

DEWSBURY MILLS

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CHAPTER VI

THE MILLS, 1831-93

CHAPTER VIThe Mills, 1831-93

The expansion of physical capacity at Dewsbury Mills in the nineteenth century was mainly concentrated in the years 1844-75, with the major building activity occurring in the mid-1840s, the late 1850s, the second half of the 1860s, and the early 1870s. Of the six plans appended to this chapter, four illustrate the physical growth of the mill buildings on the Dewsbury Mills Estate and these are based on Thorp's map of the Dewsbury district published in 1831; on the 1851 Ordnance Survey map of the area which first appeared in 1854; on evidence drawn from Hagues, Cook and Wormald's private ledgers relating to the period 1865-75; and upon a plan of the Estate made for the partners in 1890 by Marriott, Son and Shaw, surveyors of Dewsbury. The two additional plans relate to Ratcliffe Mills, built in 1873 on a site, two acres in extent, a little to the south of the original Estate and adjacent to the Calder; and to Britannia Mills, covering an area of about five acres, situated in 'the Aldams' in the town of Dewsbury and also abutting on the Calder, which were bought in 1880 and adapted and brought into use by the partners in 1881. (1)

(1) The 'Aldams' appears on early maps of Dewsbury as 'Annams' or 'Avenams'. The name refers to one of the earliest of Dewsbury's enclosed fields which was recorded as such in the mid-fourteenth century.

The partners were experiencing a shortage of productive capacity in the middle of the 1830s and particularly in 1836. (1)
 A number of new mills were erected in the Dewsbury area during the years 1835-7 (2) in response to the market opportunities of the times, but Thomas Cook seems to have been very pessimistic about the long-run prospects of a high demand for Yorkshire blankets in the American market. (3) Furthermore, Cook was influenced by the fact that it was more difficult for the large manufacturer to compete with the small clothiers during times of trade depression if the former had added to his physical capacity during the boom, thereby increasing the burden of his fixed costs when the market turned downwards. (4) The partners seem to have been influenced by these factors when making the decisions necessary to adapt the firm to the changes in the market environment of the mid-1830s, and in the face of a good deal of uncertainty they seem to have decided that flexibility of investment was the desirable object. (5) To meet the pressure

(1) See below, p. 585 .

(2) '... the new mills built since 1835 add one-fourth to the productive power of our trade.' Thos. Cook to C.H. Russell, New York, 7 April 1839.

(3) See above, p. 415 .

(4) See below, p. 574 .

(5) For a useful discussion of 'flexibility' in investment decisions, see Keirstead, op. cit., chaps. iii and iv.

of demand, therefore, the partners resorted to three principal means of enlarging their production. They purchased blankets, either in the finished or the unfinished state, at Heckmondwike market and in the Leeds cloth halls; they put out wool for spinning and yarn for weaving to nearby mills; and they took out a short lease on part of the premises at Aldams Mill where they employed a number of hand-loom weavers. (1)

By these different means the partners avoided the risks of a large fixed investment at Dewsbury Mills during the 1830s and were able to postpone this kind of growth until the middle of the 'forties. In view of the depression which affected the industry from 1837 to 1842 the actions of the partners would appear to have been prudent, for any enlargement of the mills during the boom years of 1835-6 would certainly have resulted in an embarrassment of excess capacity in the late 'thirties and early 'forties. Two other considerations seem to have contributed to the cautious decisions regarding capacity taken by the partners in the 'thirties. The partnership was weakened by the death of John Hague Senior in 1832,

(1) The former owners of Aldams Mill - the Hallileys - failed during the depression of 1834 and this Mill was put up for auction in June 1835, but no sale was effected. Cook and his partners obtained a lease on part of the premises which they held until the summer of 1840. They also bought some of the hand-looms at the sale of effects. See below, p. 443.

whose experience and wide knowledge of financial and mercantile affairs had been a great asset to his associates. This threw more of the entrepreneurial functions on to the shoulders of Thomas Cook ~~wh~~o, with his early training as a merchant, was particularly reluctant to commit himself or his partners to large fixed investments. The second consideration stems from the relationship between the partners and the proprietors of the Mills and the nature of the tenancy agreement which existed between the two parties.

Landlord and Tenant

The agreement which was operative at this time was one which had been signed in 1824 providing the partners with a twenty-one years' lease of the land, premises and water power on the Estate at an annual rent of £1,600, of which sum the partners recouped £525 yearly from their under-tenants. The enlargement of existing buildings and the erection of new premises raised a number of problems for both parties. Such expansion could only be undertaken either directly by the proprietors or indirectly by the partners with the permission of the proprietors. Before the proprietors could undertake the finance of such building they had to satisfy themselves that further investment in this type of earning asset was likely to prove profitable by comparison with other forms of investment; that, having enlarged the fixed capital, the future prospects of obtaining an economic rent from the

existing tenants or from new tenants were good; and that a tenancy agreement of suitable time-length duration could be negotiated. From the point of view of the partners, the provision of new buildings at their own expense, whilst it enabled them to plan their mill arrangements to suit their particular mode of operations, involved them in the difficulty of adding to the fixed capital stock of the proprietors; (1) introduced long-term capital risks which were not always compatible with the partnership form of economic organisation; and placed them in a weak bargaining position at times when the tenancy agreement was being renewed.

These risks, and the fact that the lease agreement of 1824 had still ~~some~~ years to run, probably contributed to the attitude adopted by the partners towards mill expansion in the 'thirties. By the early 'forties, however, the picture had changed; the lease was now running out and the sale of Aldams Mill in 1840 had terminated the use by the

(1) Whether this particular risk could be mitigated depended upon the negotiation of a 'capital loss clause' in the tenancy agreement. See below, p. 451.

(1)
 partners of part of this particular property. Thomas Cook
 seems to have been determined, at this time, to experiment with
 power weaving at Dewsbury Mills and this necessitated the
 erection of a new weaving shed and some improvement in the
 functioning of the water wheels in order to provide more
 driving power. (2) In 1842 the partners had some preliminary
 discussions with the proprietors in respect of a renewal of

(1) The partners built, at their own expense, a small weaving chamber to accommodate the hand-loom weavers displaced from Aldams Mill in 1840. A contemporary poster advertising the sale of Aldams Mill in this year refers to the premises as constituting 'one of the most complete Woollen Manufactories in the North of England' and the detailed description contains the following sentence:

'All that extensive Carding, Scribbling and Fulling Mill, called Aldams Mill, consisting of a Mill, sixty yards long by thirteen yards wide, and three stories high - with Counting House, three large Warehouses, Press Shops, Wool Chambers, Weaving Shops, lighted with Gas and heated by Steam, Wool and Piece drying house, heated by steam, Dyeing house, cistern, Gas House, Steam Engine of fifty horse power, with boilers, shafts and going gear, five Willies, Fourteen Scribblers, Six single and five double Carders, Fourteen Billies, Two Tommies, Two Mules, three Raising Gigs, Ten Fulling Stocks, Three Rag Machines and one Washing Machine, and other machinery ...'

From a poster in the possession of the Librarian,
 Dewsbury Public Library.

(2) The Fairbairn and Lilley Water Wheel seems to have given the partners persistent maintenance problems following its installation in 1823. There were repairs of this wheel in 1834, 1839, 1841 and 1844.

the lease and the provision by them of more room and more
 power for the use of Cook and his associates. (1) The partners
 also demanded a reduction in the annual rental on the grounds
 that the fixed sum of £1,600 was a heavy burden during a
 period of **bad** trade and falling prices:

When our lease is out in 1845 we must have the
 rent reduced or not take it again - it is a rack
 rent. (2)

At the beginning of 1842 they were writing to another woollen
 manufacturer:

Mill property has been sold here within the twelve
 months past at prices so wretchedly low that it is
 difficult to estimate the probable money such
 property as yours in these times will bring. (3)

- (1) The proprietors were now Edward Hague and his son John Hague, who each had a quarter interest in the property, and Thomas Hague who held the other half interest. John Hague Senior, at his death in 1832, bequeathed his interests in the Dewsbury Mills Estate to his sons, Joseph Sykes Hague and Thomas Hague, and to his nephew, John Hague. Joseph Sykes Hague died in 1837 without issue and his share in the Estate then passed to his brother Thomas.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Henry Brown, Wakefield, 15 April 1842.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jeremiah Carter, 29 Jan. 1842.

Edward Hague, who was in the ambivalent position of being both a partner in the enterprise and a proprietor, seems to have been disposed to make some concession to these requests and his son, John, was also sympathetic to the views of the partners. Thomas Hague, however, proved unyielding in the negotiations and Thomas Cook, some months later, forthrightly informed him:

... seek you some sound advice on mill property before you make any decision on our letter - you will find both on the Aire and Calder many mills actually without tenants. One, Whitaker's, they asked, it is said, £2,000 a year for, and now offer it at £700. (1)

A few weeks later, Cook writes again to Thomas Hague to inform him that:

This morning the water wheel, which you are aware was in a very bad state, has broken down - and we fear cannot be patched up to last to the end of our lease of the premises. (2)

This statement does not seem to have produced much action on the part of the proprietors and Cook is compelled to write more fully on this subject:

(1) Thos. Cook to Thomas Hague, Stanley Hall, Wakefield, 20 Dec. 1843.

(2) Thos. Cook to Thomas Hague, 8 Jan. 1844. The wheel here referred to was one of the two old wooden wheels which were part of the original installation when the partners commenced their operations in 1811.

Our wheel, for the third time, has broken down this morning. This tinkering is of a most serious expense to us and ought to be avoided. Good and respectable tenants like those you have here, might reasonably hope you to take more interest about them than your silence ... has evinced. I am persuaded that this arises from your want of knowledge respecting the serious loss sustained by the stoppage of a Mill, not to remark on the still further inconvenience resulting from the non-compliance with the orders of correspondents.

Pray be so good as to decide aye or no as to our propositions regarding the proposed alterations and the lease. I perhaps attach more importance to them than either of my partners ... for I have laid out enough here for the weal of my family. You should ride over and see John and Edward Hague, for this is no common property and ought to be cherished. (1)

This latter advice seems to have been taken by Thomas Hague and, after consultation with his fellow proprietors, he apparently decided that this issue should be referred to an arbitrator. Joseph Whitham of Leeds was invited by the parties to value the 'room and power' at Dewsbury Mills, his valuation (2) then to become the basis of a new rental agreement.

Whitham carried out his survey of the Estate in May, 1844 and although his report has not survived, a letter written to him by Thomas Cook contains a useful account of the land and (3) buildings designed to assist Whitham in his assessment.

(1) Thos. Cook to Thomas Hague, 29 Jan. 1844.

(2) He was a partner in the firm of S. and J. Whitham, 'Iron and brass founders, millwrights, and steam engine boiler manufacturers', of Kirkstall Road, Leeds.

(3) Dated 3 May 1844.

The major part of this letter is worthy of reproduction:

Upper Mills

The Estate consists of, beginning at the Upper Mills, an ancient Mill for the grinding and chipping of wood.(1)

One other Mill formerly containing two falling and two driving stocks on one wheel and a falling stock on a small wheel connected with the Coloured Fulling Mill. For want of work this Mill was altered by the tenants at an expense of £550, in the year 1839, into a Mill for rasping wood.

One other Fulling Mill called the Coloured Mill adjoining ... contains 24 fulling stocks - the Scouring machines, pumps and pipes here were put down by the tenants. This Mill is without work and the miller will not give £50 for it by the year.

The above mills are subject to much standing by want of water.

There are three cottages connected with the above Mills occupied by the tenants or their servants.

A croft at the Upper Mill is occupied by Thos. Richardson as an under-tenant and a Malt Kiln, House, stable and field occupied by Edward Clarkson as an under-tenant.

The House and Warehouse at the bridge and the Lime Kilns and Wharves are occupied by Tweedale and Rawsthorne as under-tenants. (2)

Lower Mills

A Corn Mill, dwelling House, stables, cottage, small croft and gardens occupied by Fearnley and Son as under-tenants.

(1) Mainly employed in chipping log-wood to make dyewares.

(2) Jonathan Tweedale was one of the earliest woolstaplers to establish himself in Dewsbury and he rented this Warehouse on the canal cutting which ran from the Calder near to Greenwood's Dam in a north-easterly direction towards the town of Dewsbury.

A Fulling Mill containing six stocks. The Washing machine and building over it, and the pumps, pipes, gearing were put in by the tenants who occupy it themselves as well as the Blacksmith's Shop. There is a cottage attached to it and another cottage in the occupation of Mr. Hague's gardener - together with Barn and Farm buildings. The brick stables and the Barn Rig were built by the tenants.

Mr. Hague's House, stables and field of land adjoining and the gardens in his occupation - Mr. Hague built all the garden walls and the Coach House, excepting the wall to the east of the road leading to Dewsbury which was built by the tenants. (1)

There is a blacksmith's cottage at Mr. Hague's gates.

The New Mill

This is driven by three wheels - two of them are 5 feet 10 inches broad, and the third is 8 feet broad - all entirely made of wood - the two former are driving the stocks and the willeys - the last wheel was taken out and replaced by an Iron Wheel and the House over (2) that Wheel was built at the sole expense of the tenants.

Excepting the ten stocks and the old wooden shaft now running and a similar one taken down from the room above and replaced by iron shafting - the whole going gearing, shafting and machinery are the property of the tenants - the old upright shaft was a wooden one.

- (1) Edward Hague retired from being an active partner at the end of 1838 and he then took up residence at the Mills House. This had formerly been occupied by Thomas Cook, but he removed to Crow's Nest in 1838 following the death of Joseph Sykes Hague in 1837. See below, p. .
- (2) The wheel here referred to is the Fairbairn and Lilley wheel.

The Cloth Warehouse and Counting House building.
Two good dwelling houses near the same are occupied
by F. Goodall and J. Walker. (1)

The Cloth Dye House, Wool Dye House, Bas House,
Cloth Dryhouse, Wool Dryhouse, Earth House and Earth
Drying House, Old Weaving Shop, Stoving Houses,
great Wool Warehouse, New Weaving Shops, Warping
Shops, Sample Room and Whipping Cellar, all built
by the tenants at their own sole cost. (2)

It is not, we believe, the desire of the owners that
we should pay a rent for these premises built by
ourselves - it is right to add that on the site of the
great Wool Warehouse there stood a small Drying House
which was pulled down, and therefore a valuable
consideration in the new Cloth Dryhouse is due to the
owners on it.

It is right also to say that some part of the buildings
were built when the owners not now partners were in
the trade, but Thomas Cook, who is no owner at all,
was concerned in the cost of them all.

Fields

Mill field near Malt Kiln and field in which the Mill
stands, Close between the goits, Racegills tenter
field, Upper Steanyard containing four cottages, a
Croft at the back of the Cloth Warehouse, and the
lower Steanyard field used for drying warps.

You will be told by the servants at the Upper and Lower
Mills that they are subject to standing for water,
however, so far as the fulling mills go, it is of little
moment, for there is no work for them worth naming.

-
- (1) Frank Goodall was in charge of the fine cloth business
at the Mills, Joseph Walker was employed as a wool-buyer.
- (2) The Earth House and Earth Drying House were used for
storing the fuller's earth used in the milling process.
The Whipping Cellar was used for accommodating the
'whippers' who bound the ends of the blankets with
cotton or linen thread.

We want nothing from you but a proper protection of our interests - as tenants we have remade over again, we believe, every mill race on the premises. The Mills were rotten to the core when we entered to them - and all the buildings on the main premises, but the New Mill, Cloth Warehouse and two cottages, have been builded by the trade.

The present rent is £1,600 a year on a lease which is now expiring, but you will base your valuation on the old power as exhibited by the size of the Old Wheels.

Despite this wealth of information provided by Thomas Cook, Whitham's survey and report seem to have confirmed Thomas Hague in his determination not to agree to any lowering of the annual rent and his proposed terms for a new lease were received by the partners on the nineteenth of July, 1844.

His main propositions were as follows:

I should prefer a lease of five years ... and I think that the Landlords ought to have a twelve month notice of intention to quit.

I have no objection to letting the premises at a rental of £1,600 per annum.

If usual for Landlords to take their own risk of fire and tempest, I agree. (1)

I agree to give a year's rent towards the expenses incurred by the putting in of a new wheel.

(1) The mill chimney, which was attached to the boiler house used for heating the works, was blown down in a storm in January, 1839.

Being bound by the former lease to submit to a valuation of machinery to the amount of £9,080 according to Whitham's report - I can have no objection to the insertion of a similar clause in the contemplated lease.

I do not object to a valuation or the removal of buildings added by the tenants, at the option of the Landlords, but I will not agree to make any allowance for any alterations of or additions to the present buildings. (1)

Thomas Cook responded with the following observations:

The tenants here have laid out nearly £12,000 in making these premises such as they are, and they are, even after all this, very far from what they should be. Such a sum, laid out by tenants, on an estate, makes their position in relation to their Landlords very unusual. The correctness of your opinion about letting such premises from year to year we will not dispute, but the result of our enquiries convinces us that some large establishments with far more convenient mills attached are without a tenant at all, and not a few broken up into portions.

As to new buildings, if our landlords will not give us accommodation we must erect them ourselves. (2)

Cook's weakness in this particular negotiation is revealed clearly in this last sentence, for the partners seem to have decided to stay and to enlarge their productive capacity at their own expense even before the new lease agreement had been signed. Furthermore, the constant stress which Cook laid on the fact that there were other 'far more convenient mills' which might be rented on attractive terms never seems to have

(1) Thomas Hague to Hagues, Cook and Wormald, 19 July 1844. These terms were also endorsed by Edward Hague and John Hague.

(2) Thos. Cook to Thomas Hague, 24 July, 1844.

been backed by any action by the partners to relocate their enterprise elsewhere in the Calder Valley. Their attachment to the Dewsbury Mills Estate was obviously a strong one and although Thomas Cook seems to have accepted the new terms with some displeasure, the partners emerged from the bargaining with an agreement which, in the long-run, does not seem to have proved a harsh burden on the enterprise or to have limited seriously the growth of physical capital.

The only amendment to the contract proposed by the proprietors was the acceptance of the strong demands made by Thomas Cook for a yearly tenancy, with the provision that one year's notice of the intention to terminate the agreement should be given by either of the parties. The rent was to remain at £1,600 per annum and to be varied only after a special review which would not necessarily take place each time the lease was renewed. Cook was anxious to extricate himself from the financial penalties of being tied to a long lease at a fixed money rental during a period of falling prices. In fact, under the new contract, the money rent remained unchanged for the partners throughout the period 1847-58 when prices were generally rising. ⁽¹⁾ The most

(1) The rent was raised by £900 per annum in 1858 and raised again in 1862, 1866, 1870, 1873, 1875 and 1878. See chap. VIII, below.

unsatisfactory feature of the contract, from the partners' point of view, was the reservation by Thomas Hague and his co-owners that in respect of any enlargements to existing buildings or additional buildings on the Estate made by the partners, these would be subjected to a valuation or removed, 'at the option of the Landlords', in the event of the tenancy being terminated. Although Thomas Cook finally accepted this condition he regarded it as far from satisfactory.

In his last letter to Thomas Hague on the subject of the lease, Cook concentrated on the two themes of the rent burden and the nature of the premises:

You don't understand Mills - ours is a right bad one - narrow, confined, and most expensive in the working - our under-tenants compelled us to reduce their rents in 1837 and for the last seven years we have lost annually £100. (1)

This interchange of correspondence between the proprietors and the partners at Dewsbury Mills is illustrative of the weakness of the 'room and power' principle in encouraging economic growth. It was admirably suited for stimulating enterprise by small manufacturers who were relieved of the burden of providing fixed capital in their early ventures, but

(1) Thos. Cook to Thomas Hague, 31 July 1844.

as soon as the available capacity began to fall below the firm's real requirements there was the danger that the further growth of the enterprise would be inhibited, probably permanently, by the nature of the tenancy arrangements and by the general relationship which existed between the tenant and his
(1)
landlord.

The incomplete evidence which survives, relating to the development of Dewsbury Mills after 1844, does not appear to support this hypothesis as far as general growth was concerned, but the nature of the growth which did occur might have been different had the partners owned the Estate or had the proprietors been prepared to invest more readily in fixed assets. It is likely that the investment horizon of the partners was less distant than it would have been in the case of owner-occupiers and that this resulted in new buildings and enlargements which were not of the kind which made for balanced growth of capacity in the long-run. The effect of this on the flow of production within the firm, later in the nineteenth century, was probably such as to increase the handling and movement of materials about the premises and to raise labour costs.

(1) The nature and extent of mill leases in the West Riding in the nineteenth century warrants further enquiry.

Growth of Dewsbury Mills

Following the signing of the new lease the partners embarked upon a programme of expansion. The proprietors had, early in the lease negotiations, accepted the financial responsibility of a new water wheel to replace one of the old wooden mechanisms, to an amount not exceeding one year's rent, and Whitham was entrusted with the installation of an iron, breast-shot wheel in 1844. (1) In August of that year the partners were complaining that the balance and setting of the new prime mover was ill-judged:

... there is a monstrous error in your wheel ... all the water we can throw on her will not drive her at speed ... the wheel is running at four feet per second. We think ... and we have told you so, that the water is laid on too low. (2)

In November the partners were still dissatisfied with Whitham's workmanship:

We are tired of writing on this matter of the wheel ... your theories think nothing of our observations and we would not set our judgement against practical men like you - but Fairbairn

(1) The cost of the installation was £1,366.3.10. Hagues, Cook and Wormald, Private Ledger, 1825-46, f. 175. The proprietors also allowed one year's rent to provide for necessary repairs outstanding at this time.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Whitham and Company, Leeds, 15 Aug. 1844.

was just as pertinacious as you are, until he got all his stays - or four-fifths of them - smashed to pieces ... although they were made of beaten iron. (1)

Whitham seems to have adjusted this difficulty in the end for the problem disappears from the correspondence, but in the following year they were having further trouble with the Fairbairn-Lilley wheel and repairs were placed in the hands of Messrs. Cardwell and Company of Dewsbury. This also proved an unsatisfactory arrangement and Thomas Cook writes:

Your wheel is put in so untrue that it is bearing down the masonry that has been at work for sixteen years. We are properly punished for putting this job into your hands and not sending to Manchester. (2)

These extracts illustrate the unsatisfactory state of the millwrighting facilities available in this area in the 1840s and also underline the apparent determination of the partners to cling to water-power rather than to convert to steam engines

Two new buildings were completed, late in 1844, at Dewsbury Mills by Whitham and Company, the contracts being signed before the partners became so dissatisfied with the work done by this firm on the wheel. The first of these

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Whitham and Company, Leeds, 12 Nov. 1844.

(2) Thos. Cook to Messrs. Cardwell and Company, Dewsbury, 28 Jan. 1845.

buildings to be completed was a new Willey House which was erected:

... in order to lessen the insurance on the premises which has been increased by 6s. per cent. in consequence of the old Willey House in our mill being connected with and having an opening into the mill. (1)

The old Willey House was then adapted to house 'ten jenny spinners who require no power' and to provide for some other rearrangement of equipment as 'our machinery is much crowded in the Old Mill.'⁽²⁾

The other building was a Weaving Shed, 87 feet in length and with two storeys, erected to house the power looms which the partners were introducing at this time. This was constructed to adjoin the old Weaving Shop where the hand-loom weavers were employed and Whithams also provided the metal shafting operating from the Fairbairn wheel, 'three inches in diameter tapering down to two inches in diameter and revolving at 67 revolutions per minute.'⁽³⁾

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to G. Clarkson, Wakefield, 28 Aug. 1844.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Edmund Leach, 4 Sept. 1844.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Whithams and Company, Leeds, 5 Sept. 1844.

Towards the end of 1844, Thomas Cook was writing:

We have our works all afloat by millwrights ... we are completely remodelling our premises and adapting our machinery... (1)

The result of, this 'remodelling', together with some further small constructions and enlargements in 1851-2, (2) was to furnish the mills with a unity of integration which they had not previously possessed and, for the first time, the premises were provided with a 'frontage' on Mill Lane. (3) A comparison of the 1831 and 1854 plans appended to this chapter is illustrative of this development.

The cost of the new Willey House was recorded by Thomas Cook as follows: (4)

	£.	s.	d.
Cost of Woodwork	101.	2.	0.
" " Paving	3.	0.	11.
" " Stone	20.	19.	9.
" " Building	146.	13.	10.
" " Slates	69.	4.	10.
" " Glazing	21.	16.	6.
" " Pointing	2.	11.	0.
	365.	8.	10.
Cost of shafting	206.	1.	5.
Total	571.	10.	3.

(1) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, New York, 3 Dec. 1844.

(2) At a cost of £660. Hagues, Cook and Wormald, Private Ledger, 1825-46, ff. 173-5.

(3) Later renamed Thornhill Road.

(4) Private Ledger, 1825-46, f. 171.

The costs involved in building the new Weaving Shop
(1)
were enumerated as follows:

	£.	s.	d.
Cost of Mason's work	336.	8.	0.
" " Flooring	46.	17.	6.
" " Plumbing and Glazing	341.	6.	10.
" " Joinery	430.	13.	8.
" " Slates	180.	11.	0.
" " Iron Work	150.	13.	8.
" " Bricks	9.	0.	0.
" " Pointing	12.	5.	2.
" " Millwrighting	7.	5.	0.
" " Cartage	60.	5.	8.
" " Plans	30.	0.	0.
Total	1,605.	6.	6.

The period 1852-6 was a relatively prosperous one for the partners with profits reaching an annual average of nearly
(2)
£20,000, and in 1857, despite the trading difficulties of that year, the partners agreed:

... to erect a New Mill on the Dewsbury Mills Estate with Messrs. Fairbairns as Engineers; Mr. Marriott and some other party as Architects; and to attach to the Mill a Steam Engine and Water Wheels. (3)

(1) Private Ledger, 1825-46, f. 173.

(2) See below, p. 510.

(3) Private Ledger, 1847-53, f. 3.

This was done at a cost of £1,700.^{14s.2d.} and the building was then used for power loom weaving. ⁽¹⁾ The partners were by this time persuaded that the steam engine was worth a trial and a 45 horse-power engine was installed in this mill to drive the new looms. The partners also agreed, as they had done in the case of the buildings erected during the years 1844-52, that the cost of this mill should be redeemed 'by the earnings of the mill, in full, and before otherways applied.' ⁽²⁾

The main spinning mill at Dewsbury Mills was destroyed by fire very early in 1860 and the partners were faced with the complete disappearance of their spinning capacity. To overcome this difficulty they put out wool for spinning to various firms in this year and they also took out a lease on premises at Pildacre Mills, near Chickenley. ⁽³⁾ The partners then had a long discussion with their landlords on the question of replacing the spinning mill and, after nearly twelve months of negotiation, a decision was taken and a new building was commenced early in 1861. This Spinning Mill was ready for use in the early summer of that year and was erected at a cost of £8,628.^{4s.2d.} ⁽⁴⁾ This was the largest single building erected on the Dewsbury Mills Estate, and it allowed for the introduction at Dewsbury

(1) *ibid.* f. 10. (2) Private Ledger, 1847-53, f. 3.

(3) John Walker seems to have been associated with the partners in the running of Pildacre Mills. The partners gave up operations at these mills early in 1862.

(4) Private Ledger, 1854-70, f. 373. It was a happy accident that this large, new mill was in working order at the beginning of the boom associated with the cotton famine.

Mills of larger scribbling and carding sets and of self-acting
 (1)
 mules. A new Tentor House for the indoor drying of fabrics
 was also installed at this time, but there is no record of
 the cost of this building.

Thomas Hague Cook succeeded to his father's interests in
 the partnership upon the latter's death in 1861. By this
 time he had also acquired a part ownership of the Dewsbury
 Mills Estate.
 (2) In 1862 he agreed with John Wormald that the
 annual rent payable by the partners should be £2,650 to take
 account of the enhanced value of the property since the rent
 had last been reviewed and particularly in view of the
 proprietors' expenses incurred on the new Spinning Mill. In
 the period 1863-5 a number of small installations were
 carried out. Clegg Ford House was built to the south of the
 main mills at a cost of £1,366. 9s. 3d. in 1863, and in the
 following year £500 was spent on widening the dam and effecting

(1) See chap. VII below.

(2) Thomas Hague Cook seems to have succeeded to the interests
 of Thomas Hague in the Dewsbury Mills Estate. In 1847,
 upon the death of Edward Hague, John Hague Junior
 succeeded to his father's interests in the Estate which
 he held until his death in 1867. In that year this
 interest also passed to Thomas Hague Cook who thus became
 the sole proprietor of the Estate.

some enlargement of the Warping Shop. In 1865, a cottage and a Mechanic's Shop were built to the north of the Estate at a cost of £1,300.⁽¹⁾ These expenses were met by the proprietors and, in 1866, the annual rent was increased by a further £110.⁽²⁾

In 1868-9 a Warehouse was built, together with new Stoves and a Chimney, all at the expense of Thomas Hague Cook⁽³⁾ and, in 1870, the annual rent was further increased by £183. Some improvements were also effected at this time in the reservoir which had been in existence at the north end of the Estate in the early 'forties, although not recorded as such on the surviving maps of the area.⁽⁴⁾

In 1866, John Walker, a blanket manufacturer at Kilpin Hill in the Spen Valley, was invited to become a partner in the firm and he joined Thomas Hague Cook, and Percival and John Wormald at Dewsbury Mills. He had earlier assisted John Wormald with the running of Pildacre Mills. Little is known of John Walker's previous entrepreneurial activities and the firm's record of his entry is sparse. The ledgers are extremely cryptic in their information, briefly noting the £10,000 of

(1) Private Ledger, 1854-70, f. 373.

(2) Private Ledger, 1847-53, f. 23. A number of rental arrangements are recorded in this earlier ledger.

(3) $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total cost was regarded as a 'fair' annual rent addition, the total cost must therefore have been of the order of £2,440. The Stoves were used for 'stoving' or bleaching the blankets.

(4) The reservoir was employed for balancing the water supply to the water wheels, it is mentioned occasionally in the correspondence books in 1841 and 1842.

capital that John Walker contributed to the partnership upon entry and no change was made at this time in the name of the enterprise, which remained Thomas Cook, Son and Wormald.

In 1871 a new Weaving Shed with an Office building attached was erected at the expense of Thomas Hague Cook and the rent increased by £700 per annum, and a new shaft for one of the water wheels was also provided and the rent increased by £5. There is no record of the cost of these additions. (1)

In the years 1873-5 various smaller buildings were added to the premises at the expense of the partners and their cost, which is not known, was redeemed from the earnings of the business.

These buildings were:

Wool Warehouse - Fulling Mill - Finishing Shed -
Blanket Warehouse - Gas and Seak Works - Dyehouse -
Chimney - Oil Warehouse - Tank for Gasholder -
Shed for Stoved Pieces. (2)

There is no record of any difficulty experienced by the partners in attracting labour to the mills as this fixed capital expansion was proceeding, (3) but it is interesting to

-
- (1) In relation to the rent charge, the cost must have been approximately £9,330.
- (2) Private Ledger, 1847-53, f. 27.
- (3) The total number of employees at Dewsbury Mills in 1867 was 530.

note that, in 1874, thirty-six cottages were erected at 'West Vale' by Thomas Hague Cook and the partners' rent (1) increased by £357 per annum. A further eight cottages were built at 'Island View' in the 'eighties but no financial (2) evidence relating to these particular buildings has survived.

The expansion of physical capacity at Dewsbury Mills seems to have reached a limit by 1875 and there was then no substantial building undertaken on the Estate until after 1893. The inhibiting influence of the 'great depression' in the last quarter of the nineteenth century probably explains this cessation of growth, but the sudden withdrawal of capital from the partnership which occurred in 1878 might also have (3) been a contributory factor.

Ratcliffe Mills

In 1857, Percival Wormald purchased for £3,000 a warehouse and buildings in Bond Street, Dewsbury, together with

(1) Private Ledger, 1847-53, f. 27.

(2) The forty-four cottages are still occupied as dwellings.

(3) See below, p. 518 .

... all that piece of building ground situate near to Clegg Ford bridge on the banks of the Calder ... bounded in the east by the highway from Dewsbury to Thornhill and south by Forge Lane and containing about 7,108 square yards. (1)

Some years later he seems to have released this 'building ground' as a gift to his nephew, John Wormald, and in 1873 John Walker and John Wormald together financed the erection of Ratcliffe Mills upon this land at a cost of £25,721. 0s.4d. (2) The buildings were five storeys in height and provided facilities for wool-sorting and blending, carding, scribbling, and spinning and weaving on separate floors. Two steam engines and a boiler house were also attached. This acquisition substantially increased the firm's productive capacity and the two partners charged themselves and Thomas Hague Cook (3) an annual rental of £1,930 for the use of these premises. The partners could have erected such buildings on the Dewsbury Mills Estate in the area to the west of Mill Lane but the Ratcliffe site was more directly under the control of Wormald and Walker who were the active partners in the business at this time.

(1) Wormalds and Walker, Ltd., Legal Documents, parcel 16.

(2) Private Ledger, 1847-53, f. 26.

(3) ibid.

Britannia Mills

In July 1877 the firm of Oldroyd Brothers and Company (1) of Dewsbury, carpet manufacturers, were adjudged bankrupt. Three years later, John Wormald and John Walker, with some optimism considering the general trading experiences through which they had recently passed, paid the sum of £14,000 to the trustees of Oldroyd's liquidation for the Britannia Carpet Works situated between Wilton Street and Aldams Road. It was noted in 1881 that:

Britannia Mills ... remained for a considerable time unoccupied, the property and the whole of the carpet manufacturing machinery, looms ... being sold. The mill property has, to the satisfaction of the people of Dewsbury, been purchased by Messrs. Cook, Son and Wormald ... and is being fitted up for the blanket trade. (2)

The main mill building was four storeys in height and on the separate floors the chief woollen processes were carried on, except for dyeing and finishing. The physical separation of Britannia Mills from the parent enterprise must have involved some inconvenience and probably some increase in transport costs, but some counter-balancing advantages would

(1) Their debts outstanding were estimated at £295,300.

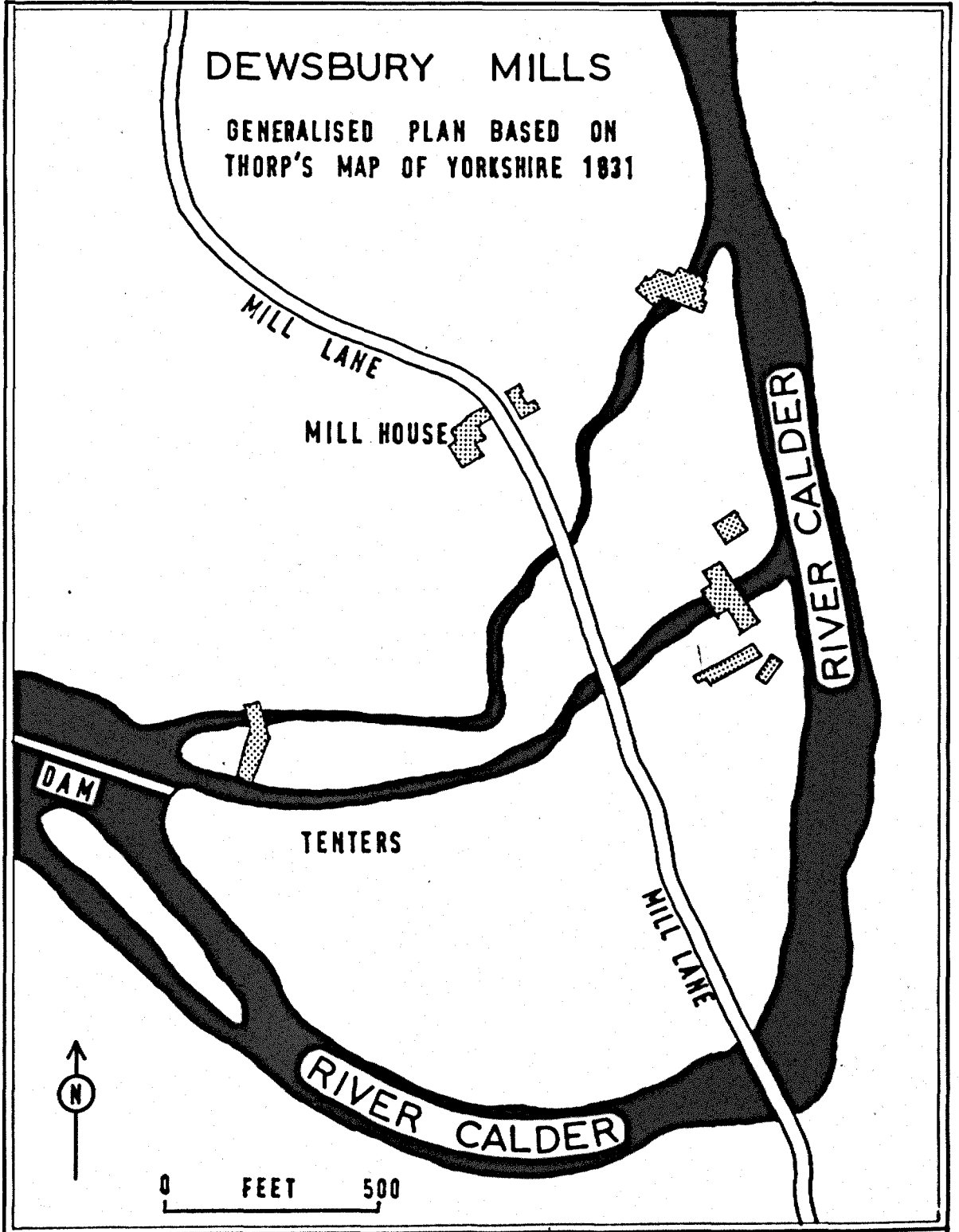
(2) Willens, op.cit., p. 22. The partners seem to have spent a further sum of £34,000 on machinery for this mill in 1890.

flow from the proximity of the new mills to the labour supply and the commercial facilities available in the town of Dewsbury.

By 1881 the partners' manufacturing operations were being conducted on three separate sites, but the main centre of activity remained firmly focussed on Dewsbury Mills.

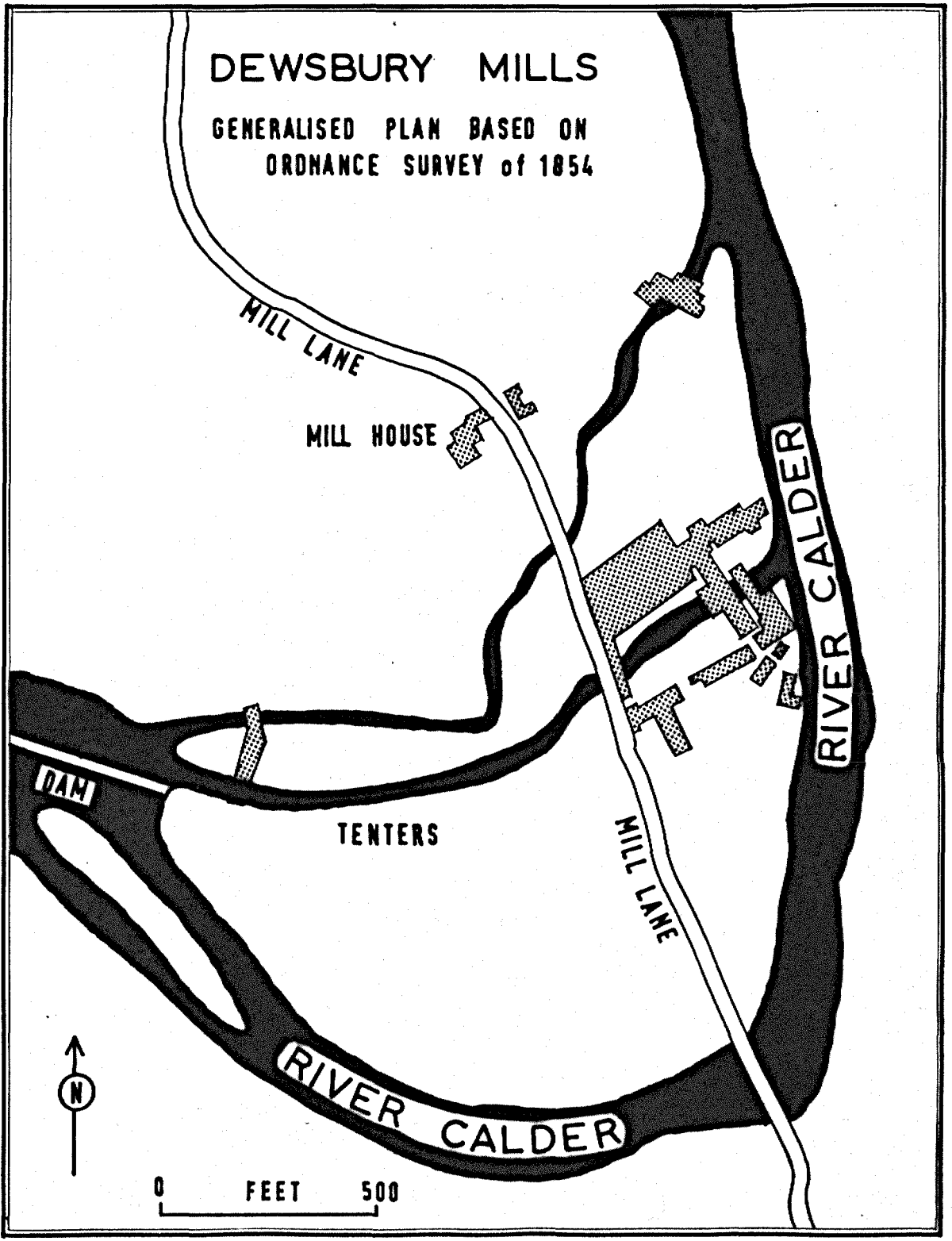
DEWSBURY MILLS

GENERALISED PLAN BASED ON
THORP'S MAP OF YORKSHIRE 1831



DEWSBURY MILLS

GENERALISED PLAN BASED ON
ORDNANCE SURVEY of 1854



MILL LANE

MILL HOUSE

RIVER CALDER

DAM

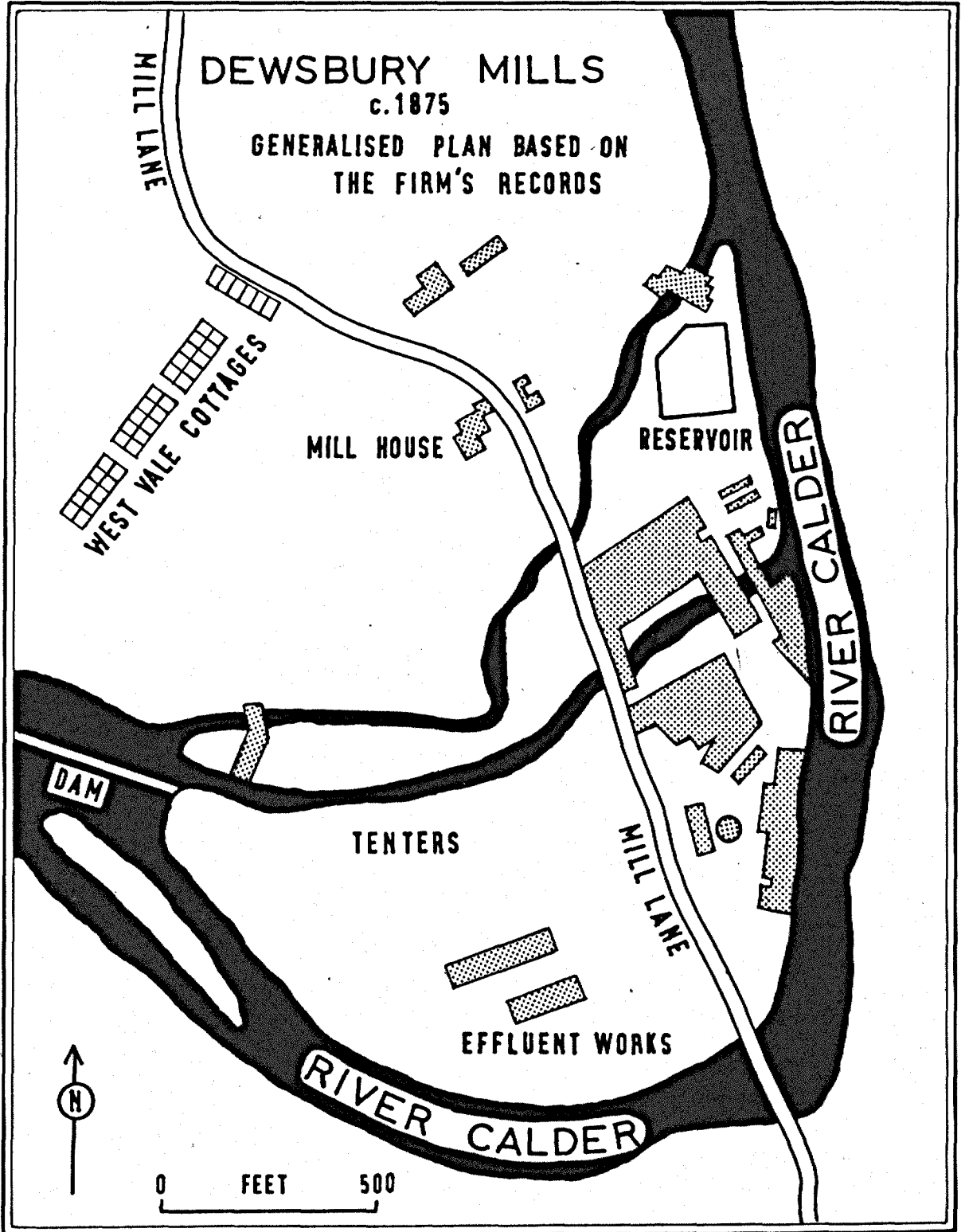
TINTERS

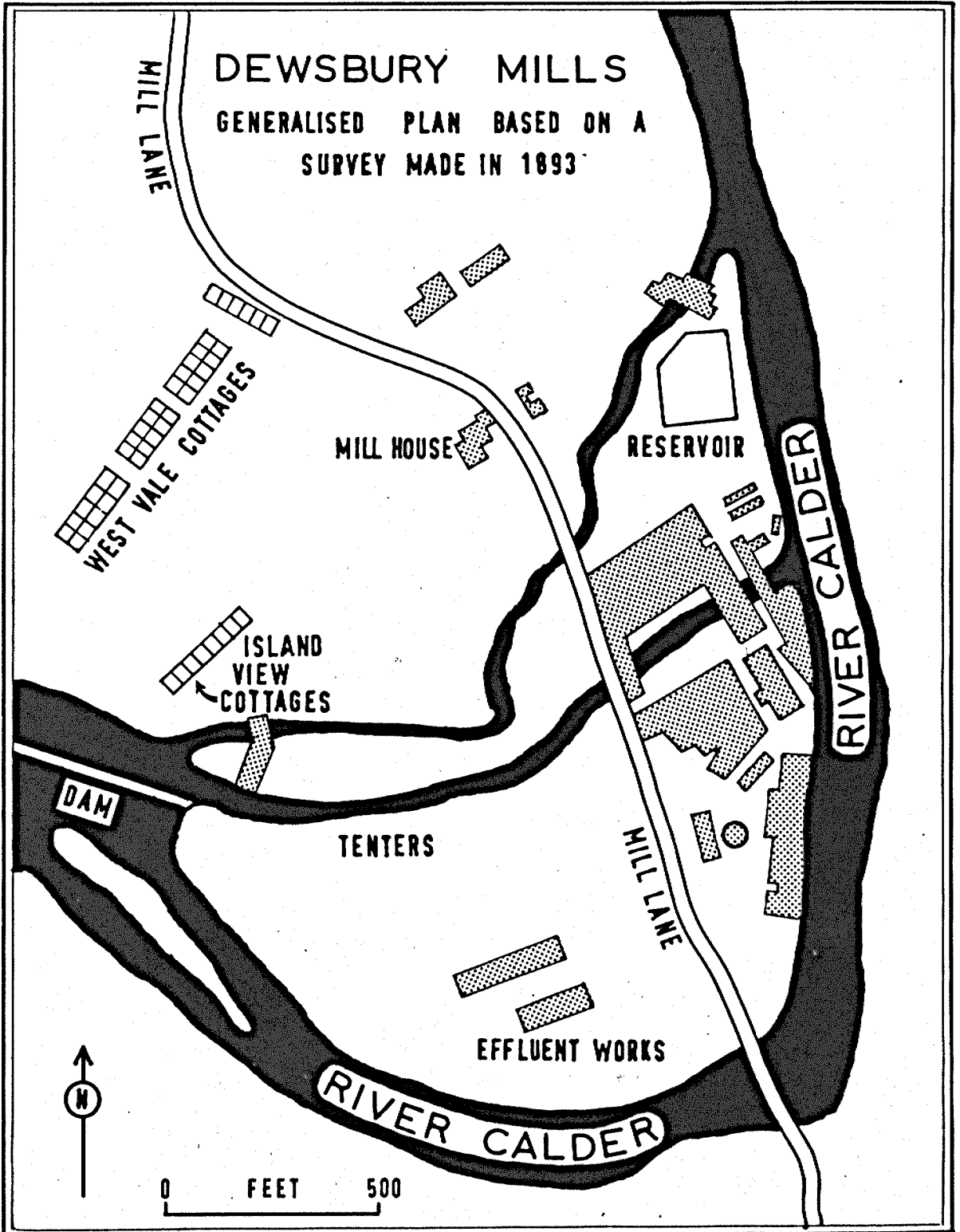
MILL LANE

RIVER CALDER



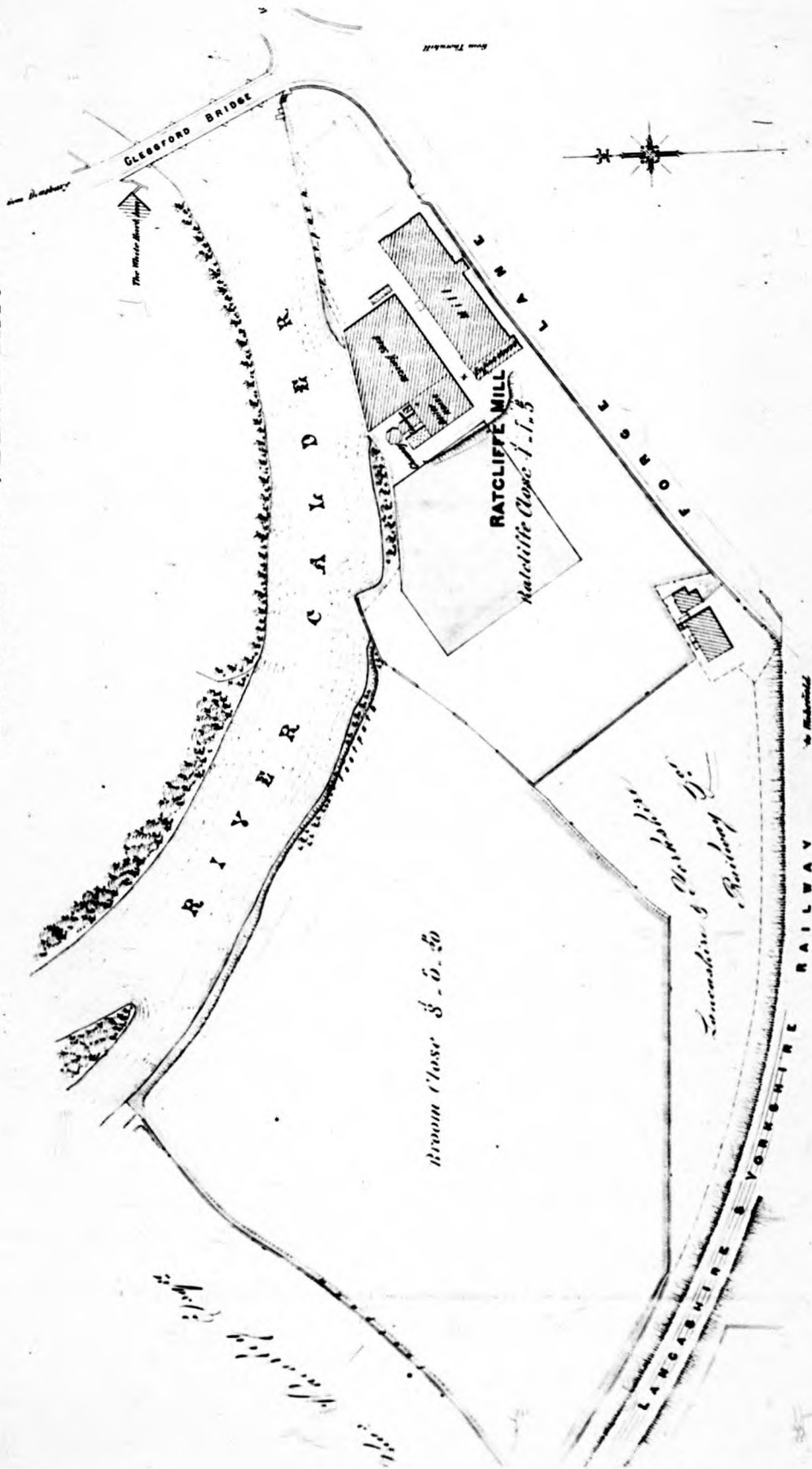
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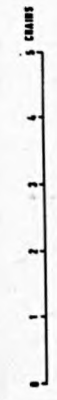


Plan of RATCLIFFE MILL & STATE, which at

THORNHILL LEES, LEICESTERSHIRE.

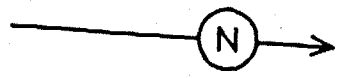
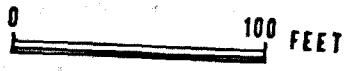
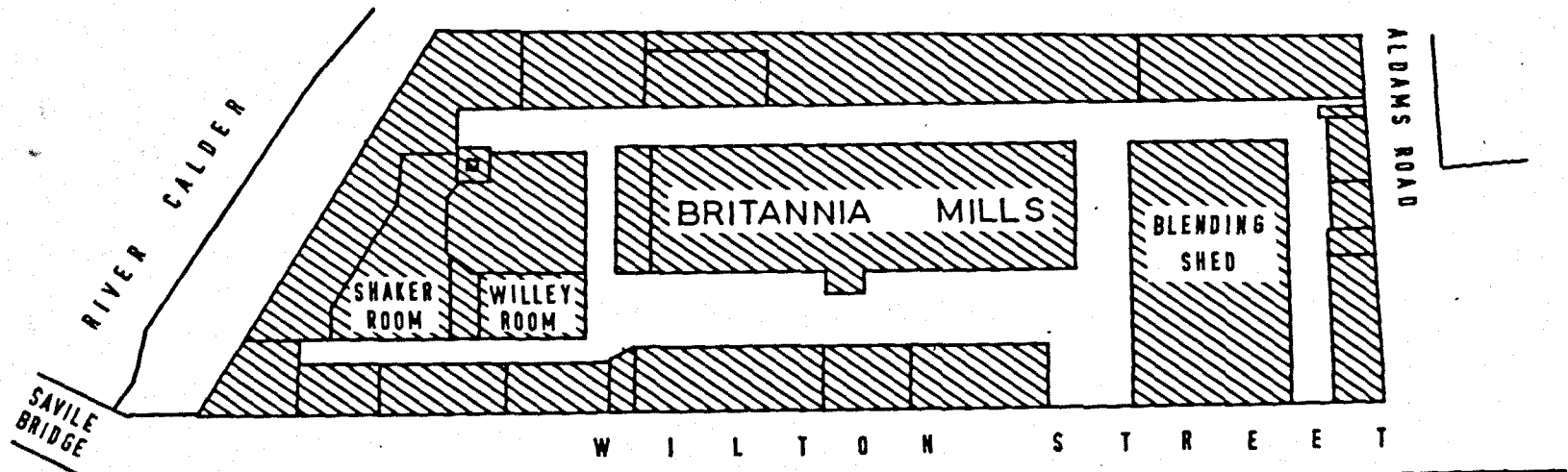


*W. H. Storer
Lands & Surveyor
Cleeford, May 1857*



BRITANNIA MILLS

BASED ON A SURVEY MADE IN 1930



CHAPTER VII

PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY, 1834-78

CHAPTER VIIPRODUCTIVE CAPACITY, 1834-78

The growth of the mill premises outlined in the previous chapter was accompanied by changes in the type and amount of productive machinery installed by the partners. The surviving information regarding these changes in productive capacity is very incomplete. There are some scattered references to machinery in the firm's correspondence books and also the more precise evidence provided by three valuations of installed machinery which were taken in 1858, 1862 and 1878. Some evidence relating to the cost of certain machinery may also be drawn from the private ledgers, but the nature of this material provides us with little more than a glimpse of the changing productive pattern established by the partners at Dewsbury Mills and at Ratcliffe Mills.

There are only two references in the correspondence books which relate to machinery in the 1830s. These occur in 1835. In September of that year the partners were making enquiries in Cleckheaton in respect of 'two thirty-two inch width Carding Engines', but there is no record of any purchase, and two months later they stated that they 'wish to order a

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Sam Wood, Cleckheaton, 16 Sept. 1835.

few pairs of looms, fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen quarters
 wide.⁽¹⁾ The order being placed with a Batley machine-maker,
 James Ellis.

It is not surprising that there is an absence of references to new machinery installations during the period of depression in the woollen industry of 1837-42, although in 1840 the following statement appeared in a letter to a West Country cloth manufacturer:

... we beg to acquaint you that we still have in work, the three machines on Mr. Dowding's patent - they do some sorts of work in a fair manner - and could you obtain a very even feeding, might not be unacceptable as a machine ... they might do still better in your very fine wool. (2)

Dowding's patent was first registered in 1827 and it was one of the earliest attempts in this country to produce a satisfactory method of 'condensing' the slubbings of wool before they were transmitted to the carding machine.⁽³⁾ The extract quoted above suggests that the partners acquired these three machines fairly early in the 'thirties and were obviously alive to the possibilities of dispensing with the piecing process.⁽⁴⁾

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to James Ellis, Batley Carr, 30 Nov. 1835. 'Quarters' refers to the reed space of the loom measured in quarters of a yard or nine inches.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to George Lister, Rivers Densley, Gloucestershire, 8 June 1840.
- (3) Patent No. 5566, 22 Nov. 1827, by William John Dowding of Wiltshire.

(4) See above. p. 176.

In the same year the partners were contemplating an addition to their scribbling capacity, and they wrote to a flannel manufacturer in Rochdale:

We are desirous to try one of your Rochdale makers - Mason or such other as you recommend - to make us a Scribbling Machine. We wish you to be so good as to order one for us. You know how narrow our Mill is, and in consequence we cannot do with a Machine whose length shall exceed the below dimensions of one at work - if it be longer there will not be room for the piecener to get to the Billy from the Cards which adjoins to where this new Scribbler must stand. Get the price as low as you can - the money to be taken home by the man who comes to set the machinery. If well done it may lead to larger orders from us - and not improbably from our neighbourhood. Total length: 16 feet, 10 inches. (1)

The partners, at this time, were obviously dissatisfied with the products of the local machinery makers and their decision to try a mechanism made in Lancashire probably marks the beginning of a more critical awareness of machinery design and performance. Chadwick introduced the partners to the firm of Edmund Leach and Company of Rochdale and, in the following year, they were corresponding generally with Leach about various processes:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 14 July 1840.

Our man overlooking the scribbling mill is going to your town, pray shew him your machinery on the Condensing principle and also the manner of spinning the yarn on to Bobbins - he will call tomorrow. (1)

This was followed by:

We have made up our minds to try your Condensers - and we wish to set about the matter at once. Please also send the price of your looms - ours are from 13 quarters to 18 quarters wide in the reed. (2)

And:

It is our intention - as the most profitable experiment at the present time - to try the machine you are about to alter in our Warp Spinning. You must let us know in good time what cards will be needed, and such other matters as may depend on us, so that you stop the machines as little as may be when you come to us. Will your 60 inches scribbler do for both our carders ? (3)

-
- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Edmund Leach, Machine Makers, Rochdale, 11 Jan. 1841. Leach registered a patent for condensing machinery in May 1840, Patent No. 8519.
 - (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leach, 14 Jan. 1841.
 - (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leach, 18 Jan. 1841. Cards were ordered from Robert Horsfall of Dewsbury, George Webster of Mirfield, and Benjamin Parker of Drighlington, at about the same time.

Later in the year the partners were writing to Leach about his Condenser:

We begin to fear an entire failure in this machine of yours as respects our work - we cannot get the sliver even. The feeding apparatus does not perform its work evenly. (1)

Leach then made some improvements to the machinery which effected some betterment in the consistency of the sliver, but the partners were apparently not convinced of the efficiency of the machine sufficiently to order any further Condensers from the same firm.

In 1841, the partners were also giving some attention to their finishing processes and they wrote to another machinery maker in the Calder valley:

We employ so many men in the raising of our goods, mainly Blankets, and are so much inconvenienced by changes and the room required for them that we are desirous to put up a Gig, and it occurs to us that you may be able to advise us of the sort best adapted to Blanket Work, as you are among the trade so largely employed in the manufacturing of raised goods which have about them a good deal of the Blanket property.

