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SEPARATE REPORT

BY THE

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

PART I.—THE DESTITUTION OF THE NON-ABLE-BODIED.

CHAPTER I.—The General Mixed Workhouse of To-day - - - 726

(A) The Promiscuity of the General Mixed Workhouse—(B) The Unspecialised Management of the General Mixed Workhouse—(C) The Universal Condemnation of the General Mixed Workhouse—(D) Why the General Mixed Workhouse has continued to exist.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 738

CHAPTER II.—The Outdoor Relief of To-day - - - - - - - - - - 739

(A) Local By-laws as to Outdoor Relief—(B) The Practice as to Outdoor Relief—(C) The Cause of the Failure of the Present Administration of Outdoor Relief—(i.) The Destitution Officer—(ii.) The Many-Headed Tribunal—(D) The Scotch Inspector of Poor—(E) The Suggested Abolition of Outdoor Relief—(F) The Substitution of Charity for Outdoor Relief.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 769

CHAPTER III.—Birth and Infancy - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 772

(A) The Provision for Birth and Infancy made by the Destitution Authority—(i.) Domiciliary Treatment of Expectant Mothers and Mothers with Infants—(ii.) The Workhouse as Maternity Hospital—(iii.) The Workhouse as Infant Nursery—(B) Voluntary Agencies for Providing for Birth and Infancy—(i.) Rescue Homes—(ii.) Maternity Hospitals—(iii.) Domiciliary Midwifery Agencies—(iv.) Day Nurseries—(v.) Infant Asylums—(vi.) The Insufficiency of the Voluntary Agencies—(C) The Supervision of Birth and Infancy by the Local Health Authority—(i.) Provision of Midwifery—(ii.) Provision of Hygienic or Medical Advice—(iii.) Provision of Milk—(D) The Need for a Unified Service dealing with Birth and Infancy.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 799

CHAPTER IV.—Children under Rival Authorities - - - - - - - - - - 801

(A) Children under the Destitution Authority—(i.) "Boarding-out within the Union"—(ii.) Boarding-out in Scotland, and "Boarding-out without the Union" in England and Wales—(iii.) Certified Schools and Institutions—(iv.) Scattered Homes—(v.) The Boarding School of the Destitution Authority—(vi.) The Receiving Home—(vii.) Children of Unfit Parents—(a) The "Ins-and-Outs"—(b) The Children of Vagrants—(c) The Abandoned Child—(d) The Assumption of Parentage—(B) Children under the Police Authority—(C) Children under the Education Authority—(i.) Medical Inspection and Treatment—(ii.) School Feeding—(D) The Failure of the Destitution Authority to relieve Child Destitution—(E) The Supersession of the Destitution Authority by the Local Education Authority.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 843

CHAPTER V.—The Curative Treatment of the Sick by Rival Authorities - - - - - 846

(A) The Medical Service of the Poor Law—(B) Domiciliary Medical Treatment under the Poor Law—(C) The Restriction of Domiciliary Medical Treatment—(D) The Hospital Branch of the Poor Law—(E) The Defects of the Poor Law Medical Service traced to their root—(F) The Treatment of the Sick by Voluntary Agencies—(G) The Treatment of the Sick by the Public Health Authorities—(i.) Municipal Hospitals—(ii.) Notification and Disinfection—(iii.) Supply of Medicines and Anti-Toxin—(iv.) Municipal Out-patients' Departments—(v.) Pediculosis and Scabies—(vi.) Health Visiting—(vii.) Municipal Home Nursing—(viii.) Diagnosis—(ix.) Home Aliment—(x.)—The Characteristics of the Public Health Authority's Treatment of Disease—(H) The Need for a Unified Medical Service.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 889

CHAPTER VI.—The Mentally Defective - - - - - - - - - - - - 891

(A) The Rival Authorities for the Mentally Defective—(B) The Mentally Defective under the Poor Law—(C) The Mentally Defective under the Local Lunacy Authorities—(D) The Recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded—(E) The Withdrawal of the Mentally Defective from the Poor Law.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 897

PAGE

CHAPTER VII.—The Aged and Infirm - - - - - - - - - - - - 899

(A) The Three Policies of the Destitution Authority—(B) The Aged and Infirm under the Destitution Authority of to-day—(C) The Establishment of National Pension Scheme—(D) The Need for Diversified Provision for the Aged and Infirm—(i.) The National Pensioners—(ii.) Provision for Persons ineligible for National Pensions—(iii.) The Helpless Aged—(v.) The Infirm and Permanently Incapacitated under Pension Age.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 926

