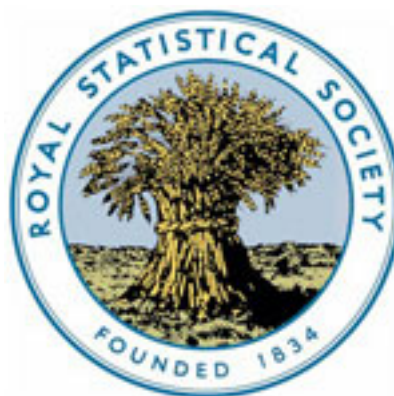


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Problems of Unemployment in the London Building Trades by Norman B. Dearle

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*Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (Mar., 1909), pp. 133-135

Published by: [Wiley](#) for the [Royal Statistical Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2339961>

Accessed: 28/06/2014 10:54

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absolute theoretical consistency. You must combine the good features of several systems if you wish to avoid the dangers to which every system is exposed. The basis of any sound system, however, must be one of capitalisation, as that is the only rigorously scientific principle.

One of the difficulties attending a system of capitalisation, and that not a negligible one, is the difficulty of investing large funds; and this Dr. Jouve proceeds to consider in the third part of his work. According to an actuarial note appended by M. Guieysse, Minister of Commerce, to his Report for 1904, the capital sum ultimately arrived at would be 800,000,000*l.* It is true that the maximum would not be reached till after eighty years or so, and that it is to be hoped the wealth of the country will be growing in the interim. Here, again, Dr. Jouve seeks enlightenment from the experience of Germany, where by 1902, 50,000,000*l.* sterling had been accumulated and invested at a rate of interest exceeding 3½ per cent. At the end of 1903, 18,000,000*l.* of this sum had been applied to local improvements, sanitary and philanthropic works, workmen's dwellings, hospitals, sanatoria, and the like: and he warmly advocates this method of investment as preferable to that of the purchase of Government securities.

The fourth part of the book relates to the ways and means necessary to be provided to maintain the equilibrium of the budget from the point of view of the State. He forecasts an annual charge rising from 9,916,000*l.* to a maximum of 14,484,000*l.*, and then diminishing to a settled sum of 6,300,000*l.*, as the portion of the cost which the State will have to provide.

Dr. Jouve's conclusion is that from the financial point of view, the question of workmen's pensions appears singularly complex, and raises difficulties of principle and of organisation, which are among the most delicate that the French legislature has had to resolve for a long time past. The first of these difficulties is the absence of technical data sufficient to establish the system upon an exact basis. Another is the question of the financial system to be adopted for the interior mechanism of the fund. The author's patient and thorough study of the points involved in the solution of these various difficulties cannot fail to be of the greatest value. In summing up the result of his labours, he calls to memory a wise utterance of Léon Say:—"Si le cœur doit être le moteur des institutions de prévoyance, c'est la science qui doit en tenir le gouvernail."

E.B.

12.—*Problems of unemployment in the London building trades.* By Norman B. Dearle. xx + 215 pp., 8vo. London: J. M. Dent and Co.

This is a close and detailed study of the conditions of employment in the London building trades which reveals the facts that the industry is depressed, that it suffers from casual employment, that a large number of operatives (Mr. Dearle calls them "hands") engaged in the various branches are badly trained, that the trades are largely recruited from the provinces, that apprenticeship has

nearly gone out, and that certain new processes and some specialisation have "revolutionised" the trade during recent years. Mr. Dearle suggests a better arrangement of the work of local bodies so as to take on most men during the ordinary seasonable depression, and the now inevitable "Labour Exchanges," with a better training of the young incomers. As a matter of fact, the problems of the London building trade are the problems of the trade in every large town, perhaps slightly accentuated, and while a study such as this is useful as adding to our knowledge of the problem of the organisation or want of organisation of industry, the main features of the trouble in London are apparent in Manchester, Bristol and other industrial centres.

Unfortunately, Mr. Dearle's book is marred by a lot of small errors, trivial, but annoying. Their existence suggests a haste and want of thoroughness which is contradicted by the painstaking detailed consideration of the evidence personally collected. He speaks many times of the trades-unions; the right term is obviously trade-unions. There are no trades-unions now, though there are Trades Councils and Trade Union Federations. Again, he speaks of the "London Unions affiliated to the great national societies" when referring to the organisations in which London building operatives are enrolled. This is a quite wrong description, as they are *branches* of the great national societies. To speak of them as affiliated to, &c., suggests that they are autonomous, and of independent origin, while, as a matter of fact, most of them have been definitely formed as branches of the great national societies. The whole description of the trade unions at pp. 150-151 should be re-written for a future edition.

