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THE SOCIAL SURVEY OF MERSEYSIDE

NO. 4

DOMESTIC  
SERVICE

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THE SOCIAL SURVEY OF MERSEYSIDE

No. 4

**DOMESTIC SERVICE**

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This paper, to which H. J. H. Parker and J. E. McCrindell have chiefly contributed, deals with the pay and general conditions of service among various types of domestic workers, both resident and non-resident, on Merseyside. Comparison is made, where possible, with the results of the London Survey for corresponding classes of workers.

A report on 'Social Factors in Secondary Education' will be issued shortly. Other papers, already published in the Survey Series, are:—

1. Housing Conditions in Liverpool.
2. A Study of Migration to Merseyside with special reference to Irish Immigration.
3. Poverty on Merseyside (Its Association with Overcrowding and Unemployment).

D. CARADOG JONES.

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CONTENTS.

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| 1. The General Position on Merseyside ... ..                        | 3    |
| Age Distribution ... ..   | 5    |
| Sources of Information ... ..                                       | 5    |
| 2. Daily Domestic Workers ... ..                                    | 5    |
| Hours ... ..  | 6    |
| Wages ... ..  | 7    |
| Cost of Transport and Locality of Residence ... ..                  | 9    |
| 3. Resident Domestic Service ... ..                                 | 10   |
| Wages (a) Girls under 21 ... ..                                     | 11   |
| (b) Women of 21 and upwards ... ..                                  | 12   |
| Hours, Free Time and Holidays ... ..                                | 15   |
| Amenities ... ..  | 17   |
| Method and Terms of Engagement ... ..                               | 18   |
| Recruitment and Training ... ..                                     | 18   |
| Householders' Opinions ... ..                                       | 19   |
| Domestic Service in Institutions ... ..                             | 20   |
| 4. Comparison of Resident with Non-Resident Domestic Service ... .. | 20   |

## DOMESTIC SERVICE

### 1.—GENERAL POSITION ON MERSEYSIDE.

DOMESTIC service is still the industry which occupies the greatest number of women on Merseyside, although there has been a very big drop since the beginning of the present century. This drop has not been merely in the percentage of families keeping servants, but also in the actual number of servants kept. In this sense it is similar to the decline in the County of London discussed in the latest volume of the New Survey of London Life and Labour, and it will be of interest to compare conditions generally on Merseyside with conditions in London, bearing in mind throughout that the cost of living is appreciably higher in London. In this area, between 1901 and 1921, domestic servants declined by nearly a third of their total number. The decline was certainly accentuated by the war, and there was probably some recovery in the succeeding years, as is suggested for the country as a whole by the much bigger increase which has taken place since 1921 in the number of women paying Health Insurance contributions than in the number paying Unemployment Insurance contributions. The tendency for the motor and servant-keeping class to move out from town to country to live has, no doubt, been responsible for some of the decline in the Merseyside county boroughs. This, however, has been in part offset by the extension of borough boundaries between 1901 and 1921, taking in large servant-keeping areas.

TABLE I.

Age Distribution of Female Domestic Indoor Servants (Resident and Non-Resident) and number per 1,000 of the total Occupied Female Population at each Age Period. The Four Merseyside County Boroughs (1901-1921).

| Age last birthday | No. of Domestic at each age period |        |        | Ditto per 1,000 of the Female Occupied Population at the same age periods |      |      |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|--------|--------|---|------|------|
|                   | 1901                               | 1911   | 1921   | 1901  | 1911 | 1921 |
| Under 25 ..       | 20,391                             | 18,168 | 10,370 | 364   | 295  | 138  |
| 25-44 ..          | 10,179                             | 10,928 | 8,210  | 284   | 240  | 172  |
| 45-64 ..          | 2,710                              | 3,021  | 3,930  | 177   | 167  | 227  |
| 65 and over       | 365                                | 416    | 610    | 160   | 148  | 192  |
| ALL AGES..        | 33,645                             | 32,533 | 23,120 | 307   | 254  | 158  |



TABLE II.

Local Distribution of Domestic Servants and Number of Female Domestic Servants in Private Households (Resident and Non-Resident) per 100 Private Families (1901-1921).

| County<br>Borough            | No. of Servants<br>in Private Households |        |        | No. of Servants<br>per 100 Private Families |      |      |
|------------------------------|--|--------|--------|---|------|------|
|                              | 1901                                     | 1911   | 1921   | 1901  | 1911 | 1921 |
| Liverpool ..                 | 23,069                                   | 20,760 | 14,120 | 16.6  | 13.5 | 8.3  |
| Bootle ..                    | 1,558                                    | 1,502  | 950    | 13.9  | 10.8 | 6.1  |
| Birkenhead                   | 5,172                                    | 5,178  | 3,790  | 23.3  | 19.0 | 12.1 |
| Wallasey ..                  | 2,914                                    | 3,845  | 3,010  | 25.9  | 22.4 | 14.5 |
| All Mersey-<br>side Boroughs | 32,713                                   | 31,285 | 21,870 | 17.5  | 14.9 | 9.1  |

As Merseyside has only to a small extent been a 'residential' area the percentage of families keeping servants and the number of domestics per 1,000 of the female occupied population always seem to have been definitely lower than in London. Tables I and II\* give figures for Merseyside, and comparable tables for London have been published by the London Survey. On the other hand, the absence of any big alternative forms of employment for women on Merseyside has made the supply of domestics large relative to the demand and their wages low, so that many families have been able to keep servants on Merseyside who would not do so in other northern towns. The nearness to Ireland and Wales has also made it easy to get servants from outside the district.

