



R. COLL. M.

B (133)

Interviews 1<sup>st</sup> book

see Life and labour ... 1902-3.

Second Series. Vol. III. Part II.

Chap. VI: Grocers [including greengrocers],  
Oil and Coloursmen.



Grocers, Greengrocers etc.



June 20<sup>th</sup>

2.

Note of Interview with Mr P. R. Wilkinson of  
Joseph Tramm and Sons: -

Mr Wilkinson is Manager of Joseph Tramm  
which since the death of Mr Tramm has been a  
limited company.

Mr Wilkinson tells me that the late Mr  
Tramm was always very good to his men; at all  
events he gave them splendid premises to work in;  
the warehouse is a fine building with very large,  
lofty and well lighted rooms, so that the men  
probably work under conditions unusually good for the

Mr Wilkinson had already filled in the  
wage sheet. He tells me that overtime is paid  
for in proportion to the wages at from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$   
per hour. Just before Christmas especially the men  
often work for four or five hours overtime.

The hours are from 7.30 to 5.30 with  
half an hour for breakfast, and half an hour for  
dinner, both of which meals the men go out for.



The busy season is from October to January when they have to take on extra hands. Mr Wilkinson cannot say where these extra men come from; if they prove capable they are often get a permanent job.

Mr Wilkinson thinks there is less drapery in Wholesale than in Drapery.

The general tendency in the trade is for the small houses to be driven out by the large ones. Both in Wholesale and retail business the 'cutting' is probably given than in any other trade. Small houses, e.g. Lipton and International Tea Co. combine Wholesale and retail business, which ~~is~~ is looked upon by other houses as rather queer.



July 1<sup>st</sup>

Note of Interview with Mr H. Coker:-

Mr Coker is the Chairman of the Metropolitan Goods and Provision Dealers Assoc<sup>n</sup>. He has recently retired from business for about three years. Previously he was for thirty years in a large way of business at Milk St.

Days. Days of mercantile men from £2 to £9 with board and lodg<sup>ing</sup>. Assistants get from 12/ to 25/ with board and lodg<sup>ing</sup>. Boys get from 3/ to 12/ with board and lodg<sup>ing</sup>. Poor who board and lodge out get from 10/ to 12/ more.

Hours. Hours now are as a rule from 8 to 8. When Mr Coker went into business 20 years ago they were from 9 to 10 or 10.30 and there was always work to be done after the shop closed. By shortening off at hours throughout the trade has been pretty shorted, and no doubt things will go further in this way. As a rule the men who refuse to come into an early closing movement are those who are doing badly.



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and many of them fail in spite of the long hours they keep open. In London would have other disregard men of this sort: in the long run he believes they would lose nothing by doing so; but the masters are very much against legal interference with their hours.

Busy Season. In two months before Christmas are passed very busy, and it is always necessary to take on extra hands; as a rule there are the older men who have fallen out of work, though in the week before Christmas, when the whole stock of the wholesale work is done, the detail forces often borrow a man or two from the wholesale houses. Just before Christmas it is necessary sometimes to work very long hours.

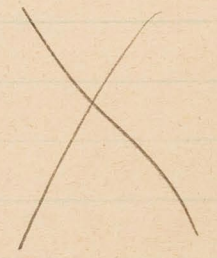
Holidays. Thirty years ago no one in the trade ever had a holiday; it was simply business and had for one year and to another. Now in all except the very smallest shops every man gets one or two holidays in the year.



The Holiday is nearly always from Saturday night or Sunday morning to the following Saturday morning, as all the men must be there on Saturday.

Method of learning. There is now little apprenticeship in London. Both masters and men dislike the system, which they find irksome. There is the usual remark that men do not know their work so well as they used to; but this ~~is not~~ is not a matter of such importance as it used to be, as a firm's business now consists so largely in the selling proprietary articles. Hence even now the most successful men are those who are judges of tea, coffee, sugar etc.

