimate nurses now. Patients discharged too soon. Convalescent Home wanted. – Lansbury.

Boarding-out not always successful, & only partial in application. Pauper taint does not affect London children much. Barrack schools quite undeservedly condemned. Forest gate children thoroughly well looked after – happy & healthy. Butler.

Poor Law Board for London badly needed. – Butler.

Limehouse.

Personnel, &c., of Board of Works.

Health.

Housing & Sanitation.

Limehouse Board of Works. (Population 65000)

Local Government satisfactory. – Alpe, I, 213

A good deal of log rolling & jobbery of a sort. Working class members some improvement, but general moral tone very low. – Sharpe, C.O.S., V, 123

Represents the 4 Vestries of Limehouse, Shadwell, Ratcliff & Wapping. Limehouse largest district – very Progressive. Others richer moderate. Difficult to get men to serve in Wapping. – Jefferson (Charrington) XIV, 1

Healthy district. Under-feeding worst cause of ill-health. – Alpe, I, 213 Health good. – Jurdon.

Two blocks of dwellings (low-rented) & underground dwelling-rooms in houses, are worst features. – Alpe, I, 213.

Great deal of old & insanitary property. Small & inferior – difficult to put right. 3 sanitary inspectors, who do all kinds of inspection work – no special-work officers. Sufficient, & work well done. Each house visited once a year. Very particular about drainage. – Jefferson.

Old property near river dirty & unwholesome.

Dust Removal.

Improvements.

Labour policy

Vestries.

Personnel, &c.

Built below street level & always damp. Kept as well as can be, but shd. be pulled down. — Dr. Stokham (Stepney) XIV.

Houses property & sanitation improved. — Derby, XIV.

Dust removed by private contract. Efficient. Pails supplied. — Jefferson.

Two improvement schemes in hand — St. John's Court & Catherine's Court areas. L.C.C. helping with each. Narrow St. also needs widening — houses there closed for a long time. Contemplate erecting cottage property on cleared areas. L.C.C. buildings in Beachcroft St. & Cambridge St very useful. — Jefferson.

Trade union wages paid, & stipulated for in all contracts. Have difficulty about old men. — Jefferson.

Vestries in Limehouse

Very bad. No public spirit & much small jobbery. Most of East End Tories without any principles. — Gordon, I 108

Disorderly Houses.

Baths & Libraries.

Mortuary.

Rating.

Poor Law Administration
Out Relief.

Good deal of prostitution, especially connected with sailors. More conviction of brothels desirable. — Gordon, I 108.

Prostitution considerable. Particular part of a port. — Alpe.

No baths or libraries in Stepney. Ratcliff Vestry going to have baths. — Jefferson

Excellent new mortuary & coroner's court. Poor encouraged to have dead removed there. — Jefferson

Rateable value slightly growing. New wharves erected lower down river into Stepney, owing to Tower Bridge. — Jefferson.

See also evidence of Dr. Thomas & Dr. Ratcliff (Blue. LVII)

Stepney Guardians.

Poor law administration degenerated since Jones's time. Out-relief now given "judiciously." — Gordon, I 106

Poor relief in Greenhouse might be less hard & fast. — Alpe, I 213

Cry for a "judicious" extension of out-relief

Out Relief (Contd)

Medical Relief.

spreading in Stepney. People being "educated up to" asking for O.R. Guardians distinctly less friendly to C.O.S. — Sharpe, V 123

Anti-out-relief policy beneficial. Little hardship involved. — Derby, XIV

Policy altering. Strictly legal position now taken of relieving all destitute, recovering cost from relatives. Only cases referred to other Organizations are those wh. the Board cannot legally assist. Workhouse test generally applied. Out-relief very restricted. Pauperism largely increased by shelters in parish. — Lewis, Clerk to Guardians, XIV.

Repression of out-relief good, but pressed too far in Stepney. — Dr Stanham.

Approves policy of Stepney Guardians. Little hardship involved. Great prejudice to workhouse. Difficult even to get people to go to Sick Asylum, altho' obviously very ill. — Jefferson.

Free hand given to medical officer in giving medical relief. Nurses (untrained) employed to attend patients in their homes where necessary. Trained nurses

would not stop. Repugnance at first even to medical relief, but once overcome, people apply freely. Drink & intermittent work chief causes of illness; also lack of cleanliness. – Dr Stonham.

Poplar Board of Works.

Question.	Answer.
1. How is the following work performed – by directly-employed labour or by contract:–	
(a) Sweeping of streets –	By direct labour.
(b) Watering – " –	
(c) Cleansing sewers & gullies	
(d) Removal of dust, &c.	
(e) – " – Street sweepings	
(f) Repair of carriage & foot-ways	
(2). About how often are the streets swept or cleansed:–	
(a) Main streets	Every day.
(b) Side streets	At least twice a week.
(c) Courts, alleys, &c.	every day.
3. About what proportion of the carriageways are paved with wood or asphalte	About 1/20 at present. Wood paving is now about to be considerably extended.
4. Is asphalte used at all in poor or market streets	Not at present.
5. Lighting:	
(a) Is incandescent lighting being tried	A few experiments have been made.
(b) Have any steps yet been taken to supply electric light	The Board of Works are now about to carry out an Electric Lighting Scheme estimated at an cost of £79.000.

Oliver E. Winter
Surveyor

26/1/99.

TELEPHONE No 73 EASTERN.

Board of Works for the Poplar District,
SURVEYOR'S DEPARTMENT.

TELEPHONE No 73 EASTERN.

BOARD OF WORKS POPLAR DISTRICT

OLIVER E. WINTER, A.M.I.C.E.
Chief Surveyor.

Board of Works for the Poplar District,
SURVEYOR'S DEPARTMENT.
117, High Street, Poplar, E.

January 30th 1889

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 28th inst, my experience of direct employment of labour has been that more satisfaction is given than by contract, and especially in the ordinary routine work such as scavenging, paving and drainage works.

As a rule I have found it more economical than the contract system, but even in cases where it is more expensive, apparently in first cost, we have had the satisfaction of knowing that the work has been well and satisfactorily done.

Yours faithfully,

Oliver E. Winter

Chief Surveyor.

?r. Jesse Argyle.
9 Adelphi Terrace.
Strand.

157

The London Argus

A Weekly Journal and Review of Municipal Life.

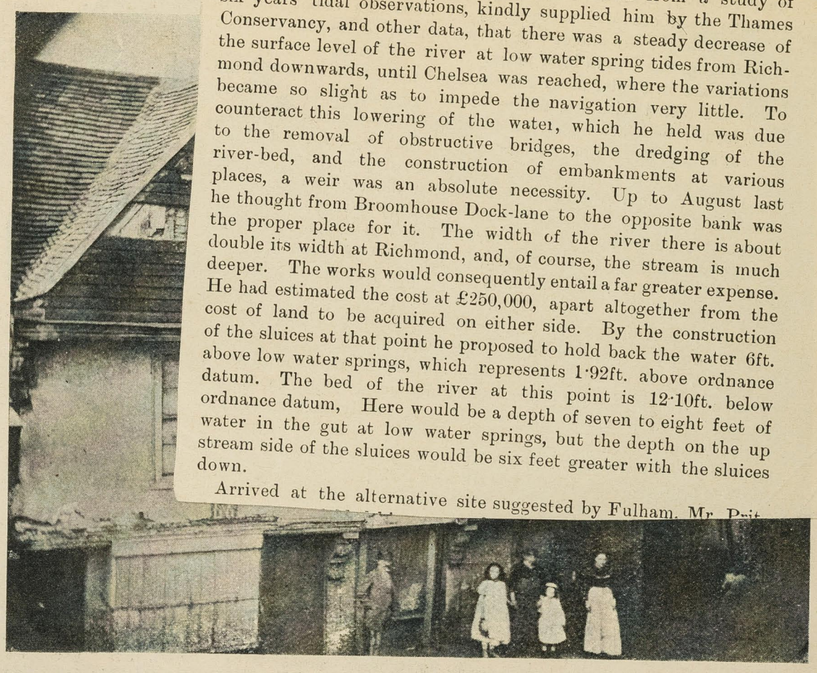
pany, and in 1888 the London and St. Katherine's Docks entered the combination, now one of the most powerful of its kind in the world.