Is your Gig adapted to such work? It will be advisable for us to raise with Brass Wire cards - teasles would be too expensive as well as ineffective for our goods. (2)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leach, 13 April 1841.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to James Walton, Sowerby Bridge, 24 Nov. 1841.

A few blankets were sent to Sowerby Bridge to be raised and the results were such that a Gig was set up at Dewsbury Mills in January 1842, and a second Gig installed in the following month. These Gigs were made especially for the raising of blankets twelve quarters in width. They appear to have been a success, although the partners were a little surprised at the frequency with which the wire teeth on the Cards were fractured. ⁽¹⁾ In the summer of 1842 the partners were able to say:

... we have adopted some new raising machines that will give an ample cover without deteriorating the fabric, and we hope to find beneficial effects to flow from the use of those we have erected. (2)

In October 1842 the following account appeared in the correspondence books:

	£ (3)
Cost of 4 Gigs:	160
Cost of grinding machine:	12
Cost of labour and carriage:	<u>112</u>
	284
	—

-
- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Walton, 23 May 1842.
 (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to William Paul, Portadown, 18 July 1842.
 (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Walton, 12 Oct. 1842.

In the covering letter which accompanied this payment to Walton, the partners referred to Walton's 'billies' and informed him that they had '18 Billies of our own carrying 1,280 spindles.' (1) Their satisfaction with his raising gigs was apparently leading them to consider the purchase of other equipment from him. In a later letter to Walton, there is a reference to the employment of 'jenny, mule, and tommy spinners' at Dewsbury Mills, but no indication is given as to the numbers of each. (2)

In 1843, the partners were beginning to think seriously about power weaving and they questioned Chadwick:

How thick is yarn woven in your neighbourhood by your power looms? That is, how many yards to the ounce of wool? (3)

But it was not until the following year that they wrote to Leach again stating that:

... we have determined to try a few power looms and we shall be obliged by being informed your price for 13 quarters plain reed, and 13 and 14 quarters twilled. As we are quite ignorant of these things you must engage to make them answer before we pay for them, with an undertaking that we shall require more if the experiment answers. (4)

- (1) *ibid.* (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Walton, 26 Nov. 1842.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, 23 May 1843.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leach, 20 May 1844.

This was followed by two further communications with Leach:

Our Mr. Wormald has gone to Lancashire this morning and he intends being at Bury and Rochdale. If he is satisfied he will recommend a few power looms to be ordered from you immediately, and if these answer we shall require a large number ... for weaving both plain and twilled goods. (1)

And:

To make a beginning we will try half a dozen looms. (2)

In August 1844, the looms were installed at Dewsbury Mills and were in operation:

We have begun to work a few looms - the goods are very nicely woven, but in weighing the blankets by the pair we find a great unevenness in the weight which our men attribute to the difference in taking in as the Yarn beam empties and the Cloth beam fills. Say to us if you have this irregularity in the cloth you weave - with us this would be a sore objection to their use. (3)

-
- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leach, 22 May 1844.
 - (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leach, 24 May 1844.
 - (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to O. Willans and Company, Leeds, 31 Aug. 1844. The problem to which the partners here are referring was, of course, probably the major technical difficulty at this time in the development of a successful power loom.

In the following month, the partners ordered 'two mules of 200 spindles each, to be ready in eight weeks at 5g. per spindle', from Knowles, Houghton and Company of Gomersal; a 'sixty inch scribbler' from Mr. Thornton of Cleckheaton; and 'one scribbler of 64 inches at £110-115, and one scribbler of 54 inches at £75-80' from Leach of Rochdale. ⁽¹⁾ In October of 1844, the partners had determined to increase their complement of power looms and to build a new weaving shed to house them, and there was a flurry of correspondence with Leach informing him of the positioning of the looms and asking his advice regarding the reorganisation of the spinning machinery. ⁽²⁾ In December, the partners ordered a 'further quantity of looms', ⁽³⁾ but without specifying the number and, in the same month, a letter to Whitham throws some light on the motive which was impelling the partners towards the large-scale introduction of power weaving:

When Leach's men came here to set up their Looms they found your shafting would not drive them to work in couples and they must now be fixed in single lines - this is a great pity - as expert hands would have worked two Looms and the economy of Double Looms is destroyed in great part. ⁽⁴⁾

-
- (1) Letters from Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Knowles, Thornton and Leach, 4 Sept. 1844.
- (2) This correspondence is further evidence of the unsuitability of the partners' existing buildings to house their new equipment.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leach, 21 Dec. 1844. A specific order was probably given to Leach on one of his visits to Dewsbury Mills and this would not then be recorded in the correspondence.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Whitham and Company, Leeds. 28 Dec. 1844.

At the end of 1844, Thomas Cook wrote to Walton with further reference to blanket raising:

We wish to have another machine to dress off the Blanket goods, if you can have confidence in making it answer for us. You will remember that ours were the first Blanket Gigs that you attempted ... you never made much of your Gigs till we began to use them ... we hope that you can meet our new requirements. (1)

The letter suggests that the success of Walton's gigs at Dewsbury Mills had led to some emulation of the partners' innovation in the Dewsbury-Batley region, and indicates that the woollen manufacturers of the West Riding, at this time, were probably highly sensitive to the introduction of new machinery to the trade.

In 1845 there were more power looms ordered from Leach and 'four dozen shuttles' ordered from a Bradford firm. (2) Later in the year, there was a reference in the correspondence to a 'Spinning Jack of 80 spindles made by Leach at a price between £25-30', (3) which suggests that the partners were still experimenting with mechanisms designed to provide a satisfactory

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Walton, 31 Dec. 1844.
 (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leach, 8 Feb. 1845; and to Edmund Heys, Bradford, 26 Feb. 1845.
 (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Willans and Company, Leeds, 28 March 1845.

condensing operation, Leach's earlier machine having proved quite unsuited to the partners' requirements. In April of that year:

Two or three of our men are going over to see the Power Looms and the Spinning, and we shall be obliged by your giving them any information which may be of use to us in our Power Loom weaving. (1)

Inventories and valuations

The references to machinery in the correspondence books for 1847 are sparse and contain little specific information; after that time, although there was expenditure on further installations in the early 'fifties and in 1857, the correspondence is unhelpful on this subject until the 'sixties. (2) Following the death of Edward Hague in 1847, Edmund Leach carried out a survey and valuation of the machinery then in use at Dewsbury Mills, but unfortunately his written report has been destroyed. The private ledgers contain the following details:

-
- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Willans and Company, Leeds, 2 April 1845.
 - (2) The correspondence books for some of the years in the 1850s are extremely difficult to read, and it is not possible to decipher with certainty all the information which they contain.

(1)

Cost of Machinery, 1844-52

		£		
1844-6	Cost of Looms etc.	2,818..	18.	5.
1847	New Scribbler:	94.	0.	0.
	Power Looms:	1,010.	15.	0.
	Gigs:	140.	0.	0.
1848	Cards and Machinery:	349.	13.	3.
1850	Machinery:	1,136.	7.	6.
1851	Cards and Looms:	1,103.	8.	10.
1852	Looms:	700.	0.	0.
		7,353.	3.	0.

In 1858, Edward Hague's account as a partner in the firm was finally closed by his executors, and a further survey and valuation of the machinery in use at Dewsbury Mills was then made. ⁽²⁾ This valuation was undertaken by James Hirst of Huddersfield and William Cardwell of Dewsbury, and part of their written report has survived. Its contents may be briefly summarised as follows:

(1) Private Ledger, 1825-46, ff. 231-2; Balances Book, f. 72. There is no information regarding the number of Looms, Cards, etc., nor is there any explanation forthcoming as to the identification in detail of 'machinery', it is not possible, therefore, to say how much the items listed in this table cost per unit.

(2) Such a valuation was necessary on every occasion when the partnership was changed. Between valuations the partners seem to have depreciated the value of their machinery at the rate of ten per cent. per annum.

Valuation of utensils, matters and
things being in and upon the premises
at Dewsbury Mills, December 1858

1 Grinding Frame.

Scribbling and Carding Sets

23 Sets: 1 of 48 inches.
5 of 54 inches.
16 of 60 inches.
1 of 64 inches.

Piecing Machines

2 Piecing machines with patent feeding.

Spindles

22 Billys carrying 1,624 spindles.
8 Mules carrying 1,600 spindles.

Total spindles: 3,224

Looms

161 Hand-loom, of which 26 worked by In-weavers,
and 135 worked by Out-weavers.

121 Power looms.

283 Total looms

Reed spaces of Power looms:

8 of 9/4
9 of 10/4
8 of 11/4
50 of 12/4
28 of 13/4
14 of 14/4
2 of 17/4
2 of 18/4

121

Loom Furniture

Gears and slays for hand-loom:	507
Gears and slays for Power looms:	<u>588</u>
Total:	<u>1,095</u>

Finishing machinery

No information available.

(1)

Total Value of all machinery at Dewsbury Mills:
£16,492. 6. 10.

The sixty-inch Carder was apparently the general size of machine in use in the Carding department, whilst the Billys were of an average spindleage of 75, and the Mules of an average size of 200 spindles each. No information is available to indicate the size of the hand-loom, but the reed spaces given for the power looms show the range of loom widths in use and the concentration on looms of twelve, thirteen and fourteen quarters wide. The solitary grinding frame on the premises strongly supports the contention of Thomas Cook, which appears frequently in the correspondence books, that 'we do not use shoddy'. The relationship between the spinning capacity and the weaving capacity as listed in this valuation is very ill-balanced, and it explains why the partners put out a portion of their spinning requirements to other mills and why they began to spin for themselves at Pildacre Mills in

(1) The value of the machinery is not shown for the separate items in the fragment of this valuation which has been retained.

(1)
 the late 'fifties. The hand-loom weavers employed at Dewsbury Mills at this time were carefully enumerated:

<u>In-weavers</u>	<u>No. of looms</u>
Joshua Auty	1
George Auty Junior	1
John Bottomley	1
Thomas Bottomley	1
William Cliffe	1
Joshua Carr	2
Joshua Carr Junior	1
Ben Castlehouse	1
John Dove	1
Abel Drake	1
Edward Ellis	1
Elijah Field	1
Joshua Gledhill	1
William Howgate	1
Joshua Healey	1
John Marsden	1
Thomas Marriott	2
John Robshaw	1
William Robshaw	1
Joshua Thornes	1
Henry Thompson	2
Robert Thornes	1
Thomas Tolson	<u>1</u>
	26
	—

The domestic weavers employed in their own homes and using hand-loom owned by the partners were also registered in this valuation:

(1) See above, p. 460.

<u>Out-weavers</u>	<u>No. of looms</u>
John Auty	1
Abraham Hall	2
John Ellis	16
Joseph Haigh	3
William Howgate Jr.	1
Abraham Crabtree	3
David Sykes	4
Alfred Field	1
Henry Hepworth	1
Joshua Ellis	1
Robert Wilson	1
Joshua Wilson Jr.	1
George Greenwood	1
William Wilburn	1
John Kilburn	1
Joshua Kilburn	1
Charles Eastwood	1
George Robinson	1
Nathan Robinson	1
Robert Greenwood	1
William Hunter	3
Parker Thornes	1
William Wilson	1
Joshua Blackburn	2
Abraham Scott	1
William Chappel	1
Beaumont Popplewell	1
Charles Sykes	1
Seth Senior	1
John Bentley	1
Abraham Hemingway	1
John Greenwood	1
George Stothard	1
John Stead	1
Bingley Ledgard	1
Joshua Dyson	1
Joshua Dyson Jr.	1
Thomas Hemingway	1
Joshua Thompson	1
Ben Dove	1
John Auty Senior	1
John Field	1
James Lister	1
Robert Glass	1
Robert Robshaw	1
George Armitage	1
Thomas Ledgard	1
James Hinchcliffe	1
George Hinchcliffe	1

James Scott	1
Joshua Crawshaw	1
Thomas Wilson	1
Ben Whitworth	1
Jack Wilson	1
Smith Robinson	1
Jesse Wilson	1
Joshua Marsden	1
William Barker	1
William Kilburn	2
Zachariah Hardwick	1
Benny Thackrah	1
Thomas Hanson	1
Enoch Thompson	1
James Whitehead	1
Edward Scott	1
Marmaduke Tolson	1
Daniel Ledgard	1
George Sykes	1
Stephen Lawton	1
Joshua Bentley	1
Isaac Oates	1
Abel Fisher	1
Sam Crosse	1
Mark Marsden	1
William Ellis	1
Walter Field	1
Jesse Thornes	1
William Ellis Jr.	1
Abraham Ellis	1
John Fisher	1
William Clarkson	1
Luke Crawshaw	1
John Whitworth	1
Joshua Haigh Jr.	1
George Ledgard	1
Joshua Wilson	1
John Buckley	1
William Metcalfe	1
James Hall	1
Sam Crabtree	1
Elijah Heard	1
James Bottomley	2
John Drake	1
Alfred Field	1
Walter Field	1
Frank Fisher	4
Mark Hemingway	1
William Hemingway	1

George Hemingway	1	
James Hinchcliffe	1	
Ben Senior	1	
David Wilson	1	
	<u>1</u>	(1)
	135	
	<u> </u>	

The overwhelming frequency of one loom per weaver is not surprising in this part of the West Riding, although eleven of the weavers managed more than one loom and John Ellis must have been sub-letting the sixteen looms, the property of the firm, in his care to other weavers whose names are not enumerated. It is unlikely that he would be managing all this equipment in one location and yet be designated as one of the partners' out-weavers, the majority of whom were one-loom employees.

In 1862, the machinery was valued again following the death of Thomas Cook, but although this particular survey falls very near to that of 1858, a dramatic change had occurred in the productive capacity of the yarn preparation departments at Dewsbury Mills during the four intervening years. This was principally the result of the fire at the Mills in the early months of 1860.

In May 1861, the partners were ordering 'piecing machines' from Leach, and sixty-six inch Carders and Scribblers

(1) These domestic weavers were located mainly in the districts of Chickenley, Earlsheaton, and Dewsbury Moor, all within a radius of four miles from Dewsbury Mills. John Ellis lived at Ossett.

(1)
 from Jonas Haley and James Critchley of Dewsbury. A little
 later they were ordering 'self-acting mules' from Platt Brothers
 of Oldham. (2) The new mill to accommodate this equipment was
 ready for use by the spring of that year and during the early
 summer the partners were busy bringing it into full productive
 use. Thomas Cook was able to write, a few days before he
 died:

We are now getting our new mill to
 work and it is being filled with
 machinery of the highest order ... (3)

There are various references in the correspondence books in
 1861 and 1862 which indicate that the partners were disposing
 of their old Billys and small Carders and Scribblers from
 Dewsbury Mills and from Pildacre Mills, and these seem to have
 been purchased by smaller manufacturers of the district. In
 June, 1861 the partners ordered five 'feeding' machines from
 James Apperley of Stroud. (4)

-
- (1) Cook, Son and Wormald, letters to Leach, Haley and
 Critchley, 4 May 1861.
- (2) Cook, Son and Wormald to Platt Brothers, Oldham, 7 May
 1861.
- (3) Thos. Cook to Messrs. Stewart and McDonald, Glasgow,
 15 May 1861.
- (4) Cook, Son and Wormald to James Apperley, Stroud,
 11 June 1861. Apperley in association with William
 Clissold registered a patent for this feeding device
 in 1858, patent No. 1135.

The main features of the 1862 valuation may be summarised briefly:

Valuation of Machinery at Dewsbury Mills,

June 1862

3 Grinding Frames.

Scribbling and Carding Sets

23 sets of 66 inch width.

Piecing Machines

1 Feeder and piecing machine attached to each Scribbler.

Spindles

11 pairs of Mules carrying 4,938 spindles.
7 Horses carrying 808 spindles.

Total spindles: 5,746.

Looms

161 Hand-loom, of which 28 worked by In-weavers
and 133 worked by Out-weavers.

124 Power looms.

285 Total looms.

Loom Furniture

Gears and slays for hand-loom: 500

Gears and slays for Power looms: 589

Total: 1,089

Finishing Machinery

No information available.

Tentering Frames

1,915 lineal yards of tenter frame.

(1)

Total Valuation of Machinery: £25,099, 8, 2.

Compared with 1858 there was little change in the weaving capacity either at the Mills or outside, the only addition being three new power looms and their sizes are not recorded. The reed spaces of the looms were omitted in this survey. The number of installed spindles at Dewsbury Mills had increased, however, from 3,224 to 5,746, an increase of 78 per cent. It is difficult to truly assess the improvement in productivity obtained by reason of the changes carried out in the yarn processing departments. The working surfaces of the scribblers and carders had been enlarged in 1862 by approximately 14 per cent. compared with 1858., and the addition of Apperley's feed and the piecing machines must have served to speed up the flow of work between the different operations in yarn preparation. The self-acting mules, with an average spindleage of approximately 450 spindles to each pair, were not only larger than the single 200 spindle mules which were in work in 1858, but the speed of rotation of the spindles and the general efficiency of their operation were probably very superior to the old equipment as Thomas Cook, who was not given to exaggeration, was moved to describe these appliances as 'machinery of the highest order'. Rag grinding may have increased a little during the four years, for there were now three grinding frames installed, but it was still an extremely marginal activity at Dewsbury Mills.

(1) The high price of wool in the early 'sixties probably accounts for the increase in grinding frames.

Comparing the monetary valuation of machinery at the two dates, the increase recorded in 1862 amounts to the sum of £8,607. The major portion of this represents the cost of equipping the new spinning mill in 1861, but it is difficult to assess exactly, owing to the fact that the 1858 valuation would have been written down to some extent before the 1862 figure was calculated and the tenter frames are included in the second valuation, but not in the first. Very approximately, however, it would seem that about £8,000 worth of new equipment was installed in the new mill in the early 'sixties just prior to the big demands upon the firm necessitated by the cotton famine.

Raw materials

The firm gave evidence to the Royal Commission on the Pollution of Rivers, in the late 'sixties, and it is noted in the Third Report of that Commission that:

We went through the extensive works of Messrs. Cook, Wormald and Co., at Dewsbury, where nearly 1,000 tons of woollen goods are manufactured annually - a larger quantity than the aggregate of the Witney manufacture ... (1)

(1) Royal Commission on the Pollution of Rivers, 1871
(C. 347) xxv, 3rd Report, vol. 1, p. 24.

An indication of productive capacity at Dewsbury Mills in the late 'sixties may be gleaned from the information which the firm provided for the use of the Commission, and this may be tabulated as follows:

Table 22. Average annual input of materials at Dewsbury Mills in the 1860s

(1)

Raw wool:	2,000,000 lbs.
Dyewares:	33,600 lbs.
Lac:	3,000 lbs.
Cochineal:	3,000 lbs.
Brimstone:	67,200 lbs.
Oil:	200 tons.
Soap:	100 tons.
Alkali:	25 tons.
Coal:	2,000 tons.
Water:	40,000,000 gallons.
Urine:	50,000 gallons.

There is no indication in this table of the use of cotton warps by the partners, presumably because these were purchased in a form ready for weaving and therefore were not regarded as raw materials for purposes of the Commission's enquiry. The dyewares, lac and cochineal were used in dyeing the fabrics at the Mills, and the partners estimated that about 25 per cent. of their total output consisted of coloured blankets. There was a relatively large consumption of brimstone which was used in the stoving process to impart a clean, white colour to the plain blankets. The oil was used in the preparatory and spinning

(1) Royal Commission on the Pollution of Rivers, 1871
(C. 347-I) xxvi, 3rd Report, vol. ii, p. 183. At this time the firm employed '530 hands'.

operations and was chiefly Rape Oil, although a small quantity of Olive Oil was also used. Soap, alkali, and urine were all used in the scouring and fulling processes. The soap was made on the firm's premises. It is interesting to note that large quantities of urine were still being used at this time, despite the fact that the firm had its own Gas Works and ammoniacal liquors were thus available for fulling purposes. The 2,000 tons of coal annually consumed at Dewsbury Mills were mainly utilised for purposes of heating the premises and for providing the hot liquids used in dyeing, but some of the fuel was also used to drive the 50 horse-power steam engine then installed in one of the newer buildings. The estimate given by the partners of their use of water reveals how important this was in their manufacture. The advantages which the firm derived from its location in this loop of the Calder were clearly not just confined to water power for driving the machinery. The volume of water which the firm was able to extract and then return to the river was a valuable asset in the preparatory and finishing departments of the firm, and the availability of this water considerably facilitated production at the Mills. (1)

Before returning the used water - which contained dye-stuffs, oil, soap, alkali, brimstone and urine - to the river, the partners had it processed at a trade effluent works sited a little to the south of the main premises. During the process-

(1) The partners also used the 'Town's water', but only 'when we cannot use the river water'.

ing some of the chemical constituents of the liquid were extracted and sold as fertiliser, whilst the grease content of the fluid was pumped across the Calder to the works of Teall and Company where it was used, among other things, for the making of boot polish.⁽¹⁾

1878

In 1878 the deaths of Thomas Hague Cook and Percival Wormald were followed by the customary survey and valuation. In the sixteen years which separated this survey from its predecessor there had been, as we have noted in chapter VI, a substantial amount of new building, and the acquisition of the land of and the erection of new mills in Ratcliffe Close. This investment activity is reflected in the 1878 survey:

Survey of Machinery at Dewsbury Mills, 1878

3 Grinding Frames.	Valued at £4.10g. each.
1 Garnett Machine.	Valued at £3.10s.

Scribbling and Carding Sets

17 sets of 66-72 inch width.	Valued at £150 to £215 each set.
------------------------------	----------------------------------

'All these sets equipped with accessories, feeders, shippers, lickers-in, workers, fancies, dickies, strippers, swifts, and patent strippers by Radcliffe.'

Willeys

6 Shake Willeys of 4 foot width.	
4 Tenter Hook Willeys, 2 at 4 foot width, 2 at 4 foot six inches width.	Valued at £10.10g to £40 each according to age.

(1) This pumping began in 1866.

Spindles

10 pairs of Self-acting Mules carrying
4,872 spindles. Valued at £96 to £140
per pair.

(1)

Looms

344 Power looms Valued at £12-25 each.

Type

303 plain looms.
40 box looms.
1 Jacquard loom.

344
—

Reed space

13 of 9/4
49 of 10/4
22 of 11/4
45 of 12/4
107 of 13/4
56 of 14/4
2 of 15/4
22 of 16/4
11 of 17/4
17 of 18/4

344
—

-
- (1) The Jacquard loom was one of 14 quarters in width and valued at £19. The Box looms were looms fitted with a drop-box motion which permitted the weaving of fabrics with more than one colour of weft. By this time, the partners were probably developing 'fancy' patterned blankets in accordance with the trend of fashion in the 'seventies, and the Box looms would be suited to the weaving of check designs and plaid effects for travelling rugs and blankets.

Warping Machines

4 Patent Sizing and Warping Machines.

Valued at £60 each.

11 Patent Dry Warping Machines.

Valued at £25 each.

354 Cast Iron 'Cheeses' for Warping Machines. (1)

Valued at 10s. each.

96 spare Beams valued at £67.

(2)

2 Balloons valued at £15 each.

Scouring

1 Wool Scouring Machine valued at £205.

1 Drying Machine valued at £25.

Finishing Machinery

1 Raising Gig of 63 inch width. Valued at £23.

2 Raising Gigs of 72 inch width. Valued at £24 each.

4 Raising Gigs of 90 inch width. Valued at £25 each.

1 Brushing Mill of 90 inch width. Valued at £43.

1 Perpetual Cutting Machine of 72 inch width.

Valued at £23. (3)

1 Dewing Machine of 90 inch width. Valued at £7.

10 Oscillating Gigs. Valued at £124.10s.

12 Whipping Machines valued at £144.

3 Binding Machines valued at £30.

(1) The 'cheese' was used for winding yarn.

(2) The 'balloons' were heated containers for drying warps.

(3) The 'Dewing' machine was used for wetting cloths before the wet raising operations.

Total Value of all machinery at
Dewsbury Mills:
£11,816.16. 3.

Survey of Machinery at Ratcliffe Mills, 1878

5 Grinding Frames. Valued at £5.10s. each.

Scribbling and Carding Sets

22 Sets of 60-72 inch width, equipped with
all accessories. Valued at £250-270 each set.

Willeys

3 Shake Willeys of 4 foot width.
3 Tenter Hook Willeys of 4 foot width.
(1)
Valued at £272,10s.

Spindles

10 pairs of Self-acting Mules carrying 7,024 spindles.
Valued at £100 per pair.

Looms

No information available.

Finishing Machinery

No information available.

Total Value of all machinery at
Ratcliffe Mills:
£7,949.15. 6.

Grand Total: £19,766.11. 9.

(1) One of the Tenter Hook Willeys was equipped with Leach's patent Oiling Machine and was valued at £80.

Compared with 1862, there was a fall of just over £5,000 in the total value of machinery operated by the partners, but this was probably the result of depreciation in the value of the older machinery, and the fact that the general price level was nearly 20 per cent. lower in the later year compared with 1862.⁽¹⁾ The total spindleage had increased from 5,746 to 11,896, or by approximately 107 per cent. during the sixteen years. The hand-looms had disappeared from the inventory and the power looms had increased from 124 to 344. The quality of the machinery was much superior by 1878. The Scribbling and Carding Sets were now equipped with accessories which satisfactorily solved the condensing problem; the self-actor was universally applied to the mule spinning; the willeys were larger; warping machines were in general use; and hand-raising and whipping had been entirely replaced by raising gigs and whipping machines. The reed spaces of the looms in 1878 when compared with the information for 1858 indicate that looms of twelve, thirteen and fourteen quarters width of reed, were still the most general types of weaving apparatus, but at the later date there was also some concentration on narrower looms of ten quarters width and broader looms of sixteen quarters width. This reflected the greater range of fabrics which was being made in 1878.

(1) Layton and Crowther, op. cit., p. 229.

The machinery in use at Dewsbury and Ratcliffe Mills in 1878 had mainly been purchased from Leach of Rochdale and Platts of Oldham, ⁽¹⁾ but a small proportion of the total equipment had also been obtained from Pearson and Spurr of Birstall, Jonas Haley of Dewsbury, James Critchley also of Dewsbury, and Bywater and Company of Leeds. In addition, the partners themselves had by this time developed a large mechanics' shop where improvements to machinery were effected, and some of the Carding machines and Willeys were built by the firm's employees and they incorporated ideas which had been obtained from productive experience in the mills.

Britannia Mills

There is no first hand information available on the productive capacity operated by the partners after 1878 and it is not possible, therefore, to indicate exactly how much machinery was brought into use when Britannia Mills were acquired in 1881. A secondary authority in 1895 in referring to Britannia Mills stated that:

At these mills there are 3,600 spindles and 300 looms. (2)

It would seem, if this statement can be accepted, that these new mills in the early 'eighties added about 30 per cent. to

(1) Platts of Oldham had a high reputation for machinery in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. cf. The Report of The Tariff Commission, par., 1577.

(2) Pike and Company (pub.), A Descriptive Account of Dewsbury, (Brighton, 1895), p. 22.

the spinning capacity and they almost doubled the weaving power of the firm. The same writer, in describing the whole enterprise of the partners, added that:

... in the aggregate the firm employ 15,876 spindles, 650 looms, and no fewer than 49 sets of scribbling and carding engines. There are engineers' shops, joiners' and mechanics' shops, to economise both in time and expense in the even of breakdown ... The mechanical appliances are of the most improved description and unsurpassed of their kind. The employees number 1,500 or thereabouts. (1)

The labour force had thus been trebled in size during the twenty-five years 1870-95.

The productive size of the enterprise in 1895 may be compared with the results of an enquiry into the size of firms in the Yorkshire textile industry which was carried out in 1914. In that year it was found that the 'best' size of enterprise in the Huddersfield district was one functioning with about 2,000 spindles and the 'best' ratio of spindles to looms in combined woollen firms was of the order 15 looms to 500 spindles. (2) By this test, Wormalds and Walker Ltd., in 1895 were considerably larger than the optimum size even if the three parts of the enterprise: Dewsbury Mills, Ratcliffe Mills, and Britannia Mills, are considered as separate 'firms'. We may conclude that the firm was a highly successful exception to the general rule.

(1) *ibid.* (2) S.J. Chapman and T.S. Ashton, 'The Sizes of Businesses mainly in the Textile Industries', Journal

Footnote (2) continued/

of the Royal Statistical Society, vol. lxxvii
(1914), pp. 502-8.

CHAPTER VIII

FINANCE, 1832-92

CHAPTER VIIIFinance, 1832-92

The financial records of the firm which have survived are contained in four small ledgers, the accounts for the major part being stated in Thomas Cook's handwriting. They relate to the period 1832-92. In the latter year the partnership was brought to an end and, in 1893, a limited liability company was formed to:

... purchase the business of Blanket Manufacturers and merchants now being carried on by John Wormald, John Walker and Thomas Marmaduke Wormald; at Dewsbury Mills, Ratcliffe Mills, and at Britannia Mills ... and ... to be known as Wormalds and Walker, Ltd.. (1)

In these four ledgers there are many tantalising cross-references to accounts and statements in other journals and day-books which have not been retained in the firm's archives. It is not, therefore, possible to present a complete picture of the financial operations of the partnership, although sufficient information is available to facilitate the sketching of a profile of the ways and means employed at Dewsbury Mills during these sixty years. The principal information is summarised in Tables 23, 24 and 25, and in Figures 9 and 10. These tables and figures are based upon

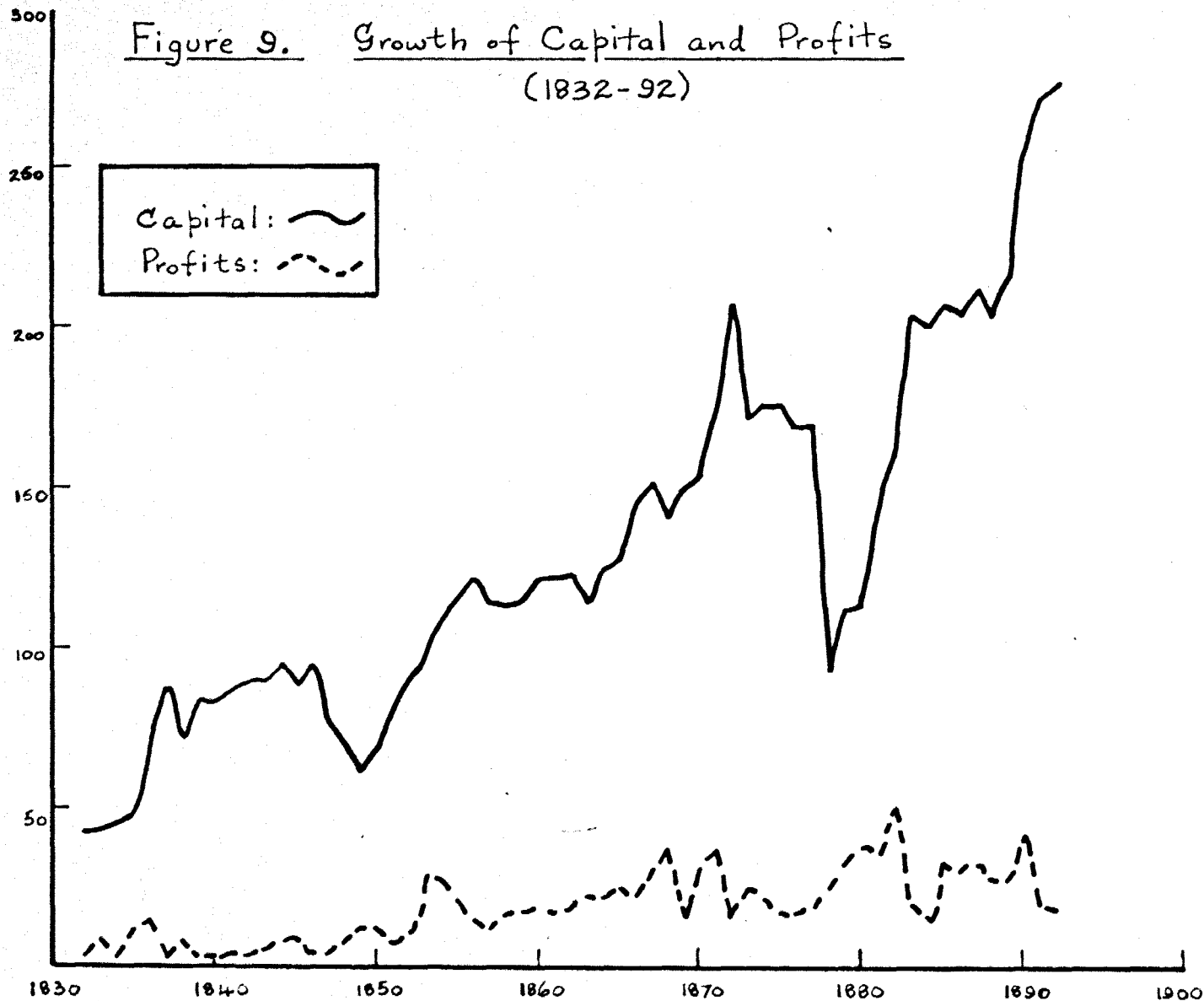
(1) From the preamble to the Company's registration in the Board of Trade's Register of Companies, No. 39150, 24 June 1893.

data which are reproduced in detail (and in the form in which they appear in the original books of entry) in the appendix to this Chapter. The individual partners' capital accounts are only available for the period 1832-70, whilst general balance sheets exist for the period 1853-92.

The capital investment of the partners in the enterprise grew during the period from £41.2 thousand to £275.5 thousand, an average rate of growth of 4 per cent. per annum; the most sustained accumulation taking place during the years 1850-72. This enlargement of capital was mainly the result of 'ploughing-back' earnings by the partners, but changes in the composition of the partnership also shaped the path of the capital curve depicted in Figure 9. It will be noted that there is some correspondence between the capital and profits curves in the diagram, but the process of 'ploughing back' was not solely determined by profitability. The partners credited to themselves an interest payment of 5 per cent. per annum on their total capital invested and this payment increased in size over time. It exceeded profits in the late 'thirties and early 'forties and was a significant factor in total earnings during the depressed years of the 'seventies and 'eighties when profits were relatively low. The withdrawals of the partners, shown in relation to capital, profits and interest in Table 23, seem to have been influenced in some years by personal factors unrelated to the firm's trading

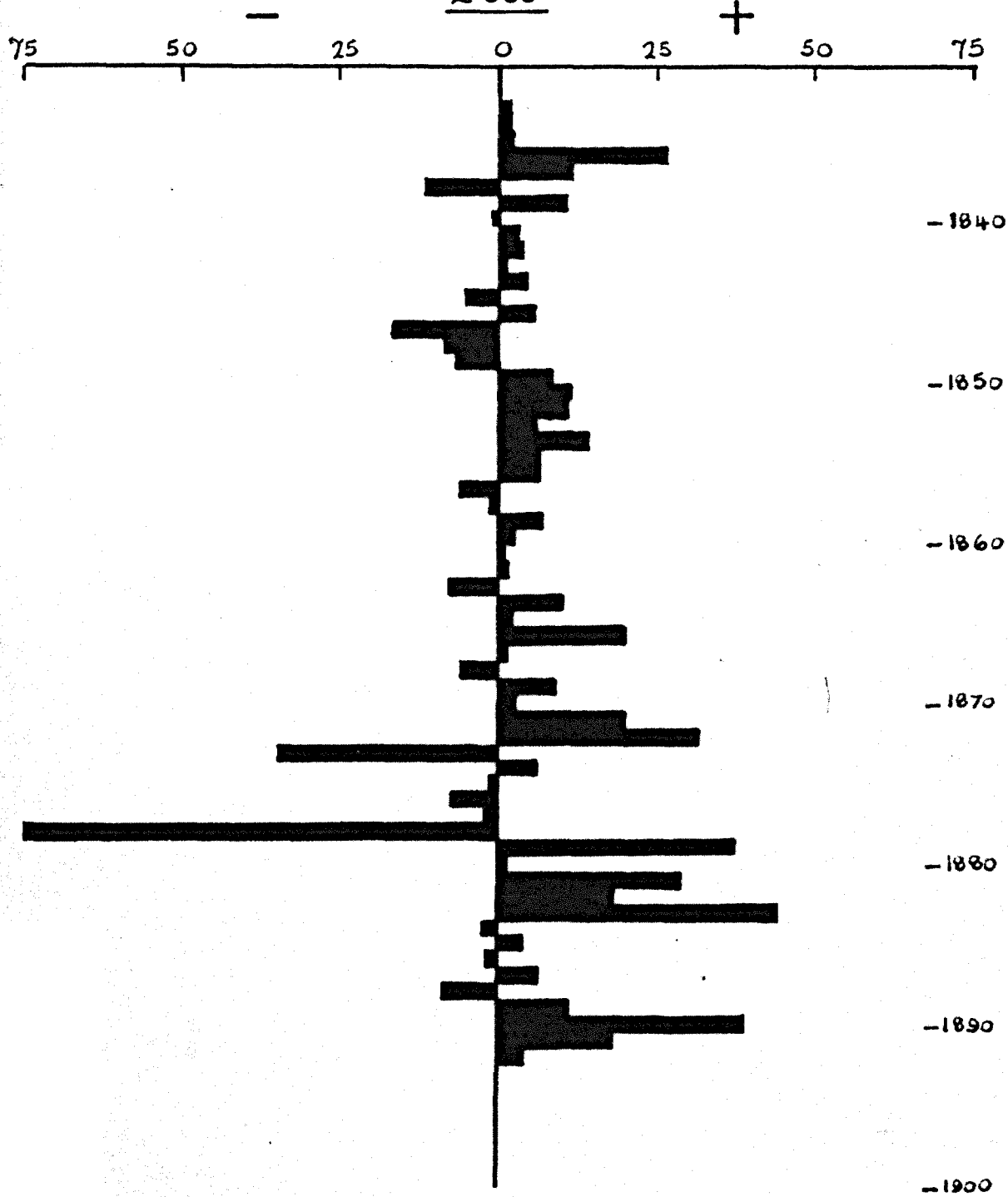
£ 000

Figure 9. Growth of Capital and Profits
(1832-92)



Source: Balances Book and Private
Ledgers.

Figure 10. Withdrawals from and additions to
£000 Capital, 1833-92



Source: Balances Book and
Private Ledgers

Table 23. Capital, Profits and Withdrawals, 1832-92

Year	(1) Capital £	(2) Changes in Capital £	(3) Interest on Capital £	(4) Profits £	(5) Rent £	(6) Partners' Drawings £
1832	41,234	1,477	2,061	3,800	1,600	- 2,784
1833	42,711	1,868	2,135	7,600	1,600	- 6,276
1834	44,579	2,293	2,228	1,600	1,600	65
1835	46,872	26,605	2,343	11,000	1,600	14,862
1836	73,477	11,941	3,673	14,400	1,600	- 4,532
1837	85,418	- 12,184	4,270	2,522	1,600	- 17,376
1838	73,234	10,432	3,661	7,400	1,600	971
1839	83,666	- 610	4,183	3,589	1,600	- 1,782
1840	83,056	2,750	4,152	3,600	1,600	- 3,402
1841	85,806	3,185	4,290	4,400	1,600	- 3,905
1842	88,991	473	4,449	3,351	1,600	- 5,727
1843	89,464	4,624	4,473	5,000	1,600	- 3,249
1844	94,088	- 5,225	4,704	7,200	1,600	- 15,529
1845	88,863	5,071	4,443	7,600	1,600	- 5,372
1846	93,934	- 17,037	4,696	3,600	1,600	- 23,733
1847	76,897	- 8,659	3,844	4,233	1,600	- 15,136
1848	68,238	- 7,272	3,411	7,800	1,600	- 16,883
1849	60,966	8,756	3,048	10,500	1,600	- 3,192
1850	69,722	10,380	3,486	10,500	1,600	- 2,006
1851	80,102	10,091	4,005	7,350	1,600	336
1852	90,193	5,442	4,509	10,000	1,600	- 7,467
1853	95,635	13,583	4,781	27,121	1,600	- 18,319
1854	109,218	6,116	5,460	27,411	1,600	- 31,271
1855	115,334	5,552	5,766	19,292	1,600	- 17,906
1856	120,886	- 6,798	6,044	14,762	1,600	- 26,004

Year	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1857	114,088	-	5,704	11,084	1,600	- 16,438
1858	112,838	- 1,250	5,641	16,171	2,500	- 13,219
1859	118,931	6,093	5,946	17,772	2,500	- 18,736
1860	121,413	2,482	6,070	18,984	2,500	-22,083
1861	121,884	471	6,094	15,828	2,500	- 18,749
1862	122,557	673	6,127	18,602	2,650	- 29,771
1863	114,865	- 7,692	5,734	22,458	2,650	- 15,685
1864	124,722	9,857	6,236	22,103	2,650	- 24,369
1865	126,042	1,320	6,302	23,740	2,650	- 7,931
1866	145,503	19,461	7,270	24,224	2,760	- 27,716
1867	146,521	1,018	7,326	21,979	2,760	- 32,080
1868	140,986	- 5,535	7,049	30,168	2,760	- 25,096
1869	150,347	9,361	7,517	26,293	2,760	- 27,654
1870	153,743	3,396	7,687	30,235	2,943	- 14,909
1871	173,813	20,070	8,695	36,290	2,943	- 19,720
1872	206,135	32,322	10,306	15,034	2,943	- 56,962
1873	171,570	- 34,565	8,578	24,281	5,573	- 23,342
1874	175,514	3,944	8,775	22,645	5,573	- 27,043
1875	175,318	- 196	8,765	17,332	5,930	- 27,300
1876	168,185	- 7,133	8,409	15,941	5,930	- 19,218
1877	167,387	- 798	8,369	18,732	5,930	- 95,613
1878	92,945	- 74,442	4,647	29,508	6,692	10,005
1879	111,960	37,518	5,598	32,712	6,692	- 30,592
1880	112,986	1,026	5,649	36,597	6,692	- 7,531
1881	141,009	28,023	7,050	34,743	6,692	- 16,887
1882	159,223	18,214	7,961	48,156	6,692	- 5,043
		44,382				

Year	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
1883	203,605	- 2,083	10,180	17,928	6,692	- 23,497
1884	201,522	4,833	10,076	14,708	6,692	- 13,259
1885	206,355	- 1,964	10,317	31,796	6,692	- 37,385
1886	204,391	7,143	10,219	29,071	6,692	- 24,455
1887	211,534	- 7,778	10,571	31,686	6,692	- 43,343
1888	203,756	12,216	10,187	27,056	6,692	- 18,335
1889	215,972	37,990	10,798	26,455	6,692	7,429
1890	253,962	17,919	12,698	39,382	6,692	- 27,469
1891	271,881	3,663	13,594	17,919	6,692	- 21,158
1892	275,544		13,777	3,663	6,692	-

Source: Balances Book and Private Ledgers

Table 24. Partners' Capital accounts, 1832-70

Year	John Hague Jr.	Edward Hague	Thomas Cook	Thomas Hague Cook	John Wormald	Percy Wormald	Frank Wormald	M/c Acct.	Other	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1832	13,991	6,516	4,199		5,000	11,527				41,233
1833	14,922	7,144	4,068		5,000	11,577				42,711
1834	16,919	8,767	4,702		5,000	11,611			30	47,029
1835	18,530	8,784	4,052		5,000	11,550			37	47,953
1836	25,439	15,823	8,334		5,000	19,458			273	74,027
1837	28,335	19,110	10,061		5,000	24,205			307	87,018
1838	22,304	13,216	10,080		5,000	23,609		9,081	323	82,313
1839	21,000	14,164	10,038			25,547		8,627	340	84,616
1840	21,000	13,803	10,080			24,980	5,605	9,081	357	84,906
1841	21,000	13,506	9,098			26,669	6,590	9,081	1,312	87,256
1842	21,000	14,308	9,537			27,631	7,084	9,081	1,410	90,051
1843	21,000	14,606	8,741			29,227	7,004	9,081	405	90,064
1844	21,000	15,668	12,558			29,046	7,509	9,081	426	95,288
1845	15,750	16,728	13,055			23,177	13,260	9,081	589	91,640
1846	15,750	18,464	14,704			23,058	14,331	9,081	617	96,005
1847	15,000	10,652	12,213			18,703	12,538	9,081	510	78,697
1848	15,000	12,075	14,140			21,664	16,419		1,540	80,838
1849	15,000	1,371	13,367			21,666	17,520		3,442	72,366
1850	15,000	1,142	15,521			21,675	19,870		4,614	77,822
1851	15,000	1,048	23,709			21,583	21,705		5,059	88,104
1852	15,000	1,050	23,139			21,700	23,216		6,961	91,066

Year	John Hague	Edward Hague Jr.	Thomas Cook	Thomas Hague Cook	John Wormald Jr.	Percy Wormald	Frank Wormald	John Walker	Other	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1853	...	...	...	...	...	no information	...	...	...	...
1854	15,000	1,000	30,413	4,876	5,005	21,783	25,808	...	5,333	109,218
1855	15,000	1,000	36,206	7,389	7,211	21,684	21,000	...	5,845	115,335
1856	15,000	1,000	40,182	9,165	9,230	21,000	21,000	...	4,309	120,886
1857	15,000	1,000	32,716	10,376	8,170	21,619	21,000	...	4,207	114,088
1858	15,000	1,000	33,913	10,784	7,869	20,000	20,000	...	4,272	112,838
1859	16,000		37,150	13,357	7,861	20,000	20,000	...	4,563	118,931
1860	16,000		45,179	15,173	12,413	14,000	14,000	...	4,648	121,413
1861	16,000		45,898	13,739	13,409	14,000	14,000	...	4,938	121,984
1862	16,000		39,755	20,970	12,596	14,000	14,000	...	5,236	122,557
1863	16,000		39,754	24,686	15,652	8,000	5,500	...	5,273	114,865
1864	16,000		39,754	30,059	19,980	8,000	5,500	...	5,429	124,722
1865	16,000		41,829	37,343	26,185			...	4,685	126,042
1866	16,000		36,903	46,147	31,864			10,246	4,343	145,503
1867	16,000		24,346	52,783	36,590			11,932	4,870	146,521
1868	16,000		10,230	59,151	37,067			13,595	4,943	140,986
1869	16,000			72,970	37,331			16,270	7,776	150,347
1870	16,000			70,083	43,366			18,487	5,807	153,743

Source: Balances Book and Private Ledgers

Note: The 'machinery account' was only recorded for ten years as a capital account. The 'other' account was held in the names of various younger members of the Cook, Wormald and related families. Some accounts were continued after the death or retirement of partners.

experiences. It is possible to trace the individual capital changes of the partners for the period 1832-70, and this is done in Table 24. In the early 'thirties, John Hague Junior and Edward Hague were steadily increasing their holdings, whilst Thomas Cook and Percy Wormald were maintaining their respective interests at approximately £4,000 and £11,000. The winding-up of the country bank in 1836 brought an influx of capital of nearly £15,000 into the partnership at the mills, the two Hagues and Percy Wormald seem to have had a larger investment in banking than Thomas Cook. (1) In 1838, John Hague Junior 'retired in favour of Frank Wormald' who became a partner with an initial capital of £5,605, probably as a result of the generosity of his mother who had inherited, upon the death of her husband, John Wormald, a sum of £5,000 which was the residue of a larger loan to the partners made in the 1820s. (2) In 1838 it was also agreed by the partners that:

No partner giving notice to leave the Business is to have power to withdraw the capital in less than two years without the remaining partners' consent. If the partnership continues to the end of six years, then each party takes his money as it becomes disengaged, that is, if no new partnership be founded. (3)

(1) See above, p. 373 .

(2) See above, p. 386 . John Wormald died in 1835.

(3) Balances Book, f. 130, 10 Jan. 1838.

John Hague Junior seems to have acted in the spirit of this agreement, running down his holdings relatively slowly from £28,000 to £15,000 in the ten years following his retirement from the partnership. He held his investment at this level until 1858 and thereafter it was increased to £16,000 and was retained at that figure until after his death in 1867.

Percy Wormald was re-investing his earnings in the firm, probably almost the entire proceeds, during the ten years after 1835, doubling his assets from £11,500 to £23,000. His zeal for capital building seems to have waned after 1846, but his earlier example seems to have infected Frank Wormald who more than trebled his capital between 1844 and 1854. Thomas Cook does not begin to accumulate with any regularity until the mid-'forties, but by 1851 he is the senior partner and the largest single capital holder with assets in the firm of over £23,000. In the following ten years he raised his capital holding to nearly twice that figure. He acquired the status of senior partner following the death of Edward Hague in 1847, an event which seems to have placed some financial pressure upon the partners owing to the rapid withdrawal of Edward Hague's capital in 1847-8, although this account was not finally closed until 1858. The agreement of ten years earlier, noted on the previous page, seems to have been allowed

to lapse by 1847 and in the autumn of that year the partners are seeking quick settlements of their trading affairs in order to conserve their cash resources:

Owing to, the death of our Mr. Hague, we are suddenly called upon to pay about £8,000 in several legacies - will you be so good as in a few days to send us a Bank Note for £500, or pay it to Smith, Payne and Company, our bankers in London? (1)

Thomas Hague Cook, the son of Thomas, joined the partnership in 1853, contributing £2,600 to the capital funds of the firm and, at the same time, John Wormald, the son of Percival Wormald was admitted with a like sum. By this time the firm had recovered from the capital drain occasioned by the demise of the last of the Hague family to be directly associated with the enterprise. This particular financial difficulty seems to have been avoided when Thomas Cook died in 1861. Frank Wormald died in 1863 and Percival Wormald retired in 1864. No perceptible effect upon the course of capital accumulation is traceable to these two events in the early 'sixties, chiefly because Thomas Cook's holdings were eventually taken over by his son, Thomas Hague Cook, also because the departure of the two elder Wormalds was compensated for by the introduction of a new partner. In 1866 John Walker,

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Messrs. D. Stuart and Company, Manchester, 20 Sept. 1847.

a blanket manufacturer in the Spen Valley was invited to join the partnership and his knowledge of the blanket trade together with an opening capital account of about £10,000 helped to strengthen the firm's resources following the loss of these three important partners. By 1870 Walker's capital holdings amounted to over £18,000.

Thomas Hague Cook and John Wormald Junior pursued a policy of capital building in the enterprise from the very first, accumulating steadily in the 'fifties by ploughing back their profits, and augmenting their respective totals vigourously in the 'sixties. By 1870, Thomas Hague Cook's account stood at a little over £70,000, whilst John Wormald Junior's holding was approximately £43,000. The former partner had acquired, it seems, the bulk of his father's former interest of £46,000.

At first sight the curve depicting capital growth in the 'seventies and 'eighties in Figure 9 seems to indicate an almost classic illustration of the 'great depression', but the major influence here is, again, the death of partners rather than the collapse of markets. Thomas Hague Cook and Percival Wormald both died in 1877 and this resulted in the withdrawal, within twelve months, of £74,000 or nearly 45 per cent. of the total capital invested in the firm. This was a serious blow to the financial stability of the enterprise, coming as it did in the most depressed year of the last quarter

of the nineteenth century, and only the most resilient of businesses could have stood the strain. The restriction of the firm's resources was relieved in a number of ways. The most obvious course open to the partners was to expedite the payment of debts outstanding and this was done with marked success. In 1877 the amounts owing to the partners at the end of the year in respect of goods supplied stood at £134,424, by the end of 1878 this total had been reduced to £65,318. (1) A second response to the crisis was the injection of new capital, to the amount of £57,518, by the surviving partners in 1878, whilst a third way out of the difficulty was provided by borrowing on the security of the firm's goodwill and trading reputation, and in the same year a sum of £55,565 was received from private creditors and repaid over the following ten years. This sum, however, was separated from partners' capital in the accounts. Large repayments were made in the years 1883-4 and the item finally disappears from the accounts in 1887. (2) The firm's financial experience

(1) See balance sheets in appendix to this chapter. This reduction was also brought about by a decline in general trading activity.

(2) *ibid.* There is no indication in the firm's records of the identity of these creditors and the loans were probably obtained from members of the Hague, Cook and Wormald families and contracted in an informal manner.

during these ten years illustrates the weakness and strength of the partnership form of economic organisation.

One of the most important items figuring in the accounts is that relating to rent. This stood at £1,600 from 1852 to 1857 and was paid to the Hague family as owners of the Dewsbury Mills Estate. ⁽¹⁾ Thomas Cook made a spirited effort to reduce this amount in the 1840s, but his efforts went unrewarded. ⁽²⁾ In 1857, as we have already seen, the partners decided to erect a new mill and this building was completed in 1858 and thereafter was 'rented' to the partnership, increasing the rental by £900. This sum was not an external payment like the £1,600 which was paid away to the owners of the basic premises and land, but it represented a book-keeping transaction between the partners themselves. However, it is included in the firm's accounts and can be traced to some extent in the individual accounts of the partners. The total rent of £2,500 was increased to £2,650 in 1862 following the erection of a new spinning mill, and the building extensions of the 'sixties and 'seventies further increased the rental. In 1866 the rent was increased by £110;

(1) The partners recouped £489 of this from their under-tenants.

(2) See above, p. 441.

in 1870 by a further £183; in 1874 an additional £1,057 was agreed upon following the erection of new power loom sheds and thirty-six cottages, and the rent of Ratcliffe Mills was fixed at £1,930. ⁽¹⁾ In 1878 the rent of the original Dewsbury Mills Estate was raised by £762, bringing the total rental to £6,692 where it remained as the annual charge until ⁽²⁾ 1892.

The profit figures shown in Table 23 for the period 1832-52 are estimated by Thomas Cook and are probably rounded totals which approximate closely to the actual calculations which were made each year and recorded in a ledger which has not survived. These profits are recorded 'gross' throughout the whole of the period, no account being taken of depreciation owing to the particular way in which machinery was purchased and installed in the mills. ⁽³⁾ The figures given for the years 1853-92 are the actual amounts stated in the yearly general balance sheets. The firm recorded a positive profit in every year of the period under review and, in general,

(1) Private Ledger, 1847-53, f. 26.

(2) Wormalds and Walker, Ltd., Legal Documents, parcel 2. Britannia Mills were brought into use by the partners in 1881, but there is no record of any arrangement about rent for these premises.

(3) See above, p. 514 .

the firm's experience seems to accord with the general trading fluctuations of the industry as a whole. (1) 1834 and 1837 were years of extremely low profits associated with the depression of the former year and the relapse encountered in the latter year following the 'boom' of 1835-6. The early 'forties were depressed, following the general experience of the trade and of the economy as a whole. 1843-5 registered some improvement and 1846-7 reflected the financial crisis, particularly the latter year when the partners suffered from the stoppage of the house of Gorton Hodges and Company. Of the amount of £4,751 owing to them by that house, the partners received £59. (2) The late 'forties were improving in profitability, but 1851 was dull, following a good year in 1850. The years 1853-4 were markedly prosperous, and then a steady trend of profitability sets in which continues until 1871, only slightly disturbed by falls in 1857 and 1867 connected with the crises of 1857 and 1866. The depression of the last quarter of the nineteenth century is well engraved on the firm's profit profile in Figure 9, particularly when seen in relation to the growth of invested capital over this period.

(1) See below, p. 806 .

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald, Letter Book No. 70, 9 Aug. 1847.

There was no myth about the 'falling rate of profit' as far as this enterprise was concerned. 1872-7 and 1883-4 were the lowest years and 1892, if the figure can be relied upon, was very nearly the most unprofitable year of the whole period. (1) By contrast, the years 1882, 1885, 1887 and 1890 were particularly favourable for manufacturing and trading.

In drawing up their general balances the partners seem only to have taken account of their current assets and current liabilities and little information is available on their fixed assets. When the partners built new premises, which as we have seen they were obliged to do owing to the refusal of the proprietors of the Dewsbury Mills Estate to extend the original provision of 'room and power', they invariably opened a new account to record the financing and eventual redemption of the investment; one such example survives in the partners' accounts for the period 1838-47 and is reproduced in Table 24. This procedure was also followed when purchasing new equipment. Unfortunately, these accounts were not recorded systematically in one ledger and the bulk of the information dealing with this important aspect of the partnership's activities is not

(1) This year does not appear to have been seriously depressed for the trade in general and it is probably more correctly explained by the partners preparing to wind up their arrangements preparatory to embarking upon a limited liability basis.

available. Some scattered references here and there in the four ledgers inform us that:

It is hereby agreed to erect a New Mills on the Dewsbury Mills Estate ... the redemption of the annual interest on the cost, and afterwards of the entire cost, to be by the earnings of the Mill in full, and before otherways applied ... it is further agreed that in the case of the retiring from the partnership, or death of any of the partners, the interest of such partner dying or retiring shall not cease in the earnings of the Mill, until the entire capital cost of the Building, Engines, Water Wheel or Wheels be redeemed ... if they desire such interest to continue to them or theirs ... Feb. 1857 (1)

In the latter part of the nineteenth century the fixed capital additions seem to have been financed by one or two of the partners rather than, as in the 1857 case, by the partnership as a whole. In 1870 it was agreed that:

... the balance of the New Stove Account No. 1, when complete, be transferred to the private account of Thomas Hague Cook from January 1, 1870 and that $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the amount be paid as rent by the firm from that date ... also that the sum of £2,000 be transferred to the New Stove Account No. 2, which shall be written off by the firm at the rate of £200 per annum, and in case of any dissolution of partnership the balance shall be taken as a good debt. Jan. 1870. (2)

(1) Private Ledger, 1847-53, f. 3.

(2) *ibid.* f. 22.

A similar arrangement was made in 1871 in connection with the financing of the new Weaving Shed and offices, the outlay, probably about £9,000, being made by Thomas Hague Cook. In the same year the building of the new Boiler House and Dryhouse and the alterations to the Mechanic's Shop were undertaken by the firm and the cost 'written off in five years at the rate of one-tenth part per year out of the profits of the business ...' ⁽¹⁾ In this connection it is of interest to note that the partners do not seem to have followed any regular or consistent policy in respect of provision for depreciation. In any case, the bulk of the fixed capital which they were using was on hire from the proprietors and when it needed replacement the partners wrangled with the landlords. ⁽²⁾ They seem to have agreed to contribute to a repair fund in the early 'sixties and in 1862 there is an item of £150 credited to the proprietors for this purpose. ⁽³⁾

The cost of erecting and equipping Ratcliffe Mills in 1874 amounted to £25,721 and this was borne in equal shares by John Wormald and John Walker, the usual rent of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum being charged to the firm for the use

(1) *ibid.* f. 24.

(2) See above, p. 441.

(3) Private Ledgers 1847-53, f. 13.

(1)
of this productive investment. In the same year Thomas Hague Cook provided £9,327 for the cost of the new Power Loom Shed and a further £7,304 in respect of the Canal Cottages built at the same time to house 36 families on the Dewsbury Mills Estate. The rent provision followed the standard form. (2)
In the following year a major building cycle seems to have been completed for the firm in the provision of the new Wool Warehouse, Fulling Mill, Finishing Room, Blanket Warehouse, Gas and Seak (3) Works, Dyehouse, Chimney, Oil Warehouse, Tank and Stoving Shed. The total cost of all this was borne by (4)
the partners together.

Table 25 shows the composition of the Current Assets of the firm for the period 1853-92. The Debts Outstanding to the partners are not shown in any detail and the overall figure probably also included Cash held at the Bank, for no Cash is shown in the firm's accounts until the last two years

(1) *ibid.* f. 26

(2) *ibid.*

(3) 'Seak' was the sediment resulting from the wool scouring process. After treatment it was used for manure.
See above, p. 497 .

(4) *ibid.*, f. 27.

of the period when it amounted to 3.8 and 5.4 per cent. of the total assets. The percentage of total assets represented by Debts was sharply reduced in the period after 1877, following the deaths of Thomas Hague Cook and Percival Wormald, and two other factors probably operated upon the firm's policy to keep this percentage low in the 'eighties. First, the general business climate of the period, which would tend to induce caution in extending credit, and second, the decision to wind up the partnership was probably taken some time before 1892 and the firm's debts outstanding would therefore be controlled carefully in order to ease the transference of the firm's affairs on to a joint stock basis.

The Manufacturing stock is not shown in its separate
(1)
categories, and the only important point to note here is that it

- (1) The Manufacturing stock included raw wool and yarn, finished blankets and blanket cloth, and other kinds of finished fabrics. It also included Oil and Soap, and sometimes sundry items such as Stamps, but there is no consistent analysis of the stock pursued by the partners over the period.

The information relating to raw wool, which formed part of the Manufacturing stock, is tabulated in Table 27, below for the period 1834-62.

Table 25. COMPOSITION OF CURRENT ASSETS, 1853-92.

