

Public health (meat) regulations, 1924 : extract from Report No. 275 / presented to the Sanitary Committee by the Medical Officer of Health [William J, Howarth] on the 24th March, 1925.

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PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

PUBLIC HEALTH (MEAT) REGULATIONS, 1924.

Extract from Report No. 275, presented to the Sanitary Committee
by the Medical Officer of Health on the 24th March, 1925.

Submitted to the Court of Common Council and agreed
2nd April, 1925.

Corporation of London

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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REPORT ON PUBLIC HEALTH (MEAT) REGULATIONS, 1924.

I have to report that I have given consideration to the Public Health (Meat) Regulations which become effective as from April 1st, 1925.

I submit the following recommendations thereon, and have to report that in arriving at the conclusions set out I have had the advantage of conferring with a sub-committee consisting of the Chairman (Mr. W. Leuw), the late Chairman (Mr. Deputy Alderton), Mr. A. S. Juniper and Mr. D. C. W. Wardlaw. I have furthermore been in conference with representatives of the London Central Markets' Association, of the London Cartage and Haulage Contractors' Association, of the Carcase Butchers' Association, of representatives of wholesale provision traders who deal in hams and bacon and of Representative Meat Porters at Aldgate. In order to ensure uniformity in connection with meat marking, both at Aldgate and at Islington, I have been in conference with Mr. J. R. Hayhurst, M.R.C.V.S., Superintendent and Veterinary Inspector, Metropolitan Cattle Market, Islington.

The regulations are divided into six parts of which the first part deals with definitions, and indicates the local authorities which are responsible for the executive work imposed by the regulations, and further sets out the officers of the authority who shall be responsible for the work.

The chief point of interest in respect of the definitions is the question of the interpretation of the words "stall" and "room," because on that interpretation depends the decision whether the shops inside Smithfield Market are to be included within the scope of Part IV. or Part V. of the regulations. "Stall" includes any stall, barrow, or vehicle from which meat is offered for sale in a street or other open space or in any market place. "Room" includes a shop, cellar, passage, or other place forming the whole or part of a building other than a slaughterhouse as defined.

I consider that any shop *within* the four walls of the market can be regarded justifiably as a "room," and that therefor Part V. of the requirements of the Regulations will apply. All stalls outside the market and not actually enclosed shops will be administered under Part IV.

PART II.—SLAUGHTERING AND SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

These regulations are designed apparently to ensure that the local authority shall be aware of any slaughtering which takes place in a registered slaughterhouse within its boundary so that the authority may have an opportunity, through its inspectors, of inspecting carcasses at the time of slaughter. The regulations, however, do not apply to slaughtering in slaughterhouses under the management of a local authority, e.g., the Corporation Slaughterhouses at Islington.

These regulations will not add much to the Corporation's powers because one or more inspectors are invariably on duty every day, including Sundays, and every night if slaughtering is taking place at the Aldgate Slaughterhouses. These are the only ones within the City area. The Corporation requirements are as follows:—

- "19.—Every occupier of a slaughterhouse who shall intend to slaughter any animal in such slaughterhouse, or to cause or to permit any animal to be slaughtered therein, at any time other than between the hours of seven o'clock in the forenoon and three o'clock in the afternoon on a Sunday, or between the hours of six o'clock in the forenoon and nine o'clock in the afternoon on any other day, shall give to the Corporation at least three hours' notice in writing of such intention, which shall be delivered or sent to their Veterinary Inspector at his office.
- "Such person shall state in every such notice the address of such slaughterhouse and the time at which the slaughtering is intended to be commenced, and he shall sign such notice or cause the same to be signed by his duly authorised agent."

As regards the requirements for inspection of offal, these in the past have been controlled under Byelaw No. 20, which is to the following effect:—

- "20.—An occupier of a slaughterhouse shall not allow any person to remove from the slaughterhouse, without reasonable excuse, the carcase or any organs of any animal after slaughter until the same have been inspected and passed by the Inspector or other person authorised by the Corporation."

As regards the prohibition of the use of slaughterhouses for such purposes as gut-scraping, tripe-cleaning, manufacture or preparation of articles of food for man or for animals, and so on, which is prohibited under the regulations, such work has been controlled in the past under the following by-law of the Corporation:—

- "18.—An occupier of slaughterhouse shall not allow the slaughterhouse to be used for any other purpose than the slaughtering and dressing of animals, the flesh of which is fit for and is intended to be sold as human food."

The regulations prohibit the blowing or inflating, by the breath or in any manner likely to cause infection or contamination, of the carcase or any part of the carcase of any animal slaughtered for human consumption. The provision of the regulations to the effect that "no person shall use a slaughterhouse for the slaughter of any animal which previous to slaughter is not intended for human consumption" will prove of considerable value.

PART III.—MEAT MARKING.

Meat marking has been advocated in many districts for a considerable period of time, and your Medical Officer, in 1919, suggested that it was not advisable for meat marking to be permitted to develop without satisfactory control, that the procedure should be controlled by the Ministry of Health, and that in any scheme approval should depend upon (a) proof that the local authority possessed a staff of inspectors sufficient in number and of competent ability to ensure that meat marking would be conducted on uniform and sound lines; (b) that the mark adopted should be one approved by the central authority, and that it should be an offence for anyone to counterfeit the mark, and (c) that the marking should be done as soon as possible after slaughter and with all internal organs available for examination.

These constitute the general principles of the system now adopted. The question of charge for services rendered is left to the local authority for decision, but in any event the sum charged should not exceed 1/- per carcase. I advise that there shall be no charge in the City.