The figures of recent censuses suggest that the proportion of domestics employed in hotels and institutions on Merseyside is not large. Many of them apparently do not now live in. There are no figures to show what proportion of domestics in private households live at home, but there is little doubt that this class is large, and has been increasing fairly rapidly in recent years. Excluding charwomen, it is estimated that daily servants probably amount to a third of the total domestics on Merseyside at the present time, a large proportion being juveniles. 'Dailies' have replaced residents in many one-servant households where it is to the convenience of both employer and employee that the maid should sleep at home. Non-resident daily service does not seem to have gained ground in the better-off household on Merseyside to anything like the same extent as in London. In the spring of 1931 the Ministry of Labour arranged a special course for daily domestic workers in Liverpool. Forty carefully-selected women over twenty-five were trained, but the officials of the Employment Exchange had some difficulty in placing them, and the experiment was not repeated. The usual wage asked, including food, was 15/-, which was above the average for dailies. (See Table VI).

\* These tables, which are based upon the census returns, are compiled in exactly the same way as similar tables to be found in the Survey of London Life and Labour (Vol. II London Industries, see Notes on Statistics Chap. VIII, Tables I and II).

### Age Distribution.

The fall in the number of girls going into domestic service has been even more pronounced on Merseyside than in London. The multiple store rather than the factory, however, has been the chief rival to domestic service on Merseyside. Also, there has been nothing like such a large rise in the number of the elderly in the industry as is shown by the London figures. It is significant, however, that whereas the number of domestics per 1,000 of the female-occupied population falls continuously with advancing years, both in 1901 and 1911, a precisely opposite movement takes place in 1921. A tendency to re-enter domestic service may have been stimulated still further by the provisions of the Widows', Orphans' and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1925. The promise of a pension to begin at 65 instead of at 70 has some attraction for an elderly woman. The figures for charwomen show only a slight fall between 1901 and 1921, and only a small change in their chief age-groups.

### Sources of Information.

In addition to the census returns material for this article has been drawn from other sources. The Social Survey of Merseyside in its sample house-to-house inquiry collected certain particulars concerning over 500 day servants, cleaners and charwomen. This material forms the basis of the sections dealing with Daily Domestic Workers. To obtain information about resident domestics and to supplement the information on non-resident domestics two further sources were used. The Liverpool Employment Exchange officials were good enough to supply particulars of a random sample of 200 women registered for resident posts and of 100 vacancies notified by employers; in addition they gave some general information concerning different types of daily domestic worker. A questionnaire was sent to a selected group of 100 housewives, 88 of whom kindly gave full particulars of their domestic arrangements. The replies were mainly concerned with resident domestic service, but some information was also received about 20 daily servants and 39 charwomen.

### 2.—DAILY DOMESTIC WORKERS.

In Table III an analysis is made of the material obtained in the Survey's sample inquiry. Domestic workers are classified not according to their employers, but according to their occupations as stated to the investigators. One difficulty arose in this connection. Maids who worked long hours and maids who worked short hours were classified as daily servants. The London Survey took forty-eight hours a week or more as the criterion for full-time daily domestic service. On Merseyside the usual custom appears to be for the daily to start in the morning and to leave as soon as her work is finished (usually in the early afternoon). The actual hours worked would thus fall far short of forty-eight in a week. Only 28 per cent. of all the domestic workers in the sample recorded themselves as working forty-eight hours or more. This included many who did not work in private households. It was felt, therefore, that thirty hours a



week would make a more satisfactory minimum in defining 'regular daily service,' provided the maid worked six days in the week and for only one employer. Those calling themselves 'daily servants' who did not fulfil these conditions were classed as 'casual' dailies, and for most purposes were included with charwomen.

**TABLE III.**  
**Number of Non-Resident Domestic Workers on Merseyside in Sample Inquiry.**

| Category                               | No. | % of Sample |
|--|-----|-------------|
| Regular Dailies .. .. .                | 221 | 43.7        |
| Charwomen (including "casual" dailies) | 142 | 28.0        |
| Office Cleaners .. .. .                | 40  | 7.8         |
| Other Cleaners .. .. .                 | 104 | 20.5        |
| Total .. .. .                          | 507 | 100         |
| Unemployed .. .. .                     | 59  | 11.7        |

### Hours.

Taking all the domestic workers in the sample together, it was found that about a third worked under thirty hours, and less than a quarter worked fifty hours a week or more. The largest number fell into the middle groups which worked from thirty to fifty hours a week.

