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JOURNAL

OF THE ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY,

DECEMBER, 1892.

*The INAUGURAL ADDRESS of CHARLES BOOTH, ESQ., PRESIDENT of the
ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY. Session 1892-93. DELIVERED
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

A PRESIDENT in his address ought, I think, to survey the position, and so far as may be forecast the future of the society or science he represents. As leader for the time being he should recount the triumphs of the past, or from the history of failure draw some salutary warning, and point the way to new conquests; all with the single aim of nerving his fellow workers through confidence and hope to fresh exertions. This is what I should, but alas, am unfit to do, and I must beg your forbearance. I feel very deeply the honour you have done me in choosing me for your President. No one can be more conscious than I am of the importance of statistics in this age of rapid social reconstruction, or of the important part that this Society is well fitted to play in these changes. But it is as a divisional leader that I must address you to-night. Instead of a plan of campaign, all I have to offer is the faithful report of a skirmish. If, next November, I have the honour of addressing you again I hope I may do better.

The losses caused the Society by death in 1891-92 were mentioned in the Annual Report. I wish here especially to refer to that of Sir James Caird, who, by reason of his scientific treatment of economic subjects, stood in the front rank of public servants. We owe to his memory a debt of gratitude, not only for his numerous and valuable contributions to our Proceedings, and the conspicuous ability with which he occupied this Chair, and for his kindness in undertaking the duties of Trustee for our property, but

even more for the example he has set us, and for the proof he has given the world of the immense value which may attach to statistical inquiries in connection with the government of the country.

I have to-night the honour to lay before this Society the results of an inquiry into the condition of waterside labour in the Port of London, with some suggestions for its improvement. There is a good deal in this paper that calls for discussion. In this Society, by courteous usage, the President's address is not discussed, but I shall take care to find an early opportunity for hearing the views and profiting by the criticism of those of my audience who are interested in the subject.

I.—London Riverside Labour.

In 1887, when I was considering dock employment as a principal East End industry, I found the position to be very hopeless as well as very unsatisfactory. The employers were content, and the men, though far from content, were entirely unorganised. The dock managers accepted the crowd and struggle at the dock gates as an inevitable phenomenon, which happened to fit in well with the conditions of their trade. They could always be sure of sufficient labour, and though its quality might be bad, its pay was correspondingly low. The character of the men matched well with the character of the work and its remuneration. All alike were low and irregular. The vicious circle was complete. How should it be broken?

In 1892 all this is changed. The unions, founded under the greatest difficulties in 1888, have had a wonderful career; and if some mistakes have been made, and some hopes disappointed, there yet remains a solid foundation on which much may be built, and an inspiring record. It may be true that as yet but little has been done from a purely material point of view to better the condition of the dock labourer; but what the men have already achieved through organisation is not to be measured solely by advantages obtained in pay or the conditions of employment. By organisation they step into line with other more highly skilled and more highly paid labour, and so acquire a position of dignity in the State of the utmost practical value if wisely used. Already we see the effect of this in the changed attitude of the employers as to casual employment. It is now generally admitted that more regular work makes better labourers, and that better labourers are more satisfactory servants even at higher pay.

Riverside labour consists of the following branches:—

I. Import through the docks.

(1.) Discharging from on board ship in dock.

- (2.) Receiving on quay and passing into warehouse.
- (3.) Receiving and stowing into lighters.
- (4.) Handling in warehouse.
- II. Import through the wharves.
(Subject to the same subdivisions as the dock work).
- III. Import "over side" from ships lying in the stream.
(The men so employed are termed "shipworkers," and undertake also the loading of coasting vessels).
- IV. Export work (both dock and wharf).
Handling goods on quay in preparation for the stevedores.
- V. Stowage of cargo (export) by stevedores.
- VI. Lighterage of goods.
- VII. Handling of coals and ballast (dock, wharf, or stream).
 - (1.) Discharging coal.
 - (2.) Loading coal as cargo (by stevedores).
 - (3.) Coaling steamers.
 - (4.) Ballast heavers.
- VIII. Handling of ships in port.
 - (1.) Tug boatmen.
 - (2.) Ship scrapers and painters.
 - (3.) Riggers and shore gang men.
 - (4.) Sailors in port.

The labour employed by the dock companies may be considered in two divisions: (1) that of the "joint committee," including the London and St. Katharine, East and West India, Victoria and Albert, and Tilbury Docks, and some warehouses in town: (2) that of the Millwall and Surrey Commercial Docks, which, though on opposite sides of the river, are alike devoted principally to the handling of grain and timber.

Wharf labour may be similarly divided, the men who handle grain and timber being of a different class from the rest, with special aptitude for this work, and a higher rate of pay. The work, however, is not to be obtained all the year round, and those who do it are for the most part unaccustomed to seek any other employment. Some of the grain and timber men, and some of the steamship workers, receive wages as high, and in some cases even higher, than the stevedores (who have 8*d.* an hour), and at this point the spheres of work overlap a little, the Stevedores' Union having one branch consisting of men engaged in the discharge of timber, while some stowage is undertaken by shipworkers.

Apart from this slight element of confusion, the stevedores are a distinct and highly organised body of men, undertaking a distinct division of export work, with very little interference from

free labour. The lightermen and watermen also play a distinct part, and are completely organised, there being two bodies, the lighter and watermen proper, and the "non-freemen," or those who have not served a full apprenticeship and so obtained the freedom of the Watermen's Company.

The discharging of coal is done by the "Coal porters' winchmen," a distinct organisation from that of the "National coal porters," who undertake to coal steamers. The "winchmen" are the successors of the "coal whippers," the change in name following a change in the system of handling the coal. The work is highly paid, but hard and irregular. Up to recent times there has been little outside competition, but an attempt to close the ranks of the union led to the employment of free labour under the management of the Shipping Federation, and although the policy has been abandoned the competition continues. Ballast heaving is very similar work, but is separately organised. Tug boatmen, sailors, &c., have also their unions.

The "import over side" work (Section III) is engaged and paid for by the owners of the vessels lying in the stream to be discharged, these being often also wharf owners; at the Surrey Commercial Docks the shipowners in some instances contract direct with stevedores for the discharge of their cargoes, and at the Victoria and Albert Docks, and in one instance at the St. Katharine's Docks, the shipowners now provide the labour on board and on quay for discharging; otherwise all the labour in Sections I to IV is engaged and paid by the dock and wharf owners.

It is to these sections that what follows will apply. To them only belong the men who are called "dockers." Sections V to VII consist, as we have seen, of distinct bodies of men whose work, though partly interchangeable with that of the dockers, and closely interdependent, is better organised and better paid, and to some extent more skilled. As to Section VIII, seamen in port cannot be considered separately from those at sea, nor the tradesmen engaged in keeping ships in repair separately from those employed in their construction or in other similar work.

II.—*Organisation of the Men.*

In early times the work of the port, then confined to wharves near London Bridge, was in the hands of privileged societies under the jurisdiction of the City; but with the extension of the docks eastward this system broke down, and the only society left is that of "Fellowship Porters," whose numbers are dwindling, and whose claim to certain monopolies is challenged. The abolition of the corn laws brought large imports of grain to the Thames,

and the famine in Ireland, happening about the same time, supplied a large number of needy labourers, who, coming to London, got possession of much of the work of handling heavy merchandise, such as grain and timber. There was then no distinction between timber men or corn porters and other dock work, nor between loading and unloading; and all alike was ill paid. But these distinctions began to creep in as the rates of pay rose; the masters refusing to pay the higher rates for the easier and less skilled branches of the work.

After the marked rise of pay secured by the unions established in 1872, the distinction grew sharper, and the men engaged in specially skilled work, as for instance the stowage of cargo and the unloading of grain and timber, became close corporations in the midst of a mass of unorganised labour. For it was only where skill or great strength provided a natural barrier against competition that the unions held together. Thus the General Labour Protection League, established in 1872, with a large number of branches on both sides of the river, practically broke up, only six branches remaining in existence, five of stevedores on the north side of the river, who have continued as the Amalgamated Stevedores' Labour Protection League, and one of corn porters on the south side, who afterwards formed the nucleus of the present South Side Labour League.

In 1888-89 there was a second general upheaval of riverside labour, culminating in the great dock strike of August, 1889, which spread over all classes of dock labour on both sides of the Thames, and affected, by way of "sympathy," most of the inter-connected trades. The strike on the north side was largely led by the stevedores' union, and that on the south side by the "over side corn porters," the leaders of these organisations being the most important components of the strike committees at "Wade's Arms" and "Saye's Court" respectively. As a result of the strike, the two existing unions arose, viz., the "Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Labourers' Union," and the "South Side Labour Protection League." The latter was a revival of the old league—the overside corn porters belonging to both—and like the old league is a decentralised federation of branches which are almost self-governing. The Dockers' Union, on the other hand, like the stevedores, is a centralised organisation, and has followed the example of the Amalgamated Engineers in the method of its spread to other places all over the kingdom.