I submit that it would be desirable to obtain official approval to a system of meat marking at Aldgate. All carcases are inspected at the time of slaughter and the staff are all competent officers. The mark I submit for adoption would be as under:—



The information on the stamp is reasonably complete considering the small area available and includes (a) the words: "Corporation of London" and the City Arms, (b) the letters P.H.D. which represent the Public Health Department and the separate letter below which is simply distinctive of that particular stamp so that the inspector using that stamp may record in a stamp register which will be kept, the fact that he used that stamp on the date recorded on it. It is necessary that a particular inspector and stamp should be associated so that if complaints subsequently arise the officer may be recognised. (c) The remaining letters indicate the month, day of month and the year.

As regards the position of the marks, I submit that it is worth consideration whether the impression should not be on every main joint into which the carcases are cut up. This would tend to minimise the risk of a butcher claiming that any particular joint was from a marked carcase when such was not the case. These joints are as follows:—

Beef.	Veal.	Mutton or Lamb.	Pork.
Forequarter (6).	Each side (5).	Each side (5).	Each side (5).
Shin.	Fillet.	Leg.	Leg.
Clod and sticking.	Loin.	Loin.	Loin.
Brisket.	Best end.	Breast and Flank.	Belly.
Fore rib.	Breast.	Best end.	Spare rib.
Mid rib.	Shoulder.	Scrag.	Hand and Spring.
Chuck rib.			
	Topside.		
	Silverside.		
	Leg.		

I have heard it stated that some objection may be raised to more than one mark appearing on a quarter of beef owing to the possibility that customers may mistake "imported" meat for "home-killed." This I can hardly imagine to be a serious objection for at any rate in the past the inspection of a greater part of the imported carcases has been much better done than that of the home-killed, although in the future one may reasonably expect the home-killed product to be inspected with at least equal thoroughness to the imported. This fortunate state of affairs, however, will not be realised unless the public recognise that the mark is one of some value, which it undoubtedly will be, and as a consequence will demand, when purchasing the home-killed product that the joint supplied is from an officially inspected carcase. There will be no possibility of confusing the English mark with a foreign mark for the stamp will clearly indicate the name of the English inspecting authority, and in view of the fact that some suppliers only obtain joints from the wholesalers it would appear desirable that those large joints should each bear an inspection mark so that it may be available for the customer's inspection if required.

The movement would be greatly assisted if institutions and organisations such as clubs and others required as a condition of contract that in the supply of home-killed meat, only officially inspected, and therefore marked meat, should be supplied.

For some months at any rate it will be impossible for meat contractors to comply with the requirement, but if the contractor finds that his customers require the marked product he will inform the wholesalers, the wholesalers will communicate the information to the suppliers in the country, and these in their turn will request the local authority to put into operation a meat-marking scheme.

An important advantage accrues to the butcher with the marking of meat. If at the time of cutting up, a lesion is discovered which calls for condemnation of the carcase, the fact that the carcase had already been marked should free the butcher from any legal responsibility under the Public Health Act in respect of inherent disease, leaving his responsibility to be one of ensuring that the "condition" of the meat is satisfactory at the time of sale.

It is necessary to ensure that in marking no product of a deleterious character is used, and in this connection therefore the marking ink, for I presume that an ink stamp rather than a hot branding iron will be used, should be of suitable composition.

I am obliged to the Chief of the Meat Inspection Division of United States Department of Agriculture for the following formula which has been in use in America since 1906, and found to be highly satisfactory:—

Water	4.5 gallons.
Pure grain alcohol, 95 per cent.	3.8 "
Granulated cane sugar	10 lbs.
Methyl violet	1 lb.

The methyl violet is dissolved in the alcohol and a portion of the water; the sugar is dissolved in the remaining portion of the water and added to the methyl violet solution. Thorough stirring facilitates the solution of the methyl violet.

The Bureau of Animal Industry does not require that the above-mentioned formula should be adhered to in every detail, but to avoid the marking qualities of the ink being impaired there should not be considerable variation. All the ingredients used in the preparation of the ink should be free from poisonous or harmful substances.

As regards the stamp, it is necessary of course, that it should be so constructed that the letters give a satisfactory impression. A brass stamp is used in America with deep narrow faced lettering. The depth of the letters is approximately one-eighth of an inch and their faces approximately $1/64$ th of an inch wide. The stamp proposed to be used in the City closely approximates this specification.

Another important point, but quite a matter of detail, is the method of applying the ink to the stamp for it is quite clear that if ink is applied heavily it is liable to smear and give an illegible impression. The ink therefore is applied lightly by sweeping the face of the stamp over an open back brush placed bristles upwards in a brass box into which a small amount of ink has been poured.

PART IV.—STALLS.

The requirements of this part of the regulations are designed to ensure that meat is exposed for sale from stalls under satisfactory conditions.

Provision is made in Regulation 19 for the suitable display of the name and address of the seller. The meat requires to be covered or screened in a manner which will avoid contamination. The surfaces on which meat is displayed or cut up and the appliances used must be thoroughly cleansed after use and kept clean. Special precautions must be taken against contamination of meat by flies, and it is also a definite requirement that no meat shall be placed nearer the ground than 18 inches, unless in a closed cupboard or other adequately protected space, in which case a height of nine inches is permitted. Appropriate receptacles must be provided in which to store trimmings, refuse and rubbish.

Practically no meat is sold by retail from stalls or barrows within the City area. The nearest approach is the open meat market in Aldgate which closes before nine o'clock in the morning. This so-called market consists of a few stalls in front of the shops attached to the slaughterhouses in that thoroughfare, and the sale is essentially of a wholesale character. (See separate paragraphs referring to Aldgate Market).

PART V.—SHOPS, STORES, ETC.