**TABLE IV.**  
**Hours of Work of Non-Resident Domestic Workers on Merseyside.**

| Hours per Week                        | % of Total |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| Under 30 hours .. .. .                | 33.3       |
| 30 hours and not more than 40 .. .. . | 20.2       |
| 40 " " 50 .. .. .                     | 23.8       |
| 50 " and more .. .. .                 | 22.7       |
| Total .. .. .                         | 100        |
| 60 hours and more .. .. .             | 9.5        |
| 70 " " .. .. .                        | 3.0        |

These hours included time for meals when they were supplied. The average (median) number of hours was thirty-seven and the most frequent periods worked were forty-four and forty-eight hours. Charwomen and 'casual' dailies tended to work for short hours, office and other cleaners for somewhat longer, and regular dailies for the longest periods. In the last case, however, meals were included and there was probably a certain amount of slack time during the hours nominally worked. The longest hours of all were worked in hospitals and private nursing homes—cases of 84, 90 and 99 hours a week being recorded. Here again slack time on the premises was probably included and it is possible that some free time was allowed which was not recorded. The hours for regular daily servants as shown in the sample do not differ widely from the 42½ hours a week quoted as their average working week by the Employment Exchange. This last figure excluded time for meals.

### Wages.

In the house-to-house sample the rate of pay of those working for short hours tended to increase according to the number of hours worked. The highest wages were paid to those working between thirty and thirty-four hours a week. For those who worked longer periods the rate of pay fell off with the increase in the time worked. This is explained by the fact that many of those working long hours were 'regulars.' It also seems probable that the unskilled work long hours to get their work done.

To get a rough idea of the average rate of pay for all non-resident domestic workers on Merseyside it is possible to combine the median wage (12/-) in the sample with the median hours of work (37). The payment per hour then works out at just under 4d. an hour—a surprisingly low figure, even when it is remembered that over one-half received such meals as were due within their hours of work. For charwomen and cleaners alone the figure was about 6d. an hour, office cleaners not being so well paid as other cleaners. Any costs of transport have usually to be met out of earnings.

The Employment Exchange quoted 3½d. an hour as the usual rate for daily servants, while for charwomen it was stated to be 4/- for an eight-hour day (or 6d. an hour). The eight-hour day was inclusive of meal times. For cleaners of offices, shops and factories 7d. an hour was given as the normal wage. In their case, however, it is not customary to supply meals save in some of the factories and large shops. These figures approximate very closely to those found in the sample inquiry. The small numbers in these classes who came into the housewives' inquiry provided somewhat different results. For dailies the average rate worked out at 4d. an hour, and, for those charwomen working for a full day, half were paid at the rate of 4/- a day and half at 5/- a day. These higher rates are explained by the fact that the housewives' inquiry on the whole related to well-to-do households.

**TABLE V.**  
**Weekly Rates Earned by Charwomen and Cleaners on Merseyside in Three Age Groups and Total Compared with the Rates Earned by Regular Daily Domestics.**

| Age-Groups             | Charwomen |       |      | (1)                        | (2)                        | (1) & (2) combined |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
|                        | 14-21     | 22-39 | 40+  | All Charwomen and Cleaners | All Regular Daily Servants |                    |
| No. included in Return | 46        | 99    | 141  | 286                        | 221                        | 507                |
| Average (Median) Wage  | 7/9       | 16/9  | 16/- | 14/9                       | 10/3                       | 12/-               |



TABLE VI.

Weekly Rates Earned by Female Daily Servants on Merseyside in Three Age Groups and Rates Earned by Female Non-Resident Full-time Workers in London in Two Age Groups.

| Age-Groups               | Merseyside<br>(a) |       |      | London County<br>(b & c) |      |      |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------|------|--------------------------|------|------|
|                          | 14-21             | 22-39 | 40+  | 20-39                    | 40+  | 40+  |
| No. included in Return   | 117               | 75    | 29   | 87                       | 18   | 57   |
| Average (Median)<br>Wage | 8/2               | 12/-  | 15/9 | 20/-                     | 22/- | 20/- |

The Merseyside Returns are based upon (a) the figures for all Regular Daily Servants in the sample inquiry. Those for London are based upon (b) returns made by Householders, and (c) the records of a Health Insurance Society.

Whereas there is a tendency for regular dailies over 40 in London to earn about the same wages as those of 20-39, the sample inquiry shows that there is a definite increase of wage with age on Merseyside. The number of regular dailies over forty is small on Merseyside and almost certainly consists of skilled workers. Unlike the daily domestic, charwomen and cleaners receive much the same wages in the age-group 22-39 as in that of 40 and over, and juvenile cleaners receive about the same wage as juvenile daily servants. Half the dailies are juveniles, but nearly half the charwomen and cleaners are over forty. The dailies decrease steadily in numbers as they pass through the different age-groups, whilst the charwomen and cleaners steadily increase. This is possibly explained by the fact that the older women, owing to family ties, usually have less time to spare away from home and so become charwomen and cleaners.

The low wages earned by non-resident domestic servants on Merseyside provide a striking contrast with the wages earned in London. The London average of 20/- for all daily servants between 20 and 40 is much above the Merseyside rate of 12/- (Sample Inquiry, Table VI); but it must be borne in mind that the London figure is obtained from Housewives' Returns and from a Health Insurance Society's Records and probably covers a somewhat better type of daily servant than that found when sampling the whole working-class population as was done on Merseyside. The difference in the rate of wages is so great, however, that, even allowing for this factor affecting the results, some explanation is required. The larger supply of and the smaller demand for domestics here, as compared with London, appears to provide the most satisfactory reason. It is worth noting also that nearly 12 per cent. of the non-resident domestics

in the Merseyside sample were recorded as unemployed; and this was in addition to a considerable number of other unemployed domestics previously engaged in resident service.