Under the same impulse the stevedores, while retaining their special organisation, widened its gates so as to include in one union all the members of the trade; and the unions of lightermen, coalies, &c., filled up their ranks; so that for a time nearly the

whole labour of the port was included in some organisation or other. Finally, the delegates, who, representing these various unions, had formed the strike committee, developed into the "United Labour Council of the Port of London," an unsuccessful attempt to federate the riverside industries; and this in turn has merged in the present "Federation of Trade and Labour Unions," from which much has been hoped, but which has so far been attended with only partial success, and which it is to be feared may also end in disappointment.

Under the excitement of the great strike, many who were loafers rather than labourers joined the Dockers' Union and South Side League, thus unduly exaggerating the numbers on the roll. When the strike was over and work began, those who had joined only to claim "strike pay" fell out. That is, they did not pay, or did not long continue to pay, the *2d.* a week demanded by the union. Over such as were not really dock labourers at all, the union had no power, and to get rid of them was gain rather than loss. Upon those who actually worked at the riverside, sufficient pressure could be and was exercised, by inspection of "cards," to keep them in the union, whether heartily willing or not. But owing to a change then adopted in the method of engaging men at the docks, this advantage was lost, excepting at the Millwall Dock, at a few of the wharves, and with some lines of steamships, where the employers have been willing to co-operate with the Union. The general result has been a great falling off in the numbers of "financial members."

A member of the union may be as much as six weeks in arrear. If he owes more than six weeks' subscription he ceases to be a "financial member." According to the rules, all levies must also have been paid. But arrears are often forgiven, and levies overlooked, the decision on these points being now left with each branch. Sickness or lack of work are sufficient excuse for remitting arrears, provided a man is ready to pay his current subscription.

It would not be fair to take the financial members as constituting the whole strength of the union, as some members who "pay when they can" are thorough unionists; and there are many others who in a dispute would claim membership and obey the orders of the union, and who must therefore be counted as unionists, even though more ready to draw than contribute to the funds. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to include those who only join under compulsion, and are never at heart loyal members of the union.

After allowing however for those who may still be fairly counted, and for those who never should have been counted at all,

there is a considerable diminution in the number of members of the two unions to which I have referred.

The South Side Protection League" consists of seventeen branches, which retain and manage their own funds, paying 3*d.* per member per quarter to the central management fund. In 1890 this contribution amounted to 210*l.*, representing 4,200 members; in 1891 it was 127*l.*, representing 2,500 members. All these would be financial members of the branches; each branch having from 100 to 250 members. Six of the seventeen are branches of corn porters, seven of general wharf labourers, and four are deal porters, ship workers, &c. The entrance fees vary from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 20*s.*, only one branch, that of steamship workers (who are in effect stevedores), being as high as 20*s.* Nearly all these men work on the south side, as do also the members of District IV of the Dockers' Union. There is, as has already been mentioned, a little overlapping of spheres of work on the south side with the stevedores. Where the work is similar, the pay is similar also, and strength of organisation follows invariably a higher rate of pay. Work which any labourer can do is ill paid and difficult to organise.

"The Dock, Wharf, Riverside, and General Labourers' Union" is an organisation which now extends over the whole country. It is divided for London into six districts, with about sixty branches. The number of financial members is not published except in total, and depends for each branch, as we have seen, on the degree of strictness with which a general rule is applied; but the total amount of contributions received by each branch is given in the accounts (which are prepared with great care), and from these amounts a reasonable estimate can be formed (see table below). The contributions received during any period may be diminished by members falling behind, or swollen by the payment of arrears, or by the entrance fees of new members, but on the whole may be accepted as providing a rough measure of the number of financial members. The rate of subscription was 3*d.* per week, or 13*s.* for twelve months (having been raised from 2*d.* to 3*d.* in 1891).

	Branches.	Half-Year to 30th June.	Half-Year to 31st December.	Twelve Months, 1891.
		£	£	£
District I. Town warehouses	10	381	360	741
" II. Wapping and London Docks	11	492	235	727
" III. India and Millwall	11	669	461	1,130
" IV. South side	13	537	560	1,097
" V. Victoria and Albert	11	1,090	830	1,920
" VI. Tilbury	4	78	31	109
	60	3,247	2,477	5,724

If each 13s.¹ represents a financial member, we should have on the whole 8,800 for the year, or taking each half year by itself (at 6s. 6d. a member) about 10,000, dropping to about 7,500.

I am not able to make a comparison with 1890, because in that year very considerable sums, included in the accounts, were levied to assist strikers in Australia, and a further levy (not so well paid) was made to support a strike at Cardiff, but there is no doubt that the numbers would show a progressive falling off each half year—possibly from 15,000 to 12,500, and so to 10,000 and 7,500 in the two years. On the whole it is not improbable that the two unions together had within the London District about 20,000 financial members at the beginning of 1890, when nearly all who were employed could be counted, against about 10,000 now, or 50 per cent. of the total number.

Even if this be so, what remains represents a remarkable degree of organisation, when the character of the men and the difficulties of the task are taken into consideration. It must also be remembered that if the union has lost some strength in London, it has gained greatly elsewhere.

III.—*Disputes.*

The main subjects of dispute, whether with the employers or between the men and their own leaders, have been: (1) the dinner hour, (2) contract work and the plus system, and (3) the position of non-unionists. Of these the first two are complicated by a tangle of old customs. The third, concerning the treatment of non-unionists, is more simple, as the only question is of expediency. Given the power, and there is no hesitation amongst unionists as to its use.

Payment for the dinner time is a very old custom. When the pay was 2s. 6d. for a day of eight hours, an interval of a few minutes was allowed for beer during the morning, and twenty minutes for dinner, or more properly for lunch, as the dock labourer made his chief meal, tea and dinner in one, when his work was done. These short hours fell in with the customs' regulations, and if overtime was worked it was paid at 4d. an hour. On this plan the work at the docks, if ill paid, was fairly easy. In 1872 the men struck for and obtained 5d. an hour in place of 2s. 6d. a day. The dinner time was still allowed by the employer, and the men thus received 3s. 4d. for the full day, but only 2s. 11d. in winter, when the day was usually seven hours. The overtime rate became 6d. The employers met this advance by

¹ In the report for 1891 the total financial membership is given at 29,140 for the whole union, and the total of contributions at the various branches 18,784*l.*, or 12s. 11d. per head.

taking every advantage of the hour system. Men were not engaged till wanted, and were paid off at any hour if the work was finished. Beyond this, steps were taken by various applications of the contract and plus system to stimulate the men, so as to secure a full amount of work being done in each hour.

The "contract" system consisted of a bargain made with picked men, acting individually or in groups, who employed others at 5*d.* an hour and took for their own remuneration the difference between the money they received, a price per ton, and the wages they paid away. The "plus" system, worked under the dock foremen, attempted to interest every labourer in the expedition of the work by undertaking to pay beyond the regulation 5*d.* a further remuneration, based on a tonnage rate, fixed as for a contract. Wherever these systems could be applied they were adopted. It is not wonderful that they caused a good deal of heart-burning.

From the masters' point of view to "work" is for a man to do his best; to do otherwise is to be an idle fellow, taking money he has not earned. The men would be far from denying that there is such a thing as robbing the employer by loafing and idleness; but they recognise degrees of reasonable honest effort in work, and object, if I may so put it, to give sixpenny or sevenpenny work for 5*d.* The contract system was to them "sweating"—the slave-driving of small masters. It was a system which benefitted the dock company; and the contractors themselves might do very well; but the labourer had no advantage—he sweated that the others might profit.

The plus system, though seemingly more fair, was hardly more satisfactory. It lacked any sound basis, as the men had no voice in fixing the tonnage prices, nor insight into the calculations made, nor was the "plus" equally shared, the largest proportion going to the ganger, whose special interest it thus became to push on the others. There resulted a feeling amongst the men that the whole thing was delusive—a carrot tied in front of the poor donkey's nose to tempt him onwards. This grievance brought about a short strike in the London and India Docks, where chiefly the system applied, ending in the rule being made in 1885 that no labourer should receive less than 6*d.* an hour for contract jobs or for work on the plus system. Many more men than enough could however be had at 6*d.* an hour, and it was complained that in the struggle treating or bribing foremen in order to secure the privilege of work became common, if not customary.

The great strike followed in 1889, having for its objects the uniform 6*d.* rate of pay, the minimum half day's wages (2*s.*), and

the abolition of contract. These points were won, but to gain them dinner time pay was abandoned.

We have already seen how, by the excitement of this strike, all riverside workers were brought into line. No sooner was it settled than the divergence of the interests involved became obvious; and the greatest difficulty was in regard to dinner time pay.

