

Municipal Lab

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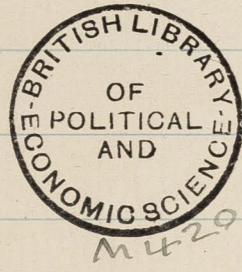
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Municipal Lab.

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Municipal Lab

/ Booth, Life and Labour.... 1902-3.  
Second Series. Vol. IV. Part I.  
Chap. II : municipal labour, etc.

Second book

Interviews  
etc.

Municipal Labour, Parson et.

Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>.

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Interview with Mr Charles Street,  
Secretary of the Limmer Asphalt Paving Co.:-

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

Hours are 57 a week, 10 on the first  
five days, and 7 on Saturday.

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

Health. The work is on the whole very

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

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

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

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

Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>.

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

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

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

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

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Health. There is nothing unhealthy in the  
work, but the men suffer a good deal from  
illness owing mainly to their reckless habits.  
However the work is in some ways very  
demoralising; owing to various causes, of  
which rain is the chief work is constantly  
suspended, when there is nothing for the  
men to do but to adjourn to the public  
house: as they earn high wages this leads  
to a great deal of drinking. In addition  
to this the men are constantly sent away  
from home on jobs, which with men  
of this class is always a bad thing.  
The result is hardly a deterioration in the  
men after they take to the work: they  
become more drunken and imprudent;  
few of them ever save anything. When they  
are away from home the Company pay  
a portion of their wages to their wives, and  
it frequently happens that a man allows his  
wife less when he is taking 18<sup>s</sup> an hour  
than he did when earning 16<sup>s</sup> an hour.  
In the hope of checking drinking the Company



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

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

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

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

Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>. 1896.

Interview with Mr Fitch:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

look much better.

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

Personnel :- wages

		S.	G.
Sweepers.	28/2.	Hours 56 1/2	and 48
Carmen	29/3	62 1/2	54.
Dist do	30/.	do	do
Dist do	30/.	Various	
Pickers	28/3	56 1/2	48
Low Pickers	36/	45	45
Hammermen	33/	56 1/2	48.

Holidays :- All Bank Holidays and a week in summer.

15/ per week sick pay, and a graduated Pension list.

Rethel firm:-

Supers:-	25/	Hours. 56 1/2	and	40
Janus	27/	(2 nos)		(4 nos)
Carmen	28/	65 1/2		58 1/2
Pickers	28/	56 1/2		40.
Man do	23/	do		do
Labourers	28/	do		do
Pushers	30/	40		40.

Holidays:- One week and Bank Holiday.

City firm:-

Supers	12/ to 28/	Hours 57	and	57
Carmen	21/ to 28/	57		57.
Drummen	12/ to 21/	57		57.
Wharfmen	10/ to 26/	57		57.

Holidays:- One week and Bank Holiday.

Fulham:-

Supers.	23/	57 1/2	and	55-
Carmen	27/	62 1/2		60.

Holidays:- Bank Holidays if not wanted

for snow

Concessions this year: - 1/4 per week extra for sweepers. Carmen all overtime after 10'clock on Saturday.

Hammsmith:-

Sweepers	20/ to 21/.	Hours	58 1/2 and 53
Carmen	25/-		64 1/2 59
Streetmen	1/6 per hour.		
Valleymen	23/.		58 53
Pickers	30/		57 1/2 48 1/2

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

Hampstead:-

Sweepers.	1/5 per hour.	Hours	56 and 50
Pickers	1/5 1/2 per hour		56 50

Holidays:- All Bank Holidays this year.

Remarks:- 50 p.c. of the employees voted for the August Bank Holiday and the last Saturday in July in lieu of the Bank Holiday.



We have got a class of Sweep that as  
a found a huck winter and summer.