As we have said, Poplar was one of the hamlets belonging to the old parish of Stepney. In 1813 an Act of Parliament was passed "for paving, watching, lighting, and improving the hamlet of Poplar and Blackwall, in the County of Middlesex, and for the better relief and maintenance of the poor of the said hamlet." The Act provided for certain inhabitants and ratepayers to be trustees for carrying it into execution, and provision was made for the election annually of ten persons not qualified to act as trustees. There are now upwards of a thousand qualified trustees, and the ten are still elected to assist them.

In 1817 a second Act was passed, making the hamlet a separate parish, and the trustees under the Act of 1813 were made "Vestrymen of the Parish of All Saints, Poplar, in the County of Middlesex." The trustees were the authority for administering the Poor Law, and paving, watching, lighting, and improving the parish until 1837, when the maintenance and relief of the poor were transferred to the Guardians of the Poplar Union, then

in August last year. Mr. Pritchard showed from a study of six years' tidal observations, kindly supplied him by the Thames Conservancy, and other data, that there was a steady decrease of the surface level of the river at low water spring tides from Richmond downwards, until Chelsea was reached, where the variations became so slight as to impede the navigation very little. To counteract this lowering of the water, which he held was due to the removal of obstructive bridges, the dredging of the river-bed, and the construction of embankments at various places, a weir was an absolute necessity. Up to August last he thought from Broomhouse Dock-lane to the opposite bank was the proper place for it. The width of the river there is about double its width at Richmond, and, of course, the stream is much deeper. The works would consequently entail a far greater expense. He had estimated the cost at £250,000, apart altogether from the cost of land to be acquired on either side. By the construction of the sluices at that point he proposed to hold back the water 6ft. above low water springs, which represents 1·92ft. above ordnance datum. The bed of the river at this point is 12·10ft. below ordnance datum, Here would be a depth of seven to eight feet of water in the gut at low water springs, but the depth on the up stream side of the sluices would be six feet greater with the sluices down.

Arrived at the alternative site suggested by Fulham, Mr. Pritchard

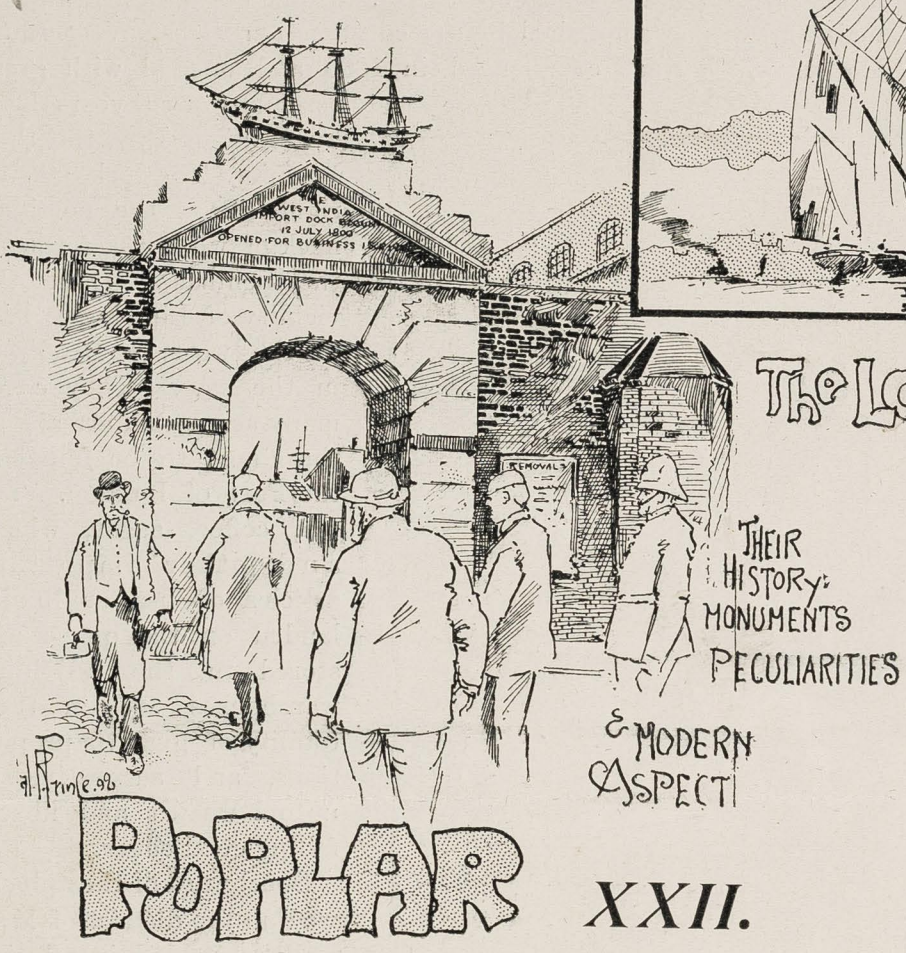


Sir Walter Raleigh's House.
(From an old photograph kindly lent by Mr. J. B. Skeggs.)

The London Argus

A Weekly Journal and Review of Municipal Life.

No. 62. Vol. III. Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper. JULY 23, 1898.



The London Parishes

Their History, Monuments, Peculiarities & Modern Aspect

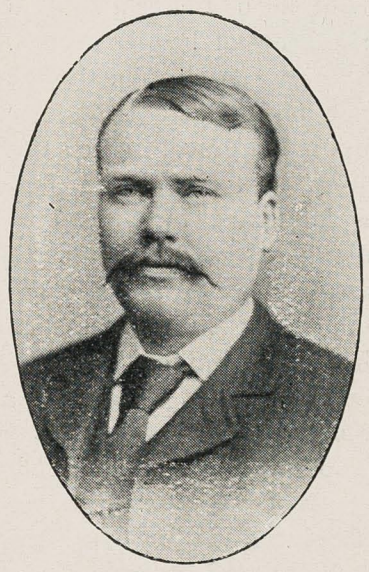
Poplar XXII.

POPLAR, as an inhabited portion of the globe, is almost wholly a creation of the present century. Originally one great peninsulated swamp, at the mercy of the tidal moods of old Father Thames, and named Stepney Marsh, in allusion to the fact that it belonged to the then extensive parish of Stepney, it later assumed the name of the Isle of Dogs, what time it had become partially drained and converted into one of the best grazing grounds in the country. Almost within living memory, docks, shipbuilding yards, and manufactories of various kinds have here crowded out prime beef, and grass has become a rarity. Poplar is to-day, in all essential respects, a self-contained, bustling, begrimed sea-port town, with a cosmopolitan population, and with peculiarities that distinguish it sharply from Rotherhithe, from Wapping, and from all the other smoke-crowned riverside parishes that make up the Dockland of our Metropolis.

If we were called upon to beat the bounds of the modern parish of Poplar, we should in the first place take a boat and row round so much of the Isle of Dogs as is defined by the Thames. Commencing, say, at the Limehouse boundary, we should glide lazily from Limehouse Reach into that of Deptford. Our chief concern in this stage of the journey would be to see that no other parish, ambitious to increase its rateable value, had seized the West India Docks, and next we should have to make sure that Millwall was all right. Across the water we should descry the masts rising from the Surrey Commercial Docks, in Rotherhithe; and in Deptford the Royal Victualling Establishment, the Foreign Cattle Market, and the mouth of the Ravensbourne River, commonly called Deptford Creek. Then, having entered Greenwich Reach, we should have to make it quite clear that Poplar is still in occupation of North Greenwich. This would not prevent us from enjoying a view of Greenwich Hospital from the river. Cubitt Town would be our next concern, after which there would be Blackwall Reach to explore as far as Bow Creek (the mouth of the Lea), where Poplar ends and Essex begins.

A mile or so of the winding Lea would have to be taken into account, and we should pass the scene of the so-called Blackwall disaster, though the spot where the bridge collapsed at the launch of H.M.S. "Albion" last June is, to be strictly accurate, in the Canning Town section of the borough of West Ham. Landing near the East India Docks, we should have to cut through them as best we could, yielding to Bromley parish its fair share of that great property; and presently we should find ourselves at the northern approach to the Blackwall Tunnel, where orders would be given to see that St. Leonard of Bromley did not tamper with the boundary mark set up there in the name of All the Saints. Acknowledging St. Leonard's claims upon the quaint entrance to the East India Docks, we should strike thence in a north-westerly direction, through narrow streets, until Limehouse Cut was reached. Then there would be a sharp southerly return to East India Dock-road, beyond which a few zig-zags (apart altogether from any refreshment we may have had on the road) would bring us to the point whence we started in the boat.