This part of the regulations has an important bearing on the trade conducted at Smithfield Market and it will be recognised that the Corporation, as owners of the market, and their tenants—the occupiers of the different lettings, have separate responsibilities. Regulation 20 (1) sets out the general sanitary requirements which shall be observed before a shop is let, and these are as follows:—

- "(A).—No urinal, water-closet, earth-closet, privy, ashpit, or other like sanitary convenience shall be within such room or shall communicate directly therewith, or shall be otherwise so placed that offensive odours therefrom can penetrate to such room;
- "(B).—No cistern for supplying water to such room shall be in direct communication with or directly discharge into any such sanitary convenience;
- "(C).—No drain or pipe for carrying off faecal or sewage matter shall have any inlet or opening within such room unless it is efficiently trapped;
- "(D).—No such room shall be used as a sleeping place, and, so far as may be reasonably necessary to prevent risk of infection or contamination of any such meat as aforesaid, no sleeping place shall communicate directly with such room.
- "(E).—Except in the case of a room used as a cold store, adequate means of ventilation shall be provided."

I am not aware that any letting within the market would infringe the above requirements.

Regulation 20 (2) enforces an obligation on the occupier to ensure that no refuse or filth accumulates longer than may be reasonably necessary.

Regulation 20 (3) sets out an obligation which, in the case of Smithfield, is divided between the occupier and the Corporation. The Corporation is responsible for the cleanliness of such part of the market as is of common use, which may be held in general to include roadways between the stalls, the roof and such parts of the structure as are above the level of what might be termed the working part of the letting. For the cleanliness of the actual letting the occupier is responsible, and in this is included the partitions at the back part of the stall to the working level as well as of uprights of the same height and the steel runners and carriers and the like. The partitions between stalls should be constructed of material capable of being washed daily and so kept thoroughly cleansed and free from putrifying substances. Hard wood, sheet metal or marble are suitable materials, and perhaps of these wood is the best.

Regulation 20 (4) requires the observance of due cleanliness in regard to the room, *i.e.*, the market-letting, and in this connection the cleanliness of the floor in addition to what has been stated already is an important requirement. In some stalls floors are scraped and kept perfectly free from fat and other accumulation, in others surface accumulations collect to an objectionable extent. In either instance the floor is usually covered with sand or sawdust or some other appropriate medium or mixture which helps to absorb drippings and facilitates cleanliness. The fact that the floors are kept scraped and in a cleanly condition in the majority of stalls indicates that it is not an unreasonable requirement that this fundamental should be observed by all.

Regulation 20 (5). The sub-divisions of this regulations are as follows:—

- "20.—(5) The occupier of any such room—
- "(A) shall take all such steps as may be reasonably necessary to guard against the contamination of the meat therein by flies and shall cause the meat to be so placed as to prevent mud, filth or other contaminating substance being splashed or blown thereon;

"(b) shall not permit any gut-scraping, tripe-cleaning or household washing to be carried on therein ;

"(c) shall cause every counter, slab, vessel or other article on or in which meat is placed for sale, and all knives and other implements used in connection with the meat to be thoroughly cleansed after use and to be kept at all times in a cleanly condition ;

"(d) shall cause all trimmings, refuse and rubbish to be placed in properly covered receptacles kept for the purpose apart from any meat intended for sale."

I submit that as regards (A) it is desirable that meat, and particularly that which is cut into joints, should be placed on wooden benches raised not less than nine inches from the floor level. Owing to the limited space which is available in each letting the benches used to carry these cut joints run parallel with the overhead steel runners on which sides and quarters of beef are hung. The distance between the hooks and the surface of these benches leaves very little space available between the bottom portion of the carcasses and the ground level. If the bench therefore is raised too far from the ground considerable encroachment is made on the area of the bench available for the display of the joints. It is not possible to raise the hooks owing to the fact that they must be at a level which will allow a porter to hang on the hooks a side of beef which he may be carrying on his shoulders without the assistance of another man, and experience shows that the present position of the hooks is the maximum possible. Even now it occasionally happens that the porter uses the edge of the bench on which to place his foot to obtain better leverage. I think that the surface of the bench need not be raised to the height suggested provided that round the bench there is placed a guard, the top of which is nine inches from the ground. Thus, suppose the upper portion of the table were five inches from the floor, the surrounding guard would require to be four inches. Nine inches is a suitable distance to prevent the flicking of dust from shoes when persons walk through the shop. On one stall I noticed that the protective raised edge was placed at a position about six inches from the horizontal edge. This space allowed the porter to place his foot on the board with a lessened risk of contamination to meat displayed thereon. The objection, however, is that if six inches of space is absorbed for this purpose round both sides of the bench considerable encroachment is made on the area available for display. Without this provision it will be necessary for the stall owners to supervise the porters to ensure that soiling of the surface of the bench by footwear is avoided.

There are two other requirements, viz., (1) a surface at the back of the shop on which to store joints which have been sold already and which are awaiting removal, and (2) a surface on which to store whole sheep carcasses or uncut quarters of beef prior to hanging or sectioning.

I think it will meet requirements if plain washable boards are placed in suitable positions in the stall and for certain purposes these may be protected with a surrounding lip to prevent the meat slipping from the board on to the ground. All these boards and tables should be of hard wood and capable of being easily moved and should be submitted to adequate daily cleansing. It will probably be found advisable to fit the under-surface of these boards with narrow battens to facilitate moving them. As an alternative the boards on which to place frozen carcasses of mutton and frozen and chilled quarters may be made of strong laths attached to battens. Laths, however, are not easily kept clean unless they are detachable, and I have seen such detachable laths on one stall. Home-killed produce which is not usually wrapped as in the case with imported should be hung on hooks.

As regards paragraph (B), the provision will not be transgressed in the market.