	<u>1853</u>		<u>1854</u>		<u>1855</u>		<u>1856</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	105,165	67.9	110,407	70.3	113,590	70.8	102,738	64.9
Manufacturing stock:	45,158	29.1	43,082	27.4	43,430	26.6	51,320	32.4
Cloth stock:	4,395	3.0	3,583	2.3	3,310	2.6	4,044	2.7
TOTAL:	154,718		157,072		160,330		158,102	

	<u>1857</u>		<u>1858</u>		<u>1859</u>		<u>1860</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	106,723	69.7	99,787	71.5	111,603	70.9	116,176	72.0
Manufacturing stock:	42,821	27.9	36,102	25.9	41,494	26.4	40,688	25.2
Cloth stock:	3,545	2.4	3,693	2.6	4,233	2.7	4,439	2.8
TOTAL	153,089		139,592		157,330		161,303	

	<u>1861</u>		<u>1862</u>		<u>1863</u>		<u>1864</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	133,408	72.0	129,987	73.2	118,591	72.1	120,749	73.2
Manufacturing stock:	49,467	26.7	45,769	25.8	44,648	27.1	43,466	26.3
Cloth Stock:	2,248	1.3	1,853	1.0	1,251	.8	878	.5
TOTAL	185,123		177,609		164,490		165,093	

	<u>1865</u>		<u>1866</u>		<u>1867</u>		<u>1868</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	110,048	67.5	129,043	70.6	126,509	70.2	118,147	64.9
Manufacturing stock:	53,112	32.5	53,741	29.4	53,827	29.8	63,722	35.1
TOTAL	163,160		182,784		180,336		181,869	

	<u>1869</u>		<u>1870</u>		<u>1871</u>		<u>1872</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	127,072	67.6	129,048	62.8	149,437	65.9	152,997	65.1
Manufacturing stock:	60,991	32.4	76,634	37.2	77,503	34.1	82,275	34.9
TOTAL	188,063		205,682		226,940		235,372	

	<u>1873</u>		<u>1874</u>		<u>1875</u>		<u>1876</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	154,988	62.6	158,097	64.1	157,152	61.2	141,224	57.1
Manufacturing stock:	92,494	37.4	88,413	35.9	99,597	38.9	105,945	42.9
TOTAL	247,482		246,510		256,749		247,169	

	<u>1877</u>		<u>1878</u>		<u>1879</u>		<u>1880</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	134,424	59.0	65,318	31.0	66,549	31.1	80,849	30.7
Manufacturing stock:	93,564	41.0	88,701	42.1	93,267	43.7	122,843	46.8
Other stock:			2,005	.9	1,869	.8	1,856	.7
Machinery:			54,785	26.0	52,018	24.4	57,172	21.8
TOTAL	228,488		210,809		213,703		262,720	

	<u>1881</u>		<u>1882</u>		<u>1883</u>		<u>1884</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	79,714	28.7	98,799	32.5	79,857	29.6	70,492	28.9
Manufacturing stock:	140,667	50.7	149,661	49.2	138,427	51.4	126,500	51.8
Other stock:	1,380	.7	1,622	.5	1,530	.6	1,651	.6
Machinery:	55,114	19.9	53,961	17.8	49,511	18.4	45,686	18.7
TOTAL	276,875		304,043		269,325		244,329	

	<u>1885</u>		<u>1886</u>		<u>1887</u>		<u>1888</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	104,007	40.0	92,614	36.5	88,859	33.9	80,098	31.8
Manufacturing stock:	110,727	42.6	118,071	46.5	132,953	50.8	133,225	53.1
Other stock:	1,514	.6	1,991	.8	2,081	.8	1,343	.5
Machinery:	43,866	16.3	40,983	16.2	38,106	14.5	36,673	14.6
Cash:								
TOTAL	260,114		253,659		261,999		251,339	

	<u>1889</u>		<u>1890</u>		<u>1891</u>		<u>1892</u>	
	£	%	£	%	£	%	£	%
Debts outstanding:	87,060	33.4	68,727	22.8	62,153	20.9	84,836	28.3
Manufacturing stock:	135,691	51.9	159,808	53.0	148,101	49.9	124,469	41.5
Other stock:	1,417	.5	1,731	.6	1,936	.6	1,820	.6
Machinery:	37,238	14.2	71,281	23.6	73,372	24.3	72,743	24.2
Cash:					11,609	3.8	15,878	5.4
TOTAL	261,406		301,547		297,171		299,756	

Source: Balances Book and Private Ledgers.

Note: The Manufacturing Stock includes finished blankets and cloths and some sundry items, Oil, Soap, stamps, as well as raw wool and yarn.

Other Stock was probably materials used in the maintenance of the machinery.

enlarges as a proportion of total assets in the late 'seventies and 'eighties, partly as a counterpart of the fall in debts outstanding, and partly as a response to the general trading situation of the times when markets were sluggish and the firm probably 'made for stock' more goods than would normally be manufactured without orders as a means of keeping their labour force together and making some contribution towards the stabilisation of the employment situation. The cloth stock was ^{not} ~~very~~ a very large item in the partners' accounts. It represented the firm's interest in the fine cloth trade which was always very marginal and it declined rapidly after 1860 and disappeared altogether in 1864. (1)

Machinery is brought into the firm's assets in 1878. Normally, this would be regarded by the accountant as a fixed rather than a quick asset, but as the partners were leasing their main fixed equipment from landlords they regarded any machinery or buildings which they installed as readily realisable in the event of a dissolution of partnership on the grounds that they would recoup the cost either from the proprietors or from succeeding tenant of the Estate. The increase of approximately £34,000 in this account in 1890 reflects the cost of new machinery installations, probably

(1) See below, p. 734.

at Britannia Mills, but it is not possible to support this
 contention with much detailed information. (1)

The Other Stock which first appears in 1878, was never a very significant item and it probably represented materials and equipment used in the general maintenance of the plant, which, by this time, would have become an important ancillary to the efficient operation of the enterprise.

In summary, the financial fragments which are available tend to reflect the general progress of the firm which is more clearly indicated in the correspondence books and in the surviving physical evidence of the growth of productive
 capital. (2) The four ledgers are also useful in shedding some light on the changing personnel of the partnership during the sixty years.

(1) See above, p. .

(2) See above, pp. , and below, pp.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VIII

- (i) Partners' Capital accounts, 1932-70
- (ii) General Balances, 1853-92

1832

Dec. 31

To Balance: Capital
in the House: 41,233.13. 4.
41,233.13. 4.

1832

Dec. 31

John Hague: 13,991. 8. 9.
Thomas Cook: 4,199. 7. 9.
Edward Hague: 6,515.14. 4.
P. Wormald: 11,527. 2. 6.
Bank: 5,000. 0. 0.
41,233.13. 4.

1833 Partners

Dr.

Dec. 31

To Balance: Capital
in the House: 42,711. 4. 3.
42,711. 4. 3.

1833

Dec. 31

John Hague: 14,921.17. 4.
Edward Hague: 7,143.17. 3.
Thomas Cook: 4,068. 6.11.
P. Wormald: 11,577. 2. 9.
Bank by Mr.Wormald: 5,000. 0. 0.
42,711. 4. 3.

Cf.

1834

Dec. 31

To Building
Account: 2,450. 0. 0.
To Balance: Capital in
the House: 44,578.12. 1.
47,028.12. 1.

1834

Dec. 31

J.S. Hague: 30. 0. 0.
John Hague: 16,918.11. 2.
Thomas Cook: 4,702. 9. 3.
Edward Hague: 8,766.18. 6.
P. Wormald: 11,610.13. 2.
Bank by Mr.Wormald: 5,000. 0. 0.
47,028.12. 1.

<u>1835</u>	Partners	Dr.	<u>1835</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31			Dec. 31	
To Building Account:		1,081.13. 6.	J.S. Hague:	32. 2. 6.
			John Hague:	18,530. 8. 1.
			Thomas Cook:	4,052. 8. 2.
			Edward Hague:	8,783.14. 2.
			P. Wormald:	11,550. 0. 5.
			Bank by Mr.Wormald:	<u>5,000. 0. 0.</u>
To Balance: Capital in the House:		<u>46,872. 05. 9.</u>		47,948.13. 4.
			J.S. Hague:	<u>5. 5.11.</u>
		47,953.19. 3.		47,953.19. 3.

<u>1836</u>			<u>1836</u>	
Dec. 31			Dec. 31	
To Percival Wormald's Account:		550. 0. 0.	John Hague:	25,438.18. 3.
			Thomas Cook:	8,334. 3. 5.
			Edward Hague:	15,522.12. 0.
			P, Wormald:	11,550. 0. 0.
			" "	7,907.13. 0.
			John Wormald:	5,000. 0. 0.
To Balance: Capital in the House:		<u>73,477. 7. 7.</u>	Thos. H. Cook:	169. 6. 6.
			Ellen Cook:	<u>104.14. 5.</u>
		74,027. 7. 7.		74,027. 7. 7.

<u>1837</u>			<u>1837</u>	
Dec. 31			Dec. 31	
Building A/c:		1,600. 0. 0.	John Hague:	28,334.17. 7.
			Thomas Cook:	10,061.15. 7.
			Edward Hague:	19,110. 5. 6.
			P. Wormald:	12,655. 0. 0.
			" "	11,550. 0. 0.
			Mrs. Wormald:	5,000. 0. 0.
To Balance: Capital in the House:		<u>85,418. 9. 7.</u>	Thos. H. Cook:	187. 4.10.
			Ellen Cook:	<u>119. 6. 1.</u>
		87,018. 9. 7.		87,018. 9. 7.

<u>1838</u>	Dr.	<u>1838</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
New Buildings			
Account:	1,300. 0. 0.	John Hague:	22,303.15. 3.
		Thomas Cook:	10,080. 0. 0.
		Edward Hague:	13,215.16. 7.
		P. Wormald:	12,059. 3. 4.
		" "	11,550. 0. 0.
		Mrs. Wormald:	5,000. 0. 0.
To Balance: Capital in		Thos. H. Cook:	197.12.11.
the House:	<u>73,231.13. 6.</u>	Ellen Cook:	<u>125. 5. 5.</u>
	74,531.13. 6.		74,531,13. 6.
			<u>73,231.13. 6.</u>
		Valuation of	
		Machinery:	<u>9,080.18. 5.</u>
	82,312.11.11.		82,312.11.11.

<u>1839</u>		<u>1839</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
New Buildings			
unredeemed:	950. 0. 0.	John Hague:	21,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	10,037.19. 1.
		Edward Hague:	14,063.16. 4.
		P. Wormald:	13,997. 6. 1.
		" "	11,550. 0. 0.
		Mrs. Wormald:	5,000. 0. 0.
To Balance: Capital in		Thos. H. Cook:	207.10. 7.
the House:	<u>83,666. 2. 5.</u>	Ellen Cook:	132.11.11.
	84,616. 2. 5.	Machinery:	<u>8,626.18. 5.</u>
			84,616. 2. 5.

<u>1840</u>	Dr.	<u>1840</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
New Buildings		John Hague:	21,000. 0. 0.
unredeemed: 1,850. 0. 0.		Thomas Cook:	10,079.12. 9.
		Edward Hague:	13,802.19. 0.
		P. Wormald:	11,550. 0. 0.
		" "	13,430. 0. 3.
		F. Wormald:	5,605. 9. 3.
		Thos. H. Cook:	217.18. 1.
To Balance: Capital in		Ellen Cook:	139. 4. 6.
the House: <u>83,056. 2. 3.</u>		Machinery account: <u>9,080.18. 5.</u>	
	84,906. 2. 3.		84,906. 2. 3.

<u>1841</u>		<u>1841</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31.	
New Buildings		John Hague:	21,000. 0. 0.
unredeemed: 1,450. 0. 0.		Thomas Cook:	9,097.12.10.
		Edward Hague:	13,505.15. 9.
		P. Wormald:	11,550. 0. 0.
		" "	15,119. 9. 4.
		F. Wormald:	6,590. 0. 2.
		Thos. H. Cook:	367.10. 0.
		Ellen Cook:	315. 0. 0.
To Balance: Capital in		Fanny Cook:	315. 0. 0.
the House: <u>85,806. 6. 6.</u>		Mary Cook:	315. 0. 0.
	87,256. 6. 6.	Machinery Account: <u>9,080.18. 5.</u>	
			87,256. 6. 6.

<u>1842</u>		<u>1842</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
New Buildings		John Hague:	21,000. 0. 0.
unredeemed: 1,060. 0. 0.		Thomas Cook:	9,537. 1. 9.
		Edward Hague:	14,308. 9.10.
		P. Wormald:	11,550. 0. 0.
		" "	16,081. 1. 7.
		F. Wormald:	7,083.15. 5.
		Thos. H. Cook:	387.15. 6.
		Ellen Cook:	330.15. 0.
		Fanny Cook:	330.15. 0.
		Mary Cook:	330.15. 0.
To Balance: Capital in		Jane Cook:	15.15. 0.
the House: <u>88,990.19. 6.</u>		Sarah Cook:	15.15. 0.
	90,050.19. 6.	Machinery Account: <u>9,080.18. 5.</u>	
			90,050.19. 6.

<u>1843</u> Dec. 31	Dr.	<u>1843</u> Dec. 31	Cr.
Buildings unredeemed:	600. 0. 0.	John Hague:	21,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	8,741. 5. 5.
		Edward Hague:	14,605.15. 8.
		P. Wormald:	11,550. 0. 0.
		" "	17,677. 7. 9.
		Thos. H. Cook:	405. 3. 4.
To Balance: Capital in the House:	<u>89,464. 3. 6.</u>	F. Wormald:	7,003.12.11.
		Machinery Account:	<u>9,080.18. 5.</u>
	90,064. 3. 6.		90,064. 3. 6.

<u>1844</u> Dec. 31		<u>1844</u> Dec. 31	
Building A/C:	1,200. 0. 0.	John Hague:	21,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	12,557.11. 5.
		Edward Hague:	15,667.16.10.
		P. Wormald:	11,550. 0. 0.
		" "	17,495.12. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	426. 9. 3.
To Balance: Capital in the House:	<u>94,087.15. 0.</u>	F. Wormald:	7,509. 7. 1.
		Machinery Account:	<u>9,080.18. 5.</u>
	95,287.15. 0.		95,287.15. 0.

<u>1845</u> Dec. 31		<u>1845</u> Dec. 31	
Buildings:	600. 0. 0.	John Hague:	15,750. 0. 0.
Woolley House:	571.10. 3.	Thomas Cook:	13,055. 0. 2.
Weaving Shop:	1,605. 6. 6.	Edward Hague:	16,727.16. 1.
		P. Wormald:	6,425. 0. 0.
		" "	16,752. 2. 8.
		Thos. H. Cook:	447.15. 8.
		Ellen Cook:	13. 2. 6.
		F. Wormald:	13,259.18. 1.
To Balance: Capital in the House:	<u>88,863. 7.11.</u>	Machinery Account:	9,080.18. 5.
		Owners' money unpaid	<u>128.11. 1.</u>
	91,640. 4. 8.		91,640. 4. 8.

<u>1846</u>	Dr.	<u>1846</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
Woolley House:	571.10. 3.	John Hague:	15,750. 0. 0.
Weaving Shop:	1,500. 0. 0.	Thomas Cook:	14,704. 1. 7.
		Edward Hague:	18,464. 3. 2.
		P. Wormald:	6,300. 0. 0.
		" "	16,757.10. 9.
		F. Wormald:	14,330.17.11.
		Thos. H. Cook:	475. 6. 7.
		Ellen Cook:	13.15. 7.
To Balance: Capital in		Machinery Account:	9,080.18. 5.
in the House:	<u>93,933.14.10.</u>	Owners' money:	<u>128.11. 1.</u>
	96,005. 5. 1.		96,005. 5. 1.

<u>1847</u>		<u>1847</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
Woolley House:	300. 0. 0.	John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
New Weaving Shop:	1500. 0. 0.	Thomas Cook:	12,213. 9. 7.
		Edward Hague:	509. 6. 3.
		" "	10,142. 9. 3.
		P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
		" "	12,703. 4. 8.
		F. Wormald:	12,537.17. 2.
		Thos. H. Cook:	500. 3. 4.
To Balance: Capital in		Ellen Cook:	9. 7. 0.
the House:	<u>76,896.15. 8.</u>	Machinery Account:	<u>9,080.18. 5.</u>
	78,696.15. 8.		78,696.15. 8.

<u>1848</u>		<u>1848</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
Woolley House:	300. 0. 0.	John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
Weaving Shop:	1,300. 0. 0.	Thomas Cook:	14,140. 4. 7.
Machinery:	11,000. 0. 0.	Edward Hague:	1,932. 3. 8.
		P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
		" "	15,663.12. 9.
		Thos. H. Cook:	527. 5. 3.
		Ellen Cook:	340.16. 5.
		Mary Cook:	346.11. 1.
To, Balance: Capital in		Fanny Cook:	325.15. 1.
the House:	<u>68,237.14. 6.</u>	Edward Hague:	10,142. 9. 3.
	80,837.14. 6.	F. Wormald:	<u>16,418.16. 5.</u>
			80,837.14. 6.

<u>1849</u>	Dr.	<u>1849</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
Woolley House:	300. 0. 0.	John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
Weaving Shop:	1,100. 0. 0.	Thomas Cook:	13,367. 7. 0.
Machinery:	10,000. 0. 0.	P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
		" "	15,665.10.10.
		Edward Hague:	1,370.12.11.
		F. Wormald:	17,520. 8. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	1,013.12. 6.
		Ellen Cook:	812.14.11.
To, Balance: Capital in		Mary Cook:	818.12. 8.
the House:	<u>60,965.17. 5.</u>	Fanny Cook:	<u>796.18. 7.</u>
	72,365.17. 5.		72,365.17. 5.

<u>1850</u>		<u>1850</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
Woolley House - all		John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
redeemed:		Thomas Cook:	15,521. 3.10.
Weaving Shop:	1,100. 0. 0.	Edward Hague:	1,142. 5. 2.
Machinery:	7,000. 0. 0.	P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
		" "	15,675. 3. 5.
		F. Wormald:	19,869.13.11.
		Thos. H. Cook:	1,314. 6. 1.
		Ellen Cook:	1,103. 7. 8.
To Balance: Capital in		Mary Cook:	1,109.11. 3.
the House:	<u>69,722. 6. 9.</u>	Fanny Cook:	<u>1,086.15. 5.</u>
	77,822. 6. 9.		77,822. 6. 9.

<u>1851</u>		<u>1851</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
Woolley House:	202.13. 5.	John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
Weaving Shop:	800. 0. 0.	Thomas Cook:	23,708.19. 5.
Machinery:	7,000. 0. 0.	P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
		" "	15,583. 5. 8.
		Edward Hague:	1,048. 0. 0.
		F. Wormald:	21,705. 6. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	1,670.14. 0.
		Ellen Cook:	1,137.17. 8.
		Mary Cook:	1,126.11. 8.
To, Balance: Capital in		Fanny Cook:	1,087. 7. 5.
the House:	<u>80,101.12. 3.</u>	Sarah Kitby:	<u>36. 3.10.</u>
	88,104. 5. 8.		88,104. 5. 8.

<u>1852</u>	Dr.	<u>1852</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
Weaving Shop:	700. 0. 0.	John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
Warping Shop:	155.19. 5.	Thomas Cook:	23,138.13. 5.
To Mary, Fanny, & Ellen Cook:	17.10. 0.	Edward Hague:	1,050. 0. 0.
		P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
		" "	15,699.12. 5.
		F. Wormald:	23,215.15. 7.
		Thos. H. Cook:	1,806.14. 8.
		Ellen Cook:	1,528.11. 8.
		MarynCook:	1,533.16. 3.
		Fanny Cook:	1,521. 0. 7.
		Sarah Kitby:	46.18.11.
To Balance: Capital in the House:	<u>90,192.14. 1.</u>	Martha Wormald:	<u>525. 0. 0.</u>
	91,066. 3. 6.		91,066. 3. 6.

<u>1853</u>		<u>1853</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
		Detailed information not available	
Capital in the House:	<u>195,635. 1.11.</u>		<u>195,635. 1.11.</u>

<u>1854</u>		<u>1854</u>	
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
		John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	30,413. 3. 5.
		Edward Hague:	1,050. 0. 0.
		P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
		" "	15,782.13. 8.
		F. Wormald:	25,808. 7. 6.
		Thos. H. Cook:	4,875.10.11.
		John Wormald, Jr.:	5,005. 4. 5.
		Ellen Cook:	1,552.16. 3.
		Mary Cook:	1,585.10. 0.
		Fanny Cook:	1,530.10. 7.
		Sarah Bibby	51.15. 0.
General Balance:	<u>109,217.11. 0.</u>	Martha Wormald	<u>611.19. 3.</u>
	109,217.11. 0.		109,217.11. 0.

1855
Dec. 31

Dr.

1855
Dec. 31

Cr.

General

Balance: 115,334.17.10.

115,334.17.10.

John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
Thomas Cook:	36,206. 7. 2.
Edward Hague:	1,000. 0. 0.
P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
" "	15,683.14. 1.
F. Wormald:	21,000. 0. 0.
Thos. H. Cook:	7,389. 6. 1.
John Wormald, Jr.:	7,210.13.10.
Ellen Cook:	1,666. 0. 6.
Mary Cook:	1,707.12. 6.
Fanny Cook:	1,644. 6. 3.
Sarah Bibby	54. 6. 9.
Martha Wormald:	605. 0. 0.
Corbett's children:	104. 6. 3.
Fanny Wormald:	<u>63. 4. 5.</u>

115,334.17.10.

1856
Dec. 31

1856
Dec. 31

General

Balance: 120,886. 3. 6.

120,886. 3. 6.

John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
Thomas Cook:	40,182. 5. 6.
Edward Hague:	1,000. 0. 0.
P. Wormald:	6,000. 0. 0.
" "	15,000. 0. 0.
F. Wormald:	21,000. 0. 0.
Thos. H. Cook:	9,164.14. 7.
John Wormald, Jr.:	9,229.15.11.
Mary Cook:	1,731. 4.11.
Fanny Cook:	1,643.17. 1.
Sarah Bibby:	82. 1. 1.
Martha Wormald:	661. 1. 6.
Corbett's children:	114.15. 4.
Fanny Wormald:	<u>66. 7. 7.</u>

120,886. 3. 6.

1857
Dec. 31

Dr.

1857
Dec. 31

Cr.

		John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	32,716.13. 5.
		Edward Hague:	1,000. 0. 0.
		P. Wormald:	15,618.15. 0.
		" "	6,000. 0. 0.
		F. Wormald:	21,000. 0. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	10,375.19. 2.
		John Wormald, Jr.:	8,170. 7. 6.
		Mary Cook:	1,743. 2. 6.
		Fanny Cook:	1,618. 2.11.
		Martha Wormald:	649. 7.10.
General		Corbett's children:	125.13. 7.
Balance:	<u>114,087.15.10.</u>	Fanny Wormald:	<u>69.13.11.</u>
	114,087.15.10.		114,087.15.10.

1858
Dec. 31

1858
Dec. 31

		John Hague:	15,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	33,912.18. 0.
		Edward Hague:	1,000. 0. 0.
		P. Wormald:	20,000. 0. 0.
		F. Wormald:	20,000. 0. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	10,783.15.11.
		John Wormald, Jr.:	7,869. 8. 3.
		Mary Cook:	1,763. 3. 6.
		Fanny Cook:	1,631.16. 7.
		Martha Wormald:	671.18.11.
General		Corbett's children:	131.19. 3.
Balance:	<u>112,838. 4. 0.</u>	Fanny Wormald:	<u>73. 3. 7.</u>
	112,838. 4. 0.		112,838. 4. 0.

1859
Dec. 31

Dr.

1859
Dec. 31

Cr.

General

Balance: 118,930.16. 4.

118,930.16. 4.

John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
Thomas Cook:	37,150. 6. 7.
P. Wormald:	20,000. 0. 0.
F. Wormald:	20,000. 0. 0.
Thos. H. Cook:	13,357. 8. 1.
John Wormald:	7,861. 4. 1.
Mary Cook:	1,800. 4. 8.
Fanny Cook:	1,641. 6. 5.
Martha Wormald:	680.10. 9.
Corbett's children:	362.18.10.
Fanny Wormald:	<u>76.16.11.</u>

118,930.16. 4.

1860
Dec. 31

1860
Dec. 31

General

Balance: 121,412.12.11.

121,412.12.11.

John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
Thomas Cook:	45,178.18. 5.
P. Wormald:	14,000. 0. 0.
F. Wormald:	14,000. 0. 0.
Thos. H. Cook:	15,173. 9. 7.
John Wormald:	12,412.11. 9.
Mary Cook:	1,834. 3. 3.
Fanny Cook:	1,652.18. 3.
Martha Wormald:	698.16. 3.
Corbett's children:	381. 1. 8.
Fanny Wormald:	<u>80.13. 9.</u>

121,412.12.11.

<u>1861</u> Dec. 31	Dr.	<u>1861</u> Dec. 31	Cr.
		John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	45,897.19. 0.
		P. Wormald:	14,000. 0. 0.
		F. Wormald:	14,000. 0. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	13,739.11. 1.
		John Wormald:	13,408.12. 8.
		Mary Cook:	1,864. 1. 1.
		Fanny Cook:	1,653. 0. 4.
		Martha Wormald:	733.15. 0.
		Corbett's children:	400. 2. 9.
		Fanny Wormald:	84.14. 5.
General		John Wormald's children:	202. 3. 9.
Balance:	<u>121,984. 0. 1.</u>		
	121,984. 0. 1.		121,984. 0. 1.

<u>1862</u> Dec. 31	Dr.	<u>1862</u> Dec. 31	Cr.
		John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	39,754.11. 0.
		P. Wormald:	14,000. 0. 0.
		F. Wormald:	14,000. 0. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	20,970. 9.11.
		John Wormald:	12,596. 3. 1.
		Mary Cook:	1,872.15.11.
		Fanny Cook:	1,640. 6. 4.
		Martha Wormald:	544. 7.11.
		Corbett's children:	420. 2.11.
		Fanny Wormald:	520. 7.11.
General		J. Wormald's children:	238. 2. 0.
Balance:	<u>122,557. 7. 0.</u>		
	122,557. 7. 0.		122,557. 7. 0.

1863
Dec. 31

Dr.

1863
Dec. 31

Cr.

		John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	39,754.11. 0.
		P. Wormald:	8,000. 0. 0.
		F. Wormald:	5,500. 0. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	24,685.11. 8.
		John Wormald:	15,652.10. 4.
		Mary Cook:	1,920.12. 1.
		Fanny Cook:	1,650. 5.11.
		Martha Wormald:	571.12. 4.
		Corbett's children:	441. 3. 1.
		Fanny Wormald:	546. 8. 4.
General		J. Wormald's children:	142. 8. 5.
Balance:	<u>114,865. 3. 2.</u>		
	114,865. 3. 2.		114,865. 3. 2.

1864
Dec. 31

1864
Dec. 31

		John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
		Thomas Cook:	39,754.11. 0.
		P. Wormald:	8,000. 0. 0.
		F. Wormald:	5,500. 0. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	30,058.13.10.
		John Wormald:	19,980. 1. 2.
		Mary Cook:	1,934.19. 5.
		Fanny Cook:	1,650. 8. 2.
		Martha Wormald:	600. 3.11.
		Corbett's children:	463. 4. 3.
		Fanny Wormald:	573.14. 9.
General		J. Wormald's children:	206. 8. 3.
Balance:	<u>124,722. 4. 9.</u>		
	124,722. 4. 9.		124,722. 4. 9.

1865
Dec. 31

Dr.

1865
Dec. 31

Cr.

John Hague: 16,000. 0. 0.
 Thomas Cook: 41,829.10. 6.
 Thos. H. Cook: 37,342.19.11.
 John Wormald: 26,185. 9. 5.
 Mary Cook: 1,960. 1. 9.
 Fanny Cook: 1,650.11. 6.
 Martha Wormald: 577.19. 3.
 Corbett's children: 491.12. 5.
 J.Wormald's children: 4. 0. 2.

General

Balance: 126,042. 4.11.

126,042. 4.11.

126,042. 4.11.

1866
Dec. 31

1866
Dec. 31

John Hague: 16,000. 0. 0.
 Thomas Cook: 36,903.11. 1.
 Thos. H. Cook: 46,147. 3. 1.
 John Wormald: 31,864. 5. 0.
 John Walker: 10,246. 3. 8.
 Mary Cook: 2,037.17. 6.
 Fanny Cook: 1,697.14. 3.
 Corbett's children: 521. 5. 5.
 J.Wormald's children: 31,19.10.
 Ethel M.H. Cook: 42. 8. 1.
 T.R.H. Cook: 10.15. 1.

General

Balance: 145,503. 3. 0.

145,503. 3. 0.

145,503. 3. 0.

1867
Dec. 31

Dr.

1867
Dec. 31

Cr.

General

Balance: 146,521. 0. 6.

146,521. 0. 6.

John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
Thomas Cook:	24,345.18. 1.
Thos. H. Cook:	52,783. 4.10.
John Wormald:	36,589.18. 2.
John Walker:	11,931.11. 9.
Mary Cook:	2,075. 6. 8.
Fanny Cook:	2,015.11. 9.
Corbett's children:	547. 6. 8.
F.M. & T.M. Wormald:	97.17. 9.
Ethel M.H. Cook:	64.19. 4.
T.R.H. Cook:	31.14. 8.
John Wormald, Jr:	30. 8. 6.
Arthur Bailey:	<u>7. 2. 4.</u>

146,521. 0. 6.

1868
Dec. 31

1868
Dec. 31

General

Balance: 140,985.16.10.

140,985.16.10.

John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
Thomas Cook:	10,230.12. 0.
Thos. H. Cook:	59,151. 5.10.
John Wormald:	37,067. 4. 2.
John Walker:	13,595. 8.11.
Mary Cook:	2,080.12. 9.
Fanny Cook:	2,005. 8.10.
John Corbett:	574.14. 0.
F.M. & T.M. Wormald:	68.16. 4.
Ethel M.H. Cook:	89. 9. 2.
T.R.H. Cook:	54.11. 3.
John Wormald, Jr.:	56. 3. 5.
Arthur Bailey:	<u>11.10. 2.</u>

140,985.16.10.

1869
Dec. 31

Dr.

1869
Dec. 31

Cr.

		John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	72,970. 7. 5.
		John Wormald:	37,331. 7. 5.
		John Walker:	16,270.10.10.
		Mary Cook:	2,103. 3. 5.
		Fanny Cook:	4,561. 7. 9.
		John Corbett:	603. 8. 9.
		F.M. & J.M.Wormald:	202. 9. 8.
		Ethel M.H. Cook:	108. 3. 6.
		T.R.H. Cook:	71.10. 8.
		John Wormald, Jr.:	89.17. 5.
		Arthur Bailey:	16. 9.11.
		Katharine Bailey:	4. 8. 3.
General		M.B.H. Cook:	<u>14. 5. 0.</u>
Balance:	<u>150,347.10. 0.</u>		
	150,347.10. 0.		150,347.10. 0.

1870
Dec. 31

1870
Dec. 31

		John Hague:	16,000. 0. 0.
		Thos. H. Cook:	70,083. 2.10.
		John Wormald:	43,366. 4.11.
		John Walker:	18,486.14. 1.
		Mary Cook:	2,066. 4.10.
		Fanny Cook:	1,961. 8.11.
		John Corbett:	633.12. 2.
		F.M. Wormald:	384.18. 9.
		Thos.M.Wormald:	357. 5. 0.
		Ethel M.H. Cook:	127.18. 4.
		T.R.H. Cook:	89. 8.10.
		John Wormald, Jr.:	125.12. 6.
		Arthur Bailey:	21.15.11.
		Katharine Bailey:	9. 2. 2.
General		M.B.H. Cook:	<u>29. 6. 0.</u>
Balance:	<u>153,742.15. 3.</u>		
	153,742.15. 3.		153,742.15. 3.

GENERAL BALANCES

<u>1853</u> Dec. 31	Dr. £	<u>1853</u> Dec. 31	Cr. £
We owe:	31,961.14. 7.	Due to us:	105,165. 7. 8.
Partners' Cap:	195,635. 1.11.	Manfg. stocks(1)	45,157.15. 8.
Balance:	<u>27,121. 1.10.</u>	Cloth stocks:	<u>4,394.15. 0.</u>
	154,717.18. 4.		<u>154,717.18. 4.</u>
	Cloth Account:	194. 4. 4.	
	Power Looms:	1,420. 0. 1.	
	Figs:	1,444.15. 8.	
	Scribbling Mill:	1,526. 4. 9.	
	Machinery:	<u>20,362. 6. 2.</u>	
		24,947.11. 0.	
	1851 Balance:	1,503.11. 4.	
	1852 Balance:	<u>669.19. 6.</u>	
		27,121. 1.10.	

<u>1854</u> Dec. 31	£	<u>1854</u> Dec. 31	£
We owe:	20,443.15.11.	Due to us:	110,406.13. 6.
Partners' Cap:	109,217.11. 0.	Manfg. stocks:	43,082. 8. 2.
Balance:	<u>27,410.17. 7.</u>	Cloth stocks:	<u>3,583. 2.10.</u>
	157,072. 4. 6.		<u>157,072. 4. 6.</u>
	Cloth Account:	696.13. 0.	
	Gig Account:	1,694.16. 9.	
	Power Looms:	1,556.18. 6.	
	Scribbling Mill:	2,252. 4. 1.	
	Machinery:	<u>18,734. 4. 3.</u>	
		24,934.16. 7.	
Private Ledgers:		<u>2,476. 1. 0.</u>	
		27,410.17. 7.	

(1) Includes wool, yarn, oil, blankets, etc..

<u>1855</u> Dec. 31	Dr. £	<u>1855</u> Dec. 31	Cr. £
We owe:	24,034. 8. 5.	Due to us:	113,590. 2. 5.
Partners' Cap:	115,334.17.10.	Manfg. Stock:	43,430. 9. 0.
Balance:	19,292. 9.10.	Cloth Stock:	3,310. 1. 0.
Private Ledger	<u>1,668.16. 4.</u>		
	160,330.12. 5.		<u>160,330.12. 5.</u>
	Cloth Account:	1,520. 8. 3.	
	Gig Account:	1,772. 9. 8.	
	Power Looms:	1,859.18. 9.	
	Scribbling Mill:	2,155. 0. 6.	
	Machinery:	<u>11,984.12. 8.</u>	
		19,292. 9.10.	

<u>1856</u> Dec. 31	£	<u>1856</u> Dec. 31	£
We owe:	21,008.16. 3.	Due to us:	102,737.10. 6.
Partners' Cap:	120,886. 3. 6.	Manfg. stock:	51,319.14. 1.
Balance:	14,762. 1. 3.	Cloth stock:	4,044. 7. 6.
Private Ledger:	<u>1,444.11. 1.</u>		
	158,101.12. 1.		<u>158,101.12. 1.</u>
	Cloth Account:	642.14. 8.	
	Gig Account:	1,668. 1. 1.	
	Power Looms:	1,534.17. 2.	
	Scribbling Mill:	1,921. 8. 8.	
	Machinery:	<u>8,994.19. 8.</u>	
		14,762. 1. 3.	

<u>1857</u>	Dr.	<u>1857</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	26,596. 1. 3.	Due to us:	106,722.17. 1.
Partners' Cap:	114,087.15.10.	Manfg. stock:	42,821. 6. 9.
Balance:	11,083.12. 1.	Cloth stock:	3,545. 0. 0.
Private Ledger:	<u>1,321.14. 8.</u>		
	153,089. 3.10.		<u>153,089. 3.10.</u>
	Cloth Account:	458. 9. 1.	
	Gig Account:	1,663. 1. 7.	
	Power Looms:	1,533.16. 6.	
	Scribbling Mill:	1,612. 4.10.	
	Machinery:	<u>5,816. 0. 1.</u>	
		11,083.12. 1.	
	Old Balance:	<u>1,321.14. 8.</u>	
		12,405. 6. 9.	
	Allow on stock:	<u>2,000. 0. 0.</u>	
		10,405. 6. 9.	
	Clerks, redemption, bad debts:	<u>3,581.19. 3.</u>	
		6,823. 7. 6.	
	Private Ledger:	<u>1,291. 9. 9.</u>	
	Profit on consigned goods:	<u>8,114.17. 3.</u>	

<u>1858</u>	Dr.	<u>1858</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	10,583.10. 9.	Due to us:	99,787. 6. 4.
Partners' Bal-		Manfg. stock:	36,101.17. 0.
ances:	112,838. 4. 0.	Cloth stock:	5,693. 7. 0.
Balance:	<u>16,170.15. 7.</u>		
	139,592.10. 4.		<u>139,592.10. 4.</u>
	Cloth Account:	237. 9. 5.	
	Gig Account:	1,673. 1.10.	
	Scribbling Mill:	1,817.19. 5.	
	Power Looms:	1,457.17. 1.	
	Machinery:	8,920.18. 8.	
	New Shed:	1,700.14. 2.	
	Old Balance:	<u>362.15. 2.</u>	
		16,170.15. 7.	

Note:

New Shed account includes
£1,191.9.6. for machinery:

Machinery: 17,683.16. 4.
New Shed: 1,191. 9. 6.
16,492. 6.10.

Machinery Dr.
in Ledger: 11,639.18. 2.
4,852. 8. 8.

4,852. 8. 8. Improved value
of machinery.
21,023. 4. 3.

<u>1859</u>	Dr.	<u>1859</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	17,979.13. 7.	Due to us:	111,603. 1. 6.
Partners' Cap:	118,930.16. 4.	Manfg. stock:	41,494. 9. 4.
Private Ledger:	2,648. 2. 6.	Cloth stock:	4,232.14. 0.
Balance:	<u>17,771.12. 5.</u>		
	157,330. 4.10.		<u>157,330. 4.10.</u>
	Cloth Account:	453.18. 7.	
	Gig Account:	1,764. 0. 0.	
	Scribbling Mill:	1,326.15.11.	
	Power Looms:	1,454.10. 0.	
	Machinery:	12,223. 8. 5.	
	New Shed:	<u>548.19. 6.</u>	
	Gross Profit:	17,771.12. 5.	

<u>1860</u>	Dr.	<u>1860</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	17,323.17. 7.	Due to us:	116,176. 2. 0.
Partners' Cap:	121,412.12.11.	Manfg. stock:	40,687.10. 8.
Private Ledger:	3,581.17. 1.	Cloth stock:	4,438.18. 6.
Balance:	<u>18,984. 3. 7.</u>		
	161,302.11. 2.		<u>161,302.11. 2.</u>
	Cloth Account:	309. 2. 9.	
	Gig Account:	2,011.14. 9.	
	Scribbling Mill:	1,319.11. 3.	
	Power Looms:	1,413.15. 8.	
	Machinery:	15,028. 0. 3.	
	New Shed:	<u>901.18.11.</u>	
		18,984. 3. 7.	

<u>1861</u>	Dr.	<u>1861</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	41,957.12.11.	Due to us:	133,407.11. 9.
Partners' Cap:	121,884. 0. 1.	Manfg. stock:	49,467. 3. 3.
Private Ledger:	5,353.15. 7.	Cloth stock:	2,248. 9. 6.
Balance:	<u>15,827.15.11.</u>		
	185,123. 4. 6.		<u>185,123. 4. 6.</u>
	Cloth Account:	629.17. 5.	
	Gig Account:	1,402. 1.10.	
	Scribbling Mill:	939.14. 1.	
	Power Looms:	1,159.18. 5.	
	Machinery:	11,042. 0. 4.	
	New Shed:	<u>654. 3.10.</u>	
		15,827.15.11.	

<u>1862</u>	£	<u>1862</u>	£
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	26,395. 5.10.	Due to us:	129,987. 3. 1.
Partners' Cap:	122,557. 7. 0.	Manfg. stock:	45,768.19. 0.
Private Ledger:	10,054.18. 0.	Cloth Stock:	1,853. 8. 0.
Balance:	<u>18,601.19. 3.</u>		
	177,609.10. 1.		<u>177,609.10. 1.</u>
	Cloth Account:	1,465. 1. 3.	
	Gig Account:	1,971. 2.11.	
	Scribbling Mill:	3,953. 8. 3.	
	Power Looms:	1,722. 6. 6.	
	Machinery:	8,791.19. 7.	
	New Shed:	<u>698. 0. 9.</u>	
		18,601.19. 3.	

<u>1863</u>	Dr.	<u>1863</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	16,389. 2. 2.	Due to us:	118,590.13.10.
Partners' Cap:	114,865. 3. 2.	Manfg. stock:	44,648.10. 2.
Private Ledger	10,778. 0.10.	Cloth stock:	1,251. 1. 6.
Balance:	<u>22,458. 4. 4.</u>		
	164,490.10. 6.		<u>164,490.10. 6.</u>
	Cloth account:	1,653.13. 7.	
	Gig account:	1,945.10.10.	
	Scribbling Mill:	4,598. 6. 6.	
	Power Looms:	1,033. 0. 2.	
	Machinery:	12,704. 1.11.	
	New Shed:	<u>523. 2. 4.</u>	
		22,458. 4. 4.	

<u>1864</u>	£	<u>1864</u>	£
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	7,347. 3. 9.	Due to us:	120,748.19. 4.
Partners' Cap:	124,722. 4. 9.	Manfg. stock:	43,465.12. 4.
Private Ledger	10,920. 8.10.	Cloth stock:	878. 1. 0.
Balance:	<u>22,102.15. 4.</u>		
	165,092.12. 8.		<u>165,092.12. 8.</u>
	Cloth Account:	832.10. 0.	
	Gig Account:	2,040. 3. 2.	
	Scribbling Mill:	4,107. 7. 8.	
	Power Looms:	1,047. 1. 8.	
	Machinery:	13,650. 8. 1.	
	New Shed:	<u>425. 4. 9.</u>	
		22,102.15. 4.	

<u>1865</u>	Dr.	<u>1865</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	8,854. 7. 11.	Due to us:	110,048. 9. 11.
Partners' Cap:	126,042. 4. 11.	Manfg. stock:	53,112. 2. 0.
Private Ledger:	4,524. 2. 1.		
Balance:	<u>23,739.17. 0.</u>		
	163,160.11.11.		<u>163,160.11.11.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,125. 7. 8.	
	Scribbling Mill:	3,689.11. 4.	
	Power Looms:	1,185.18. 3.	
	Machinery:	16,203.17. 1.	
	New Shed:	<u>535. 2. 8.</u>	
		23,739.17. 0.	

<u>1866</u>		<u>1866</u>	
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	11,858.17. 7.	Due to us:	129,043. 5. 0.
Partners' Cap:	145,503. 3. 0.	Manfg. stock:	53,740.16. 0.
Private Ledger:	1,197.14. 2.		
Balance:	<u>24,224. 6. 3.</u>		
	182,784. 1. 0.		<u>182,784. 1. 0.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,086. 1. 6.	
	Scribbling Mill:	2,303.16. 2.	
	Power Looms:	943. 1. 0.	
	Machinery:	18,360. 1. 10.	
	New Shed:	<u>526. 5. 9.</u>	
		24,224. 6. 3.	

<u>1867</u>	Dr.	<u>1867</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	10,975.14.10.	Due to us:	126,509.10. 1.
Partners' Cap:	146,521. 0. 6.	Manfg. stock:	53,826.19.11.
Private Ledger:	861. 2. 8.		
Balance:	<u>21,978.12. 0.</u>		
	180,336.10. 0.		<u>180,336.10. 0.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,294.14. 3.	
	Scribbling Mill:	2,584. 0. 0.	
	Power Looms:	1,014. 3.11.	
	Machinery:	14,929.15. 8.	
	New Shed:	528.10. 4.	
	Fulling Mill:	<u>627. 7.10.</u>	
		21,978.12. 0.	

<u>1868</u>		<u>1868</u>	
Dec. 31.	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	9,598. 6. 3.	Due to us:	118,146.14. 8.
Partners' Cap:	140,985.16.10.	Manfg. stock:	63,722. 5. 6.
Private Ledger:	1,117. 3. 1.		
Balance:	<u>30,167.14. 0.</u>		
	181,869. 0. 2.		<u>181,869. 0. 2.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,080.16. 2.	
	Scribbling Mill:	2,495.14. 4.	
	Power Looms:	1,096. 2. 7.	
	Machinery:	23,939.19. 8.	
	New Shed:	<u>555. 1. 3.</u>	
		30,167.14. 0.	

<u>1869</u>	Dr.	<u>1869</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	11,157.10. 0.	Due to us:	127,072. 5. 2.
Partners'Cap:	150,347.10. 0.	Manfg. stock:	60,991. 7.11.
Private Ledger:	265. 9. 6.		
Balance:	<u>26,293. 3. 7.</u>		
	188,063.13. 1.		<u>188,063.13. 1.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,190.19. 0.	
	Scribbling Mill:	2,793. 0. 2.	
	Power Looms:	1,532. 4. 2.	
	Manufacturing ?	19,074. 7. 6.	
	New Shed:	<u>702.12. 9.</u>	
		26,293. 3. 7.	

<u>1870</u>		<u>1870</u>	
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	21,181.16. 5.	Due to us:	129,048. 5. 1.
Partners'Cap:	153,742.15. 3.	Manfg. stock:	76,633.14. 8.
Private Ledger:	522.10. 4.		
Balance:	<u>30,234.17. 9.</u>		
	205,681.19. 9.		<u>205,681.19. 9.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,412.12. 3.	
	Scribbling Mill:	2,826. 1. 3.	
	Power Looms:	1,443. 3. 4.	
	Manufacturing:	22,895.17.10.	
	New Shed:	<u>657. 3. 1.</u>	
		30,234.17. 9.	

<u>1871</u>	Dr.	<u>1871</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	15,984.11. 6.	Due to us:	149,437. 9.10.
Partners' Cap:	173,813. 6. 6.	Manfg. stock:	77,503. 3. 2.
Private Ledger:	853. 3. 9.		
Balance:	<u>36,289.11. 3.</u>		
	226,940.13. 0.		<u>226,940.13. 0.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,207.11. 7.	
	Scribbling Mill:	3,123.18. 2.	
	Power Looms:	1,808.10. 5.	
	Manufacturing:	28,699. 4. 7.	
	New Shed:	<u>450. 6. 6.</u>	
		36,289.11. 3.	

<u>1872</u>		<u>1872</u>	
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	14,203.10. 9.	Due to us:	152,997. 8.10.
Partners' Cap:	206,135. 2. 8.	Manfg. stock:	82,275. 2. 2.
Balance (P.L.):	312.14. 6.		
Balance:	<u>14,721. 3. 1.</u>		
	235,372.11. 0.		<u>235,372.11. 0.</u>
	Gig Account:	1,471.13. 4.	
	Scribbling Mill:	1,484. 1. 7.	
	Power Looms:	2,722. 2. 1.	
	Manufacturing:	<u>9,043. 6. 1.</u>	
		14,721. 3. 1.	

<u>1873</u>	Dr.	<u>1873</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	51,504. 8. 9.	Due to us:	154,988. 8. 11.
Partners' Cap:	171,570. 7. 3.	Manfg. stock:	92,494. 8. 7.
Private Ledger:	127. 1. 0.		
Balance:	<u>24,281. 0. 6.</u>		
	247,482.17. 6.		<u>247,482.17. 6.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,757.18. 3.	
	Scribbling Mill:	108. 5. 7.	
	Power Looms:	6,129.19. 6.	
	Manufacturing:	9,326.17. 3.	
	Ratcliffe Mill:	<u>5,957.19.11.</u>	
		24,281. 0. 6.	

<u>1874</u>		<u>1874</u>	
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	50,240.19. 9.	Due to us:	158,097. 9. 1.
Partners' Cap:	175,513.13. 5.	Manfg. stock:	88,413. 3. 2.
Private Ledger:	110.17. 9.		
Balance:	<u>22,645. 1. 4.</u>		
	246,510.13. 3.		<u>246,510.12. 3.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,823. 4. 7.	
	Scribbling Mill:	-	
	Power Looms:	3,665.18. 7.	
	Manufacturing:	11,559.11. 0.	
	Ratcliffe Mill:	<u>4,596. 7. 2.</u>	
		22,645. 1. 4.	

<u>1875</u>	Dr.	<u>1875</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	63,792.17. 8.	Due to us:	157,152. 0. 2.
Partners' Cap:	175,317.12.11.	Manfg. stock:	99,596.14. 3.
Private Ledger:	306. 1. 1.		
Balance:	<u>17,332. 2. 9.</u>		
	256,748.14. 5.		<u>256,748.14. 5.</u>
	Gig Account:	3,024. 5. 6.	
	Power Looms:	4,174.11. 7.	
	Manufacturing:	5,972. 9. 2.	
	Ratcliffe Mill:	<u>4,160.16. 6.</u>	
		17,332. 2. 9.	

<u>1876</u>	£	<u>1876</u>	£
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	62,921. 8. 1.	Due to us:	141,223.12. 2.
Partners' Cap:	168,185. 4. 2.	Manfg. stock:	105,944.15. 7.
Private Ledger:	121. 0. 9.		
Balance:	<u>15,940.14. 9.</u>		
	247,168. 7. 9.		<u>247,168. 7. 9.</u>
	Gig Account:	2,660.15.10.	
	Power Looms:	3,458.10. 8.	
	Manufacturing:	2,465. 0. 7.	
	Ratcliffe Mill:	2,525. 2. 7.	
	Scribbling Account:	1,976.18. 0.	
	Dyeing:	1,789. 6. 5.	
	Fulling:	799. 4.10.	
	Seak and Soap:	<u>265.15.10.</u>	
		15,940.14. 9.	

<u>1877</u>		Dr.	<u>1877</u>		Cr.
Dec. 31	£		Dec. 31	£	
We owe:	42,274. 5. 2.		Due to us:	134,424. 2. 6.	
Partners' Cap:	167,387. 0. 7.		Manfg. stock:	93,563. 11. 9.	
Private Ledger:	94. 14. 8.				
Balance:	<u>18,731. 15. 10.</u>				
	228,487. 14. 3.			<u>228,487. 14. 3.</u>	
	Gig Account:		2,673. 2. 3.		
	Power Looms:		3,531. 15. 9.		
	Manufacturing:		3,481. 12. 6.		
	Ratcliffe Mill:		3,200. 4. 6.		
	Scribbling Account:		2,440. 15. 4.		
	Dyeing:		1,833. 4. 0.		
	Fulling:		1,407. 10. 3.		
	Seak and Soap:		<u>163. 11. 3.</u>		
			18,731. 15. 10.		

<u>1878</u>			<u>1878</u>		
Dec. 31	£		Dec. 31	£	
We owe:	31,761. 15. 4.		Due to us:	55,317. 19. 8.	
Partners' Cap:	92,945. 2. 8.		Manfg. stock:	88,701. 7. 0.	
Private Creditors:	55,565. 11. 11.		Other stock:	2,004. 16. 9.	
Private Ledger:	1,029. 7. 2.		Machinery:	54,785. 7. 4.	
Balance:	<u>29,507. 13. 8.</u>				
	210,809. 10. 9.			<u>210,809. 10. 9.</u>	
	Gig Account:		2,775. 8. 5.		
	Power Looms:		4,808. 11. 0.		
	Manufacturing:		9,959. 0. 8.		
	Ratcliffe Mill:		3,946. 6. 7.		
	Scribbling Account:		3,634. 7. 9.		
	Dyeing:		1,724. 5. 5.		
	Fulling:		1,670. 3. 11.		
	Seak and Soap:		<u>989. 9. 11.</u>		
			29,507. 13. 8.		

<u>1879</u>	Dr. £	<u>1879</u>	Cr. £
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
We owe:	26,911. 6. 9.	Due to us:	66,548.18. 8.
Partners' Cap:	111,960. 9. 0.	Manfg. stock:	93,266.16. 6.
Pte. creditors	41,049.10. 6.	Other stock:	1,868.15. 4.
Private Ledger	1,069. 3. 3.	Machinery:	52,017.12. 9.
Balance:	<u>32,711.13. 9.</u>		
	213,702. 3. 3.		213,702. 3. 3.
	Gig Account:	3,350. 8. 8.	
	Power Looms:	4,621.13. 8.	
	Manufacturing:	13,473. 9. 6.	
	Ratcliffe Mill:	3,881. 7. 2.	
	Scribbling Account:	3,073.12. 2.	
	Dyeing:	1,936.12. 7.	
	Fulling:	1,992.12. 8.	
	Seak and Soap:	<u>381.17. 4.</u>	
		32,711.13. 9.	

<u>1880</u>	£	<u>1880</u>	£
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
We owe:	74,968.16. 2.	Due to us:	80,849.10.11.
Partners' Cap:	112,985.18. 9.	Manfg. stock:	122,845. 8. 0.
Pte. Creditors:	36,468.13. 5.	Other stock:	1,856. 2. 6.
Private Ledger:	1,700. 6. 2.	Machinery:	57,171.11. 0.
Balance:	<u>36,596.17.11.</u>		
	262,720.12. 5.		262,720.12. 5.
	Gig Account:	4,170. 4. 3.	
	Power Looms:	4,225. 7. 2.	
	Manufacturing:	11,895. 4. 1.	
	Ratcliffe Mill:	4,169.12. 0.	
	Scribbling Account:	3,256. 0. 0.	
	Dyeing:	3,962.18. 9.	
	Fulling:	2,909. 2. 6.	
	Seak and Soap:	1,018. 2.11.	
	Britannia Mills:	<u>990. 6. 3.</u>	
		36,596.17.11.	

<u>1881</u>	Dr.	<u>1881</u>	Cr.
<u>Dec. 31</u>	£	<u>Dec. 31</u>	£
We owe:	60,810.15. 9.	Due to us:	79,714. 7. 2.
Partners' Cap:	141,009.10. 1.	Manfg. stock:	140,667. 0. 5.
Pte. Creditors:	39,350. 7. 3.	Other stock:	1,380. 7. 2.
Private Ledger:	961.13. 4.	Machinery:	55,113.18. 7.
Balance:	<u>34,743. 6.11.</u>		
	276,875.13. 4.		276,875.13. 4.

Gig Account:	3,588. 9. 5.
Power Looms:	2,931.12. 0.
Manufacturing:	13,423.14. 7.
Ratcliffe Mill:	3,139.17. 0.
Scribbling Account:	2,571.19. 5.
Dyeing:	2,906. 1. 4.
Fulling:	2,106.13. 7.
Seak and Soap:	816.19. 3.
Britannia Mill:	<u>3,258. 0. 4.</u>
	34,743. 6.11.

<u>1882</u>	£	<u>1882</u>	£
<u>Dec. 31</u>		<u>Dec. 31</u>	
We owe:	55,556. 8. 8.	Due to us:	98,799. 5.10.
Partners' Cap:	159,222.14. 8.	Manfg. stock:	149,661. 5. 8.
Pte. Creditors:	41,069.15. 0.	Other stock:	1,621.14. 4.
Private Ledger:	38. 2.11.	Machinery:	53,960.19. 5.
Balance:	<u>48,156. 4. 0.</u>		
	304,043. 5. 3.		304,043. 5. 3.

Finishing Account:	2,995.15. 9.
Power Looms:	3,891.14. 0.
Manufacturing:	22,323.17.10.
Ratcliffe Mill:	3,265. 7. 3.
Scribbling Account:	3,095.17.11.
Dyeing:	5,988.18. 2.
Fulling:	971. 8. 0.
Seak and Soap:	116. 0. 9.
Britannia Mill:	<u>5,507. 4. 4.</u>
	48,156. 4. 0.

<u>1883</u> Dec. 31	Dr. £	<u>1883</u> Dec. 31	Cr. £
We owe:	30,281. 2. 2.	Due to us:	79,857. 5. 5.
Partners' Cap:	203,604.14. 2.	Manfg. stock:	138,426.18. 8.
Pte. Creditors:	17,334.18.10.	Machinery:	49,510.15. 0.
Private Ledger:	177. 7. 7.	Other stock:	1,529.12. 2.
	<u>251,598. 2. 9.</u>		
Balance:	17,926. 8. 6.		
	<u>269,324.11. 3.</u>		<u>269,324.11. 3.</u>

Finishing account:	1,517.10. 4.
Power Looms:	1,521.18.11.
Manufacturing:	5,365. 5. 1.
Ratcliffe Mill:	1,353. 3. 4.
Scribbling Account:	1,809. 5. 0.
Dyeing:	2,791. 1. 0.
Fulling:	1,175.10. 4.
Seak and Soap:	184.17. 4.
Britannia Mill:	<u>2,207.17. 2.</u>
	17,926. 8. 6.

<u>1884</u> Dec. 31	£	<u>1884</u> Dec. 31	£
We owe:	25,298. 1. 9,	Due to us:	70,492. 8. 6.
Partners' Cap:	201,522. 1. 5.	Manfg. stock:	126,499.16. 2.
Pte. Creditors:	3,938.12. 4.	Other stock:	1,650.15. 0.
Private Ledger:	862. 0. 3.	Machinery:	45,685.11. 2.
Balance:	<u>14,707.15. 1.</u>		
	<u>244,328.10.10.</u>		<u>244,328.10.10.</u>

Finishing Account:	2,483.10. 4.	
Power Looms:	2,275. 2. 0.	
Manufacturing:	691.13. 1.	(Loss)
Ratcliffe Mill:	913.17. 9.	
Scribbling Account:	1,256.10. 0.	
Dyeing:	4,290. 3.11.	
Fulling:	2,111.16. 4.	
Seak and Soap:	414.17. 0.	
Britannia Mill:	<u>1,653.10.10.</u>	
	14,707.15. 1.	

<u>1885</u>	Dr.	<u>1885</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	16,288.16.10.	Due to us:	104,007.10. 4.
Partners'Cap:	206,355. 1. 3.	Manfg. stock:	110,726.15. 4.
Pte.Creditors£	4,490. 0. 1.	Other stock:	1,513.19. 0.
Private Ledger:	1,184. 0. 8.	Machinery:	43,865.11. 4.
Balance:	<u>31,795.17. 2.</u>		
	260,113.16. 0.		<u>260,113.16. 0.</u>

Finishing Account:	3,207. 9. 1.
Power Looms:	2,665. 3.11.
Manufacturing: 1	12,193.14. 0.
Ratcliffe Mill:	2,144. 9. 9.
Scribbling Account:	1,866. 7. 6.
Dyeing:	3,294.19.10.
Fulling:	3,088. 3. 7.
Seak and Soap:	410.17. 5.
Britannia Mill:	<u>2,934.12. 1.</u>
	31,795.17. 2.

<u>1886</u>	£	<u>1886</u>	£
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
We owe:	12,095. 3.11.	Due to us:	92,613.19. 0.
Partners'Cap:	204,390.16. 0.	Manfg. stock:	119,070.19. 6.
Pte.Creditors:	7,573.19. 5.	Other stock:	1,991. 8. 6.
Private Ledger:	528. 3. 6.	Machinery:	40,982.15. 7.
Balance:	<u>29,070.19. 9.</u>		
	253,659. 2. 7.		<u>253,659. 2. 7.</u>

Finishing Account:	2,971. 6. 4.
Power Looms:	2,657.16. 5.
Manufacturing:	10,517.16. 9.
Ratcliffe Mill:	1,905. 1. 7.
Scribbling Account:	1,544.19. 3.
Dyeing:	2,998.13. 0.
Fulling:	3,518. 1. 7.
Seak and Soap:	-
Britannia Mill:	2,656.19.10.
S.T.Millowners':	<u>500. 0. 0.</u>
	29,070.19. 9.

<u>1887</u>	Dr.	<u>1887</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	16,635.18. 2.	Due to us:	88,858.11. 6.
Partners' Cap:	211,534. 7.10.	Manfg. stock:	132,953. 6. 2.
Pte. Creditors:	1,936.10.11.	Other stock:	2,031. 3. 0.
Private Ledger:	206. 7. 7.	Machinery:	38,106. 8. 1.
Balance:	<u>31,686. 4. 3.</u>		
	261,999. 8. 9.		261,999. 8. 9.

Finishing Account:	3,531.11. 4.
Power Looms:	3,097. 4. 0.
Manufacturing:	9,055.10. 7.
Ratcliffe Mill:	2,583. 9. 1.
Scribbling Account:	1,830.12. 7.
Dyeing:	3,690.13.11.
Fulling:	4,081.10. 6.
Britannia Mill:	3,335.12. 3.
S.T. Millowners':	<u>500. 0. 0.</u>
	31,686. 4. 3.

<u>1888</u>	£	<u>1888</u>	£
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
We owe:	19,934.19. 3.	Due to us:	80,098. 2. 9.
Partners' Cap:	203,756. 2. 7.	Manfg. stock:	133,224.13. 0.
Private Ledger:	592. 1. 2.	Other stock:	1,342.18.10.
Balance:	<u>27,055.15. 3.</u>	Machinery:	<u>36,673. 3. 8.</u>
	251,338.18. 3.		251,338.18. 3.

Finishing Account:	3,146.14.10.
Power Looms:	2,835.12.11.
Manufacturing:	6,520. 0. 7.
Ratcliffe Mill:	2,233. 2. 8.
Scribbling Account:	1,348.16. 7.
Dyeing:	3,680. 3. 7.
Fulling:	2,782. 1. 0.
Britannia Mill:	3,509. 3. 1.
S.T. Millowners':	<u>500. 0. 0.</u>
	27,055.15. 3.

