

RELATIVE COST OF MUNICIPAL WORK DONE BY DAY LABOR AND BY CONTRACT.*

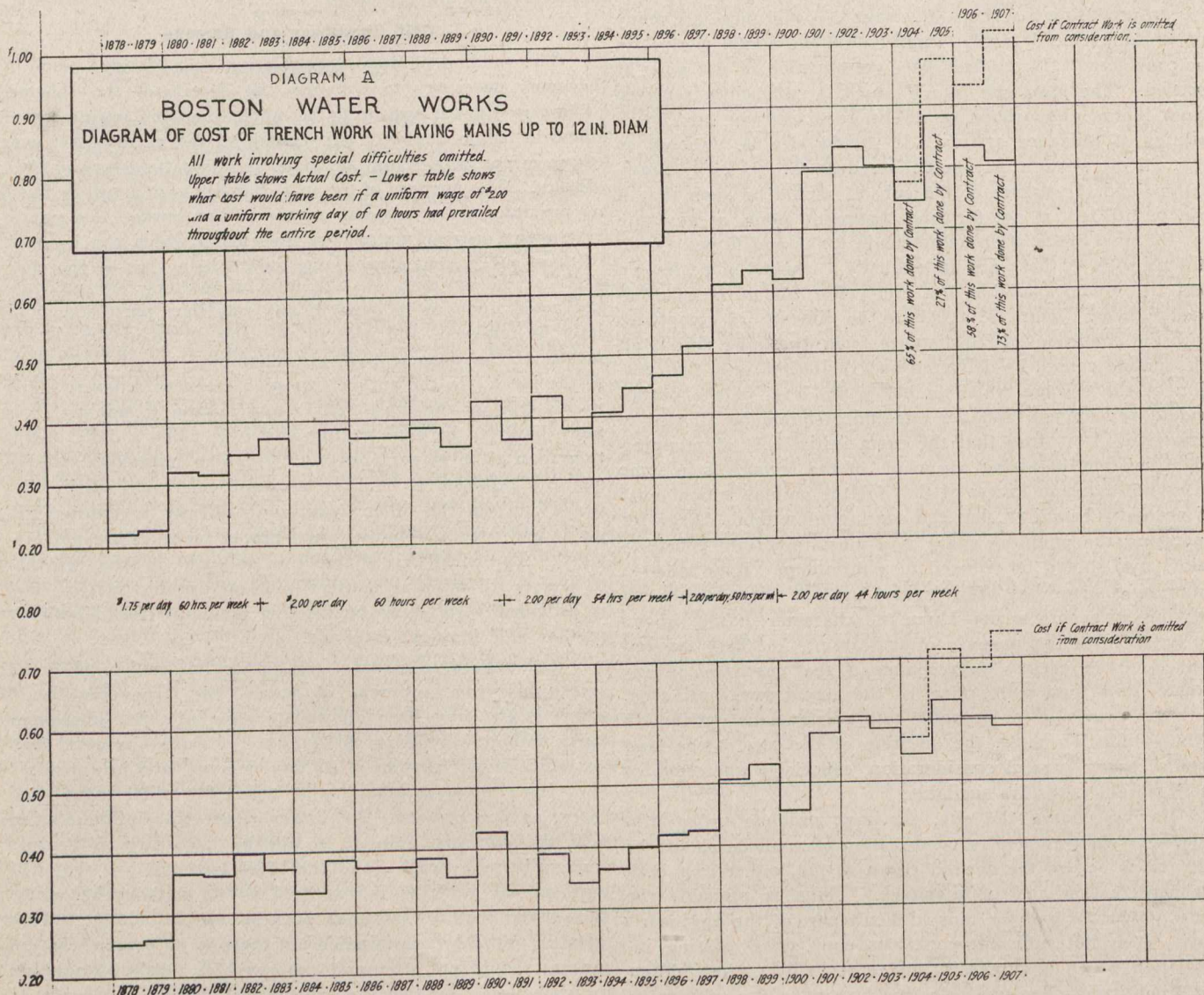
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From all the information available it appears that this study of cost and efficiency is based upon very full and reliable data., and that comparison from year to year can day labor force has dropped about 50 per cent. in the last may be obtained by averaging several years and making a parisons are made, it is apparent that the efficiency of the twelve years. In other words, in 1907 the average employee did only one-half as much work in a given length of time as he did in 1895. In this connection it should be remembered that there are many causes for this decline in efficiency,

Efficiency of Labor and Rate of Wages Paid.

An effort was made to ascertain the prevailing rate of wages paid by contractors in the vicinity of Boston for work similar to that performed by the city Water and Sewer Departments. Data were obtained from thirty-five different contractors.

The minimum rate of wages paid in this vicinity appears to be 15 cents per hour, and the maximum did not exceed in any case 30 cents per hour. Comparatively few laborers are employed at rates of pay exceeding 25 cents per hour, while large numbers are paid as low as 20 cents. In general, it may be stated that English-speaking laborers are paid more than others, and further, that the rate of 30 cents applies quite generally to building laborers or to laborers who possess rather more than average skill. In no case was it found that laborers were paid for legal holidays, and only



some of which are entirely independent of the personal effort of the laborers, and for which they should not be held in any way responsible. It is also true that this decline is not necessarily an inherent result of the operation of the day labor system, and that system has been in use in other cities for many years where a decline of such proportions is not apparent.

It is also interesting to note that the cost of work (Diagram A) was reduced by including with the work done by day labor also that done by contract during the years 1904-7.

in two instances were Saturday afternoons allowed. None of the contractors gave Saturday afternoons off with continued pay, and in no case were laborers paid in event of absence from work on account of injuries received.

The contractors furnishing data do not "carry" their employees through the winter unless they have work which must be done. In other words, they do not "find" work for their laborers during the winter season as do the city departments, and consequently they do not give continuous employment.