Kensington:-

Sweepers	21/.	Hours	5-6 1/2 and 5-1
Carmen	26/ and 20/	63	5-1.
Drummen	24/	5 1/4 to 5-8	
Labourers	24/ to 26/.	5-6 1/2	5-1
Masons	36/ to 42/	5-6 1/2	5-1
Painters	40/	do	do.

Holidays:- Three days and all Bank  
Holidays.

Marylebone:-

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

Holidays:- One huck and all Bank  
Holidays.

Trick and Branch:-

Sweepers.	25/
Carmen	30/.

Shetman . 25-

Pickers 20/.

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

Poplar.

Shapers. 22/ and 24/.

Shetman 24/.

Pickers 24/.

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

Paddington :-

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

Rothenhithe:-

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

Pickers. do

Holiday: One week and Bank Holiday

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

Remarks:- Concessions this year:-

Saturday afternoon time of leaving off work altered and breakfast time allowed in the short hours. 'Leppin's' coat, and 'Soresta' provided for wet weather

Dorchester, St George's Southwark:-

Skippers. 27/ Hours. 5 1/4 for all  
Carmen 20/ through year.  
Doctors 27/  
Pickers 27/

Holidays:- One week and Bank Holiday.

Shorditch:-

- Sweepers . 24/
- Stopmen 25/.
- Day Carmen 25/.
- Machine Room men 26/6
- Drummen 24/
- Pickers 25/.
- Wrench Carmen 25/.
- Washers 26/.
- Masons 25/.
- Painters 25/.
- Rammers 27/.

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

St. George's, Harrow Sq.

Swipers.	21/11.	58 1/2	and	58 1/2
Carmen	26/ and 27/.	69	and	62
Pickers	5 <sup>d</sup> per hour	57 1/2		52 1/2
Swiss Serv.	5 <sup>d</sup> per hour	do		do

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

St. Luke's.

Swipers	24/.	6 to 6	and	7 to 6.
Carmen	25/ to 28/	do		do
Drummen	23/ and 25/.	do		do.

Chelsea.

Swipers.	16 <sup>d</sup> per hour.	10		9
Carmen	do	10		10
Drummen	1/8 per load.	do		9
Pickers	16 1/2 per hour.	do		do
Masons	1/9 per hour.	do		do.

Holidays:- Five days and Bank Holiday.

Dorchester:-

Shropens	24/	56 1/2	and 48
Carmen	27/	65 1/2	57
Dorchester	24/	56 1/2	51.
Pickers	24/.	do	do.

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

Greenwich:-

Shropens	20/.
Carmen	26/
Dorchester	24/
Pickers	27/.

Holidays:- Nine days in summer.

Cambridge:-

Masons	35/.	Grandiffers	32/6.
Masons' labor	25/.	Carpenters	35/7.
Women Sappers	35/.	Shet Drivers	21/.
Bookb. do	30/.	" Collectors	17 1/2 per ton
Pickers	26/.	Washers Sappers	28/.
Tax Payers	26/.	Washers	24/.
Washed Days	6/ per day.	Galleyers	27/.
Gardners	27/.	Disinfecting men:-	
Carmen	27/.	Women	40/.
Sweepers	25/6.	Drivers	25/.
Old men Sweepers	20/.	Artists	35/.
Horsekeepers	44/.	Worthey keepers	40/.
Cheff cutters	30/.	Span men	17 <sup>0</sup> and 7 1/2 per ton.
Harness makers	40/.		
Famians' Formen	42/.	Roller Drivers	27/.
" Doormen	33/.	Wapmen	25/6.
Whal nights	40/6.	Watchmen	20/.

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

## Interview with Mr Mason:-

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



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

The Paviers whose business it is to pave the roadway as distinguished from the footpath is now of course largely supplanted by wood and asphaltic paviers.

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

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

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

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

March

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

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

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

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is not that they are highly paid:  
they fairly earn their money. Men  
elsewhere are badly paid and I am sure more.  
Mr. Sumner thinks he ~~is~~ could get the  
work equally well done for 25% of the  
cost.

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

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

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