At the wharves, where the hours were 6 to 6, or 8 to 6, it had been usual to pay 5*s.* for the long day and 4*s.* 2*d.* for the short day, being 5*d.* an hour over the whole time. The men were allowed for meals 1 hour out of 10, or 1½ out of 12. On the new system they were to get 6*d.* in place of 5*d.* an hour, but instead of gaining 10*d.* or 1*s.* on the day's work, the advantage, by their receiving nothing for meal times, was reduced to 5*d.* or 4½*d.* a day. They had not understood—they thought their interests had been neglected—they would not stand it—they always had been paid for meal times and always would be. So they re-opened the fight at Hay's Wharf, but were finally worsted by the introduction of outsiders engaged permanently on weekly pay.

Nor did the dockers like it, but they did not suffer quite so much on their short dinner time, and the other points in the settlement concerned them more than the wharf men; for the system of taking men on and discharging them short of half a day, which was put an end to, applied principally to the docks, and the contract work objected to was entirely an affair of the docks.

Amongst those working at the different docks there was a similar clashing of interests. The grain and timber men, and the south side workers generally, complained that their interests had been neglected. In this case however the difficulty was settled amicably between the men and their employers.

It is to be remarked that whenever pay is drawn at a minimum or subsistence rate, with a plus to follow according to results, the question of the dinner hour loses its point, assuming there is anything to divide; for the extra wages paid would only reduce the amount to be distributed. When the settlement of 1889 was made, it was agreed that the work might, when desirable, be given to the men at a price per ton, and done under the joint supervision of dock officials and representatives of the men; but the plan did not succeed. Control over the men being nominally shared between the dock foremen and the representatives, was practically lost. The chance of obtaining more than 6*d.* an hour by working hard was to many of the men less attractive than working easy at the minimum rate. The result was that they did not give "sixpennyworth of

"work" for the 6*d.* The representatives of the union could not make their men work properly, but they could and did exclude non-union men from being taken on. There was thus a good deal of friction, and after twelve months' trial the system was put an end to in November, 1890. In place of it the joint committee now allow on most of the work a gratuitous plus over and above the 6*d.* an hour. This they reckon in their own way, and all who work share in it equally. It varies from nothing to about 3*d.* an hour, and even where the average earned is lowest, it more than pays for the dinner hour.

At Millwall direct contracts taken by gangs of men work quite well. One man in each gang is leader and spokesman, but all work and share alike. The gang of contractors employ some subordinate labour at 6*d.* an hour. The work done in this way, handling grain and timber, has a special character.

As a substitute for both contract and plus, an attempt has been made to introduce strict co-operation, and where the conditions are simple, remarkable successes have been made. Yet even so the system does not spread, and seems more likely to die out. It does not seem possible at present to obtain out of the democratic organisation of the men any practical working leadership which shall be able to make bargains, inspire confidence, and enforce discipline.

The last subject of dispute to which I have referred concerns the footing of non-unionists—the claims of free labour, the rights of "blacklegs."

Immediately after the settlement of 1889 there was trouble between union and non-union men, aggravated by very bitter feeling against the men who had been engaged to keep the work going during the strike. The unionists refused to work with non-unionists, and were able generally to enforce this rule. Some of the "blacklegs" left, some obtained permanent places, and some joined the union. This cause of dispute was consequently got over. The power of the union to enforce membership is now very limited, and with the lack of this power has gone one fruitful cause of disputes. On this point there can perhaps never be a hearty agreement between employers and employed. No employer likes to be dictated to, or limited in his choice of those he employs; while the men will never abandon the desire to decide with whom they shall work, and if they have this power will always be tempted to use it to strengthen the weak-kneed and to coerce the unwilling; in the interests, real or supposed, of their organisations.

There was at first some friction between the Dockers' Union and the South Side League, but they now work together, and must be considered as representing jointly docker organisation.

IV.—*Numbers Employed.*

(1.) The whole work, organised or unorganised, is very irregular in character, being affected by the weather and many fortuitous circumstances, as well as by the seasons of the year, and by the occurrence of certain great sales held periodically each year in London. To find enough men at all times involves having many standing idle at other times, and even high rates of pay, such as are received by the men who handle grain and timber, do not produce a satisfactory average income, when little opportunity presents itself, and probably little effort is made, to find supplementary work.

The information collected may be best expressed graphically, and I submit a series of charts and diagrams for this purpose.²

Where organisation is complete, as with lightermen, stevedores, and coal porters, the total numbers amongst whom the work is divided are fairly well known, but it is not so with regard to ordinary dock and waterside labour. I am, however, able to show what have been the actual numbers employed day by day in each important branch of the work for the year ending 31st March, 1892. This information, which was collected with the kind co-operation of the dock managers and wharf and steamship owners, in order to be submitted to the Labour Commission, is summarised in the table which follows:—

It will be seen that the greatest number returned as employed on any one day (3rd December, 1891) was 17,994, but the day of maximum employment differs in each division, so that taking the divisions as distinct labour markets, 21,353 men would be required to do the work. The number would be still larger if each small centre of employment were treated separately. The men are mostly known at, and attached to, some particular centre, having their names inscribed, perhaps, on some list which gives preference for employment; and sometimes, if well placed on this list, they will seek work nowhere else. It indeed follows that if they are well known at and constant to one department, they will be unknown at any other. But, within a certain range, there is a great deal of movement, the men flocking wherever work seems most likely to be had, and an imperfect adjustment is thus obtained, which makes it probable that the number of men needed under the present system, though more than the theoretic 18,000, will be less than the addition of the district maxima. The number will probably be somewhere between 18,000 and 22,000, and may be roughly estimated at 20,000. The number of those who regularly compete for the work is larger, and may amount to the full 22,000.

² These have been published with the evidence taken by the Royal Commission.

TABLE A.—Number of Men Employed Daily (excluding Tilbury), 1891-92.

Where.	Maximum.			Minimum.			Average.	
	Date.	Number.	Addition.	Date.	Number.	Addition.	Number.	Addition.
London and St. Katharine's Docks.....	Feb. 5	3,789	{ 8,224 }	Oct. 12	1,249	{ 3,092 }	2,302	{ 5,284 }
East and West India Docks.....	Jan. 7	2,380		Nov. 11	619		1,317	
Victoria and Albert Docks	Oct. 28	1,107		July 1	611		865	
Town warehouses	Nov. 24	948		May 27	613		800	
Total of Joint Committees' employ- ment (excluding Tilbury)	Feb. 9	7,781	—	Nov. 11.....	3,553	—	—	—
Shipowners, Victoria and Albert Docks	Nov. 13	2,091	{ 7,540 }	Oct. 19	562	{ 3,578 }	1,322	{ 5,443 }
„ London Docks	Jan. 28	415		July 4	5		116	
North' side wharves and warehouses	Sept. 29	3,856		Dec. 24	2,675		3,277	
(except town warehouses)	Nov. 14	1,178		Feb. 8	336		728	
Millwall Dock	Nov. 13	7,034	—	Dec. 24*	4,114	—	—	—
Total of other north side employment	Nov. 13	13,305	—	Nov. 11	8,008	—	—	10,727
Total north side	Feb. 9	18,021	{ 5,589 }	March 12—18	621	{ 3,222 }	1,248	{ 4,448 }
Surrey Commercial Docks	July 11—17	1,802		June 30	2,601		3,200	
South side wharves and warehouses	Nov. 14	3,787	—	March 10	3,439	—	—	—
Total south side	Nov. 4	5,410	—	Dec. 24*	11,967	9,892	—	15,175
Grand total	Dec. 3	17,994	21,353					

* The smallest number employed being on Christmas Eve, it may be well to give the next smallest, viz.: "Other" north side, March 15, 4,265. Grand total, March 11, 12,200.

Note.—Two firms of shipowners and a few of the minor wharves made no returns; the numbers omitted might amount to from 200 to 500 men.

(2.) The first chart shows the numbers employed by the joint committee including and excluding the Tilbury Docks. I do not know to what extent men living in the London district go by train to work at Tilbury; or, living at Tilbury, come to work in the London district; but as the distance is great, it seems best to treat Tilbury by itself.

At Tilbury, as over the rest of the dock system, more work is shown from December to March than during the rest of the year; but there are special depressions in May, June, and November not shared by the other districts as a whole. The irregularity of work at Tilbury is very marked, and if we may assume that those who seek their work here are numerous enough to do all that offers at the busiest time, and that they are for the most part out of reach of other chances, then it must follow that many of them are very often necessarily idle.

The line on the chart showing the total numbers employed without Tilbury, is in some ways more satisfactory. In this line we can trace the influence of larger causes, involving less uncertainty than those which make daily and weekly irregularity of work, and there is thus a better chance for finding supplementary earnings. Stated broadly, from the end of April to the middle of November there is a deficiency of work, and this is especially marked after the middle of July, though subject to a temporary rush of work at the end of September.

From July to September is the time of the harvest, and is also the time when the militia, to which many of the men belong, is in training. During these months very many men find work elsewhere. It will be less easy to find supplementary work in October and early in November, and again there will be little to fill up the deficiency shown in March.