With the decay of apprenticeship a lower class has come into the business. Formerly the sons of tradesmen in good positions were constantly apprenticed. The firm's assistant now is nearly always the son of a working man, and comes in as an errand boy as soon as he leaves the board school. The sons of tradesmen now all want to



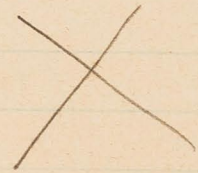


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begin at a point in advance of that  
where their father left off. Mr. Coker was  
most anxious that his son should be apprenticed  
and carry on the business; however he refused  
to associate with grocers assistants, - whom he  
characterized as 'lads' - and was anxious to  
go into the army with a commission.

Habits of men. Though the men come  
from a town class they are more sober and  
generally more moral than those of a previous  
generation. Mr. Coker keeps life in Dublin  
in St. Paul's Churchyard. Out of 100 men  
there not more than 10 had any idea of decency  
and morality. Women used to wait  
for their coming out on Sledge Hill and they  
all went to public houses on Music Hill about  
every night. They now behave much more  
respectably.

The practice of lodging in is much  
less common than it was, ~~chiefly~~ chiefly because  
the men set too high an opinion of their





8  
right and privilege and checked under the  
restrictions as to hours etc. which was necessary  
in the interests of discipline. The result is that  
the relations between masters and men are not  
nearly so cordial as they were. In the older days  
the men were always treated as members of the  
family; now they are little more than machines.

The grocer's trade is in the proud  
position of supplying more work for the bankruptcy  
officials than any other. This is owing to the  
fierce 'cutting' which is done than in any  
other trade. No other trade has suffered so much  
from the competition of stores, which sell  
many proprietary articles at cost price.

There is no association among grocer's  
assistants in London.

A good deal of Mr. Laker's evidence  
will be found in his evidence before the Labour  
Commission (see the printed matter). The reading  
of that evidence does not give nearly such a



9

favorable impression of the man as a person  
conversation. I should say that he was a  
most favorable specimen of a master, who  
generally reports that the relations of  
master and man are so much altered. As long  
as he was in business he always had his men  
living in, and says, I think truly, that he  
did all he could to make their lives happy  
and comfortable. He says that they always had  
their meals with the family. He ~~he~~ he  
forbade them to frequent public houses, but  
allowed each man to get beer from the  
housekeeper at any time as long as they  
did not abuse the privilege. He built them  
a small stage and got up theatrical  
concerts, and social evenings. They certainly  
had to work hard, but not so hard as he  
did.

Altogether the position of the men has  
unusually improved in the last thirty years.  
Their wages are certainly double what they  
were, the hours are much shorter, and the  
work while they are at it, is much easier.



At one time all the articles sold by  
the firm required an enormous amount of  
work expended & on them upon they were  
fit for sale. Sugars had to be blended, fruit  
had to be cleared etc. For all this work is  
done in the wholesale houses and warehouses,  
and the <sup>retail</sup> firm has scarcely any ~~of~~ warehouse  
work.

There is no reason as regards health  
why men should fall out of the trade  
early, but in the retail trade they do. You  
seldom see an old man behind the counter.  
The reason is that shopping is mostly done by  
young women; when women get on in life  
they send their daughters out to do the  
shopping. The young women always go to  
the shops where the assistants are young,  
and no man can afford to keep old men  
behind the counter at the risk of losing his  
trade. The older men often get jobs in  
the wholesale trade.



July 2<sup>nd</sup>

Note of Interview with the Manager  
of the Imperial Oil Company:

The Imperial Oil Co. almost divide the  
wholesale trade in ~~Petroleum~~ ~~and~~ ~~Gasoline~~ ~~and~~ ~~Lighting~~  
oil with the Anglo American Oil Co.

Wages Their carmen are paid a fixed wage  
with a commission on sales. Their wages average  
from 28/ to 30/ a week. Some of them may  
add to their earnings by giving short measure to  
customers but not to any great extent.

Hours. The men start on their round  
at 7.30, and have always done by 9. They  
take their meals as they like during their round.