CHAPTER VIII.—Charge and Recovery by Local Authorities - - - - - - - 928

(A) Charge and Recovery by the Destitution Authority—(i.) Contributions by Relations—(ii.) The Device of Relief on Loan—(B) Charge and Recovery by the Public Health Authority—(C) Charge and Recovery for the Maintenance of Children by the Education Authority and the Police Authority—(D) The Need for Uniformity of Principle and Judicial Adjudication in Personal Assessments.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 947

CHAPTER IX.—Settlement and Removal - - - - - - - - - - - - 948

(A) The Game of "General Post"—(B) The Proposal to abolish Settlement and Removal—(C) The Provisions necessary in a Reformed Administration—(i.) Safeguards for the Local Health Authority—(ii.) Safeguards for the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective—(iii.) Safeguards for the Local Education Authority.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 952

CHAPTER X.—Grants-in-Aid - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 953

(A) England and Wales outside the Metropolis—(i.) The Relief to the Local Ratepayers—(ii.) Discrimination in favour of desirable Expenditure—(iii.) Giving authority to Central Control—(B) The Metropolis—(i.) The Relief to the Local Ratepayers—(ii.) Discrimination in favour of desirable Expenditure—(iii.) Giving authority to Central Control—(C) Scotland—(i.) The Relief to the Local Ratepayers—(ii.) Discrimination in favour of desirable Expenditure—(iii.) Giving authority to Central Control—(D) Ireland—(i.) The Relief to the Local Ratepayers—(ii.) Discrimination in favour of desirable expenditure—(iii.) Giving authority to Central Control—(E) What should be the terms of the National Subvention—(i.) It should be a Grant, not merely an Assignment of Revenue—(ii.) It should be dependent on Local Efficiency—(iii.) It should be applied to definite deliberately selected services—(iv.) It should be conditional—(v.) It should be based on a Scale of Distribution according to Need and Ability.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 976

CHAPTER XI.—Supervision and Control by the National Government - - - - - 977

(A) The Orders—(B) Audit—(C) A Court of Appeal—(D) The Inspectorate—(E) The Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board—(F) The Need for Specialised Central Control.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 997

CHAPTER XII.—THE SCHEME OF REFORM - - - - - - - - - - - - 999

(A) Schemes that we have rejected—(i.) The Continuance of a Denuded Destitution Authority alongside of other Local Authorities providing for the Poor—(ii.) The Monopoly of Public Assistance by a Deterrent Destitution Authority—(iii.) The Extension of Public Assistance by a Disguised and Swollen Poor Law—(B) THE SCHEME WE RECOMMEND—(i.)—The Supersession of the Destitution Authority—(ii.) The Distribution of the Services of the Destitution Authority—(a) The Duties to be transferred to the Local Education Authorities—(b) The Duties to be transferred to the Local Health Authorities—(c) The Duties to be transferred to the Local Pension Committees—(d) The Duties to be transferred to the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective—(iii.) New Machinery for the Co-ordination of Public Assistance—(a) The Registrar of Public Assistance—(b) The Public Register—(c) Charge and Recovery—(d) Sanction of Home Aliment—(e) The Registrar's Receiving House for Omitted Cases (f) The Registrar as National Pension Officer—(g) The *status* of the Registrar—(C) The Conditions of Eligibility for Public Assistance—(D) Disfranchisement—(E) The Sphere of Voluntary Agencies—(F) The Practical Application of the Scheme—(i.) The Rural Counties—(ii.) The Metropolis—(iii.) Scotland—(iv.) Ireland—(v.) The Departments of the National Government—(G) Some Theoretical Objections answered—(i.) The Integrity of the Family—(ii.) The Withdrawal of the Destitution Officer—(iii.) The Economy of Efficient Administration—(iv.) The Right to Relief.

Summary of Proposals - - - - - - - - - - - - 1031

PAGE

PART II.—THE DESTITUTION OF THE ABLE-BODIED.