The table which follows shows that the maximum number employed on any one day, in all branches of the work of the joint committee (excepting Tilbury), is 7,750, but that on two days only was there work for more than 7,500, on seven days only for any more than 7,000, and on seventeen days only for more than 6,500 men.

TABLE B.—*Particulars of Employment at the Docks under the Management of the Joint Committee (excluding Tilbury).*

			Days.
4,000	3,750 men had work for		308—309
	250 additional men could have had work for		295—307
5,000	250	" "	279—291
	250	" "	243—273
	250	" "	213—240
	250	" "	186—207
6,000	250	" "	148—179
	250	" "	127—145
	250	" "	91—118
	250	" "	71—89
7,000	250	" "	45—62
	250	" "	23—42
	250	" "	10—17
	250	" "	7—9
7,750	250	" "	4—7
	250	" "	2—3
	250	" "	1—2
			Per Cent.
Work done by permanent men			32·2
Other (possible) constant work			35·1
Nearly constant work (necessary deficiency not more than 15 days)			8·4
Irregular work			24·3
			100·0

We have no certainty as to the number of men who make this work their regular business, but we may safely say that 6,500 would be enough, as the 1,000 to 1,250 additional men who are at the most needed would undoubtedly be attracted to the docks at any time by the offer of work.

On the assumption then that 6,500 men take up this work for their livelihood, and have the "first call" for it, and that the surplus labour offering takes up dock work in the intervals of other work, the figures would show that for the 6,500 men, if all shared alike, there would be about four-fifths of full employment (or 250 days work out of a possible 309). But they do not share alike. There are (1) the permanent men; (2) those having first preference (list A), all of whom are now engaged by the week; (3) the second preference (list B); and (4) the third preference (list C): and there may be others who, though not listed, are dock labourers by profession. Moreover, the number who seek their livelihood regularly in this work is certainly more than 6,500.

In the year under review the permanent men numbered 1,780 at the outset, falling to 1,630 at the close. The men on the A list beginning at 850, ended at 1,200. Those on the B list increased from 2,000 to 2,500. Those on the C list—1,300 to 1,400 from April to November, 1891—rose to over 2,000, and including a

supplementary list to over 3,000, receding later to between 2,000 and 2,500, at which figure the numbers stood at the end of March, 1892. [The supplementary list seems to have been connected with the wool sales, and probably contained names already listed elsewhere.]

Thus though the total number on the lists up to November, 1891, was from 6,000 to 6500, the maximum reached in the winter of 1891-92 was 8,500, and the year ends with a total of 8,000. There seems no reason to suppose that any considerable number of men appear on more than one regular list, but it may be that the lists include men who are not regular dock labourers, and are rather to be counted as belonging to some other trade working occasionally at the docks. The great increase in the number on the list during November, 1891, signalled the acceptance by the men of the list method, and it is improbable that there are now many men who seek work regularly at the docks whose names are not on one or other list.

In considering the division of the work amongst these various classes, the following supposititious table may be useful:—

	Men.	Days.	Days' Work.
Permanent men	1,700	294 (309 days, less 5 per cent.)	= 499,800
First preference (A)	1,000	278 (" 10 ")	= 278,000
Second ,, (B)	2,000	247 (" 20 ")	= 494,000
Third ,, (C)	1,800	195 (" 37 ")	= 350,200
	6,500	250 (average)	1,622,000
Occasional labour	1,250	7	8,000
Maximum numbers	7,750	210 (average)	1,630,000

Note.—309 days constitutes the full working year.

It will be seen that for the assumed numbers of each class I have inserted an estimate for lost time: 5 per cent. for the permanent men, 10 per cent. for the A list, and 20 per cent. for the B list, leaving 37 per cent. loss to be borne by the C class if we limit their number to 1,800, and treat the last 1,250 men as taking on the average only seven days each. This result is rather what *might be* than what *is*, and if leaving the 8,000 occasional days to outsiders, we divide the third preference work amongst the residue of the listed men, all of whom may claim to be considered professional dockers, there would be only 106 days' work out of 309, or about one-third work for them, or probably, in truth from one-half to one-fourth work, as the percentage of loss of time is no doubt really a constantly rising one, from one end of the scale to the other.

It is a debateable question whether 4*s.* or 4*s.* 6*d.* or some intermediate sum should be taken as the normal value of a day's work.³

If 4*s.* be taken, we get the following average rates of pay:—

		<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
For the A list of	1,000 men	21	4 per week.
„ B „	2,000 „	19	- „
„ C „	3,300 „	8	- „

If 4*s.* 6*d.* be taken as the basis for translating a day's work into money, the amounts would be one-eighth more.⁴

It is not to be supposed that no earnings would be made by the casually employed men when they are not required at the docks, but such earnings are very precarious, and it would be rash to estimate them at more than 1*s.* a day on the average. If this rate be taken, it would raise the total earnings of Class C by about 4*s.* a week, or from 8*s.* or 9*s.* to 12*s.* or 13*s.* a week on the year's average.

It thus appears that while picked men may make as high an average as 24*s.*, the ordinary rank and file of the dockers earn, at their trade, from about 21*s.* at most to about 8*s.* a week, and may supplement this by other earnings, which will probably vary according to the amount of unoccupied time and the use made of it, from 1*s.* to 5*s.* a week. Those who belong, in truth, to other trades, but come at times to the docks, are probably no better off; but their earnings should rather be viewed in connection with the trade to which they are properly accredited.

(5.) At the Victoria and Albert Docks the more regular work is that provided by the Dock Company. That done for the ship-owners varies very much from week to week.

On the whole, there is more work from August to March than during the rest of the year, but during the busiest time there are also the days of least work—a thousand men being put off or taken on according to the weather or the press of work.

The work offered at these docks is desirable: much of it is paid at 7*d.* an hour, and more hours are worked than at the East and West India Docks or London and St. Katharine's Docks. It therefore attracts the best men. There is no very decided busy or slack season. The result is that very few outsiders find employment, those who seek their work here and nowhere else being perhaps enough to meet every demand.

³ See Appendix.

⁴ The limits of possible error in these figures are not very wide. If the men on List C make any more than 8*s.* or 9*s.* on the average, so much the less will fall to the men on List B.

TABLE C.—*Particulars of Employment at the Royal Victoria and Albert Docks, April, 1891, to April, 1892.*

			Days.
1,500	1,200	men had work for.....	309
	100	additional men could have had work for	308
	100	" "	306
	100	" "	305
2,000	100	" "	300—305
	100	" "	290—294
	100	" "	271—281
	100	" "	245—259
2,500	100	" "	218—229
	100	" "	182—200
	100	" "	147—161
	100	" "	109—124
3,000	100	" "	78— 92
	100	" "	54— 67
	100	" "	35— 43
	100	" "	23— 29
3,150	100	" "	14— 18
	100	" "	8— 13
	100	" "	5— 7
	100	" "	1— 3
	50	" "	1
			Per Cent.
Possible constant work			55·0
Nearly constant work (necessary deficiency not more than 15 days)			20·4
Irregular work.....			24·6
			<hr/> 100·0

This table does not show the men with permanent employment, as we have this information only for the Dock Company's employés. The percentage of necessarily irregular work is much the same as for the whole of the joint committee's system—about 25 per cent.

If we assume 3,000 men to be needed, we find that there is on the average 222 days' work for each, and then 150 more men must be attracted to do about three days' work a-piece. Of the 3,000 men we may perhaps assume that 1,000 would not lose over 10 per cent., and another 1,000 not over 25 per cent., and if so the last 1,000 would lose 46 per cent. If, however, there are (as is not improbable) 3,500 men who find their living at these docks, and if the first 2,000 still hold their place in preference, then the last 1,500 would lose 64 per cent.

The average value of a day's work at these docks may perhaps be 4s. 6d., and if so, the earnings of the men divided into three classes as above would be—

	s.	d.
For 1,000 men	24	— per week.
"	21	4 "
"	13	1 "

or, allowing 3,500 men in all, the last 1,500 would earn about 8s. 8d. per week.

(4.) The chart showing a year's employment at the East and West India Docks is chiefly noticeable for its "regular irregularity." The fact that on the whole there is most work in the winter is almost disguised by the sharp depressions occurring at the beginning and end of each month; August and March appear to be the worst months. The general character of the line makes it probable that those who rely on this work attend day after day for work which, though very uncertain, may at any time require every man. I am told that the difficulties of those who do not look elsewhere are aggravated by the central position these docks hold: it being comparatively easy for men who are not wanted at the docks lying east and west, or to the south and across the river, to make for the India Docks.

The table which follows shows a maximum of 2,350 men employed on any one day at the East and West India Docks, of whom 300 are permanently engaged. But only on nine days were any more than 1,900 employed, and only on eighteen days any more than 1,800.

