



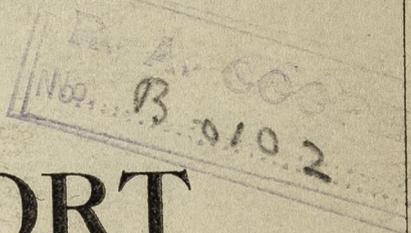
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Research Committee

Christian Social Union

(LONDON BRANCH).

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REPORT

of Inquiry into the Wages
of Women and Girls in the
following trades :

FRUIT PRESERVING,
PICKLE MAKING,
CONFECTIONERY,
TEA PACKING,
COFFEE & COCOA PACKING,
BISCUIT MAKING.



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Research Committee, Christian Social Union.

:: :: :: (LONDON BRANCH.) :: :: ::

REPORT of Inquiry into the Wages of Women and Girls.

The Research Committee of this Union set an inquiry on foot in December, 1912, in order to ascertain as far as possible the wages paid to women and girls in six trades which form a large proportion of those known as "warehouse": namely, fruit preserving, pickle making, confectionery, tea packing, coffee and cocoa packing, and biscuit making.

These trades are scattered more or less all over London, with the exception of the fruit preserving trade, which is carried on chiefly in the South-East district, especially in Bermondsey, and in the East End, including Millwall.

Confectionery is found in the North, South, South-East, East, and South of London. Chocolate sweet making is not carried on by all confectionery firms, some biscuit firms make a speciality of chocolate sweets, which appears to have grown out of the necessity for supplying themselves with chocolate for the making and covering of chocolate biscuits.

Biscuits are made in Bermondsey, Fulham, and Willesden; ships' biscuits in the East End.

Tea packing is largely an industry of the East and South-East districts, but there are some tea-packing firms in the City.

Cocoa packing is sometimes found as a separate trade, but it is also combined with tea and coffee packing, and with the manufacture of chocolate sweets.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining information, especially from girls, who showed great timidity in answering direct questions. It was further extremely difficult to trace the girls employed in a particular factory to their club or home owing to the immense distances at which they often live from their work.

Woman -
Employment -
United Kingdom
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While clubs were mainly used as sources of information with regard to girls' work, other organisations were applied to for lists of adult women workers. Of these the principal were Trade Unions (girls were also reached through these), Labour League and Co-operative Guild Branches, Political Associations (both parties), and Mothers' Meetings. A considerable number of women were also visited in their own homes, and much valuable information was given by many, who had worked or were still working in factories where married women are employed, as to general rates and conditions throughout the factories. Much information was also given by men working in the trades investigated, especially in the fruit-preserving trade.

This information was checked by that given by other persons well acquainted with the industrial conditions of their special neighbourhood, *i.e.*, social workers, the medical profession, clergy of all denominations, heads of settlements and societies, leaders of girls' clubs, etc.

All these trades overlap and commingle to a very large extent, both with each other and with other trades. Under one roof is found fruit preserving, confectionery, making of potted meats and pickles, etc., etc., tin box and card box making, and printing both on paper and tin.

This Report is based upon information obtained in respect of forty-five factories, the more important of which were personally visited by the investigator. Where the Report deals with conditions it records in every case things actually seen.

Classes of Workers.

The class of workers varies greatly. While in some low-class jam and confectionery factories they are extremely rough, in other better-class places workers of a superior type are found. The girls and women employed in the tea-packing and biscuit trades are, as a whole, of a much better class than those engaged in fruit preserving and sweet making.

Fruit Preserving.

Three classes of factories:—

- A. Good class.
- B. Second class.
- C. Low class.

Three special factories have been selected as fairly typical of each class.

Example of A.

Conditions excellent. Workers well looked after, and type of women and girls very superior.

Example of B.

Conditions in some respects good, others bad. Wet floors abound. Bottle washing carried on under conditions of wet and cold. The dirty state of some rooms very noticeable. Good class of girls; and considerable interest taken in them by the firm. Married women of not very good class employed for seasonal work—preparing fresh fruit and peeling oranges. Girls do the boiling, and are specially chosen for strength, as the work involves lifting great weights. Much heavy lifting, carrying, and pushing done by girls and women. Wages good.

Example of C.

Very large factory in the East End of London. Condition of factory very good. Men's work is, however, done by the women and girls, pushing, lifting, and carrying heavy weights—one woman regularly engaged in lifting jars weighing 30lb. A woman is employed on the lift. Class of girl and woman very low. A large number of married women are employed. The workers are indescribably filthy. Snuff-taking is a common habit.