The circuit we have just described marks off an area of 1,164 acres, with a population of 60,000 concentrated for the most part in the northern section of the parish, for in the other portions dwelling-houses are subordinated, as in Rotherhithe, to gigantic docks, wharves, and "works." Let us now have a ramble through the parish and see what we can find of interest. The highway by which it is most frequently approached from Central London is Commercial-road East, that long and not uninteresting thoroughfare which leads from Aldgate to the heart of Limehouse, whence forking roads run respectively to the East and the West India Docks.



Mr. Joseph Zouche Cahill
Chairman of the Vestry.

Our tram happens to be bound for the East India Docks, and all we have to do is to make ourselves comfortable on the top and keep our eyes open. No ordinary highway is East India Dock-road. It contains buildings of all sorts and sizes from mariners' institutions to neat villas with gardens, and the aggregation of its architecture is broken in outline to the point of picturesqueness. It is one of those agreeable surprises that await people that form erroneous notions about the East End before they have explored it. Apart, too, from architecture, this and other thoroughfares in Poplar have a character that is all but unique. Nowhere so much as in this part of the metropolis does one see, day by day, so many divergent types of the human

race—lightly clad Chinamen making their way, not as strangers, to the nearest opium den; fair-haired and blue-eyed descendants of Scandinavian vikings rubbing shoulders with great brawny Ethiopians, whose forefathers lived, perchance, no great distance from the traditional site of Valhalla; swarthy Malays gliding along with stealthy footstep as though every man's hand was against them; Germans exchanging glances of hatred with Frenchmen; Italians stopping to chat with the vendors of ice-cream; and last, but by no means least, good old Jack Tar, who, propped up against a lamp-post, asks the good folk of Poplar and English people in general why the so-and-so they "stick" those what-d'ye-call'em foreigners—asks them, too, whether they don't think he could jolly well lick a hundred—a thousand—aye, a million of such rubbish "which, when they ain't a-stabbin' of yer in the bloomin' back, are sneakin' round the sailors' homes for corfee." Next morning the English nation, as represented by the magistrate at the Thames Police Court, gives its reply: "Ten shillings and costs."

In our drive along East India Dock-road we pass successively, on the south side, the Poplar Recreation Ground, a pretty, though not extensive, public garden, running back to the High-street, and maintained by the District Board of Works; the Public Baths and Wash-houses, in front of which is a statue of one of the greatest benefactors of the parish, Mr. Richard Green; the station of the North London Railway; the parish church of All Saints, with its spacious old graveyard; and, finally, at the point where the thoroughfare just traversed merges into Barking-road and the parish of Bromley begins, we see in front of us the portals of the East India Docks, on the left the Poplar Hospital for Accidents, and on the right the isolated archway through which the Blackwall Tunnel is approached.

Before exploring Dockland let us linger awhile in the heart of Poplar proper. The parish church, though not built until 1823, has upon its gracefully carved stonework the blanched mellowness of centuries, and its spire is a landmark for miles around. In Newby-place, which runs along the west side of the churchyard and connects East India Dock-road with High-street, are the residence of the Rector of Poplar (the Rev. Arthur Chandler) and the Town Hall, a handsome building of brick and stone now undergoing repair and enlargementat a cost of £3,000. In it are housed the Vestry officers, and popular entertainments are given in its largest saloon. The building was erected in 1870 at a cost of £10,000, the proceeds of the sale of the old Town Hall and Poor House in High-street.

Long and narrow, the High-street is spasmodically quaint, though the picturesque old houses are becoming fewer and fewer every year. Of modern buildings it contains the offices of the Poplar District Board of Works. the Central Library, and the Workhouse. Eastward the street runs in the direction of the East India Docks, and westward it leads, by way of King-street, to the main entrance of the West India Docks. Northward of this line there is but little of interest beyond what we have described. The population there is the densest and the atmosphere the stuffiest.

Such breezes as the parish affords are to be had in the Isle of Dogs, a name which has provoked so many conflicting etymological theories that we hesitate to commit ourselves to any. Still, if we must give an opinion at all, we pronounce, with all due reserve, in favour of the theory that the name was originally applied to an islet opposite Deptford, now effaced. This little island is so indicated in a map of 1588, and it seems to have derived its name from the number of dead dogs washed up there by the tide. Gradually the appellation was extended to the mainland, until it became a synonym for the whole of Stepney Marsh.

Strangely enough, it was not until the present century that the larger area became really an island. This severance from the mainland was accomplished by the construction of the West India Docks, which were commenced in 1800 and opened with great ceremony two years later by William Pitt, the then Premier. The docks stretch right across the northern neck of what was formerly the peninsula, from the vicinity of Limehouse Pier in the west to Blackwall in the east. They cover many acres, and are among the finest to be found in the Port of London. The tea, coffee, sugar, wines, and other important articles of use or luxury landed on the quays and stored in the adjoining warehouses are in their totality of gigantic proportions, and suggestive of untold wealth and never-failing good cheer.

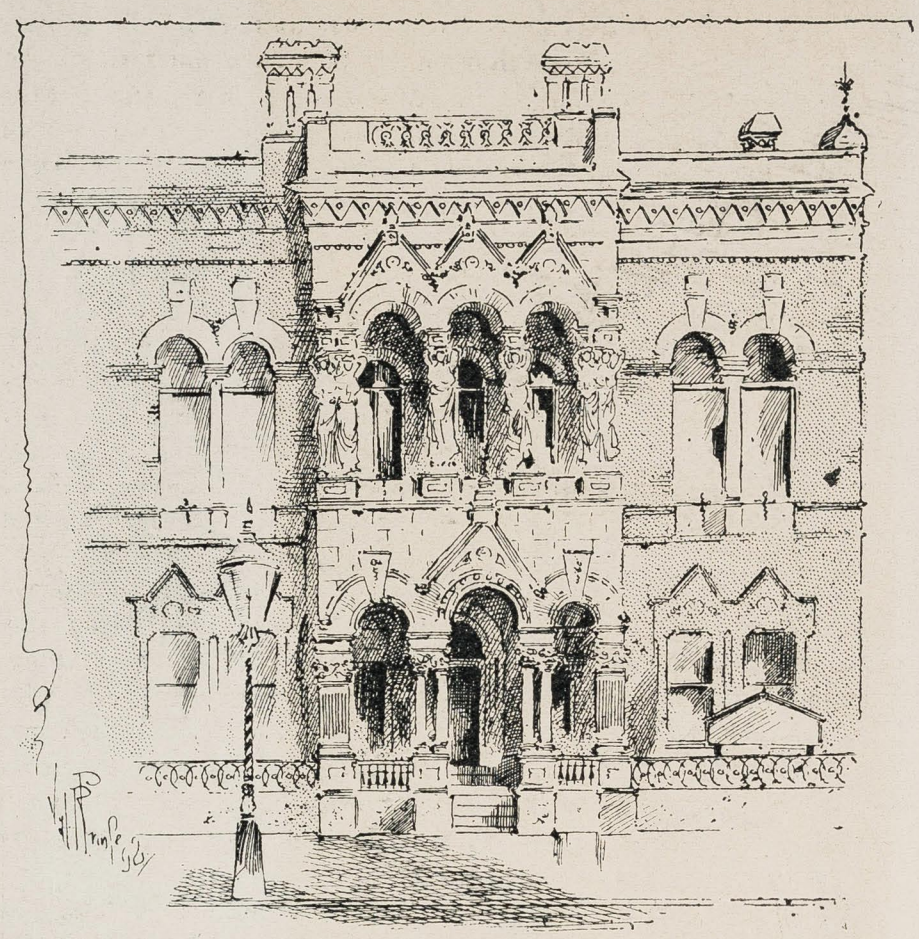
Southward of these docks we find the district of Millwall, so named in allusion to some windmills that used to stud the embankment, or wall, by which the western side of the marsh was protected long ago. Millwall was a wilderness until the docks of the same name were opened in 1868, sweeping away the last vestiges of a mediæval chapel or cell, mentioned in a fifteenth century document as *Capella Beatæ Mariæ in Marischo in parochio de Stepney*, and supposed to have belonged to the Monastery of St. Mary of Graces, near the Tower. Milwall Docks accommodate miscellaneous shipping, and many passenger ships leave there for different parts of the world. Apart from its docks Millwall is famous as the birthplace of the "Great Eastern" steamship, which was launched from the Millwall Ironworks in 1858; and many other vessels of gigantic proportions have made their first plunge hereabout.