For charwomen in private houses—in contrast to daily servants—the difference in rate of pay between London and Merseyside does not seem to be very great. Charles Booth, in 1896, stated that the recognised pay for a charwoman in London was 2/- or 2/6 a day. In 1898 an Association of Trained Charwomen was founded by the Women's Industrial Council. It only accepted highly skilled domestic workers. Wages were fixed at 6d. for the first hour and 4d. for each succeeding hour; meals were provided in the hours of work. The Liverpool Women's Industrial Council, led by Miss Eleanor Rathbone, started a similar association in 1905 with the same rates; the usual rate at that time on Merseyside was 2/-, but some better-off households paid 2/6. The New London Survey (Vol. II, p. 453) gives 5/-, with meals, as the dominant daily rate from householders' returns, but on p. 463 4/-, with meals, is recorded as the usual rate for charwomen. For those paid by the hour (householders' returns) 9d. an hour is stated to be the average for those who receive meals. These results do not differ so very widely from those on Merseyside. Considering that an 8-hour day has replaced a 10-hour day for charwomen on Merseyside, as in London, the improvement in wages and conditions since the beginning of the century can be said to have been equally marked in both areas.

The rates for office cleaners (under 6d. an hour in the sample inquiry and 7d. according to the Employment Exchange) are definitely less than in London, where 7d. to 1/- are the rates given (Vol. II, p. 463). The average in London would appear to be somewhere about 10d. or 11d. an hour. The greater demand in London for such workers has raised wages appreciably. The increased commercialisation of the West-End is only one of the factors operating in this direction. In Liverpool the convenience of part-time work for women who wish to supplement the family income is so great that the supply is always in excess of the demand. As in London, cleaners in the employ of the local authorities were well paid. Some of the shipping firms, amongst others, had an equally high standard.

#### Cost of Transport and Locality of Residence

Particulars as to the weekly cost of transport for all types of non-resident domestic workers were collected in making the sample inquiry in Liverpool. It was found that 35 per cent were recorded as having to meet transport costs to and from their work, and that their average weekly outgoings for this purpose came to 1/6. For a large number of domestic workers there thus resulted an appreciable reduction in the wages recorded above. The figures varied considerably for the different categories of domestic workers.



**TABLE VII.**  
**Weekly Transport Costs of Non-Resident Domestic Workers in Liverpool.**

| Types of Domestic Worker               | Proportion of Total recorded as having to meet Transport Costs | Average Weekly Transport Costs |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Regular Dailies .. .. .                | 34%  | 1/5                            |
| Charwomen (including "casual dailies") | 20%  | 1/5                            |
| Office Cleaners .. .. .                | 65%  | 1/10                           |
| Other Cleaners .. .. .                 | 42%  | 1/7                            |
| <b>TOTAL .. .. .</b>                   | <b>35%</b>   | <b>1/6</b>                     |

In the dock areas and poorer districts there is a strong tradition against domestic service. The distance to residential areas is very great for daily work, and offices and municipal buildings prefer to draw their cleaners from the 'respectable areas,' such as Edgehill, which lie round the centre of the city. Office cleaners frequently go to their work both in the morning and the evening. Hence the large number of these cleaners with high transport costs. Charwomen, on the contrary, working as they do for short periods and often for more than one employer, naturally tend to work near their own homes. Regular dailies undoubtedly prefer to do the same, but have less aversion to travel to and from work if it lasts for a reasonable length of time when they get there.

A great many domestic workers in the sample came from families with no adult male worker or with the adult male worker out of work. This was particularly noticeable in Birkenhead where a very large number of domestics were drawn from the families of unemployed shipyard workers.

### 3.—RESIDENT DOMESTIC SERVICE.

It has already been stated that the majority (about two-thirds) of the domestic servants on Merseyside are engaged in resident service, but as the Household Census carried out by the Survey was confined to working-class households these workers were not included in the returns. To complete the survey of what constitutes the most important women's occupation in the area, certain additional information was obtained directly from the Employment Exchange and from a number of housewives, as explained in an earlier paragraph.

The Liverpool Employment Exchange opened a special department in July, 1928, for placing women in resident domestic service, and the experiment has met with a considerable amount of success. It deals mostly with the one-servant type of household, but mistresses of two and three servants are increasingly using this method of recruitment and a large number of workers are supplied to Institutions such as hospitals and hostels.

A sample of one hundred vacancies and two hundred women applicants furnished by the Employment Exchange, although it

provided data as to wages at different ages and for different types of servant, did not throw light on the subject of hours and general conditions. Moreover, the better-class type of household was not sufficiently represented. Hence it was thought desirable to send a questionnaire to a number of housewives; particulars as to the wages, hours and conditions of 156 resident servants were thus added to our other data.

The following table shows the number of maids in different types of household concerning whom information was obtained from the two sources mentioned.