Paragraph (c) requires the cleansing of utensils and this in general is satisfactorily carried out.

Paragraph (d) requires the provision of properly covered receptacles and in certain instances this requirement is not satisfactorily observed. In the case of trimmings, particularly of fat, which has a distinct value, it is undesirable that wooden drawers placed underneath the upper woodwork of a cutting up bench should be used. These drawers cannot be satisfactorily cleansed, and I would suggest that either separate metal receptacles are used or that the drawers are lined with close fitting sheet metal free from open joints. Such drawers and receptacles can be kept clean and sweet with a minimum of trouble.

RETAIL SHOPS.

It strikes me that there is room for the display of considerable ingenuity in the construction of shops from which meat is retailed. It is very difficult to suggest improvements which will satisfactorily reduce the risks of contamination of meat in present circumstances. The observance of the structural conditions set out in Regulation 20 (1) is an obvious essential, and until an improved shop is devised attention must be given to adequate cleanliness, the wearing of clean washable overalls and head covering, the covering of meat as far as may be practicable to avoid dust or flies settling on it, the limitation as far as may be practicable of open communication between the street and the shop, and suitable ventilation. The minimum of joints should be exposed and the greatest use made of cold rooms or refrigerators.

I have purposely refrained from detailing requirements as such might hinder the development of more permanent improvements which I am hopeful will result from increased attention to the underlying principle that the great object is to prevent contamination.

The handling of meat by customers should be prohibited by all butchers, and notices to that effect might well be displayed in all retail shops.

Adequate ventilation may require the installation of mechanical means.

The question of requiring that no meat shall be exposed otherwise than behind a glass window is one which gives rise to controversy. In the summer months, particularly in the case of a shop on the sunny side of the street, the enforced closure of a glass window results in the shop becoming unduly heated to the detriment of the meat. It may reasonably be suggested that in such circumstances only the minimum of meat should be displayed and that the refrigerator or cold room should be used for storage ; still some meat must be available, and perhaps a satisfactory alternative in the present circumstances is to require that the meat exposed for sale shall be behind glass windows, or if any part of

the glass is removed such area shall be protected by suitable clean muslin curtains or other washable or cleansable material which will allow the interchange of air between the shop and the outside and yet act to a certain extent as a screen against dust and the entrance of flies.

I submit what appears to me to be a very useful suggestion in the case of all butchers' shops with a single large window. In certain Continental cities a pipe runs horizontally along the whole length of the window at the top. This is connected with a cistern placed at a higher level in one of the adjoining rooms. The pipe itself is perforated with a number of small openings and water passes from the cistern through these openings on to the window surface. The slight head pressure forces the water through a number of openings in the pipe which ensures that down the whole front of the window a thin stream of water will trickle. At the bottom of the window this is collected into a suitable channel and drained into a small sump hole from which it is pumped by a suitable small engine to the first-mentioned cistern. The water in the cistern may be kept cool in summer by the addition of ice, and the result of a water screen aided by evaporation is to keep the interior of the shop cool, to permit meat displayed behind the window to be seen and generally to add to the attractiveness and sanitation of the premises.

WHOLESALE SHOPS.

There are in the City a few shops from which meat is sold by wholesale. The circumstances are rather different to those above referred to since the meat is mainly in carcase form. In some instances, of course, the carcasses are cut up into very large joints. In any event there is not the same degree of exposure of cut surfaces as in the retail shop. Provided the same standard of sanitation is adopted, the chief concern is as regards cut surfaces and similar principles to those already enumerated should be observed. Sides of beef which hang in the shop overnight should also be protected against dust deposit. (See "Aldgate" Section).

SALE OF BACON AND HAMS.

In this trade those who handle meat products will be expected to wear suitable washable overalls, and those employees who carry sides of bacon on their shoulders must be furnished with head coverings. The man in charge of the wholesaler's distributing van will be included in this category; in the case of the "washers" who are engaged on the washing of "green" bacon before it is submitted to the process of smoking, some kind of suitable waterproof covering will also be required.

The vans used for the conveyance of provisions from which both sides and cut portions of bacon and ham are distributed will be expected to conform with the requirement that they shall be easily kept clean, and where a tail-board is used a suitable covering will require to be attached to the back of the cart and so arranged that it will, as far as practicable, effectually prevent dust and dirt collecting in the interior.

All cut surfaces of ham and bacon should be sealed with grease-proof paper. Long envelopes are used by some to enclose streaks and backs.

The dealer who distributes sides of bacon is very jealous of the bloom or finish which he imparts to his products and desires for obvious reasons that it should be as little disturbed as possible, and for that purpose I am assured that where sides of bacon are laid flat, no better material on which to lay the bacon has been discovered than straw. Hanging from hooks is, of course, satisfactory but this method of delivery restricts the carrying capacity of the vans. Straw is also used to separate the different sides of bacon when supplies are forwarded packed in a box.

I dislike straw for the reason that its history is generally unknown. It may be used again and again after having been received from the first supplier, and each time of use may add something in the nature of contamination. I have the assurance of the wholesale traders that consideration will be given to the subject with the object of (a) ensuring that only clean straw will be used, and (b) discovering a satisfactory substitute. In the meantime whenever straw is used a cover whether of grease-proof or other suitable paper will be interposed between the bacon and the straw.

In the future construction of carts more attention will be given to internal details and particularly to the question of whether suitable shelves cannot be devised which will assist in the carrying of bacon and hams whilst not unduly encroaching on the space available for other products.

THE SALE OF PREPARED MEATS.

It is probable that greater risk attends the contamination by dust of prepared meats than similar contamination of fresh meat. Prepared meats are generally consumed without further cooking and the results of contamination may therefore be serious. Fresh meats are practically invariably consumed after cooking which effects some degree of sterilisation. It is of the greatest importance that no prepared meats shall be exposed for sale unless adequately covered so that contamination by dust or flies is avoided.