As shown in the above example, conditions are sometimes better in a low-class factory than in one of the second class.

Confectionery.

The factories where confectionery is made fall under the same heads as the fruit-preserving factories, with this difference—that under Class C fall a very large number of small confectionery factories and workshops, where conditions are bad, and, as in the jam factories under this head, a very low class of girl is employed.

Examples of A.

(1) A very old established firm in S.E. district. Conditions excellent. Workers thoroughly-well looked after. Wages good.

(2) A large confectionery firm, having shops in many parts of London. Conditions excellent, some really beautiful rooms. Certain work is, however, done entirely by arti-

ficial light. Workers are in some departments rough and not very clean. In the others a much better type of girl employed. Wages very low.

Example of B.

The confectionery department of a large fruit-preserving and potted meat firm in extreme E. of London. State of girls in starch room very bad. Much dust flying about. Heavy work. Unswept and wet floors. Wages good.

Example of C.

Factory in N. London. Bad conditions, wet floors—girls complain of getting their skirts very wet. Very low class of worker. Wages very low.

The factories where chocolate sweet making is a distinct trade fall, in the majority of cases, under Class A. Where the trade is carried on in conjunction with boiled sweet making, biscuits, etc., it falls naturally into the class to which that factory belongs.

Tea Packing.

The factories again fall under the three heads. But whereas in the confectionery trade the Committee feel it safe to say that the majority of small factories and workshops belong to Class C, in the tea-packing trade many small firms are good employers and the workers of superior class. In no case is the lowest class of worker found in the tea-packing trade.

Examples of A.

- (1) Large firm in E.C. district; conditions excellent. No dust. Hours short. Girls of good class; well looked after.
- (2) Small firm, E.C. Not much machinery. Conditions good. Workers very contented.

Example of B.

Medium sized firm. Conditions not good, much dust, Poor class of girl. Many general complaints as to conditions.

Example of C.

Very large firm, whose largest factory is in extreme S.E. district, packing a widely-advertised tea. Very low wages.

Coffee packing is frequently carried on in conjunction tea packing. **Cocoa making and packing** is carried on in conjunction with tea packing, with sweet making, or alone. Some chocolate sweet-making firms also make and pack cocoa.

Biscuit Making.

The biscuit factories hardly admit of the classification which has been followed in the foregoing trades. The majority of the factories are good buildings and the conditions often excellent. The workers are both rough and superior, but the lowest class is not employed in the biscuit trade. A large amount of female labour is found in this trade and in trades carried on in connection with it; in some instances it has replaced male labour. For example, the largest biscuit firm in S.E. London, which makes its own tin boxes, now employs girls to solder and do rough, hard work on which a few years ago 40 men were occupied. Only 3 men are on this work now.

In this trade the chief work upon which women and girls are employed is packing, "creaming" biscuits and wafers, preparing currants, etc., and icing. Very little of the actual making of biscuits is done by girls, with the exception of some kinds of wafers.

Powder Packing.

This work, consisting of packing baking and custard powders, cornflour, etc., is frequently combined with the making and packing of jelly and of "blackening." Many fruit-preserving firms, both good and low class, pack powder and make jelly.

Juvenile Labour.

The Committee desire to draw attention to the fact that a very large number of girls under sixteen are employed in all these trades, excepting in the preparation of jam,* and that their number is increasing.

The following are examples of firms who are (1) taking on girls of 14 instead of older ones; (2) dismissing older girls and replacing them with girls of 14:—

- (1) The largest, best organised, and best-paying biscuit firm in S.E. London now only takes on girls of 14.

* Young girls are employed in the jam warehouses, labelling, tying over, etc.

- Older girls have no chance of engagement. The investigator's impression on visiting this firm was of rooms full of little girls and little boys.
- (2) First-rate, old-fashioned confectionery firm in S.E. district. Only takes girls of 14. Dismisses all girls of 16 who are not earning a certain rate, and are considered worth to the firm at least two-thirds of their wages. Slackness given as reason. Forty girls were dismissed from this firm in one month lately.
- (3) Old-established pickle and sauce firm in S.E. district, turning off older girls and replacing with girls of 14. This firm is now employing many of this age, and the character of the firm, which had hitherto been good, has altered considerably.

The Committee have reason to believe that this elimination of girls over 16 is taking place in many factories of all classes. Where the check system is in use these young girls work at very high pressure.

Variations in Conditions.