Regularity. The winter is of course the  
busy season, but the Company do not largely  
reduce their staff in the summer: as in the  
milk trade the men have to do much the same  
round whether things are busy or slack. The  
men who are thrown out in the summer about

33





without exception find work in the Imperial  
Water trade.

General condition of the trade. The oil  
trade here of London has for ~~many~~ <sup>some</sup> years  
been in a bad way. It has been injured in the  
west end by the Electric light, and in poor  
districts by the perry. in the slot for  
But the chief disturbing factor in the trade  
has been the action of the Anglo American Co.  
This company is simply the English representative  
of the Standard Oil Trust of America. They  
came to England with the expressed intention  
of killing all trade in opposition to their own.  
The lowest price at which they can sell their  
oil at a profit is 3 3/4 pence <sup>per gallon</sup> but last winter  
they lowered the price to 2 3/4 in the expectation  
of forcing out all others. The Imperial  
here London made a good fight against them,  
and this year the Anglo American finding that  
they had made an enormous loss last year, went  
on the other tack and gradually raised ~~to~~  
the price to 50' a gallon, with the result



that a large number of their customers left them and went to the Imperial. They are loathes of retailers throughout the trade, as no one has any idea from day to day what the price will be.



July 4<sup>th</sup>

Note of Interview with Mr. C.C.:-

Mr C.C. who preferred not to give his name is a former Assistant now out of work. He has been in London for ten years and was for five years with Mr Jones, a large grocer in Bishop St. Poppen. He was last with Lipton.

Wages The wages of a Managin who lives in are about 15/- a week; of one who lives out about 30/-.

A First Counterer will get 12/- living in; 24/- to 26/- living out.

A Second Counterer 10/- in; and 24/- out.

A Third Counterer 8/- in; and 20/- to 24/- out.

Boys get from 6/- to 9/- with nothing found.

There is little or no opportunity in properly managed shops of adding to the wages by illegitimate methods.

Except perhaps in large firms or stores there are no reductions in the shape of prices.

Men have to find their own aprons at a cost of about 1/- each. They require not less than



six a year. They are always obliged to wear white shirts, and are expected to be dress well and smartly. In some firms (e.g. Lipton) they have to wear Smocks costing from 2/6 to 4/6, and will last not less than three years.

Hours. At Jones they worked from 7 to 10 on the first four days, till 11 on Friday, and till about 12.30 on Saturday. Washin C.C. has never had to begin before 7.30, the closing hours being much the same everywhere except perhaps in the West End.

As a rule they have 20 minutes for breakfast and tea, and 30 minutes for dinner, but on Saturday tea is a very uncertain meal.

Holidays. Most of the larger firms give a holiday of some sort in the year, but the largest C.C. has ever had is from Monday to Tuesday.

The majority of men still live in, though they would prefer to live out. The masters prefer



to have men living in, as they fear that if they live out they may help themselves to food. There is therefore a great objection to married men, who can scarcely get places except as managers of branches.

There is no apprenticeship in London, though still some in the country. The majority of provincial assistants are countrymen.

There is no trade in which men are thrown out so young; a man can so far the greatest difficulty in finding work. C.C. is 27, and says that as a rule he can now find younger men preferred to him.

C.C. thinks it is better to be in a small shop where the Master superintends, than in a branch shop of a big firm under a manager. Managers are very jealous, and do all they can to keep back assistants who show ability, for fear they should supplant them.





It is a common practice where men live in  
to supply no food on Sunday, so that men have  
to turn out for the day.

The number of men out of work in the  
trade is always very great. There are always  
dozens of men applying for every vacant place



July 4<sup>th</sup>.

18

Note of Interview with Mr Perret:-

Mr Perret is a man over 40 in age, has been in many shops in London: at one time he managed a branch in the city for Hulton and Co, The Merchants; his last place was as first man in a small shop in Foster's Road, &c. For a year he had a small shop of his own on which he took £135.

Wages. Menages 28/ to 38/ out, and 12/ to 20/ in.

1<sup>st</sup> Counter 28/ to 30/ out; and 14/ in.