**TABLE VIII.**  
**Types of Household Sampled.**

| No. of Servants | Employment Exchange Vacancies | Housewives' Returns | Total      | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|------------|------------|
| 1               | 50                            | 36                  | 86         | 48         |
| 2               | 28                            | 21                  | 49         | 27         |
| 3 or more       | 7                             | 20                  | 27         | 15         |
| Institutions    | 15                            | 3                   | 18         | 10         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>100</b>                    | <b>80</b>           | <b>180</b> | <b>100</b> |

### Wages (a) Girls under 21 years of age.

The Employment Exchange Resident Service Department only deals with girls from eighteen years of age upwards and, as the Housewives' Returns included very few girls under that age, the rates of wages from the two sources for maids between 18 and 21 are quite comparable. The numbers about whom particulars were obtained were not large and the wages were so similar for work of every description that no division was made according to its type. About two-thirds of those registering at the Employment Exchange (33 out of 53) asked for 10/- a week, whereas the Housewives' Returns gave 10/- as the lower quartile,\* 11/6 as the median and 13/9 as the upper quartile. These rates are rather higher than one would expect, since the Employment Exchange median wage for all types and all ages from 21 upwards is only 12/6 a week for vacancies and 15/- for women registered. (See Table IX.) A reason is to be found in the possible scarcity of supply of young servants, for girls under 21 are attracted to and can fairly readily obtain work in shops and factories whereas at later ages supply and demand seem pretty well balanced.

The average wage-rate in London for girls of 18-20 years is given in the New Survey (Vol. 11, p. 468) as 13/- by both the Employment Exchange and Private Registries, and as 12/- by a voluntary placing society.

\* If the women are arranged in order of descending wages, the upper and lower quartiles are the wages paid to those who stand one-quarter the way along the line, counting from the top and bottom respectively. The median wage is that paid to the woman standing half-way along the line.



To obtain a comparison with the wages for non-resident servants the girls of 21 years were added to those of 18-20, but the median rate remained the same for both the Employment Exchange and the Housewives' figures although in the latter the upper quartile rose to 15/-. Even if we take the Employment Exchange median rate of 10/-, it compares favourably with the figure of 8/2 for daily servants. There is a material advantage of nearly 2/- in money wages, plus lodging and probably more food, on the side of resident service, although it must be borne in mind that the inclusion of girls under 18 in the Household Census returns probably reduced the wage for daily servants appreciably.

### Wages (b). Women of 21 years and upwards.

TABLE IX.  
Average Weekly Wage of All Types of Resident Servants  
Twenty-One Years and Upwards.

| Distribution   | LIVERPOOL                           |                    |                             | LONDON                       |                              |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                | Employment<br>Exchange<br>Vacancies | Registra-<br>tions | House-<br>wives'<br>Returns | House-<br>wives'<br>Returns* | Employ-<br>ment<br>Exchange† |
| Lower Quartile | 10/6                                | 12/-               | 15/3                        | 17/9                         | —                            |
| Median         | 12/6                                | 15/-               | 17/3                        | 19/3                         | 15/6                         |
| Upper Quartile | 15/-                                | 15/6               | 20/-                        | 20/-                         | —                            |

\* New Survey Vol. II, p. 435 and p. 468.

From this table it would appear that the vacancies at the Employment Exchange are on the whole offered at slightly lower wages than the women asked, but a more detailed analysis revealed that Cooks of all ages and Generals from 21-39 asked on an average about the same wages as they were offered, viz., 15/- and 12/6 respectively, but that House and Parlour-maids and a small miscellaneous group asked rather higher wages than prospective mistresses were prepared to give.

The Housewives' Returns indicate a distinctly higher rate of wages paid to the well-established and better-class servant. It is interesting to compare these figures with the London Housewives' Returns and to note that, although the median rate in London is 2/- above the corresponding Liverpool rate, the upper quartiles are exactly the same.

The London Employment Exchange average of 15/6 for women of 21 years and upwards is surprisingly low, compared with the London Housewives' average of 19/3. In fact, it is only 6d. above the rate for women registered at the Liverpool Employment Exchange. It lends support to the view previously expressed that the placing of the better type of servant is not yet effected to any large extent through the Employment Exchanges.



TABLE X.

Average Wage for Three Principal Types of Servant in Three Age-Groups.

| Types                     | AGE-GROUPS                      |                     |                                 |                     |                                 |                     |                                 |                     |                                 |                     |      |      |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|------|------|
|                           | 21-29                           |                     |                                 | 30-39               |                                 |                     | 40 Upwards                      |                     |                                 | All Ages            |      |      |
|                           | Liverpool<br>Emp. Ex. ‡ H'wives | London †<br>H'wives | Liverpool<br>Emp. Ex. ‡ H'wives | London †<br>H'wives | Liverpool<br>Emp. Ex. ‡ H'wives | London †<br>H'wives | Liverpool<br>Emp. Ex. ‡ H'wives | London †<br>H'wives | Liverpool<br>Emp. Ex. ‡ H'wives | London †<br>H'wives |      |      |
| Cooks .. ..               | 15/-                            | 17/-                | 19/-                            | 15/-                | 20/9                            | 23/-                | 15/-                            | 19/3                | 23/-                            | 15/-                | 20/- | 22/- |
| Generals ..               | 12/6                            | 15/-                | 17/3                            | 12/6                | 16/6                            | 20/6                | 14/3                            | 16/6                | 18/-                            | 12/6                | 15/- | 20/- |
| House and<br>Parlourmaids | 15/-                            | 16/3                | 17/3                            | 14/3                | 18/6                            | 19/3                | 16/3                            | 17/6                | 20/3                            | 15/-                | 17/3 | 19/6 |
| ALL* .. ..                | 14/3                            | 16/3                | 20/6                            | 14/3                | 18/6                            | 21/9                | 15/-                            | 19/3                | 20/3                            | 15/-                | 17/3 | 19/3 |

13

\*These figures are the average for all types of servant including betweenmaids, children's nurses and other types not sufficiently numerous to form a separate group.