<u>1889</u>	Dr.	<u>1889</u>	Cr.
Dec. 31	£	Dec. 31	£
We owe:	18,674.12.11.	Due to us:	87,060. 5. 9.
Partners' Cap:	215,972. 8. 4.	Manfg. stock:	135,690.19. 6.
Private Ledger:	304. 0. 11.	Other stock:	1,416.12. 6.
Balance:	<u>26,454.16. 0.</u>	Machinery:	<u>37,238. 0. 5.</u>
	261,405.18. 2.		261,405.18. 2.

Finishing Account:	3,637.19. 7.
Power Looms:	2,780.12. 8.
Ratcliffe Mill:	2,551. 4.10.
Manufacturing:	6,576.10.11.
Scribbling Account:	2,100.15. 8.
Dyeing:	3,650. 3. 6.
Fulling:	2,069.11. 4.
Britannia Mill:	2,587.17. 6.
S.T. Millowners':	<u>500. 0. 0.</u>
	26,454.16. 0.

<u>1890</u>	£	<u>1890</u>	£
Dec. 31		Dec. 31	
We owe:	7,185. 1. 1.	Due to us:	68,727.10. 6.
Partners' Cap:	253,961.14. 2.	Manfg. stock:	159,808. 1.10.
Private Ledger:	192.15. 2.	Other stock:	1,731. 1. 5.
Value of machinery:	826.10. 0.	Machinery:	<u>71,281. 5. 8.</u>
Balance:	<u>39,381.19. 0.</u>		
	301,547.19. 5.		301,547.19. 5.

Finishing Account:	4,101.14. 8.
Power Looms:	3,701.16. 0.
Manufacturing:	14,495. 4. 3.
Ratcliffe Mill:	3,150. 9.10.
Scribbling Account:	3,653.10. 2.
Dyeing:	4,334.12. 7.
Fulling:	2,663. 3. 7.
Britannia Mill:	2,801. 7.11.
S.T. Millowners':	<u>500. 0. 0.</u>
	39,381.19. 0.

<u>1891</u>	Dr.	<u>1891</u>	Cr.
<u>Year ending 9 Feb. 1892</u>			
We owe:	6,060. 3. 10.	Due to us:	62,153. 5. 7.
Partners' Cap:	271,881. 1. 5.	Manfg. stock:	148,100. 13. 0.
Private Ledger:	775. 10. 2.	Other stock:	1,936. 5. 6.
Balance:	18,454. 15. 7.	Machinery:	73,372. 10. 8.
		Cash:	<u>11,608. 16. 3.</u>
	<u>297,171. 11. 0.</u>		<u>297,171. 11. 0.</u>
	Finishing Account:	2,032. 9. 10.	
	Power Looms:	2,262. 10. 7.	
	Manufacturing:	4,337. 2. 0.	
	Ratcliffe Mill:	1,613. 18. 9.	
	Scribbling Account:	1,492. 14. 2.	
	Dyeing:	2,696. 14. 3.	
	Fulling:	1,204. 19. 11.	
	Britannia Mill:	2,314. 6. 1.	
	S.T. Millowners':	<u>500. 0. 0.</u>	
		18,454. 15. 7.	

<u>1892</u>		<u>1892</u>	
<u>Year ending 9 Feb. 1893</u>			
We owe:	5,711. 14. 8.	Due to us:	84,835. 15. 9.
Partners' Cap:	275,543. 18. 6.	Manfg. stock:	124,469. 1. 11.
Private Ledger:	1,279. 5. 6.	Other stock:	1,819. 10. 6.
Balance:	17,211. 4. 9.	Machinery:	72,743. 5. 10.
		Cash:	<u>15,878. 9. 5.</u>
	<u>299,756. 3. 6.</u>		<u>299,756. 3. 5.</u>
	Finishing Account:	1,658. 16. 3.	
	Power Looms:	2,238. 10. 5.	
	Manufacturing:	6,090. 0. 2.	
	Ratcliffe Mill:	758. 3. 1.	
	Scribbling Account:	1,953. 5. 3.	
	Dyeing:	1,303. 17. 7.	
	Fulling:	557. 19. 1.	
	Britannia Mill:	2,150. 12. 11.	
	S.T. Millowners':	<u>500. 0. 0.</u>	
		17,211. 4. 9.	

CHAPTER IX

THE BLANKET TRADE

1832-63

CHAPTER IXThe Blanket Trade
1832-63

'... they are good things, and very handsome, some dyed scarlet, pink, orange, blue ...'

The blanket trade conducted from Dewsbury Mills falls naturally into three main divisions: the foreign trade (which was mainly the United States' trade during these years), the home trade, and government contracting. After 1845, blankets were also made for the Hudson's Bay Company, but as these were manufactured in respect of orders obtained from competitive tendering, this trade may be more conveniently treated under the heading of contracting. The scantiest evidence survives relating to the total size of manufacturing operations and sales of goods by the partners, and the only information which is extant regarding the relative importance of these different branches of their trade is Thomas Cook's remark in 1840 that:

The trade of this Town and District will be about one-half for export, and the other for home consumption - the bulk of the former being for the United States. (1)

The correspondence books contain voluminous general references to each of these branches and this chapter is based on these sources.

(1) Thos. Cook to John Mollett, London, 28 Feb. 1840.

The structure of the industry

Some indication of the structure of the West Riding blanket industry during this period, and of the position of the partners within it, may be gleaned from the firm's correspondence and from information contained in contemporary directories. The number of blanket manufacturers in the main centres of the industry at different times was as follows:

(1)
Number of Blanket Manufacturers

Year	Dewsbury	Batley	Heckmond- wike	Earlsheaton & Soothill	Total
1830	45	26	47	20	138
1842	50	64	53	38	205
1864	32	47	44	43	166

In 1841, Thomas Cook observed that 'this neighbourhood is studded with multitudes of small makers whose whole property may not, nor does, average £100 ...' (2) Many of the manufacturers recorded in the table above must, therefore, have been working only a small number of looms and only a handful of firms are ever mentioned in the firm's correspondence as if they were of any substantial size. Edwin Firth and Company

(1) Information extracted from contemporary directories, see bibliography. These figures are unlikely to be either complete or completely reliable, but they serve as an approximation to the true position.

(2) Thos. Cook to Mr. Jellicose, Manchester, 29 May 1841.

and the Tattersfields of Heckmondwike, Halliley, Brooke and Company of Dewsbury, and Thomas Spedding of the same town, James Ellis and Sons of Batley Carr, George Sheard and John Nussey of Batley, and the Hemingways, Lees, Tolsons and Tongs of Earlsheaton and Chickenley, seem to have been the principal competitors of the partners, but none of these were larger than half the size of the enterprise at Dewsbury Mills in terms of capital employed or value of yearly output according to the scattered comments of Cook which appear throughout the letter books.⁽¹⁾

It is, at first sight, surprising that Cook and his partners should have found the trade so highly competitive considering their dominating position within it in terms of resources at their disposal and business connections forged during the first twenty years of their trading activities.

It seems clear that there were no large economies of scale in the period before the introduction of the power loom; that there were many profitable opportunities open to small manufacturers who could use low wools skilfully and could

(1) Halliley, Brooke and Company were the largest of the partners' competitors, but they failed in 1834. Edwin Firth and Company and the Tattersfields of Heckmondwike, and Thomas Spedding of Dewsbury commanded perhaps a third of the resources utilised by the partners. The other rivals were all smaller than this.

(1)
exploit the shoddy wool as a raw material; and that the vicissitudes of the trade in the first half of the nineteenth century handicapped the large establishment during times of depression when it was difficult to reduce costs quickly. These considerations probably explain why the partners were always anxious to obtain their raw wool on the best possible terms and to acquire the most advantageous credit arrangements for what they bought and for what they sold, using their relatively large financial resources to attain these ends.

The table on page 572 above suggests that there was a general growth in the number of 'enterprises' engaged in the trade in the 'thirties, despite the general depression which characterised much of that decade. This growth, it seems, was mainly based on the rise of the shoddy trade, and the Batley district and, to a lesser extent, Earlsheaton and Soothill, were the growing points during these years.

(1) During Thomas Cook's lifetime the partners would have nothing to do with the use of shoddy wool at Dewsbury Mills even as a marginal input for their cloth production. After 1861 there was some use of shoddy, but it was never very important and it is pertinent to ask the question: did the reluctance to use shoddy lower the competitiveness of the enterprise in the industry, particularly in the 'thirties and 'forties when the shoddy trade was growing quickly? It is not possible to answer this question with any certainty from the data available.

Dewsbury and Heckmondwike, clinging mainly to the traditional blanket manufacture, experienced a more sober enlargement of the numbers engaged in the manufacture in those towns. After 1842 there was some decline in the number of manufacturers in Dewsbury, Batley and Heckmondwike, obviously resulting from the introduction of the power loom and the coalition of small concerns for purposes of taking advantage of new productive techniques. (1) At Earlsheaton, however, the small manufacturer and the hand-loom remained characteristic of the trade and there was a slight increase in the number of blanket makers in that district between 1842 and 1864.

It seems clear from many passing comments made by Thomas Cook throughout the correspondence books that he considered his 'real competitors' to be the Leeds merchanting houses rather than the smaller blanket manufacturers of the

(1) cf. Willans, Recollections of Dewsbury and Batley, Past and Present, passim, for general observations which indicate that some consolidation of enterprises was taking place in these two towns during the period.

Marshall pointed out that the introduction of the power loom into the woollen manufacture was accompanied by improvements in the methods and machinery employed in cloth raising and finishing, thus necessitating increased expenditure on equipment. cf. Marshall, Industry and Trade, (1919), p. 232.

'heavy woollen' district. The Leeds merchants bought large quantities of blankets from the small makers at Heckmondwike market and also gave out orders directly to these clothiers, The great bulk of these blankets were bought in an unfinished condition and the dyeing and the dressing was then done in Leeds. Benjamin Gott and Sons not only merchanted in this way, but also manufactured blankets for themselves in Leeds and Cook regarded the 'house of Gotts' as his most formidable rival in the trade. In a primary sense, however, it was the small manufacturers of the Dewsbury and Heckmondwike districts, from whom the Leeds merchants obtained their untreated cloths, who were Cook's 'real' competitors, for the reason that as long as Cook and his partners could produce blankets in the raw state at or below the costs of production incurred by these small makers it was not possible for the Leeds merchants to buy them and market them at a price more favourable than that fixed by Hagues, Cook and Wormald.

There is the question of finishing costs to be considered. If the Leeds merchants were markedly more efficient in this department of the trade than the partners were, then this would give them a competitive advantage, provided that they could obtain raw supplies from the small makers at prices not too far out of line with those which

ruled, for similar goods, at Dewsbury Mills. But, although we possess no data which would allow us to answer this question, the general impression gleaned from the firm's correspondence books is that their dyeing and finishing services were not noticeably inefficient, although they seem to have adhered to hand-raising of blankets longer than did the Leeds dressing houses. (1)

In an important sense, however, Cook was correct in his view that the Leeds people were his 'real' rivals. In competing for orders from the Manchester, Liverpool and London houses, Cook knew that the large demands would either come to him or to the Leeds merchants. If they came to the latter, the eventual impact on the manufacture would be felt throughout the 'heavy woollen' district, but not at Dewsbury Mills, for the Leeds merchants never ordered

(1) Although mechanical dressing was probably cheaper than hand-raising of cloths, the merchants also had to carry overhead costs on these establishments or pay commission charges to the specialist dressing firms which would tend to dissipate their advantage in this respect. Hagues, Cook and Wormald commenced 'blanket-gigging' in 1842. See above, p. 479.

(1)
 or bought goods from the partners. In this basic sense, then, of receiving orders from the exporting houses, it remains true that Cook and his associates were competing with Leeds and not with their neighbours, but in fact they were competing with Leeds and their neighbours for the reason that, at Dewsbury Mills, the functions of the small makers and the Leeds merchants were conducted by the one enterprise.

Foreign trade

The movement of the firm's profit curve in the years here under review is illustrated graphically in Figure 9 and there appears to have been a strong correlation between the firm's profitability and the state of trade in the United States. In 1832, which was a year of steady demand for woollen

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- (1) The only record of any orders received at Dewsbury Mills from a Leeds merchant are occasional letters from the house of A.S. Henry and Company. In December 1844, the partners stated in reply to one of these letters:

Our business has gradually grown to its present great magnitude and if we began sending our goods to Leeds in contact with those of our neighbours, the smaller manufacturers, it would give a feeling of bitterness and aggravation of that in some degree in existence against us, and which we do not desire to exist. We see our interest in our neighbours not thinking we wish to devour them.

Hagues, Cook and Wormald to A.S. Henry and Company,
 Leeds, 12 Dec. 1844.

manufactures, the partners were writing to Thomas Dixon in New York on various matters connected with their American orders:

We shall gladly ... send Messrs. Kernochan Parish and Company to the amount of £3,000 at any time on the Open Account, to be remitted by them at their convenience ... those goods shall be put up on our lowest terms for a three months bill and they must pay interest for all time over that which their payment exceeds our terms ... and all goods wanted above £3,000 in amount at any time on the account, they will be so good as to give us a credit in England for.

Messrs. Henry and Company and others, charge as you quote - $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. - to the parties in America - now if you can get $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. and we allow you the same commission on the orders you send us - we think that will be equitable to both buyer and seller. Messrs. Henry and Company pay us always cash for their goods deducting $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. ... we have a very large account with this House.

Our Government have ceased to give the blanket presents to the Indians - and we have noticed an increased demand this winter for Mackinaw blankets in consequence ... of this circumstance. (1)

Dixon was still the partners' main link with that market, but other important customers had by this time been acquired and the connection with the Henrys of Manchester, and later of Leeds, was obviously a valuable one with payment risks at a minimum. The American Tariff of 1828 was

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thos. Dixon, New York, 22 Feb. 1832.

still causing the partners some concern in 1832 and 'as we see so much discussion in your Congress ... we think it prudent to delay a while the sending of any goods.'⁽¹⁾

This difficulty was still inhibiting the firm's actions in the summer of that year when the partners were 'fearful what to do in consequence of the Tariff',⁽²⁾ but the threat of further tariff obstacles did not materialise and 1833 was a year of brisk demand for blankets in the transatlantic trade. In this particular twelve-month period the firm sold to American customers a total of £118,491. 12s. 2d. worth of goods which, apart from the years 1835-6, was the highest value of sales recorded to that market by the firm in the 'thirties.'⁽³⁾

There was a severe decline in profitability for the partners in 1834 when the gross profit achieved amounted only to £1,600. In that year the total sales in all markets reached an aggregate of £145,500 and gross profit was thus

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Dixon, 13 March 1832.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Dixon, 6 July 1832.

(3) Thos. Cook to George W. Wood, M.P., London, 20 June 1843. There are no correspondence books retained which deal with the year 1833. The correspondence book for 1832 carries a complicated set of calculations on the fly leaf which relate to the American tariff charges.

less than one per cent. on the sales value of manufactures. (1)

Thomas Cook outlined the adversities of this year. Of the domestic demand he complained that:

... the trade will not ... give prime costs for goods ... we will give over making Home Trade goods and stand. (2)

Of the American trade he indicated that:

... what we have had this year has all come since Whitsuntide ... we lost more than half the year's profit in countermanded orders. (3)

He also seems to have been convinced that some part of his troubles were due to losing ground in the United States market in the face of foreign competition:

Could you not obtain for us quickly ... samples of those commoner French goods ... (4)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Addams, Manchester, 20 May 1835. This sales figure is the only yearly total known during this period. Of the sum of £145,500, the American sales amounted to £103,175 or 71 per cent. of the total. This does not accord with Cook's statement in 1840 that the blanket trade was about equally divided between home and foreign markets. Cook also told the S.C. of 1828 that his total trade was apportioned in approximately this manner, but the firm's experience in the early 'thirties may have been different unless we assume that 1834 was an untypical year for purposes of judging the disposition of demand for the firm's products over a longer period.

(2) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, New York, 14 July 1834.

(3) Thos. Cook to Jones, Gibson and Ord, 8 Dec. 1834.

(4) Thos. Cook to Dixon, 28 Dec. 1834.

At the same time he found the wool market difficult with prices generally rising and a fierce competition from the smaller manufacturers:

Your market (London) must this week swarm with our small makers ... with two or three packs of goods each. (1)

Cook's experiences in this year would appear to support Oastler's contention about the state of the trade and the activities of the export houses. (2)

In the years 1835 and 1836 the profitability of the blanket trade was strongly affected by the boom conditions in trade to the United States which followed on the difficulties of 1834. The correspondence books contain many references to the shortage of manufacturing capacity to meet the press of orders; to the shortage of liquid capital; and to the decline in the standard of workmanship as the boom gathered momentum. Early in the year, Cook was seeking a temporary loan from John Wormald:

... we have £50,000 worth of goods to send away before we get much money. (3)

(1) Thos. Cook to Robert Nicholson, 10 Nov. 1834.

(2) See above, p. 153.

(3) Thos. Cook to John Wormald, London, 20 Feb. 1835.

A little later he observed to the same correspondent:

We are hard pressed, but you know we will not make our Bank an engine to raise the mill's money. (1)

There were '200 fine wool, imitation French blankets' despatches to Henry and Company, Manchester, in March, the price of these being about six shillings each. (2) At the same time the partners were informing customers that:

... we cannot deliver before June and then late in the month. (3)

In 1835-6, the activities of the partners were such that Cook estimated that thirty per cent. of the blanket production of the West Riding was in their hands. (4) He was thus in an authoritative position in commenting on the conduct of the trade at this time. Comparing 1835 with 1815 he observed that:

... we are back again in 1815 ... all together at the doors of the small manufacturers and they will do just as they like. (5)

(1) Thos. Cook to John Wormald, 27 March 1835.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to A.S. Henry and Company, Manchester, 26 March 1835.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholas Martin and Sons, Dublin, 24 March 1835.

(4) Thos. Cook to John Addams, Manchester, 2 May 1835.

(5) Thos. Cook to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 15 April 1835.

Later, he added:

I never saw men so puffed up by eight weeks trade in all my life. (1)

On workmanship he commented, early in the boom:

... goods are never put up well in these hurries. (2)

And:

... we have our men to pamper like spoiled bairns. (3)

As the boom subsided he was of the opinion that:

The business done this year has been monstrous in quantity and infamous in its management. (4)

At the peak of the demand he was able to say that:

Our consumption of coarse wool is not exceeded by that of any house in the country. (5)

(1) Thos. Cook to Addams, 2 May 1835.

(2) Thos. Cook to R.T. Horner, 7 May 1835.

(3) Thos. Cook to John Chadwick, 24 May 1835.

(4) Thos. Cook to Robert Nicholson, 20 Feb. 1836.
This concern with quality of manufacture strengthens the view that Cook was concerned with long-run rather than short-run profit maximisation.

(5) Thos. Cook to A.S. Henry and Company, 10 Aug. 1835.

And:

At full stretch we are making £3,000 worth
of blankets per week. (1)

To supplement his own manufacture, Cook toured the 'heavy
woollen' district, buying blankets when he could and adding
a $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. margin to his purchasing costs before
invoicing these fabrics to his customers. He also put out
wool and yarn to nearby mills, but often experienced difficulty
in getting cloth or the materials returned. In the spring
of 1835 he was trying to ease the strain on his own capacity
by putting-out orders to Witney, but he found the Witney
makers working to their limits. (2) Towards the end of the
year he reported to the Henrys on the West Riding situation:

... there is not a loom in the trade
out of work. (3)

He had earlier told the same correspondent:

I never expect to see a Demand like this
again ... and we must not throw our old
customers overboard. (4)

(1) Thos. Cook to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 25 June 1835.

(2) Thos. Cook to Early and Company, Witney, 25 March 1835.

(3) Thos. Cook to A.S. Henry and Company, 28 Oct. 1835.

(4) Thos. Cook to A.S. Henry and Company, 30 April, 1835.

Cook's view of the avalanche of orders from the United States was clearly that it was a short-run phenomenon and during these two years he was striving to keep his share of the home trade, copying French blanket designs ⁽¹⁾ (not only for the New Orleans trade but also for the South American and West Indies markets), experimenting with the use of the cotton warp, ⁽²⁾ and beginning to export directly 'ladies' cloths and Spanish stripes' to the Chinese market, having appointed an agent at Canton. ⁽³⁾ These fabrics, brightly coloured, were a type of superior flannel manufactured from fine wool, highly finished with a short nap and usually made in 56 inch widths, 18 to 22 yards in length. The partners bought these cloths in the 'balk' in the Leeds White Cloth Hall and prepared them for final despatch at Dewsbury

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- (1) 'We could manufacture more of these French blankets but they require a peculiar gear of which we have not a full suit for all our looms.' Hagues, Cook and Wormald to A.S. Henry and Company, 8 Jan. 1836.
- (2) 'We now manufacture some goods with a cotton warp, the difference in the cost arises in the warp only ... and will affect the goods to the extent of 6-8 per cent.' Hagues, Cook and Wormald to A.S. Henry and Company in same letter as above.
- (3) Wetmore and Company, Canton.

(1)
 Mills. Prior to 1835 the firm had sold these cloths,
 directly or indirectly, ⁽²⁾ to American houses who were then
 able to export them to China without encountering the
 difficulties which confronted British exporters as a result of
 the charter privileges of the East India Company. ⁽³⁾

Cook noted at the end of the boom in July 1836:

... we shall in three weeks be without any
 work ... the home trade is flat ... (4)

- (1) Frank Goodall was in charge of the finishing operations on these cloths and he appears to have commanded the full confidence of the partners. He assisted with the purchasing of fabrics in the Leeds Hall.
- (2) 'With one house for fifteen consecutive years we have done from £7-10,000 annually in Ladies' Cloths' Thos. Cook to Dixon, 4 Feb. 1838. The house concerned was Jones, Gibson and Ord of Manchester.
- (3) Until 1834 the sole right and exclusive trading privileges of moving merchandise into and out of 'the dominions of the Emperor of China' was, as far as British subjects were concerned, legally vested in the East India Company. The East India Company invited tenders from time to time for cloth and blankets destined for that market, but their regulations and general conduct of the trade did not attract the partners except at times when they wished for such orders to keep their mill at work. The orders sent by the partners to American importers before 1834 led them to believe that the trade, once freed, might be a lucrative one and they chose Wetmore and Company as their Canton agent on the basis of intelligence provided for them by Thomas Dixon of New York.
- cf. M. Greenberg, British Trade and the Opening of China, 1800-42, (Cambridge, 1951), esp. chaps. i-iv, vi and vii.
- (4) Thos. Cook to Robert Nicholson, London, 5 July 1836.

The experience of the high demand for goods had convinced the partners that they could no longer continue to operate their country bank as well as their manufacturing interests and the banking function was brought to an end in May of this year. Some of their old customers complained and Cook's reply to one of them contained a comment:

... perhaps you are right about the Bank, but our Mills business is now more important and we did not dare to enter into the race of lending money. (1)

Just before the boom subsided the partners indicated that they had '£6,000 to £8,000 employed in the trade of consigning goods'⁽²⁾ to America and this represented less than five per cent. of their total sales to the United States in each of these two years. Although consignment business was still part of the commercial arrangements of the trade, the partners had obviously succeeded in relegating it to an extremely subordinate position in their transatlantic affairs.

A calculation of the value of the firm's American sales which Cook prepared for 'lobbying' purposes at the time of the concerted agitation against the wool import duties, in 1843, enables us to see the relative size of the 'boom'

(1) Thos. Cook to George Sheard, Batley, 14 May 1836.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 17 May 1836.

of 1835-6 in the table below:

(1)

Hagues, Cook and Wormald, Sales of
Goods - chiefly blankets - to the
United States' Market, 1833-42

<u>Year</u>	<u>£</u>
1833	118,491
1834	103,175
1835	161,369
1836	154,738
1837	80,586
1838	64,769
1839	112,309
1840	49,108
1841	77,148
1842	49,488

For one particular customer - Crofts and Stell of Manchester - the magnitude of the change in demand during the period 1834-6 is indicated by the accounts kept with that house by the partners for the early months of each of these years:

(1) From a letter written by Thos. Cook to George W. Wood, M.P., London, 20 June 1843.

(1)

Crofts and Stell account with Hagues, Cook
and Wormald, 1 Jan. to 16 May in each year,
1834-6

<u>Year</u>	<u>£</u>
1834	4,515
1835	16,889
1836	23,790

Cook was also concerned by the effect of the boom on the likely course of wool prices and, at the beginning of 1837, he wrote to Nicholson:

The business of the last two years has given to the small manufacturers each some additional capital which they appear disposed to invest in raw materials. (2)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 20 May 1836. This particular house and some other of the Manchester and Liverpool exporters ordered their goods from the partners during the early months of the year in order to take advantage of a five per cent. discount on price which Hagues, Cook and Wormald allowed in order to encourage the receipt of orders 'in the dead season of the trade.' This practice enabled the partners to spread their manufacturing operations for the American market over a longer period of the year than would have been possible otherwise.

(2) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 1 Jan. 1837.

The effect of this was to increase the demand for the fibre at a time of year when, as we have noted, Cook normally found the market quiet and took the opportunity of building up the partners' wool stock. (1)

The partners increased their capacity to cope with the large demands of 1835-6 by various ad hoc measures rather than by any permanent enlargement of their plant and equipment, but the chief disadvantage of their 'flexible' response to the hump of orders was that they lost control over the quality of their production. Goods were made at home, put out to be manufactured, bought in Heckmondwike market, or partly made elsewhere and finished at Dewsbury Mills. With such a varied mode of production it was inevitable that there was considerable unevenness of fabrication and Cook exclaimed that:

Goods are not being made - wool only
is put together ... (2)

The partners had to contend with a demand for higher wages in February, 1836, which could hardly have been unexpected, and Thomas Cook compared the firm's wage rates with those of his competitors. Mr. Richard Ward of Dewsbury

(1) See below, pp. 731 et seq.

(2) Thos. Cook to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 8 June 1836.

was asked about his rates for spinning and Edwin Firth was questioned on the subject of his payments to in and out-weavers. Cook recognised that wages must be increased at this time, but wished to keep his costs in line with those prevailing elsewhere in the 'heavy woollen' district:

Our men are getting bad to manage ... if we grant the spinners' demands the weavers will then turn out next ... but still our men are the best conducted so far in the parish. (1)

In April, Cook was writing to some of his customers:

We have all considered best to give the wages ... it will add to the goods $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. in cost ... the standing of the men has thrown back work a fortnight. (2)

The main consideration in Cook's mind during this episode seems to have been that he was expecting 'a panic inevitably' and he did not wish to be burdened with high labour costs when the downturn came. On the other hand, there seems to have been a considerable time-lag between the onset of this particular trade boom and the organised demand for higher wage payments.

In these four years of trade the firm had been faced with a large expansion of demand from the United States

(1) Thos. Cook to Edward Clarkson, Earlsheaton, 29 Mar. 1836.

(2) Thos. Cook to A.S. Henry, 6 April 1836.

which had exceeded the productive capacity of Dewsbury Mills by a considerable margin. Fortunately, the existence of under-utilised spinning and weaving machinery in the 'heavy woollen' district enabled the partners to meet calls upon them from merchants in the American trade without serious delay, and without major disappointment regarding delivery dates which might have lost for the partners some valuable connections. They were assisted in this achievement by the goodwill which they obviously enjoyed amongst the majority of their smaller neighbours, and by their reputation for prompt payment for work done and for fairness of treatment in cases of dispute over workmanship or materials employed. The influx of extra financial capital into the enterprise, following the winding-up of the country banking business, was a strong support to the firm in 1836 and it provided an extra margin of safety in extending credit to United States' customers, and in allowing the partners to expend more of their liquid funds on wool buying at strategic times during the period. The frequent comments of Thomas Cook on the question of quality of production, which appear in the correspondence books at the height of the demand, suggest that a long-run view of profits was being taken and that the concern of the partners at this time was to use the enhanced demand for their goods as a means of strengthening their position in the trade, rather than for quick returns.

Depression

The American demand for goods from the partners was cut by nearly a half in 1837 compared with the previous year, as is illustrated in the table on page above. In March of 1837 at a time when the activity at the mills would normally be quickening in response to the beginning of the season's trade, the partners were complaining that:

We shall ... unless work comes soon be reduced to one-third employment. (1)

Soon afterwards they were observing:

There is now scarcely any work done for America - the whole trade appears money fast. (2)

And in the summer, Thomas Cook was passing through one of his periodic bouts of pessimism regarding his interest in the trade:

... we are so mauled by the stoppage of these London Houses ... what awful times we live in. (3)

At the end of June the partners were writing down the value of their wool and cloth stocks:

... in order to bring our affairs to what they really are. (4)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to William Sandwith, Scarborough, 31 March 1837.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 30 May 1837.

(3) Thos. Cook to Dixon, 8 June 1837.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 25 June 1837.

In this year, Thomas Cook wrote one of his rare letters concerning the firm's products for the foreign trade in a comprehensive manner; his extended discussion of the topic deserves reproduction in full:

My Dear Sir,

I wish to cram you about the Blanket Trade before you go across the great waters.

The blanket goods sent to America consist mainly of London Duffils and Point Blankets for Negro use and of Mackinaw Blankets for the Indian trade and for also being cut up for coats. Rosed Blankets and Witney Blankets for ordinary bed purposes and the following observations apply to each.

'London Duffils' appear to have taken their name in contradistinction to 'Bristol Duffils', which latter are made in 15 blankets to the piece and go largely to the West Indian islands. London Duffils are made 16 blankets to a piece and are made plain, and we manufacture them at various weights and sizes in about four qualities - you know that up to 3s. the blanket the goods will pass at 5 per cent. of duty - and in fact to 6s. the blanket provided they be middle-striped and the half blanket measure full 56 by 38 inches in size. The coarse goods may be got 54-5 by 72 to 74 inches for the 3s. blanket, and all the others 62-4 by 72 for the same duty. The four qualities we designate:

Coarse:	present price at	16 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	
Good common:	"	"	" 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.
Medium:	"	"	" 20d.
Fine:	"	"	" 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. (1)

Formerly the second of these qualities went in the greatest abundance, but of late years the coarse have competed or exceeded these goods

(1) Cook's prices here refer to blankets by the pound weight.

in quantity sent - while the fine also are partially bought - but from the price you will remark that the fine goods are necessarily thin, but being good wool and being fine made, look well and shewy.

It may be unnecessary again to repeat that a larger and heavier blanket can go at the low duty provided the real pair do not exceed 12s. and the half blanket be not less than 56 by 38 inches - by middle-striping and not over 3s. Without again going over this - this remark applies to all blankets. We may add that to Charleston many fine London Duffils go - 72 by 76 inches, weighing from 60 even up to 90 lbs. !!! for the 16 blanket piece.

The Twilled Blankets go by the name of Points, although many of these goods go without being pointed. We make those goods in the same qualities as the London Duffils and about the same sizes can be made at the prices, not quite so wide perhaps, as a plain made piece the same weight the blanket can always be gotten better size than a twilled one. Twilled goods or Points are made 20 blankets to the piece, and the prices in each reckoned by weight, generally run lower by $\frac{1}{2}$ d. the lb. than plain made London Duffil goods - as 16, 18, 19 $\frac{1}{2}$, 21 for each of the four sorts.

The name 'Points' formerly truly designated the goods, and they were pointed 1, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$, 2, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$, 3, 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ points etc. Each particular point was expected to be a certain width, length and weight the blanket, for instance a 'three point' would be 58 by 74 inches and weight 4 lbs. the blanket, but the march of intellect makes a 'point' mean anything or nothing as we now mark goods frequently as high as four points, not over 38 by 56 inches and $\frac{1}{8}$ lb. the blanket. (1)

-
- (1) The 'point' as a mark of value to the North American Indians and the Eskimos had, it seems, undergone an inflationary disturbance.

Both in London Duffils and Twilled Goods an additional cost of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. or even more per lb. is made by additional sized striping, and expensive colours. We ought to say that we make a few coarse things still lower in price - as low as $15\frac{1}{2}$ d. for Duffils, 15 d. for Points.

Mackinaw Blankets are now manufactured of all sorts of weights and sizes and 'pointed', so the real Indian trade Mackinaws are commonly as follows: the goods are mostly striped with indigo dyed wool and occasionally some are scarlet striped which is about $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. more expense:

1	Point	36 by 46 inches,	21lbs. 12oz.
$1\frac{1}{2}$	"	39 by 48 "	3 lbs.
2	"	44 by 56 "	4 lbs.
$2\frac{1}{2}$	"	54 by 63 "	6 lbs.
3	"	58 by 74 "	8 lbs.
$3\frac{1}{2}$	"	64 by 82 "	9 lbs. 8 oz.
4	"	70 by 86 "	10 lbs. 8 oz.

We make Mackinaws in five qualities:

Mock Mock or Coarse about 18 d. per lb.
with Indigo Heads.

Mock or Common about 20 d. per lb.

Medium about 23 d. per lb.

Fine about $25\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.

Super about 28 d. per lb.

Super Super about $29\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.

All these sorts have Indigo Heads and go chiefly for the Indian trade.

A good many Mocks go, fancy perhaps for the Louisiana trade - you know a many Mackinaws also go dyed various colours as Scarlet (7 d.), Green (2 d.), Gentianella Blue (7 d.), Dark Blue (6 d.), Brown (2 d.) and Drab ($1\frac{1}{2}$ d.) and to the white price the extra sum, per lb., placed beside each will have to be added for dyeing. (1)

(1) Blue and Scarlet were obviously the most expensive dyeing processes. The partners apparently did their piece-dyeing themselves.

Witneys go at all prices - according to weight - and accordingly as they shall be expensively fancy striped. Rosed blankets are the same, but we, however, make a lower article. The prices noted, excepting for Witneys and Rosed are those being paid now by the Leeds merchants here, 2 months Bill from day of delivery, and our own made goods will be more by $\frac{1}{2}$ d., but they are a penny better - and with the exception of Rosed and Witneys our prices to you will exceed by 2 per cent. what we named generally - pray note this. (1)

(1) Thos. Cook to Mr. Buckingham, London, 20 Feb. 1837.

Buckingham was a partner in the house of Ross, Mitchell and Company of London with whom the partners were now beginning to do business in the American trade. Thomas Cook appears to have enclosed a price list with this letter which he then proceeded to amend in the closing sentence of his 'lecture'. His reference to the Leeds merchants buying blanket goods in the Dewsbury district and presumably also at Heckmondwike market indicates that he was still, apparently, endeavouring to keep the firm's prices to customers below what he knew the Leeds merchants were paying to the small makers who were his competitors. On balance, this should have given the partners a marked competitive advantage as the Leeds merchanting houses would add their customary commission to their own costs before invoicing their goods to houses in London, Liverpool and Manchester. It must be remembered, however, that comparative quality of fabrics was always difficult to judge exactly and the Leeds merchanting houses possessed 'goodwill' and strong connections with exporting merchants which would tend to outweigh some of the price advantage which Cook and his partners might obtain on certain lines. There is also the related fact that the Leeds merchants bought some goods in the Dewsbury district in the 'balk' which they then finished in Leeds and they may or may not have possessed superior finishing facilities to those existing at Dewsbury Mills. The surviving data are not adequate to enable us to answer these questions with any certainty.

In August 1837, the partners were complaining of countermanded orders coupled with difficulties resulting from the tardiness with which payments were being received from the United States for those goods which the partners had been able to despatch to that market:

... we are much impoverished for means at present by the locking up of so much capital among our American correspondents. (1)

And:

Of houses in Yorkshire, in our way, none have had the disappointments to encounter of a tithe that we have had ... (2)

In this same month there were signs of some recovery in the home trade, but Cook was pessimistic:

... there is a prevailing sentiment that we are to have a winter of bad trade. (3)

A few orders for the Australian market brightened the picture in the autumn and Cook commented to an Irish correspondent:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jeremiah Carter, London, 1 Aug. 1837.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Dixon, 28 Aug. 1837.

(3) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 31 Aug. 1837. In this same letter he instructed Nicholson to bid for 'the East India Company's blankets', but the nature of the bid is indecipherable. An order was received in respect of this bid in the following April for '10,000 blankets'.

... we normally put up a great many goods for Sydney and Hobart ... light, medium, and extra medium Witneys. (1)

At the end of the year the partners recorded that 'only three American houses have paid us their accounts promptly' and 'we have charged 5 per cent. interest on outstanding monies' (2)

In his review of the trading experiences of 1837, Cook noted that during the year wool prices had fallen 'on an average 33 per cent., whilst blanket prices have fallen 25 per cent.', (3) despite this favourable trend from the manufacturer's point of view, Cook's further opinion was that:

The Leeds merchants may have made profits but we doubt if the Manufacturers have in the bulk obtained the cost of their goods. (4)

The retardation of payments from the United States was the

- (1) Thos. Cook to Hague and Dean, Dublin, 1 Nov. 1837.
A little earlier he had noted to another customer:
'We put up a deal of blankets for New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.'
Thos. Cook to William Smith, Liverpool, 24 June 1837.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, New York, 14 Dec. 1837.
- (3) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 14 Dec. 1837.
- (4) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, Manchester, 21 Dec. 1837.

principal factor which produced this opinion, apparently, in Cook's mind. This problem might have caused serious difficulties for the firm, especially as the home trade did improve in the autumn and liquid capital was required. However a happy circumstance had augmented the firm's financial resources in 1836 and the monetary strain did not create any lasting prejudicial effects to the firm's stability. The country bank at Dewsbury had been wound up in the summer of that year and, after all the affairs had been finally settled, the bank's capital was largely transferred by its owners into the blanket enterprise. Thomas Cook was pleased, but surprised, at this development:

I had no notion that more than half the Bank's capital would go to the Mills and thus fill this concern with money beyond my anticipation. We did not, therefore, use you for either loans or discounts during the severe money pressure ... of the year ... (1)

One other problem with which the partners had to contend in the second half of 1837 was that the exchange was unfavourable for transmitting funds from the United States and from South America. This particular hazard was mitigated to some extent by moving into produce and the partners instructed the house to:

(1) Thos. Cook to The Manager, West Riding Banking Company, Huddersfield, 17 Jan. 1838.

... have our balance invested in Coffee and shipped to New York from Rio. (1)

Generally, they were able to say that:

Some of our correspondents have done well in remitting us in Cotton, which brought their Money at 98 about. (2)

On the whole, the partners seem to have escaped serious injury, although they obviously experienced a fright and they were not pleased at the action of the Bank of England during the crisis:

If the Bank of England ... had been determined to fell the Trade of this Town to the earth ... the attack could not have been more surely planned ... nevertheless ... we have got ... nearly the whole of the debts paid. (3)

The firm's experience in this year also coloured the attitude of the partners to the China trade and, in April 1838, they advised Wetmore and Company:

You will make our returns in Bills ... produce, or in such form as you deem the most judicious return. (4)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Mester Gall and Company, Manchester, 20 Jan. 1838. Of an earlier letter received through that house the partners had noted:

'Our five bales of goods which cost us £231.13s.8d. sold for 1.528.570 - plenty of figures but downright Greek to us ...'

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, 11 April 1838.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Dixon, 25 April 1838.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, Canton, 27 April 1838. This letter accompanied an invoice for 50 trusses of Ladies' Cloth.

The American trade remained dull during 1838 and, in the summer, various correspondents were urging the partners to try the consignment method as a means of increasing their business. The partners, however, were not to be moved:

... having now as large a sum of money as we ought to have in this New York trade, we ought not by a hope of profit to carry it larger, as at home it may be turned over many times at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. before we can expect a return from the United States. (1)

Early in 1839, the partners wrote a long letter to Dixon reviewing the trade to his market and indicating their share of the American blanket imports for a number of years.

Last year our goods were depressed below the cost - much below it - and we doubt not that all the goods sold for export from January to June averaged a loss of 10 per cent. We anticipate this year an export demand in the trade of this district, double to that of last year at the least. Last year was one of great falling off - we may be wrong - but we fancy that no House in the Trade maintained so good an average as ours - and our export trade was not one-third of the two previous years - nor much over one half the average of the previous four years. The total blankets sent to the United States for the last six years is annexed as declared by the United States Government and made into sterling at the now rate of exchange.

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Van Arsedale and Company, New York, 25 Aug. 1838.

Blankets imported into the
United States

1833-8

Year	From France	From Great Britain	Other Imports	Total	From Us
	£	£	£	£	£
1833	20,733	241,373	712	262,818	118,492
1834	27,074	212,332	76	239,482	103,175
1835	29,647	389,536	-	419,183	161,370
1836	49,497	445,620	513	495,630	184,739
1837	26,024	180,454	-	206,478	80,586
1838	-	-	-	-	64,770

Now whenever the return shall come for 1838 we doubt not that in no former year did we supply so great a proportion of the whole export as we did in 1838 to the United States - we hope this year for twice the trade of last year, but the United States' merchants are much crippled and cautious. (1)

Cook's figures illustrate the boom of 1835-6 in relation to the years that lie on either side of this period and also indicate the relatively small hold which the French exporters had on this market at this time. The avidity with which Cook seized upon the opportunity to copy French blanket designs serves to indicate also the export consciousness and the sensitivity of Cook to foreign rivalry at this time, despite the fact that the French could only really have been

(1) Thos. Cook to Dixon, 8 Jan. 1838. Dixon supplied the raw figures to Cook from the Congressional returns. The 'year' used as the time period in this table ended on September 30.

nibbling at his market in the 'thirties. The share of the total market held by the partners was large considering the number of manufacturers engaged in the trade in the West Riding and at Witney. It was as high as 45 per cent. in 1833, but this proportion fell during the 'boom' to 39 per cent. in 1835 and to 36 per cent. in 1836. It was back again, however, at 39 per cent. in 1837 and, if Cook's conjectures were correct, was probably above 40 per cent. in 1838. This variation in the proportionate share enjoyed by the partners over these years is not hard to understand. During the period of peak demand the partners were refusing orders and some marginal suppliers of blankets probably found a temporary footing in the market. The French manufacturers were able almost to double their sales to the United States between 1834 and 1836. As the demand subsided many of these marginal suppliers would be pressed out of the market by the cessation of orders to them or by losses incurred on consignments of goods which they risked speculatively. It is likely, however, that the firm connections which the partners had with the major and well-established merchanting houses would ensure their receiving orders even though the market was generally shrinking. It is not possible to draw the conclusion with any certainty that the partners were more competitive in this market in time of falling demand than they were in years of prosperity, although Cook was fond of reiterating that:

It does not appear at all probable that anyhouse can furnish blanket goods on terms cheaper than ours, quality being equal. (1)

In 1839 the American trade was slow in establishing itself as far as the partners were concerned, but by the end of March, Cook reported that:

We have a very fair amount of orders for the United States considering the time of the year for delivery May, June, July - about 1,700 bales, say £70,000 at least. (2)

In the following month he was stating to Russell:

All your countrymen are not absolutely frightened off, we find, although they bore with small gimlets ... (3)

Meanwhile, the shoddy trade was experiencing a buoyant demand and:

Batley for some time past was never known so busy - and we are advised that the goods are mainly for the U.S. trade ... (4)

- (1) Thos. Cook to John Cryder, London, 2 April 1838.
- (2) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 26 March 1839. About £20,000 worth of this total seems to have been put out as orders to the smaller manufacturers of the district. The partners were anxious at all times to maintain the productive capacity of the trade as a whole and were interested in the continuing independence and vitality of the small clothiers. This attitude was not unlike that which was attributed to Benjamin Gott in his relationships with the small makers.
- (3) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, New York, 5 April 1839.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 2 July 1839.

In the autumn Cook was again writing to Russell:

... by all means tell your people not to remit our money till February if there is a likelihood of the Exchange going down to par or even to 4 per cent. and on no account even to buy cotton... (1)

At the end of the year the partners were lending money to a Manchester exporting house:

... and as we may not want all our means early in the spring, I am instructed to say that in January you may have from us for a few months the loan of £3,000. (2)

Early in 1840, Cook was taking a gloomy view of trading prospects which was not an incorrect speculation as events for the next two years were to prove. His main grumble was levelled against the mismanagement of the monetary authorities of the credit supply available to the economy and perhaps his own direct acquaintance with country banking endows his opinion with some force and relevance:

We fear ... a recurrence of the years from 1820 to 1822 and 1826 to 1829 inclusive unless a relaxation in the stringency be made at an early date. We mean a slow and gradual decline, imperceptible but continued - till we get to crushingly low rates which will compel a higher circulation of money - and then another great jump in prices. There is a great offset to this in the power of the Joint Stock Banks to neutralize the doings of the Bank of England. But no common

(1) Thos. Cook to Russell, 22 Nov. 1839.

(2) Thos. Cook to George Hodges and Company, Manchester, 3 Dec. 1839.

tradesman knows how to conduct his affairs under the backwards and forwards movement of the Bank. (1)

The year was generally less active in a trading sense than 1839 and in his annual review of the state of business, Cook said:

We think that the amount of goods sent during the past year from this neighbourhood to the U.S. does not exceed three-quarters of what went during the preceding year. Of profit there has been none and the sales of low pilots and flushings have been attended with such loss as to produce absolute ruin among many manufacturers of these descriptions of goods. Blanket manufacturers though seriously injured have not been so frequently ruined ... (2)

In a letter to a Dublin firm of linen merchants the partners said, in 1841:

... we have got, by doing business at small profits, a connection inferior to few Yorkshire tradesmen. (3)

But although the profits were small, the risks were large and at the same time it was necessary to write to another house:

Do you ever hear anything of the Coffee from Rio? Your market is an awfully long one - returns come more quickly from China. (4)

(1) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, Manchester, 3 Jan. 1840.

(2) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, 2 Jan. 1841.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Pim Brothers and Company, Dublin, 21 Jan. 1841.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Mester Gall and Company, Manchester, 23 Jan. 1841. This statement seems slightly exaggerated in order to expedite some action on the part of Mester Gall and Company. It was taking 'about two years

In March, Cook reported to Russell that:

Trade has been bad here and at Batley for some time. In the China trade, some houses - Gott's for instance - did all through last year a large trade in that market and must have - if all go right - anticipated all other woollen houses) I fancy Barlings are connected with them in those large transactions.

As for your U.S. market ... I fear the trade has seen its halcyon days as respects England. (1)

This latter observation suggests a most pessimistic view of the prospects of trade revival in the American market and probably was engendered by Cook's reactions to the 'great distress for work' which prevailed throughout the 'heavy woollen' district:

We are in a bad state here ... two-thirds of the folk are unemployed. (2)

Footnote (4) continued from previous page

to bring ourselves round into funds again' in the China trade. This time span was measured from the investment of cash in fine wool to the final receipt of actual cash from Wetmore's, but see below, p. .

- (1) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 1 March 1841.
- (2) Thos. Cook to A.S. Henry and Company, Leeds, 2 April 1841.

In the same month the partners detected a little brightness in the condition of trade:

We have heard of the proposed alteration in the 5 per cent. blanket duty, it will put an end to a great deal of trouble and scheming to avoid the upper duty. (1)

On the question of tariffs, Cook reiterated his views on the Corn Laws to a woolstapling correspondent in December:

An equitable tariff with America would bring much flour and prevent an alteration in the tariff against us - and the value of their flour would all go in our goods. The measure is one long thought of by people in the United States' trade - the difficulty of a partial commercial treaty is, however, great. (2)

In his review of the year, Cook assessed the immediate past and the immediate future as follows:

We have concluded another year of bad business, being ... the fifth in succession of serious disappointment and heavy loss to our branch of the woollen trade. We have known our working people much worse off than they have been the last year; indeed there has been an improvement of their condition, for there has been unquestionably a much large quantity of goods made in 1841

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, Manchester, 21 Oct. 1841. The Manchester houses played an important part in the firm's exporting activity and in an earlier letter to this firm the partners pointed out that:

'We have received some years over £100,000 from your Town and we do not recollect ... allowing more than $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. for Cash.'

(2) Thos. Cook to Thomas Legg, Bermondsey, 13 Dec. 1841.

than in 1840 and as the rate of Wages is the same here from year to year, their sufferings though great must have been in a measure mitigated.

The United States demand of 1841 must have exceeded by fifty per cent. that of 1840 for woollens. The concurrent opinion of the best informed among our American friends is that stocks of heavy woollens and blankets are exhausted in first hands in the States and that the Country is on the whole in a better state for receiving a large supply of those articles, and that a fair demand may with just reason be anticipated for the Fall Trade of this year - and unless these views be realised we see no hope of a successful business again arising here ... (1)

The 'fair demand' anticipated did not appear in 1842, however, and in August the partners were saying with some disappointment:

Our orders are now done and the Sales just about £20,000 less to the same date last year ... (2)

And to the same correspondent in September:

We fear there is nothing in store but a bad winter for trade. (3)

(1) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, 5 Jan. 1842.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to George Hodges, Manchester, 23 August 1842. Hodges was associated with the Russells of Manchester and New York.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Hodges, 15 Sept. 1842.

In October they reported to Russell:

We have sold the 98 bales of Cotton at 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. It may not be judicious so to tell you, but the prices fixed are below what we fix to any other House for the present. We look forward with apprehension as to our winter's trade and are fearful it must be still worse than any we have had for many years. Money is easy and the profitable employment of it difficult. Are there any of your Country's securities that you look at with moderate confidence? If your exchange shall go a little lower an export of Gold would pay a fair interest. (1)

Seeking other markets and reducing costs were other responses to the depression made by the partners. To a London house in the Colonial trade they wrote:

... from our long familiarity with the Australian market for goods we feel sure that we can give satisfaction. (2)

George Hodges, in Manchester, was informed:

It will become necessary to reduce our wages here. (3)

A few days later the partners recorded that:

... we have this day made some arrangement with our men which will effect a saving of about three-sixteenths of a penny per lb. on goods. Trade is deplorably depressed and we must do all in our power to find some bread for those who look up for employment to us. (4)

-
- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, New York, 10 Oct. 1842.
 (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Messrs. Brickles and Company, London, 25 Oct. 1842. A small order for New Zealand blankets resulted from this enquiry.
 (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Hodges, 31 Oct. 1842.
 (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to George Brettle and Company, London, 4 Nov. 1842. Some of their competitors in the Dewsbury district had reduced wages a few months previously.

The lack of orders led the partners to earn at least bank interest on some of their funds:

We could spare a few thousand pounds next week, if you can use it - say what rate of interest you can allow ... for £3,000 cash - if you do not take it we will send it to Sanderson and Company. (1)

In April:

We fancy at present we are doing about as much or more than as much as all the rest of the Blanket Trade. (2)

In May, Cook was expounding on the subject of the Corn Laws:

For our own part we have seen for four years last past so much of misery and destruction of property, that we are become indifferent as to who is Minister - but we would hope for some benefit from an alteration in the Corn Laws - all our experience is that the Labouring People are better off under cheap corn. (3)

In the same month the partners were busily scrutinising the passenger lists for customers from the United States and they calculated that:

... many parties, buyers of goods, have come by those ships and their intentions will be developed in a few days. (4)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Wilson, West Riding Union Banking Company, Huddersfield, 27 March 1841. He took it at 3 per cent.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 17 April 1841.
- (3) Thos. Cook to Gillespie Moffatt and Company, London, 15 May 1841.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to George Hodges, 18 May 1841.

These intentions, However, were not those of large-scale buying and, in July, the partners were becoming dispirited:

Our trade is very bad still and we have had over four years of it, another four will place half the country in a state of insolvency. (1)

To another blanket manufacturer they said, at this time:

Pray be careful in all goods you make for us - as we find our customers tiresome to manage. (2)

In September their affairs were little changed:

For four years last past we blanket-makers as a body have unquestionably lost a large sum of money, the prices of the day rarely ever giving the cost of production - and until the foreign trade revive we do not hope for a better state of things than to get back cost. (3)

English wool was maintaining its price during this year and some of the coarser qualities were much more expensive than Cook thought justifiable in the then state of demand, 'the farmers are rich and stubborn as to their wool', as a result the partners raised the price of their blankets and this

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.A. and G. Maxwell, Liverpool, 20 July 1841.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to D. and G. Stephenson, Chickenley, 24 July 1841. July was not entirely black - the Coffee came from Rio !
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Rennie Brothers, Dublin, 3 Sept. 1841.

(1)
action did not help them to enlarge their order book.

There was some improvement in this year in the rapidity with which payments were made for those blanket orders from America which were received and fulfilled by the partners, but the remittances which came home in the form of cotton were not all satisfactory to the partners. In October Russell was informed:

Cotton remittances this year have been very bad ones - at present they cost perhaps 15-18 per cent. on the exchange.

We are disposed to receive from you part of our money in Cotton, provided one half of it can be sent forward invested in that article and laid down at Liverpool of fully fair quality in either Mobile or Orleans at not exceeding 6d. per lb. including all and every charge.

If fair quality cannot be gotten so well as inferior, then take other qualities in price proportioned to their quality, taking 6d. as the standard for fully fair. If 'good middling' could be obtained including every charge at Liverpool at 5½d. it might probably result favourably. (2)

- (1) This increase in price also reflected the higher cost of Gallipoli and Rape oil at this time. The partners were experimenting with oil substitutes - oleagine, for example - but found that they affected the whiteness of the goods detrimentally. They were also buying Russian wool from Odessa as a means of lowering prime costs.
- (2) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, New York, 15 Oct. 1841. The house of C.H. and W. Russell and Company were by this time acting completely for the partners in the American trade, Thomas Dixon having retired from active merchanting, although he still occasionally corresponded with the partners giving them intelligence about the state of demand. Russells were being paid 5 per cent. commission on the value of their sales or indirect orders.

It is clear that a not inconsiderable knowledge of cotton and the cotton trade was one of the necessary requirements at this time for the woollen blanket manufacturer who was determined to stay in business and to supply his products to the United States market.

The wage changes initiated by the partners were intimated, in detail, to Edwin Firth of Heckmondwike and they appear to have amounted to some 5-10 per cent. of the money wages being paid by the partners before the lowering took place. The reductions were not uniform amongst all their employees, the billy spinners suffering the largest fall, and it would seem that the firm's general wage structure was 'tidied up' on this occasion. ⁽¹⁾ The prices of blankets were lowered soon afterwards and new price lists issued to the firm's main customers. To one customer, Thomas Cook noted that:

The price fall you see is from 11 to 18 per cent. (according to quality) in the last eighteen months, and prices are lower now than at any time since 1823, except for a few months between Nov. 1829 to March 1830. (2)

In his review of the year, Cook refrained from repeating at length the gloomy description of trade which by now he was

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Edwin Firth, Heckmondwike, 26 Nov. 1842.

(2) Thos. Cook to Crofts and Stell, 2 Dec. 1842.

beginning to accept as a permanent state of affairs:

... we despair of any recurrence of a trade again to give full employment to our population. (1)

He noticed, however, that:

The union of cotton warps to woollen wefts has diminished the consumption of Hoggett wool and reduced it to the price of Wedder. (2)

The advantages enjoyed by the partners which had proved so beneficial during the earlier years of boom also assisted the firm to survive the depression. The size of the partners' resources enabled them to withstand successfully 'the severe money pressure' of, 1837 and to avoid financial entanglements and credit difficulties. It also allowed the partners to enter more substantially into the long trade with the Chinese market and, although there were some disappointments with prices obtained for fabrics sent to Wetmore and Company at Canton and with some of the receipts from tea sales in London, the firm seems to have benefitted generally from this kind of business which provided some compensation for

(1) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, 9 Jan. 1843.

(2) *ibid.* Hoggett wool was the wool sheared from a year-old sheep which had not previously been clipped. The fibres of this wool were usually fine, strong and tapered in structure. They were eminently suited to the spinning of warp yarns. Wedder, or wether, wool was obtained from the second and subsequent shearings from rams and was less fine than hoggett wool.

the shrinkage of old-established markets. Over the rest of their activities, it was the reputation and esteem in which the firm was held and the possession of 'a connection inferior to few Yorkshire tradesmen' which prevented the enterprise from suffering that 'misery and destruction of property' which might have resulted, and did result for many smaller or less prudently conducted enterprises.

Recovery

In February of 1843 the partners had '£60,000 or more laid unemployed' and they were 'doing nothing or next to it',⁽¹⁾ and, in April, they were enquiring bluntly from Hodges:

Are we to have any business at all for the United States this season? (2)

Cook found the paucity of orders puzzling:

We understand that the Americans are making a many blankets themselves, but until their wages shall be lower we know not how they can with a hostile wool tariff compete with our coarse things. (3)

Despite the weakness of demand, the partners were not to be persuaded to resort to consignment business as a means of

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leyland and Bullins, Liverpool, 11 Feb. 1843.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to George Hodges, 5 April 1843.

(3) Thos. Cook to Horace Fuller, Manchester, 20 April 1843.

employing their resources:

We should not like to add to our shipment of blankets on consignment ... let the Market get short once of goods and we shall then have a chance of legitimate trade. (1)

In May the situation was healthier and the partners were able to tell Russell that:

... since the beginning of the month there has been somewhat more of activity and we are well employed, this is not so with our neighbourhood. (2)

In this month they were also active with their Chinese orders. 81 bales of Spanish stripes were despatched to Wetmore and Company and the advice note accompanying this delivery carried the comment:

We think that you will find this a nice little parcel, and we are persuaded we have nothing to fear from Belgium or foreign manufacturers, but your advice in all matters is desirable. (3)

- (1) Hague, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, Manchester, 8 May 1843. This particular house was particularly interested in the consignment trade and they made repeated attempts to persuade the partners to venture more largely into this kind of business, without success. On the other hand, the partners had a strong and profitable connection with this firm in normal times. For a discussion of the consignment method of selling blankets in the United States, see section iv of chapter I above.
- (2) Hague, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, 30 May 1843.
- (3) Hague, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, Canton, 11 May 1843.

In the making of Spanish stripes and Ladies' cloths, the partners put out a considerable portion of their work to the firm of Willans and Company of Leeds and, in 1843, they were comparing their costs of production with that firm as follows:

(1)

Cost of making a 72 yard length of Spanish stripes

<u>Process</u>	<u>Hague, Cook and Wormald</u>			<u>Willans and Company</u>		
	<u>£.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>	<u>£.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
Slubbing:	1.	5.	0.	1.10.	0.	0.
Warp spinning:	8.	0.		8.	0.	
Weft spinning:	6.	9.		12.	0.	
Warping:	7.	3.		7.	3.	
Size:	2.	0.		2.	2.	
Weaving:	1.10.	0.		1. 7.	0.	
Milling and Tentering:	8.	0.		9.	0.	
Burling:	2.	0.		2.	0.	
	4.	9.	0.	5.	0.	1.

The cost of making this cloth at Willans and Company's premises was thus a little over 12 per cent. greater than it was at Dewsbury Mills, but there was some difference in quality and the partners observed:

... we think your goods rather finer made, particularly in the weft, yours cost per yard in the making $1s.4\frac{3}{4}d.$, ours only $1s.2\frac{3}{4}d.$ but at Guiseley they can make them at less than we can here even ... (2)

Willans and Company were more efficient in weaving than the partners, probably due to the fact that they were then beginning to use power looms, whilst hand looms were still universal at Dewsbury Mills.

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to O. Willans and Company, Whitehall Road, Leeds, 29 April 1843.
 (2) *ibid.*

The claim of the partners that they were efficient in making 'a nice little parcel' of such goods was re-echoed a little later to another house:

We do not think that there is any House in our Country that gets up Stripes and Ladies Cloths for the China trade better than we do. (1)

At the end of that month, however, they had to write again to Wetmore and Company complaining that:

The tea you sent us will bring about 14d. per lb. and of course at that rate will leave a heavy loss to us indeed. (2)

In August the demand for blankets was far more lively and the partners 'were very busy' sending bales to Havana and Striped Witneys to Hamburg. (3) By September the level of activity had increased so much that:

... we never had so many orders at this period of the year for a long time ... (4)

Towards the end of the year the recovery in the trade was such that wool prices were rising and 'the movement

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, 27 May 1843. This was a strong claim to make with Gotts of Leeds in the same trade.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, 30 May 1843.
- (3) Their chief connection with the Hamburg trade was through the house of Hamilton Koch and Company in that town. They also had a little German trade with the firm of Charles Mott and Company of Liverpool.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to F. and W. Addams, Monaghan, 4 Sept. 1843.

in wool makes it necessary that we should advance our
 blankets', ⁽¹⁾ It is unlikely that the partners would have
 raised their prices so promptly, unless they expected demand
 to be well sustained, and their action did bring some reaction
 from the Irish wholesaling houses.