The variations in conditions have already been noticed, but the Committee wish to lay stress on the fact that it is not only in low-class fruit-preserving factories that the worst conditions prevail, and the heaviest and most exhausting work is done. In the example of a B Class jam factory it will be noticed that girls do the boiling, which in many low-class places (Class C) carrying on this trade is done by men, and is considered men's work.

Examples.

- (1) Accommodation for orange-peeling women cold, wet, and uncomfortable. This is a factory of B class, where the wages are good.
- (2) Dry room, warmed, for women peeling, preparing, and squeezing oranges and lemons. This in a Class C factory where the filthiest and lowest class of women are employed. Wages low.

Variations in Wages.

In all these trades very striking differences were found in the wages paid for the same processes in the various factories. The following are typical instances:—

Fruit Preserving.

Factory No. 1.—Boilers	20/-	girls over 16 years.
„ „ 2.—Boilers	11/-	„ „
„ „ 3.—Finishers	15/-	„ „
„ „ 4.—Finishers	10/-	„ „
„ „ 5.—Orange Peelers ...	4/-	a day, married women.
„ „ 6.—Orange Peelers ...	2/-	„ „

Confectionery Trade.

Factory No. 1.—Caramel Cutters ...	15/-	girls over 16 years.
„ „ 2.—Caramel Cutters ...	9/-	„ „
„ „ 3.—Fondant Floor	13/-	„ „
„ „ 4.—Fondant Floor	8/-	„ „

Chocolate Sweet Making.

Factory No. 1.—Chocolate Packing	16/-	girls over 16 years.
„ „ 2.—Chocolate Packing	7/-	„ „

Tea Packing.

Factory No. 1.—Packer	18/-	girls over 16 years.
„ „ 2.—Packer	8/-	„ „
„ „ 3.—Labellers	15/-	„ „
„ „ 4.—Labellers	9/-	„ „

Biscuit Making.

Factory No. 1.—Packer	14/-	girls over 16 years.
„ „ 2.—Packer	10/-	„ „

Pickle Trade.

Factory No. 1.—Fillers	15/6	girls over 16 years.
„ „ 2.—Fillers	10/-	„ „

NOTE.—The ages of the workers whose wages are given above varied from 17 to 24.

The wages, except in the case of "Boilers" in the Fruit-preserving Trade, "Packers" (on machine) in Tea, and girls of 14 years, are piece-rate wages. Payment by piece rather than time is the common practice in all the trades investigated, and the figures given are those stated by the workers as the average weekly total of their earnings.

Estimated averages for all classes of labour individually throughout the trades:

	s.	d.
Girls 14 years.....	4	9
„ 15 years to 18 years	6	4
„ 18 years and over	11	5
Married women	8	11

Estimate average, all ages, 7s. 8d.

JAM MAKING.

Processes.	Mini- mum. s. d.	Maxi- mum. s. d.	Average Average		Mar- ried Women. s. d.
			Aver- age 14 yrs. s. d.	15 yrs. to 18 yrs. and over. s. d.	
Preparing Fruit	9 0	13 6	—	—	9 0
Boiling Room	11 0	20 0	—	—	11 0
Bottle Washer	8 0	10 0	—	—	9 0
Finishing	9 0	15 0	—	—	11 6
Washer Off	8 0	11 0	—	—	9 0
Swiller Out	8 0	9 0	—	—	8 0
Candy Floor	8 0	11 0	—	—	9 0
Filling Out	9 0	15 0	—	—	11 6
Orange Peeler	9 0	22 0	—	—	9 0
Peel Boiler	9 0	13 0	—	—	10 0
Packer	8 0	16 0	—	—	11 6
Labeller	5 0	16 0	5 0	8 4	11 6
Shifter	9 0	11 0	—	—	9 0
Behind the Bench	9 0	11 0	—	—	9 0
Total average	8 6	14 2	—	—	10 2

SWEET MAKING.

Processes.	Mini- mum. s. d.	Maxi- mum. s. d.	Average Average		Mar- ried Women. s. d.
			Aver- age 14 yrs. s. d.	15 yrs. to 18 yrs. and over. s. d.	
Sugar Room	—	—	—	—	9 0
Starch Room	8 0	13 0	—	9 0	10 0
Knockers Out	5 0	15 0	5 0	8 0	8 0
Fondant Floor	5 0	15 0	5 0	9 0	10 0
Boiling Room	6 0	17 0	—	9 0	9 0
Cleaners (Fondant).....	5 0	13 0	5 0	8 0	10 0
*Crystallising Gums	9 0	—	—	—	9 0
Wrappers Up	4 0	10 0	4 6	6 0	9 0
Packers	5 0	17 0	5 0	5 6	10 0
Caramel Cutters	9 0	15 0	—	—	9 0
Rock Room	9 0	17 0	—	—	9 0
Gum Floor	5 0	—	5 0	9 0	—
Other Processes	3 6	—	—	—	—
Labeller	5 9	14 0	—	—	7 6
Total averages.....	6 2	14 4	4 11	7 6	9 2

* Very heavy work, usually done by men.