There are, too, several errors about wages and hours, *e.g.*, the plumbers are described at p. 151 as rising to 10*d.* per hour after 1872, while those in the other branches remained unchanged at 9*d.* Their wages were, like the other trades, unchanged between 1873 and 1892, and for nearly half a century they have received the equivalent of about one halfpenny per hour more than the carpenters, &c. Then, again, they are described at p. 134 as working only 47 hours per week, and at p. 199 correctly as working 50 hours. The change from 47 hours to 50 took place in 1905. At p. 27, on the authority of Mr. Stanley Bird's evidence before the Labour Commission, it is stated that wages rose 50 per cent. between 1859 and 1872, and were in the latter year fixed at 9*d.* per hour for the skilled workmen except painters. This is all wrong; the 9*d.* was fixed in 1873, and the correct figures are (summer wages and hours) :—

	1847-52.	'53-60.	'61-64.	1865.	'66-71.	1872.	'73-91.	'92-95.	'96-99.	1900-08.
Carpenters } Masons .... } Bricklayers } Plasterers }	30 <i>s.</i>	33 <i>s.</i>	7 <i>d.</i> per hour	7½ <i>d.</i>	8 <i>d.</i>	8½ <i>d.</i>	9 <i>d.</i>	9½ <i>d.</i>	10 <i>d.</i>	10½*
	58½ hours	58½	56½	56½	56½	52½	52½	50	50	50

\* Plasterers, 11*d.*

The most the advance between 1859 and 1873 can be taken at is from  $6\frac{1}{2}d.$  to  $9d.$  per hour, or less than 50 per cent. In weekly earnings it was from 33s. to 39s.  $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ , or about 20 per cent. Further, there was a great strike in 1878 for  $10d.$  per hour, during which hundreds of masons and carpenters were working at this rate, only to go back to  $9d.$  when the strike failed and trade became depressed.

Mr. Dearle suggests (p. 188) that the members of the Steam Engine Makers Society are more regularly employed than the members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, because the former help one another to get jobs. The real explanation why the Steam Engine Makers have less unemployment is probably that the Amalgamated Society of Engineers have by far a greater proportion than have the Steam Engine Makers of members employed in shipbuilding and marine engineering, and these branches of industry are notoriously more fluctuating than the textile machine making, &c., in which so many of the Steam Engine Makers are employed.

The figures in the footnote at p. 41 are rather confusing, and a diagram would be much clearer.

On the whole, these blemishes do not affect the main purpose of the book, and as an analysis of the situation and difficulties of one trade Mr. Dearle's book is certainly valuable and worthy of attentive study.

G.H.W.

13.—*La grève, les salaires et le contrat de travail.* Par D. Zolla, Professeur à l'École de Grignon. Préface de M. Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu. 305 pp., 8vo. Paris: V. Giard and E. Brière, 1908.

The thesis of this not very important work, supported by the preface, and repeated again and again, is that strikes have no influence on wages. The proof offered is circumstantial, supported by rather irrelevant theoretical considerations. A review of the movement of wages in France in the nineteenth century shows, on the whole, that wages rose most rapidly before workmen's associations were legal, and comparatively slowly in more recent years, during which strikes, promoted by these associations, were frequent. It is further shown that, in comparing industry with industry, there is no relation between increase of wages and frequency of strikes. It is urged that the only cause of increment in real wages is increased productivity, and this statement is supported by interesting statistics of production. The erroneous notion that want could be replaced by luxury, if only the division of reward between land, capital, and labour were less unequal, is exposed at length.

The arguments brought forward are (except in the most obvious cases) unconvincing. It is no doubt true that no country is so rich that all can have everything desired; but it is equally true that, so far as mere mass of produced commodities is concerned, there is enough for moderate comfort for everyone. If, as is alleged, an equal division of the profits of all the French railways among their employés would give each "only" 200 francs per month, still, this would be a very handsome addition to their incomes; and the fact that this quotient is higher than would be obtained in most industries