†The London figures were obtained from the New Survey Vol. II, pp. 435 and 436. The yearly wages were given in £'s but were converted into weekly wages to the nearest 3d. for purposes of comparison.

‡The Employment Exchange figures are for women *registered* in each Age Group.



In Table X the wages are analysed for different types of maid in three specified age-groups from 21 years upwards and comparative figures are given for London. Comparing the money wages of resident and non-resident servants at ages 22-39 (see Tables VI and X), a distinct advantage is again evident in resident service in all the returns. The advantage is considerably less if we confine the comparison to the Employment Exchange groups for resident and non-resident service. Indeed, when we come to examine servants of forty years of age and upwards the pay of the daily servant is found to exceed that of the resident maid by 9d., although the difference is probably not significant, and would certainly be reversed if 'real' wages (*i.e.*, taking lodging and full board into account for resident service) were compared.

The average annual wage in households employing one servant or two servants was found to be the same in the London Housewives' Returns, £45 2s.; there was a slight rise for three-servant households to £47 18s. and afterwards a decline. In Liverpool a distinct difference was found between the one and two-servant types of household, both in the Employment Exchange and the Housewives' Returns, but only a very small rise in the average wage in households employing three or more servants.

TABLE XI.

## Average Wage for different types of Household.

| No. of Servants | Employment Exchange Vacancies | Housewives' Returns | London Housewives' Returns |
|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1               | 12/6                          | 15/-                | 17/3                       |
| 2               | 15/-                          | 17/-                | 17/3                       |
| 3 or more       | 15/3                          | 17/3                | *17/3                      |

\*The average for ALL households with three or more servants was £45 5/-.

This seems to support the view expressed earlier that the absence of alternative employment in Liverpool creates a supply of lower-paid servants, resident as well as non-resident, employed in households of a type which could not afford to keep a servant in London and other towns. Further we see that for higher-grade servants there is little difference between the rates of wages in Liverpool and in London.

In order to elucidate this point further it will be of interest to compare the Housewives' Returns for Liverpool and London, differentiating the types in more detail; the wages in this case are expressed yearly.

TABLE XII.

## Average Annual Wage Rate of different types of Servant as shown by Housewives' Returns.

| Type                        | Liverpool | London* |
|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Cooks .. .. .               | £52 10 0  | £56 0 0 |
| Cook-general .. .. .        | 45 10 0   | 52 0 0  |
| Working-housekeeper .. .. . | 54 0 0†   | 52 0 0  |
| General .. .. .             | 39 0 0    | 45 0 0  |
| Housemaid .. .. .           | 44 0 0    | 45 0 0  |
| Parlourmaid .. .. .         | 48 0 0    | 50 0 0  |
| ALL .. .. .                 | £45 0 0   | £50 0 0 |

\*New Survey, Vol. II, p. 435.

†This figure was based on only a small number of returns.

In all types, with one scarcely significant exception, the London wage is higher than the Liverpool wage, but the difference is not so marked as might have been expected, taking into consideration the fact that supply and demand for the better type of service seem well balanced in Liverpool, while in London as stated in the New Survey (Vol. II, p. 432) 'the demand for resident servants has long exceeded the supply.' It should further be noted that the difference is greatest for Generals and Cook-Generals who are found in the one and two-servant type of household.

Unfortunately, no early figures are available for Liverpool, similar to Charles Booth's figures for London in 1896, with which a comparison can be made of the wages of servants in 1932. We know that during the period of scarcity, when there was a big demand for women workers, owing to the war, wages were at least doubled. Some drop has taken place since then, as supply overtook and perhaps even passed demand. But, in spite of that, the increase in money wages is still believed to be about 100 per cent. above pre-war level.

But it must always be remembered that money wages are only part of the true remuneration of the resident domestic servant; board, lodging and amenities are really more important factors in her well being. The information received from housewives throws some light on these general conditions, which we shall proceed to consider next.

**Hours, Free Time and Holidays.**

The housewives were asked to give (1) hours on duty (2) hours off duty on ordinary days and Sundays, and (3) extra free time in the week or month. In compiling the tables, when merely the hours of beginning and ending work were recorded, two hours



were allowed for meals if some free time for leisure were allotted each day; if no such leisure time was specified two-and-a-half hours were allowed for meals. The following table gives the result:—

**TABLE XIII.**  
**Working Hours for All Ages and Types of Servants.**

|                        | Daily | Weekly |
|------------------------|-------|--------|
| Lower Quartile .. .. . | 10    | 57     |
| Median .. .. .         | 11    | 62     |
| Upper Quartile .. .. . | 11½   | 68½    |