We do not wonder at the indisposition to
 pay the advance on goods, but at present
 we suspect that we are below Heckmondwike
 market in many sorts. (2)

One Irish house was informed that:

... the Leeds merchants are giving at
 Heckmondwike our prices, and an advance
 of ld. per lb. more on some sorts of
 goods over the summer rates. (3)

The partners were expecting the demand to be sustained and
 the movement in wool prices to force the price of blankets
 still higher and they intimated to a Manchester house that:

... we see a great risk in taking orders so
 much ahead - we may find that we have to
 supply them at a loss of 2 or 3 per cent.
 You have nearly 300 bales of goods now
 contracted for and you must in further
 orders get a latitude in price, this ... must

- (1) The prices were raised by '2½ to 3¾ per cent. over
 our price list.'
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to T.B. Cawood, Dublin,
 20 Nov. 1843.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Hugh Hannay, Belfast,
 6 Dec. 1843.

to be safe embrace one penny by the
lb. weight. (1)

In November of this year they had some painful things to say to Russell in relation to his recent agency activities on their behalf:

We duly received your account of sales of goods and remittance connected with them. It is very distressing to us to have to remark on these sales and to stress the dissatisfaction we feel at your slaughtering them at Auction in the manner you have done. You are not novices at business and your great intelligence as merchants ought to have prevented so wasteful a destruction of our property, and the more so as you know we could not be in a state to render needful so great a waste and to obtain funds for our business wants.

The loss of interest from the time of the goods being in Cash is about £1,000 or more than 20 per cent. of their cost, and our more immediate reason for writing to you is that we have similar goods in other hands sent at the same time, part sold and part left over till this year as were those with you - and the loss on them is not one-tenth of that made by you. It is this that gives us the most concern and the reason for the remark.

-
- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, 22 Dec. 1843. This was the first time for four years that the partners were receiving forward orders in anticipation of the spring trade for the United States and the movement in wool prices was now inhibiting their collection of such orders.

It is true that in their sales all their goods are sold privately - yours were all forced off at Auction. But this auction only adds about 6 per cent. to the expense and will not account for your allowing them to go at prices which it was quite impossible to import the goods at - and under the circumstances we do hope that the extra commission thrown on us by those auction sales will be returned to us.

We are firmly of the opinion that the loss on these goods and on the previous ones will give to us a loss exceeding the gain on the last £60,000 value of goods we sold to you. (1)

Thomas Cook was beginning to register some anxiety at this time regarding the domestic manufacture of blankets in the United States and the likelihood that this kind of production would spoil the market for the Yorkshire goods. In December he wrote to a Saddleworth cloth maker:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, New York, 22 Nov. 1843. This particular trading loss probably explains why the partners' profits in 1843 were little in advance of those for the two previous years. The partners here were writing with reference to a special consignment of goods which they had 'risked' at the bottom of the depression in 1842. This was one of the few occasions when they had departed from their normally prudent policy of keeping consignment ventures to a very tiny fraction of their total activities. Russell and S.D. Bradford of Manchester were the two houses entrusted with special consignments in 1842 and, as the letter above emphasises, Bradford's consignment turned out well, whilst Russell's was a disaster.

Will you be so good as to tell us what your brother thinks of the prospect for next year's trade and how our English goods compare with those being made in the United States. (1)

The reply he received does not seem to have confirmed him in his fears and early in the following year there was ample evidence of the beginning of an active American trade. Indeed, there was a shortage of wool to meet the demands of the trade and some orders for goods were being refused before the customary spring demand had arrived.

We have made a good deal of enquiry today as to what is doing among the small makers and we find quite an indisposition at all to take orders for coarse goods, that is so much the fact. We do not believe that the best makers would meddle with ordinary twill goods at less than 14d. per lb. and that, mind, for an article decidedly purchaseable last November and December at 11d. to 11½d. per lb. It arises from the inability to find wool ... (2)

To a very valued customer the partners had no hesitation in saying:

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- (1) Thos. Cook to Ralph Lawson, Delph, Saddleworth, 30 Dec. 1843. Ralph's brother was probably a member of the 'Saddleworth invasion' of the American market which occurred in the 1820s. cf. Heaton, 'Yorkshire Cloth Traders ...', pp. 279-81.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, 31 Jan. 1844.

... if you can procure the goods at the prices which you name we would recommend you by all means to do so without hesitation or delay... (1)

The sudden revival of demand was looked upon with some suspicion by Thomas Cook and he expressed some doubts about the trend of business to a Manchester friend:

... what is to be anticipated from the apparent quantity now being prepared? It may all be a pushing, early affair and we are alarmed at the idea of the risk. Russell slaughtered our goods ... and had all our business been consigned and at the Russells the last two years, it would have stripped us of half the money in our trade. (2)

The China trade was being watched closely by the partners and in February they wrote to Wetmores:

We are told some good tweeds are shipping for China - we can scarcely credit this - but you will keep us well advised by patterns as being things in the woollen trade adapted to your markets - ,as well as blankets - if any length, breadth, weight of those goods is desirable and the style of them. It would also be desirable that you should from time to time transmit to us very approved colours for Ladies' Cloths and Stripes. (3)

Although the risks of the American trade were still very great when orders were countermanded and when Russells misjudged the demand situation, the partners had by this time

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to George Brettle and Company, 2 Feb. 1844.
- (2) Thos. Cook to S.D. Bradford, Manchester, 27 Feb. 1844.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, Canton, 28 Feb. 1844.

acquired a highly satisfactory and established method of receiving payments from the Manchester houses engaged in this commerce:

The manner in which Henry and Company and Crofts and Stell, and all our American customers, pay us, is the 1st of the month for all goods in their hands before the 20th ... (1)

This arrangement of payments meant that they never gave more than six weeks credit to these houses in the normal course of business and they were careful to point this out to new customers seeking to commence ordering from the partners with novel ideas of "credit provision. Occasionally the partners found themselves in difficulty when they had made goods which the Manchester houses were not able to accept immediately:

... our stock is so heavy of goods and wool that at present we do require money ... but ordinarily it is the fact. (2)

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, Manchester, 5 Feb. 1844. This house was very 'tight' on their monetary payments and tried hard to extort privileges from the partners.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, 1 May 1844. The partners were running an overdraft at this time and 'paying in excess of 4 per cent. interest.'

In the summer events were such as to support, to some extent, Cook's earlier view that the trade was starting 'with a rush' and could not be sustained until August. In May, 1844 he noted that:

The trade is clearly stopping to the States and we are glad of it as it will probably now result in all the goods gone and still to go - being profitable. (1)

The China trade was proving more profitable at this time and the partners noted in a letter to Canton that:

The tea by the 'Bibby' resulted in a good remittance. We have had several orders for blankets from Hayter, Howell and Company of London, the East India packers of Blankets for China. They are good things and very handsome, some dyed scarlet, pink, orange, blue - but we send none on our own account as it would be injurious to those from whom we have the orders direct. (2)

But by November the picture had changed again and to the same correspondent it had to be reported that:

Our teas have sold at a very heavy loss ... the low-priced teas selling at 10d. to 11d. per lb. We can offer you no advice about remittances - all we desire is that in each case of sending us the result of our sales home, you will just

- (1) Thos. Cook to Richardson and Watson, New York, 31 May 1844. The partners' account with this house for the period February to June of this year was £11,058.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, Canton, 3 Aug, 1844.

(1)

do for us as if the transaction were your own.

The partners were, on balance, reasonably satisfied with their association with their Canton agents and in answer to an enquiry in 1844 they said:

We are not aware that Wetmore and Company have any agent in England at present, but Mr. Samuel Wetmore (the Head of the House) resides at New York. On the whole their transactions with us have proved satisfactory - and were it not in the instance during the war of their having sent about £4,600 of Tea home for themselves, but given us Bills - contrary to their practice - we could offer no complaint against them. (2)

There was a consignment of Spanish stripes and Ladies' Cloth from Dewsbury Mills made in January, 1845 which was valued by the partners at £2,236 and a few days later they stated to a London correspondent that:

-
- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, 5 Nov. 1844. The partners sold their tea in London through the agency of Fredk. Huth and Company. There was much speculation in the tea market at this time and the partners would have had to have had considerable knowledge of the tea trade to have avoided losses such as this. The time-lag in receiving consignments from Canton also added to the difficulties of always getting a favourable price through the medium of Huth and Company. The partners received special consignments of choice teas for their own consumption.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, Manchester, 14 Jan. 1845. The 'war' mentioned in this extract was the 'Opium War' which formally began in June 1840 and continued until the Treaty of Nanking in August, 1842. In the early months of this war the price of tea in London rose by 30 per cent.

... the £5,000 of fine wool in question would provide a year's stock for us in respect of China trade goods ... (1)

It would seem, therefore, that the business done with Wetmore and Company, at this time, constituted only some 5-6 per cent. (2) of the total production of the partners.

Their early orders in this year were large and they were making:

Cotton warp blankets ... for South America and the West Indian Islands. (3)

But there was some countermanding of American orders in February and Joseph Walker was requested to return home from London and to 'buy no wool'. (4) In a letter to Russell, the situation was described by Cook as follows:

Our trade looked promising in January, but we have from business houses and others many cancelled or suspended orders owing to the gloomy statement of money matters from your side - but the Canada trade is large.

- (1) Hague, Cook and Wormald to Christopher Perry, London, 24 Jan. 1845.
- (2) This calculation is based on the assumption that the firm's American trade at this time was of the order of £90 - 100,000 value per annum and that it constituted half the total value of trade done by the partners. Manufacturing costs and profit are assumed to represent about half the total selling price, whilst the cost of wool constituted the other half.
- (3) Hague, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, 5 Feb. 1845.
- (4) Hague, Cook and Wormald to Joseph Walker, 12 Feb. 1845.

We have a mania here in Rail Road affairs that would amaze you and half the kingdom appears infected with it - the profit has been in many lines 30 ... 200 per cent., nay more, and we are all in a fever of excitement and are forgetting the sober callings of life and living in lunar influence nearly without exception ... (1)

In May the American trade was still dull and Cppk was pessimistic about its future inna long-term as well as in a short-run sense:

The transit, the duty and other charges are a great burden for the British manufacturer to contend against ... it is quite impossible to get profits lower there than the British makers have had the last few years ... we must hope for some other market opening for the employment of our hands, but what it is to be we have no probable opinion as yet. (2)

He returned to this theme in a letter to Russell later in the month:

... we do not see why an article as easy to make as Blankets shall not be produced in a quantity as ample for the wants of your country by your own manufacturers ... (3)

- (1) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 27 Feb. 1845. The partners do not seem to have resorted to any serious railway investment, but George Hodges was 'bitten heavily' by the failure of a railway company and in his subsequent bankruptcy, which was further precipitated by the events of 1847, the partners suffered a loss of over £4,000.
- (2) Thos. Cook to George Birnie, Aberdeen, 21 May 1845.
- (3) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 31 May 1845.

There was some recovery in the trade later in the summer and the partners were able to estimate it at '75 per cent. of last year's demand.'⁽¹⁾

Some compensation was found for the decline in the American market in the growth of trade to China and to Australia. In the case of the former it was noted that:

The vast shipments of better goods to China has so improved that branch of trade that perhaps at no time was it so valuable. (2)

Of the latter market the partners explained their success in enlarging their business in this direction by careful attention to the condition of their consignments:

We send a many goods to Australia ... we always dry the goods ... as dry as it is practicable and by doing so we avoid mildew and spotted goods - by this means we avoid complaints which we have heard to be not uncommon to other Houses. (3)

The partners were ordering pattern books from a Manchester designer, early in 1846, and these were chiefly used for making some new lines for the China trade. The

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to James McCall and Company, New York, 22 July 1845. They revised their estimates to 80 per cent. at the end of the year.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, 20 Sept. 1845.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jacob Montefiore, London, 3 Sept. 1845.

designs which seem to have been particularly successful during the year were 'the Elephant design and the Spanish Bull Fight.'⁽¹⁾ Orders were obtained from various exporters to this market and the consignments to Wetmore and Company were increased, but by the end of the year they were slackening their efforts in this direction:

We have a larger amount of money afloat and in your hands at present than we proposed to devote to this trade, and we shall hold our hands till we get some returns. (2)

They were partly persuaded to take this decision by intelligence received through a Manchester house that blanket and cloth prices at Canton were tumbling.⁽³⁾

The American market was dull throughout the year. In the early months there was a marked absence of orders and Cook wrote to one Manchester house:

I wish you would send us part of your blanket order as we are very much in want of work - more so than for any of the last 10 or 15 years at this period of the year. (4)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to William Simpson, Manchester, 23 Jan. 1846.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, 1 Dec. 1846.
- (3) From Reiss Brothers of Manchester who were advised of this by their Mr. Ganz of New York.
- (4) Thos. Cook to Horace Fuller, 17 March 1846.

The state of this trade was disturbed for most of the year due to the discussions which were proceeding in Congress on the American tariff, and in the autumn the partners were speculating on the likely effects of the tariff change which (1) was then adopted.

We are of the opinion that the alteration of the United States tariff will lead to a greater demand for cotton warp goods in our trade. (2)

This opinion was fully supported by the progress of the transatlantic trade during the following fifteen years and the partners were alert to the possibilities of the sale of 'union' fabrics from the beginning. At the end of the year Thomas Cook had formed optimistic views as to the general effect of the tariff legislation and he was looking forward (3) to 'a much improved foreign trade for 1847.'

The partners had a welcome enquiry about goods for the Australasian trade, early in 1847, and their reply is indicative of changes in the fabrics entering into that trade:

(1) See above, p. 250 .

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Robert Rawston, Rochdale, 14 Nov. 1846. The partners bought the bulk of their cotton warps, at this time, from Rawston.

(3) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, 24 Dec. 1846.

We make goods for the New Zealand market ... the character has quite changed ... when we first put up goods for the New Zealand Company the articles were shoddy, coarse things, now the private trade requires a fine, thick article with a good colour and whipped at the ends - indeed some whipped with red worsted all round the blanket. (1)

We can make them with scarlet or dark blue borders ... we can supply 8 or 10 bales within a month. (2)

The American orders were not up to the partners' expectations in this year and in May:

Our opinion is that coarse goods going to the States will be small. (3)

In June:

The difficulty is great for turning big bills into cash ... and we have a state of money here we have never known in England before in our experience. (4)

At this time the partners were approached by one of the Manchester merchanting houses for financial assistance to meet the 'crisis' and Cook replied:

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to H.J. Willis and Company, 4 Feb. 1847.
- (2) *ibid.* 7 Feb. 1847.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, 13 May 1847.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Richardson and Watson, New York, 3 June 1847.

Our House I am sure will be glad, as I am, to be of use to you - and we can no doubt in some measure meet your convenience. But to show you how we are, I have before me near £20,000 in paper which, were I compelled to discount it, would neutralise ALL the profit made in several shipments of goods. We have big means and on all former occasions should deem ourselves rich at present, as we scarcely ever owe anything a week old and we know pretty well our engagements to arise will be compatible with our means. (1)

In the late summer, trade improved to the United States and at the end of the year Cook estimated that it 'has been much in excess of the two previous years, probably 20 to 30 per cent.' (2)

The prudence of the partners seems to have kept them clear of serious losses in this year, although the bankruptcy of one firm brought them a payment of £59.8s. instead of the £4,751.10s.4d. to which they were entitled, (3) and they were also forced to write in strong terms to an old and valued customer in respect of his non-payment for 15 bales of goods:

... we trust you as a British merchant in good faith, we do not expect you to be other - however, plainly say, one way or the other, that you will see us righted or you will not ... (4)

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- (1) Thos. Cook to William Stell, Manchester, 5 June, 1847. There is no record of how much accommodation the partners provided.
- (2) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, 27 Dec. 1847.
- (3) Gorton, Hodges and Company, Manchester, 9 Aug. 1847. Hagues, Cook and Wormald acted as receivers as they were the largest creditors.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to William Keith, Manchester, 21 Aug. 1847

Of the general effects of the events of 1847 upon the West Riding trade, Cook's view was that:

So far as we can learn this immediate neighbourhood has escaped the losses many must have by the great failures, nor do we hear that at Leeds, Bradford, or Huddersfield any prejudicial effects are likely to arise therefrom. The Cloth Trade has not been good - the Huddersfield fancy goods trade has been the best supported ... (1)

Much of the firm's correspondence in 1848 reflected the attempts of the partners to increase their trade to the United States and the political situation in Europe in that year. In January, Cook wrote:

... we send you by Sailing Packet ... a few samples of goods. Our works are so extensive that a very large quantity can be brought round by us in a short time and 1,000 or 5,000 pairs could be done in four weeks or sooner even ... it is clear enough no House in England can in the same time effect delivery of so large weight of goods ... (2)

The usual claims were also made regarding prices and quality, but this emphasis on speed of delivery was anew feature of the competitiveness of the partners in this market. In March they received from this correspondent a draft for £1,000 with orders to send an assorted supply of blankets as speedily as possible.

(1) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, 27 Dec. 1847.

(2) Thos. Cook to Grant and Barton, New York, 17 Jan. 1848.

In April they were writing to Russell:

Europe you will learn from our papers is in flames ... we have no fear of revolution here, though the Continental example is quite captivating to many of our disaffected.

All sorts of French goods are fearfully low ... every man in France is plundered of half his property held at Christmas ... land excepted. Money is easy here - trade bad ... (1)

In May, Cook explained to Reiss Brothers that:

We fear the calamities of Europe will react on you and we anticipate that America must feel somewhat the consequences of the disorganisation of the Old World. We think the blanket trade here for your market is likely to equal in extent that of last year - till lately we did not think it would be so, excepting in Blue Blankets, to which we a long time ago called your notice. Here, Robert Spedding has had a good many blues ... does he get the orders from Alder and Company? (2)

On the whole, the firm emerged from the year with a fair profit relative to the two preceding years, but it is evident that the partners were not entirely satisfied with the size of their trade to the States.

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Russell and Marsh, New York, 14 April 1848. Marsh had now joined the Russells in partnership, probably in 1845.

(2) Thos. Cook to Reiss Brothers, New York, 24 May 1848.

Russell supplied the partners with information in 1849 respecting the type and colour of blankets which were then most finding favour in his market. In November of that year they despatched to him an invoice and a consignment of goods:

We send to you ... eight bales of goods ... there are a few new mixtures in these bales. We thank you for your information and we assure you that any communication will be faithfully used. The price of potash is so great that we expect the dyers will want $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. more for the gentianella colour.

We are also desirous to send to your market a couple of cases of Black Cloth of a new and peculiar finish which we fancy will equal the best Belgian manner of dress. Could you put these into the hands of some cloth folks? What we want is to test them through some house largely conversant with the Cloth Trade. (1)

We have seen that there was some experimentation in the Leeds and Huddersfield regions in the late 'forties in the finishing of cloth. (2) The Continental makers were having some success at this time in the American market and the prevailing opinion in the West Riding was that the cloth finishing of their rivals was proving more acceptable to the customer than their own process, that of 'roll-boiling'. The partners were attempting to move into the fine cloth trade,

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Russell and Marsh, 1 Nov. 1849. There were usually 100 blankets packed in each bale.

(2) See above, p. 242.

to a limited extent, in 1849 and were alive to the opportunity of using a new technique to assist them in winning orders. Their efforts were never really successful and, after some ten years of tinkering with this trade, the partners allowed the experiment to lapse. Pilot cloths and beavers of a good finish constituted a small part of the partners' production in the 'thirties and 'forties, and the making of good quality broadcloth was not entirely a new trade to Dewsbury Mills in the late 'forties. But cloth-making was never regarded as anything more than a minor subsidiary to the blanket production and as the demand for blankets grew in the 'fifties, the partners allowed their enthusiasm for the fine cloth trade to dwindle. If the American demand for blankets had declined in the 'fifties, as Thomas Cook expected it would, a more ambitious and sustained attempt might have been made to establish the firm in the fine cloth market, although there was no firm tradition of fine cloth making in the Dewsbury area and such a development would have been a major departure in woollen manufacture in this district. This particular innovation, although of short duration, illustrates the determination of the partners to undertake new modes of production in the face of decline in their traditional trade in the 'forties. The experience gained in seeking new markets and making new lines was to stand them in good stead in the last quarter of the nineteenth century when the firm

lost a number of markets and had to develop new outlets in the face of tariffs and depression. Nothing more is revealed in the correspondence regarding the 'new and peculiar finish' imparted to the Black Cloths in 1849 and the partners reverted to 'roll boiling' in the 1850s. (1)

The year 1849 was an improvement on 1848 from the point of view of profits and a good trade was done in Blue Blankets. To meet the rising cost of potash and its effects on their final prices for goods the partners resorted to a greater use of logwood blue which was a cheaper, but more fugitive, dye and they could not always obtain the delicate shade of gentianella which was the fashionable choice in the market at this time. This apparently caused them some concern for the partners were very proud of the fact, and constantly reiterating, that:

... nobody can dye gentianella like
we can ... (2)

The recovery of the firm's profitability which came after 1843 was disturbed by the decline in trade in 1846 and by the 'crisis' in 1847, but by 1849 the annual profits were running at a level over 60 per cent. greater than in 1840.

(1) See above, p. 242.

(2) This particular extract from a letter written by the partners to Reiss Brothers, Manchester, 23 Feb. 1844.

The American market remained very volatile during the decade of the 'forties and, although the partners pursued their interests in that market at all times, it was the concentration, with some success, in other foreign markets: China, Australasia and Canada, together with an intensification of selling in the home market and a steadier winning of government contracts, which largely accounted for the improved trading position attained before 1850.

Consolidation

There was a brisk demand in 1850 and the partners were busy at Dewsbury Mills throughout that year. Thomas Cook, however, was disappointed with the woollen industry's profitability compared with what he could see going on in the nearby worsted manufacture:

Although the demand for goods is so great I do not think that in the Clothing and Blanket departments the profits are so great, in fact I believe them run down to a bare commission ... they were never less than now ... Not so at Bradford ... the trade there is rampant and the profits large. I believe that it is the large combination of cotton with wool joined to an improved taste in the goods which has wrought this extraordinary change. (1)

In this same letter, Cook's pessimism regarding the continuance of demand from America was once more revealed:

(1) Thos. Cook to George Maxwell, Liverpool, 22 Aug. 1850. cf. Sigsworth, Black Dyke Mills, pp. 43-52.

I cannot think that the present extraordinary employment can be maintained. The United States trade this and last year has been very great ... but it cannot last, I think. (1)

At the same time there were serious complaints from an American house regarding a consignment of goods from the partners and an 'allowance' of £874 was claimed from them to cover deficiencies. Cook's reply was forthright:

We have for more than twenty years past done business for your States involving millions of Sterling and the whole claims made upon us will not amount to anything like the sum you talk of ... we have not seen the goods since they left us and cannot know what be wrong with them. Without prejudice to you or to ourselves we will to end the matter allow you £140 ... and that will, be a lesson that we are not soon to forget. (2)

At the end of the year the partners were predicting a higher demand for their goods in 1851 and indicating past and likely prices for one type of blanket as follows:

	<u>1847</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1851</u> <u>Probable</u>
Price of Duffil No. 91 8 pairs the piece, 35 lbs. weight:	38 <u>s</u> .	37 <u>s</u> .8 <u>d</u> .	40 <u>s</u> .

(1) *ibid*.

(2) Thos. Cook to Grant and Barton, New York, 26 Aug. 1850. There seems to have been a general stiffening of attitude of American houses to the partners in the late 'forties and early 'fifties which suggests an intensification of competition.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Andrews MacDowall and Company, Charleston, 30 Dec. 1850.

They were also writing to Wetmore and Company in similar terms:

The 'Morier' with the Tea on board has arrived off the coast ... we see little hope of goods being done in your market as prices rule here for our quality of goods ... (1)

One of the partners' difficulties in this China trade was the timing of the disposal of tea consignment received and, in 1851, they changed their selling agent in Loddon. They had formerly relied on Frederick Huth and Company, but they now wrote to Ewart Macaughey and Company:

... we are so ignorant of the Tea trade that our best plan is to leave ourselves in your hands, which we do, seeking your best judgement. We have been most immoderately punished on all former occasions by holding tea which we have sometimes done two, or even three, years, whilst submitting to some $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. of loss at the first would have prevented 2d. or even 3d. per lb. of loss afterwards when we did sell ... we have no faith in holding. (2)

It was clear by May that the expectations of a good year's trade were not to be realised and Russell was informed that:

There will be a great falling off in the export of goods to your market this year in reference to the three last ... in Coloured Goods the limited amount of orders is most marked ... there is a somewhat more active demand for White Goods, but scarcely any mills but ours are in full work. (3)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company, 22 Feb. 1851.
 (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Ewart Macaughey and Company, London, 28 Feb. 1851.
 (3) Hsgues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, 3 May 1851.

The general dullness of trade characterised the whole year and the firm's profits were reduced to a figure comparable to that earned in 1848.

In the spring of 1852 the partners were cautiously observing that 'we think there is a little more doing here', but by the autumn the demand had so improved that customers had to be given reasons for non-delivery of goods:

The weather has been so bad lately that it has almost stopped our manufacturing operations - we will, however, let you have your goods as early as possible. (1)

In general the demand seems to have returned to about the level attained in 1850, but there was a sharp increase in trade in the following year and Cook found:

... prices for goods have been all through the summer and the autumn 30 to 35 per cent. above last November's prices, but for their future movement you are quite better able to judge of the course of business matters than we ... (2)

To Russell he indicated that:

... the opinion of our moneyed men is that we shall have after the close of the year easier rates of discount ... all the great depots for money are complaining of its scarcity ... business is now not so active here, but has been very lively. (3)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Frisby Dyke and Company, Liverpool, 8 Nov. 1852.

(2) Thos. Cook to Reiss Brothers, Manchester, 17 Nov. 1853.

(3) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 9 Dec. 1853.

And to an Irish house they said:

Wool is at a very high price, but we have no confidence in its continuing at such prices considering the state of trade ... (1)

The year closed for the partners less profitably than its predecessor, but Cook was optimistic about the prospects for 1857 and 'we are buying wool in anticipation of early orders from the United States.' (2)

The trade of this year, however, was dislocated by the 'crisis', although the American demand appears to have been much improved for the partners compared with the previous two years. In August the partners were seeking to enlarge their sales of Mackinaw and New Orleans blankets, the former being high quality goods and the latter being coarse, radical fabrics.

Messrs. Reiss Brothers have had from us, we believe, for 19 consecutive years - Mackinaw blankets, not in large parcels, but each year some ... our general account with them has been very large, but at Christmas they discontinue business. Now should you buy Mackinaws from us... you shall have an advantage in price ... you must not spurn such assumption on our part, but you cannot buy Mackinaws lower than from us, quality for quality, from what we see of our neighbours.

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Todd, Burns and Company, Dublin, 12 July 1856.

(2) Thos. Cook to Reiss Brothers, Manchester, 24 Dec. 1856.

In the spring of 1854 the partners were able to reduce their prices of goods for an American house by '½d. per lb.', partly due to the slackness of trade at this time:

... trade is by no means good at this season of the year and there is very little demand for your market, but we have very little difference to note in the price of English wool ... under these circumstances ... we had expected a great decline in the price of woollen goods, but the firmness is in a great measure attributable to the depressed state of the Bradford trade and the relative scarcity of, shorts and noils suitable for our manufacture. (1)

In May they told Russell that:

Money is hard here at 5½ to 6 per cent. and trade getting more dull ... we shall go to lower prices. (2)

The Crimean War of this year stimulated the blanket trade considerably and the partners compensated for their lack of American orders by obtaining large government contracts.

Early the following year this situation still obtained and:

The demand for goods for the United States is still very limited but our government are requiring such an immense supply of woollens

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Grant and Barton, 31 March 1854.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, 20 May 1854.

for the use of the Troops that we do not think blanket prices are likely to be lower. (1)

As the year progressed there was some slackening in the government demand, but the American trade continued to 'fall off sickeningly', (2) and apart from 'these Turkish orders' (3) the partners had to report 'a melancholy twelve months in our business.' (4)

Although there was some recovery in the American trade in 1856, there was some falling off in the orders from Australia and Canada and government contracting was by now back to a state of normal demand. In July the level of activity at Dewsbury Mills was such that the partners could write:

We do not ship our large Charleston orders till from the 25th July to the 1st of August ... but if you write at once and confirm your requirement for the 1700 pairs of Duffils we could supply the whole of these goods on time. (5)

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to I.B. Bruyere, Montreal, 8 Feb. 1855. The partners enclosed a price list which enumerated 41 different types, sizes and weights of blankets at prices ranging from 2s. each for Crib Blankets to 19s.4d. each for Dark Blue, first quality Mackinaws. The fall in the price of goods from the previous year was of the order of 7 per cent.
- (2) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 31 July 1855.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thomas Lee, 16 Feb. 1855.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thos. Legg, 27 Dec. 1855.
- (5) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thornton, Firth and Company, Manchester, 17 July 1856.

We have some lower sorts which we call imitation French which we sell to a house at New Orleans and which we think are for Planters' Trade, but they may go far West and to Mexico for ought we know. This house pays us many thousands annually for such goods. Then we have in Paris two smaller accounts for similar goods ... they all go to New Orleans from Grenier and Company.

As long as we can act not to cut our own business to pieces we will supply these goods to you on the most advantageous terms should you decide to enter into this trade. (1)

In October, Cook was writing to Joseph Walker about the 'crisis' and comparing the state of affairs with 1837 when 'we had to pay the bills of our customers to a serious, indeed alarming amount and ... we shall have again to do so.' (2)

In a letter to New York in November, the partners referred to the 'minimum rate of money at 10 per cent.' and 'failures very numerous' and they added that:

Commercial matters are in a state so uncertain, bad and rotten that there really appears no certainty in fixing prices. (3)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Cronin, Hurxthal and Sears, New York, 11 Aug. 1857.
- (2) Thos. Cook to Joseph Walker, Liverpool, 8 Oct. 1857.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Cronin, Hurxthal and Sears, 5 Nov. 1857. William Keith of Manchester, one of the merchanting agents with whom the partners did business, was bankrupted in this year, but the partners escaped injury.

The partners managed to maintain their labour force in 'full-time working' throughout the year, although their demand for labour was much reduced and this decision must have sharply raised overhead costs. (1) In the autumn they were bidding for 'workhouse blankets' as a means of maintaining some activity. (2) In December, Cook wrote to the proprietor of Dewsbury Mills:

The commercial world is in a sorry mess and well for those who are clear of its pressure. (3)

The 'temporary suspension' of Wetmore and Company limited the firm's China trade, whilst there was a sharp falling away of American orders. The trade to the Cape and Australia and New Zealand was brighter, (4) but the Canada trade declined as a partial result of the condition of great 'commercial embarrassment' of the United States, although the partners were seeking actively to enlarge this trade through Glasgow agencies. (5) They were also corresponding with a Dublin house at this time about the prospects of sending goods to India. (6)

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thomas Legg, 20 Nov. 1857.
 - (2) For example, 2,000 blankets for the Manchester Board of Guardians.
 - (3) Thos. Cook to Thomas Hague, Filey, 4 Dec. 1857.
 - (4) The partners appear to have had a Mr. John Tyas acting as a temporary agent for them in Sydney at this time, his function being to solicit orders for Australian and New Zealand blankets.
 - (5) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Brough & Company, Glasgow, 8 Nov. 1857, and also to Robt. Kerr of the same town.
 - (6) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Pim Brothers, Dublin, 2 Nov. 1857. This resulted in an order for 1,000 pieces of coarse, blue-grey, mixture cloth.

The year was disastrous for the partners from the profit viewpoint and the writing down of stocks and the costs of maintaining their labour force reduced their profits to the lowest level for ten years. Cook's opinion was that:

... these speculations by forcing up the price of raw material have for all this year cut the profits from under the manufacturers ... (1)

There was some reaction to the crisis in 1858, particularly in the American market, but as the year developed there was a marked improvement in the trading situation and the partners were able to speak of 'much more employment in our district ...the trade is more remunerative.'⁽²⁾ Profits were higher in this year and there were some good accounts with Australian buyers:

We are pleased at the good prices obtained for our blankets and if the bad accounts of our commercial dislocations of last year have brought wool lower in Melbourne you may invest the proceeds of our goods in wool ... not buying, unless you deem the wool cheap, for although our trade is much improved ... we are not as active as we were four years ago. (3)

(1) Thos. Cook to John Burnside and Company, New Orleans, 24 Dec. 1857.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John T. Bowes, Liverpool, 30 Aug. 1858.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Samuel Topp, Melbourne, 11 Aug. 1858.

The prices of blankets had risen by a fraction in early 1859 compared with 1858 and the early orders from America were more encouraging. During the previous year the partners had ventured a little more than usual into the consignment trade, but the improved prospects for 1859 led them to reassert their caution in this type of business:

As to the result of last year's operations we can tell nothing ... but when the last goods are sold and the account closed then we can tell and patiente will do all this for us ... our experience is not large on consigned goods, but so far as it is there appears to us no common regularity of charges and expenses. Be assured we appreciate your services, but we would as far as we are able wish always to take a mercantile view of the trade ..
(1)

Australian orders were increased compared with 1858 and there were orders from Kessler and Company of New York for 2,300 blankets, (2) and a new account with Lazard Frères of Paris for 1,000 'low Mackinaws'. (3) There was also a shared consignment with Reiss Brothers for 20 bales of goods for Shanghai together with some smaller orders for blankets for the China market, Wetmore and Company still being inactive (4) as far as the partners were concerned, in this trade.

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- (1) Cook, Son and Wormald to Christ, Jay and Hope, New York
9 March 1859.
- (2) Cook, Son and Wormald to Kessler and Company, 10 Dec. 1859
- (3) Cook, Son and Wormald to Lazard Frères, Paris, 5 Dec. 1859
- (4) Cook, Son and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, Manchester,
22 Dec. 1859.

1860 was not quite as active a year for trade for the partners as the previous one, but there was plenty of work in the first half of the season and, in May, Cook was in correspondence with the head of a New York house who, at that time, was visiting the West Riding:

Our Weavers' Book is so full of work that our foreman of the warpers says it will take a month to clear it for new work and we do not see how we could get through more than 120 packs of goods in less than six weeks.

We will do our best for you, but we have a deal of work on hand and only in a crippled state to deal with it. We have spoken to some manufacturers here who will assist in supplying your wants, but on that part of the order a small commission will have to be added ... (1)

Early in this year the partners had their large spinning mill burnt down and this dislocated their productive activity for the rest of the year. The correspondence is heavily charged with comments lamenting the difficulties encountered in meeting their orders whilst attempting to clear away the debris and build a new mill. Thomas Cook found the operation 'attended with one disappointment after another ... cleanliness is difficult to maintain.' (2)

(1) Thos. Cook to I.B. Cronin, The Scarborough Hotel, Leeds, 19 May 1860. There were 30 pairs of blankets in each pack.

(2) Thos. Cook to J. and E. Carter, London, 4 Oct. 1860. Some auxiliary spinning capacity was being used at Pildacre Mill at this time.

The cotton famine

In the spring of 1861 the partners were sending price lists to a new customer in Australia in an endeavour to enlarge their trade to that market. They found:

Business very dull here arising mainly from the United States affair ... if this state of things continues we must expect lower rates for wool and this will affect the price of goods. (1)

It seems strange that the situation in the United States at this time had not yet led the partners to contemplate the likely effect of a Civil War upon the cotton supply to this country and the secondary effect this would have on the demand for woollen fabrics and raw wool. In this year also there was a major change in the American tariff legislation - the Morrill Tariff Act - which raised the duties on blankets to a prohibitive degree for British manufacturers. Whilst the legislature was considering the measure, the partners were extremely optimistic as to the final outcome. (2)

We trust a reduction in the duty on blankets may soon take place. (3)

But in June they were reporting that:

Very few orders have been executed for the Northern States for your new tariff seems quite prohibitive of our goods - surely this must soon be repealed. (4)

- (1) Cook, Son and Wormald to Chas. W. Thorne, Melbourne, 8 April 1861.
 (2) See above, p. .
 (3) Cook, Son and Wormald to Kessler and Company, New York, 16 March 1861.
 (4) Cook, Son and Wormald to Dovemus and Nixon, 7 June 1861.

By November the impact of the War was registering in the 'heavy woollen' district of the West Riding and the partners wrote to Russell:

We have not yet despatched a bale of the cloth which we are preparing for you, but shall do so next week and after that make rapid deliveries, we hope more so than we promised.

To economise time we have engaged five or six mills in this work and therefore your friends must be prepared for a trifling variation both in shade and colour, but we shall spare no exertion to merit the confidence you have reposed in us.

There is an immoderate demand for goods throughout this district, particularly for Brown, Grey, Army Blankets, but we think the anxiety to place further orders is a little abating, and if so the manufacturers with us may become a little more manageable, but we do not think material will decline at present. (1)

Just a little earlier than this letter was written the partners, despite their large demands from the United States, were able to send away their first consignment of goods to the care of Savage and Hill for the South African trade. This was the beginning of a long association with that house and for the following twenty years the partners dealt in this market exclusively through this house. (2)

(1) Cook, Son and Wormald to W.H. Russell, New York, 23 Nov. 1861. This order was for 100,000 yards of sky-blue kersey cloth at 4s.6d. - 4s.8d. per yard.

(2) Cook, Son and Wormald to Savage and Hill, London, 7 Oct. 1861. This first order was of the value of £376.

In December they were writing again to Russell to say that:

We cannot find ourselves able to price an order to the extent of 400,000 yards, but if our goods please we shall be happy to undertake the order and charge as low as the market will admit of ... doubtless when we get into these we should be able to deliver 20,000 yards a week.

Regarding the U.S. Grey Blankets ... of which so many are being made at 66 inches by 84 inches, 10 lbs. per pair ... we should like to enter into arrangements to commence in January ... provided other orders do not come in the meantime ... we could deliver 20,000 pairs per month ... our price today would be 14s.2d. per pair. It is only right to tell you that we have taken orders two months since for similar goods at 12½ per cent. less and what the price may reach it is impossible to foresee.(1)

The year closed with the partners swimming in orders from the United States, but determined to keep contact with their old customers in other markets. Their profitability in this year, although healthy, did not yet reflect the tremendous upsurge of demand for their products which was to flow from the 'cotton famine'. There was considerable buying of wool towards the close of the year and the partners equipped themselves as well as they were able to cope with an enlarging order book in 1862. Their new spinning mill, fortunately, was now in work and they were able to proceed without the dislocation of building activities on the Dewsbury Mills Estate.

(1) Cook, Son and Wormald to W.H. Russell, 21 Dec. 1861. The price of blankets seems to have risen generally by about 40 per cent. during 1861.

Early in 1862 the partners were running into some difficulties with these orders:

We see that we now have to adopt prompt steps with these goods as your Government have prohibited the purchase of foreign manufactures. We have still 12,000 yards on hand and this is £3,000 worth of goods for which we have no opening whatever except in filling your order so we must send them on, but wish to hear how you like the finish of them.

This ruinous affair will be a caution to us against entering on a large order for a new make of goods in an excited market and with a limited time. (1)

In the following month it was found necessary for Mr. John Wormald to visit New York in order to ensure that the goods were finally disposed of and the reimbursement of the partners effected. It remains a pertinent question to ask whether Thomas Cook, who had died before the demands of the Civil War had begun to affect the activities of the partners at Dewsbury Mills, would have acted any differently in the face of these sudden orders for cloth and blankets. Fortunately, the partners had been prudent enough not to jettison their normal trading connections in order to cope the more easily with this special trade and it was possible to readjust the productive arrangements at the Mills to handle the normal commercial orders. With one American house, in this year, the partners effected a total account of £7,800 in their traditional blanket goods. (2)

(1) Cook, Son and Wormald to W.H. Russell, 18 Feb. 1862.

(2) Cook, Son and Wormald to Cronin, Hurxthal and Sears, 13 Oct. 1862.

Some blanket manufacturers in the Dewsbury district continued during this year to make blankets for the American government trade irrespective of the decree which had caused some anxiety for the partners, but the policy now adopted by the firm was one of great prudence:

... business in this district has become exceedingly brisk and very large quantities of heavy, grey blankets are being made, many on speculation, we however are determined not to meddle with anything we do not get passed and paid for here. (1)

Profits for the partners were higher by some £3,000 than they were in 1861 and the risk of losses on the early American contracts which were accepted and then subjected to cancellation seems to have been very much minimised by the personal arrangements made in New York by John Wormald. The partners also undertook to dispose of a large quantity of Sky Blue Cloth in America on behalf of Sheard and Sons of Batley. Their negotiations in this case were highly successful, but unfortunately the exchange was very much against the dollar when the receipts were brought home and there was an exchange loss of £410 on a total account of £2,190 - approximately 19 per cent.. (2)

(1) Cook, Son and Wormald to Hess, Kessell and Company, New York, 7 Oct. 1862.

(2) Cook, Son and Wormald to M. Sheard and Sons, Batley, 20 Jan. 1863.

It was a highly profitable year at Dewsbury Mills in 1863. In March the partners received an order from Canada for 3,095 pairs of blankets, mostly of good quality and the total value of the contract was approximately £1,500. ⁽¹⁾ In the same month they had an order from Hamburg for £20,000 worth of coloured blankets - mainly scarlets and greens at 19d. to 23d. per lb. weight - and some indigo blue cloth, wool-dyed at 4s.11d. to 6s.4d. per yard. ⁽²⁾ Cronin's American account was of the value of £9,691 in this year ⁽³⁾ and there was an attractive Irish order for 1,920 pairs of Witneys, mostly plain white. ⁽⁴⁾ In making 'union' goods they were, by this time, experiencing considerable difficulty 'in getting cotton ... we cannot precisely say when they will be ready.' ⁽⁵⁾ The Chinese trade was also active in this year and a large consignment of Stripes was sent to Canton. ⁽⁶⁾

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- (1) Cook, Son and Wormald to Thos. Thibeaden, Montreal, 8 Mar. 1863.
- (2) Cook, Son and Wormald to Sigmund Salinger, Hamburg, 21 March 1863.
- (3) Cook, Son and Wormald to Cronin, Hurxthal and Sears, 7 April 1863.
- (4) Cook, Son and Wormald to John Arnott and Company, Belfast, 26 May 1863.
- (5) Cook, Son and Wormald to Du Fay and Company, Manchester, 27 June 1863. There is a nice irony in the partners having to tell a Manchester house that there is a 'cotton famine'.
- (6) Cook, Son and Wormald to Hayter, Howell and Company, 20 July 1863.

In September the partners were faced with complaints from Savage and Hill regarding the high cost of their blankets and they replied that:

... we cannot be surprised at your customers being startled at the great advance ... 20 per cent. within six months ... you will know the tremendous advance there has been in cotton ... our object then was to bring in something lower in price than woollens and early in 1862 we attempted these Angolas ... now Angola is nearly as dear as all wool. (1)

In October 1863 the partners had an order for 60 bales of blankets for Africa and they were then able to say that:

We make a great many blankets for the Cape with only one stripe about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide. (2)

It is evident that alternative markets to the United States were being developed, which was a necessary undertaking for the firm at this time. The harshness of the Morrill Tariff was being masked during these years of peculiar demand and the late 'sixties were to bring many problems of readjustment in the overseas trade of the partners.

It is to be regretted that the firm's correspondence

(1) Cook, Son and Wormald to Savage and Hill, London, 22 Sept. 1863. Angola yarn was a mixture yarn usually composed of 80 per cent. wool and 20 per cent. cotton. Shoddy or mungo might be used in the preparation in order further to reduce costs. The high prices of all fibres by this time neutralised, as the partners here pointed out, the advantages of using this kind of yarn for goods for South Africa.

(2) Cook, Son and Wormald to James Black, London, 8 Oct. 1863.

comes to an end in this year and that there are no first hand comments on the impact of the tariff when it falls so heavily upon the industry in 1866-7. In 1863, however, the blanket trade was still buoyant and although there were now no existing orders for Grey, Army blankets 'whereas during the last two autumns we have been busily engaged in them', the partners could record that:

... we have here a most active demand for blankets and prices are very high. (1)

Considering the vicissitudes of trade in overseas markets throughout the thirty years which we have considered above, the partners seem to have emerged successfully from the experience. Their relatively large resources coupled with great prudence in wool buying, and the extreme caution which they displayed in accepting orders from the United States when the payment arrangements were not to their satisfaction, largely explains this satisfactory outcome. In addition, the partners had built up connections in foreign markets before 1832 which stood the strain well during the depression of 1837-42 and at times of 'crisis' in 1847 and 1857. It is interesting to note that the consignment method of trade continued to be of importance in the American market throughout this period, but the

(1) Cook, Son and Wormald to J. Hess and Company, New York
3 Nov. 1863.

partners, as we have noted, regarded this kind of marketing with great suspicion and it was never more than a very marginal activity for the enterprise. In the deepest depression they were persuaded to undertake a little more of this trade than they thought prudent, but even then only through their established agents in the United States, chiefly Russell and Company. During the 'fifties, when the demand for blankets was generally high and increasing, the partners consolidated their position in overseas markets and strengthened their capital strength and their productive power. This placed them in a strong position to profit from the boom of the cotton famine and to meet the years of depression which followed in the 'seventies.

The Home Trade

The correspondence books are far less informative on the trade in blankets in this country by comparison with the detailed information recorded for the overseas markets. Robert Nicholson acted as the firm's agent in London and his dealings with the London wholesaling houses would thus not be shown in any detail in the partners' letters. But the sales of goods to buyers in the large towns must have involved considerable correspondence and Cook stated to a Glasgow merchant in 1837:

We do all our business by letter - we travel nowhere, unless an occasional journey to some of the big towns may be called such ... (1)

It must be concluded that the bulk of the firm's communications in respect of such business was retained in a separate form and has not survived. There are some gleanings to be made, however, from the existing material and the partners sometimes discussed the state of their domestic market when writing to overseas correspondents. Some buyers visited the partners at Dewsbury Mills and placed orders with them personally. Cook observed in 1831 that:

We keep a book for the especial purpose of entering all contracts for goods made at our Counting House ... (2)

In 1831 the partners were complaining that 'our home trade is very bad this autumn' and early in the following year

The cholera disease on the Eastern Coast has caused some demand for Charity Goods or we should have been miserably flat. (4)

But there was no marked improvement in the domestic demand for blankets and in the summer of 1834 the prediction was that:

- (1) Thos. Cook to Robert Kerr, Glasgow, 2 June 1837.
- (2) Thos. Cook to I. and S. Corry, Sherborne, 6 Oct. 1831.
The book has not been preserved.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to J.W. Kelly, New York,
7 Dec. 1831
- (4) Thos. Cook to Thos. Dixon, New York, 6 Jan. 1832.

... this looks like being the third autumn in succession that the Home Trade has been bad. (1)

There was apparently little business being done in London during these years and the partners were complaining of the 'high cost of holding Nicholson's stock'.⁽²⁾ Halliley, Brobke and Company of Dewsbury, who were strong competitors of the partners, failed during the latter part of 1834 and their premises, Aldams Mill, put up for auction.⁽³⁾ The state of trade was so bad, however, that there were no serious bidders for the property. Early in 1835, Cook's opinion of the bad situation in the home orders was that:

... the fact is ... the farming population cannot buy our goods ... (4)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 23 Aug. 1834.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jeremiah Carter, London, 3 Oct. 1834. It was costing the partners £50 per year.
- (3) Cook's explanation of the cause of the Halliley's bankruptcy was that:
'... by intemperance and by wrangling they got their affairs into such a state of embarrassment that they were obliged to submit to a bankruptcy. Halliley's son was intended for the medical profession, but he is now seeking a nautical career.'
- (4) Thos. Cook to Nicholas Martin and Sons, Dublin, 6 Feb. 1835. The partners' account with this wholesaling house in the years 1833 and 1834 was, respectively, £2,550 and £2,660.

There was some recovery in demand during 1835, but this was a year of large orders from the United States and, in the spring, the:

Home trade does not support the American rates for goods. (1)

In the autumn the partners were obtaining about '2 per cent.' more in price for their blankets in the home trade which:

... for the first time for many years past is such as to employ this neighbourhood in a responsible manner. (2)

The burst of activity lasted until the end of the year and in December:

We never had so many orders ... since we were in trade ... at this time of the year. (3)

Despite the enlarged commerce the London connection was not regarded as being very profitable for the firm:

The goods cost us in insurance $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., in your discount $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., in freight $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., making a total of $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., and for this we only have $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. in profit ... (4)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, 8 May 1835.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thos. Dixon, 3 Nov. 1835.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W. Gartside, Liverpool, 2 Dec. 1835.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 3 Jan. 1836. The bales sent to London by coasting vessels took three days on the voyage at this time.

The trade was flat again in the summer of 1836 and:

Our men have been busy with the farm work. (1)

But the agricultural prospects were encouraging Cook to hold the view that:

If the weather for the harvest be good ... the Irish demand for low woollens must be great. (2)

This particular market improvement did not materialise and later in the year the partners reported to Nicholson:

... we shall soon see a great lack of work ... you will have swarms of little makers with 100 to 300 pairs of blankets each, and when they get to Town at some price the goods must go ... (3)

The reaction to the boom in the American trade in 1835-6 produced a great dullness in affairs for the partners and their neighbours in the summer of 1837. In June:

John Carr and Sons of Spring Mills are just being bankrupts and there has been literally nothing to do for more than two months worth naming, and at present not one third of the Mills employed ... (4)

In the autumn the Irish demand which had been expected in the previous year now arrived and:

(1) Thos. Cook to William Barff, Wakefield, 30 June, 1836.

(2) Thos. Cook to Hague and Dean, Dublin, 7 Aug. 1836.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 27 Oct. 1836.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thos. Dixon, 30 June 1837.

... is considerable ... the harvest being well spoken of may keep on some enquiry from that Country for another month. (1)

One of the firm's employees, Thomas Cawood, was by this time making regular journeys to Ireland to solicit orders for the firm, usually three times a year. On one of his visits, Cook instructed him:

... to make yourself acquainted with this trade - both as to quality and prices - which the trade gives to Kendal and to Scotland - and where we can make an improvement in our own fabrics. (2)

The Kendal blanket and cloth manufacturers were well established in the Irish market, their main product being a coarse woollen cloth usually dyed green, whilst the Scottish tweed makers provided a grey frized cloth which was popular with the Belfast and Dublin houses.

The Nicholson affair

From 1836 onward the correspondence books reveal a good deal of dissatisfaction expressed by the partners on the conduct of the London business handled by Nicholson. In the summer of 1837, Cook was of the opinion that:

... we must reduce our stock in London ... the best plan will be to make it an order trade only. (3)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 23 Sept. 1837.
- (2) Thos. Cook to T.B. Cawood, Belfast, 20 Nov. 1837. Cawood had formerly been employed in a merchanting house in Dublin.
- (3) Thos. Cook to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 31 July 1837.

Nothing concrete seems to have been done in this matter, however, and in the autumn of the following year, Cook was urging Nicholson to:

... take a lower commission in order that we may compete better in the Blanket market in Town. (1)

A few months later he returned to the attack:

Do not misunderstand us - we find no fault with your commission provided you obtain our list prices for us on our terms, but we are sure that if at Manchester and Liverpool we had to add $1\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. to our present rates, the account would soon dwindle. (2)

In August of the same year the matter came dramatically to a head and the decline of the partners' sales in the London market was clearly explained by Cook in a letter to a Lancashire business house:

I was at Liverpool Sale last week and my friend Mr. Hartley showed to me a letter from R. Nicholson which gave to me the first intimation of his being in any difficulty. I determined at once to go to Town - got there on Saturday morning and found to my great grief as much an account of the man, as my loss which will be occasioned by him, that he must for many years have been keeping back a class of our London accounts which we thought paid with great regularity according to terms sold but which, in fact, were paid under discounts and not handed over to us till actually due according to the terms of our books. Our defalcation is £1,200 and more and £350 on loan ... there may be 4s. to 5s. in the £ and that as soon as it can be paid if we all know the worst. (3)

(1) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 30 Nov. 1838.

(2) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 4 Feb. 1839.

(3) Thos. Cook to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 10 Aug. 1839.

In another letter of the same date the matter is further illuminated:

It is clear by the four accounts I extracted for 1833 from Nicholson's ledger that, in that year, they were kept back ... and also that there appears to have been put on to the Sales about 3 per cent. more than the account of sales furnished to us - in some cases 5 per cent. (1)

This episode explains the lack of competitiveness which the partners were experiencing with their sales of goods to London houses and it indicates the tightness of the market at this time in so far as an addition of a relatively small impost by Nicholson - 3 to 5 per cent. - to the partners' prices was sufficient to retard the flow of business in this direction.

The partners acted with speed following their discovery and within a week of Cook's writing to Chadwick they were able to inform their customers:

... we have sold off our stocks and have now no agent in London. (2)

They then set to the task of building up strong connections with a few of the large London wholesaling houses and they formed a very profitable and long-standing attachment to the firm of George Brettle and Company which was to continue for

(1) Thos. Cook to T.B. Cawood, London, 10 Aug. 1839.

(2) Thos. Cook to Montefiore Brothers, London, 16 Aug. 1839.

a long stretch of time throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. (1) But, as we shall note below, the government tendering activities performed by Nicholson remained an important function for the partners and, in this respect, other agency arrangements had to be made.

The autumn trade in 1838 was restricted 'by the price of corn' (2) and this depression continued into the following year, affecting the blanket trade generally:

The Witney people are very dull and little doing ... many of their men are seeking work here. We find their wages much below ours and we cannot account for their great want of work - they must buy their wool worse or aim at large profits. We do not attach much importance to what they say, but they tell us that the goods they saw in work here were far better than is now made at Witney. (3)

This extract offers further support to the contention that the West Riding success in the cheap blanket trade was based largely on prudent wool buying and small profits in relation to the value of sales, particularly in the 'thirties and the 'forties.

The partners began manufacturing in the summer for the Irish market and, following intelligence received through

- (1) The partners still had an account with this house in 1894.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to A.S. Henry and Company, Leeds, 30 Nov. 1838.
- (3) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 26 March 1839.

Mr. Cawood, a start was made in the making of:

... grey frize cloth, as worn by the
common people of Ireland. (1)

The experiment appears to have been successful and:

As far as we are concerned our Home Trade orders
were never larger at the end of July for the
Irish houses. (2)

A further innovation at this time was the introduction at
Dewsbury Mills of a new stoving process designed to impart a
whiter and brighter appearance to the plain blankets:

Pray tell us if you have any rule as to the
quantity of sulphur put into the Stove for any
given weight of goods, there is not a question
but this process adds mightily to the beauty
and colour of the goods. (3)

1840 was a sad year for the trade and in

... this year matters are bad and the small
makers from whom the Leeds people obtain goods
have been in a bad state. (4)

Irish trade was fairly active in this year, but of that branch
of their activities, Cook wrote:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, Rochdale,
22 July 1839.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, New York,
26 July 1839.

(3) Thos. Cook to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 17 Aug. 1839.
Chadwick used this method in finishing flannels.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to William Keith, Manchester,
24 Aug. 1840.

... we only make Irish blankets to order, the people are so extremely fanciful, scarcely two houses order their goods alike ... they order their goods to their own sizes and weights ... we make all blankets up to 12 quarters wide in 20 pairs to the piece. (1)

There was also a good demand for 'heavy Pilots ... the trade in which has been large and profitable'. (2) This was beneficial to the Batley firms rather than to the partners, whose Pilot manufacture was only a subsidiary to their blanket production.

In the spring of 1841:

We are in a sad state here, two-thirds of the folks are unemployed. (3)

And:

We think this last winter has sent more of our artisans to you for a home than we before recollect to have heard of in our recurring times of bad trade ... (4)

Business was still very depressed in the autumn, the only sign of activity appearing in a slight increase in orders from Scotland. Some of the orders were from new customers and the

(1) Thos. Cook to John Pollard, Halifax, 3 Oct. 1840.

(2) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, Manchester, 2 Jan. 1841.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to A.S. Henry and Company, Leeds, 2 April 1841.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to C.H. Russell and Company, New York, 18 May 1841.

partners wrote to a Glasgow house:

... we trust that you will keep an eye on all those new accounts of ours. (1)

Travelling

The late 'thirties and early 'forties were, as we have noted earlier in this chapter, extremely stagnant in respect of orders from the United States and the partners were concerned during these years to concentrate more attention on the home trade. One of the obvious methods which the firm could have adopted to effect this would have been a resumption of their practice of the early 'twenties of employing a traveller to visit the large towns to solicit orders. In 1841, however, Cook was insisting that:

... we have not entertained the subject of renewing our old plan of keeping a traveller - we do not think that we should derive much benefit by a change of our system. (2)

But towards the close of the following year, in the light of a further worsening in their trading experience, the possibilities of using a commercial traveller were beginning to be re-examined:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Robert Kerr, Glasgow, 8 Nov. 1841.

(2) Thos, Cook to I.B. Roberts, Leeds, 6 Nov. 1841.

Will you ... ask Mr. Phillips how far he thinks our selling goods through him in the Country might interfere or give offence to the London Houses - we do a very large business with Brettle and Company and a little with others. We do not suppose that north of the Trent this would mean anything - in the South it might. We are aware that the London Houses are never to be depended on, but the one House we name has certainly shown a disposition to be tolerably steady to us.

Our Country Trade - we mean in England and Ireland - is large, about £70,000 worth of goods perhaps annually, but in the country towns of England it is small. We have a few good customers such as Chamberlain and Company of Norwich, but for a House like ours it is a small country trade. The fact is that we did not seek it, not having travelled the country for most of twenty years. Our production of goods is so considerable that it would be inadvisable to throw away on a contingency an account like Brettles for instance, who may take in a year 400 or 500 small trusses of goods worth £20 each truss on an average or, say, £8-10,000 worth. (1)

The view of Mr. Phillips appears to have been such as to encourage the partners in reaching a firm decision to employ him as a regular traveller to develop the home trade, and early in the following year Thomas Cook wrote a long letter to Phillips which warrants reproduction for its general information regarding the home trade in blankets and coarse cloth in the early 'forties:

We have come to the conclusion again to make a trial of the Country Trade through your Agency,

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Edmonds and Company, Bradford, Wilts., 12 Nov. 1842.

and shall be glad if the result be to our common benefit; it ought to be. It surely must be in our power to serve your correspondents and friends with goods of our manufacture fully as well as they can procure them elsewhere, however on that head, time will explain our capability to them better than words if we have orders for goods to supply any of them. (1)

Our manufacture is blankets - of this article we must have quite the largest trade of any House in the kingdom - quite the largest, Flushings, Pilot cloth and Witneys, as well as low-priced cloth.

It is a thing never done that we know of, excepting sometimes abroad, but we could give you a Book showing the qualities of the different numbers we make in Blanket goods.

We send you the list of prices charged by us up to this time to our Country customers, and we propose to continue them for the present - low as goods are - the market has a downward tendency and your Commission will have to be paid out of the old rates.

It is in June the greatest care must be taken with the sizes and the best effort made to prepare it, on the easiest scale for the buyers.

The terms on which we shall charge the goods will be for a Draft on the Customer of 3 months date after a credit of one month which will give time for the goods to arrive and be examined. Thus all goods going from 20 February to 29 March would be due to be drawn for on the 1st of April at 3 months date - due in Cash, 1st July.

Drawing fixes the payment and is best but as our means are such as not to render this course necessary for money convenience - where parties could be depended on they might take the time if preferred, still, drawing on the London plan fixes the payment and avoids cavil.

(1) Phillips was travelling for Edmonds and Company and selling good quality broadcloth.

In Flushings or Pilots where any distinct width is required it should be stated - in Ireland substance is more required than width - in England an absolutely 54 inches thing is needed.

Your commission will be $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the actual receipts and in the Country trade we know not that you can do it at less, but in such large orders as we receive from Manchester, Liverpool and also Glasgow - the parties would not pay that extra price on their goods, and in London, where we formerly had an agent, we did but give $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on orders of magnitude - and could now get them done for that.

We know that it is needful for you again to visit us at present and in the summer we better have you a day or two with us to become thoroughly acquainted with all our goods, and to receive from you such suggestions as your experience will suggest as useful, to us.

Trusting this connection will be one of harmony and advantage to each.

P.S. As we intend our prices for your sales shall not exceed more than your commission and the rates that Gotts are known by us to be giving for their goods here, you must be careful whom you trust.

The Saddlers buy a good many Brown, Fawn, horse blankets and this is a large article with us, but prices vary very much for equal sizes. (1)

In April, 1843, following a short tour by Phillips in search of orders, Cook was able to write to Phillips:

We are not at all disappointed at the measure of success which has attended your journey, as we did not expect that you could do more than introduce the name for next season's business. (2)

(1) Thos. Cook to I.B. Phillips, at Leonard Duncan's, Halifax, 25 Feb. 1843.

(2) Thos. Cook to Phillips, 15 April 1843.

In the following month he added:

... we have for some time past contemplated writing to you to suggest that as you live so near to those places, that you should in your holidays visit Bristol and Bath. Twenty years ago ... we did a good business there. Excepting, however, Gardiners of Bristol, we have no account open at either of these two places, but we consider those towns so important, and so large buyers of our kind of goods that a visit to them might be productive of business during each of your holidays. (1)

The first ventures of Phillips obviously encouraged Cook to believe that 'travelling' was likely to prove an important means of enlarging the home trade of the firm and he wrote to a Glasgow correspondent:

It is my present intention during the summer to visit your City - we fancy there must be in our line of trade a large business done there which by a little cultivation we might partake of. (2)

On the pricing of the firm's products, Phillips was informed that:

... in a very few days you may expect a parcel of Price Lists for blankets - our opinion is that these lists ought only to be sent to your most esteemed customers ... so that they shall not be universally exposed. Indeed, some of the very small buyers ought to be charged more perhaps, but of this we leave you to be the judge. (3)

(1) Thos. Cook to Phillips, 15 May 1843.