Round the bend of the Thames we see North Greenwich, with its pretty "Island Gardens," opened by Mr. W. Crooks, L.C.C., on August 3rd, 1895; and the adjacent district of Cubitt Town, named after a member of the well-known Cubitt family, who owned property in that part of the Isle. From this painfully modern anp uninteresting locality Manchester-road leads towards Blackwall, one of the oldest place-names in the parish. The embankment, or wall, that protected the eastern side of the marsh from the tides of the Thames was black—hence the name. Blackwall is, of course, famous all the world over for its tunnel, which connects the northern with the southern bank of the river, and is one of the greatest engineering achievements of modern times.

SKETCH MAP OF THE PARISH OF POPLAR

The tunnel was fully described in THE LONDON ARGUS of May 22nd, 1897.

Across swing bridges, along puzzling little roadways, and between high walls, we make our way through Blackwall to the East India Docks, which, as we have said, overlap the Bromley boundary. The origin of these docks is described in an inscription over the



THE VESTRY HALL, POPLAR.

main entrance, wherein all and sundry are informed that "under the auspices of our most gracious sovereign George III., the sanction of his Majesty's Government, and the patronage of the East India Company, these wet docks, appropriated to the commerce of India and ships in that employ, were accomplished in those eventful years 1804, 1805, 1806, the first stone being laid March 14th, 1804." The company which worked this great undertaking was amalgamated in 1838 with the West India Dock Company, and in 1888 the London and St. Katherine's Docks entered the combination, now one of the most powerful of its kind in the world.

As we have said, Poplar was one of the hamlets belonging to the old parish of Stepney. In 1813 an Act of Parliament was passed "for paving, watching, lighting, and improving the hamlet of Poplar and Blackwall, in the County of Middlesex, and for the better relief and maintenance of the poor of the said hamlet." The Act provided for certain inhabitants and ratepayers to be trustees for carrying it into execution, and provision was made for the election annually of ten persons not qualified to act as trustees. There are now upwards of a thousand qualified trustees, and the ten are still elected to assist them.

In 1817 a second Act was passed, making the hamlet a separate parish, and the trustees under the Act of 1813 were made "Vestrymen of the Parish of All Saints, Poplar, in the County of Middlesex." The trustees were the authority for administering the Poor Law, and paving, watching, lighting, and improving the parish until 1837, when the maintenance and relief of the poor were transferred to the Guardians of the Poplar Union, then formed under an order of the Poor Law Commissioners; and the trustees continued the paving, lighting, etc., until 1855, when those duties were transferred to the newly-created Poplar District Board of Works—a combination of the parishes of Poplar, Bromley, and Bow. Since then the trustees have been the authority for making and collecting the rates for all the spending bodies.

Though under Schedule B, the Vestry accomplishes a large volume of useful work, for under the Parish Councils Act it has obtained control of the Public Libraries and the Public Baths and Washhouses. Its chairman—or, rather, the member elected to the chair at every meeting—is Mr. Joseph Zouche Cahill, who knows everybody and everything in the parish and is known by everyone. Mr. Cahill, who is an official of the London and India Docks Joint Committee, lives in one of the few houses in Blackwall that can be called picturesque. Isle House, as his residence is named, is approached from Cold Harbour and overlooks the wonderful and ever-changing panorama of Thames shipping. For eighteen years or more Mr. Cahill has been engaged in parochial affairs as a Vestryman, and he now occupies the chair. He is, moreover, Chairman of the Board of Overseers, which is elected by the Vestry; a Churchwarden of eight years' standing, and a member of the Board of Guardians. For two years he was Chairman of the District Board of Works, and is still a member of that body. If he goes on at this rate he will soon be sighing, like Alexander, because there are no more worlds to conquer.

The Vestry possesses one of the best clerks in London. Mr. J. B. Skeggs, at the age of fifteen, entered the service of the late Vestry Clerk in 1875 as junior clerk, and on the death of that official in 1891 was unanimously elected to the position. Mr. Skeggs really holds three separate appointments. He is clerk to the Trustees under the Act of 1813, clerk to the Vestrymen under the Act of 1817, and Clerk to the Vestry created by the Metropolis Local Management Act, 1855. The last named body is elected by the ratepayers, and sends delegates to the District Board of Works, of which the present Chairman, Mr. John Bussey, is a Poplar representative. He carries on business as an auctioneer and estate agent at 213, East India-road. Politics upon the Metropolis Local Management Vestry are pretty even, but the Board of Works has a working majority of Progressives owing to the balance of opinion in Bow and Bromley.

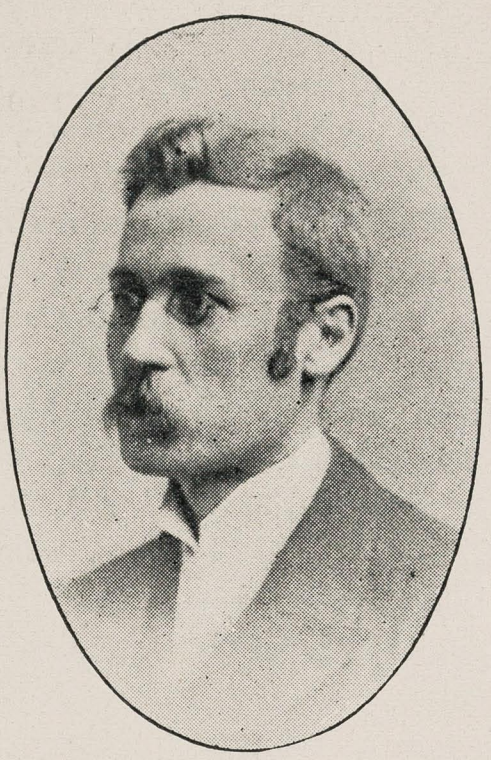
Under the Act of 1817 there is still a church rate in the parish, for those purposes, defined by the Court to be "non-ecclesiastical," which were declared to be the stipends of the Rector and Lecturer,

SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S HOUSE.

(From an old photograph kindly lent by Mr. J. B. Skeggs.)

and the clerical cost of administering the Act, so that whilst the parish church could tumble down, and the Vestrymen be powerless to interfere, they are bound to maintain the Rectory in a proper state for habitation.

The public baths and washhouses in East India-road were erected as long ago as 1852 at a cost of £11,255. In 1886 a sum of £700 was spent in improving the swimming and private baths, and the Vestry is now laying out some £2,000 in enlarging and improving the laundry and washhouses. The Vestry is also endeavouring to provide baths for the use of the Millwall and Cubitt Town Wards, and a scheme for dealing with the matter at a cost of £9,000 is now before the Local Government Board.



MR. J. B. SKEGGS,
Vestry Clerk.

The Public Libraries Act was adopted by the parish in 1890 by the largest majority then known in London—3,301 against 314. The site of the Central Library in High-street was purchased by donations amounting to £1,600 and a loan of £7,000. In 1895 a branch evening library was opened in a house belonging to the London County Council, in the Island Gardens, North Greenwich, and the rent is only nominal. An excellent librarian is Mr. Harry Rowlatt, who manages both the libraries. He came to Poplar in 1891 from Kensington Library, and was formerly at Leeds.

For Parliamentary and County Council purposes the Poplar division of the Tower Hamlets is a little larger than the parish, as it takes in a slice of Bromley, and a very decent Radical, Mr. S. Buxton, represents it. The constituency sends to the County Council those roaring doves, Mr. McDougall and Mr. Will Crooks. In School Board elections Poplar goes with the Tower Hamlets division.

Poplar, dreary marsh that it was until comparatively recent times, and busy shipping centre that it is to-day, has practically no literary associations. Some of the old dramatists, and also Pepys in his Diary, refer to the Isle of Dogs, but no great writer, so far as we can ascertain, was born or lived in the parish. There stood until recently, near the Artichoke Tavern, Blackwall, a house said to have been occupied successively by Sebastian Cabot and Sir Walter Raleigh, and one of our illustrations gives an idea of what the building was like in later years.