TABLE D.—*Particulars of Employment at the East and West India Docks, April, 1891, to April, 1892.*

		Days.	
	600 men had work for.....	309	
1,000	100 additional men could have had work for....	307—308	
	100 " " "	303—306	
	100 " " "	286—299	
	100 " " "	266—274	
	100 " " "	225—251	
1,500	100 " " "	195—209	
	100 " " "	162—175	
	100 " " "	122—140	
	100 " " "	84—105	
	100 " " "	54—71	
2,000	100 " " "	33—41	
	100 " " "	18—25	
	100 " " "	9—12	
	100 " " "	6	
	100 " " "	6	
2,350	100 " " "	3—4	
	100 " " "	1—3	
	50 " " "	1	
			Per Cent.
	Work done by permanent men.....	21'6	
	Other (possible) constant work	24'0	
	Nearly constant work (necessary deficiency not more than 15 days)	18'8	
	Irregular work.....	35'6	
			100'0

The Dock Company have about 1,900 men on their lists, viz., 300 permanent, 300 A, 700 B, and 600 C. If these men are all at work they need 500 extra when at the busiest.

If the extra men required on nine days of the year were to be drawn from outside, and if of the 1,600 listed men who divide the

work A lose 10 per cent., and B 20 per cent., it would follow that the C class would lose 66 per cent., and taking 4s. as the value of a day's work, A would earn on the average 2 1s. 4d. per week, B 19s., and C 8s.

The chance of making money out of off-days is perhaps not very good at this dock, as the work, though irregular day by day, is unusually steady week by week, thus demanding the constant attendance of those who make it their regular pursuit.

(5.) The main features of the line of employment shown on the chart for the London and St. Katharine's Docks are explicable by the periodic wool sales, which stand out clearly on the line used to indicate that part of the labour employed in the wool department. The rest of the work rather intensifies than subdues the curve indicating that the work connected with these sales extends beyond the wool department itself to the rest of the dock, as is no doubt the case. There are, however, other agencies at work causing the numbers employed to run up to a considerable height, from time to time, between the sales. The maximum number employed is 4,000 on 5th February, the minimum number is 1,300 on 11th November.

TABLE E.—*Particulars of Employment at the London and St. Katharine's Docks, April, 1891, to April, 1892.*

		Days.
	1,300 men had work for.....	309
1,500 {	100 additional men could have had work for	306—307
	100 " "	297—305
	100 " "	280—284
	100 " "	265—274
2,000 {	100 " "	244—254
	100 " "	225—236
	100 " "	212—221
	100 " "	201—206
	100 " "	184—195
2,500 {	100 " "	169—173
	100 " "	145—155
	100 " "	125—135
	100 " "	112—118
	100 " "	95—103
3,000 {	100 " "	80—88
	100 " "	69—77
	100 " "	60—67
	100 " "	56—58
	100 " "	49—53
3,500 {	100 " "	33—39
	100 " "	22—25
	100 " "	17—18
	100 " "	14—16
	100 " "	9—13
4,000 {	100 " "	8
	100 " "	6—7
	100 " "	1—3
		Per Cent.
	Work done by permanent men.....	27'1
	Other (possible) constant work.....	27'1
	Nearly constant work (necessary deficiency not more than 15 days)	8'2
	Irregular work.....	37'6
		<u>100'0</u>

Any deductions from this table must take into account the peculiarities of the case. The wool sales afford occasional employment for about 700 extra men; the work is liked, and these men are drawn from all sides. If we could deduct them, and the work they do, from the table, it would be very different. The wool sales occupy in all about 124 days, and assuming that all the additional men needed are outsiders, we get the following result:—

650 permanent men, working 294 days (309, less 5 per cent.)	= 191,100
700 extra men for wool sales, 124 days	= 86,800
2,650 others, average 163 days	= 433,400
<u>4,000</u>	<u>711,300</u>

Of the 2,650 "others," there are 500 who are not wanted more than sixteen days in the year. If these 500 men were obtained from outside, the rest of the work could be performed by 2,150 men, who would have on the average about two-thirds work. There are, however, 2,400 men on the A B and C lists, and the division of the work among them may be about as given below:—

A....	400 men working 278 days (309, less 10 per cent.).....	= 111,200
B....	1,000 " 247 " (" 20 ").....	= 247,000
C....	1,000 " 71 " (" 77 ").....	= 71,000
		<u>429,200</u>
	Occasional work, 500 men averaging 8 days	= 4,200
		<u>433,400</u>

If the C list were reduced to 750, making 2,150 listed in all, each man on the C list might have ninety-five days' work instead of seventy-one as assumed above.⁵

These results, though they may be exaggerated in statement are in accordance with the generally admitted fact that the work at the London and St. Katharine's Docks is for "casualty men," the most casual of any on the river side. It must also be said that it is here especially that we find those labourers who do not desire regular work, and who fall in readily with the off and on employment obtainable at the dock gates, and find means to eke out an existence by many shifts.

(6.) There is a very great similarity between the line on the chart representing the south side wharves and warehouses, and that for the western section of the north side, both showing general

⁵ It seems probable that in these docks the men on the B list do not obtain so much as 247 days' work. Any reduction of the share allotted to them would by so much increase that of Class C.

features, which are reproduced in a more marked way on the total line. The same features can just be traced in the line representing the eastern section of the north side, but this line shows on the whole very great regularity the year through. The variations from day to day, or week to week, are not very great in any of the lines.

In the aggregate a surplus of work is shown from September to Christmas, and a deficiency from March to August, the months of January and February representing about the mean. Holiday and fog combined cause a very marked depression in Christmas week.

TABLE F.—*Particulars of Employment,* North Side Wharves and Warehouses.*

			Days.
3,500	3,400 men had work for		309
	100 additional men could have had work for		305—308
4,000	100	"	297—301
	100	"	287—294
	100	"	269—282
	100	"	232—251
	100	"	179—204
4,500	100	"	127—144
	100	"	93—112
	100	"	62—77
	100	"	48—56
	100	"	26—40
4,750	100	"	10—15
	100	"	3—7
	50	"	1
			Per Cent.
Work done by permanent men.....			33'9
Other (possible) constant work.....			49'6
Nearly constant work (necessary deficiency not more than 15 days)			6'0
Irregular work			10'5
			<hr/> 100'0 <hr/>

In this table the proportion of necessarily irregular work is only 10 per cent., and doubtless the work at the wharves is less subject to fluctuation than at the docks; but on the other hand, there will be less interchange of men between one wharf and another than between different departments in the same dock. The figures show that there would be pretty fair work for 4,500 men, but it is not improbable that 5,000 men find their living in it. There are 1,400 permanent men, and if we divide 3,600 more into

* With the labourers employed in the wharves and other warehouses are here re-stated those employed in the "town warehouses" managed by the joint dock committee. The whole form one field of employment, and the masters are mostly members of an association which holds its meetings at the Dock House.

three classes, we obtain the following not improbable proportion of work to men :—

1,400 permanent,	294 days (309, less 5 per cent.).....	= 411,600
1,600 first preference, 278	„ („ 10 „).....	= 444,800
1,000 second „ 247	„ („ 20 „).....	= 247,000
1,000 third „ 146	„ („ 53 „).....	= 146,300
<u>5,000</u>		<u>1,249,700</u>

If a day's work is worth 4s. 6d., the average weekly earnings in each class of daily labour would amount to for first preference, 24s.; second preference, 21s. 4d.; third preference, 12s. 7d. The permanent men would make about 27s. a week, setting overtime against off days.

TABLE G.—*Particulars of Employment, South Side Wharves and Warehouses, April, 1891, to April, 1892.*

		Days.	
	2,600 men could have had work for	309	
3,000	100 „	302—305	
	100 „	288—299	
	100 „	258—276	
	100 „	232—247	
3,500	100 „	193—211	
	100 „	161—181	
	100 „	124—136	
	100 „	85—106	
3,800	100 „	42—61	
	100 „	18—29	
	100 „	3—9	
	100 „	1—2	
			Per Cent.
Work done by permanent men		37.5	
Other (possible) constant work.....		43.8	
Nearly constant work (necessary deficiency not more than 15 days). ..		6.1	
Irregular work.....		12.6	
		<u>100.0</u>	

The proportion of irregular work is here given as 12½ per cent., 3,800 men being needed altogether, of whom 100 are only wanted on three days, and another 100 only on fifteen days. There is pretty fair work for 3,500 men, but as with the north wharves, it is probable that a larger number, not less than 4,000, compete.

There are 1,200 permanent men, and we may make the following table :—

1,200 permanent men, 294 days (309, less 5 per cent.).....	= 352,800
1,200 first preference, 278 „ („ 10 „).....	= 333,600
800 second „ 247 „ („ 20 „).....	= 197,600
800 third „ 131 „ („ 53 „).....	= 104,800
<u>4,000</u>	<u>988,800</u>

Again taking wages at 4s. 6d. a day, we get the following for an estimate of the weekly earnings made:—

First preference, 24s.; second preference, 21s. 4d.; third preference, 11s. 4d.