The daily hours are for a full working day, only meal hours and daily free periods being deducted; while from the weekly hours have been deducted all the daily and weekly free time and a proportion of the monthly free time where given. The weekly hours are only approximate as it was very difficult to assess the amount of leisure time, especially on Sundays; but, even allowing for the probability that some of the hours on duty were not actually hours of work, these hours are certainly longer than for any other large class of woman worker. If we compare domestic servants with shop assistants—women of similar age and frequently of similar class—the average weekly hours of the former, judged by this sample, exceed by twelve the average of fifty hours obtained for a random sample of shop assistants in the Merseyside Survey. It must be stressed throughout, too, that these returns were collected from a selected group of housewives who had already shown an interest in the Survey and who would be likely to give more than the usual amount of thought and consideration to the welfare of their maids. Incidentally, less than a quarter of the servants concerned (36 out of 156) were single-handed; the hours calculated from these returns are therefore probably shorter than those generally prevailing. The Employment Exchange estimated the customary hours of duty as 7-0 a.m. to 8-0 or 9-0 p.m., but remarked that the habit of allowing an hour or two definitely off work in the afternoon was growing; this was evident also from the Housewives' returns.

In addition to this, it is to be noted that the full 'day a month' customary in pre-war days has almost entirely given place to the 'half-day a week' from 2-0 p.m. to 10-0 or 10-30 p.m., and in addition one free evening a week from 6-0 p.m. is not unusual. Nearly half the single-handed servants had Sunday entirely free after mid-day dinner; most of the rest had half the day or the evening free in alternate weeks, while a small minority had alternate Sundays on duty. In two-servant households the maids usually have the half-day free on alternate Sundays, although sometimes both maids are free in the evening. In larger households the maids seem to get about two out of three Sundays, afternoon and evening, free; in short, the general

impression is that the maids are free to go out on Sundays as long as there is not work actually to be done. Saturday afternoons and evenings sometimes alternate with Sundays as free days and several mistresses mention occasional week-ends in addition to the usual holiday.

An annual holiday of a fortnight on board wages after a year's service is usual, but frequently another week or two may be given without board wages in the larger households. In smaller households, when the family takes a long holiday, the maid is given board wages for a month or more.

#### Amenities.

More than half the two-servant households provided separate bedrooms for their maids, and in the larger households the senior maids had separate rooms, while the younger maids shared bedrooms. In all types of household a maid's sitting-room is fairly common and visitors seem to be allowed freely. A number of mistresses mention the provision of wireless, while a few state that it was offered, but not desired.

**TABLE XIV.**  
**Length of Service.**

| Type of Household      | Period in One Situation (Percentages) |                     |                      |                   |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
|                        | Under 1 year                          | 1 and under 5 years | 5 and under 10 years | 10 years and over |
| One servant .. .. .    | 26                                    | 43                  | 23                   | 8                 |
| Two servants .. .. .   | 24                                    | 34                  | 25                   | 17                |
| Three or more servants | 23                                    | 43                  | 16                   | 18                |
| ALL TYPES .. .. .      | 24.5                                  | 40                  | 20                   | 15.5              |

Table XIV shows that in all types of household about a quarter of the maids had been in the same situation for less than a year. One to five years is the most usual length of service, accounting altogether for 40 per cent. of all households. A surprisingly large proportion of maids (35.5 per cent.) had been with the same employer for over five years, and this is most conspicuous in the two-servant households where the proportion rises to 42 per cent. Out of a total of 149 recorded cases, twenty servants had been from ten to twenty years, and three had been over twenty years in the same situation.

These figures, so far they go, indicate rather less movement from one family to another in Liverpool than in London, for the Householders' Returns analysed in the New Survey (Vol. II, p. 438) showed that rather more than a third had been less than a year, and 11 per cent. had remained ten years or more, in the same situation. In London as in Liverpool, the figures point to the fact that the households sampled were above the average of those employing domestic servants.



No question was asked as to progressive rises in wages, but it is significant that those who had been longest in their situations were amongst those most highly paid.

#### Method and Terms of Engagement.

The Householders' Returns suggest that Private Registries are still, in Liverpool, the most usual source for obtaining servants; 40 per cent. of the replies placed this method first, 30 per cent. of employers relied on personal recommendation, 20 per cent. on Press advertisement, and only 10 per cent. mentioned any use of the Employment Exchange.

The placing of resident servants by the Employment Exchange has only been undertaken systematically during the past few years. Such changes have taken place in the economic situation during this short period that no safe conclusions can be drawn. The returns are given below and it may be pointed out that the figures for the last six months of 1931 indicate a considerable surplus of applicants for domestic service in contrast with a diminished demand. This may in part be due to the recent alteration in the administration of unemployment benefit for women.

TABLE XV.  
Employment Exchange Records, 1928-1931.

|                             | Vacancies Filled | Vacancies Notified | Applicants Registered |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| July, 1928 to June, 1929 .. | 826              | 1,026              | 1,546                 |
| July, 1929 to June, 1930 .. | 729              | 999                | 1,514                 |
| July, 1930 to June, 1931 .. | 741              | 1,015              | 1,329                 |
| July, 1931 to Dec., 1931 .. | 310              | 380                | 819                   |

The terms of engagement are usually a month's trial, and a month's notice on either side when terminating the engagement. This month's notice has persisted even though the custom of paying wages weekly has practically superseded monthly payment.