2<sup>nd</sup> Counter 21/ to 25/ out, and 10/ in.

3<sup>rd</sup> Counter 14/ to 16/ out, and 8/ in.

Boys get from 2/ to 8/.

The check titles or cashiers are now employed by all large almost all shops, and men have no opportunity of adding to their wages.

Mr Perret gives the price of aprons as from 1/6 to 2/ and says a man will require at least three a year.



With regard to white shirts - in no shop are less than two a week required: in most shops the men wear them: but in some they are expected to put on a clean one every day.

Hours. Mr Perrett has been led to begin work upon 8: otherwise his evidence confirms that of C.C.: with the exception that in the city he opened and closed at 9.

Meals in small shops are very uncertain; men are always liable to be called away. The food is often very bad and quite insufficient.

Holidays are given in large firms, but rather the exception in small ones.

There is no opportunity now. It is not wanted: there is little or nothing to learn. The work which used to be done by the retail firm, is now done by the wholesale house. Goods used to be delivered in bulk: they now nearly all come in packet form. Few firms



now thoroughly understand their business, and the herding is done for them.

Busy and Slack seasons. Most furs and especially the Stone Lake or Vicia leads at Christmas. Last Christmas Jim Parrot took a job at the Wild Fur Store in the Haymarket. All the men so taken on are members of the trade.

Jim Parrot has never found the trade unhealthy, though he has known men break down under the long hours.

Jim Parrot complains the difficulty of getting work after youth is past. The enormous number of aged furs' assistants become canvassers for Insurance Companies or for Singer's Sewing Machines etc.

There is less living in than there used to be. The men prefer to live out, and the masters do not much care. One way or the other.



The relations between masters and men are not so good as they were. Masters are coming to look upon their men as mere machines, and take no interest in them and no trouble to teach them.

Rather in contradiction to this Mr Perrot says that big firms are as a rule better than small firms; they often provide excellent rooms for their men, and in some cases libraries etc.

Mr Perrot again says that the majority of men are countrymen.

The 'cutting' in the trade is terrible; the poor people is not much more than a penny in the shilling; and Mr Perrot does not see how the small men with one shop can struggle on for many years longer. In poor neighbourhoods there will probably continue to be a few "generals" where the master is content to work very hard for a very small return, but otherwise the small men must drop out.



July 8<sup>th</sup>.

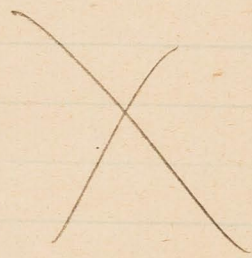
22

Note of Interview with Mr. H. H. Kettle of  
Messrs. Macken and Kettle.

Messrs. Macken and Kettle are Grocers  
and Oil and Colom Merchants with several branches.

Wages. Mr. Kettle's evidence as to wages  
confirms that of other witnesses, but he says  
that in the oil and colom line they are usually  
rather ~~lower~~ higher than in grocery; at all  
events the men in the oil and colom trade get  
their highest wage much younger than those in  
grocery. They come from a lower social class,  
and nearly always begin as errand boys very  
young; by the age of 16 or 20 they will  
be earning full wages, and if they are capable  
may soon look forward to being managers of  
branches. Grocers are usually the sons of  
more respectable parents, who do not care for  
their children to go into a trade which they  
consider dirty. In many cases they still  
begin as apprentices, and at 16 they are  
only learning the wages of lads.





Hours in the Old and Colon line are if anything rather longer than in grocery. With regard to Early Closing - Mr Kettle personally would prefer compulsory to voluntary closing. Voluntary closing he says is really compulsory on the larger firms. If you do not close early on the day fixed a parade with a band will be held outside your shop by the Early Closing Association, and a system of intimidation carried on; the small men who keep open is left alone. Messrs. Mathan and Kettle have lost much trade through Thursday closing which they can never hope to regain unless their small neighbours are forced to close too.

Popularity. In the grocery they take in a few heads at Christmas. In Old and Colon the trade is regular throughout the year.