(7.) *Surrey Commercial and Millwall Docks.*⁷—Taking the docks separately, the chart shows that at the Commercial Dock the highest point is touched about the middle of July, and a fairly high level maintained till the middle of January, with occasional depressions, of which the most marked are at the time of the August bank holiday and at Christmas. From the beginning of April till the middle of July there is not so much work, May being the worst month; and from the middle of January to the end of March there was an almost constant decline in the numbers employed, with the result that on 31st March, 1892, work was found for only 725 men compared to the 1,175 men employed on the 1st April, 1891, when our year began.

At Millwall also, work is best in the autumn and early part of the winter, but the full time does not begin till the end of August. The line is subject to some sharp depressions, due to the weather in October and November, and touches the lowest point at Christmas. May, June, and July show a varying line, but when once the line drops in January there is little to relieve the slackness till the middle of May. The year ends on 31st March, 1892, with employment for 350 men less than it began with on 1st April, 1891, this reduction being due in both docks to the Russian famine and the consequent prohibition of grain export from Russia.

A comparison of the amount of labour employed on handling grain with the total labour employed, shows that it is to grain that the variations must largely be attributed. The number of men on other work varies, however, from 586 at least (on 8th May) to 1,591 at most (on 21st August). From August to January is the period of most work in these as well as in the grain departments. The bulk of this other work consists of handling timber. Special strength and aptitude are required for grain and timber, and it is not possible for outsiders to compete for this work. On the other hand the men who are accustomed to it do not care to take other, less paid, work at all.

⁷ For part of the work at the Commercial Dock no record is kept of the number of men employed, and for this work the numbers have been estimated from the wages paid—the proportion of number to wages having been decided by a special inquiry into the facts for a few selected weeks.

TABLE H.—*Particulars of Employment at Surrey Commercial Docks, April, 1891, to April, 1892.*

		Days.
1,000	{ 600 men had work for	309
	{ 100 additional men could have had work for	291—303
	{ 100 " "	275—281
	{ 100 " "	258—263
	{ 100 " "	242—258
1,500	{ 100 " "	218—230
	{ 100 " "	174—207
	{ 100 " "	144—162
	{ 100 " "	102—132
	{ 100 " "	66—84
1,800	{ 100 " "	42—54
	{ 100 " "	18—42
	{ 100 " "	6
		Per Cent.
Possible constant work		50·2
Nearly constant work (necessary deficiency not more than 15 days)...		8·2
Irregular work		41·6
		<hr/> 100·0 <hr/>

TABLE I.—*Particulars of Employment at the Millwall Docks, April, 1891, to April, 1892.*

		Days.
500	{ 300 men had work for	309
	{ 100 additional men could have had work for	301—308
	{ 100 " "	262—287
1,000	{ 100 " "	214—240
	{ 100 " "	171—193
	{ 100 " "	119—134
	{ 100 " "	79—103
	{ 100 " "	37—55
1,200	{ 100 " "	14—24
	{ 100 " "	2—5
		Per Cent.
Possible constant work		41·1
Nearly constant work (necessary deficiency not more than 9 days)....		13·6
Irregular work		45·3
		<hr/> 100·0 <hr/>

Both of these tables show a greater proportion of irregular employment than we have found for the docks under the joint committee.

In neither dock are the permanent men stated separately, nor are there very many of them. Each dock has its own system of piece or contract work, and the men of the regular gangs are in effect preference men. A good deal of money is earned on this contract work, but the slack seasons affect all hands. Dividing the men arbitrarily into three classes, according to their chances for work, they may probably make on the average 30s., 20s., and

ros. a week respectively. As to numbers there is a little interchange between these docks, but on the whole it is not likely that there are less than 3,000 men who seek their living at them.

(8.) The charts include a daily record of the weather, in which red indicates rain sufficient to interfere with work, and black indicates fog. In this record morning is divided from afternoon, and we thus obtain nine varieties of description in each colour. The whole day may be fine, showery, or wet, or a day may begin with any of the three, and change from fine to showery or wet, from showery to fine or to wet, or from wet to showery or fine. Similarly fog, if present at all, may be dense or slight, or may change from one to the other during the day.

The proportion of rainy and foggy days was as follows:—

Rain all day	16	} days.		
„ followed by showers	1			
„ in morning only	6			
Showers, followed by rain	1			
Showery all day	18			
„ in morning only	22			
Fine, followed by rain	4	}	Rainy	89 days.
„ showers	21		Foggy	25 „
			Fine	195 „
				<hr/>
				309
				<hr/>
Dense fog all day	4	} days.		
„ in morning	7			
Foggy all day	3			
„ followed by dense fog	1			
„ morning	6			
Fine, followed by fog	4			

There is no cure for fog; when it is dense work must stop at the docks. But this is not necessarily the case with rain, as the provision of some form of shelter is at least conceivable. A rainy day throws off from 500 to 2,500 men, and costs 4s. a day to each of them. If the interests of masters and men were the same, some means would probably be found to avoid this loss, which in the course of the year must amount to a very large sum. It may be said that the work must be done sooner or later, and the line on the chart shows that in proportion as few men are taken on during rain, additional men are needed when the rain ceases. This, however, does not make up the loss to the men, as the extra demand for men when the rain ceases only brings in additional workers.

(9.) Taking docks, wharves, and warehouses together, it appears that there was work—

Days' Work.

On 302—309 days for 12,500 men (or all the year round)	=	about 3,840,000
„ 293—301 „ 500 more (all year except part of March)	=	„ 150,000
„ 284—297 „ 500 „ (all year except part of March, May, and August)	=	„ 146,000
„ 260—283 „ 500 „ (ditto ditto)	=	„ 138,000
„ 219—259 „ 500 „ (part of March, May, June, July, and August without work)	=	„ 125,000
„ 158—218 „ 500 „ (no work in August, very little in March, not half work in May and June, and no month without some loss of time)	=	„ 101,000
<hr/> 15,000		<hr/> 4,500,000

On 121—157 days for 500 more (no work in March, May, June, or August, and not much in July; half work in April and September)	=	about 75,000
„ 80—120 „ 500 „ (no work in March, and practically none 1st May to end of September)	=	„ 54,000
„ 44—79 „ 500 „ (about half work in November, December, January, and February. No other work except a short spell at the end of September)	=	„ 33,000
„ 24—43 „ 500 „ (only quarter work in November, December, January, and February)	=	„ 18,000
„ 7—23 „ 500 „ (practically no work, except at end of November and beginning of December)	=	„ 8,500
„ 7 „ 500 „ (needed at the beginning of December only)	=	„ 3,500
<hr/> 18,000		<hr/> 4,692,000

As has been said, it seems probable that in the way the work is now distributed, 20,000 men are actually needed, and that there may be as many as 22,000 professional dockers. This number is made up as follows :—

Usually employed at Victoria and Albert Docks	3,500
„ East and West India	2,000
„ London and St. Katharine	4,000
„ north side wharves and warehouses	5,000
„ south „	4,000
„ Millwall Docks	1,200
„ Surrey Commercial Docks	1,800
	<hr/>
	21,500 ⁸

The earnings are also shared by incomers from other trades who seek work at the docks, not because the docks are busy, but because their own trades are slack. How many there are of these at any one time, or altogether, it is not easy to say; but whatever their numbers may be, the work they do must be deducted from that at the disposal of the professional docker. It is the fact of these outsiders coming, not only when needed but at all times, which makes the peculiar difficulty of dock industry.

The improvement in the position of the professional docker might be found in an increase in the number of those who come from other trades to share his work if they were introduced only when the docks were busiest, and if at the same time the number of professional dockers were reduced. There appears to be good work actually for 14,500 to 15,000, or allowing for sickness and unavoidable friction, for about 16,000 men. For these, with strict preference over all outsiders, there would be an average of 281 days out of 309. This calculation assumes that when needed 3,000 more men could be obtained from the unemployed in other trades. The year's work would then be divided somewhat as shown below:—

		Days' Work.
Permanent men....	4,000, working 294 days (309, less 5 per cent.)	= 1,176,000
First preference....	4,000, „ 287 „ 7½ „	= 1,148,000
Second „	4,000, „ 278 „ 10 „	= 1,112,000
Third „	4,000, „ 266 „ 14 „	= 1,064,000
	<hr/>	
	16,000 average.	4,500,000
Outsiders	3,000, working 63 days average	190,000
	<hr/>	
	19,000	4,690,000

⁸ The 10,000 financial members of the union may be approximately divided as under among the various docks, &c.:—

London and St. Katharine.....	4,000 men, of whom about 700 are organised.
Victoria and Albert	3,500 „ 2,500 „
East and West India	} 3,200 „ 1,400 „
Millwall	
North side wharves and ware- houses	} 5,000 „ 1,200 „
South side wharves and ware- houses	
Surrey Commercial Docks....	} 5,800 „ 4,200 „
	<hr/>
	21,500 10,000

Figured at 4s. a day, the preference men would average 22s. 1d., 21s. 4d., and 20s. 5d., or at 4s. 6d., 24s. 10d., 24s., and 22s. 11d. per week. The off-time of the third preference men would fall in the summer, mostly in August, and might be made of some value. If the outsiders, who it will be remembered are wanted mainly in the winter, could be drawn from those trades which are slack at that time, they too might find a sufficient amount of work between two sources of employment for a decent livelihood. This arrangement, if it were feasible, would dispense entirely with the services of 5,000 or 6,000 men. It is not to be supposed that such a change could come about quickly.