There are in Poplar many charities, prominent among which are those associated with the names of George and Richard Green. The former benefactor was the founder of the firm of R. and H. Green, shipbuilders, and owners of the Blackwall line of ships, sailing from Blackwall Yard. The original proprietor of that yard was John Perry, who is buried in the churchyard of St. Mathias (formerly the East India Company's Chapel), and his daughter became Mrs. George Green. There is in the Town Hall a large portrait of George Green, for the cost of which £500 was publicly subscribed. The memory of his son Richard is preserved by the statue we have already mentioned. The firm of Green is still in the parish, and Mr. Charles E. Green, of the Orient Steamship Company, is a grandson of George Green.

And so we bring our brief chronicle of Poplar, past and present, to an end, satisfied if we have in some measure dispelled the notion that this portion of London's Far East is totally monotonous and uninteresting.

[*The portrait and brief biographical notice of Mr. Leonard Potts, the Clerk to the Guardians, is held over till next week.*]

ON ARGUS. JULY 23, 1898.

PROPOSED LOCK FOR THE THAMES BELOW PUTNEY.

THE movement which has for its object the construction of a lock and sluices on the Thames below Putney was advanced a further stage this week. On Wednesday a large party of delegates from the County Councils, Vestries, and District Boards, having interests or authority on either bank below Richmond, made an inspection of the river and examined the alternative sites for the proposed works, with the assistance of Mr. Edward Pritchard, M.I.C.E., the consulting engineer, who has been engaged in making surveys and observations for the past eighteen months or more.

Representatives were present from Fulham, Hammersmith, Chiswick, Brentford, and Heston-Isleworth, on the Middlesex side; and from Battersea, Putney, Wandsworth, Barnes, and Mortlake, on the Surrey side. The Middlesex and Surrey County Councils were also represented, but a deputation from the London County Council, which was expected, failed to attend. The Thames Conservancy had declined to send a representative. All the arrangements were in the hands of Mr. W. P. Cockburn, Vestry Clerk of Hammersmith, who is the honorary secretary of the Joint Committee of the local authorities agitating for the suggested improvement.

A start was made from Hammersmith pier about ten o'clock in a steam launch drawing about 3ft. of water. The time was well selected in one respect, for steaming down the river the little craft was soon aground nearly opposite the Ranelagh Club. Thus early had the delegates a practical illustration of the wretched state of the river at low water. A little patient effort, however, soon pushed her out of the mudbanks, and the site originally proposed for the lock was reached. This is situated about midway between Putney and Wandsworth Bridges, a short distance above the point where the Wandle enters the river, and opposite the Broomhouse Dock-lane on the other side.

Until the Fulham Vestry suggested that the lock should be constructed much lower down, the Broomhouse Dock scheme was most in favour, and Mr. Pritchard had reported definitely in support of it. Steam was therefore shut off here, and the delegates heard from the engineer a full account of the investigations he made for the purposes of the report presented to the Joint Committee in August last year. Mr. Pritchard showed from a study of six years' tidal observations, kindly supplied him by the Thames Conservancy, and other data, that there was a steady decrease of the surface level of the river at low water spring tides from Richmond downwards, until Chelsea was reached, where the variations became so slight as to impede the navigation very little. To counteract this lowering of the water, which he held was due to the removal of obstructive bridges, the dredging of the river-bed, and the construction of embankments at various places, a weir was an absolute necessity. Up to August last he thought from Broomhouse Dock-lane to the opposite bank was the proper place for it. The width of the river there is about double its width at Richmond, and, of course, the stream is much deeper. The works would consequently entail a far greater expense. He had estimated the cost at £250,000, apart altogether from the cost of land to be acquired on either side. By the construction of the sluices at that point he proposed to hold back the water 6ft. above low water springs, which represents 1·92ft. above ordnance datum. The bed of the river at this point is 12·10ft. below ordnance datum, Here would be a depth of seven to eight feet of water in the gut at low water springs, but the depth on the up stream side of the sluices would be six feet greater with the sluices down.

Arrived at the alternative site suggested by Fulham. Mr. Prit-

Correspondence.

BROMLEY PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

To the Editor of London.

SIR,—There has been so much misapprehension with regard to the attitude of certain of the Bromley vestrymen on the Bromley Public Libraries question, and indeed with regard to matters connected generally with the Bromley Public Libraries, that I sincerely hope, in common fairness to the members of the Progressive party, of whose conduct you have complained, and in order that those who read your paper will not be misled, you will insert this explanation.

In your issue of the 23rd December, 1897, it is stated: "Six years ago the ratepayers of Bromley adopted the Public Library Act, and as, during all that time, the vestrymen had not carried out the will of the people whose servants they are, they were, therefore, no longer worthy of the people's trust."

I would point out these two facts with regard to that statement. Firstly, the Vestry were not the library authority till early in 1896, and, therefore, it is hardly fair to blame the Vestry for the first four years' delay, when they had practically no *locus standi* in the matter, and were unable to expedite or delay the consummation of the wishes of the people in the direction indicated. Secondly, as you are aware, the Vestry is a varying and not a fixed body. Every year one-third of its members are elected afresh, and it is hardly fair to lay the blame (if any) which might attach to the Vestry as a whole on the present existing Vestry.

I quite agree, if I may say so, with the opinions expressed in various issues of your paper that there has been unlawful and unjustifiable delay, but the parties responsible for such delay should be blamed and not those who are not responsible.

More than a year ago (not being then a member of the Vestry) I pointed out, through the columns of the local press, in the hopes of getting more books for the branch library, from which the Vestry had but recently commenced to issue books, that section 18 of the Act of 1892 made it apparent that the intention of the Act as interpreted by a Local Government Board letter to the Streatham Library Commissioners is undoubtedly that those who pay the rates should have the immediate benefits consequent on the library rate being levied in their parish—namely, the prompt establishment of public libraries. A sum of £150 was, by a strange coincidence, a week or so later voted for further books.

The meaning of this section of the Act has been urged by me on the Vestry, and the Progressive party has endeavored to press matters on accordingly.

As to the motion of censure so severely condemned by your paper, and as to which you passed some not too complimentary remarks on myself as the mover, I do not think for one moment that those who supported the motion (and I speak for myself positively) intended to throw blame on LONDON with regard to the statements complained of. We had very good grounds for believing your representative had been misinformed. To show that certain statements were incorrect and misleading, and as such most unfair, I take two allegations made in your issue of 26th August. "The Bow and Bromley Joint Libraries Committee had an offer of the well-stocked library at the local Mechanics' Institute." There is not now, and never was, a Bow and Bromley Joint Libraries Committee. It should have been stated that the offer made to Bromley Libraries Committee was not unconditional. The books and catalogue were carefully inspected by the Bromley Libraries Committee. The books mostly in circulation were in a very bad condition; those, and a considerable number which were not in circulation, were not worth taking. Also, one of the terms consequent on the handing over of this library was that a gentleman who was not the working librarian at the Institute was to be employed as librarian by the Bromley Libraries Committee at a salary of, I believe, £175 a year. The whole of the circumstances were so unfavorable that the Bromley Libraries Committee were perfectly justified in refusing the offer, and they were not, I believe, the only body who refused it.

Again, "Had they" (Bow and Bromley Libraries Committee) "been able to come to terms as between themselves with regard to amalgamation, a private individual would have built a joint central library at his own expense," which assertion is wholly without foundation.

Further, in LONDON, of the 23rd December last, appears the following: "Last week one or two of them (the Bromley Vestrymen) wasted the whole meeting by a foolish discussion," is not true or fair.

In the first place, more than one or two, in fact, nearly half, if not half, of the Vestry supported the motion of censure. It was only because I was arbitrarily deprived of my right to reply, at the close of the debate on my motion, which was especially necessary after the clerk, by permission, had made a statement so incorrect and so fallacious that I wished to supersede it by the truth, that a number of us withdrew and did not vote. Hence the "large majority." The whole meeting, apart from any question of the importance of the motion, was not wasted.

The motion was practically the only item on the agenda paper left which was not ruled out of order and that could, properly speaking, be discussed.