(2) Thos. Cook to W.I. Duncan, Glasgow, 24 May 1843.

(3) Thos. Cook to Phillips, 7 June 1843.

Price List of Blankets &c.

Terms 3 Months Bill, or 1% P. C. Disc^t for Cash.

NAME CALLED	Common Light Wlneys		Light Wlneys	Medium	Extra. Medi ^m	Low Super	Super	Super Super	Merino Superfine	BATH BLANKETS		
	Size	Wt	Weight	Size & Weight	Size and Weight	Size and Weight	Size and Weight	Size and Weight	Size and Weight	Size		
QUALITY, No	No 10		No 12	No 12	No 2L	No 11	No 22	No 11	No 61	Sixes		
5 Quarters	182 x 51	3.5			4 1/2 x 9 1/2	4 1/2	7	3 1/2	4 1/2 x 9 1/2	4 1/2 x 9 1/2	4 1/2 x 4 1/2	2 1/2
6 do	42 x 60	3.4	4 1/8	3 1/2	3 1/2 x 7 1/2	3 1/2	4 1/2	3 1/2	3 1/2 x 7 1/2	3 1/2 x 7 1/2	3 1/2 x 5 1/2	3 1/4
7 do	54 x 70	3.0	3 1/4	3 1/2	4 1/2 x 9 1/2	5 1/2	5 1/2	4 1/2	4 1/2 x 9 1/2	4 1/2 x 9 1/2	4 1/2 x 6 1/2	5 1/4
8 do	58 x 77	2.4	5 1/4	2.0	7 1/2 x 9 1/2	6 1/2	7 1/2	7 1/2	7 1/2 x 9 1/2	7 1/2 x 9 1/2	7 1/2 x 7 1/2	7 1/4
9 do	67 x 87	3.1	6 1/8	2.4	8 1/2 x 10 1/2	8 1/2	9 1/2	8 1/2	8 1/2 x 10 1/2	8 1/2 x 10 1/2	8 1/2 x 7 1/2	10 1/8
10 do	76 x 96	7	8 1/5	7	9 1/2 x 11 1/2	10 1/2	11 1/2	10 1/2	10 1/2 x 11 1/2	10 1/2 x 11 1/2	10 1/2 x 8 1/2	13 1/4
11 do	85 x 104	9	10 1/11	9	10 1/2 x 12 1/2	12 1/2	13 1/2	12 1/2	12 1/2 x 13 1/2	12 1/2 x 13 1/2	12 1/2 x 9 1/2	17 1/4
12 do	94 x 112	11		11	11 1/2 x 13 1/2	13 1/2	14 1/2	13 1/2	13 1/2 x 14 1/2	13 1/2 x 14 1/2	13 1/2 x 10 1/2	22 1/4
13 do	103 x 118	13		13	12 1/2 x 14 1/2	14 1/2	15 1/2	14 1/2	14 1/2 x 15 1/2	14 1/2 x 15 1/2	14 1/2 x 11 1/2	26 1/8
14 do					13 1/2 x 15 1/2	15 1/2	16 1/2	15 1/2	15 1/2 x 16 1/2	15 1/2 x 16 1/2	15 1/2 x 12 1/2	29 1/8

Scarlet, or Fancy Striped Wlneys will be more by 5 to 7% Per Cent according to Size of Stripping

FINE ROSED BLK ^s			FLOCKS				IRISH BLKTS		Weight	No 11	No 11	No 12	No 2L	No 11	No 22	No 11
Name	7/8 Pull	3/4 - 3/8	COMMON GREY 2 1/2 per lb		BEST GREY 3/2		WHITE									
			Coverlets	Red	Black	Double Black	Double Red	3 1/2 x 7 1/2	3	3/4	3 1/2					
1/2 Com	28 x 31	2	3/5	1/8 1/2	1/5 1/2	2/5 1/2	2/1 1/2	3 1/2 x 7 1/2	3	3/4	3 1/2					
1/2 Pull	28 x 30	2.4	3/6	1/8 1/2	1/5 1/2	2/5 1/2	2/1 1/2	3 1/2 x 7 1/2	3	3/4	3 1/2					
3/4 Com	38 x 43	3	3/2	2/5 1/2	2/1 1/2	3/5	3/6 1/2	4 1/2 x 9 1/2	3	12	4 1/2					
3/4 Pull	34 x 38	3.8	4/1	2/5 1/2	2/1 1/2	3/5	3/6 1/2	4 1/2 x 9 1/2	3	12	4 1/2					
1/2 Com	58 x 72	4	4/11	3/3	2/6 1/2	4/1	4/7 1/2	6 1/2 x 12 1/2	4		5 1/2					
1/2 Pull	63 x 74	4.8	7/9	3/3	2/6 1/2	4/1	4/7 1/2	6 1/2 x 12 1/2	4		5 1/2					
3/4 Com	67 x 76	5.4	8/4	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
3/4 Pull	72 x 81	6.4	1/1	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
1/2 Com	70 x 83	7.0	1/5	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
1/2 Pull	71 x 80	7.8	1/3	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
3/4 do		8	1/2	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
1/2 Com	85 x 90	8.12	5/6	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
1/2 Pull	80 x 80	9.12	7/2	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
3/4 Com	90 x 103	10.0	2 1/2	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
3/4 Pull	84 x 101	12.8	2 1/2	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
1/2 Com	103 x 112	11	3 1/2	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
1/2 Pull	101 x 115	16.8	3 1/2	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
3/4 Com	112 x 117	18.8	4 1/2	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					
3/4 Pull	118 x 121	20.8	4 1/2	4/1	3/6	4/1	5/6	7 1/2 x 14 1/2	4	12	5 1/2					

12 June 1843

T. F. Messer, Litch Field

Following the sending of these lists, Cook wrote further to Phillips:

We have we fancy placed our list of blanket goods so low in price as to make it below what any of the Leeds Houses may be supposed capable of supplying goods at, excepting a few that may have been bought of small makers in distress during the spring.

Be careful who you do with - a £100 loss would take the profit from £2,000 value of sales, for the list will give a bare commission. We wish to make a favourable start.

We are anxious that you should also endeavour to do a little in Flushings, Pilot Cloths and Beavers which do not interfere with your own West Country Goods.

To get hold of two or three good Houses in the larger towns and one or two in the smaller towns might be more desirable than too many accounts involving more risk, which our prices will not warrant. (1)

By 1844, Phillips had widened his territorial coverage in selling goods on behalf of the firm and the correspondence books at various dates during the period 1843-4 indicate that he was visiting Coventry, Rugby, Sleaford, Hull, Beverley, Yarmouth, Boston, Chester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Sunderland, Whitby, Carlisle and Edinburgh.

(1) Thos. Cook to Phillips, 26 June 1843.

The Irish trade

Towards the end of 1841 the partners were concerned with the quality of the finish of their grey frized cloth for the Irish market and Cawood was reporting to them on the relative merits of their product compared with similar fabrics produced in Scotland. Cook's assessment of Cawood's information was that:

It is clear from your letters that we must somehow mismanage the raising - in Wool no House as a whole introduces so perfect an article - we must see Walton and use a Gig for our heavy goods - our men are jaded by too much work.

Walton's Gigs have a high reputation and if flannels (which are entirely gig-raised) can be managed, then our cloths may.

We fear that any defect in our supply of goods will drive us into a second-rate connection - a thing to be avoided by every practicable means. (1)

The persistence with which the partners pursued their objective of raising demand for their goods in the Irish trade was keenly stimulated in this year by the general dullness of their business. At the close of the year, Cook was lamenting that:

The demands of the Home Trade, arising from charitable and other channels, remains still in some activity, nevertheless the total has been so much below the power of production that the competition to sell has kept goods below the cost in many

(1) Thos. Cook to T.B. Cawood, Dublin, 22 Nov. 1841.
Walton was a Sowerby Bridge machine maker, see above,
p. 479 .

instances, and scarcely remunerative in any. (1)

In the spring of 1842 the partners were smarting from the bankruptcies of two Irish houses:

We are sadly mauled in Belfast by Halliday and Company and Howards. (2)

They were also acquiring business at extremely low prices as a means of employing their labour force and of maintaining goodwill in London:

We do not wish your respectable house to go from us and although we see nothing as to profit we will take the order. (3)

In August the partners shared in the excitements of the Plug Riots:

Our Mill has just been stopped by a large mob, every hand compelled to quit work and leave the place. (4)

38 Mills ... in this neighbourhood were stopped work yesterday by the insurgents. (5)

... the insurgents preached all about politics - and nothing said here as to Wages, which must be less before they be more. (6)

- (1) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, 5 Jan. 1842.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, 16 May 1842.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to George Brettle and Company, London, 28 May 1842.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Hague, Dean and Harrison, Dublin, 16 Aug. 1842.
- (5) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Lord and Hall, London, 17 Aug. 1842.
- (6) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Gorton, Hodges and Company, New York, 18 Aug. 1842.

Our men began again on Friday and the three days cost them £250 loss of Wages - we believe it is all over in the West Riding Mills. (1)

At the end of the year, Cook was corresponding with Nicholson and 'writing with plainness' on the partners' determination not to 'have an agency again in Town' due to the fact that 'your extraordinary closeness ... and the manner your affairs developed themselves' would prevent 'that entire satisfaction in our minds which was once felt towards you' and although:

... with one or two Houses we are doing some business ... if the London Trade would afford inducement we would extend it ... but your market we find so infested by smaller men always on the spot with goods for sale, that to keep pace with them would in time make us as small as themselves. (2)

Even the weather was against the partners in this year and:

Our Home Trade was fairly good till the end of November when it appeared all at once to cease - the open weather has prevented any revival in the demand for blankets. (3)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Dobson and Company, London, 22 Aug. 1842.

(2) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 15 Dec. 1842.

(3) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, 9 Jan. 1843.

In the summer of the next year there were signs of revival from the depression and Cook reported that:

There is a better feeling here throughout the Woollen District, but depend on it there has been a sore melting down of property these last four years. (1)

In the same letter, Cook answered interestingly a question on the Country trade which throws some light on the reluctance of the partners to resort to commercial travelling earlier than they did:

We do not know what to say to you about the English Drapers as a body ... there is a class of very respectable men among them and most towns contain of that class, but we are sure that there is great rottenness among a large number. (2)

The autumn trade in this year was much improved and the partners raised their blanket prices from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{5}{4}$ per cent.', they also expected this improvement to continue and:

... it would not surprise us to see by May next, coarse blankets near a price 12 to 15 per cent. higher than last May. (3)

Their expectations regarding demand were realised and in the following autumn they told Russell:

(1) Thos. Cook to W.I. Duncan, Glasgow, 10 July, 1843.

(2) *ibid.*

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, 23 Oct. 1843.

Our trade is exceedingly large here and it embraces every department of industry among us. (1)

The Irish trade, however, was still involving the partners in some difficulty over the question of cloth finishing:

Mr. Paul is again remarking on his last parcel of goods and were all our customers as exact as he we know not how the Trade could be carried on - still we think it is calculated to produce a beneficial effect, having so vigilant a correspondent.

When we get all straight the best way will be to dress all the goods off by machine, such things do not grumble they do their work as they are told ... (2)

On his previous visit to Ireland, Cawood had also been informed that:

... we cannot see with the large Houses that with the Heaton competition we can get a full mercantile profit in excess of their rates. (3)

In 1845 the weather assisted the partners in working to capacity with home orders and:

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, New York, 4 Sept. 1844.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to T.B. Cawood, Belfast, 11 Nov. 1844. The customer mentioned here was William Paul of Portadown.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to T.B. Cawood, Dublin, 1 July 1844.

The whole neighbourhood is now very busy in providing for the demands of the home trade. (1)

The following spring was quiet as far as country orders were concerned, but in the summer:

A large home trade is looked for and from the great circulation of money by a large employment, together with the great scarcity of clean, white blanket wools, prices may be expected to be higher in a couple of months' time. (2)

In October it was reported that:

Business has been flat, but our London letters this morning are rather more lively, perhaps we may have a little more shortly. (3)

Later in the month:

... we have thousands of pairs in the raw state which we cannot scour and mill until the water is clear. (4)

The situation in November was that:

We continue to have a good deal of Home Trade, indeed as much as the weather will admit of - still it is from day to day and there is no life in it. (5)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, 27 Aug. 1845.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Hague, Dean and Harrison, 5 June 1846.
- (3) Thos. Cook to I.B. Phillips, Stockton-on-Tees, 15 Oct. 1846.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thos. Hanson, Bradford, 22 Oct. 1846.
- (5) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, 17 Nov. 1846.

Prices

In the summer of this year the partners undertook a large-scale revision of their price list and they seem to have incorporated into their new list a number of new qualities and sizes of blankets which, in the light of the experience of Phillips in his travelling, were likely to prove attractive to buyers. Compared with the price list of 1843 the range of goods in almost every category of the partners' production was widened, except in the case of Irish blankets where an extra quality had been introduced and the number of different sizes reduced from twenty to thirteen. A new list of fancy Witneys, thirteen sizes and four qualities, was added and fancy blankets in fourteen sizes and two qualities were now listed at very moderate prices. A novel venture was the production of red and black travelling rugs suitable 'for railway journeys' and these were now available in five sizes and one quality at prices ranging from 1s.9½d. to 5s.10d. The third-class passenger was catered for as well as the first-class traveller, although the latter could buy a Bath blanket for this purpose in any one of eleven different sizes and could expend 20s. on the article. Horse blankets were still being sold at this time and an extra size and quality appeared in 1846. Over the whole range of goods presented in the 1846 list there was an increase in prices over 1843 of 4 to 10 per cent., the largest increases appearing on the cheaper lines. This suggests that

Hagues, Cook and Wormald, Price List - 1846.Witneys

10 sizes and eight qualities.
Price range from 3s.3d. to 42s.9d. per pair.

Bath Blankets

11 sizes
Price range from 2s.10d. to 40s. per pair.

Irish Blankets

13 sizes and six qualities.
Price range from 4s.1d. to 20s.8d. per pair.

Fancy Witneys

13 sizes and four qualities.
Price range from 4s.5d. to 22s. per pair.

Fine Rosed Blankets

19 sizes.
Price range from 3s. to 46s. per pair.

Horse Blankets

4 sizes and four qualities.
Price range from 3s.3d. to 9s. per pair.

'Point' and Fancy Blankets

14 sizes and two qualities.
25s.6d. to 100s. per piece, 10 pairs to the piece.

Red and Black Rugs

5 sizes.
Price range from 1s.9½d. to 5s.10d. each

Fancy London Duffils

14 sizes and two qualities.
Price range from 12s.4d. to 103s.4d. per piece.

Mackinaw Blankets - heavy and weatherproof.

10 sizes and six qualities. One to three 'points'.
Price range from 3s.11d. to 14s.4d. per pair.

Cotton Rugs

5 sizes, bleached or unbleached.
10½d. to 2s.1½d. per pair.

Terms: 3 months Bill or 1¼ per cent. discount for cash.

labour costs rather than raw material price increases were the major elements in enhancing the firm's final prices during this period.

To encourage the demand in the autumn of 1847, the partners wrote to Phillips at the beginning of his travels for that season:

You can inform such of your customers who may be disposed to order blankets that they will be rather lower than last year at this time. (1)

The success of Phillips in selling the partners' products was now becoming recognised at Dewsbury Mills and in the following month a Glasgow merchant was informed that:

Four years ago we did give a contract to a Mr. Phillips ... and amongst the drapers he has sold us a good deal of Blankets. (2)

The last three months of 1847 were very quiet and in the early part of the following year:

It is difficult to say how business will be affected by the present position of Europe - the events on the Continent must prostrate trade and probably reduce the price of the raw material. (3)

The order book in September was 'quite firm' and the home trade did not fall away until early December. Some 'warm, wet weather' probably diminished trade towards the end of the year. (4)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to I.B. Phillips, Bristol, 20 June 1847.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to J.E. Roger, Glasgow, 18 Aug. 1847.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Grant and Barton, New York, 10 March 1848.
- (4) Thos. Cook to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 29 Dec. 1848.

In 1849 the partners were putting out some Irish trade goods to a Leeds firm for making and experiencing great difficulty in maintaining the quality of production which they desired:

It is contrary to our desire and very repugnant to our feelings to have to complain, but we really are getting such an accumulation of your goods that are useless to us, that we shall have a loss by them that we cannot endure the thought of having to bear.

... the burling is so badly done that the goods are full of holes ... try the milling without soap - wash and fuller's earth only, we sometimes mill our own so - are your cards in good order?

We have a great many of your dyed goods which we wish heartily were in the wool again. (1)

A good trade was expected in the autumn for 'we never knew our artisans so well off: the same wages and everything they touch whether of food or clothing at low rates', (2) and soon afterwards

We have here a great home trade, but our farmers are becoming very rabid at the price of corn and cattle - both now very low ... (3)

Early in 1850 there was further correspondence with

Haley:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to M. Haley and Son, Bramley, 1 Aug. 1849. This firm had disappeared by 1853.

(2) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 1 Nov. 1849.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, 19 Nov. 1849.

... you either want work from us or you do not - if you do, it must be done with a despatch we have never yet experienced at your hands - or left off altogether - it is best to be plain and distinct, for your work will not answer either for us or for any other party.

It is one mess of failure altogether and sickening to look at - and what is to be done with the goods is more than we can divine.

Do, do have the goods clean - we cannot tell why we have had so much more failure in blankets with you than with Willans who gets his clean. (1)

This 'mess of failure' was entrusted to Phillips to sell off at low rates and:

If you can make anything of them pray do not overlook it ... but if you sell any tell us the exact terms agreed on that we may have the entries correct in our books. (2)

Thomas Cook did not expect a good home trade in this year:

I have travelled a good deal this last month and I do not consider the wheat crop an average ... we must have a large importation of wheat, very large, I think and the demand for goods will fall ... (3)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to M. Haley and Son,
8 Feb. 1850.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to I.B. Phillips, Bristol,
24 June 1850.

(3) Thos. Cook to G. Maxwell, Liverpool, 22 Aug. 1850.

Costs and Sales

A record of the partners' manufacturing costs and receipts from sales during the years 1847-9 and the first half of 1850 was made in one of the firm's private ledgers and is reproduced in Table 26. No information is given to define carefully the meaning of the three categories: manufacturing costs, value of sales, and surplus - used by the partners and it is not possible, therefore, to compare these figures meaningfully with other information available in respect of the firm's profits in these years. But the data do throw some light on the firm's activity. April, May, June and July were the busiest months, with September and October also exhibiting a minor peak of activity. This accords with what we have already seen were the times of demand for the foreign markets and the home market. May and June were the peak months for both manufacturing expenditure and for sales receipts. It is possible to detect a time-lag between the incursion of manufacturing costs and the receipt of monies from sales which would result from the firm's credit policy, but no regular pattern can be discerned. 1848 shows the highest total of manufacturing costs during the period, which suggests a higher level of activity, particularly as the price of raw material was low at this time:

British wool is at present below the average of some years. (1)

In the years 1847 and 1849 there was a higher total value of sales in relation to manufacturing costs, which indicates that the partners were able, in these two periods, to obtain a higher value for their products than in 1848. The data for 1847 clearly illustrate the effect of the boom in prices which preceded the 'crisis' and the surplus recorded in May of that year was unusually high. This was probably due to a determined effort on the part of the partners to obtain as many payments as possible for goods delivered to customers as a precaution against the risks of over-trading. The trend revealed in 1849 is continued in the first half of 1850 and this partial table shows improving movements in all the categories of costs, sales and surplus, and probably allows the conclusion to be drawn that 1850 was the most satisfactory trading year of the four years here reviewed. This is not clearly shown in the partners' profit calculations over this period, owing to the nature of the very generalised profit statements which have survived for the 'forties. The 'surplus' as an approximate percentage of value of sales was as follows:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Grant and Barton,
10 March 1848.

1847	10	per cent.
1848	9	" "
1849	11	" "
1850	12	" "

This tiny sample of the firm's costs and receipts cannot support a sophisticated argument about the firm's profitability, but it is interesting that it serves to emphasise the emergence of the enterprise into an improving trading atmosphere at the close of the 'forties and in the early 'fifties.

The domestic demand throughout 1851 was dull and Phillips reported 'a great reluctance to order',⁽¹⁾ whilst Cawood, apparently, found the Irish houses 'proceeding with great caution'.⁽²⁾ There was 'a little more doing here' in the spring of 1852:

But a melancholy falling off in reference to the last five years. (3)

In an effort to stimulate trade the partners were developing some new designs:

We send a sample of starred blankets, scarlet ... we must increase the price by 15s. the piece for every 100 stars - in fancy goods for clothing we are also doing some various mixtures and marbles ... in blankets and duffils we are varying our colours. (4)

(1) Thos. Cook to I.B. Phillips, Bradford, 15 July 1851.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to T.B. Cawood, Belfast, 8 Sept. 1851.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, Manchester, 6 April 1852.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Reiss Brothers, 17 April 1852.

Table 26. Manufacturing costs and receipts from sales
(1847-1850)

Year	Manufacturing costs £	Value of Sales £	Surplus £
<u>1847</u>			
January:	7,806	10,894	3,088
February:	6,768	8,379	1,611
March:	17,836	20,638	2,802
April:	14,323	15,726	1,403
May:	26,685	35,307	8,622
June:	20,605	21,789	1,184
July:	14,054	15,770	1,716
August:	9,364	10,526	1,162
September:	12,726	15,019	2,293
October:	10,852	13,576	2,724
November:	11,182	11,414	232
December:	9,071	9,592	521
	161,272	188,630	27,358
<u>1848</u>			
January:	6,226	6,821	595
February:	6,854	7,357	503
March:	14,521	14,905	384
April:	26,854	27,386	532
May:	34,481	37,315	2,834
June:	24,658	26,678	2,020
July:	15,042	16,010	968
August:	15,706	17,791	2,085
September:	14,513	16,784	2,271
October:	19,615	22,901	3,386
November:	12,514	15,222	2,708
December:	13,791	15,539	1,748
	204,675	224,709	20,034

Table 26 (continued)

Year	Manufacturing costs £	Value of Sales £	Surplus £
<u>1849</u>			
January:	6,800	7,686	886
February:	11,600	14,685	3,085
March:	18,582	19,340	758
April:	17,796	19,877	2,081
May:	29,557	32,459	2,902
June:	24,934	27,760	2,826
July:	18,774	21,448	1,674
August:	11,794	13,352	1,558
September:	17,061	20,238	3,177
October:	15,518	18,836	3,318
November:	7,695	8,760	1,065
December:	<u>13,607</u>	<u>15,652</u>	<u>2,045</u>
	194,718	220,093	25,375
<u>1850</u>			
January:	7,900	9,704	1,804
February:	14,675	16,265	1,590
March:	19,671	22,975	3,304
April:	23,570	26,857	3,287
May:	33,491	37,703	4,212
June:	<u>24,035</u>	<u>26,788</u>	<u>2,753</u>
	123,342	140,292	16,950

Source: Balances Book, 1821-54.

Some success followed these attempts to attract buyers and in July:

... at this time of the year our large London, Dublin and Belfast orders come in and so they have done this last three weeks, and we believe that the orders we have received are in excess of former years. (1)

The early orders, however, were not typical of the trade in general and by November:

Our home market is almost over for this year. (2)

There was a marked improvement in the home trade in 1853 despite the increased cost of goods '30 to 35 per cent. above' those prevailing in the previous year. In December, which was usually quiet, Cook described the situation as 'not so active', the price of wool being lower 'but still much above last year's rates.' (3) At the end of the year the partners credited a commission payment to Phillips on his total sales during 1853. His cheque amounted to £216 in respect of sales to the value of £9,656. (4) On large orders

(1) Thos. Cook to George Fox, London, 9 July 1852.

(2) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, New York, 8 Nov. 1852.

(3) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 9 Dec. 1853.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to I.B. Phillips, Burford, 31 Dec. 1853.

he received $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. commission, whilst on small orders from the drapers he was paid $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Early in 1854, Cook wrote to his son in London:

The Mills here all appear employed, but it appears to me that business is more dull and that there is a want of orders. (1)

The picture was soon changed with the onset of the Crimean War and the flow of blanket orders into the district which then ensued, but the general commercial demand for blankets and cloth remained depressed in the autumn and Cook was apprehensive about the position once the 'inordinate demand (2) occasioned by the War' had subsided.

Phillips, following a severe attack of bronchitis, retired from the firm's employment in February, 1854 and the partners then appointed the firm of Pagan and Company, flannel manufacturers and merchants of Rochdale, to undertake the travelling formerly performed by Phillips. At the same time they signed a contract with Mr. Robert Morrison of Edinburgh to act as their agent in Scotland and particularly to call on those Glasgow houses which dealt largely in the Canadian trade. The same rates of commission on orders from

(1) Thos. Cook to Thomas Hague Cook, 20 Feb. 1854. Thomas Hague was now taking an active part in the firm's affairs under the guidance of his father.

(2) Thos. Cook to Cronin, Hurxthal and Sears, 31 Jan. 1855.

large and small buyers as were paid to Phillips were continued with Pagan and Morrison.

Both these arrangements seem to have been satisfactory for the partners, although it is difficult to judge their efficiency in obtaining orders during the years 1854-7 as the home trade generally appears to have shown a tendency to decline and there was a severe trading dislocation in the latter year. Pagan and Company, later Pagan, Willans and Company, were never completely satisfied with the low commission of $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. on orders obtained from the large houses and there were frequent interchanges between them and the partners on this subject. The argument of the partners, however, always took the following form:

In replying to you we are writing to parties conversant with the cost of our goods and you must well know, right well, that discount and your commission off, there will not be for us $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in excess of cost on our goods and on some of the goods, Nos. 1 and 88 for example, not a copper in excess of cost. (1)

In 1860 the total sales on behalf of the partners in the first half of the year by Pagan, Willans and Company was £1,768. (2) There were 53 orders of an average value of

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Pagan, Willans and Company, Rochdale, 8 Oct. 1858. Nos. 1 and 88 were the cheapest lines.

(2) Cook, Son and Wormald to Pagan, Willans and Company, Rochdale, 30 June 1860.

£33.7s.0d., the smallest order being collected from a Sunderland firm of the value of £2.7s.3d., whilst the largest was for £263.16s.0d. from a Liverpool house. The definition of a large order by the partners seems to have been any order in excess of £30. The houses dealt with by Pagan, Willans and Company seem to have been concentrated in the north of England and in the Midlands with the chief buyers located in Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield and Newcastle, in that order. There were very few Yorkshire customers, probably because the partners transacted a good deal of Yorkshire business in the counting house at Dewsbury Mills and also because their wool buyer on his visits to Leeds, Wakefield, Bradford and York would be able to make contacts for the firm and to accept orders in those towns.

For the first half of the year in 1861 the total sales were lower than they were in 1860 for the Rochdale representatives and the partners paid them a commission on a figure of £1,429.⁽¹⁾ There were 55 accounts, three new ones being recorded for Nottingham, Burslem and Birkenhead. The average size of account was £26 and there were fewer extremes of large and very small orders in this year. This data suggests that some of the larger customers obtained by Phillips had

(1) Cook, Son and Wormald to Pagan, Willans and Company,
1 July 1861.

by this time become direct correspondents with the firm and that the business transacted by Pagan, Willans and Company was only a small, but yet very welcome, fraction of the partners' total sales in the home trade.

Morrison strengthened the connection of the partners with the Canadian houses and enabled the firm to share in the enlarged business in that market in the middle 'fifties and early 'sixties, but he did not remain long in the firm's employment and at the end of 1860 he retired and was succeeded by Mr. William Beattie of Edinburgh who, in his first full year of travelling in 1861, obtained for the partners a total sale of £15,126 worth of goods for Canada. This total represented about 25 per cent. of the aggregate British export of blankets to that country in that year. He was dealing with thirty exporting houses, the majority of whom were exporting to Montreal, although Quebec, Halifax and Toronto also figured in the list. (1)

The information on the home trade is extremely sparse in the correspondence books for the late 'fifties and early 'sixties when the partners' letters are much more

(1) Cook, Son and Wormald to William Beattie,
Edinburgh, 3 Jan. 1862.

concerned with discussion of technical changes at the Mills, tariffs, government contracting, and the effects of the cotton famine. The data available, however, serve to confirm the impression gained from the earlier correspondence which we have considered in this section, that home demand for blankets was tending to grow over the period and that the partners were not slow in exploiting the market opportunities of the late 'forties and early 'fifties. It is very significant that Thomas Cook should have regarded the home trade as being much more riskful than the foreign trade, but this was explained by the fact that the partners had well established links with reputable houses in overseas markets by the early 'thirties and that when Phillips began his travels for the firm in 1843, many of the customers he gained for the firm were unknown and untried as far as business transactions were concerned. The observations made by Cook, regarding the home trade of the firm, thus tend to support the commonly accepted view that the commercial organisation in this country associated with overseas markets was stronger in the first half of the nineteenth century than the internal marketing structure. By the time that Pagan, Willans and Company and Robert Morrison were operating on behalf of the firm, the domestic trade dealt with at Dewsbury Mills was improving in

status by comparison with the foreign transactions, and the decline of government business in the 'forties also strengthened the concentration which the partners focussed on their home orders.

Government contracting

'We thought that there was no House but the Earlys ...equal to such a contract and they, we thought, swam in a common boat with you.' (1)

Robert Nicholson dealt with the government tendering arrangements for the partners in London extremely expeditiously and there are very few letters before 1839 which throw much light on this trade. The timing of contracts from the Board of Ordnance and the Admiralty was always of major interest at Dewsbury Mills and Cook and his associates were anxious at all times to discover what sort of tenders were being placed in opposition to their own. Early in 1835, the partners wrote to Nicholson:

If you happen to hear anything of the government order tell us of it - it may enable us to see the smaller manufacturers and prevent their opposing us. (2)

The smaller makers in the 'heavy woollen' district made bids for government work in various ways: they tendered for small portions of a large order; they sometimes co-operated in groups (this was especially true at Earlsheaton) and bid

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jeremiah Carter, London, 29 Jan. 1842.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 7 Feb. 1835.

for large orders; and they also accepted work from the large merchanting houses in London which specialised in bidding for and obtaining government contracts. To reduce this kind of competition against themselves the partners were sometimes able to give out batches of orders to these manufacturers for blankets required for the American or the home market, and this, by absorbing their productive capacity, took them out of the government market at strategic times.

In connection with an Admiralty contract for 20,000 blankets in the spring of 1837, Thomas Cook wrote:

Get to know Carter's tender if you can
- it is always useful knowledge - it
shows what people are about. (1)

Jeremiah Carter was a blanket manufacturer at Ossett who seems to have specialised in the government trade. He spent much time in London at the buying offices at the Tower and at Deptford and he had regular, personal dealings with the government inspectors who examined the goods supplied under contract.

This question of the examination of goods was one which caused the partners frequent difficulty. The successful bidder for a contract was bound to supply a stated quantity of blankets or cloth at a certain time and at an agreed price.

(1) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 14 March 1837.

He must also supply the goods 'of a quality in accordance with the sample', and this raised two problems. In the first place, it was difficult in a large order to maintain quality at a fixed level for all fabrics when the nature of the wool used, the variations in spinning and weaving, and in dyeing and finishing, would tend to introduce some disparity between one batch of cloth and another even in the best regulated mill. Second, the judgement of goods supplied by comparison with the sample was exercised by inspectors appointed for the purpose and, as we shall note, this judgement of fabrics was undoubtedly "an art and not a science."

The partners had become convinced by the middle of 1837 that:

We have the very worst opinion of
Wickens and Pugh as respects us. (1)

Wickens and Pugh were the inspectors for the Board of Ordnance at the Tower and their rejection of goods supplied by the partners had led to the formation of 'the very worst opinion' of them by Cook, particularly. In another letter to Nicholson, Cook stated that:

We are afraid to send these particular blankets which are of slightly better quality than those we have ready of pattern quality ... we fear we

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 28 June 1837.

shall have the latter rejected when they see the former. (1)

Jeremiah Carter, however, does not seem to have encountered the same difficulties as the partners and Cook's observations in 1838 were very interesting:

We have done a very unhandsome thing by Mr. Carter, and one we should not like practised on us ... there is at a Mill here which spins for us ... 30 packs of blend of Weft for his government order. We asked the millowner to give us a sample of the wool and a cop of the weft and he has done so, we send it to you.

Now Mr. Carter must have no injury done to him. If he can pass such wool in his government orders well, let him have the advantage it will give him. Our warp wool is better! But you will note in his weft there is not only worsted garments not fully pulled up, but actual shoddy torn from flannels and stockings and the wool mainly foreign and broadhead.

This wool will cost $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. less than ours, or more - and he will, if the goods pass, make a fair profit - the weft wool would not make our common Witneys. (2)

Now we should never dare to put together such stuff for No. 1 Ordnance goods and if Mr. Carter can get such goods passed, then rest assured that all contest with him is hopeless. (3)

(1) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 3 July 1837.

(2) 'Government blankets require 7 per cent. more wool than ordinary trade goods of the same weight, if they are to be up to the sample ...' Note in Letter Book No, 13, 1838.

(3) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 18 May 1838.

From 1838 onward the partners found Carter a formidable competitor in government contracting and particularly in the case of contracts for the Board of Ordnance:

... it is now clear to us that, at the Tower, Carter can pass goods which others cannot. (1)

Other blanket manufacturers also experienced difficulty in competing with Carter and the partners discovered in 1839 that:

The Witney people last year ... had a many blankets rejected, 7 quarters and 8 quarters in width ... Army's and Hospitals we took them to mean by this description ... (2)

The partners responded to this situation by making repeated complaints to the Tower about the variability of examination of goods, and by cultivating the friendship of Carter. This latter development did not take place, however, until, after the partners had closed down their London agency and terminated their contract with Nicholson.

In 1838 the partners began to take steps which led them eventually into a profitable activity connected with their contracting trade. They pressed Nicholson into service in this matter:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 28 May 1838.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 26 March 1839.

The American Government at present buy their blankets for public use of such goods as they can pick up at New York. They wish in future to get them as the British Government do and if possible to get samples of the goods, having on them the British Government seal to show they are the same goods.

Pray ask Mr. Stacey how this is to be managed ... tell Mr. Stacey to keep this private as if we can manage to get their authenticated samples - we can get ~~the~~ order from America without competition for it - don't let anyone know of this. (1)

The partners had been apprised of this favourable opportunity in the American market by their correspondent, W.H. Russell of New York, and early in January 1839, they were able to despatch to him a pair of blankets carrying the seal of the Board of Ordnance. This resulted in a small trial order from Russell in the following March and:

We have not devoted to any order in our memory more care than to this. (2)

In July the partners began to receive regular orders from Russell for government blankets of a low quality, consigned to him at 5s. per pair. Other manufacturers were able to move into this trade soon afterwards, but the initial advantage obtained by the partners allowed them to retain a

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 23 Dec. 1838.
Stacey was the government buyer for the Board of Ordnance.
- (2) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, 1 April 1839.

share of this trade during the following twenty years, and particularly during the early 'sixties when the impact of the Civil War stimulated large orders for government blankets and cloth.

Following Nicholson's dismissal in August 1839, the partners were handicapped in their contracting trade by the absence of a regular agent in London, especially as, in the following month, they obtained 'a standing contract with the Admiralty for transport blankets'⁽¹⁾ and it was necessary to have regular contact with the Admiralty Storekeeper at Deptford. An attempt was made to overcome this difficulty by offering the agency to a friend in the city - a businessman engaged in the hop and grain factoring trade - the offer was made in these terms:

Nicholson used to deliver our goods forward ... the matter is one of not much trouble, some years it is worth about £100 to £150 - others only £50 ... now could you not see after this for us? On the transactions we give 1 per cent., and you know that when there is no wage there is no work. (2)

It would appear then, that the total value of goods consigned to the Admiralty and the War Office was within the range

(1) Thos. Cook to John Dobson, 7 Sept. 1839.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Dobson and Company, London, 1 Sept. 1839. The partners' account with the Admiralty for the period Feb. 1836 to April 1838 was worth £9,690; in the period July 1838 to March 1839, the account with the Board of Ordnance was valued at £11,684.

£5,000 to £15,000, or approximately 5 to 6 per cent. of the partners' total business at this time. This was not a large consideration in terms of profitability, but in so far as government contracts could often be obtained during periods when the normal manufacturing operations were reduced in size, then such work was valuable in sustaining employment at the Mills and assisting the spread of overhead costs.

Dobson elected to have £100 per year as a flat payment for handling the business irrespective of the size of the transactions involved, but the partners soon discovered that Dobson's lack of familiarity with woollen goods was a major handicap to them and they soon had recourse to the assistance of Jeremiah Carter. Thomas Cook had endeavoured to employ Carter before this arrangement was made with Dobson, but without success:

You will recollect I called on you in Town some time ago and made a distinct offer to divide the Blanket Gobds with you - I did this in direct opposition to Robert Nicholson's wishes - thinking it folly that you and we should run against each other - you will recollect that you received this offer with great coolness and declined it. (1)

At the end of 1842, Cook in a friendly letter to Nicholson declining his offer to resume their London agency for the partners, stated that:

(1) Thos. Cook to Jeremiah Carter, London, 4 Sept. 1839.

Dobson and Company do not understand our goods, nor their management if and when they are rejected by the government examiners ... and ... we have to pay Carter for his trouble in attending to our affairs. (1)

It is not clear when Carter first started receiving payment for these services, but probably towards the end of 1839 the partners began to lose confidence in Dobson's agency.

It is not surprising that this connection with Carter was soon turned into an association whereby certain 'arrangements' were made to limit the competition in the tendering for government contracts.

If the Witney people be satisfied with half the blankets, we will join them, if not we will take our chance. You will ask them and tell us their notions of prices. (2)

In respect of the same contract the partners wrote a little later:

... we do not think anyone from here can offer so low, there will however be large competition as to Messrs. Hale and Company and the Leeds people, but we are looking after them. The former House's last prices exceeded ours by one penny per lb. (3)

(1) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 15 Dec. 1842.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Carter, 18 April 1840.

(3) *ibid.* 25 April 1840. 'Hale and Company' refers to the firm of Hale and Walshaw, blanket merchants of Dewsbury.

We are led to believe that a very close contest will take place amongst the Heaton makers divided into bodies in bidding for the blankets. We should be perfectly indifferent to them, were it not for the fact that when once the barrier of fear in taking government orders shall be broken down, a competition will be created for those goods by parties animated by great rivalry with each other and which would in better times destroy all profit. (1)

At this time the depression in the woollen industry was such that many of the smaller makers who had previously looked upon government contracting with some trepidation were now disposed to try their hand in order to obtain work. Cook's concern was thus understandable and, from his point of view, a spoiling of the market was a real danger in this prevailing situation of eager selling.

The contract for 40,000 blankets was given out by the Board of Ordnance in July 1840 to the three lowest bidders who happened to be: Jeremiah Carter, Charles Early and Company of Witney, and Hagues, Cook and Wormald. The activities of Carter were obviously designed to secure a stable division of the market and, on this occasion, the threat of price undercutting from other parties was met successfully:

One of the difficulties associated with this trade was the tardy method of payment made by the authorities for goods received, and Dobson was persistently urged to seek payments in respect of consignments from the partners. A

(1) *ibid.* 27 April 1840.

typical letter from Cook on the subject stated:

Pray get us some money from the Tower as soon as possible and stick up to the examiners, or they will give the preference to those who do so. (1)

Occasionally it was found necessary to take stronger action than this to secure payment:

I wish to draw your attention to the great delay in payment which now takes place ... for some years ago no such delay was experienced as the manufacturers now have to endure. Indeed, the money might be obtained from the United States in equal time for goods sent there.

As far as we are concerned the mere loss of interest is the only inconvenience felt, but there is now doing business with your Honourable Board a class of little manufacturers of untiring industry, prudent, painstaking and careful, to whom a little earlier examination would be of rare use. Indeed, we know this, as we have granted accommodation to one party who alleged that the cause of the assistance was the delay of getting his goods examined at the Tower - and we believed him from the circumstances of knowing how we ourselves were dealt with there. (2)

The impact of a large government contract on the coarse wool market could at times be very great and some estimate had to be made of the course of wool prices during the period which elapsed between the submission of a tender and the

(1) Thos. Cook to John Dobson, 11 April 1843.

(2) Thos. Cook to Robert Byham, Secretary of the Board of Ordnance, 16 June 1843. The 'one party' granted a loan by the partners was Benjamin Tattersfield, blanket manufacturer of Dewsbury Moor.

receipt of an order, before a firm price could be tendered. The partners' resources were such that they could often purchase wool in anticipation of orders before the market began to move unfavourably and Dobson was informed very early in his representations on behalf of the firm:

Mr. Stacey always knows when orders are to be put out and when the quantity is great we have found an advantage by early information in wool matters - two or three days are in such cases useful. (1)

In 1840 the partners wrote very clearly to Dobson on the question of tendering:

You must be so good as to see Mr. Carter on Monday or Tuesday and arrange prices with him and the Witney people. We do not want more than half of the blankets and 5,000 of the travelling rugs, and therefore on the 15,000 blankets and the 5,000 rugs your prices must be below theirs, on all the rest a fraction above them. But it may so happen after all that other tenders may be so framed as to exclude one of ours, if so the principle is understood that we are to have our proportion of theirs or they of ours. (2)

In the following month they told him:

We believe Nicholson never gave Christmas Boxes - we are not sure that he ever did it but once, a sovereign. If it can be done with safety we have not the slightest objection to your giving them 20s. or 40s. as Christmas Boxes, but were the matter discovered ... your names would be stricken from the Queen's Books! (3)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Dobson, 8 Sept. 1839.
 (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Dobson, 14 Nov. 1840.
 (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Dobson, 23 Dec. 1840.

In 1841, Thomas Cook was corresponding with a flannel manufacturer in Rochdale:

The Navy contracts are commonly declared for the middle of March and we expect they will not be later this year - do you bid? and through whom? If no arrangement with others, send your prices to us if you cannot get your deliveries seen after for less than a 1 per cent. charge. (1)

... you need not fear the Navy examiners provided the goods be fairly done to the patterns, many fear that favouritism obtains there, our experience does not lead us to such conclusion. (2)

This led to an advantageous arrangement for the partners whereby Dobson handled deliveries of flannel and serge made by the Rochdale firm for an extra £50 per annum from the partners. Cook and his associates, however, received 1 per cent. commission on the value of Chadwick's consignments and this enabled them to 'defray some of Dobson's expenses' and to reduce their own agency costs. It also made it less expensive for them to employ Carter as well as Dobson for some of their government work. Carter was invariably resorted to when any of the partners' goods were rejected. These fabrics were carefully sorted out and the better pieces were submitted again to the buying departments with other batches. The very inferior cloths were either returned to Dewsbury

(1) Thos. Cook to John Chadwick and Sons, Rochdale, 15 Feb. 1841.

(2) *ibid.* 17 Feb. 1841.

Mills or sold in London at special rates. By these means the partners minimised the risk of loss and Carter's judgement of cloth enabled him to exercise a fine discretion in dealing with rejected goods which Dobson could not hope to emulate. In cases where the proportion of rejected goods to the total was very large, the government buyer was petitioned to allow the goods to 'pass' at an abated price or for an extension of time to allow for the manufacture of replacements. The partners seem to have escaped such drastic measures:

... during the last twenty years we believe there is but one occasion in which we have had to solicit for government goods to be taken at an abated price. (1)

In 1846, there was 'a monstrous rejection' at the Tower and the partners were:

... hoping that the quantity rejected may not much exceed 2,000 blankets. (2)

This was for a total delivery of 21,000, but Carter came to the rescue and only some 700, or just over 3 per cent. of the total were returned to Dewsbury Mills. The petition which looked likely at first was therefore averted.

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Messrs. Pugh and Wickens, Tower, London, 6 July 1840.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Dobson, 25 Sept. 1846.

There was an intensification of competition for the contracts in 1841 and Carter was told in May:

You may be curious to know about a second quality Army Blankets - Hall, Wilson and Company have them ... the price being exactly one-eighth of a penny below our offer. (1)

In respect of another order the partners enquired:

Do your Witney friends want any, if so tell us what price they desire us to bid for them? (2)

And later:

We have put on to the Contract Paper in pencil mark, what we deem as low a price as we ought to bid for the points, and we fancy it one that will secure the order. However, as we put our prices in pencil, we leave $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to a $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. to your discretion, thinking that you ought not to go down more than the former. (3)

This arrangement with Carter was unsuccessful and the order, for 6,000 point blankets, was given to Hall, Wilson and Company. (4)

In November of that year Cook informed Carter:

The Aldams Mill Company will, we expect, now be constant bidders for all contracts, whether of blankets or flushings - they got well through the last order I believe. (5)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jeremiah Carter, 6 May 1841.

(2) *ibid.* 14 May 1841.

(3) *ibid.* 18 May 1841.

(4) Hall, Wilson and Company had by this time taken over Aldams Mill.

(5) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Carter, 23 Nov. 1841.

The Aldams Mill Company also obtained an order for Navy cloth soon afterwards, but they did so at 'a fearfully low price' and, apparently, ran into difficulties:

Our neighbours will profit by their lesson - it is well that the quantity is as small as 3,000 yards. You will be so good as to write to Witney - we were yesterday told that they are actively employed at present. We are desirous to get this Ordnance order, it is quite of moment for us to do so, but we will not meddle with it to lose our Mill costs - unless we can win that it shall pass us. (1)

This order, however, was given to Witney and Thomas Tong of Earlsheaton. Carter was informed:

Tong has the 15,000 blankets, we understand, and we are surprised at it, because he is a cautious man and not well disposed to take much risk.

We would rather decline any of the Witney goods at the money, how should they have any without your knowledge? We thought that there was no House but the Early's at that place equal to such a contract and they, we thought, swam in a common boat with you.

However, Tong being engaged on these Ordnance goods will leave the Navies more at liberty. (2)

The trade distress of this period was forcing the tender prices down, although no figures are available to measure this movement, and the Witney makers had apparently decided to withdraw from their association with Carter in order to meet competition from Yorkshire unhampered.

(1) Thos. Cook to Carter, 15 Jan. 1842.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Carter, 29 Jan. 1842.

In February of 1842, the partners returned to the subject with Carter:

We do not expect to receive the order for the 3,000 blankets ... if they do come you shall have part of the work to spin or to mill as you would like.

We do not understand your Witney friends ... we understood that part of them were in league with you ... have they played you fair? It would appear not to us, the matter is of no moment, but it certainly has to us the appearance of their desire to have two strings to their Bow. (1)

It may well be that, by now, the Witney people had only one string to their bow which was that they were prepared to reduce their prices to almost any level in order to obtain part of a contract, whilst the partners were not prepared to bid for government work at prices which, in their opinion, were not likely to cover prime costs plus Dobson's commission.

In March, Thomas Cook wrote:

... thinking of going to London next week, 35,000 blankets and 550,000 yards of flannel are named for contract. (2)

This visit was made and Cook took with him a tender from Chadwick and Sons and also a tender based on prices supplied by Sheard and Company of Batley and to which Cook had added $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. to cover various charges and expenses. He had

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Carter, 18 Feb. 1842.

(2) Thos. Cook to George Hodges, Manchester, 16 March 1842.

very little success, although Chadwick's were awarded some 20,000 yards of the flannel contract.

In the summer the partners obtained a small part of the Navy contract - 5,000 blankets - and they were experimenting at this time with burl dyeing, but this created an unexpected problem:

We find no difficulty so great at Deptford in our goods as burls - they cannot there be made to look upon them with any complacency - they think them made of shoddy. (1)

Thomas Tong had succeeded in getting the lion's share of this particular contract, his price being well below that tendered by the partners, but:

Tong is trying to reduce his men's wages, and they are all turned out. (2)

In the November of this year the partners appear to have made some effort to terminate the contract with Dobson and give their agency in London to Carter, but they met with some resistance from Dobson and they finally compromised by leaving the Ordnance work and the flannel and serge consignments to Dobson, whilst Carter was given the sole management of blankets intended for Deptford. Dobson continued to have his £150 per annum, whilst Carter was given $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. commission on the value of contracts handled. (3)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, 22 June 1842.

(2) Thos. Cook to Carter, 17 June 1842. The partners reduced their wages five months later.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Carter, 17 Nov. 1842.

In December the partners were bidding for Navy blankets:

Our last price was 5s.3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each, but the wool is at present low, our price is left blank, fill it up ... we think the price ought not to go below 4s.8d., but we leave a fraction to you in the matter. Witney and Carr only are to be feared, but if they keep to quality our price is a barely saving one - and it is our rule to keep to quality. (1)

On 10 January the partners received an order for 15,000 blankets and on the same day they wrote to Carter:

We have only 15,000. Harrop will of course have 10,000. It is said that Tong has 24,000. Who has the other 5,000 we know not, but it is said that Edwin Firth has these through Kynaston - do you know? (2)

By now, it seems, the partners and Carter were unable to meet the competition for orders with anything more than slight success and the collusive agreement which had worked so well in the early part of the depression had by now completely broken down.

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Carter, 28 Dec. 1842. The emphasis on quality made by the partners in relation to the competition from Witney is an interesting commentary on the development of the Yorkshire trade in blanket-making compared with the older centre of the manufacture.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Carter, 10 Jan. 1843. Thomas Harrop of Chickenley and Edwin Firth of Heckmondwike are the manufacturers here referred to with Tong. Kynaston seems to have been a London agent.

In the summer of 1843, the partners wrote a long letter to the Board of Ordnance complaining of the long delays in payment for goods supplied; during the course of this complaint it was noted that:

You do not know the actual parties making the goods, as they are bidden for by parties not manufacturers, on behalf of their friends, and lately the orders have gone to a class of men, in the major part, who at one time never made goods for the Tower inspection at all. (1)

The improvement in general trading conditions during 1843 reflected itself in the government trade, Many of the smaller makers were now obtaining foreign and domestic orders and the competition was less fierce. At the end of the year the partners tendered to the Admiralty on behalf of Chadwick and Son for 100,000 yards of Blue Serge at prices ranging from 8.1d. to 8.3d. per yard, and they obtained the whole of the contract. (2) In the following February:

The Government put out about 60,000 blankets on Wednesday and we have taken 14,000 varying from 19d. to 20d. for No. 12 quality. This price is about 18-20 per cent. higher than twelve months back for the same goods. Of course all the lower priced tenders would be served first, but it shows how easy the trade has been in the desire to get them. (3)

-
- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to J. Wood, the Board of Ordnance, London, 27 June 1843.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to the Secretary of the Admiralty 12 Dec. 1843.
- (3) Thos. Cook to George Hodges, Manchester, 16 Feb. 1844.

The general easing of the economic situation also had its effect on quality of production and, in April, the partners had to write to Chadwick and Sons:

We have heard from Dobson of complaints from Deptford that 'the deliveries of serge get worse and worse and very much inferior to pattern'. Pray let us hear from you, if they get suspicious, we shall have nothing but trouble from them. (1)

The partners had to return to this theme in the summer:

Whatever are you doing with the new contract?
We are in a complete mess with these goods. (2)

They also obtained an order for Chadwicks from the Board of Ordnance for 24,682 yards of Brown Serge at 12³/₈d. per yard to be delivered in three months:

We beg your very particular attention to this order as the examiners are ten times more particular at the Ordnance than they are at the Victualling Office. (3)

This warning was of no avail, however, and in the following February 'a large quantity' of this cloth was rejected. (4)

Carter seems to have disposed of this satisfactorily, but the partners were still peeved at 'the unfortunate light blue serge on which there has been a loss of £124.' (5)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick & Sons, 4 April 1844.

(2) *ibid.* 5 June 1844 (3) *ibid.* 6 July 1844

(4) *ibid.* 16 Feb. 1845 (5) *ibid.*

This emphasis on quality, in their own manufacture and in the manufacture of goods supplied by Chadwicks, Sheard of Batley, and the smaller manufacturers of Earlsheaton and Dewsbury from whom they obtained goods in the 'fifties and early 'sixties, remains the dominant theme of the correspondence on the government trade from this time onward. It illustrates once again the concentration of the partners, and particularly Thomas Cook, on the maintenance of long-run rather than short-run profitability for the enterprise. It would certainly have been possible for the partners to have joined in the price-cutting war of the early 'forties as a means of ensuring the receipt of government contracts, but once the 'going price' had slipped below the figure at which the pattern quality could no longer be maintained without recourse to the use of shoddy materials and shoddy workmanship (1) the partners withdrew from the race. It is clear that the partners preferred a collusive arrangement to maintain a 'fair' price rather than depreciate their fabrics. Thomas Cook would no doubt have argued that his collusion with Carter and with Witney was 'in the public interest', although without a rigorous examination of prices and costs it would not be easy to accept such a plea. In 1854, Thomas Cook wrote to a Witney manufacturer in the following terms:

(1) Referring to the government trade later in the nineteenth century, W. Viccars of Huddersfield said that 'profits have diminished through competition ... especially felt in ... Government contracts. They are often taken at cost price, or almost under ...'. Report of The Tariff Commission, par. 1583.

You will notice the Government want for the Tower, 50,000 blankets. Now it is perfect folly that there should be a race of improperly low prices to obtain the order. We shall all have more or less to do, and prices ought to be obtained for the Tower goods corresponding to the risk and trouble in their examination.

It would be better if you, ourselves, and Mr. Tong did not run each other down below proper prices, and so far as we are concerned, we shall be glad to arrange matters for a distribution of the quantity having fair prices for ourselves and just ones for the Tower people. (1)

This letter was written at a time of low trade, but the Witney response was not encouraging and the development of wardemand later in the year filled order books for most of the blanket manufacturers and the need to 'arrange matters for a distribution' did not arise.

It would be difficult to exonerate Cook and his partners completely from the charge that their interest in collusion was prompted by a desire to mitigate the rigours of free competition, but it is noticeable that this kind of correspondence only occurs in the firm's records during times of severely depressed trade and when desperate measures were apparently being taken by competitors to obtain government orders. Furthermore, it is clear from the firm's correspondence that the partners regarded government contracting as

(1) Thos. Cook to John Early and Sons, Witney, 19 Jan. 1854.

a regular and normal part of their trade, hence their insistence on quality as a means of ensuring the goodwill of the government buyers over a long period of time. This they seem to have achieved in the case of the Admiralty, but it is less certain in the case of the Board of Ordnance, later the War Office. It is understandable that the partners would wish to protect their normal marketing in this particular line of business in the face of abnormal and alien competition during severe depression. Whether entering into a collusive arrangement is ever a justifiable policy from the point of view of 'the public interest' is a nice question, it certainly would seem to have been so from the point of view of the partners in the 'forties.

The Hudson's Bay trade

In the early years of the partnership, attempts were made to secure the contracts for blankets which were regularly put out by the Hudson's Bay Company, but only very slight success was achieved in the tendering, the major share of such contracts being secured by the Witney firms, and in the late 'twenties the partners lost interest in the submission of tenders and the Company's name disappeared from the firm's ledgers. No further reference to this trade occurs in the correspondence books until the autumn of 1845 when Thomas Cook wrote to Dobson:

There is a large public company called the Hudson's Bay Company in London - who buy a large quantity of blankets for the American Indian trade exchanged for furs - Otters, Beavers, skins... we believe Archibald Barclay Esq. is the Secretary and the business place is at 4, Fenchurch Street.

Many years ago our late Mr. Hague called at the Company's Office, but did not see the parties ordering, however it resulted in nothing. We should be glad if the Company would allow us to send them samples. (1)

You know no house in the kingdom does so largely in this article as our House does, and if they would but look at our goods, made to their own weights and sizes, we are sure ~~we~~ would get their orders.

Could you call or get an introduction to the Secretary, if you could it might lead to something with them. (2)

Dobson seems to have acted promptly and successfully in this matter and by the end of that year the partners were corresponding directly with the Company:

We have the honour to own the receipt of your letter and to express our thanks to you for the information it gives us.

We do not know if the Governor and the Committee allow your patterns to be cut in the manner the Government allow theirs at the Tower ... if so, we shall be obliged by your allowing the bearer to take pieces from the samples and specifications as to sizes and weights.

(1) Hague's visit must have been some time before 1832.

(2) Thos. Cook to John Dobson, 10 Sept. 1845.

If this not be allowed we will run up to London - see the patterns and give you prices at which we will supply the goods.

Thanking you for allowing us the privilege to compete for your orders. (1)

The 'bearer' referred to in this letter was Jeremiah Carter who was now pressed into service to ascertain the exact nature of the Company's requirements:

We are most desirous to obtain this order but do not see our way to venture on making any of the goods below our No. 10 quality. To reduce what are called inferior to No. 88 would make them so coarse they would never pass, or there would be great risk in their passing. We therefore adopt No. 10 quality for all and it would be satisfactory to us to report how far our sample No. 10 was in the minds of the packers equal to the Hudson's Bay Company samples.

We send you our Tender and the prices embrace a Commission of 1 per cent. to you and if you do not obtain the Order charge us your journey into Yorkshire. (2)

Carter placed the tender on behalf of the partners and satisfied himself as to the qualities demanded by the Company's examiners, which appear to have been of inferior to good, medium quality in relation to the firm's normal range of production. On the basis of this tender, the firm received

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Archibald Barclay, Esq., Hudson's Bay House, London, 19 Dec. 1845.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jeremiah Carter, 23 Dec. 1845.

an order in January 1846 which is reproduced overleaf for its general indication of the fabrics entering into this trade. In addition, the Company ordered at the same time twenty-five pieces of strong, thick, white duffil cloth in 40 yard lengths, weighing 85 lbs., and to cost no more than 134s.6d. per piece; and one piece of similar material striped indigo and blue, weighing 90 lbs., and to cost no more than 200s.⁽¹⁾ The Company's terms of payment were, cash payable at the Company's Offices twice a year, in June and September.

This order was the beginning of a long and valuable association between the firm and the Company which still exists. Regular contracts were received from the Company at Dewsbury Mills during the twenty-five years which followed Dobson's successful representations at Hudson's Bay House, but in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the partners again ceased to tender for a period of years for reasons⁽²⁾ which are not exactly known.

(1) These details indicate the relatively high cost of dyeing indigo blue, it added some 33 percent. to the value of the fabric, and also the additional weight which this kind of dyeing produced in the finished piece - nearly 12 per cent.

(2) See below, chapter XI.

Description	Delivery in 1846			Size in inches	Weight lbs. oz.	Price per pr.
	Feb.	April	July			
Blankets, strong, thick, Green ...						
4 points:	12	41	20	72 x 90	12	20s.
3½ " "	-	47	-	63 x 81	10	16s. 8d.
3 " "	-	15	300	60 x 72	8 5	13s. 10d.
" strong, thick, White ...						
4 points:	35	95	-	72 x 90	12	18s.
3½ " "	52	185	400	63 x 81	10	15s. 1d.
3 " "	165	1275	1000	60 x 72	8 5	12s. 5d.
2½ " "	82	1250	800	50 x 66	6 10	10s. 0½d.
2 " "	20	390	100	42 x 57	4 7	6s. 7½d.
1½ " "	22	365	25	36 x 51	3 9	5s. 4d.
1 " "	40	600	-	32 x 48	3 1	4s. 6½d.
" strong, thick, bright						
Scarlet, fast colour:	-	25	-	54½ x 76	6 4	12s.
" striped duffle with						
three bars at each end:	10	25	-	60 x 36	3 7	5s. 1½d.
" " , Hudson Bay striped						
Blue and Green, Red and Yellow, 3 pts:	-	100	-	60 x 72	8 5	12s. 6d.
" " Ditto, 2½ points:	-	125	-	50 x 66	6 11	10s. 1d.
" " Indigo Blue, 3 points:	-	25	-	60 x 72	8 5	16s. 8d.
" " " " 3½ " "	-	25	-	63 x 81	10	20s.
" " " " 4 " "	-	4	-	72 x 90	12	24s.
" " striped duffle with four bars						
each end, Scarlet and Blue, 3 points:	-	-	25	60 x 72	8 5	13s. 2d.
" " inferior, plain White with						
broad Indigo band, 3 points:	-	-	600	60 x 72	6 12	10s. 1d.
" " " 2½ " "	-	-	500	50 x 63	5 7	8s. 1d.
" " " 2 " "	-	-	75	45 x 52	3 10	5s. 5d.
broad scarlet bar 2 " "	-	-	200	45 x 52	3 10	5s. 5d.

CHAPTER X

WOOL BUYING, 1832-62

CHAPTER XWool Buying, 1832-62

I

A large consumption of wool was necessary to sustain the manufacturing operations at Dewsbury Mills and the partners recorded their wool purchases in a number of 'green-leaved ledgers' which, unfortunately, have not been preserved. However, there are frequent references to wool buying in the correspondence books for the period 1832-62 and, although it is not possible to measure the flow of wool into and out of the warehouses of Hagues, Cook and Wormald in quantitative terms, the firm's letters throw some light on the types and prices of wool bought during these years and also upon the organisation of the wool trade. We have already noted in Chapter V above that the partners tended to concentrate their wool buying in the later months of the year and this practice continued throughout the period with which we are here concerned. The stocks of wool held at Dewsbury Mills on the 31 of December in each year were recorded, in value terms, in the Private Ledgers for the years 1834-62, and these have been reproduced in Table 27, and form the basis of Figure 11. The only classifications used by the partners for stock assessment purposes were those of 'Blanket Wool' and 'Fine Wool' and no differentiation was made between native and foreign

fibres. There was no significant use of shoddy wool by the firm during these thirty years and no stocks of this commodity were recorded.