TEA PACKING.

Processes.	Mini- mum. s. d.	Maxi- mum. s. d.	Average Average		Mar- ried Women. s. d.
			Aver- age 14 yrs. s. d.	15 yrs. to 18 yrs. and over. s. d.	
Packers	5 0	20 0	5 0	8 9	11 6
Labellers	5 0	15 0	5 0	9 10	10 0
Packeting, Machines :					
1st hand ...	10 0	18 0	—	—	14 0
2nd hand ...	8 0	11 0	—	9 6	—
3rd hand ...	6 0	9 0	—	7 6	—
Weighing Up	5 0	20 0	5 0	8 9	11 6
Total average	6 6	15 6	5 0	8 10	11 9

BISCUIT MAKING.

Processes.	Mini- mum. s. d.	Maxi- mum. s. d.	Average Average		Mar- ried Women. s. d.
			Aver- age 14 yrs. s. d.	15 yrs. to 18 yrs. and over. s. d.	
Packing	5 0	16 0	5 0	6 0	11 0
Icing Room	6 0	15 0	—	—	11 6
Picking Fruit	5 0	10 0	5 0	6 0	9 0
Checkers	5 0	15 0	5 0	10 0	12 6
Biscuit Creaming.....	6 0	14 0	—	9 0	11 0
Labellers	5 0	12 0	5 0	6 0	11 0
Total average	5 4	13 8	5 0	7 4	11 0

POWDERS.

Processes.	Mini- mum. s. d.	Maxi- mum. s. d.	Average Average		Mar- ried Women. s. d.
			Aver- age 14 yrs. s. d.	15 yrs. to 18 yrs. and over. s. d.	
Custard, Packing	5 0	16 0	5 0	7 9	9 0
Baking, Packing	5 0	15 0	5 0	7 6	9 0
Tissueing Jelly	5 0	14 0	5 0	7 0	11 6
Total averages	5 0	15 0	5 0	7 5	9 10

PICKLE MAKING.

Processes.	Mini- mum. s. d.	Maxi- mum. s. d.	Average Average		Mar- ried Women. s. d.
			Aver- age 14 yrs. s. d.	15 yrs. to 18 yrs. and over. s. d.	
Bottling	5 6	11 0	—	7 0	9 0
Finisher	6 0	14 0	—	7 9	9 0
Packer	4 6	16 0	4 6	8 0	11 6
Vinegar Room	4 6	13 0	4 6	7 9	9 0
Washer Off	5 0	11 0	5 0	7 0	8 0
Filling	9 0	15 5	—	—	9 0
Total average	5 9	13 4	4 8	7 6	8 11

COCOA PACKING.

Processes.	Mini- mum. s. d.	Maxi- mum. s. d.	Aver- age 14 yrs. s. d.	Average		Mar- ried Women. s. d.
				15 yrs. to 18 yrs. s. d.	Average 18 yrs. and over. s. d.	
Packers	5 0	20 0	5 0	8 9	11 6	—
Labellers	5 0	19 0	5 0	8 6	11 0	—
On Machine	7 0	18 0	—	8 0	10 0	—
Weighing Up	5 0	16 0	5 0	8 0	10 0	—
Total average	5 6	18 3	5 0	8 3	10 7	—

CHOCOLATE SWEET MAKING.

Processes.	Mini- mum. s. d.	Maxi- mum. s. d.	Aver- age 14 yrs. s. d.	Average		Mar- ried Women. s. d.
				15 yrs. to 18 yrs. s. d.	Average 18 yrs. and over. s. d.	
Moulders	4 7	20 0	5 0	6 4	11 6	—
Coverers	5 0	20 0	5 3	8 9	12 0	—
Covering Machine	5 0	10 0	5 3	8 0	10 0	—
Packers	4 7	20 0	5 0	7 10	11 2	10 0
Foiling	4 7	10 0	5 0	6 0	9 0	—
Total average	4 9	16 0	5 1	7 4	10 8	—

None of the averages in these tables are correct to fractions of a penny.