The real facts leading up to the motion, stigmatised as ridiculous, are these.

BLAMING THE OLD COMMISSIONERS.

The Public Library Commissioners, who were the library authority before the Vestry took over their powers, consisted principally of Tories. For four years they controlled the rate collected. They took a 60 years' lease of an inconveniently small property, totally unfitted for public library purposes. The same gentleman valued the premises for the Library Commissioners and also for the vendors. A sum of about £1,400 was expended on this wretched little leasehold building (known generally in the parish as "The Rabbit Hutch") before a single book had been bought. After considerable delay the room on the ground floor was opened as a reading-room. When the newspaper stands are up this room will accommodate about 25 people sitting and standing. Mr. Passmore Edwards opened the library, or, more properly speaking, the reading-room, and gave 1,000 volumes to the library. The Library Commissioners bought another 1,000. Many months elapsed, and still only the reading-room was open to the public. At length, in 1896, the Vestry took over the management of affairs and opened the library portion of the premises. It would seem that the parish was indebted principally to Captain Custard, one of the few Progressives who ever became Library Commissioners, for the privilege of having the enjoyment of this branch library, poor as it was, for even his strenuous efforts could not at this time accomplish more.

With regard to the site for the Central Library, the action of the Bromley Library Commissioners was still worse. They secured a site which faces the boundary road between the parishes of Bow and Bromley, right on the verge of the parish, and the use of which site will probably involve removal of the present buildings, and the erection of others at great cost. Before the Bromley Commissioners bought this site no steps had been taken in Bow, and none, even yet in Bromley, to ascertain the views of the parishioners on the question of amalgamation. Moreover, it was impossible to obtain actual possession of these premises until September, 1897. Surely, it will be agreed, the Vestry were severely handicapped at the outset. I may add that, at the time the contract was signed for the purchase of these premises, there were nine Library Commissioners, of whom eight were Tories. I am informed, and believe, two or three of the eight members were openly and avowedly opposed to the institution of public libraries in Bromley at all.

NO DEALINGS WITH BOW.

There arose, after Bromley Vestry took over the libraries, some unfortunate delay caused solely by the wavering attitude adopted [redacted] of Bow Vestry and Bow Libraries Committee on the question of amalgamation, and I may here point out that on the Bromley Vestry who support the idea of amalgamation, at any price, whatever may be the loss to the Bromley ratepayers, besides the Vestry clerk, are two of the old Library Commissioners, who are unfortunately on the Library Committee of the Vestry.

This delay having arisen, one of the most competent and capable men on the Vestry (as I think all parties on the Vestry will admit), Mr. P. A. White, moved on the 22nd July, 1897, and the resolution was adopted—"That this Vestry declines further to consider or negotiate with reference to the proposed amalgamation with the parish of Bow for public library purposes, except on the basis of the scheme already submitted to Bow by this Vestry, or on an alternative scheme prepared under the authority of the parish of Bow."

This motion, as may be seen, plainly should have had the effect of expediting matters and of preventing fruitless discussions on schemes not sanctioned by Bow Vestry. This was the more necessary seeing that the Bow Vestry, for a year or more, had not sent a definite reply to the scheme for amalgamation approved of and submitted by Bromley Vestry and still ignored by Bow.

AGAINST THE VESTRY CLERK.

Instead of obeying this resolution, on the 24th September, 1897, the Vestry clerk and the chairman of the Bromley Public Libraries Committee allowed the following to appear on the agenda paper of the Library Committee: "To confer with Bow Libraries Committee," thus nullifying and flatly disobeying the resolution of the 22nd July, as there was no scheme to be submitted, nor was submitted, on the basis of the one proposed by Bromley Vestry, or any alternative proposal by the Bow Vestry. Two of the Bromley Library Committee (Mr. White and myself) objected to the discussion, and, on its being persisted in, withdrew from the meeting. The chairman admits the discussion was informal. As such, it had absolutely no right on the agenda paper, nor ought the chairman to have allowed the discussion. After this, the Bromley Library Committee, as a body, was ignored. The Bromley Vestry clerk and the chairman and vice-chairman of the Bromley Libraries Committee met a select body of the Bow Libraries Committee privately and discussed this question. Such a proceeding was utterly unjustifiable, more particularly so on the part of the Vestry clerk, chairman, and vice-chairman, bearing in mind the Vestry's resolution of July 22nd. It tended to evade or circumvent a decision of the Vestry, and wrongfully to create an ill-informed majority on the Bromley Libraries Committee favorable to a most suicidal policy.

May I note here that the Vestry clerk is a servant of the Vestry, and should be loyal to its decisions. He "has no right to vote upon or take part in the questions submitted to the vestry." See Steer's "Parish Law," 5th ed., page 203, and Shaw's "Parish Law," cap. 18.

He therefore had no right to ally himself with or

to instigate the party in favor of amalgamation at any price, however unfair to Bromley, or with any party at all. He interviewed members of Parliament and of the County Council without the authority of the Vestry with a view to their arbitrating on this question of amalgamation on which there was at the time no basis to work, and with regard to a matter of the details of which the parties interviewed could have little or no knowledge. Such a course when proposed to the Vestry was ridiculed, and rightly so.

BOW TAKES ACTION.

About two months ago a scheme of amalgamation was approved, and sent by Bow Vestry to Bromley Vestry. In passing, I would say the scheme was most unfair to the Bromley parishioners, and would necessitate further delay, as a special order would have to be obtained from the Local Government Board to constitute a joint committee of the two parishes, and the front portion of the premises of the site to be used for the joint central library is let by agreement till September, 1898. Further, according to this scheme Bromley would not be equitably represented with Bow in proportion to the collective rate paid by the parish, and in other respects the scheme was eminently defective.

SO DOES THE CLERK.

Instead of presenting this scheme in a proper and businesslike manner to the Vestry, to whom it was sent (and who met eight or ten days after the scheme had been approved by Bow), in order to ascertain its views and directions if the scheme was thought worthy of consideration, the Vestry clerk at once submitted the scheme to the Bromley Library Committee, a scheme which was utterly wrong. In such a hurry was the vestry clerk that he even neglected to give two clear days' notice, as provided by the standing orders, when calling the Library Committee meeting. The Library Committee should have been advised by the Vestry clerk and the chairman of the Committee that they had no right to consider the scheme, but instead of this they swallowed it eagerly. The Committee (less two members who objected to the course being adopted) then reported favorably on the Bow proposals, suggesting, however, one insignificant and useless alteration. In justification of the conduct of the two dissentients, I may point out that the report of this scheme having become a dropped motion it is withdrawn, and the Bow scheme, without any recommendation whatever, will be laid before the Vestry, as it should have been in the first instance. But there has been caused, by this irregular action of the chairman of the Committee and the Vestry clerk, a delay of over two months, and a majority of members on the Library Committee have been committed blindfold to this miserable scheme.

I hope it will be seen from this my conduct in bringing the motion of censure, and the conduct of those who supported the motion was amply justified. Moreover, from our earliest opportunity we have strenuously objected to unnecessary delay in providing the ratepayers with the libraries to which they are by every right entitled. We object to any underhanded influences being used, and to the interests of the ratepayers of Bromley being sacrificed. And these were the principal reasons why the motion of censure was moved. I had previously endeavored to call the attention of the Vestry to the wrong state of affairs without moving any motion on the subject, but was not allowed to do so in any way but this one.

As to the charge of vulgarity made in LONDON, the meetings of our Vestry are generally well-behaved; and though I have differed with members of the Library Committee at various times, I have never been treated discourteously by any of them, with the exception, perhaps, of the vice-chairman of that body.

I think you will agree that, to avoid delays and needless recriminations and discontent, a strictly businesslike form of proceedings should be adopted by all public bodies, more especially on vexed questions.

I hope in ordinary fairness you will be able to see your way to publish this letter. With apologies for its length,—I am, yours faithfully, C. E. BRADY.

BARRACK SCHOOLS.

To the Editor of London.

SIR,—May I ask if any person who is in the secret will kindly inform me through your columns who gave the persons who wrote and printed the "Open Letter" to Lord Peel in defence of barrack schools the necessary authority to sign it in the name, and on behalf, of the Central Poor Law Conferences?