#### Recruitment and Training.

The demand for juvenile female labour not being great in Liverpool, it is quite usual for young girls of the better artisan class to be kept at home to assist the mother for a few years after leaving school\* and it is from this class that domestic servants for private houses are mainly recruited. A rougher type of girl, but still not from the slum districts associated with casual labour, is employed in Institutions.

Women over forty, thrown on the labour market owing to the breaking up of a home they have looked after for relatives, are a special problem, and they can usually only be placed as working-housekeepers with people of a similar class to themselves.

The time-honoured method of the mistress or older maids training the new recruit still prevails, but Liverpool is fortunate in having its own Day Training Centre under the Ministry of Labour, to which the Employment Exchange officials can send

\* This conclusion is borne out by the Household Census which recorded a large number of girls and women (apart from the housekeeper) supported by their father or other earning members of the family—living in fact as unpaid domestic servants.

selected young women of eighteen and over who have not previously been in domestic service. The period of training is three months, and girls who have been through the course are placed easily and satisfactorily.

#### Householders' Opinions.

The householders were asked to give their experience of the class of girl who now takes up domestic service and their opinion as to whether there was any improvement in efficiency and agreeableness since pre-war days. It was possible to classify the replies from sixty-eight mistresses, and the consensus of opinion was about equally divided between those who thought that both the class of servant and the quality of work had (1) improved (2) deteriorated, and (3) remained much the same. For two-servant households the numbers were in much the same proportions, but the mistresses of larger households on the whole thought a poorer type of maid was available than formerly. On the other hand in one-servant households the emphasis lay on the side of improvement, and this is interesting as indicating a tendency for the better-class maid to prefer a situation where she is solely responsible. A few extracts from the Housewives' returns will serve to illustrate the mistresses' views.

##### *One-Servant Households.*

"My maid has had a good education and is attractive and refined in manner."

"The girls who take up domestic service are generally those whose mothers have been in service. Girls are more independent and assertive. Do not work so hard."

"The type has remained the same—both efficient and agreeable. I think this depends on the choice of suitable girls in the first place and the capacity of the mistress for moving with the times and realising that the domestic servant requires and should have more liberty and amenities than she at one time received."

"Type distinctly lower and less reliable than formerly."

"My maid is of good yeoman stock, thoroughly intelligent and self-educated. A most superior woman in every way and moreover a saint if ever there was one!"

"Cleaner and more particular about their personal appearance, but much worse manners."

##### *Households with more than One Servant.*

"The type of girl has improved—my cook was formerly a governess and my housemaid a dressmaker."

"In these abnormal times the market is flooded with women of all classes and of varying degrees of efficiency—many obviously unsuited for domestic service."

"Servants now are more efficient and agreeable, but inclined to be independent."

"Definitely not improved in efficiency, seem to lack a sense of responsibility and interest in family and work."

There is little doubt that the status of domestic service has been distinctly raised during the last few years, owing to better wages and amenities, and that there is much less prejudice against



resident service on the part of good-class girls and their friends. It is possible that in Liverpool under present trade restrictions the supply has come to exceed the demand, and it is hoped that the good conditions so hardly won will not be lowered.

#### **Domestic Service in Institutions.**

Liverpool has a good many Institutions serving not only the city, but a large area comprising South West Lancashire, Cheshire and North Wales. These Hospitals, Hostels, and Homes employ a number of domestic workers under rather different conditions from those prevailing in private households. The wages are lower than in private service (in our sample the average was 12/- a week), but uniform is usually provided; and, although the discipline is more rigid, the companionship and the definite hours of duty are compensating features.

#### **4.—COMPARISON OF RESIDENT WITH NON-RESIDENT DOMESTIC SERVICE.**

The increase in recent years in the number of regular daily servants requires some explanation. The hours of work for regular dailies on Merseyside were found to amount to just over 42 a week, as compared with 62 for resident service in better-class households. In both cases time for meals and other free periods are excluded.

This difference is certainly striking. On the other hand, the wages of the daily were distinctly lower than those of the resident servant. Girls of 18-20 in resident service were paid an average wage of 10/- to 11/6, whilst dailies of 14-21 obtained 8/2 a week. The exclusion of girls under 18, however, would raise the latter figure appreciably. The average pay for resident maids of 21 and over was between 12/6 and 17/3 a week. These figures may be compared with an average of 12/- a week for regular dailies between 22-39 and of 15/9 for those of 40 and over. The value of full board and residence to the maid who lives in must also be taken into account, although dailies usually receive such meals as fall within their hours of work. About one-third of the dailies were recorded as having in addition to meet transport costs in going to and from work, amounting on an average to 1/5 a week. The smaller real wages earned by the dailies thus largely offset the advantage they possess in shorter hours of work.

The growth in the number of dailies has taken place principally in the one-servant households, where it is frequently to the advantage of both mistress and maid that the latter should sleep at home. From the point of view of the young maid it is the greater freedom rather than the shorter hours which proves so attractive in daily service. She is not cut off from her family, and can lead a similar life in her spare time to that of a sister working in a factory or shop. Her contribution to the family exchequer is probably not large. Older women, on the other hand, especially those without family ties, have not the same objection to 'living-in,' since it is somewhat expensive, besides being rather dull, to maintain a separate existence in lodgings.