PART VI.—TRANSPORT AND HANDLING.

The transport and handling of meat as practised by certain traders has, for a long time, amounted almost to a scandal and the Sanitary Committee of the Corporation have time and again directed attention to the state of affairs and to the fact that they possessed no powers which would enable them to deal with the problem. They ordered a report to be prepared in 1915 which was adopted and forwarded with the approval of the Corporation to the Ministry of Health. That report was reprinted *in extenso* in Australia as it was of interest to a meat exporting country to learn how the products on which care and attention had been devoted were treated in the course of distribution in London and elsewhere. The report was also reprinted as an appendix to the report of the Departmental Committee on the Wholesale Food Markets of London, and it succeeded in directing public attention to an objectionable

state of affairs. The Sanitary Committee has had interviews with both the permanent and political heads of government departments and urged action. Progress seemed so slow that the Committee finally decided that the subject of meat handling should be placed on the Agenda of every meeting. Last year just previous to the Autumn recess it was further decided that the Corporation should be advised to seek powers to control this work in the City by means of a Private Bill. The present regulations will make that step unnecessary and the Committee will now proceed with the attempt to improve existing affairs, satisfied with the result which has followed their past endeavours.

The parties interested in this Division of the Regulations are (1) the Corporation, in view of the fact that they licence porters, (2) the porters themselves, whether employed by the market authorities or by private firms, (3) the stall-holders who employ their own porters, and (4) outside traders who come into the market and who employ for the purpose of carrying meat either (a) their own men, or (b) casual persons who are not licensed porters.

VEHICLES USED FOR THE TRANSPORT OF MEAT.

Regulations 21 (1) deals particularly with the vehicle used for transporting meat and sets out the following requirements:—

- " 21.—(1) Every person who conveys or causes to be conveyed any meat in a vehicle—
 " (A) shall cause to be kept clean the inside and covering of the vehicle, the receptacles in which the meat is placed, and such parts of any slings or other implements or apparatus used for loading or unloading as come into contact with the meat or its covering; and
 " (B) if the vehicle is open at the top, back, or sides, or if any other commodity is being conveyed therein, shall cause the meat to be adequately protected by means of a clean cloth or other suitable material;
 " (c) shall not permit any live animal to be conveyed in the vehicle at the same time as meat."

The question of the covered vehicle is a difficult one and some time will elapse before all these can be remodelled or altered to comply with new requirements, in the meantime reasonably efficient temporisations will require to be devised. In some instances the vans are excellent but in others the reverse holds. The means of transport at present in use may be divided as follows:—

1.—*The transport of meat from Islington to Smithfield.*—The vehicles which are used for the purpose of conveying to Smithfield the carcasses of animals slaughtered at Islington were designed after conference with the predecessors of the present Carcase Butchers' Association and have since continued to be used with the tacit approval of that organisation. This vehicle consists of a body, the floor of which is sunk below the axle trees to a point about 12 inches from the ground, the bodywork itself being about the level of the upper part of the wheel circumference. There are no wooden sides above this level but at each corner are four uprights which support a strong quadrilateral frame. The carcasses are borne on cross members attached to this frame-work and are hoisted into position by a mechanism which consists of a combination of wheel and axle and pulleys. The cart being filled, canvas blinds are drawn down each side. The top of the vehicle is covered by canvas on battens. The back part of the cart is open and the carcasses are exposed to full view.

The vehicle in its present form is not satisfactory as it is not easy to cleanse, it is fully open at the rear and the side curtains do not fit closely. Both these latter defects allow the dust and draught to gain access to the meat. Improvements in the vehicle ought not to be difficult to arrange and these should receive early attention.

2.—*Distributing Vans.*—These are used to convey meat from Smithfield to the different shops in London and the Home Counties. There are a large number of firms engaged in this work. Some own a considerable number of vans and others perhaps only one. Numerous objections can be raised against some of these vans, the chief being (i.) the woodwork of which they are composed is not close fitting, leaving many crevices for accumulation of dirt, (ii.) in some instances the woodwork of the bottom of the cart is defective, (iii.) many vans consist of a wooden body on the top of which is waterproofed canvas spread out on battens, and the junction of the canvas carrying portion with the wooden part of the cart is so badly designed that a large amount of dirt can accumulate, (iv.) dirt also gathers behind the battens, (v.) the cover itself is not made of material which is easily kept clean, (vi.) in many instances the fronts of the carts are not boarded in and tarpaulin is used which is often dirty and rests on the cut sections of beef, and (vii.) a common cause of defect is that the floor has no safeguarding means to prevent the dirt picked up off the streets on the shoes of the men who are filling the cart, from reaching the meat, and this applies whether straw or coarse sacking are used as covers for the floor of the cart.

The chief principles which should be observed are that the vans should be closed entirely, well ventilated, the lining should be one which can easily be kept clean—metal-lined vehicles have certain advantages in this connection—and some means such as battens used on which to rest the meat, divisions of battens being laid on the floor progressively as the cart fills.

3.—*Small Carts.*—There are certain small carts which are used by butchers for the purpose of conveying their purchases from Smithfield to their shops in more or less remote places. It would not be a reasonable proposition to suggest that every butcher should forthwith provide himself with a covered van though it would be an advantage, and the day will arrive when this standard may be reached. For the present, as a temporary expedient, I suggest that a butcher's cart which is open should be constructed of reasonably good woodwork internally, capable of being kept clean, and that the floor should be fitted with a false bottom comprised of battens which can be removed after the conveyance of meat and thoroughly cleansed. The cart being prepared for market should have this false bottom in position. An efficient washable cover should be used sufficiently large to cover the bottom and each side, with projecting ends large enough to cover the top of the meat when the van is loaded. These ends then should be carefully placed in position and the whole, if necessary as on a wet

day, or when the sun is shining down on to it, should be further covered with a smooth white mackintosh material. With such a furnishing, the bottom, the cover and the mackintosh can all be kept clean as well as the interior of the cart.