CHAPTER I.—The Able-bodied under the Poor Law - - - - - - - - - 1,036

(A) The Persistence of Outdoor Relief—(i.) Sudden or Urgent Necessity—(ii.) Reported Exceptions—(iii.) Going Out to look for Work—(iv.) Are Women Able-bodied?—(B) The Outdoor Labour Test—(C) The General Mixed Workhouse as an Asylum for Able-bodied Men—(D) The Able-bodied Test Workhouse—(i.) Poplar—(ii.) Kensington—(iii.) Birmingham—(iv.) Manchester and Chorlton—(v.) Sheffield—(vi.) Compulsory Detention—(vii.) Summary of Objections to the Maintenance of a Penal Establishment by a Destitution Authority—(E) The Casual Ward—(i.) The Casual's Free Hotel—(ii.) The Casual's Prison—(iii.) The Unwarded Vagrant—(iv.) Who are the Casuals?—(v.) The Dilemma of the Casual Ward—(vi.) The Need for more Prolonged and more Specialised Treatment—(F) The Able-bodied in the Scottish Poorhouses.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1,093

CHAPTER II.—The Able-bodied and Voluntary Agencies - - - - - - - - 1,095

(A) Emergency Funds—(B) Voluntary Relief Works—(C) Shelters and Labour Homes—(D) The Undermining of a Penal Poor Law by Voluntary Agencies.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1,101

CHAPTER III.—The Able-bodied under the Unemployed Workmen Act - - - - 1,102

(A) The Provision of Work at Wages by the Municipal Authorities, 1886–1905—(B) The Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905—(C) The Distress Committees—(D) Rural Colonies—(E) The Labour Exchange—(F) Paying the Cost of Removal—(G) The Inadequacy of the Unemployed Workmen Act.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1,129

CHAPTER IV.—The Distress from Unemployment as it Exists To-day - - - - - 1,131

(A) Class I.—The Men from Permanent Situations—(B) Class II.—The Men of Discontinuous Employment—(i.) The Operatives of the Building Trades—(ii.) The Public Works Men—(iii.) Existing Agencies dealing with the Men of Discontinuous Employment—(C) Class III.—The Under-Employed—(i.) The Casual Labourer—(ii.) The Fringe of Casuals about the Skilled Trades—(iii.) The Under-Employment of Declining Trades—(iv.) The Social Evil of Under-Employment—(v.) The Swamping of the Distress Committee by the Under-Employed—(vi.) Under-Employment the Main Cause of Pauperism—(vii.) The Cause of the Constant Existence of an Under-Employed Class—(viii.) Existing Agencies dealing with the Under-Employed—(D) Are Women Unemployed?—(E) Class IV.—The Unemployable—(i.) The Daily Manufacture of the Unemployable—(ii.) The Wife and Mother as Breadwinner—(iii.) The Misuse of Boy Labour—(iv.) The Alleged Exclusion of the Elderly—(v.) Raising the Standard of Efficiency—(vi.) Existing Agencies dealing with the Unemployable—(F) Character and Unemployment—(G) The Need for a National Authority for all Sections of the Unemployed.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1,177

CHAPTER V.—Proposals for Reform - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1,179

(A) The National Labour Exchange—(i.) The Experience of Germany—(ii.) The Experience of London—(iii.) The Experience of the Seamen's Labour Exchange—(iv.) The Functions of the Labour Exchange—(a) The Labour Exchange and the Men from Permanent Situations—(b) The Labour Exchange and the Men of Discontinuous Employment—(c) The Labour Exchange and the Seasonal Trades—(d) The Labour Exchange and the Under-Employed—(e) The Labour Exchange and the Suppression of Vagrancy—(i.) The Labour Exchange as a Method of enforcing Personal Responsibility—(B) The Absorption of the Surplus—(i.) The Halving of Boy and Girl Labour—(ii.) The Reduction of the Hours of Labour of Railway and Tramway Servants—(iii.) The Withdrawal from Industrial Wage-Earning of the Mothers of Young Children—(C) The Regularisation of the National Demand for Labour—(D) The Provision for the Unemployed—(i.) Trade Union Insurance—(ii.) Maintenance under Training—(E) The Ministry of Labour—(i.) The Minister for Labour—(ii.) The National Labour Exchange—(iii.) The Trade Insurance Division—(iv.) The Industrial Regulation Division—(v.) The Emigration and Immigration Division—(vi.) The Statistical Division—(vii.) The Maintenance and Training Division—(F) "Utopian?"

Summary of Proposals - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1,215

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations of Parts I. and II. - - - - - - 1,218

INTRODUCTION.