Master and prefer men to live in, and men who are steady prefer prefer to do so themselves; they know that they cannot.



live decently on their wages if they live out,  
and those who wish to live out are always  
regarded with suspicion.

I asked Mr. Kettle as to the line of  
distinction between the two businesses. He says that  
that distinction there was is rapidly breaking down;  
oil and colomann have taken to selling a  
number of things which at one time were considered  
only in the province of the ~~pe~~ grower, though  
growers have not yet taken to selling oil and  
colomann. Profits are so small now that men  
find it impossible to live on the one business.  
In a few years there will probably be only very  
large businesses, and very small ones.



July 18th.

25

Note of Interview with Mr H. Clifford:-

Mr. Clifford is a young and old and Colon man with a number of branches.

Wages. Mr Clifford confirms the evidence that wages in the oil and Colon line are rather high, he should say about 10 p.c. higher. This is due to the fact that it is a distant trade.

Hours. At some of his shops Mr Clifford closes at 9, at others at 9.30 according to the neighbourhood. He has the strongest objection to the long hours, but feels convinced that they cannot be shortened to any great extent by voluntary effort: the public are too selfish and inconsiderate. On three occasions the process in the neighbourhood of Strand Green, where Mr Clifford's chief shop is, have tried early closing on Thursday: twice it has broken down, and is now on trial for the third time. Nothing will ever work short of compulsion, and any compulsory system would require a perfect army of inspectors to enforce it.

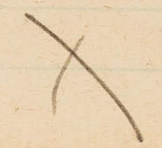
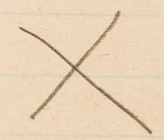


being carried out. Mr Clifford thinks that the best hope for the assistants is to try and get more holidays out of the masters. Personally he gives all his men a half holiday once a fortnight, besides about five days holiday in the year. The annual holiday is now he thinks almost universal throughout the trade.

Regularity. Extra hands required at Christmas, but Mr Clifford thinks that it is only the firms who have large Christmas Clubs who take on extra hands, unless perhaps an additional try to deliver parcels. The majority of unemployed firms advertise in "The Gleaner" and at Christmas the advertisements fall from about 2 pages to half a page.

Health. Mr Clifford says that statistics show that fitters are an unusually healthy body of men.

Fitters assistants as far as education and social position go rank next to drapers assistants. A good many therefore leave the trade young, and





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become Communist Travelers.

Mr Clifford seems takes unmarried men who want to live out. He thinks they are too fond of helping themselves to biscuits, cheese etc. If married men live out arrangements are sometimes made for them to have their needs in.

Mr Clifford told me much more which was merely in confirmation of previous evidence.



July 15<sup>th</sup>.

28

Note of Interview with Mr H. J. Sils  
Secretary of the Metropolitan Grocers' Federation:-

Mr Sils is a sound Yankee with a good  
grasp of the job, and I should say a very  
thorough knowledge of the grocery trade. Some weeks  
since he asked me to give him a list of questions,  
to which I gave him written replies, with some  
of his comments on those which required explanation.

1. Define as nearly as possible the province  
of (a) Grocer (b). Wholesaler (c)  
Provision Dealer (d). Oil and Coloursman (e) Chemist,  
Druggist:-

"(a). Sells tea, coffee, spice, sugar,  
and proprietary articles. (b). Overlaps former  
in many cases, but a few sell also foreign  
preserved provisions and other foreign produce.  
(c). Sells bacon, cheese, butter, eggs, poultry, and  
game (d). Sells oils, colours, paints, pickles,  
sauces, soap, and tallow chandlery...

Until comparatively recent times there  
was no overlapping among these various trades;



Tea, coffee, spice and sugar were the staple articles of the foreign trade. The Italian merchants sold nothing but foreign produce, e.g. macaroni, olive oil, sardines and other 'delicacies'. While the articles sold by the others were equally well defined. Now the foreign and the Italian merchants are completely merged, and there are few firms who do not at all venture touch on the produce of the oil and colourmen, and vice versa. With few exceptions the big men in the trade now go in for all these branches, and many of them sell articles not strictly included in any one of them. The change was brought about by the necessity of competing with the stores. Each man found it impossible to make a living out of his own trade, and was forced to add touch upon his neighbour's produce.