4.—*Heavy Cartage Trade from Docks.*—The carts engaged in this trade convey the imported quarters of beef or whole carcasses of sheep from the docks to the markets or stores. The quarters of beef are wrapped in calico which is covered outside with coarse sacking. The carcasses of sheep are enclosed in calico bags only.

So long as the interiors of vans used for this purpose are kept clean and ventilated and so constructed that they may be cleansed with certainty, that is without ledges and crevices, requirements will be met.

The question of the use of straw is one for consideration. I think it is an undesirable medium for use in connection with meat transport as it is always of doubtful cleanliness.

5.—*Dutch Pork, Veal and Mutton Carcasses from the Docks.*—These carcasses are hung from the roofs of vans and the principles applicable to the construction of the van in respect of meat apply to vans used in this particular trade.

6.—*Hand-barrows in Aldgate.*—See "Aldgate" Section.

7.—*Railway and Ship Transport.*—A large amount of meat arrives in London by rail and is transported from the different centres to the market in lorries and vans belonging to the Railway Companies. In addition, a large amount of fresh pork, lamb and veal arrives from Continental countries and is transported from vessels in the City.

The circumstances associated with this special branch of transport will be reported in my next communication to the Committee, after I have had an opportunity of discussing the situation with the responsible officers.

PREVENTION OF CONTAMINATION OF MEAT BY PERSONS HANDLING.

Regulation 21 (2) sets out the following :—

" 21.—(2) A person engaged in the handling or transport of meat—

" (a) shall not permit any part of the meat to come into contact with the ground; and

" (b) shall take such other precautions as are reasonably necessary to prevent the exposure of the meat to contamination."

These are obvious precautions which should be observed.

Regulation 21 (3) is in the following terms :—

" 21.—(3) Every person who employs a person to carry meat in or about a market or other place in which meat is sold by wholesale, or in or about any place wholly or mainly used for the storage of meat before it is distributed to retailers, shall cause such person while so occupied to wear, and every person while so occupied shall wear, a clean and washable head covering and overall."

It is not necessary to devise any definite form of covering or overall, and so long as it adequately protects the meat from the head, neck and everyday garments of the porter, the requirements will be met.

Presumably neglect to wear the garment will involve both the person employing the porter and the porter himself in liability. When the porters or persons handling the meat are regularly engaged by a firm it seems essential that the firm should make it a condition of engagement that the employee uses suitable clothing provided either by the firm or the employee as the terms of the engagement may decide. In such a case if the employee defaulted the main responsibility would fall upon him for neglect. In the case of a person employing casual labour it would appear to be a reasonable obligation that such employer should assure himself that the person he is employing is suitably and properly clothed.

THE HANDLING OF MEAT PROTECTED BY COVERS.

The only exception for the handling of meat by a person not suitably clothed is in respect of meat which is packed in hampers or other strongly constructed or impervious cases or is adequately wrapped in jute or some other suitable fabric.

GENERAL QUESTION OF LIABILITY IN CASE OF DEFAULT.

As bearing on the question of liability it should be observed that the Public Health (London) Act, 1896, provides by sub-section 3 of section 1 as follows :—

" If any person wilfully neglects or refuses to obey or carry out, or obstructs the execution of any regulations made under any of the enactments mentioned in that Act, he shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £100, and, in the case of a continuing offence, to a further penalty not exceeding £50 for every day during which the offence continues."

ALDGATE MARKET.

The circumstances which are to be observed at Aldgate Market require to be considered as a separate item.

It is within the knowledge of your Worshipful Committee that for hundreds of years a meat market has been established on the South side of Aldgate opposite the exit of the Aldgate Metropolitan Railway Station.

The tendency has been for the number of shops and slaughterhouses within that area to decrease, but an extensive trade both in the slaughtering of cattle and the wholesale and retail sale of meat is still conducted.

I have reported on different occasions to your Committee on the different objections which are to be raised against slaughterhouses being located in this neighbourhood and action appropriate to the circumstances is under consideration.

As regards the shops, it is interesting to observe that some are used entirely for wholesale trading, and that others are used from the early hours in the morning until 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning for the purpose of this wholesale trade, but after that hour and for the rest of the day the same shop is used, generally by a different individual, for retail purposes.

The wholesale trade of the shops is conducted not only in the shop but on benches which extend in front of the shop to almost the middle of the roadway in Aldgate, leaving an intervening space between the shop and the stall for the use of pedestrians. The morning wholesale market is the source from which a large number of small butchers in the East End of London, and in other neighbourhoods, obtain their daily supply. Supplies when purchased are taken away in some instances by the purchaser, in others, porters furnished with a barrow convey the meat purchased to the respective shops for an arranged payment. In some further instances more or less suitable covered vans deliver the quarters and joints. The following matters call for consideration:—

(A) Covered premises used for wholesale trading should be dealt with on the lines of the stalls in Smithfield Market.

One of these premises is well equipped; the basement portion of the shop has been converted into an efficient refrigerator, the shop itself is provided with good class steel rail carriers and hooks. The party wall of the shop is tiled, and the floor is an impervious inlaid floor. All the benches and all appliances are kept in clean condition. The shop is fitted with efficient metal roller blinds which can be brought into use as desired, and no retail trade is carried on. It is fairly easy for a business so equipped to be conducted with a minimum of resulting contamination. The remaining wholesale shops are not so well furnished; floors are boarded, and the walls either matchboarded or floated with cement, and limewashed. There is a lack of cleanly appearance and generally they are below the standard of perfection of the one referred to. In these establishments additional cleanliness will require to be observed and the proprietors stimulated to improve their holdings.