We find ourselves unable to agree with the Report of the majority of our colleagues. Our reasons will be plain when we have stated the facts as they have been revealed to us by the investigations, and set forth the reforms which, in our opinion, these facts irresistibly demand.

PART I.

THE DESTITUTION OF THE NON-ABLE-BODIED.

The Poor Law is at the present time only to a small extent concerned with the man who is able-bodied. The various sections of the non-able-bodied—the children, the sick, the mentally defective, and the aged and infirm—make up to-day nine-tenths of the persons relieved by the Destitution Authorities. In Scotland indeed, no other persons can lawfully receive Poor Law relief. In England and Wales, though persons in distress from want of employment may be relieved under the Poor Law, and have, at times, loomed large in Poor Law statistics, this section now forms only a small fraction of the pauper population. In Ireland the position is essentially the same as in England.

CHAPTER I.

The General Mixed Workhouse of To-day.

The Poor Law Report of 1834 was concerned, almost exclusively, with the problem of Able-bodied Destitution; that is to say, with the case of the labouring man unable, through unemployment or under-payment, to maintain himself and his family. The one positive recommendation with regard to the children and the aged that can be extracted from the Report is the repeated demand that, where these classes are provided for in institutions, they must be, not in a single "mixed" institution, however perfect might be the nominal classification, but in entirely separate buildings, with distinct rules and arrangements, and under quite independent management. Nothing can be stronger than the condemnation in the Report of the General Mixed Workhouse, whether large or small, old or newly designed for its purpose. The Assistant Commissioners had found, in the great majority of parishes, the Workhouse "occupied by sixty or eighty paupers, made up of a dozen or more neglected children (under the care, perhaps, of a pauper), about twenty or thirty able-bodied adult paupers of both sexes, and probably an equal number of aged and impotent persons, proper objects of relief. Amidst these the mother of bastard children and prostitutes live without shame. . . . To these may often be added a solitary blind person, one or two idiots, and not infrequently are heard, from among the rest, the incessant ravings of some neglected lunatic. In such receptacles the sick poor are often immured." On account of the inevitable association of the different classes, even the largest and best designed General Mixed Workhouses were equally condemned. "Even in the larger Workhouses," continues the Report, "internal sub-divisions do not afford the means of classification, where the inmates dine in the same rooms, or meet or see each other in the ordinary business of the place. In the largest houses, containing from 800 to 1,000 inmates, where there is comparatively good order, and in many respects, superior management, it is almost impossible to prevent the formation and extension of vicious connections. Inmates who see each other, though prevented from communicating in the house, often become associates when they meet out of it. It is found almost impracticable to subject all the various classes within the same house to an appropriate treatment. One part of a class of adults often so closely resembles a part of another class, as to make any distinction in treatment appear arbitrary and capricious to those who are placed in the inferior class, and to create discontents, which the existing authority is too feeble to suppress, and so much complexity as to render the object attainable only by great additional expense and remarkable skill." Hence, stated the Report, "at least four classes are necessary, the aged and really impotent, the children, the able-bodied females, the able-bodied males," for each of which distinct institutions were to be provided. "Each class," continues the Report, "might thus receive an appropriate treatment; the old might enjoy their indulgences without torment from the boisterous; the children be educated; and the able-bodied subjected to such courses of labour and discipline as will repel the indolent and vicious."*

We regret to have to report that, notwithstanding the distinct and emphatic recommendations of the Report of 1834, to which it is commonly assumed that Parliament gave a general endorsement by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, the General Mixed Workhouse has not been abolished. In the course of the past half-century, a certain

* Report of Poor Law Commission of 1834, pp. 303, 306, 307 of the 1905 Edition.