2. Average rate of wage of various grades of labour in (a) wholesale (b) retail trade?  
 Answer: -  
 " (a) From £50 to £600 a year.



(b). Out of the Lona 20/ in the Lona 15/.

The men employed in the wholesale trade are Salomon with large salaries, Warehousemen and Clerks. Warehousemen are not necessarily merely unskilled men carrying packages; most of them, and at all events the foremen are usually thoroughly skilled in the articles which they have to handle, and their wages run up to £150 a year.

3. Do men usually load and load in?

Answer:-

"About half in and half out."

4. Have men to wear any special articles of dress, and if yes, are they found by the firms or provided by the men? Have the men to pay for any tools or implements?

Answer:-

"Not specially and have no tools to find."

The firms admitted the aprons. Some firms, & (e.g. Lipton's and Home and Colonial),



Expect their men to wear white jackets, which are supplied by the firm. Many persons expect their men to wear dark clothes.

5. Do there any general system of fines for unpunctuality or other causes, and if yes are the fines retained by the master, or returned to the men in any way, e.g. as sick fund or otherwise?

Answer:-

"Generally in large establishments but not in medium or small ones. When there are fines, sometimes to a sick fund, sometimes to an outing or holiday fund."

6. Have the men any opportunity of adding to their wages by legitimate or illegitimate methods?

Answer:-

"No overtime or premiums or commissions generally paid as is done in the drapery trade. Illegitimate methods, by stealing goods rather common as there are so many





Opportunities.

7. Hours of labor in (a) Wholesale (b) Retail trade with hours of business and ending?  
Answer:-

"(a) 10 hours a day - 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. (b) 12 hours a day 8 a.m. to 8 p.m."

8. Intervals allowed for meals, and whether taken off or on the premises?

"Breakfast and tea half an hour dinner an hour when usually taken off the premises; varies when taken on the premises."

9. Do men as a rule get any holiday in the year?

Answer:-  
"Yes a week or a fortnight"

10. Is overtime common throughout the trade?  
"No"

11. Are there busy and slack seasons, and from



What causes, and if you are extra hands taken on during busy seasons? If they are so taken on, are they as a rule unemployed members of the trade, or do they come from other occupations?

Answer:-

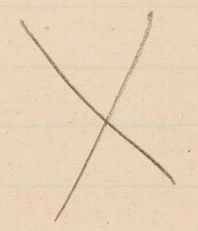
"Wholesale trade principally. Extra hands not generally taken on. In some special cases of the trade such as ~~and~~ ready money shops in working class districts on Saturday nights extra hands are taken on. There are always men out of work in the trade."

12. Is apprenticeship general in the trade, and if not how do men learn their work?

Answer:-

"No. Men learn the trade by passing through the steps of messenger boy, porter. Apprenticeship does of course exist, and an endeavor is being made to extend it."

Mr. Fisher denies that knowledge of the trade is not now so important as it was. In his opinion it is now important than ever. The great low cause of the trade is the





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ignorance of its members. To see his  
unsuspected soul not one person's assistant out of  
a thousand could tell the difference between Pchoe  
and Souchong. Many of these men sit up for  
hours and are misled by their ignorance; they  
are at the mercy of tricksters and dealers in  
proprietary articles. Even when they have got their  
goods in the shop they don't know how to keep  
them. In fact, after seeing tea lying loose  
in the kitchen with spice on one side, sugar on  
the other, and bacon hanging just over it; tea  
is most sensitive and sucks in something from  
any other food in its immediate neighborhood.  
Grooms are now beginning to realize the  
importance of knowledge if they are to hold  
their own, and almost without exception the  
men who are doing really well are men who  
have taken the trouble to go right through the  
trade, and who really understand the articles  
in which they deal.