I have for some time past attended the Conferences as a delegate from my Board, and I have not heard of any instruction being given to the Committee to act in any way whatever in the matter.

I do not think that a majority of the delegates would have been in favor of barrack schools if they had been asked to vote; large schools are being abandoned, and cottage homes established in their stead all over the country. May I repeat the question: Who gave the three gentlemen who signed the letter to Lord Peel the power to speak authoritatively and dogmatically on such a controversial question, without having consulted their constituents?—Yours truly, J. C. CROPPER.

Hampstead, N.W.

THE DARENTH ASYLUM TRAGEDY.

To the Editor of London.

SIR,—Too much is being made of this business, horrible as it is.

Undoubtedly, the Asylums Board was discourteous to the Hampstead Guardians in failing to inform them at once of what had happened as soon as the condition of the woman was discovered; the Guardians being responsible for the proper treatment of their parishioner.

That was all; and we may charitably assume that the Asylums Board was guilty of no worse crime than that of being anxious not to create a public scandal, which could do no good, but would destroy the confidence that the poor have rightly had in the institution to which they have sent their afflicted relatives.

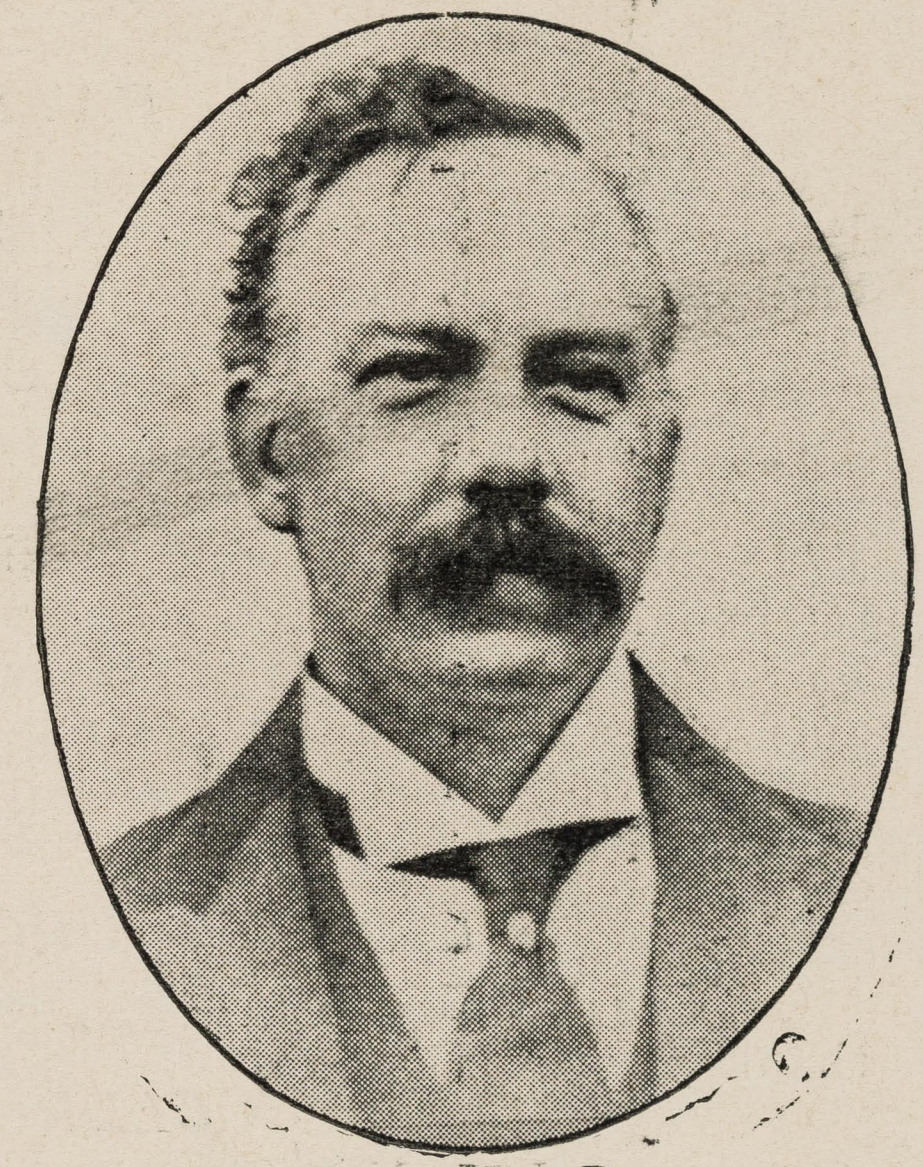
It is necessary that the Hampstead Guardians should make inquiry into the matter, but the inquiry should be judicial, not hysterical. Mr. Bremner's declaration that the suspected man ought to have been arrested, and left to prove his innocence before a jury, would, if it were agreed with, destroy one of the soundest principles in English law. Insane people, just because they are insane, are in the habit of making false charges against persons utterly incapable of committing the sins they are accused of; and although the man accused in the present case was dismissed more recently for a gross offence not connected with this case, it must be remembered that, at the time when the insane woman pointed to him as the culprit, he had been 18 years in the service of the Board as gardener, was married and had children, and was, to all appearance, thoroughly respectable. Could such a man be prosecuted on the uncorroborated testimony of an insane person? Even before the Hampstead Guardians stirred in the matter the Asylums Board had instituted an inquiry; what more is the Board expected to do?

It would be a lamentable circumstance if this sad affair were seized upon with sinister motives by persons who have nursed ill-feeling for other reasons against the Asylums Board.—Yours faithfully,

HAMPSTEADIAN.

THE POPLAR BOARD OF WORKS.

In accordance with our promise of last week, we now give the portrait of Mr. Leonard Potts, the Clerk to the Board of Works for the Poplar district. Mr. Potts, who is about forty-five years of age, was first appointed as an Officer of the Board in 1874, when he secured the position of Assistant Clerk and Accountant, after an examination of the several candidates, conducted by Mr. Arthur Gunn, late Comptroller to the London County Council, who was then Accountant to the Metropolitan Board of Works. In 1893 he was appointed Controller to the Board, with certain powers relating to the Surveyor's Department, and on the death of Mr. Farnfield, in June of last year, he was appointed Clerk to the Board. He has thus been closely identified with the work of the Board for twenty-four years, and has taken part in all the improvements and advances that have been made in the district during nearly a quarter of a century.



MR. LEONARD POTTS.
Clerk to the Poplar District Board.

MUNICIPAL

VESTRIES.

BATTERSEA.

On Wednesday it was decided to erect new baths and washhouses at Battersea Park-road, at a cost of £34,000, and to carry out necessary improvements to the Central Library at Lavender Hill.

CAMBERWELL.

On Wednesday it was resolved to purchase sites for depots and wharves in several portions of the parish, at an estimated cost of £23,000. A motion was unanimously passed to grant £50 and a testimonial to Mr. Slater, assistant engineer, for his services during the long illness of the late surveyor, Mr. Brown. It was agreed that the authorities throughout the Kingdom be asked to request the Government to introduce a Bill requiring labels on condensed skim milk, showing its worthlessness as an article of food for infants.

CHRISTCHURCH, SOUTHWARK.

On Tuesday Mr. Brown resigned his seat and was accorded a vote of thanks for his past services.

CLERKENWELL.

On Thursday, Mr. Churchwarden Millward, J.P. (the Chairman) presiding, a bill sent in by Mr. W. Robson and Mr. T. H. Brinton (the Churchwardens of St. James's parish) for the payment of £70, the official expenses incurred in connection with the late election of Vicar was ordered to be paid. The Chairman said that he and the two

with the Bishop of London o

POPLAR AND THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.