(B) Wholesale stalls in the street. These stalls will be administered under Part IV. of the Regulations, and it is perhaps fortunate that the business is conducted at an hour when fly contamination is at the minimum as also is street traffic. Attempts will be made to improve the general standard of trade, but it will be extremely difficult even at the best for such an open air market to be conducted on ideal lines.

(C) Retail shops. The principles already mentioned as affecting retail shops will apply to the Aldgate premises in use as retail shops, bearing in mind the main difference between the wholesale and retail trader, which is that in the retail shop, the area of sectioned meat is many times greater than the area of the same amount of meat in a wholesale establishment.

(D) Transport—(i). The individual trader who takes away one or two joints in the morning cannot be expected to have enough money to furnish himself with a covered cart. He uses a hand-cart or basket, and it will meet requirements in these instances if the purchaser arranges to enclose his meat in a washable bag of suitable texture. A bag of material somewhat stouter than that used to enclose the quarters of imported meat will suffice, particularly if the wholesaler covers the cut section with a piece of grease-proof paper.

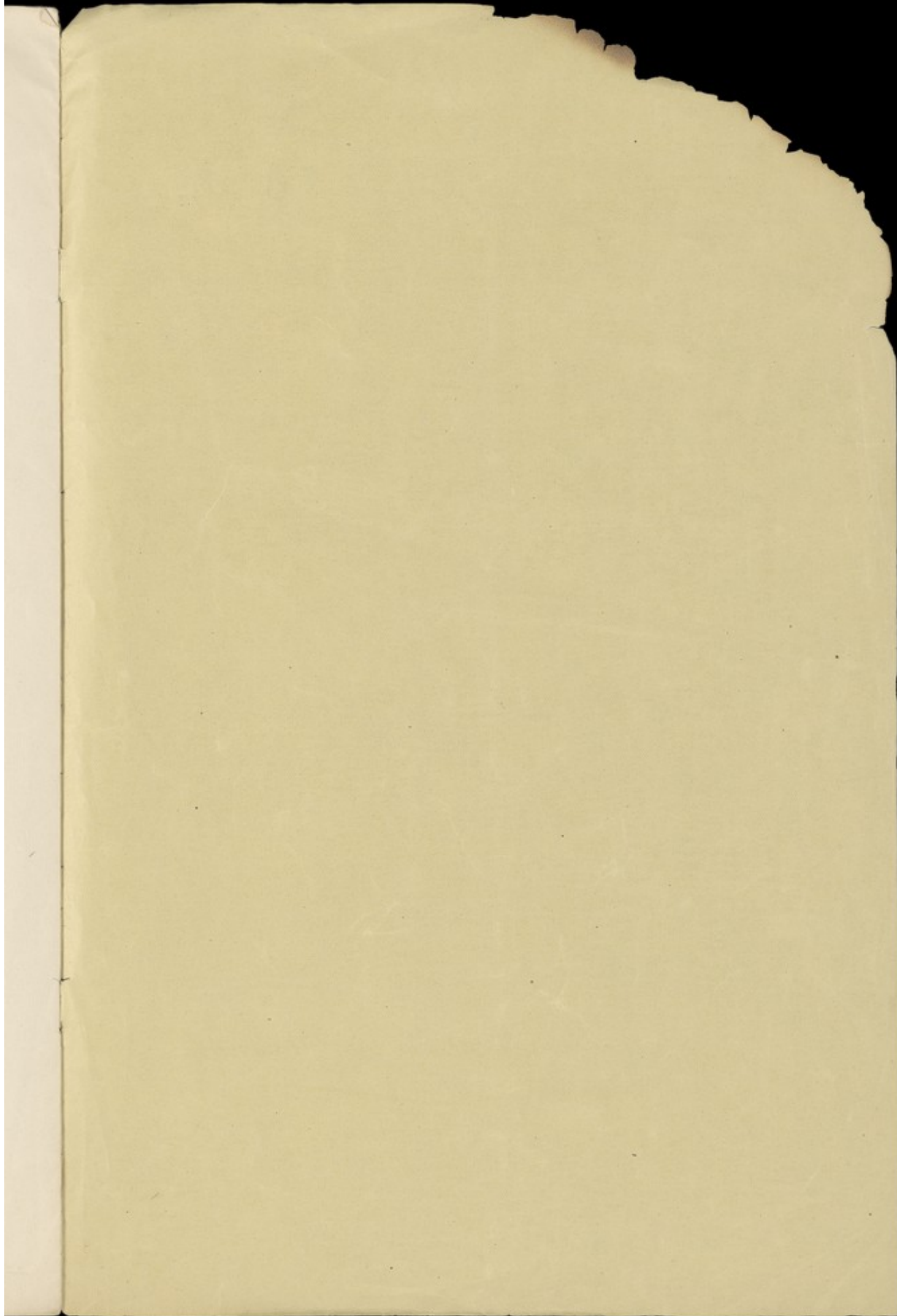
(ii). The porters who use a hand-cart in which to convey a considerable number of joints have been informed that the method of transport is unsatisfactory. Those who make a business of meat transportation will be called upon to furnish themselves with suitable conveyances and I think in these instances a covered cart is essential. A suitable small covered cart should be designed and in conference I have advised the men who are engaged in this work to that effect.