13. Is there any reason to suppose that  
the majority of those employed are countrymen?



Answer: -  
Yes the majority are. Curiously as  
a rule the London born assistant is not so good  
as the countryman.

Many men refer to here London  
in their shops.

14. Do there any Association of (a)  
Masters (b) Men?

Answer: -  
Yes of Masters. the Institute  
of Grocers and Provision Dealers Association. Not of  
Men except the Dairy Men's Association.

15. Are large stores and traders with  
many branches pushing out the smaller men?  
"Yes to a large extent".

16. Do members of the trade to any  
large extent add to their profits by adulteration,  
and if yes is such adulteration of a nature  
likely to be injurious to the public health?

Answer: -

Continued in another book.



Summary.

Notes on Vegetable Markets of London from  
County Council Report.

## Covent Garden: -

The retail trade in Covent Garden is quite inconsiderable. This is owing perhaps to the fact that so many first class fruiters and florists' shops have sprung up of late years in the West End. The market is the great centre for the distribution of special commodities which go to all parts of the metropolis and to many of the Midland towns that cannot obtain local supplies. Goods are even bought in Covent Garden and are taken to the Borough Market to be resold. Covent Garden is preeminently a wholesale market into which goods are brought in bulk, sold in bulk, and distributed in bulk. The trade in the market is capable of considerable extension, but the expansion should be gradual and natural. According to the Duke's agent what is needed to make the improvements complete



is rather means of getting to and from the market, and this can only be done by municipal authority.

I find there is so much about the Market in this Report that I have thought it better to buy another copy, and tear out the leaves.



June 21<sup>st</sup>.

38

Note of interview with an unknown person.

I to-day visited Court Garden in the hope of seeing a Mr. J. Sexton, but failed to find him. However I entered into conversation with a man who was standing on Mr. Sexton's premises, and who told me that he was a salaried man in the market.

With regard to the Posters in the Market he told me that they earn a great deal of money, which they spend very freely. Many of them think nothing of spending 2/- on their breakfast. Their earnings of course vary much, but he thinks that any man who comes to work here earns less than 20/- a week, while in the summer, and especially during the straggling season they may take £3 or £4.



June 29<sup>th</sup>.

39

Note of Interview with Mr R. Horner:-

Mr R. Horner is the Proprietor of Spitalfields Market.

He tenants in the Market employ a certain number of permanent men who are paid from 20s to 30s a week. They probably earn a further 20s a week in carrying out goods.

The bulk of the labour in the Market is that of porters employed by the purchasers. There is no licensing system and anyone can act as a porter. Mr Horner at one time tried a system of licensing and badges, but found it impossible to work it. It requires some public body to carry out a licensing system efficiently. The men may earn anything from 1/6 to 10s a day. Summer is the busiest season, and Saturday the busiest day. At busy times more men turn up.

The men are an exceedingly rough, imprudent lot. They never have any money in hand, and when work is slack are



always coming to by. However they  
are certainly less rough and more solid than  
they had to be.

Work begins at 4 o'clock but there is  
little doing after 6 o'clock



July 17<sup>th</sup>

Note of Interview with Mr. Coleman of  
S. J. Coleman and Sons:-

Mr. Coleman are fruit- and vegetable  
salmon at Court Garden and King's Cross.

Wages. Mr. Coleman arrange the wages  
of their permanent men at from 35/- to  
40/- a week. These men are all supposed to  
be hired by the Duke of Portland, but as  
a matter of fact many of them are not,  
and practically any one can work in the  
Market.

Hours vary a good deal from day to  
day, but they average not less than 12  
hours a day. Men get on hour off for  
breakfast and an hour for dinner, but not  
necessarily at fixed hours.

Receipts. The busy time at Court-  
Garden is during the summer, and especially  
during the Strawberry season, but not wholesale



people have a depot at King's Cross on some other Market as well as Const. Garden, and when the stock runs at one Market is the high season at another, so that the permanent men are kept fully employed throughout the year. There is always a great deal of shifting of labour between the various Markets, and men who want a job can usually get one somewhere.