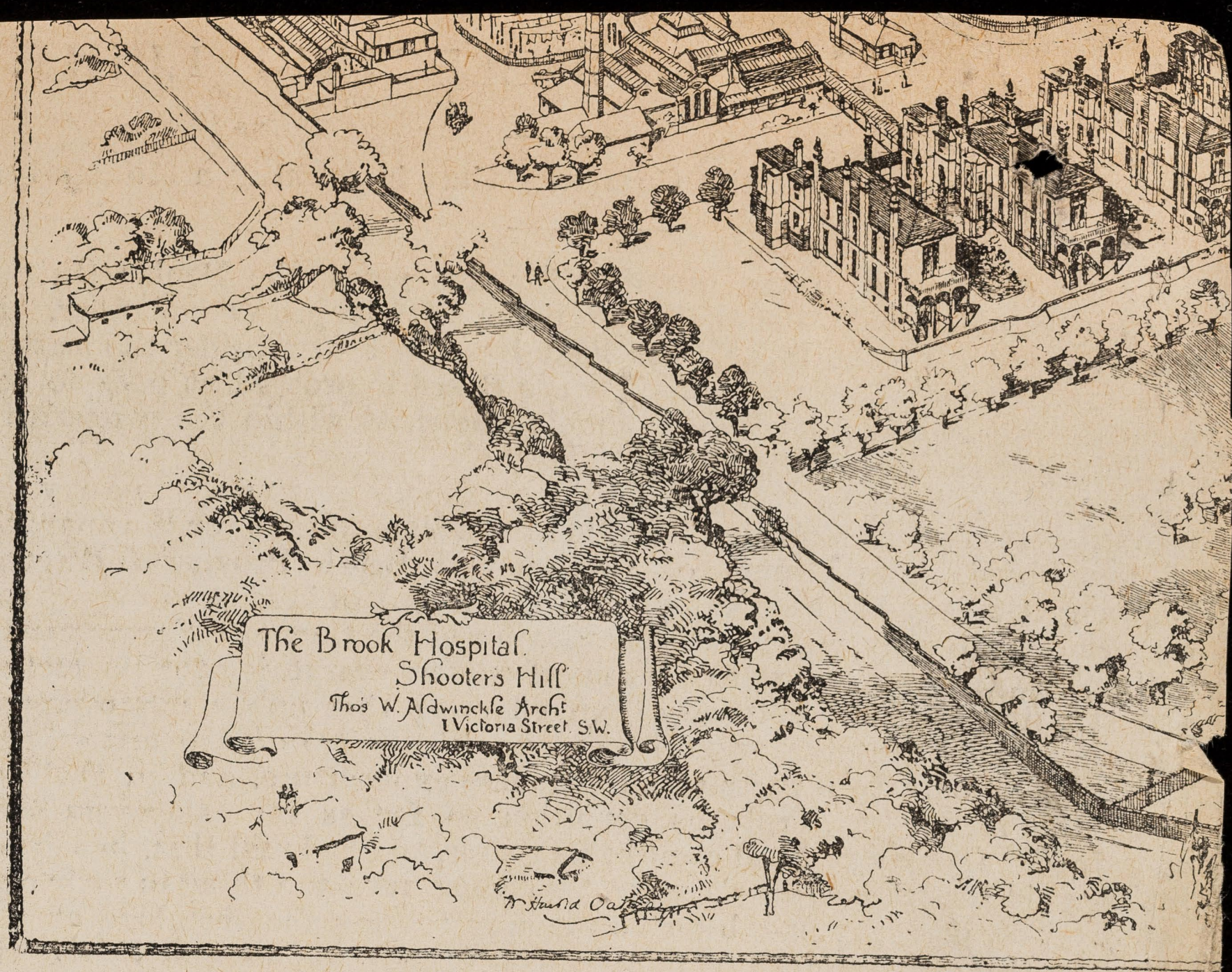
Serious Charge against the Company that is seeking a Monopoly.

After dallying with the question for five years, the Poplar District Board have now decided definitely to proceed with its provisional order. A special meeting of the Board was held last week to consider the matter. The Special Committee recommended the Board to proceed at once to act upon its provisional order, and to supply electricity within the compulsory area at the earliest possible moment. They also suggested that the Electric Lighting Committee be instructed to take the necessary steps to carry the resolution into effect, reporting its action from time to time for the approval of the Board. The County of London and Brush Provincial Electric Lighting Company has been applying to the Board of Trade to supply the district. Mr. Bussey, who moved the adoption of the Committee's recommendation, said the company were desirous of getting everything for themselves and stopping the local authority from effecting that public improvement, because they thought the authority had no knowledge of the matter, that they desired only to perpetrate an immense expenditure, and in the end bring the matter to a ruinous condition so far as the ratepayers were concerned. Camberwell had come to its senses, and had said that, in spite of having paid for the company's order, they must take the thing in their own hands. The company had been continually touting the members of this Board. He had received several visits from a representative of the company, who had tried in every possible way to make him fall in with a course favorable to them. He would go further, and say overtures had been made of a character which at the present moment he could not go into. The company wanted to take the very best producing areas in the Tower Hamlets. They wanted to go from Whitechapel, through St. George's and Stepney, to Limehouse and Poplar, and they wanted to raise a charge which would be prohibitive in a district such as that. They would not care one iota about the outlying districts. That Board ought to be very much obliged to Camberwell for the policy it had adopted, and he hoped they would that evening show that they did not intend the company to manipulate them, but on the other hand show that the Board would take municipal lines. According to Mr. Williams's report, the Board would pay the company at 1d. per unit £1,333 more than they actually would if they did it themselves, taking the basis at 6d. At the present time they paid for the lighting of public lamps £6,279 per annum, and for private lighting, as per report, £3,204. He took from that £7,500, and going on the lines of calculation as adopted by Mr. Williams, he could show that the consumption would be 300,000 units at 6d., or a saving of £1,250 per annum as compared with the company's price of 7d. per unit.

Mr. Valentine said the company had stated that the Board could buy the undertaking any time within 20 years; but how did they know if they took the supply over the mains would be laid suitable for a self-containing station?

A division was claimed, when there voted for the Committee's recommendation 30, against 7.

It was decided to forward a copy of the resolution adopted by the Board to the Board of Trade.



THE BROOK HOSPITAL.—**ESTIMA**

had supplied the bricks for Brook Hospital. Mr. Brown said that he knew nothing about the matter until he came up to town that morning, and on purchasing a newspaper he found to his amazement his own name attached to a statement that he was mixed up in a gross scandal. Three days ago he received a communication from Mr. Lobb asking him a question. He met him by accident the following day and told him all the circumstances of the case, and handed him a copy of counsels' opinion, taken on this question two years ago, for his personal perusal. He had only just received that back. He was extremely sorry that the matter had come out in this way, because he was afraid that it was being simply used as a political weapon against his friend, Mr. White. (Hear.) Although this had been done by the party to which he belonged, it was hateful to him that such a question should have been used for party purposes. A number of statements had been made which were entirely misleading. Mr. Lobb had told the interviewer that he had admitted the truth of the accusations, that a large quantity of bricks were used, and that there could be no competition because the builder would have no option but to buy the bricks specified. It was false to say that he supplied the whole of the bricks.

THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER.

It was true that a few bricks of his manufacture did exist in the hospital, and, he believed, in almost every hospital of the Board. He was powerless to prevent it, name was taken out of th builders applied to him he a him or do anything. He su ways—one directly, and the bought off him, to whom he h give a merchant's discount. T these bricks had dealt with h no business of his to ask wher if he asked he would not be t When he went to the Brook H wards he saw for the first ti were being used. It was en supplied the whole of the b few bricks used for orna infinitesimal as compared used. In the whole mat board. He had been en 20 years, and had supp London. There were ar to-day who had used his not known it personally what purpose the brick fullest inquiry, and would Local Government Board If he had done wrong th right of action against him, himself at all costs. The tr so great that he had though He went to a Q.C., one of t

LIMEHOUSE VOTES FOR A PUBLIC LIBRARY.

THE result of the poll in Limehouse was very satisfactory. There were 2,824 in favor of adopting the Act and 772 against. Of the voting papers sent out 1,040 were returned unfilled, but as the majority in favor was 1,052 the Act would still have been adopted if the whole of these had voted "No," and this was not by any means likely. At the meeting of the District Board it was decided that the number of commissioners be nine, five from Limehouse, two from Ratcliff, one from Wapping, and one from Shadwell.

parish where the analyst took the trouble to send a sample of milk to three or four analysts of great repute. The whole of them were of opinion that water had been added, but Somerset House "found no evidence of water having been added," and that opinion over-ruled all the others, the case being dismissed with costs against the public authority. The Vestry passed the following resolution on the subject: "That the delay which arises from analysing milk and other perishable articles is very prejudicial to the proper administration of the Food and Drugs Act."

PUBLICLY CONDEMNED FOR KISSING WORK-