Much of the wool buying for the firm was still being done by Thomas Cook in the early 'thirties and although his travelling in search of supplies was by now more curtailed owing to his day-to-day involvement with the manufacturing processes and the general routine of the counting house, his approval of samples was necessary before the partners agreed to take delivery of bulk consignments. In early 1832 he wrote to a Bristol woolstapler:

It has been the intention of this writer to go to Bristol Fair and forward to London - but one circumstance or other joined to the dullness of trade will prevent it. Pray say how the wool market is at the Fair, and if anything can be done better than the last purchase, show us the article - if it cannot, do not be at the trouble of sending us samples. (1)

A few months earlier he had written to a woolstapling firm in Dorset:

(1) Thos. Cook to Mr. Francis, Oakill, Bristol, 27. Feb. 1832.

Table 27. HAGUES, COOK AND WORMALD

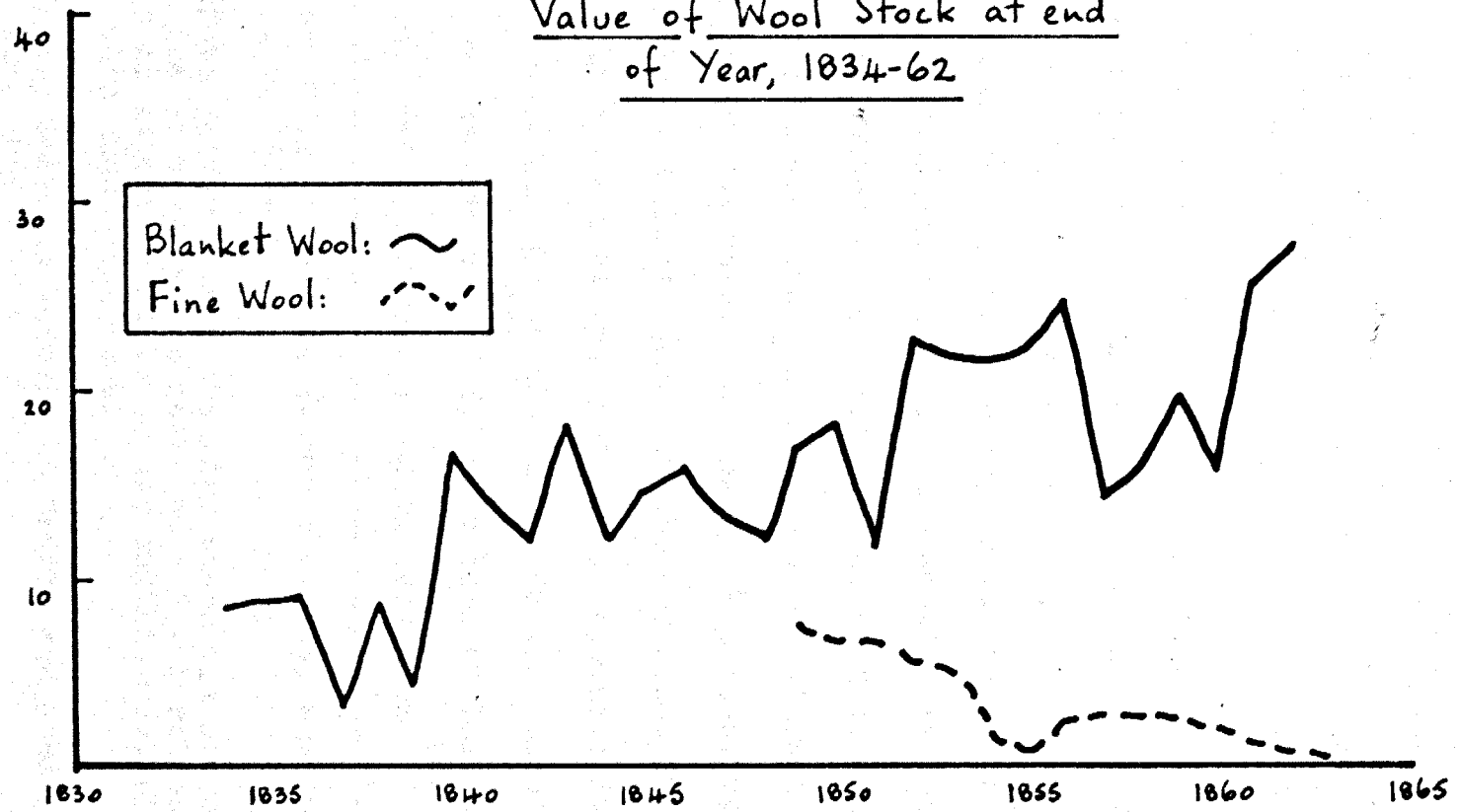
Value of wool stocks held
at end of Year, 1834-62

Year	Blanket Wool	Fine Wool
	£	£
1834	8,319	-
1835	8,506	-
1836	8,660	-
1837	3,007	-
1838	8,385	-
1839	4,146	-
1840	16,338	-
1841	13,769	-
1842	11,613	-
1843	17,994	-
1844	11,998	-
1845	14,250	-
1846	15,529	-
1847	13,051	-
1848	11,985	-
1849	16,850	7,077
1850	17,971	6,573
1851	11,086	6,538
1852	22,045	5,528
1853	21,952	4,991
1854	21,204	1,525
1855	21,925	923
1856	24,272	2,113
1857	13,969	2,256
1858	15,613	2,324
1859	19,453	2,100
1860	15,319	1,581
1861	25,208	743
1862	27,387	105

Source: Private Ledgers, 1821-70

£000

Figure 11. Hagues, Cook and Wormald,
Value of Wool Stock at end
of Year, 1834-62



Source: Private Ledgers, 1821-70

With respect to your buying wool for us, if ever a thing so unlikely should occur, you shall have money to go to market with as you require. But we keep a person for this especial purpose, which obviates the necessity of employing others who cannot be so conversant with the article we require as he who from long experience must be better able to judge if an article laid before him be applicable to our use.... (1)

The person employed by the partners for 'this especial purpose' was Joseph Walker who divided his time between working in the blending warehouse and visiting the local wool markets in the north of England. He appears to have been a local clothier - probably one of the partners' hand-loom weavers - who was recruited in 1831 and then thoroughly initiated into the firm's blanket business before being allowed to travel on behalf of the partners. As Cook and his associates gained confidence in Walker's judgement he was allowed to represent them in London and at the wool fairs, whenever it was inconvenient for Cook himself to attend and it was necessary to keep an eye on the market. (2) In the autumn of 1834 it was noted that 'our wool buyer was in London last week' (3) and a month

(1) Thos. Cook to Messrs. I. and T. Corry, Sherborne, 25 Oct. 1831.

(2) Before Walker joined the firm there are scattered remarks in the correspondence books to a Mr. Hirst as a wool buyer, but it is not possible to say anything decisive regarding Hirst's exact functions.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 12 Nov. 1834.

later Cook and Walker were in London together to 'buy £4,000
 of wool, 20 to 30 per cent. below summer prices.' (1) Between
 their visits to London, Cook and Walker were kept informed of
 price movements by Thomas Legg, woolstapler of that city, from
 whom they purchased large quantities of coarse wools and in
 whom they appear to have had great trust. (2)

At about this time, Robert Nicholson was persuaded to
 use part of his warehouse in Coleman Street to house the wool
 purchases made in London and to arrange for these to be later
 consigned to Dewsbury. (3) In one way and another Nicholson
 had a good deal to do with wool and he occasionally purchased
 small amounts for them, but he never seems to have commanded
 Thomas Cook's confidence in this respect and he was subjected
 to 'lectures' from time to time on the art of wool buying.

(1) Thos. Cook to Edward Hague, 18 Dec. 1834.

(2) Legg sometimes made mistakes. In January 1842, the
 partners complained to him:

'£150 will not pay the loss ... this is a
 bad affair - we believe you have taken the
 wool at wet weights.'

(3) The consignments were sent by coastal steamer from London
 to Hull. In 1834, Cook estimated the cost of carriage
 as representing a $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the value of the wool.
 The transport cost from Hull was 14s. per ton.

The whiteness of wool is very important for our goods and you must avoid grey hairs and burrs. (1)

There are some isolated comments in the correspondence book for 1834 which suggest that the partners probably arranged to purchase wool in London in accordance with instructions given them by their near neighbours and trading competitors, Halliley, Brooke, Halliley and Company of Dewsbury, but no detailed accounts have survived. (2) At first sight this would seem to be disadvantageous to the interests of the partners, but in so far as they were enabled to time their own purchases of wool and those made on behalf of the Hallileys separately, the arrangement may have been beneficial to both parties.

There is no evidence to suggest that the scale of the partners' wool buying ever allowed them to dominate the coarse wool market, although their actions certainly influenced that market, as did the actions of the Leeds merchants, indirectly, when they gave out orders to the small makers in the 'heavy woollen' district. In 1840 the partners wrote to Thomas Pape:

(1) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 25 Sept. 1834.

(2) The Hallileys failed in October 1834 and it is not possible, therefore, to trace this particular topic in the later correspondence.

Our neighbours hereabouts say that we are the people who fix the price for Locks and Cast and if we did not give such high prices wool of that description would be bought for something nearer its real value in York Market. (1)

The fact that the partners bought in many different markets - local, Liverpool, London and foreign - strengthens the view that they could not 'corner' the market, but their appearance in the market affected prices. For short periods of time they did operate collusively with Barff of Wakefield in order to sell imported wool on advantageous terms, but in their buying of wool their chief modus operandi was to buy at quiet times of the year as unobtrusively as possible.

When you purchase the wool, mind, you must not say for whom it is intended.... (2)

In buying wool for the Hallileys they were acting collusively, in a sense, but they never had any regular, permanent, or long-term arrangement with any other wool buyer to operate jointly in the market. (3)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thomas Pape, Newburnholme.

(2) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 12 Nov. 1835.

(3) cf. Sigsworth, Black Dyke Mills, pp. 243-70, for a discussion of collusion in wool buying in the alpaca and mohair markets. Collusion in buying was rendered easier in the case of foreign fibres imported into the country through a small number of ports.

Although the partners kept a close watch on the wool markets of Wakefield, Bradford and Leeds, only very infrequent purchases of wool seem to have been made in those towns, the firm being 'desirous of avoiding the woolstaplers' commission' and preferring to deal direct with farmers. (1) Joseph Walker toured the counties of Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and the Midlands at shearing time, and two large-scale staplers - William Lyon of Cambridge and Thomas Pape of Nunburnholme - regularly sent samples and consignments to Thomas Cook for his approval. Pape bought wool for the partners at York market. William Sandwith of Scarborough provided wool and intelligence on wool prices from North Yorkshire. The firm had a regular 'settling-day' each week when the wools purchased in the previous seven days were accounted for and payments made. This prompt settlement of their affairs seems to have enabled the partners to form advantageous connections in their wool supply. (2)

(1) The partners seem to have had hardly any trading connection with Jonathan Tweedale, the Dewsbury stapler.

(2) 'We never, or scarcely ever, owe any debt a week ... our terms of payment are to pay for all our wool purchases, for which we have invoices, every Wednesday in cash with 3 months interest or a 3 months draft on our bankers - Smith, Payne and Smiths - as may happen to suit our convenience the day of payment.'

Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wood and Walker, Bradford, 12 Nov. 1841. It was usual for woolstaplers to give long credit to the manufacturers and in this practice, therefore, the partners were very untypical of their competitors. '... you have a sort of payment from us we know not be universal amongst wool buyers'. Thos. Cook to Thomas Legg, 10 Dec. 1841. The fact that the partners were able to buy their wool direct from farmers, or from staplers, or through agents, and pay so promptly and without recourse to credit is a further indication of their financial strength. See chap. VIII, passim.

The firm did not purchase Welsh or Scottish wools, but they imported wool from Ireland and T.B. Cawood when he visited Dublin in the autumn of each year was usually instructed to obtain information regarding qualities and prices ruling in that city. As the firm's name became known in the trade, speculative parcels of wool were often received by the partners from farmers and staplers who were anxious to establish a trading connection with them. These, if not, absorbed at Dewbury Mills, were either sold to local clothiers or returned at the consignor's expense. (1)

Numerous small payments were made for noils in the 1830s. These were usually bought in Bradford from Titus Salt or Joseph Wood, but the partners also obtained supplies from firms in Halifax and, in the summer of 1835, there was a purchase of £400 worth of 'noils and nippings' from James Clay and Sons of Sowerby Bridge. These hoils were blended in a careful manner with other wools in accordance with 'recipes' which Thomas Cook had evolved for producing different qualities of blanket yarn, and the evidence of the correspondence suggests

(1) 'If you do not like the prices we fix, we will pass the wool to Wakefield or Leeds ...' Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Morgan, Glastonbury, 21 Nov. 1837.

that he spent much of his time in the blending warehouse supervising such operations. In the autumn of 1835 he stated to a Manchester merchanting house:

I have every confidence in these goods as
I mixed the wool for them myself. (1)

When wool was being put out for spinning in times of brisk trade - particularly in 1836 - the blending was done at Dewsbury Mills before the fibre was despatched to the smaller manufacturer. (2) Similarly, when yarn was to be spun from dyed wool, the dyeing was undertaken under Cook's supervision, except for indigo blue dyeing which was usually put out to Joseph Holdsworth of Wakefield at this time at a cost to the partners of 10s.6d. per stone, less ten per cent. discount for prompt payment. The partners were mindful of the cost of this specialised dyeing and were generally alert to the possibilities of reducing this cost by a constant comparison of the prices charged by different dyers for the work. In 1836,

-
- (1) Thos. Cook to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 15 Oct. 1835.
- (2) The spinning was put out to Hirst and Company of Gomersal, John Wheatley of Mirfield, and Joseph Wheatley of Hopton. The partners settled their spinning accounts every three months.

Cook asked for a statement of prices from a Leeds dyeing firm and he emphasised to them that:

We have paid another Dyer £14,000 for this sort of work in a short time. (1)

This figure related mainly to indigo blue dyeing, but also to green dyeing which the partners could not always manage satisfactorily for themselves; and the size of the figure reflects the boom in blanket goods in that year and also the fashion of having blue and green headings on otherwise white blankets made for the American trade. The reply received from Leeds does not seem to have encouraged the partners to vary their dyeing arrangements and Holdsworth continued to have their orders.

It is interesting to note that Thomas Cook was invariably concerned at all times to reduce the costs incurred by the partners for processes carried on away from Dewsbury Mills, and this, in turn, reflects the highly competitive nature of the blanket trade and the keen concern of the entrepreneur to keep his costs and processes firmly under personal control. (2)

Thomas Cook bought different sorts of foreign wool in

(1) Thos. Cook to George Nussey, Leeds, 19 Aug. 1836.

(2) 'Our out-weavers ought to return the thrum and loom shearings, but we never get them.' Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 29 Mar. 1836.

Liverpool, usually from William Gartside of that city, and he experimented with these various types of fibres in the manufacture of blanket cloth. Early in 1834 he informed Gartside that:

We are not much in love with South American wool. (1)
In the following year he was more definite in his views on this article:

You should import this South American wool in the scoured state. (2)

Of Iceland wool, at this time, Cook's opinion was that:

We have uses to which we can profitably - we hope - use it, but no little maker could do so. (3)

The size of the firm's operations and the careful blending of fibres which went on at Dewsbury Mills were obviously allowing the partners to utilise quantities of extremely coarse wool in the 'thirties, with a beneficial and lowering effect on their prime costs. Of other wools bought from Gartside, Cook's usual complaint was that their colour was detrimental to successful blanket manufacture:

The Mogader and Smyrna will not make Witneys - the colour is so exceptionable. (4)

(1) Thos. Cook to William Gartside, Liverpool, 8 Feb. 1834.

(2) Thos. Cook to Gartside, 22 Oct. 1835.

(3) Thos. Cook to Gartside, 20 Dec. 1835.

(4) Thos. Cook to Gartside, 3 July 1836.

Russian wool

Russian wool was being used extensively at Dewsbury Mills in the early 'thirties and Cook noted that the firm's consumption of this fibre was '300 to 400 cwts. weekly between April and August' in 1834, which was a dull year for the woollen trade. (1) This wool was purchased from importers in London and Hull, John Mollett and Company in the former port and S. and I. Samuelson in the latter town being the principal, but not the only, sellers to the partners. Thomas Cook resented the payment of the importers' commission on this Russian wool and, early in 1835, he was examining the possibility of direct importation of the commodity. (2) In March of that year he was urging Nicholson to discover what he could about the transport of wool from Russia and in October of the same year he wrote to Titus Salt of Bradford asking:

Pray how do you manage your insurance
from Odessa. (3)

He seems to have satisfied himself as to the nature of the importing formalities and a little later he appears to have

- (1) Thos. Cook to Isaac Law and Company, Liverpool, 10 Sept. 1834.
- (2) 'We do not wish to purchase wool at second hand when we can get it at first.' Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 3 April 1836.
- (3) Thos. Cook to Titus Salt, Bradford, 15 Oct. 1835. Salt was using Russian wool at this time for making moteens.

placed a trial order for '250 bales of Donskoi wool' with the
 house of John Cortazzi of Odessa. ⁽¹⁾ The order was delivered
 five months later 'per the S.S. Hebe' at Hull, and the
 partners seem to have been highly satisfied with their first
 venture in this particular method of ensuring their wool
 supply.

Some difficulties were encountered in dealing with
 'poods' and 'roubles' and an invoice received from Odessa
 was found to be unintelligible to the partners and was
 therefore sent to the house of Cortazzi and Company in London
 for an interpretation:

We know little of foreign commerce, and wish
 all matters to be as simple as possible, that
 we may not get wrong in the cost of goods. (2)

Despite these problems, and the fact that the freight charges
 from Odessa to Hull added an additional cost of £9 to every
 ton of wool imported, the partners calculated that the
 'Donskoi has not cost more than 6d. per lb.' and, considering
 its quality, this was regarded as a pleasing outcome to the
 transaction.

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to J. & J. Cortazzi, London,
 20 Oct. 1835.

(2) Thos. Cook to J. & J. Cortazzi, London, 19 Aug. 1836.
 A 'pood' was equivalent to a weight of 40 lbs.

A similar order for wool was placed with this Odessa house in the summer of 1836 and there was some disappointment at Dewsbury Mills owing to the length of time which elapsed before the consignment arrived. 1837 was a year of depression and the partners refrained from ordering Russian wool, but in the spring of 1838 they decided to go more largely into the trade, to import wool of varying qualities and to staple those types which they could not employ themselves as a profitable adjunct to meeting their own wool needs. Thomas Cook appears to have had some discussions on this matter with William Barff, woolstapler of Wakefield, and an agreement to import Russian wool jointly and to share the risks and probable profits of this trade was made between them. There were a number of importers of Russian wool in business at this time and Barff and the partners were not able to use their imports to influence the market seriously, but they were, apparently, able to obtain supplies on better terms than through the usual channels. At the same time, Cook and Barff arranged with Cortazzi's in London to keep them acquainted with the state of the wool market in Odessa, to arrange shipping and insurance, and to assist with invoices and monetary conversion in payment for wool imports. In return, Cortazzi's were to have a three per cent. commission on the total value of wool imported in this way and the right to draw bills on Hagues, Cook and

Wormald to a total not exceeding £5,000. Some of the wool obtained from Odessa was eminently suited to the worsted manufacture and Cook and Barff quickly became involved with Titus Salt who was, apparently, always anxious to have the opportunity of a first examination of any long staple fibres which came to hand from this source.

In the year ending March 1839, Cook and Barff imported Russian wool from Cortazzi's in Odessa to the value of
 (1)
 123,971 roubles. Some proportion of this total was sold in Bradford and Wakefield and Cook was able to report to Barff that:

The Zigay wool you see leaves $15\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. profit and all interest of Money. (2)

In his dealings with him, Thomas Cook found Titus Salt a very keen bargainer and as Salt was also a stapler his activities both as a buyer and as a seller of wool were not unimportant in the market. In early 1839, Cook wrote to Barff:

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Baring Brothers, London, 15 April 1839.

(2) Thos. Cook to William Barff, 2 Jan. 1839. This Odessa wool was imported 'in several grades, in the same parcel, all bought at one common price.' Sometimes the partners sold wool on joint account and at other times Barff did the selling. They charged each other a guarantee commission for the trouble.

In a letter we had from Mr. T. Salt a few days ago he informs us that he has received many extensive orders for goods and which will require him to use weekly more than 100 packs of Russian wool. He intimates that he shall try to treat with us for some - we have not replied to the letter as respects our wool and name it to you in order that you may be aware that he is likely to be a buyer - perhaps the best for both of us, is that you should lose as little time in disposing of your wool as may be. (1)

The existence of stocks of Russian combing wool at Dewsbury and Wakefield was evidently considered by Cook to be likely to constitute a market weakness in the light of Salt's known requirements at this time. In the following year, Cook wrote spiritedly to Salt protesting at his price for a quantity of coarse wool offered by him to the partners:

... in all cases when we have asked you as to price, we have done better than your offers. (2)

Regular imports of Russian wool were made in the years 1839-41 as a result of orders sent to the Cortazzi's, but some dissatisfaction became to creep into the association with the Odessa house owing to wools being received at Dewsbury Mills which were not in accordance with the expressed requirements earlier intimated to the Cortazzis.

(1) Thos. Cook to Barff, 4 March 1839.

(2) Thos. Cook to Titus Salt, 2 March 1840.

This dissatisfaction culminated in October 1841 when Thomas Cook objected to the receipt of 233 bales of wool which were not in accordance with instructions sent out. The dispute was referred to an arbitration in Liverpool and the arbitrator found in favour of Cook and Barff and awarded an abatement on the invoice price of £89.17s.8d., or nearly five per cent. of the value of the bales. Thomas Cook recorded the transaction as follows:

(1)

DONSKOI WOOL

Cost of 233 bales:	£1,900. 8s. 2d.
Less arbitration allowance:	<u>89.17s. 8d.</u>
	1,810.10s. 6d.
Charges at Liverpool:	556.11s.11d.
Insurance:	<u>50.18s.10d.</u>
	£2,418. 1s. 3d.

Cost of wool: approximately 6.85d. per lb.

Charges at Liverpool

Duty on 84,155 lbs. @ $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	175. 6s. 0d.
5% commission:	8.15s. 6d.
Dock and Town dues:	9.19s. 9d.
Cartage:	10. 9s. 8d.
Storage:	1. 4s. 0d.
Freight:	<u>350.17s. 0d.</u>

£ 556.11s.11d.

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald, Letter Book No. 27, f. 305, 20 Oct. 1841.

From this time onward the importation of Russian wool was conducted without recourse to Cortazzis, and John Mollet and Company of London, and occasionally Samuelson or William Bolton of Hull were asked to take care of shipments from Odessa, and less frequently from St. Petersburg. In the mid-1840s they came to rely for these services also on the firm of Boddington and Company in London and they continued their importation of Russian fibres in association with William Barff until the end of 1846 when Thomas Cook indicated in a letter that:

" We find the high rates of freight at Odessa will prevent the sending to us any more of our coarse wool. (1)

The cost of transport imposed itself more heavily upon the cheap wools than it did upon the better quality fleeces and, apparently, Cook was finding the Russian product relatively expensive by this time by comparison with native wools. The trade with Odessa could have been continued, however, on the basis of the better quality fibres and particularly

(1) Thos Cook to Boddington and Company, London, 26 Dec. 1846. A little earlier in the same year, Cook had observed that there was 'a small stock of coarse wool in England due to the difficulty of procuring freight in the Black Sea ... from the great demand there is for shipping ... the corn trade being so active.' Thos Cook to Wood and Abbott, Philadelphia, 16 Nov. 1846.

those used for combing purposes, but it would seem that the partners did not wish to continue this connection solely for stapling purposes. Furthermore, the import of coarse wool from Australia was now becoming significant and, as we shall note later, the partners had a mind to develop an interest in this direction. Between 1846 and the summer of 1851 there were no further direct imports from Odessa.

II

In the closing months of the year 1834-36 the partners built up the value of their wool stocks held at Dewsbury Mills to a little over £8,000, as is shown in Table 27. This total, in each of those years, was roughly equivalent to 'the amount of orders we have on hand' and no attempt was made to increase the value of the wool stock as Thomas Cook was:

... of the opinion that growth is increasing
and that soon we shall have much lower prices
in coarse wools. (1)

The expected fall in wool prices did not occur, in the case of short-staple wools, until the autumn of 1836, (2) and the partners then made little alteration in the size of their end of year stock due to their pessimistic view of the

(1) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 11 Feb. 1835.

(2) See above, pp. 21-2.

trading prospects of 1837. Their expectations were borne out by the serious decline in blanket orders in that year and by the end of the twelve months the value of the wool stock had been run down to about £3,000. In the summer of 1837, Cook reported that:

... the fall in wool prices since February
is awful ... (1)

This price movement would also serve to inhibit wool buying by the partners until such time as they were satisfied that the rate of change of prices had been so reduced that the risks of holding wool instead of money were at a minimum.

In 1838, following a brighter year of trade, the value of the wool stocks was back again at the £8,000 level, but, early in 1839, Cook had evidently decided that some part of the partners' stocks had been purchased at too high a price due to a policy decision by the firm which might have been varied:

Wool is here 20s. per pack lower than it was last December and we regret having put out so many orders in December ... as it must have had a tendency to throw many makers on to the wool market. (2)

(1) Thos. Cook to Nicholson, 30 June 1837.

(2) Thos. Cook to Barff, 11 Feb. 1839.

This extract from the correspondence illustrates the crucial importance for the manufacturer of timing his wool purchases satisfactorily, and also emphasises the size and influence of the partners at Dewsbury Mills in relation to the smaller manufacturers of the Dewsbury district.

In the autumn of 1839 the partners informed John Chadwick of Rochdale that:

We are running our wool stock down, for we cannot get to any other conclusion than that when the Home Demand ceases the Foreign Demand will not be such as to maintain the now rates of wool. (1)

By the end of that year the value of the stock was down to some £4,000, or about half the size of the previous end of year total, (2) but there was a dramatic change in 1840 and the total value at the end of that year was over £16,000. In December of 1840 the partners told a London wool importer (3) that 'we have bought largely lately of country wools', but

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick and Sons, Rochdale, 5 Oct. 1839.

(2) Thos. Cook in a letter to W.H. Russell, New York, 22 Nov. 1839 mentioned in passing that:

'... very little wool is being combed at Bradford at present, which makes noils keep their prices.'

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to George Davis, Jr., London, 19 Dec. 1840.

they seem to have purchased foreign wools as well and in the following February they were able to say:

... we have a superior and large stock of wool, we think selected well, and at moderate rates during the scarce time of money, the end of the year. (1)

It would appear that at this time the partners were anticipating some recovery from the dullness of trade which characterised the late 'thirties, but such a change was not to occur until 1843 and during the years 1841-42 the partners allowed their year-end stock to fall gradually. But even at the end of 1842, which was most severely depressed, the value of their stock at £11,613 was still significantly higher than it was in the 'thirties.

In August 1841 Cook was complaining that:

... the farmers are our masters with respect to wool - with which they appear to deal differently from any other of their productions - which when ready for sale they allow to go at a market rate. It is not their system in respect of their wool. (2)

Later that year the partners were corresponding with a wool agent in Dublin and instructing him:

We give you an order for 1,000 sheets of wool of best quality, to be quite dry, when you can obtain it at 11s.6d., not to exceed 11s.9d. per stone, and this order will be in force till we

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to William Paul, Portadown, 11 Feb. 1841.

(2) Thos. Cook to T. and W. Earle, Liverpool, 12 Aug. 1841.

withdraw it. If an article quite superior in dryness, offers may go to no more than 12s. (1)

Soon afterwards they were writing to Titus Salt:

Our Joseph Walker brings to us your offer of 250 packs of Russian wool and 125 of noils - we do not at present require any wool of this character, but are not indisposed to clear you of it, if you will place us in a little advantage over your other sales as a compensation for clearing so large a lot. (2)

The confidence with which the partners express their readiness to dispose of Salt's wool suggests that the wool market at this time was more active than might have been expected, considering the then state of trade, and it may be that expectations of an early end of the depression were held by others in the trade as well as by the partners.

Early in 1842, Thomas Cook wrote to Thomas Legg in London:

Business is decidedly worse here and we fear we hold sadly too much wool - buy no more. We do not think the Witney people to follow us in wool, nor do we think their payment so good as ours, it may however be so. (3)

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Sam Wade, Dublin, 21 Oct. 1841. The Irish practice of wetting wool to increase its weight was one of the hazards of importing from that country.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Titus Salt, 29 Oct. 1841.
- (3) Thos. Cook to Thomas Legg, Bermondsey, 22 Feb. 1842. Legg's commission from the partners was 4 per cent. on the value of wool bought.

To the same correspondent, a little later, he added:

... shall be glad if you can tell us after Bristol Fair that you discover anything cheerful in the recollection of it. (1)

Despite this pessimism, however, he hastens to add that:

If the East India wool be white, clean and good we could use some of it into this Navy Contract we have. (2)

In the summer, Cook was again writing to Legg:

Our Joseph Walker will be in London - he is going to try and sell goods as well as to buy wool at the sale - and what he sees as prospects for the former must guide him in the latter, therefore do nothing for us unsanctioned by him. (3)

At the close of the year, Cook's summary of the wool position was that:

Our wool market has not undergone, in short wools of our use, any great change through all last year - from 8d. to 8½d. in the extreme fluctuations are all that have been experienced. (4)

In 1843 the partners wrote to Salt:

... trade is so bad with us that we desire to embrace every chance of finding work for our men ... tell us your lowest price for equal

(1) Thos. Cook to Legg, 1 March 1842.

(2) *ibid.*

(3) Thos. Cook to Legg, 13 June, 1842.

(4) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, Manchester, 3 Jan. 1843.

proportions of low and better noils as before ...
 dont let us have any bargaining, but fix at once
 the lowest price you will take. (1)

They do not seem to have received the treatment which they
 requested and later in the year they complained to him:

You have charged us higher prices for wool
 than you did Firth's of Heckmondwike for
 similar quality. (2)

Thomas Cook was particularly incensed at Salt's action in
 this connection and in a private letter to T.B. Cawood he
 described Salt as:

... a perfect over-reacher in all his
 settlements by which he has become rich. (3)

It might have been expected that the partners would have
 broken off trading relations with Salt but, on balance, they
 found him an important link with the Bradford trade and in
 December 1843 they sold to him '16 bags of mohair' which they
 had acquired cheaply at a sale held by Simes and Company in
 London. (4)

It was not until the end of 1843 that a consignment

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Salt, 6 March 1843.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Salt, 7 Oct. 1843.

(3) Thos. Cook to T.B. Cawood, 7 Nov. 1843.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Salt, 22 Dec. 1843.

of 45 bales of wool was received from Odessa, this being the only Russian wool directly imported by the partners and Barff in that year. Thomas Cook explained the reduced importation in the following terms:

... we have imported a good deal of wool from Odessa in former years, but the past summer the Belgian and French people have been able to give prices exceeding our limits. (1)

Cook's observation here would seem to support the view that the Continental woollen manufacturers were beginning to become more highly competitive with the Yorkshire makers in foreign markets, particularly the United States market, and were thus, in the 1840s, able to give firm prices for their imported wool. (2)

In the early summer of this year, Cook wrote to a Huddersfield woollen merchant on the subject of German wool:

We use for Ladies' Cloths and Spanish Stripes some German wool ... this article we have not imported at all, but bought in England. What we require is an article which costs us here

(1) Thos. Cook to I.B. Phillips, Bradford-on-Avon, 6 Nov. 1843. In the absence of Russian imports in this year the partners had recourse to 'use Scotch wool - this could not materially affect the quality of the cloth but the colour might be slightly affected.'

(2) See above, p. 241.

in the fleece about 17d. per lb. We want to make a trial of German wool from the other side, we fancy we must save 5 per cent. by doing so - would your brother buy us £1,000-£2,000 value on trial charging us the common commission on such matters. (1)

In this year also Thomas Cook played his part in campaigning for a reduction in the wool import duties which many manufacturers blamed for their plight during the depression of the late 'thirties and early 'forties. In the early summer he wrote to his Member of Parliament:

We shall be glad again to see an opening of the question of the propriety of repealing the Wool Duty - sooner or later it must be remitted ... our own position as Woollen Manufacturers appears to be most effectually assailed by foreign competition at present, and it appears to us that we are now so closely run by the foreigners, European and American, as to make it doubtful whether or not, by a Repeal of the Duty, we can regain our Trade.

In the wools we mainly use of the coarser sorts ... we obtain them from Petersburg, Odessa, Italy, and the Levant - adding South America - the cost abroad varies from 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. up to 8d. per lb., the great bulk being about 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to 4d. per lb., we therefore paying a duty of 15 per cent. on the cost, some 25 per cent. on the cost. ... scarcely any of this wool is used for goods in the Home Trade - but nearly entirely exported in the manufactured state.

(1) Thos. Cook to John Starkey, Huddersfield,
27 May 1843.

We are not to forget that while the foreigner is allowed to come here and buy wool, British or Foreign, and take it out of the country at a merely nominal duty - we are taxed from 5 to 30 per cent. on our imported Foreign Wool ... (1)

In the following year the duties were repealed and these particular arguments could no longer be relied upon for explaining the competitiveness of the French and the Belgians.

At the end of 1843 the value of the wool stock held at Dewsbury Mills was nearly £18,000, but in relation to the orders on hand for the coming spring this does not seem to have been adequate. In December they informed Samuelson in Hull that:

We should be glad to buy some Russian wool, do you know how Iceland wool is selling? (2)

This enquiry was prompted by their general wool-buying experience at this time:

We never knew low wools so scarce, though we have known them thrice the prices. (3)

Early in 1844 the partners were seeking a short-term credit of £5-6,000 in order 'to purchase a very great weight of wool to meet orders', (4) and Lord and Hall, wool brokers

(1) Thos. Cook to George W. Wood, M.P., London, 20 June, 1843. Cook was really saying here that the wools he imported ranged from 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. in cost.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Samuelson, 21 Dec. 1843.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Ralph Lawson, Saddleworth, 31 Dec. 1843.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Smith, Payne and Smiths, London, 9 Jan. 1844.

of London were instructed to purchase wool on their behalf. In February, Joseph Walker was attending the wool sales in London and Cook was urging caution upon him, '... be careful, these prices must stop ...' ⁽¹⁾ The prices continued to rise, however, and in April, Cook wrote to a Manchester house:

... we are giving 2d. to 2½d. per lbs more for the low wool, that is 8d. and 8½d. against 6d. in November last ... the exhaustion of low weols was so entire and so suddenly discovered that there was scarcely any intermission from 6½d. to 8½d. per lb. (2)

It appears that the building up of a fair-sized stock of wool at the end of 1843 had been a wise decision as events moved later and that Cook's caution in February was not justified by the price movements which followed soon afterwards.

In the summer the wool duties were repealed and wool continued to fall in price. By the early autumn, Cook was able to report that:

Wool is falling in price and will, I think, go lower still. There is a deal pouring in and it can be bought at 7d. now to a farthing. (3)

(1) Thos. Cook to Joseph Walker, London, 3 Feb. 1844.

(2) Thos. Cook to Croft & Stell, Manchester, 10 April 1844.

(3) Thos. Cook to G.W. Hodges, Manchester, 18 Sept. 1844.

The wool stock at the end of the year was reduced in relation to the previous year, mainly due to the fact that the orders on hand were smaller at this time and probably also due to the opinion of Thomas Cook that:

We do not look for so large a foreign trade in the year 1845 as we have had in the present year ... (1)

From March to October of 1844 the partners and Barff were able to resume their imports of Russian wool, using John Mollétt as their London agent, and at the end of the year Cook was able to furnish Barff with an account in respect of 'nine consignments of Russian wool received from Odessa, the total cost amounts to £1,849. 2s.10d. for each party, including all charges.' (2) Titus Salt was apparently aware of their activities in this connection and had made approaches to the partners in respect of likely purchases he might make from them. Cook's attitude towards him had hardened further since his previous business with him and he wrote in December:

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- (1) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, Manchester, 28 Dec. 1844. '... we appear to have about two months work in hand, much less than last year.'
- (2) Thos. Cook to Barff, 21 Dec. 1844. The wool was obtained from Ernest Mabs and Company of Odessa.

We have imported a good deal of Russian, but being good combing we have been selling part of it ... we should not wish to have recurrence of the correspondence which has suspended our business transactions, in our judgement very properly, with you for twelve months past. (1)

Salt seems to have responded to this letter by sending to the partners a large quantity of 'good quality noils to the value of £1,552. 6s. Od.' and these appear to have been of fair price and to have raised Salt's stock with the partners a few points. (2)

Australian wool

The use of Australian wool at Dewsbury Mills first appears in the firm's records in 1838 when the partners noted that:

Brown and Company of Sydney have bought of us nearly £2,000 value of blanket goods lately and wool in their own sale we have desired them to forward. (3)

This wool arrived in 1839 and appears to have been satisfactory for making fine cloths rather than for the manufacture of the general quality of blankets. (4) Although, as we have

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- (1) Thos. Cook to Titus Salt, 13 Dec. 1844
 - (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Salt, 28 Dec. 1844.
 - (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Nicholson, 23 Nov. 1838
 - (4) The partners made only a very small quantity of fine wool blankets, 'Merino, superfine, No. 61'.

already seen, the partners had a small interest in the fine cloth trade at this time, they did not make such cloth for themselves, but purchased it in the 'balk' at the Leeds White Cloth Hall and only performed dyeing and finishing processes on it at the mills. (1) In 1843, however, they began to manufacture for themselves and their requirements of fine wool were therefore enlarged. In 1844 they decided to import wool from Australia and they approached their London bankers for advice:

We have an idea of ordering a quantity of wool at Sydney - perhaps Hobart Town - can you be so kind as to tell us in what manner it would be best to transmit funds, whether by draft or specie? The last we apprehend will be the cheapest method, but we have no knowledge on the matter. (2)

The partners were advised to use a letter of credit for this purpose and, in August 1844, they wrote to a Sydney house stating their requirements:

This Colonial wool will we suppose cost in all charges from you $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 3d. in the lb., and ought, unless the quality be very superior, to be bought at from 10d. up to 15d. by the lb. in order to be a saving on the now rates of Sale Wools as going off at Liverpool and London. Our recent purchases have been at 18 and up as high as $20\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.

(1) See above, p.567.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Smith, Payne and Smiths, 27 July 1844.

If your market shall rule favourably to the buyer in reference to the prices we quote on the other side we shall not be displeased to have a further quantity of, say £2,000, in addition to Smith, Payne and Smith's letter of credit.

It is a matter of indifference to us whether the wool go to London or to Liverpool. (1)

Later in that year, Thomas Cook was complaining of the 'great advance in Colonial wools' (2) and this price movement probably stimulated the partners to seek direct imports of Australian wools for themselves. At the same time they were instructing Robert Oldman of Leeds to procure fine wool on their behalf (3) and sending a similar request to Lord and Hall in London:

If anything, in fine wool, be offering cheap, pray tell us. (4)

In April, 1845 the partners were again in communication with Oldman:

... as we shall ourselves have imported from £4-5,000 worth of New South Wales wool, we wish you to buy only what you see is very cheap, decidedly cheap. (5)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to I. & T. Armitage, Sydney, 28 Aug. 1844. The prices quoted 'on the other side' are quite indecipherable.
- (2) Thos. Cook to Wetmore and Company, Canton, 5 Nov. 1844.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Robert Oldman, Leeds, 5 Nov. 1844.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Lord and Hall, London, 21 Dec. 1844.
- (5) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Oldman, 23 April 1845.

They appear to have been exercised considerably by the price of wool generally at this time and there are numerous references to the subject in the correspondence books in April and May:

... the demand for manufactures of woollen fabrics is so large, that we appear to be exceeding the growth of Fine Wool. (1)

We fancy wool is not plenty and from the bad state of the combing business, noils and broke are scarce and higher in price. This fact may operate in favour of skin wools, which however are already so high as to make trade unproductive. (2)

The present state of the wool market is bad and the prospect for an abatement of price does not by any means appear probable. (3)

In June they gave further instructions to Armitage and Company in Sydney:

You may spend up to £7,000 if wool can be obtained at 17d. per lb. If the price be 16-16¹/₂d. per lb., then our authorisation goes to £10,000. (4)

In the same month the partners recorded the receipt in London of '38 bales of wool just arrived from Sydney per

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Wetmore and Company,
14 May 1845.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Morgan Whittle and Company,
16 May 1845.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Martin and Son, Dublin,
31 May 1845.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to I. and T. Armitage, Sydney,
8 June 1845.

(1)
 "The Emily", and in the following month after these had been received and examined at Dewsbury the partners referred to this wool as being of 'high quality' and they instructed a Huddersfield house to:

... ask your Sydney house to purchase for us some raw wool - say £3,000 to £5,000 - the price not to exceed 18d. per lb., for the best grades. (2)

1845 was a year of very buoyant demand for blankets and coarse woollens, by contrast with the worsted trade, and Thomas Cook, in a letter to New York, reviewed the wool supply situation in dramatic terms:

... coarse, short wools and fine German wools are higher by 15 per cent. than last year and a good harvest would send them higher still. We appear to be consuming wool faster than it is grown as from all parts of the world prices are rising in this article. This price is far too high for goods in the coarse trade ... we have the anomaly of noils and shorts being at present nearly at the rate of middle quality wools ... while fine wools are sought after with great avidity at great speculative prices. (3)

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Boddington and Company, 26 June 1845.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Swain and Webb, merchants, Huddersfield, 27 July 1845. A close examination of the partners' correspondence suggests that merchanting in Huddersfield was becoming important in the mid-1840s. See above, p. 232.
- (3) Thos. Cook to Russell and Marsh, New York, 4 Aug. 1845. See also above, pp. 210-12.

In the autumn of 1845 the price of wool was lowering and trade was slackening considerably following the boom of the summer. The partners were concerned, by this time, at:

... the tying up of money in this lengthy period of ordering and receiving Australian wool. (1)

Although the value of wool stocks at Dewsbury Mills exceeded £14,000 at the end of the year, there was apparently some hesitation in the buying policy pursued towards the close of 1845. In a letter to Salt the partners observed that:

We really are so perplexed in our minds as to the course of trade that we are doubtful what to say to your offer. There is, we hear, a very large quantity of wool coming from Odessa, the quality of which is highly spoken of, but it will cost a heavy price and the freight will be heavy. (2)

Nevertheless, they did buy from him '650 packs of wool ... to be paid for between Christmas Day and December 30th.'⁽³⁾ The chief difficulty confronting the partners was, apparently, that:

We do not know how to act about wool, it is lower in price a good deal, but it is very scarce ... and for America in the spring we have not yet orders for a Bale for that market. (4)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jeremiah Carter, London, 27 Nov. 1845.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Salt, 8 Dec. 1845.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Leatham and Tew, Wakefield, 23 Dec. 1845.

(4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 20 Dec. 1845.

Careful wool buying was undertaken during the early months of 1846 - chiefly of East India wool from Littledale and Company of Liverpool - ⁽¹⁾ and in April the partners stated that:

Of wool we hold a vast quantity at times without alarm and we have now a very large stock ... (2)

In the summer they were complaining again about their Australian imports:

... we are anything but satisfied with the manner in which our business has been conducted at Sydney ... in fact we have not yet had wool sent for the funds actually in their possession early in the year 1845 ... (3)

In fact, the partners' complaints covered a wider field than this and soon afterwards they wrote to Armitage and Company in London:

We have reason to fear that your Sydney House has deviated from our instructions, not only as to quantity, but also as to the selection of wools ordered by us ... (4)

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- (1) At this time they were refusing wool from Gartside of Liverpool because 'your low wools are too low and your East India wools are so very burry ...' Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Gartside, 30 March 1846.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 14 April 1846.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to I.D. Jacomb, Wool Broker, London, 6 May 1846.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to I.T. Armitage and Company, London, 23 May 1846. The firm of Armitage and Company had 'houses' in Sydney, London and Huddersfield at this time.

They were also concerned as to the prices which they were being asked to pay by Armitage and Cook wrote to a Liverpool friend:

My dear James,

You would help us very much if you could procure for us a few lists of prices current in Sydney ... (1)

Matters reached a head very quickly, following this correspondence, and 159 bales of Australian wool were delivered to Simes and Company and I.D. Jacomb in London with the request from the partners that they should be sold at the London wool sales. At the same time there were letters sent to Armitage and Company with frequent use of the words 'dispute' and 'arbitration', (2) and a letter was sent to the Bank of Australia (3) refusing to accept a 'bill for £1,500'.

The experience of the partners in buying wool at long range, in Odessa and in Sydney, was by this time having a cautionary effect upon their behaviour and their change of attitude is well indicated in two letters to London wool merchants:

(1) Thos. Cook to James Bibby, Liverpool, 1 June 1846.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Armitage and Company, Huddersfield and London, 22-28 June, 17 Aug. 1846.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to The Bank of Australia, 23 June 1846.

We do not understand the Odessa market - we think the flocks vary from year to year - it is uncertain to contract for a true delivery ... the better way is to see the wool you buy. (1)

And:

We think it is a more prudent course for us to see samples of your Australian ... and we can then form our own opinion as to their value. (2)

At the end of 1846, which was not a particularly good trading year, the partners were holding a wool stock to the value of a little over £15,000 and in the early part of 1847 they were:

... hoping something from the United States trade this year and we hold a very large stock of wool to meet any demand that may arise. (3)

They were also writing, at this time, to their solicitor, Mr. Fredk. William Jacomb of Huddersfield, urging him to move more quickly with the 'Armitage arbitration affair',⁽⁴⁾ and informing him that 'the case of Entwistle versus Dent appears to have many analogies to our dispute.'⁽⁵⁾ No progress was

- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Mollett, London, 22 June 1846.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Simes and Company, London, 6 Oct. 1846.
- (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 7 Jan. 1847. There was a favourable tariff change in the United States in 1846, see above, pp. 250-1.
- (4) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to F.W. Jacomb & Son, Huddersfield, 9 Jan. 1847.
- (5) *ibid.*

reported on this matter, however, during the rest of 1847. At the end of the year, which was a 'dull one' for trade despite the excitement of the financial crisis, Thomas Cook reported to Robert Barbour:

The long severe pressure on our Money Institutions and the high rate of Discounts have not produced much change in the coarser descriptions of wool which are seriously affected by the high rates of freight which has been so high as to nearly exclude coarse wool from the English market. British wool, however, has given way in price, although it is very unevenly bought. Colonial wool, having chiefly London and Liverpool for its depots, has gone down fearfully in price.... (1)

Following much mediation by Jacomb, the solicitor, the partners and Armitage and Company finally agreed upon a settlement without recourse to process of law. The monies still held by Armitage and Company early in 1848 were returned to the partners and the ten per cent. commission which that firm had charged on wool bought for the partners was forfeited to Cook and his associates in respect of 305 bales of wool which were the subject of the dispute. (2) At the same time the arrangement which the partners had with that firm was finally terminated and the partners did not make any new connections in respect of this kind of wool buying in Australia. Their

(1) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, Manchester, 27 Dec. 1847.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Jacomb, 12 Jan. 1848.

experience with Armitages had convinced them, yet again, that
'buying from samples or from somebody you can trust' ⁽¹⁾ was the
only satisfactory method of proceeding in this business. In
the summer of 1848 they were writing to a correspondent in
London:

If you elect to return to New South Wales
it will be very acceptable to us to employ
you on our behalf there. (2)

Although the partners had been much troubled with their direct
imports from Australia, they were still not, apparently,
disposed to pay the wool prices charged for this kind of wool
by the London and Liverpool importers.

Wool stocks

The pattern of the partners' activities in wool buying
which has been illustrated from the correspondence books for
the period 1832-48, did not materially change in the following
twelve years. The size of the wool stocks at the year-end
always reflected the twin considerations of expected demand
for blanket goods and expected future movements of wool prices.
The value of the wool stock was relatively low at the end of

(1) Thos. Cook to Barff, 14 Jan. 1848.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Mr. Marshfield Mason,
London, 24 May 1848.

1848 following a year of reduced trade after the crisis of the previous year and reflecting also 'the disorganisation of the Old World' ⁽¹⁾ caused by the revolutions on the Continent in that year. By the end of 1849 there was a sharp increase in stock value due largely to Thomas Cook's anticipation of an increased American trade in 1850:

Will not this great advance of 50 per cent. in Cotton have a marked influence on Trade to the States? (2)

Cook's expectations were not disappointed and by the middle of 1850 he reported that:

We have going on here an extraordinary trade ... and I never knew a time when all the mills were so fully employed, nor any time when our artisans were so comfortable fed and well clothed, indeed this last has a great tendency to improve trade by such a vast consumption of good clothing, the young folk on the Sunday are better dressed than respectable farmer's wives and children were when I was a lad. (3)

At the end of 1850 the partners were still maintaining a large wool stock - nearly £18,000 in value - partly as a result of their view that 'this United States' trade will be

- (1) Thos. Cook to Reiss Brothers and Company, New York, 24 May 1848.
- (2) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, New York, 19 Nov. 1849.
- (3) Thos. Cook to George Maxwell, Liverpool, 22 Aug. 1850.

maintained' and partly due to the fact that:

Coarse wool is very scarce, and very little in the market and we should rather expect that towards the spring the rates will go to a higher range ... all will depend on the supply of wool from abroad ... at present it is difficult to meet with ... (1)

In the spring of 1851 the partners noted that 'low wools at Liverpool were going at 1d. per lb. below the London Sales' and that 'trade is getting more dull in Yorkshire at all the large towns, it may be temporary, but all our foreign buyers tell us that there is nothing in prospect from them.' (2) This state of trade was characteristic of the year as a whole and by December the partners had allowed their wool stock to fall in value to the lowest level it had been for the previous twelve years:

In May of this year, Cook was ruminating on the prospects of Australian wool prices:

... how Colonial wool is to be affected by the Gold Discoveries in our Colonies remains to be seen, but we think it will tell more next year than on the importations now arriving ... a good deal of wool having been shorn before the flock tenders ran to the diggings. (3)

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to A. MacDowall and Company, Charleston, 30 Dec. 1850.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Thos. Legg, Bermondsey, 28 March 1851.

(3) Thos. Cook to W.H. Russell, New York, 3 May 1851.

This feeling regarding Colonial wool prices prompted alternative action in another field. In this same month, the partners wrote to John Mollett in the following terms:

It is time we wrote to you about Donskoi wool. Messrs. Barff and ourselves have this day had a conference in respect of it and we desire you to forward our instructions as at foot, bearing in mind all our former expressed expectations as to quality to which we again pointedly refer you - and at the prices fixed for delivery to either of the three usual ports - London, Liverpool or Hull - every expense included and say:

600 to 800 usual sized bales at
6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb. (1)

At the end of 1852 the partners were again building up the value of their wool stocks, largely because they feared a 'wool famine' and were anxious to ensure their manufacturing supplies:

Wool has risen greatly in price and the consumption has so beaten the growth and importations that the whole stock of English and foreign wools, particularly in low sorts is very small ... (2)

This policy continued throughout the mid-1850s and there was no significant fall in value of stocks until 1857.

At the end of 1853, the partners noted that 'business is not so active here, wool is lower, but still much above

(1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Mollett, London, 27 May 1851.

(2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, New York, 8 Nov. 1852.

(1)
 last year's rates', and at the end of the following year they observed that 'trade is getting more dull here and we shall go to lower prices', (2) but in neither case did this result in any marked change in their stock-holding policy. The stocks of wool held during and at the end of 1855 were governed in size by the demands of the government for army cloths and blankets, the home trade being in this year generally depressed. In the summer of 1856 the partners were of the opinion that 'wool is at a very high price' and we have 'not confidence in its continuing at such prices'. (3)
 The expected change was realised to some extent in the autumn of that year and this led the partners to enlarge their end of year stock to a value exceeding £24,000.

In 1857, following the 'panic' of that year, there was a sharp fall in wool prices and this led Thomas Cook to question the wisdom of retaining large stocks. In October he wrote to Joseph Walker in Liverpool:

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- (1) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to W.H. Russell, New York, 9 Dec. 1853.
 (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Cronin, Hurxthal and Sears, New York, 27 Nov. 1854.
 (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Todd, Burns and Company, Dublin, 12 June 1856.

The accounts from the United States are very bad and it is said they will be worse ... the trade will have enough to do to maintain credit rather than think of buying wool. The very fact of your being out of the market will, we are sure, affect prices and make them lower for someone - dont mind that, better give more mills an easy mind than to part with money that may be needed ... £1,000 is quite enough to expend with present prospects. (1)

Later in the year, Cook wrote to an American customer:

Within the last ten days we have had so severe a crash among the wool speculators, that we are sure now to have a great decline in the prices of wool ... it is a very sudden and a very great change and the fall in the stocks of wool will be disastrous to the holders. (2)

Following this experience the partners proceeded cautiously with their wool stocks in 1858 and 1859. In the early part of the latter year they were able to say that:

The panic applied more extravagantly to the Bradford trade than to the short wool trade and the prices of coarse wools have now nearly been regained. (3)

In 1860 the fire in the autumn at Dewsbury Mills destroyed part of the storage capacity and this seems to have mainly accounted for the fall in wool stock recorded at the end of that year.

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- (1) Thos. Cook to Joseph Walker, Royal Hotel, Liverpool, 8 Oct. 1857.
 - (2) Thos. Cook to John Burnside and Company, New Orleans, 24 Dec. 1857.
 - (3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Stuart and Warry, Liverpool, 22 Feb. 1859.

This particular problem also seems to have inhibited the partners in their wool buying towards the end of 1861, but in 1862 their capacity for storing wool was restored following new building on the Dewsbury Mills Estate and at the end of the year their wool stock reached a value of £27,000 which was the highest amount of wool on hand recorded during the whole period here under review. This total reflected the partners' provision for an increase in orders in respect of blankets and cloth stemming from the 'cotton famine' which by this time was having its impact upon the woollen trade.

Fine wool

During the period 1849-62 the partners recorded separately the value of their holdings of fine wool. In general the stock was falling in value throughout the whole of the period, apart from the year 1854-8 when the stock was diminished quickly and then increased in response to changes in orders received at Dewsbury Mills for fine cloths. The main reason for the general decline in the stock of fine wool over the period was the death of Frank Goodall in 1847. As we have already noted, Goodall was in charge of the fine cloth business, on behalf of the partners, and after his death no satisfactory arrangements to replace him were made and the

(1)
trade was gradually allowed to subside. In November 1861, the bulk of the remaining stock was sold on behalf of the partners by Simes and Company in London.

The general conclusions which might be formed from this examination of the firm's wool buying policy over the period are that, on the whole, the policy was prudent and successful, that risks were taken in order to obtain wool at prices lower than the market would yield at particular times, and that the particular experiments which were made in the importation of Russian and Australian wool were, on balance, useful in giving the partners experience in these distant markets which could not be obtained in any other way. The size of the partners' resources and their association with Barff were important factors in accounting for the general health of the wool buying success which the firm largely achieved. (2)

(1) See above, p. 507 .

(2) It is not known when Joseph Walker retired from the firm's employment, but in the 'sixties the partners were commissioning Mr. Brooke of Batley to purchase wool on their behalf. Brooke was particularly successful as a wool agent. cf. Willans, Batley: Past and Present, p. 16.

CHAPTER XI

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING

AND THE LONDON AGENCY

1863-93.

CHAPTER XIGOVERNMENT CONTRACTING AND THE LONDON AGENCY
1863-93

The government demand for blankets and plain woollen cloths was always of significance to the heavy woollen manufacturer, particularly during the winter months when the commercial trade was seasonally low, and the interest of the partners at Dewsbury Mills in securing such orders was maintained throughout the whole of the period for which records of the firm exist. Although a systematic account of this branch of their activities cannot be formulated owing to the absence of data, we have already noted some aspects of the firm's government contracting in the early nineteenth century,⁽¹⁾ and the survival of a small ledger covering the years 1863-86 provides a view of the firm and its competitors in this branch of trade during these twenty-five years.

We have also noted the activities of Robert Nicholson who, in the 'twenties and 'thirties, acted as the firm's London agent for the home trade as well as for the government orders. After 1839 the partners placed their government business into the care of Dobson and Company and later into the hands of Jeremiah Carter and Company.⁽²⁾ This latter

(1) See above, pp. 703-30.

(2) See above, pp. 711-12.

connection seems to have been broken in the early 1880s when Carter and Company wound up their business activities, and thereafter the partners dealt with their government affairs directly from Dewsbury Mills. ⁽¹⁾ In respect of the home trade, the partners had no regular agent in London between 1839 and 1871, but in the latter year they apparently decided that such an agency was necessary. They were probably persuaded to take this decision by the fact that the Australian, South African and Far Eastern markets for Yorkshire blankets were by this time becoming important alternatives to the previously large and remunerative American trade, and a number of merchanting houses in London had begun to specialise in textile exports to these areas. ⁽²⁾

The firm of J.A.S. Lovatt and Company, trading at No. 7 Milk Street, London, was invited to become agents for the partners in 1871 ⁽³⁾ and soon afterwards Mr. J.A. Loup of that

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- (1) For important tenders the firm sent a representative to London to deliver the necessary documents personally and to show samples.
- (2) See above, pp. 300-11. The main agency houses for the American trade, as we have already noted, were located in Manchester and Liverpool.
- (3) The firm of Savage and Hill acted for the partners in the South African trade in the late 1850s and they continued to act in this capacity after Lovat and Company had taken over the general representation of the partners' affairs in London.

firm began to specialise in the furtherance of sales of blankets in London on behalf of the partners. ⁽¹⁾ By this decision the partners were enabled to form a strong connection with the principal London merchanting houses and the large wholesale drapers prior to the onset of the 'Great Depression' and this probably allowed them to retain an interest in the London trade during the depressed years which might otherwise have disappeared. It would have been difficult for the firm to have formed new attachments, or to have continued with ad hoc agency arrangements, whilst trade was shrinking.

Government contracting

The partners submitted tenders to three government departments: the Admiralty, ⁽²⁾ the War Office, and the India Office, for blankets of a standardised size, weight and quality, and they recorded in the ledger the date and size of the official demand, their offered prices, ⁽³⁾ and the outcome of the tendering for themselves and their competitors. The practice

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- (1) He continued to do this until 1936. Some of the information in this chapter is extracted from a private letter written by Loup in 1948. Lovat and Company moved from Milk Street to an address in Aldermanbury 'about 1875'.
- (2) 'The best of all the public offices to deliver to ...' Thos. Cook to Chadwick and Company, Rochdale, 7 Dec. 1861.
- (3) The offered prices are sometimes recorded as single amounts per blanket or, more usually, stated as a price range related to the size of the order tendered.

of tendering for blankets and cloth required by the Hudson's Bay Company seems to have been discontinued by the partners during the period 1863-82, but three tenders were submitted and orders received subsequently from that Company during the years 1883-6. ⁽¹⁾ The information recorded in respect of tenders to the India Office is less detailed than the account given of Admiralty and War Office business and a clearer impression of the trade is gained by concentrating on the evidence relating to the goods supplied to these two latter departments. These transactions are summarised below.

(1)

It is not possible to be certain about this cessation of business with the Hudson's Bay Company, for the firm may have had transactions during the twenty years 1862-82 and recorded them in a ledger which has not survived. Loup, however, in his interview in 1951 refers to that Company during this period as having had 'only a small Office conducted by 3 old men, and you never got a word out of them.'

ADMIRALTY Navy Blankets to measure 62 inches by 89 inches, to weight 4 lbs. 12 oz., to 5 lbs., and to be wet-raised and not stoved.