The road towards it lies in perfecting the list system and, if possible, deciding over-night the number of men who will be required in each department on the following morning.

Priority of employment, as given in the joint committee's docks, is admitted not only between list and list, but also between man and man, according to the order in which the names stand on the various lists kept. But this inner priority is not absolute, some discretionary power resting in practice, if not in intention, with the foreman, who can pass a name over here, or give an advantage there, when it suits him to do so. This power may be used to favour friends or to give a "drilling" to some man. I believe it is usually exerted to check irregularity of attendance. Men will be told, "you have been playing to please yourself, and "now you can play to please us," or with the same view a man's name may be moved to the bottom of the list. In some form it is a useful, and even necessary power, but it needs safe-guarding if petty tyranny and unfair favouritism are to be avoided.

Every department of the joint dock service has its separate lists, and there are forty-six departments. The numbers enrolled at each vary from 5 to 500. No man is supposed to be on more than one list. Men working in any department other than their own are counted as extra men, exactly as though they were strangers from outside; and as in each department severally the work from day to day fluctuates very much, men even on the A list may not always find work at their "regular call." Of the B men, a considerable proportion have often to try elsewhere. This it is which causes needless rushing to and fro in pursuit of work. The men neither know how many will be required in their particular department, nor what others on the list will decide to do—whether try at home or seek elsewhere—nor do they know what work offers at other departments. Or rather, the knowledge is very vague, and calculated to cause rather than prevent rushes hither and thither. It may therefore happen that a man seeks work elsewhere and does not find it, while if he had stuck to his

proper call he would have been employed; and nearly everywhere we find extra men taken on, the *habitués* at one place appearing, evidently, as "extra" men elsewhere. It is no doubt the same at the wharves.

The statistics of "abstention" from work among men for whom it was apparently waiting, are consequently very misleading. There may be cases in which men who, while they complain of lack of work, do not work when they might, and there will be other cases when men go elsewhere, deliberately attracted by an equally good chance of a better job—as for instance in the case of extra men needed for the wool sales. Lighter work, more "plus," and it may be overtime, or a longer run of continuous work, will constitute a "better job." But in the great majority of cases it is clear (from an analysis of the dock companies' figures) that the explanation of the absence of listed men is due to a simple weighing of the chance of work at their own department (with such preference as they have) against the chance which offers elsewhere for "extra" men. Amongst extra men it is probable that there is an unwritten preference for men whose faces are well known, and it may even be politic for men not to confine themselves too rigidly to one department. These difficulties would end if the surplus men at one place could be transferred for preference at the nearest department which was in need of extra labour, but any such adjustment would require to be made over-night in such fashion that the men could go straight where they were booked to work.

V.—Possible Regulation of the Work.

Both masters and men desire to see a reduced proportion of very casual work, but there is a fundamental difference in the aims of the two parties, as well as in the methods relied upon to attain them.

The general policy of the wharf owners is to have as many permanent servants on weekly wages as possible, and the dock managers attempt to arrive at the same result by giving a strict preference for employment day by day to men of their A class, or as regards the Surrey and Millwall Docks, to the men of the regular gangs. The employers naturally desire to have a body of men on whom they can rely, as having too much to lose to engage without very grave cause in a strike. Beyond this it is their first interest to secure a sufficient supply of outside labour on which to draw. Formerly they looked no further, and, as I have said, accepted the struggle at the dock gates as unavoidable. The great strike and the public feeling awakened by it have had the effect of opening their eyes to the close connection which not only ought

to exist but actually does exist between their own welfare and that of the men they employ. I therefore approach the subject with the full assurance that any proposal having for its object an improvement in the condition of the labourers, will receive a ready and a favourable consideration from the employers.

The ideal of the men is different from that of the masters. They see in the employment of a permanent weekly staff a tendency to prevent the free distribution of the work and to weaken the men's power of combination. They find in it no solution of the labour question; and while accepting the practice as inevitable, desire to limit rather than extend its application. Outside of this body of "permanent" hands they would propose to form all other professional dockers into a strong ring, the members of which should be preferred for work to the exclusion of outsiders. They would wish that all within this ring should share alike in the chances of work, and would if they could limit the numbers of those forming it; but this is recognised as impossible at present. The ring is too easily broken. Most of the work can be done by any labourer, and when men are needed they must be found. The unions are therefore ready to accept any man as a member of their organisation, and to allow him to struggle with the rest for his proportion of the work.

It is questionable whether the men would be content with an actually *equal* division of the work if that were open to them. They will no doubt always prefer to do as well as they can for themselves. They ask only for *equal chances*. On the other hand, the masters, and especially the foremen, like to pick their men.

Is it possible to find a compromise which shall bring the ideas of the men sufficiently in line with the policy of the masters? Each side would need to give way to some extent. It is certain that men in plenty can be found, who in return for permanent work will be ready to make their employers' interests their own. Against this tendency the unions are powerless, and they will do wisely if they also recognise the superior claim which those who work regularly have to regular work. On the other hand the employers may perhaps be willing to accept this simple test of worth, and abandoning patronage, offer equal chances to all capable workmen by giving priority of employment strictly according to regularity of attendance. On this basis an orderly system of employment seems at least possible if it were adopted, and I believe that the results would prove beneficial to all concerned.

Given in rough outline, the plan I would suggest for the better regulation of dock and wharf labour is as follows:—

(1.) At each place or "call" where men are taken on for work

a list should be kept, and periodically adjusted, so that the names of the labourers stand in order of the regularity of their attendance. Each name to have its number.

(2.) These labour "calls" should be grouped conveniently according to district, and each group should have a central office in telephonic communication with all its branches.

(3.) At each place or "call" the number of labourers required should be (so far as practicable) determined on the previous day, and should be posted up in some conspicuous manner, as for instance—"Nos. 1 to 33 wanted here."

(4.) The surplus or deficiency of men at each "call" for the next day should be communicated to the central office of the group, to be there adjusted or "cleared," surplus being set against deficiency. The labour master or foreman at each "call" would then, if in need of extra labourers, be informed as to what men would be sent him, or if he has more men on his own list than he can employ, would be told whether the surplus would be required elsewhere, and if so, where. In the adjustment preference would be given to those whose place of call lay nearest.

(5.) Each place or "call" which did not require all its own men would then add to its announcement "Numbers 34 to 42 "wanted at (so and so)." "No work for numbers 43 to 50" (for example).

(6.) The information as to the next day's labour to be posted at each labour "call" before the men leave work on the preceding day; and also at some convenient common centre, for the benefit of those working at a distance from their usual call.

(7.) The centres of these groups should be themselves in communication, so that, when it happened (as sometimes it might) that every man in some group was employed and more needed, a transfer might be arranged from some other district; or at least that the men not needed in other groups might have information of the demand for men.

For such a plan as this to succeed it would be necessary that the men should recognise the system. They must accept the entering of their names on any list as a contingent engagement. Where they are needed, within the district, there they must go as directed. They can take a day off if they want it, but would be required to give notice beforehand, so that their name might not be counted in for the time. Only by complying with this condition could they expect to retain their preference for work, and I think they would be ready to comply.

The greater difficulty lies on the side of the employers, in having to determine in advance the amount of labour required. Here lies the crux of the proposal. It will not be a very easy

matter, and may even be said to be impossible. On this point I shall be well satisfied if I can arouse practical discussion, as I am inclined to think that the difficulties would be found more imaginary than real.

There are some other obstacles, but most of them may be overcome, or rather whittled away, by reducing the size of the groups, and it must be admitted, by to that extent reducing the efficacy of the plan. But believing as I do, that the principle is right, and that if tried the system would work satisfactorily and tend to perfect itself, I should be content with a very humble beginning. Moreover, gradual action would avoid difficulties and dangers of quite a different character which are involved in any great and sudden changes.

Not only is it unnecessary and even undesirable that, at the outset, the adjustment aimed at should be co-extensive with the whole area of the port, but it need not be adopted by all the employers in any district chosen. An employer who preferred to remain outside could do so, but in that case must by some means provide enough work for his own men, as they would not be able to obtain much elsewhere.