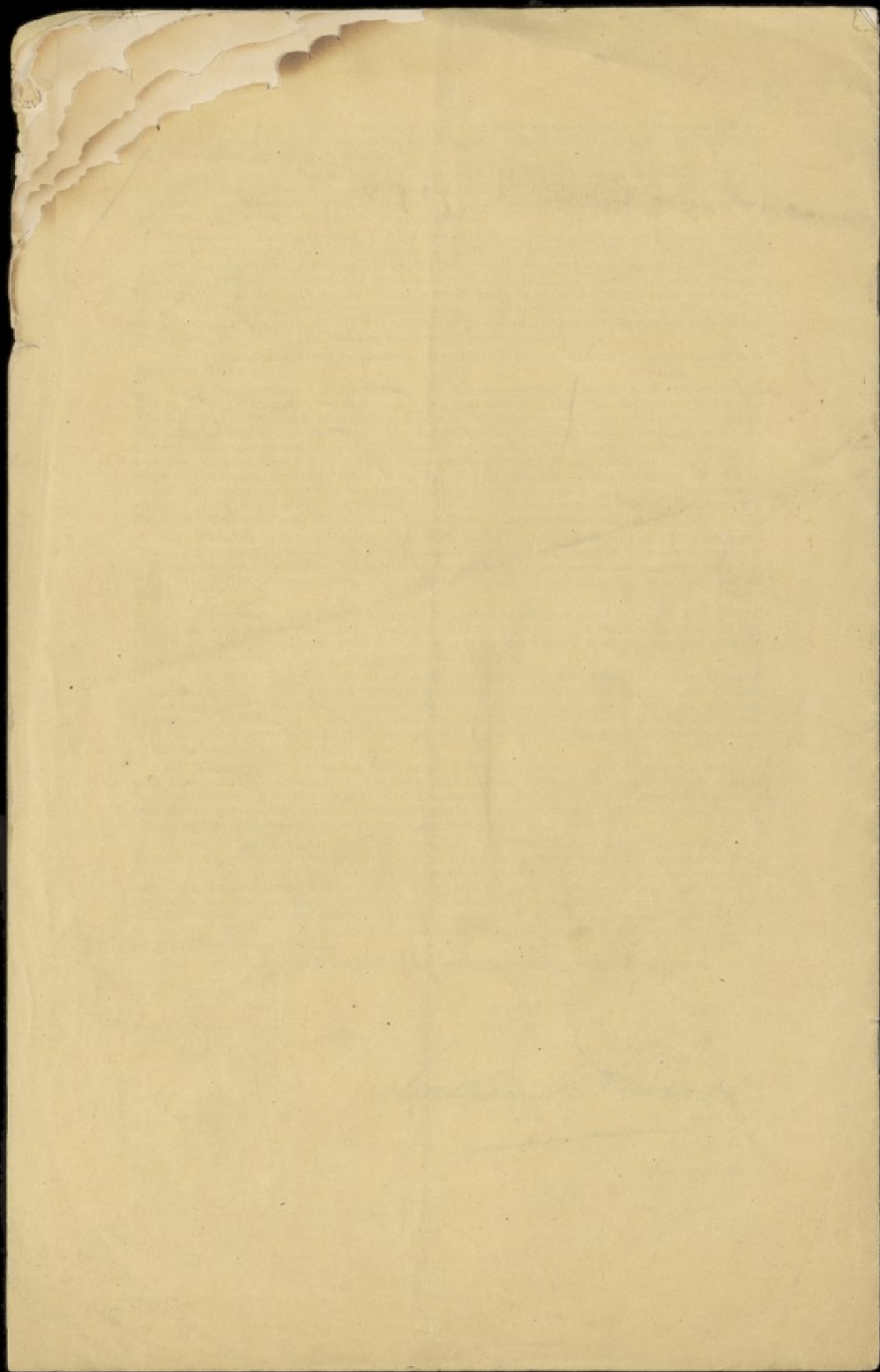
In view of the fact that these porters usually hire their barrows, I have agreed that, as a temporary expedient, the barrows they use must be kept perfectly clean, that each porter must arrange with the firm from which he hires the barrow to provide it with a false bottom composed of laths, and that if the hiring firm fails in this respect the porter must supply himself and must be responsible for the cleanliness of the rack. He must also furnish himself, each morning, with sufficient washable and clean material to cover the bottom and the sides and tops of the meat which he conveys. The whole of the covered meat must be further covered on the top with a piece of protective washable mackintosh.

(iii.) Covered carts will be required to comply with the requirements already set out on page 6.

William J. Howarth.

Medical Officer of Health.





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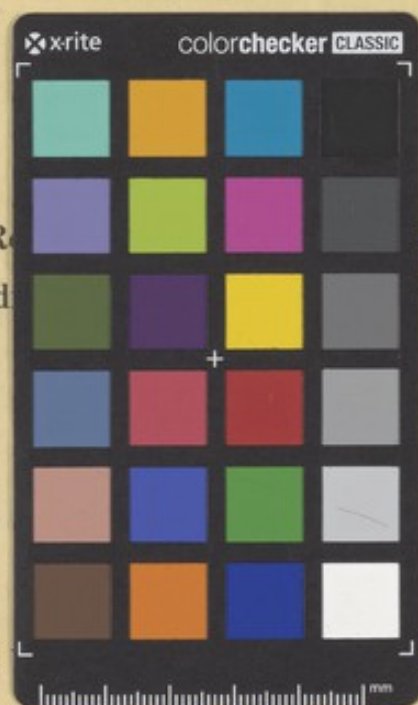
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Corporation of London.

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

HEALTH (MEAT) REGULATIONS, 1924.



om R
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the Sanitary Committee
the 24th March, 1925.

itted

Council and agreed

2nd April, 1925.