Date	Demand	Cook, Son and Wormald's price	Order received	Remarks
<u>1865</u> Feb.	48,000	8s.9½d. - 9s.1¼d.	11,500	Walker 1,000 Tolson 8,000 Brooke 9,000 Tattersfield 15,000
<u>1866</u> May	93,000	8s.4½d. - 9s.1¼d.	60,000	J.Lee 15,000 D.Lee 5,000 Cardwell 15,000 Early 5,000
<u>1867</u> Mar.	37,000	8s.1½d.	23,000	Cardwell 4,000 Walker 5,000 Tattersfield 5,000
Oct.	4,000	7s.11½d.	4,000	Direct order
<u>1868</u> Feb.	32,000	7s.2¾d.	24,000	Tolson 8,000
<u>1869</u> May	12,000	6s.11½d.	10,000	
<u>1870</u> Apr.	19,000	6s.7½d. - 6s.9½d.	-	Tolson has all these at 6s.6d.
<u>1871</u> Feb.	16,000	7s.4½d.	-	
<u>1872</u> Mar.	21,400	10s.11d. - 11s.2d.	-	Cardwell 5,000 Taylor and Company 6,400 " " 10,000

Date	Demand	Cook, Son and Wormald's price	Order received	Remarks
<u>1873</u> Feb.	23,300	9s.5 ³ / ₄ d. - 9s.6 ³ / ₄ d.	-	Tattersfield Walker Oates and Co. Oldroyd Blakeley and Co have all these.
<u>1874</u> Mar.	17,000	7s.10 ¹ / ₂ d.	17,000	
<u>1875</u> Mar.	23,800	7s.5 ¹ / ₂ d. - 7s.6 ¹ / ₂ d.	6,800	Cardwell 12,000 Tolson 5,000
<u>1876</u> Feb.	24,500	7s.5 ¹ / ₂ d. - 7s.7d.	2,000	Lee & Sons 15,000 Firth and Sons 5,500 Clarkson 2,000
<u>1877</u> Feb.	22,500	6s.8 ¹ / ₂ d. - 6s.11d.	14,500	Lee and Sons 4,000 Clarkson 4,000
May	4,000	7s.2d.	-	Clarkson 4,000
<u>1878</u> Jan.	23,000	6s.7d. - 6s.8 ¹ / ₂ d.	-	Lee and Sons 14,000 Clarkson 8,000 Cardwell 1,000
<u>1879</u> Jan.	19,600	5s.11 ¹ / ₂ d. - 6s.1 ¹ / ₂ d.	8,000	Tolson 7,600 Oldroyd 4,000
Nov.	9,000	6s.5d.	-	
<u>1880</u> Jan.	23,000	7s.2d. - 7s.4d.	-	Lee and Sons Oates and Company and Oldroyd have all these.

Date	Demand	Cook, Son and Wormald's price	Order received	Remarks
<u>1881</u> Jan.	18,000	6s.4½d.	9,500	Tolson 8,600
<u>1882</u> Jan.	21,850	6s.9½d. - 6s.11½d.	-	
<u>1883</u> Jan.	34,600	6s.4½d. - 6s.6½d.	10,000	Tolson 13,000 Oates & Co. ?
Jan.	2,500	6s.5½d.	2,500	Direct Order
<u>1884</u> Jan.	20,600	5s.11¾d. - 6s.1½d.	-	Tolson Early
<u>1885</u> Jan.	31,000	5s.5½d. - 5s.7d.	10,950	Berry Oldroyd Tolson Walker Oates and Co.
<u>1886</u> Jan.	29,000	5s.3½d. - 5s.5d.	12,500	Tolson and Berry took 16,500

WAR OFFICE Barrack Blankets, to measure 56 inches by 92 inches and to weigh 4lbs. 4 oz. Grey colour, free from hair and wool waste and perfectly dry, not scaped or dry-raised ... one fast, Blue bar not more than four or less than three inches from the end.

Date	Demand	Cook, Son and Wormald's price	Order received	Remarks
<u>1863</u> Sept.	20,000	8s.4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. - 8s.6 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.	-	Cardwell 5,000 at 7s.5d., Tolson 4,000 at 7s.9d., Poole 10,000 at 7s.8 $\frac{3}{4}$ d., Neville 1,000 at 7s.9d.
Dec.	2,000	7s.10 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.	-	
<u>1866</u> June	15,000	8s.8d. - 8s.9d.	-	
Dec.	9,500	7s.9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	6,500	Firth & Sons 3,000
<u>1867</u> June	30,000	7s.11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. - 8s.1d.	-	
Aug.	2,552	7s.9d.	-	
Dec.	6,000	6s.11 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.	5,000	Oates & Co. 1,000
<u>1868</u> May	48,300	7s.5d. - 7s.10d.	10,000	David Lee 10,000 Lee & Son 12,500 Tolson 8,300 Early 7,000
Dec.	8,380	7s.1d.	8,380	
<u>1869</u> Feb.	1,500	7s.3d.	-	

WAR OFFICE The specification for Barrack Blankets was altered in 1869 to measurements of 60 inches by 90 inches and a weight of 4 lbs. 8 oz.

Date	Demand	Cook, Son and Wormald's price	Order received	Remarks
<u>1869</u> Nov.	20,000	6s.2d. - 6s.3d.	2,000	Oates & Co. 2,000 Tolson 12,000 Early 4,000
<u>1870</u> Mar.	10,000	6s.1½d.	4,500	
Aug.	40,000	6s.3d. - 6s.3½d.	15,000	Tolson 5,000 at 6s.3¼d.
Sept.	36,420	6s.3½d. - 6s.4½d.	20,000	Tolson 5,000 at 6s.3½d. Firth and Swallow 11,420 at 6s.6d.
<u>1871</u> May	30,000	6s.11½d.	10,000	Tolson 7,000 at 6s.11d.
Aug.	41,077	7s.5½d. - 7s.6¼d.	26,077	Collier 3,000 Tolson 12,000
<u>1872</u> Nov.	29,000	7s.10d. - 7s.10½d.	10,000	
<u>1873</u> April	24,000	6s.10¾d. - 6s.11d.	2,000	Tolson 2,000
July	35,000	6s.6½d. - 6s.10¾d.	13,000	Tolson 10,000 Oldroyd 10,000 Early 2,000
Dec.	35,000	6s.5d. - 6s.6¾d.	-	

Date	Demand	Cook, Son and Wormald's price	Order received	Remarks
<u>1874</u> Apr.	36,000	5s.11d. - 6s.0 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	16,500	
<u>1875</u> Mar.	73,000	5s.7d. - 5s.9d.	43,000	Tolson 30,000
<u>1876</u> Feb.	50,000	5s.11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. - 6s.2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	-	Oldroyd and Lee and Sons have these.
Apr.	10,000	5s.11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	-	Tolson all these at 5s.7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.
Nov.	103,000	5s.10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. - 6s.4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	-	Lee and Sons, 47,000, Oldroyd & Sons, 30,000 Oates & Son 6,000, Heckmondwike Manufacturing Co. 20,000 at 4s.10d. - 5s.2d.
<u>1877</u> July	5,000	5s.7d.	-	Lee & Sons
Aug.	11,700	5s.5 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. - 5s.6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	-	Oldroyd 6,700 Berry Brow Manufacturing Co. 5,000
Dec.	100,000	5s.3d. - 5s.6d.	40,000	J. Lee 10,000 D. Lee 10,000 Priestley 10,000 Oldroyd 15,000 Tolson 25,000
<u>1878</u> Feb.	40,000	5s.6d.	-	Tolson 25,000 Oldroyd 15,000
Mar.	70,000	5s.8d. - 5s.10d.	5,000	Oates & Co. 1,000 Tolson 6,000 Oldroyd 30,000 Lee 18,000 Tattersfield 5000 Heckmondwike Man. Co. 5,000

Date	Demand	Cook, Son and Wormald's price	Order received	Remarks
<u>1878</u> June	50,000	5s.3½d. - 5s.4d.	2,500	Tolson 2,500 D. Lee 20,000 T. Lee 10,000 Oldroyd 15,000
<u>1879</u> Jan.	25,000	4s.10d. - 5s.0d.	-	T. Lee 5,000 D. Lee 5,000 Oldroyd 15,000
Mar.	50,000	5s.2d.	15,000	Tolson 10,000 Lee 6,000 Oldroyd 15,000 Oates & Co. 1,200 Heckmondwike Man. Co. 2,800
June	50,800	4s.9½d. - 5s.1½d.	-	Oldroyds have thes
Nov.	100,000	5s.7d. - 5s.10d.	16,000	Tolson 8,000 D. Lee 6,000 T. Lee 6,000 Oldroyd 5,300 Hepworth & Co. 5,000 Oates and Co. 1,000 Hackmondwike Man. Co. 5,000
<u>1880</u> Jan.	10,000	6s.1d.	10,000	
Aug.	50,000	5s.1½d. - 5s.2½d.	-	Oldroyd 30,000 T. Lee 10,000 D. Lee 10,000
Dec.	20,000	4s.5½d.	-	Oldroyd 20,000

Date	Demand	Cook, Son and Wormald's price	Order received	Remarks
<u>1881</u> Jan.	20,000	4s.5 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. - 4s.6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	20,000	Direct Order.
Mar.	74,000	5s.2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. - 5s.9d.	-	Oldroyd 34,000 Hepworth 20,000 D. Lee 20,000
Sept.	25,250	4s.10d.	-	
<u>1882</u> April	30,000	4s.11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.	-	D. and M. Lee Oldroyd and Sons
<u>1883</u> Jan.	50,000	4s.8d. - 4s.9d.	-	Oldroyd 30,000 Hepworth 15,000 T. Lee 5,000
<u>1884</u> Feb.	20,000	4s.2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. - 4s.4 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.	5,000	Oldroyd 15,000
<u>1885</u> Mar.	20,000	4s.1d.	-	D. Lee, T. Lee and Oldroyd have these
May	50,000	4s.6d. - 5s.4d.	-	Oldroyd 30,000 Firths 20,000
<u>1886</u> Jan.	140,000	4s.10 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. - 5s.0 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.	-	Firth 40,000 Oldroyd 32,000 Tolson 20,000 Clay 20,000 Burnley 6,000 Turner 6,000 Hepworth 5,000 Preston 5,000 T. Lee 3,000 Oates & Co. 3,000

With the exception of the firm of Early and Company of Witney, the firms competing with the partners for these orders were all located in the heavy woollen district of the West Riding at Savile Town, Earlsheaton, Dewsbury, Batley and Heckmondwike. All these firms were relatively small in size compared with Cook, Son and Wormald and probably their smaller scale of operations gave them a lighter burden of overhead costs to carry in times of depression, which therefore increased their competitiveness for government contracts. It was possible, as the above summaries show, for the firm to obtain detailed information relating to the disposition of contracts, including occasionally the tender prices submitted by their rivals. Such information was obtained for them by Carter and Company in London, whose representative 'kept his ears open' when visiting the Government buying departments at Deptford and at the Tower. The partners also exchanged information with the firm of Tolson and Company of Earlsheaton, which in turn had close contacts with the Lees in that district.

Although the firm recorded the outcome of all but fourteen of the seventy tenders listed above, it must be remembered that firms receiving government orders often sub-contracted part of these orders to other firms, and particularly to firms which had been unsuccessful in their bid and were later prepared to undertake work at prices below their tender offer. These summaries, therefore, indicate to

some extent the immediate results of the tendering in these years, but they do not reveal the final distribution of government demand for blankets amongst those West Riding firms engaged in the trade, and they almost certainly hide a good deal of collusion amongst the bidders for official orders. We have already noted in some detail how the government trade was conducted in an earlier period, and it is not likely that the methods there described would have been much modified in the light of the demand conditions for woollen fabrics which prevailed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. (1)

It is tempting to use the prices listed by the partners as an indication of price movements in general, in view of the fact that they are related to a standardised manufactured product over the course of some twenty-four years, but there are many obstacles in the way of drawing up a price index on this basis and, in view of the qualifications which would have to be appended to the calculation, the temptation has been resisted. The prices tendered by the partners reflected not only real costs of production and changes in productivity, but also their 'eagerness' at any time to have or not to have the

(1) See above, p. 158. The absence of correspondence books for this period prevents any clear assessment being made as to the extent of collusion amongst the firms listed on pp. 785-92 above.

order. The prices we really need for the compilation of an index are those which actually were accepted by the government buyers on each occasion when tenders were received, and only with a very few of such tenders were the partners able to state definitely the final price outcome of the order. Furthermore, and this is a major difficulty, it is not possible to discover whether there were any marked changes in the quality of goods supplied to the government departments over these years. It would have been a natural response to strong competition for manufacturers to depreciate quality of production in order to bid for orders below their competitors' prices, and whether such a response would have been successful depends upon the consistency with which the government examiners were able to preserve their tests and standards over time and to detect lowering of quality. This, as we have also noted above, was likely to be a highly variable factor. ⁽¹⁾

In view of the strength of the government buyers in the market during this period it was possible, in theory, for the government to obtain its requirements at prices which would be fairly close to the real costs of production involved plus some addition for 'normal' profit. This latter constituent of price probably almost disappeared during the highly competitive

(1) See above, p. 705.

struggle which developed in the years of deep depression, 1873-9 and 1882-6. At other times, however, the degree of collusion, if it could be known, would measure the success with which the manufacturers kept the contract prices above the minimum figure which would have covered their total costs and furnished a reasonable return on capital.

In 1872 the partners could secure an order for 10,000 Barrack Blankets at a price of 7s.10d. each, but in 1877 they could not secure orders with a bid of 5s.5½d., and 4s.9½d. in 1879 was not low enough to prevent the contract from going to another Dewsbury firm. In 1885 they were bidding at 4s.1d. without success and in the following year they failed, with a bid of 4s.10½d., to participate in the disposition of a giant contract for 140,000 blankets. They were more consistently successful in maintaining their hold over orders from the Admiralty, although 1878 and 1884 were years when relatively modest prices, compared with former years, failed to result in orders. Fortunately, the years 1883-6 brought some success with the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company ordered from the partners 250 pairs of point blankets in 1883, 3,450 pairs in 1885, and 2,100 pairs and 60 pieces of duffil

(1)
 cloth in 1886. Over the whole period, 1863-86, the firm only experienced one year - 1882 - without a contract order of any kind, as Table 28 indicates.

The timing of orders by government departments seems to have borne some relation to the seasonal fluctuations in activity in the blanket trade, the bulk of contracts being placed in the months of December to March, and the government buyers also took cognizance of the state of the industry during periods of severe depression. In 1876 the War Office invited tenders for 103,000 blankets, spreading the orders finally between four firms, and in the two following years further large orders were widely dispersed. The years 1879, 1881 and 1886 were also marked by action of this kind, and official policy was thus doubly beneficial. It had the effect of increasing effective demand in the industry particularly and in the economy generally, and it provided the government with stocks of blankets at extremely low prices.

Foreign governments also placed orders for cloth and blankets in the heavy woollen district and in 1877 it was

(1) The price of the point blankets was 9s.10d. to 15s.6d. per pair according to size and quality; the duffil cloth was 40 yards long, 54 inches wide, and weight 85 lbs. per piece, at a price of 104s.6d.

Table 28.

Cook, Son and Wormald,
Successful Tenders, 1863-86.

Year	Admiralty	War Office	India Office	Hudson's Bay Company
1863	X	X	-	O
1864	-	X	-	O
1865	X	-	X	O
1866	X	-	X	O
1867	X	X	-	O
1868	X	X	-	O
1869	X	X	X	O
1870	-	X	X	O
1871	-	X	X	O
1872	-	X	X	O
1873	-	X	-	O
1874	X	X	X	O
1875	X	X	X	O
1876	X	-	X	O
1877	X	-	X	O
1878	X	X	X	O
1879	X	X	X	O
1880	-	X	X	O
1881	X	-	-	O
1882	-	-	-	O
1883	X	-	-	X
1884	-	X	-	X
1885	X	-	-	X
1886	-	-	-	X

Successful tenders : X
 Unsuccessful tenders: -
 No tender: O

Source: Private Ledger, 1863-86

noted of the Dewsbury trade for the previous year that:

A prominent feature ... has been the demand for army cloth, chiefly for the Ottoman Government. When first a rumour became current ... that Russia was likely to interfere on behalf of the Christian subjects of the Porte, merchants were commissioned to place large orders in Dewsbury, Batley and Ossett. Army goods have been made also for our own Government, for Austria, and for Italy ... (1)

At the same time it was also reported that:

... the demand for coloured blankets, suitable for use by troops in the field, has been very great during the past three months. (2)

In 1877 the depression in the heavy woollen trade was mitigated to some extent by the fact that:

Agents of the Turkish Government gave orders for blankets in large quantities - one firm securing the contract - and as the year went on giving out sub-contracts. (3)

This did not prevent, as we have already noted, very severe distress in the Dewsbury region during this year, with a number of spectacular failures of old established firms. (4) Nevertheless, the home and foreign government orders during the last quarter of the nineteenth century were probably

(1) The Economist, 10 March 1877.

(2) *ibid.* The coloured blankets seem to have been mainly browns and scarlets.

(3) The Economist, 9 March 1878.

(4) See above, p. 272 .

important in assisting the prudent enterprise to stay in the industry during the years of shrinking markets and severe competition. There seems to have been a steady demand throughout the period for 'army and navy goods' and the effects of war were always favourable to the stimulation of demand in this part of the West Riding woollen industry. In 1895 it was recorded that:

... cloth and blankets have ... had something to stimulate demand through the call made on account of the war between China and Japan. (1)

The impact of the Boer War, although not discernible in the surviving records of the firm, seems to have registered strongly in the Dewsbury region. In 1900:

A special feature has been the cast output from the looms and dye-houses of Khaki cloth for the troops in South Africa.

And:

In blankets, the Government placed heavy contracts for sovereign-greys, browns, and whites, particularly the former, and large purchases of East India wool, etc. had to be made for their production. (2)

The prudent buying of wool, which was always fundamental to success in the woollen manufacture, was even

(1) The Economist, 16 February 1895.

(2) The Economist, 16 February 1901.

more important during such years of sudden upsurge in demand, and calculations of future movements in wool prices constituted a vital element in the assessment of tender prices which would not only secure contracts, but also lead to productive business for the enterprise. ⁽¹⁾ It would be interesting and illuminating to know how many of the bankrupted woollen manufacturing firms of the West Riding in the 'seventies and 'eighties failed ⁽²⁾ in the public service.

The London agency

The London agency commenced in 1871, but the sales ledgers in respect of business transacted with London houses carry information from the year 1869. In that year the partners had 52 open accounts operating with an average sale per annum on each account of £1,611, the largest of these amounting to £9,971 and the smallest being £8. In 1872 the number of accounts had been increased to 100 of an average value of £634. The smallness of this figure compared with

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- (1) The existence of economies of scale, in producing long runs of standardised fabrics, probably led some firms to quote prices which were uneconomic for them if the official order placed with them was for some significantly smaller quantity than the firm had in mind when their tender was made.
- (2) C.J. Wilson, told The Tariff Commission that '... we had substantial orders for the Government at very unremunerative prices. If you are a well-known house there is no trouble in getting on the Army List, but there was great competition for these orders, and they had a very strict specification ... Also during that time, the class of wool used for that particular article ran up to price very rapidly and very much, so that after we had taken orders

the average amount in 1869 resulted from two factors: the trade depression of 1872 and the acquisition of a number of small customers by the agents in their early drive to increase the partners' business. By 1887 the number of accounts reached its maximum - 170 - for the period 1869-93. Loup, who was the most energetic member of the firm of Lovat and Company in so far as the interests of Cook, Son and Wormald were concerned, seems to have formed attachments with all the principal shipping houses in the City and to have also made profitable connections with the major wholesaling and retailing drapers.

In 1878 he obtained his first order from Payne Brothers who specialised in exporting low quality blankets to Natal and three years later he began to do 'a good deal of business with John Palmer Jnr. and Company'⁽¹⁾ whose interests were in the Chinese market. This house also traded a little to Japan and Loup obtained some experience of the Japanese trade with Palmer's before forming a more substantial attachment to that market by obtaining orders from the house of A.J. Macpherson and Company:

(1) From a typewritten record of an interview between J.A. Loup and Messrs. John Wormald and C. Penney in August 1951.

Footnote (2) from previous page ... continued in a number of cases they proved unremunerative in consequence.' Ev. of C.J. Wilson, tweed manufacturer of Hawick, The Report of The Tariff Commission, par. 1830.

They ... bought Scarlet Blankets for the rickshaw business. It was a very big business - large quantities - but it died out because the Japanese could make them themselves, and took advantage of the opportunity. (1)

In the early 'eighties Loup began to receive orders for the Australian trade from importers who were becoming dissatisfied with the service they received from the house of Savage and Hill and from this time onward he developed a lively interest in this particular market. He noted in his reminiscences:

The Mill was very sticky about the Australian trade ... small striped headings in either Blue or Black. It was found that we were losing business in the Australian market, and although I reported this for over three years, nothing was done until it was found that a man of the name of Crowther in Leeds was scooping the market with fancy coloured borders. The first ones which were sent down from Dewsbury Mills were Red, Yellow and Blue, which are the colours with which the Devil painted his tail, and were not successful at all. We had accounts with every Australian Wholesaler with the exception of Paterson, Lang and Bruce. (2)

(1) *ibid.* This was done in 1885. In 1889 Macpherson's account was valued at £12,421, by 1894 it was down to £7.

(2) J.A. Loup, Reminiscences, 1951.

In 1881 the Orient Steam Navigation Company was added to the partners' lists with an account for that year worth £231 relating to transport blankets. At the same time the first orders were received from the Peninsular and Oriental Company, their account in 1881 totalling £1,040. In the 'nineties, Loup made a beginning with some of the important London drapery houses. Marshall and Snelgrove and Swann and Edgar⁽¹⁾ were persuaded to try the partners' products in 1891 and in 1894 Loup obtained his first order from Harrods Stores and he later observed in his reminiscences:

To pass Harrods ... sets me recalling the first order for Blankets ... the promoters had just opened with an old provision shop and two or three private houses on each side, and they had roughly knocked these into one block. When I called to see the Buyer ... the order resulting was for 120 pairs, delivery half for October and the balance in December. (2)

The agents also undertook the responsibility of receiving payments from the London customers and Loup remembered that:

Some of the larger accounts used to remit their monthly accounts regularly, others had 'pay days' and if you omitted to call on that day the cheque awaited your next month's visit. (3)

(1) These remained very small accounts in the 'nineties.

(2) J.A. Loup, Reminiscences, 1951.

(3) *ibid.*

The total value of sales in London for the period 1869-93 is shown in Table 29 below.

Table 29. Cook, Son and Wormald,
London Sales, 1869-93. (1)

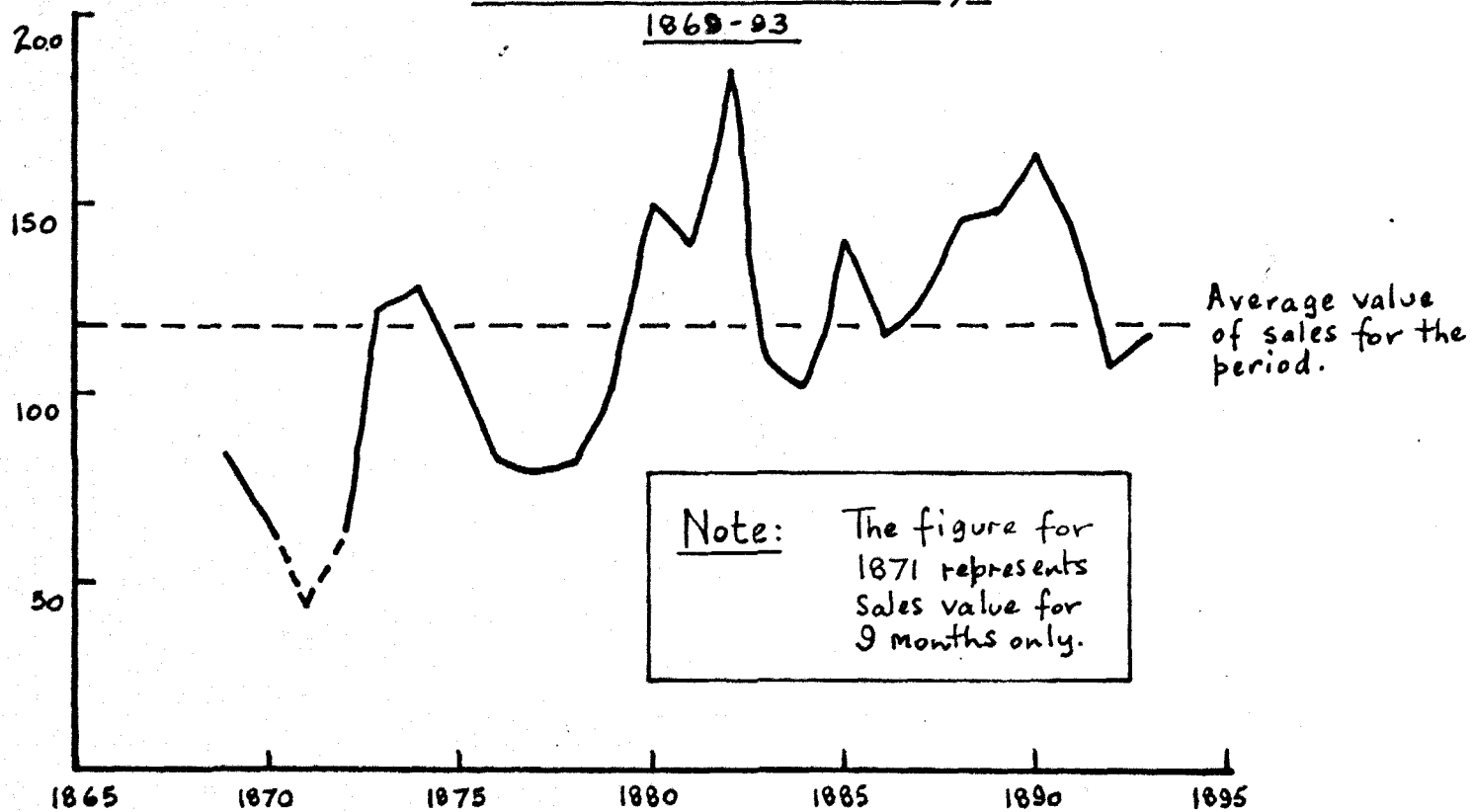
<u>Year</u>	(Value) £
1869	83,816
1870	64,488
1871	43,062 (2)
1872	63,446
1873	121,067
1874	126,676
1875	106,442
1876	81,158
1877	78,932
1878	79,255
1879	100,441
1880	148,079
1881	139,572
1882	183,348
1883	107,000
1884	104,041
1885	138,830
1886	113,819
1887	122,645
1888	144,356
1889	146,675
1890	160,210
1891	142,546
1892	105,818
1893	113,171

Source: London Ledgers, 1869-94.

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- (1) The firm's name was changed to Wormalds and Walker in 1885.
- (2) The total stated in the table for 1871 relates only to the first nine months of that year.

Table 29 contains information which, although limited to the records of the London agency, is probably indicative of the firm's general trading experience during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The firm's total sales for this, or any other, period of the nineteenth century are not known and there are no surviving documents upon which any sort of estimate of such figures might be based. The London houses with whom the firm had business relations, however, were involved in trading in almost all the major external markets for woollen fabrics, and the home demand for Yorkshire textiles was normally well represented in the London orders received at Dewsbury Mills. The years of severest fall in the value of sales were 1876-8 and, to a lesser extent, 1883-4, 1886 and 1892. The 'good' years were 1880 and 1882, 1888-9 and 1890. The latter year, with sales reaching a value of over £160,000, was only bettered during the period by the achievement in 1882 when sales rose to a total of £183,000. The 'Great Depression' is almost classically portrayed in the curve depicted in Figure 12 which is based on the data already set out in Table 29.

£000 Figure 12. Cook, Son and Wormald
Value of London Sales,



Source: London Ledgers, 1869-94

CHAPTER XII

THOMAS COOK, 1787-1861

CHAPTER XIITHOMAS COOK, 1787-1861

Many of the firm's documents upon which the preceding eight chapters are based, were hand-written by Thomas Cook and this fact largely explains why he emerges from the records more clearly than any of his associates in the enterprise. Almost all of the important items of correspondence despatched from Dewsbury Mills during the period 1824-61 were his work, and although he must often have consulted his partners on major matters, his letters were the final expression of the firm's decisions and policy. It is significant that, throughout the correspondence, there are frequently recurring statements to the effect that:

Our Mr. Cook is from home, we will reply
to your letter when he returns. (1)

The survival of a fragment of his private diary also allows us to obtain an insight into his character and personality which confirms the impressions gained from an examination of the more formalised business correspondence. (2)

(1) This particular extract from a letter written by Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Crofts and Stell, Manchester, 16 Oct. 1846.

(2) This diary covers the period 15 May 1819 to 1 Jan. 1823. It might be conjectured that he ceased to keep the diary after this latter date owing to general pressure of work at the Mills. On the other hand, he may have continued the record in some other journal which has since been destroyed.

Thomas Cook was born in Dublin on the third of April 1787, and his father, John Cook, and his uncle, John Hague, were partners in a merchanting enterprise in that city. ⁽¹⁾ He seems to have had little formal education and in course of time he was apprenticed to his father and his uncle to learn the merchanting business. ⁽²⁾ His later activities suggest that this apprenticeship was a thorough, diligent and energetic process. In his twenty-fifth year he joined members of the Hague family in the partnership which was established at Dewsbury Mills and, at the same time, married Ellen Wormald, the daughter of Thomas and Martha Wormald and the younger sister of May Wormald, the second wife of John Hague the Elder who was one of Cook's partners. His marriage appears to have been a happy one and he became the father of a large family, Seven daughters were born to Thomas and Ellen before the end of 1822 and it was not until 1831 that a son, Thomas Hague Cook, was born.

(1) See above, p. 364.

(2) 'I know very little of grammar or of grammar books, being taken from a poor school at 13½ years old.' Thos. Cook to Frank Wormald, 24 April 1830. For a general discussion of the education of merchants see W.E. Minchinton, 'The Merchants in England in the Eighteenth Century', The Entrepreneur, papers presented at the Annual Conference Economic History Society, Cambridge, 1957

The importance of Thomas Cook, in the enterprise and in the industry of which it was a part, lies in the scope and size of his business activities. We have seen how, with his partners, the Hagues and the Wormalds, he combined merchanting and manufacturing with banking and farming in the year 1811-24. During these years he developed Dewsbury Mills from an establishment providing facilities for yarn preparation and cloth fulling at the service of local clothiers, in a complete manufactory, housing all the processes of cloth manufacture from wool blending to the dyeing and finishing of woven fabrics.⁽¹⁾ Upon this foundation he then built in the early 'thirties a strong position for the partners in the blanket trade; competing successfully with Benjamin Gott, the Witney producers, and the large merchanting houses, for government contracts and for commercial orders in the home and overseas markets. We have seen how he assiduously developed his interest in the American market, which was not without its risks, and in the 1830s over 40 per cent. of the total imports of blankets, in value terms, entering the United States from all sources, was produced under Cook's supervision, either at Dewsbury Mills or on the looms of smaller manufacturers of the district working to Cook's orders.⁽²⁾

(1) See above, Chapter V.

(2) See above, chapters I, pp. 113-25 and IX.

In his day-to-day activities the records reveal him as
 (1)
 'the complete business man', possessing strong powers of
 organisation and a keen sense of market opportunity:

Met Mr. Hirst of Gomersal at Wakefield, had some conversation with him relative to the milling of the goods of a large contract he has made with India House. He wants the price of milling to be lowered in consequence of the coarseness of the goods and the short time they would take in the stocks. Did not agree to make any abatement in price, but I remarked that we might make a discount of 5 per cent. for prompt payment at Mill Feast in order to keep the work. (2)

He was a sternly disciplined entrepreneur, meticulous in his business methods, fulfilling his commercial commitments promptly and demanding a reciprocal treatment from those with whom he had business dealings:

When we address any House by letter we always expect a prompt written reply - messengers sometimes forget their messages. (3)

Whatever the cause of the rejection of the blankets, you ought to say at all times - pray get them packed and sent home at once. (4)

The position which he established for the partnership in the blanket trade not only stimulated developments at Dewsbury Mill

(1) cf. C. Wilson, 'The Entrepreneur in the Industrial Revolution in Britain', Explorations in Entrepreneurial History, vol. vii (1955)

(2) Thos. Cook, Diary, 23 Mar. 1821.

(3) Thos. Cook to Knowles, Houghton and Company, Gomersal, 18 May 1846.

(4) Thos. Cook to John Dobson, London, 19 April 1847.

but enabled him to diffuse his ideas relating to business practice and improvements in the quality of manufacture of blankets throughout the 'heavy woollen' area. Numerous small orders for blankets were put out by Cook to the smaller manufacturers in the 'thirties and the 'forties and such orders were always accompanied by careful instructions as to the quality of production.

We have a few hundred pairs of Scarlet Striped Witneys - rather stout goods of a fine quality - which we want to put out to be done in three weeks or a day or two less if possible. Can you ... take them and do them well for us, if so come down at once. Mind, they must be a right good article, well spun, and you must watch your colours. (1)

Cook had not a little to do with the general improvement in blanket manufacture in the West Riding which enabled the Yorkshire producers to pull the supremacy of position in the trade out of the hands of the Witney firms during the middle decades of the nineteenth century, although coal and steam power and the pursuance of a policy of low profits were also vital factors in this achievement. Thomas Cook wrote in 1837:

We are put on our mettle by a friend telling us that we cannot furnish a blanket so good in Blue as he buys, Witney made and London dyed. (2)

(1) Thos. Cook to William Senior, Earlsheaton, 10 Aug. 1846. This is typical of a large number of similar letters scattered about the correspondence books.

(2) Thos. Cook to Robert Nicholson, 12 Dec. 1837.

We have already noted his evidence before the House of Lords Select Committee on the state of the British Wool Trade in 1828,⁽¹⁾ and he attended with Benjamin Gott upon Sir Robert Peel in March 1843 to urge, on behalf of his fellow manufacturers,⁽²⁾ the removal of the remaining duties on imported wool. His correspondence is studded with empirical observations on the probable future course of consumer demand for wool and fabrics, and his patient study of markets and competitors coupled with a natural flair for judging wool and the sellers of wool were important factors in his success. He was quick to instal power looms at Dewsbury Mills, in the early 'forties, when the technical difficulties of weaving broad woollen cloth by this means were still formidable and this kind of equipment still very experimental. The power loom did not come into use at Witney until twenty years after its successful beginnings in the Dewsbury trade.⁽³⁾ From the 'thirties onward, Cook was a pioneer in the application of one machine after another in an attempt to perfect the condensing of slubbings in order to render the slubbing billy obsolete. He did not accept cheapness of production as the sole criterion of success

(1) See above, pp. 17-18.

(2) These duties were abolished in June of the following year.

(3) cf. Plummer, op. cit., p. 251.

and quality of manufacture was always an important consideration for him. He had a good eye for colour and finish and was always interested in visiting dye-houses and looking at cloth finishing elsewhere.

I should like to look at some dyeing and raising in your town whilst I am with you if you think that there will be time. (1)

In a letter to an American correspondent he stated, in 1848:

We hope that you will find the Drabs a good match; we have allowed in the Gentiabella blankets for blooming, as that colour tends to grow darker for a time. (2)

Cook was very enthusiastic about the firm's participation in the West Riding contribution to the Great Exhibition and his efforts brought two prize medals to Dewsbury Mills in respect of products which the partners exhibited on this occasion. One medal was received for 'excellent production of Spanish stripes', (3) whilst the other awarded was merited by:

... a great variety of excellent blankets in all qualities, for the Irish, English and American

(1) Thos. Cook to John Chadwick, Rochdale, 2 March 1841.

(2) Thos. Cook to Russell and Marsh, New York, 14 April 1848.

(3) Reports by the Juries, (1852), vol. i, p. 769.

markets; scarlet and blue blankets for the American trade; and travelling rugs of various kinds. (1)

In addition, the Jurors at the Exhibition awarded a medal to one of the Dewsbury clothiers, Thomas Robinson, who undertook work on behalf of the partners, and they observed in their report:

This person is a small manufacturer, but his goods are the best of their kind for quality and workmanship. (2)

Outside of his strictly business affairs, Thomas Cook played an energetic part in the life of the local community, although many of his public activities also produced business advantages. He interested himself strongly in the improvement of transport facilities, advancing the projects of a new bridge built in the centre of Dewsbury in 1817 and the new road from Dewsbury to Leeds which was opened in 1821. (3) His attitude

- (1) *ibid.* p. 784. It took the partners nearly two years actually to obtain possession of the medals. There was a very considerable organisation built up to deal with the Exhibition in Leeds. The Second Chamber of Commerce at Leeds drew out of the Exhibition Committee of 1851.
- (2) *ibid.*
- (3) This road was nearly eight miles in length and it passed through the parishes of Soothill, West Ardsley, Morley, Churwell, Beeston, Hunslet and Holbeck to Leeds. The road was financed by money raised from subscribers in 1816-17 and by a loan from the Exchequer Loan Office in 1820. cf. Report of the Royal Commission for Inquiring into the State of the Roads, 1840 (280) xxvii, App., p. 514.

towards the Calder-Hebble Canal facilities was coloured by the fact that the passing of vessels along the waterway sometimes interfered with the water and power supplies at the mills, but the number of disputes with the Canal Company which reached the stage of letter-writing for the partners seem to have been very few, (1) until the major dispute with that Company occurred in 1875. (2) In 1845, Cook became one of the Directors of the Leeds and Dewsbury Railway Company and

(1) There seems to have been some altercation between the partners and the Company in 1834 when the Company proposed to effect improvements in the navigation which were contrary to the terms of Rawson's Award of 1796, but an amicable settlement seems to have been quickly reached. Again, in 1844, the partners stated their case very strongly and the Company gave way.

'It is most disagreeable to us to have to write to you at all on Canal business, because Corporations like you will do as a body, which as private individuals you would refrain from. So little notice has been taken of our former remonstrances ... respecting the condition of the Gates at the Double Locks and the overflowing of the water at the 'figure of three' that we have made up our minds that we will, not patiently longer submit to this usage. If you do not take steps to remedy this grievance of which we so justly complain, powerful as you are, we will fight ...'

Thos. Cook for Hagues, Cook and Wormald to Charles Norris, Calder and Hebble Office, Halifax, 14 May 1844.

(2) See above, p. 358 .

although his financial stake in that venture was small he made strenuous efforts to link Dewsbury by rail with Leeds and Manchester. In 1846 he noted in a letter to the firm's London bankers:

You are right, I am one of the Directors of the Leeds and Dewsbury railroad - it passes through a highly populated country and it shortens the distance from Leeds to Huddersfield by twelve miles. It is also so circumstanced as to become, I believe, Leeds and Manchester railroad stock. My opinion of its merits are quite favourable, and that it will prove ultimately good property ... many of the Directors hold largely, I only about sixty shares. (1)

Cook also encouraged his partners to invest in the railway development of the district and there are scattered references in the correspondence books to small dividend payments made to the Hagues in respect of railway stock. In 1847, Thomas Cook wrote to a Wakefield banking firm in the following terms:

The late Edward Hague directed his executors to pay at his death £2,100 to certain parties and they have prevailed on them to let the sum of £2,000 be settled and loaned to the Leeds and Dewsbury Railway Company instead of receiving the money to which they are entitled. (2)

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- (1) Thos. Cook to Smith, Payne and Smith, London, 24 May 1846. Many passing comments in the correspondence books confirm the impression of Cook's desire to see the railroad link with Manchester. A beginning was made with this project in 1846 and when the Leeds, Dewsbury and Manchester Company was formed in that year Thomas Cook became a Director and the Chairman was John Gott of Leeds.
- (2) Thos. Cook to Leatham and Tew, Wakefield, 8 Sept. 1847. Cook was one of Edward Hague's executors.

Earlier in that year, Percival Wormald had written to his bankers in Leeds to inform them that:

Early next month I have engaged to lend a mortgage to the Leeds, Dewsbury and Manchester Railway Company of £5,000 and I shall be obliged by you keeping the enclosed £1,650 until the whole amount is deposited with you. (1)

The provision of railway facilities for the town of Dewsbury was much forwarded by the efforts of Cook supported by his partners and other blanket manufacturers in the neighbourhood, and Cook was probably strongly motivated in his actions in this connection by the desire to improve the transport of wool and fabrics to and from Dewsbury Mills. The success of his efforts, however, had far-reaching effects for the town generally. The coming of the railway coincided with the growing use of shoddy in the Dewsbury district and the importation of rags from abroad and from other parts of the country was much facilitated by railway transportation. We have already noted the growth of the rag auctions and sales which originated at the railway station in Dewsbury in the late 'forties. (2) Perhaps the most marked effect that the railway had upon the West Riding blanket trade was the stimulus which it gave to the Dewsbury manufacturers to by-pass

(1) Percival Wormald to Beckett and Company, Leeds, 24 Apr. 1847

(2) See above, p. 232.

the Leeds merchanting houses and to consign their goods direct to Liverpool, Manchester and London. This enabled Dewsbury in association with Batley to acquire a fully independent status in the Yorkshire industry and to attain a leadership in the blanket trade of this region which had formerly been held by the Heckmondwike district. From the late 'forties onward the Blanket Hall at that town was losing ground as a marketing centre for the 'heavy woollen' manufacture.

One of the subsidiary motives which seems to have impelled Cook to interest himself in railway development was his keen concern to improve the postal facilities available to the enterprise in particular and to the town of Dewsbury in general. As early as the summer of 1821 he recorded in his diary that he:

Went to Leeds with Mr. John Halliley Junior to see the postmaster respecting the conveyance of the Dewsbury letters. (1)

This seems to have been the beginning of a long campaign on his part to effect a speedier and more regular delivery of mail and at various points in the correspondence books the question recurs. It might have been expected that the coming of the railway would have improved matters, but in 1846 Cook

(1) Thos. Cook, Diary, 26 July 1821.

is petitioning a Cabinet Minister to use his good offices with the Post Office authorities 'to allow the Hull and Liverpool mails, which about meet in point of time at our railroad station, to take from our Post Office the OUT as they do bring us the IN letters.'⁽¹⁾ Cook also in this letter 'ventured to hope that your Lordship's interference may obtain that attention to the wishes of our neighbourhood which all our own efforts have failed to accomplish',⁽²⁾ and he added that, 'my House alone now receives more letters every week than the whole district did when we began business, and as our transactions are large and mainly dependent on correspondence through the Eastern and Western mails we are, from having only one dispatch a day - such is the rapidity of communications - having our merchandise down at Liverpool, before the letters can be received directing the Brokers to ship the goods ... and this inconvenience is not only great to me, but to all the neighbourhood, as you well know a hive of industry.'⁽³⁾

Some temporary improvement seems to have been effected as a result of this letter, but Cook was never really satisfied

(1) Thos. Cook to Lord Viscount Morpeth, London, 9 Nov. 1846.

(2) *ibid.*

(3) *ibid.*

with the service and whenever the train services were revised there was always the danger of some interference with the postal arrangements to the detriment of the business of the town. In 1858, Cook is still complaining of the inadequacy of the mail service and requesting the authorities 'to give us the common facility of the other towns in despatching our morning westward letters and you will much oblige this neighbourhood and your obedient servants.'⁽¹⁾

In a highly competitive industry like that of the blanket manufacture, it was clearly of the highest importance to the entrepreneur to be able to receive communications in respect of trade and to reply quoting prices and delivery dates to correspondents in the shortest possible time.⁽²⁾

Cook knew that his rivals in Leeds were better served in this respect and he regarded the vagaries of the Dewsbury postal service as a competitive disadvantage to be removed. It is obvious that success in this particular sphere of action did not come quickly and Cook's experience serves to emphasise the fact that the diffusion of regular, reliable and efficient postal transmission throughout the economy had not

(1) Thos. Cook to the Secretary to the Post Office, London, 2 Jan. 1858.

(2) See chap. IX.

developed as far as might have been expected by the middle of the nineteenth century.

As a member of the new industrial aristocracy, Cook was certainly spurred to action in his business life by the profit motive, although never in a narrow, short-term sense. Although he took his opportunities in times of boom he was never a get-rich-quick entrepreneur and his view of a 'fair' profit was based not only on notions of an adequate return on capital employed, but also on the necessity of retaining the loyalty and goodwill of customers in the long-run. (1) His public actions and attitudes were animated by a mixture of philanthropy, strong religious faith and public spirit, a combination of personal characteristics which probably motivated more of Cook's contemporaries than has usually been conceded. He served as an Overseer of the Poor for Dewsbury parish in 1819-21 and seems to have performed his duties as conscientiously as he undertook his private commitments:

At the Workhouse until after twelve o'clock
at night making up my Book as Overseer of
the Poor. (2)

He was a firm supporter of Richard Oastler in the

(1) See esp. chaps. V and IX above.

(2) Thos. Cook, Diary, 11 April 1821.

'thirties and 'forties and a leading 'Ten Hours man' in the Dewsbury district. In 1834 he wrote to the Factories Inquiry Commission in answer to the question: 'Can you suggest ... any other legislative provisions for regulating the hours of labour?'

... we are for the Ten Hour Bill, subject to a reservation for making good stoppages by flood-water on some reasonable plan ... (1)

In 1843 he informed his Member of Parliament:

... my own feelings are decidedly for ... a simple Ten Hours Bill. I think those hours of actual labour enough for child or adult ... I think if the Government have to abandon their plan, the parties who cause the abandonment of it will have much to answer for to their humble brethren. (2)

These views were held by Cook from considerations of economic efficiency rather than from any sympathy with the political agitations which accompanied the demands for reduced hours of employment.

Although we know almost nothing about the size and quality of the labour force at Dewsbury Mills during the nineteenth century, a few scattered observations made by Cook

(1) Factories Inquiry Commission, 1834, Section C.1, Q. 78. cf. C. Driver, Tory Radical, the life of Richard Oastler (New York, 1946); also Asa Briggs, 'Industry and Politics in Early Nineteenth Century Keighley', Bradford Antiquary, vol. ix (1952), pp. 305-10.

(2) Thos. Cook to William Beckett, M.P., London, 5 May 1843.

in the course of correspondence suggest that he was fair and humane in his general treatment of employees and that he was concerned to provide regularity of employment at wages which were compatible with the maintenance of profitability of the enterprise. He would have nothing to do with the truck system of remuneration operated by some factory owners in the West Riding in the early nineteenth century and he boasted that 'we have always insisted on and never departed from a system of money wage payments.'⁽¹⁾ In considering 'wage claims' made by his employees, he was usually sympathetic providing it could be shown that his competitors had already made such concessions or would be prepared to follow his lead if he moved in favour of higher payments. It was a matter for regret for him that wage rates had to be reduced during the severe depression which gripped the industry in the late 'thirties and early 'forties, and he wrote on this matter in 1843:

... we were not the first to lower wages and we have told our men that we care little about what the rate is if it be uniform and general ... we know not how the small makers could be brought to give our rates ... and we believe that ... the Witney rates are below those of this district. (2)

-
- (1) Thos. Cook to Robert Barbour, Manchester, 5 Aug. 1837. Sovereigns and half-sovereigns were obtained from Leatham and Tew, Wakefield, every fortnight for this.
- (2) Thos. Cook to Edwin Firth, Heckmondwike, 20 Nov. 1843.

Later in that year these points were reiterated in a letter to the Vicar of Dewsbury who was seeking to further the claims of the workpeople to have the pre-1837 rates of wages restored now that depression was beginning to lift from the industry:

I shall be glad to join in any measure to better their condition, and care but little about the rate of wages if it be uniform and general, provided the rate be not such as to drive the trade from the District - and this is to be feared - however, if the principal parties at Heckmondwike and at the Heaton's ... will go back to former wages, or any other prudent ones, we will follow. We did now lower first ... and we should faithfully carry out these promises, many would not I fear. The fault at Dewsbury is not so much in the rate of wages being too low, as to irregularity of employment. (1)

Although Cook may have been moving with great caution in this particular wage question, taking what looks at first sight to be a typical employer's attitude to the demand for more pay, it was probably also true that he was asking himself a number of crucial questions at this time. If a concession is made can it be maintained over a long period? Is the present improvement in trade a temporary or a more permanent break in

(1) Thos. Cook to the Reverend Thomas Albutt, Dewsbury, 13 Dec. 1843. The Vicar was not approached by any of the firm's employees, but by those employed elsewhere in the district. This suggests that some of the workers in the blanket industry held the view that if they could obtain some concession to their demands from the partners at Dewsbury Mills it would then become a general concession throughout the area.

the state of depression? Will the other Dewsbury manufacturers, and those in the adjoining districts, move in the same direction? What will be the reaction at Witney? If the large manufacturers push up wage costs will this give marked advantages to the smaller clothiers who work on own account?

These seem to be the sort of questions which were probably passing through his mind at this time, unless the evidence of the two extracts above is to be dismissed as a polite explaining away of the failure to act fairly in this issue, but such a view would not be compatible with the honesty of business conduct which is so voluminously and consistently indicated throughout the whole of Cook's correspondence. It is more likely that his views on this problem were strongly influenced by the high degree of competitiveness which prevailed in the industry in which he was engaged, and by his natural tendency to take the pessimistic outlook as
(1)
to the future state of trade.

Although Cook was always mindful of the competitiveness of the small clothiers, especially in times of weakening

(1) This pessimism which is not uncharacteristic of business men generally, seems to be very typical of those entrepreneurs who work with wool. cf. H. Heaton, 'An Early Victorian Business Forecaster ...', pp. 553-74.

demand, he appears to have regarded them in much the same way as Benjamin Gott did. He conceived of them as occupying a complementary position in the trade to that of the large manufacturers. He appears also to have held the opinion that the industry, and society in general, was improved by the presence of a large number of small-scale, independent 'businesses' of this kind. He was usually ready to assist the clothiers in their manufacturing and marketing operations by making their views known to the authorities or by providing financial assistance to them in schemes for the benefit of the trade. Two examples may be cited. In 1841, Cook was making representations to the Manchester and Leeds Railroad Company:

... this neighbourhood is studded with multitudes of small makers whose whole property may not, nor does, average £100 and to whom this conveyance would be a convenience. Seven o'clock would do for them for Leeds market, nine would not ... (1)

Four years earlier, Cook had played a leading part in the establishment of a Blanket Hall at Dewsbury. We have already noted the origin and development of an earlier and similar institution at Heckmondwike, ⁽²⁾ but in 1836 - a year of brisk trade - some dissatisfaction with that market had

(1) Thos. Cook to Mr. Jellicose, Secretary to the Manchester and Leeds Railroad Company, Manchester, 29 May 1841.

(2) See above, p. 234.

been expressed by the small blankets makers in the Earlsheaton district who found travelling to Heckmondwike a time-consuming and inconvenient distraction. Thomas Cook 'on account of application from the Earlsheaton makers ... warmly advocated and subscribed freely to the erection' of the Dewsbury Blanket Hall which was opened with due ceremony in April 1837. (1)

On Wednesday last the new Cloth Hall and Blanket Market at Dewsbury was opened for the sale of druggets, flushings, paddings, blankets and other descriptions of woollen goods manufactured in Dewsbury and the neighbourhood, on which occasion a great variety of goods were shown and several purchases made. After the market ... about 200 persons sat down to a most excellent dinner. Thos. Cook, Esq. presided, supported ... by E. Hague, Jonathan Tweedale, and most of the influential gentlemen, manufacturers and tradesmen in the town and neighbourhood. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed throughout, the manufacturers and merchants pledging themselves to support the market to the utmost of their power. (2)

Two months later it was noted of this new venture that:

(1) There is no record in Cook's personal accounts of any sum paid in respect of this subscription. The cost of the buildings and equipping of the Hall was met by the sale of shares, but no evidence survives of the shareholding arrangements which were made at the time. I am indebted to the Directors of the firm of Machell Brothers and Company, Cloth Hall Mills, Dewsbury, for kindly allowing me to inspect their legal records in connection with this particular enquiry.

(2) Leeds Intelligencer, 15 April 1837.

We think, ere long, this market will answer very well, both for merchants and manufacturers, the situation being so very central. (1)

These hopes were not realised, however, and sometime in 1842 the Dewsbury Hall was closed and later converted to other uses. (2) Thomas Cook's efforts in this direction were thwarted by two main forces. In the first instance, the project aroused the hostility of the Heckmondwike manufacturers who built themselves a new Blanket Hall which was opened in 1840, and also refused to vary their market days so that 'the injudicious division of the Blanket Trade ... by the holding of two markets on the same day' (3) might be avoided. Secondly, by the time that the Dewsbury Hall had begun to function with efficiency the state of trade had changed from boom to slump and, in these circumstances, it must have been difficult to form new trading connections and commercial practices. By the time that the demand for blankets had revived in the mid-1840s, the railway developments in the Dewsbury district had begun to stimulate the by-passing of the Leeds merchants in blanket marketing and the project was

(1) Leeds Mercury, 8 July 1837.

(2) The premises finally passed into the hands of Machell Brothers and Company who converted the buildings into 'Cloth Hall Mills' in the 1870s.

(3) Hagues, Cook and Wormald to John Barnes, Leeds, 7 Feb. 1840.

never again revived. But the lack of success which attended Thomas Cook's endeavours in this project must be ascribed, therefore, largely to errors of timing rather than errors of judgement, for although he was sufficiently percipient to observe during the boom of 1836 that 'we shall have a panic inevitably', ⁽¹⁾ he could not be expected to know how severe the depression of business would be during the succeeding six years.

Cook was a very religious man and he recorded in his diary:

At Wakefield this day at our Oratorio in the Church, the Messiah much gratifying. (2)

And:

Dewsbury Church in the morning, Chapel at night. (3)

But perhaps the most revealing of the remarks in his diary is the note that:

I this day completed by 33rd year and on looking back through my life I find very little which affords me real satisfaction in reflection on my conduct, and a great deal to condemn. I pray God that I may spend the remaining portion of my life more profitably. (4)

(1) Thos. Cook to T.B. Cawood, Dublin, 10 April 1836.

(2) Thos. Cook, Diary, 29 Sept. 1819.

(3) Thos. Cook, Diary, 10 Dec. 1820.

(4) Thos. Cook, Diary, 3 April 1820.

Cook was very attached to the local community at Thornhill Lees and it was a matter of some regret to him that the Thornhill residents and himself should have to journey (1) into Dewsbury town to attend Church. He finally resolved this difficulty in 1858 when, with the assistance of his partners and their families, he provided the bulk of the finance necessary for the building of a local church, parsonage and school, and provided an endowment fund. The details of this expenditure were recorded in one of the firm's private ledgers and of the total cost of £13,464, Thomas Cook and his associates paid £11,451. (2)

Thomas Cook spent half a century at Dewsbury Mills in extremely active partnership with the Hagues and the Wormalds. During this time he saw the firm's assets - in the form of partners' invested capital - quadruple in value from £50,000 to £200,000 and the annual average profits increase from

- (1) His local pride in Thornhill led him, in 1861, to oppose the application for the incorporation of Dewsbury as a borough. There were 469 other opposers. cf. Report of the proceedings held at the County Court, Dewsbury, in November, 1861, in reference to the Incorporation of Dewsbury, (Dewsbury, 1862), p. 37.
- (2) Hagues, Cook and Wormald, Private Ledger, 1854-70, pp. 338-42. The Wormald family also spent approximately £10,000 on the rebuilding of the Parish Church at Birstall during the period 1865-70. cf. H.C. Cradock, A History of the Ancient Parish of Birstall, (1933), pp. 93-4.

£1,500 to £16,000. He was instrumental in introducing the power loom and new modes of spinning at the Mills and he played an energetic part in developing cotton-warped fabrics in the 'forties. He would never, however, have much to do with the use of shoddy, although he watched the rapid development of this trade in the Dewsbury-Batley area at first hand.

... there are plenty of blankets made by small manufacturers in our neighbourhood and sold to the Leeds merchants which are composed of half waste and rubbings - we do not pretend to compete with such goods as ours are made of honest, sound wool. (1)

He lived through a full and eventful period from the point of view of the woollen manufacture and the trade in woollen fabrics, and his entrepreneurial decisions and behaviour can be seen against the industrial background provided in chapters I and II of this work. He was involved in the difficulties of establishing the enterprise during the post-1815 period and in the 'twenties he was engaged in the export drive of those years in the United States and South American markets. In the 'thirties and the 'forties he was consolidating his factory organisation against a background of boom and depression, whilst in the 'fifties he was facing an expanding market at home and overseas which necessitated

(1) Thos. Cook to Henry Lyons, Sligo, 12 Dec. 1840.

the adaptation of the firm's organisation, and to some extent of its products, to meet the enlarged flow of orders.

It may well be that Cook would have welcomed the assistance of a number of sons in his work at Dewsbury Mills, but we have seen that his family was predominantly female and his only son arrived late in Cook's life. Thomas was in his forty-fifth year when Thomas Hague Cook was born and by the time that the latter was considered ready to enter the business at the age of twenty-three years, Thomas Cook was in his late 'sixties. Fortunately, however, the Cooks were so inter-related with the Hagues and the Wormalds that there was never any shortage of interested and capable recruits from these families able to join the partnership when death or retirement threatened to weaken the business efficiency of the enterprise. This inter-connection with the Hagues and the Wormalds also provided other sources of strength. The tradition of merchanting which characterised the former and the long association with banking of the latter family, related to the organisational and manufacturing skill which Cook seems to have quickly acquired, provided a combination of forces which was not easily brushed aside in the struggle for markets and the quest for profits.

Thomas Cook's health seems to have stood up extremely well to the strain of fifty years of blanket-making and marketing and there are few complaints from him on this subject

in the correspondence books. In 1843 he observed that he had 'lost a lot of weight the last twelve months' which necessitated ordering a 'new suit of black cloth' ⁽¹⁾ and in the following year he informed Thomas Hague that:

My health is infirm - it is now four years since it began to get so much worse - and while I am for days together comparatively well, I am suddenly otherwise ... (2)

This indisposition, which was the result of his being afflicted by asthma, does not seem to have ever seriously incapacitated him for any substantial period of time, although he occasionally escaped for 'a few days' to stay with 'Mr. Sandwith at Scarborough.' ⁽³⁾

From 1844 until his death in 1861 at the age of 74 years, Cook made no further reference to his condition other than the occasional comment of his 'want of rest'. It is characteristic of his attention to business that he should have been 'twice at work' on the day he died and it is probable that his death was precipitated by the loss of a favourite daughter in a tragic accident a few weeks ⁽⁴⁾ previously.

(1) Thos. Cook to Mr. Stubbs, Manchester, 16 Feb. 1843.

(2) Thos. Cook to Thomas Hague, Wakefield, 31 July 1844.

(3) Sandwith was a woolstapler with whom Thomas Cook had formed a very close attachment in the early 'twenties.

(4) 'Mrs. John Wormald, daughter of Thos. Cook, killed in endeavouring to jump from her runaway coach near Tadcaster - her husband escaped with his life, 19 April 1861' Leeds Mercury, 23 April 1861

Thomas Cook died on the 16 of May 1861, a few weeks after he had been elected as the first President of the newly formed Dewsbury Chamber of Commerce. In the previous year it had been possible for a local historian to record:

Dewsbury is in a most thriving and improving condition, and has bright and encouraging prospects for the future. (1)

And in the following year another writer was able to say that:

There has been a very surprising increase in the number of mills, manufactories and dwelling houses ... in Dewsbury ... during the last twenty years... (2)

This economic progress was not unrelated to the private and public activities of Cook and his partners at Dewsbury Mills, and although there is always the danger for the business historian of taking an 'heroic' view of the particular business leader whose affairs he is analysing, this writer finds it hard not to accept the view expressed by Cook's obituary writer that 'his manner of doing business had won the esteem of all who knew him.' (3)

Thomas Cook did not live to face the problems which confronted the woollen industry in the last quarter of the

(1) Jubb, op. cit., pp. 120-1.

(2) Report of the proceedings ... in reference to the Incorporation of Dewsbury, p. 25.

(3) Leeds Intelligencer, 18 May 1861.

nineteenth century and which have been reviewed above in chapter III. Nor did he survive to see the great contraction in the American market for Yorkshire blankets which set in a few years after the enactment of the Morrill Tariff. But he left the enterprise with a good productive organisation,⁽¹⁾ a well-established connection with home and foreign customers, and a reputation for excellence of manufacture and service at competitive prices. These attributes were to stand the firm in good stead during the economic strains of the 'seventies and 'eighties. In one respect, however, he might have been more energetic and more long-sighted. We have noted the peculiar problems created by the divorce of ownership of the premises at Dewsbury Mills from the direct control of the partners. It was difficult to plan the orderly physical expansion of the firm under these conditions and Cook ran into special difficulties of this kind, as we have already seen, in the mid-1840s and the late 1850s.⁽²⁾ It is difficult to understand why Cook did not initiate plans to gain control of the Dewsbury Mills Estate, and the fact that he did not do so must be regarded as one of his entrepreneurial errors.

(1) In 1861 the partners had 363 business correspondents.

(2) See above, chap. VI.

It may be argued in mitigation of Cook's omission in this important aspect of the firm's affairs that his lack of action did not have serious repercussions on the future progress of the enterprise, in so far as his son, Thomas Hague Cook, later became the proprietor as well as being a partner at Dewsbury Mills. But this development, beneficial as it was to the provision of new premises in the 'seventies, was not as favourable as it would have been if the partners had owned their land and property in the 'forties or the 'fifties. If this latter condition had ruled, the growth of the firm's physical capital would have proceeded more rationally and more smoothly and it might have proved possible to avoid the scattering of the firm's productive processes over three different locations. (1)

(1) It may be arguable that the firm had reached an optimum managerial size at Dewsbury Mills by the end of the 'sixties and that there would thus have been a similar disposition of productive capacity by the partners in any case, but the general available evidence would seem to sustain the points made above.

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