Habits of men. The casual porters who have not got permanent jobs may drink a good deal, but the regular men are as sober and steady as any other body of men, and there has been much improvement throughout the trade of late years. The work however is dry and exhausting, and there is a good deal of temptation to drink.

There are a number of Jews in the Wholesale Fruit trade, but they are nearly always dealers and salesmen, and do none of the rough work. There may be a little foreign labour in the Foreign Fruit Market, but not much else.



X

43

The sale of vegetables falls off a great deal in hot weather, as many people do not light a fire. In hot weather therefore the men in the market earn less, as they do not make so much by carrying.



July 1<sup>st</sup>

44

Note of Interview with Mr Brooker:-

Mr Brooker is a free man with two shops in poor districts. He was introduced to me in the market by Mr Coleman.

He tells me that he pays his permanent hands from 25/- to 35/- a week. They do not live in, and to do so is very unusual in the trade.

Hours. The hours of a small master in the trade are terribly long: "he is worse off than a convict". Most days from 3 to 10 or 10.30, and on Saturdays from 3 to 1 or 1.30. The hours of the men are as a rule from 8 to 10 with two hours off for meals.

Regularity. Mr Brooker always has to take on extra help on Saturday. The men he employs are those of the loafing type who do not want a permanent job, and would not take it if offered them.



Method of learning. There is not now, and Mr. Proctor thinks there has been any apprenticeship in the trade. There is no reason why there should be, as there is nothing to learn.

The trade is very healthy, being out in the air all day.

Habits of men. Mr. Proctor notices the general improvement in sobriety. He used to have the greatest difficulty in getting extra labour on Saturday, as he could not depend on men owing to their drinking. Now he has no difficulty in getting such men as he wants.

It is exceedingly difficult now to make a living at the trade. It can only be done by very large sales, as prices have been cut so much.



July 10th.

Note of Interview with Mr. W. S. Wright:-

Mr. Wright is a purveyor at present out of employment.

Wages of Assistants vary from 20/ to 30/ a week.

Nearly all purveyors, ~~are~~ large and small, now do send a man round with a cart à la coster, though they do not shoot. The men who pass on this road often take ready money, and may have opportunities of adding to his wages, but they do not like milkmen make much in this way.

Hours. The shops keep at least <sup>one</sup> man for market work. In summer he starts work at 8 and finishes about 6; in winter his hours will be from about 5 to 6. He gets home from the market at 8, has his breakfast and usually spends the remainder of the day in attending to the boxes and going a round. When he gets to the market it is the custom



47  
for the master to give him  $\$2$  or  $\$3$  for  
Coffee Money.

The shopmen who do not go to market  
look exactly the same lower as growers.

Most masters now give their men about  
a week's holiday in the year.

Dress. Men have to buy nothing except  
aprons, and about  $\$5$  a year will cover the  
necessary cost.

Replenish. The busy time is during the 'Soft  
Fruit Season' for about three months from the  
end of May. Most masters require almost a  
double staff during that time. However many of  
the men who are taken on are not permanent,  
but casual. Extra hands are often taken on at  
Christmas too.

Most men who go regularly into the retail  
trade set up for themselves at some time in  
their lives; there is no trade in which less capital



X

40  
is required for a start. Hence the profits on  
any trade; no other trade suffers so much from  
the competition of the water.



Index.

- Page 2. Interview with Mr. S. R. Wilkinson.  
" 4 " " Mr. H. Cusher.  
" 11 " " Manager of Imperial Oil Co.  
" 14 " " C. C.  
" 18 " " Mr. Parrot.  
" 22 " " Mr. H. H. Kettle.  
" 25 " " Mr. H. Clifford.  
" 28 " " Mr. H. J. Giles.  
  
" 36 Notes on Vegetable Markets.  
" 38 Interview with a furniture maker.  
" 39 " " Mr. R. Horner.  
" 41 " " Mr. Coleman.  
" 44 " " Mr. Brooks.  
" 46 " " Mr. W. E. Wright.



