

Inquiries were sent to sewer departments of all the cities in Massachusetts and several of the larger cities of the other New England States to ascertain the length of day and the rate of wages in force upon municipal sewer work in the city departments. The data thus collected is compiled in Table 6. Several of the cities included in this inquiry performed their construction work by contract, so that the figures given in those cases apply only to the maintenance forces. From these data it appears that the prevailing length of day is eight hours, although in some cases a nine-hour day is required. Excluding Boston, the nominal rate of pay varies from \$0.17 to \$0.287 per hour, while the prevailing rate of pay may fairly be said to not exceed \$0.25 per hour. In about one-third of the cities the laborers are permitted to have half-holidays on Saturday, although in about one-half of these cases the half-holidays are restricted to the summer months. In several of the cities where half-holidays are granted the length of day is so arranged that the laborers work forty-eight hours during the week. In five cities granting Saturday half-holidays laborers are paid in full for Saturdays during the summer months (varying from two to six months).

From a comparison of the wages paid by contractors and by municipalities, it is evident that city laborers are paid considerably more than laborers employed by contractors, and that they work fewer hours per week. It is difficult to determine the relation existing between high wages and the efficiency of the employees. It is doubtless true, however, that higher wages are paid by municipalities, very largely because of political influence.

In this connection it is very interesting to note the increase in wages paid for common labor in the city of Boston from 1878 to 1907. From 1878 to 1883 the wages paid were \$1.75, and the length of day was ten hours. In 1883 the rate of wages was increased to \$2 per day. In 1891 the length of day was reduced to nine hours, and in 1897 Saturday half-holidays were allowed **with pay**. In 1900 the eight-hour day was granted, together with the continuance of the Saturday half-holiday, and in 1907, with the same hours, the rate of wages was increased to \$2.25. It, therefore, appears that between 1878 and 1907 the rate of wages had increased from \$1.75 to \$2.25 per day, or 28 per cent., and the hours of work had been reduced 26½ per cent. The result of reducing the length of day and increasing the rate of pay is made more apparent by comparing the rate of compensation per hour as in Table 7.

TABLE 7.

Wages of Laborers Employed by City of Boston—Nominal Time Worked and Wages Paid.

| Period. | Hours per week. | Nominal Rate of Wages. | |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|------------|
| | | Per day. | Per hour. |
| 1878-1883 | 60 | \$1 75 | 17½ cents. |
| 1883-1891 | 60 | 2 00 | 20 " |
| 1891-1897 | 54 | 2 00 | 22½ " |
| 1897-1900 | 50 | 2 00 | 24 " |
| 1900-1907 | 44 | 2 00 | 27½ " |
| 1907-date | 44 | 2 25 | *31½ " |

* Allowance made for legal holidays for which full pay is allowed.

From this tabulation it appears that the hourly wage, making due allowance for the Saturday afternoons and holidays, has increased from \$0.175 to \$0.315, an increase of 80 per cent. in the cost to the city for the work done, assuming equal efficiency. In this connection it should be noted that while the cost of labor to the city has increased

80 per cent. per hour the increase in daily wages received by employees has amounted to but 28 per cent.

It is further important to note that while the cost per hour to the city for labor has increased 80 per cent., the efficiency of labor, as already shown, has fallen 50 per cent. In other words, a dollar's worth of time in 1878 would to-day cost the city \$1.80, but the efficiency having dropped 50 per cent., the city is obliged to pay \$3.60 for the amount of work done in 1878 for \$1, an increase of 360 per cent.

Holidays and Sick Leave.

The effect of political influence is shown very clearly in the granting of holidays and sick leave with pay to city laborers. The cost of holidays, half-holidays and sick leave is an item, the magnitude of which is not very generally appreciated. The Boston Water Department has very carefully compiled statistics relating to this source of expense. During 1906 the distribution division expended upon pay-rolls about \$450,000, and the amount charged to holidays, half-holidays and sick leave amounted to over \$34,000, or 7.7 per cent. of the total pay-roll. The lowest percentage for any month was 5.3, and the highest was a little over 10 per cent. of the respective pay-rolls. During the first eight months of 1907 the money paid for holidays and sick leave amounted to 8.3 per cent. of the total cost of labor. During this entire period of twenty months the pay-rolls amounted to \$752,000, and nearly \$60,000, or 7.95 per cent. of the amount of the pay-rolls was expended for holidays and sick leave.

Age of Laborers.

Perhaps one of the most frequent criticisms by the public of day labor departments is that the men employed are too old for the work they are required to do, and consequently that the amount of work done per man per day is ridiculously small. This appears to be the universal opinion, and, unfortunately, in many cases there is much to substantiate it. An investigation of the Boston Sewer Department furnishes considerable interesting information pertinent to this criticism. Of the employees of this department, the investigation included 715 connected with the labor service. The ages of the various employees, as well as their terms of service, were obtained from the State Civil Service records, and are classified in Tables 8 and 9.

Considering these tables as of the date of their preparation (1907), it is found that of the 65 men who were from 60 to 64 years of age, four had seen less than five years of service in the department; six had seen from 5 to 9 years' service; 20, between 10 and 14 years; 28, between 15 and 19 years; **and only 7 had served the department 20 years or more.** Of the 21 men from 65 to 69 years of age, two had worked less than five years; two others from 5 to 9 years; six from 10 to 15 years; five from 15 to 20 years; **and only six had been employed in the department 20 years or more.** Of the nine men from 70 to 74 years old, two had labored from 10 to 14 years; four from 15 to 19 years, and **three only for 20 years or more.** There was one man over 75 years of age, and he had labored **40 years or more for the department.** Sixty-one (9 per cent.) of the 715 employees had worked 20 years or more. **There were 97 employees over 60 years of age, but only 18 of them (18.5 per cent.) had served the department for 20 years or more.**

Many will maintain, and with much justice, that men who have worked for the city for 20 years are entitled to consideration, but from the following statement of facts it appears that few are in need of charity. Of the 56 men who were over 40 years of age, and who had served 20 years, nine were employed as watchmen, which work they could perfectly well do. Four were filling positions for which they