If, however, we for a moment assume that every employer joined—that the districts for groups were made as large as the distance the men were willing to travel allowed—and that the group centres were put into communication with each other so that surplus labour could be transferred, when requisite, from district to district, under some agreement as to travelling expenses—suppose also that the men fell in with the plan, and that all regular dockers registered their names, each at the place of employment he preferred. What then would happen?

Judging by the figures we have been studying, there would usually be more workers than work—not perhaps at every little “labour call,” but in any one dock or at any set of wharves. The work done would be shared amongst the enrolled men, with a reasonable self-acting advantage to those most able or most willing to work regularly, but otherwise much as it now is. Against outsiders, however, the door would be shut, excepting in so far as they were actually needed to make good deficiencies in the dockers’ ranks. The system would be adverse to two classes—those who do not wish for regular work, and those who come to the docks not because there is any demand for their services as dockers, or because they have chosen that profession, but solely because they have at the time no work to do in their proper trade.

Those who were seldom employed would gradually drop off. The numbers on the lists would grow less. In summer time many would leave. In the winter, when extra men were needed, their names might reappear.

When, with reduced lists, it happened that more men were required than were enrolled, the opening of a supplementary list for temporary employment could be relied on to draw a sufficient supply of good labour. This would probably happen every winter, and would conduce to the systematic dovetailing of seasonal employment.

The varying demand for labour at the docks can be provided for in four different ways: (1) By maintaining at all times a sufficient force to cope with the largest amount of work offering. (2) By working overtime when needed. (3) By drawing upon outside labour for additional hands in busy times. (4) By postponing some of the work. Of these four it is upon the first alone that the employers now rely, and the only mitigation of its hardship is the extent to which the men may themselves find other work in slack times. My present suggestion bears mainly upon the application of the third method here mentioned, *i.e.*, on the introduction when needed (and not at any other time) of outside labour. It may, however, be desirable to use the second and fourth methods to some extent. At times, without causing much delay, it may be possible to spread the work more evenly over the days, or a short pressure of business may be fairly met by overtime, in order to avoid bringing strangers in unnecessarily. If in addition any arrangements could be made for continuing out-door work during rain, it would tend in the same direction by levelling the curve of demand for labour.

If the principal dock and wharf owners were to adopt the system of transferring surplus enrolled men, hither or thither, in accordance with the actual daily demand for their services, 6,000 of those who now call themselves dockers could be (as I have shown) gradually dispensed with, to the lasting benefit of all concerned. It will be asked, what then will become of the displaced men? The answer is that the change would come slowly, and would act more by cutting off the incoming supply of men than in any other way. Among those whose sources of employment would be dried up, there are many who now depend on the earnings of their wives and children, and who work only enough to supply themselves with beer and tobacco. For them little pity need be felt. Beyond this the increased pressure on some lives during the period of change, cannot be weighed against the permanent and growing benefit which would result. I cannot overstate, I cannot even adequately state, how great a blessing more regular work would bring to some of the poorest parts of London. Of all the causes of poverty and misery, irregular work, coupled, as it always must be, with irregular lives, is by far the greatest. A change in this would effect more than almost anything else could do for the welfare of the people.

APPENDIX.

Daily Wages.

In order to help to determine the ordinary value of a day's work at the docks, the chairman of the Joint Committee of Management has supplied me with his calculations extending half year by half year from 1st January, 1891, to 30th June, 1892.

During this period (which covers the twelve months I have had under review) the value of "piece work" (or work at 6*d.* an hour with a plus) was on the average nearly 5*s.* a day.

The permanent men, when not employed on piece work, were paid on the average 4*s.* 6*d.* per day, and the day labourers when not on piece about 4*s.* There is much more piece work than day work.

Taking the middle period (from June to December, 1891), which is also the middle of the year I have reviewed, we have the following figures:—

	£	Per Day. s. d.
An average of 2,890 men on piece received.....	110,619, or	4 11
„ 987 „ permanent (wages).....	34,530, „	4 6
„ 1,247 „ daily (wages)	39,620, „	4 1
Total..... 5,124 men	184,769, or	4 7

I have omitted Tilbury here as elsewhere.

At Tilbury more overtime is worked, and the pay, counted by the day, is higher—piece work and ordinary daily labour figuring for 5*s.* 9*d.* and 4*s.* 4*d.* respectively in place of 4*s.* 11*d.* and 4*s.* 1*d.* elsewhere.

Of the 2,900 men on piece work, many are drawn from the permanent list. I am not sure whether the plus is equally divided, or whether the permanent hands get a larger share than the rest; and even if all share alike it is probable that the permanent hands will be selected for the most responsible and best paid work. It may therefore be right to estimate the average value of the day as follows:—

1,700 permanent men at	5 <i>s.</i>
3,400 daily labourers at	4 <i>s.</i> to 5 <i>s.</i>
5,100 taken together at	4 <i>s.</i> 7 <i>d.</i>

The value of the piece work varies very much in the different docks. The London and St. Katharine's Docks represent the

average, the East and West India falling below, while the Victoria and Albert Docks and the town warehouses are above the average. It would seem that 4*s.* is the lower and 5*s.* the upper limit of value. The higher value is generally accompanied by longer hours or more strenuous work.

One of the steamship owners, working at the Royal Albert Dock, has also furnished me with some very interesting particulars. These are for the year ending 31st March, 1892. For about half of this time the men were working on the co-operative system, and earned on the average 5*s.* 4*d.* per day for discharging, and 4*s.* 11*d.* for work on the quay. Some of the co-operative work proving unprofitable, the men asked to be, and were, put on time at 6*d.* an hour, and working in this way earned, during the second half of the year, 4*s.* 5*d.* a day for ship and 4*s.* 3*d.* for quay work.

It is remarkable that the cost of working per ton of cargo remained the same. The work done under the pressure of the co-operative system being more efficient in exact proportion as it was better paid; and it seems that the men are as well pleased to give "sixpenny work" for 6*d.* as to give eightpenny work for 8*d.*

Another firm of ship owners working in the same dock has supplied the following particulars:—

			<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>d.</i>		
Ship work (up to 74 men at most) averaged	4	11	at	6	per hour and plus.		
Quay	"	86	"	4	6	"	6
Frozen meat	149	"	"	6	1	"	8

The figures of one large wharf, taken for twelve months, show that a day's work is worth, on the average, fully 5*s.* for the casual men. The permanent hands at the same wharf, not counting foremen, received 28*s.* per week, thus accepting less pay per hour in exchange for the regularity and permanence of their employment.

Longer hours are worked usually at the wharves than at the docks.

Statements made to me by a number of the men give 4*s.* a day as a full average. Taking $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours in summer, and $6\frac{1}{2}$ hours in winter, at 6*d.* an hour, we have 3*s.* 9*s.* and 3*s.* 3*d.* respectively; overtime, the men say, is on the whole balanced by short time—i.e., when the work begins late or ends early on any day; and finally they claim that the "plus" does not do any more than make the money up to 4*s.*, taking winter and summer together, on the average of the work done. It is however not denied that large earnings are sometimes made. In the town warehouses, during the wool sales, many men are said to work from 6 a.m. to

10 p.m., earning as much as 50s. in a week. Men working for the feather sales also earn high wages, and for the tea and other sales. A good gang working at frozen meat will make 1s. an hour, &c.

The slight discrepancy which exists between the 4s. as stated by the men as the average value of a day's work and the actual figures shown by the books of the employers, is to be accounted for by the exclusion from or inclusion in the average of large occasional earnings.

So far as all share equally in these extra earnings, they undoubtedly should be included in the ordinary dockers' budget, but so far as they are in effect a privilege to be enjoyed by a few, it is misleading to bring them into average. It would be more correct to say that a portion of the day labourers get, like the permanent men, higher pay, as well as more regular work, than the rest.

A census taken by the joint committee of the men employed by them for the week ending 13th July of this year, confirms this view. Those who received over 30s. for the week's work were apportioned as under:—

Permanent men	503	out of	1,418,	or	35½	per cent.
A list	308	„	1,052,	„	29¼	„
B „	180	„	1,824,	„	9½	„
C „	111	„	1,160,	„	9½	„
Extra	155	„	2,119,	„	7¼	„

There is a slight error in the numbers of B, C and extra men, as those who during the week have worked in more than one department are counted more than once. We may, however, fairly say that not more than one-tenth work at the higher level of pay, taking B, C and extra together, whereas one-third of the permanent hands and men of the A class do so.

While, therefore, the true average value of a day's work at the docks is fully 4s. 6d., it would be rather misleading to use this figure in estimating the position of the ordinary docker. It must, however, be borne in mind if 4s. or even 4s. 3d. a day be taken as the average value of the joint committee's work, that the rule excludes a certain proportion of preferred men who get the cream of the work.

The same applies undoubtedly to part of the wharf and warehouse labour both north and south: some men being able to combine pretty regular work with good and at times high pay. Similarly special work, such as the handling of grain, which from its nature commands an extra price, may be reasonably excluded from the ordinary average.