number of specialised institutions, such as Poor Law Schools and Poor Law Infirmaries, to be hereafter described, have been established for the children and the sick of certain districts. But every one of the Unions of England, Wales and Ireland, and now a large number of parishes or combinations of parishes of Scotland, has its General Mixed Workhouse; and the great majority of the non-able-bodied poor for whom institutional treatment is provided are still to be found intermingled with the able-bodied men and women in these institutions. Of the 50,000 children who are in Poor Law Institutions in England and Wales, there are still 15,000 living actually inside General Mixed Workhouses.* We found that in Scotland, where it is commonly assumed that the Poor Law children are either boarded-out or maintained upon Outdoor Relief, there were 1845 children in the General Mixed Workhouses, or not far short of as many in proportion to population as in England itself.† In Ireland, out of 9,000 children maintained in Poor Law Institutions, no fewer than 8,000 are in the General Mixed Workhouses, where their condition is the worse in that they do not even go out to the public elementary day school, but are taught on the Workhouse premises. Nor is it otherwise with the sick and the aged. Of the uncounted host of inmates of Poor Law Institutions who are so sick or infirm as to need nursing or medical attendance—estimated to number in the United Kingdom at least 130,000—more than two-thirds are in General Mixed Workhouses. Of the 140,000 persons over sixty in Poor Law Institutions, only a thousand or two in England and Scotland, and none at all in Ireland, are in the separate establishments recommended by the Report of 1834, where "the old might enjoy their indulgences without torment from the boisterous." Commingled with this mass of non-able-bodied or dependent poor there may be found, in all the Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland, and in the Poorhouses of Scotland, a number of men and women in health and in the prime of life—termed "able-bodied" in England, Wales and Ireland, and "tests" or "turn-outs" in Scotland ‡—who are scarcely capable, from physical or mental defects, of earning a continuous livelihood. In the mammoth establishments of London, Glasgow, Liverpool, Dublin, and Belfast we found even a considerable number of really able-bodied and mentally competent men and women, who are "work-shy" or merely unemployed through misfortune—some of them being chronic "Ins and outs," or, as the Scotch say, "week-enders," who, whilst they add comparatively little to the official statistics of indoor pauperism, are a perpetual cause of demoralisation of the other inmates. In fact, the General Mixed Workhouse, including all classes of destitute persons, far from having been abolished, forms to-day the basis of the whole system of Poor Relief in England and Wales; it has, within the last century, spread over all Ireland; and we even see it, during the past decade, growing up in its worst forms in Scotland, which had formerly been free from its baneful influence.

(A) The Promiscuity of the General Mixed Workhouse.

We see no reason to differ from our predecessors, the Royal Commissioners of 1834, in their decisive condemnation of the General Mixed Workhouse. We do not wish to suggest or imply that the workhouses of to-day are places of cruelty; or that their 250,000 inmates are subjected to any deliberate ill-treatment. These institutions are, in nearly all cases, clean and sanitary; and the food, clothing and warmth are sufficient—sometimes more than sufficient—to maintain the inmates in physiological health. In some cases, indeed, the buildings recently erected in the Metropolis and elsewhere, have been

* Our Children's Investigator reports that the children living "in Workhouses are not diminishing in number, having remained between 21,000 and 22,000 for some years. Of these, 565 children of school age are still being taught in schools within the Workhouses, the remainder (of school age) being sent to Public Elementary Schools" (Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 2). A certain proportion of these children are in separate Poor Law infirmaries, which are officially classed as Workhouses. The exact figures, as revealed by the Commission's Census of Paupers on March 31st, 1906, were, for children under sixteen, in the ordinary wards of Workhouses, 14,439; in the sick wards, 4,119; in Poor Law infirmaries, 3,149.

† The Census of Paupers taken by the Commission showed that on March 31st, 1906, there were, in Scotland, 1,845 children under sixteen, simultaneously in the Poorhouses, and in Ireland, 9,148 on Indoor Relief (not yet in volume form). *See also* House of Commons Return No. 284 of 1907.

‡ It must be remembered that, in the official terminology of English and Irish Workhouses, the term "able-bodied" is applied practically to all men and women under sixty years of age who are not in the sick wards, or on special diet. The halt, the lame and the blind, the man with only one arm or only one leg, the sane epileptic and the feeble-minded may be all included as "able-bodied." In the Poorhouses of Scotland, where it is against the law to relieve any able-bodied man, the corresponding class includes, as we have ascertained by special medical inspection, exactly the same kind of persons as those who in English Workhouses are termed "able-bodied" (Report on the Physical Condition of the Able-bodied Male Inmates of Certain Scotch Poorhouses and English Workhouses and Labour Yards, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, p. 14).

not incorrectly described, alike for the elaborateness of the architecture and the sumptuousness of the internal fittings, as "palaces" for paupers. In many other places, on the other hand, the old and straggling premises still in use, even in some of the largest Unions, are hideous in their bareness and squalor. But whether new or old, urban or rural, large or small, sumptuous or squalid, these establishments exhibit the same inherent defects. We do not ignore the zeal and devotion by means of which an exceptionally good Master and Matron, under an exceptionally enlightened committee, here and there, for a brief period, succeed in mitigating, or even in counteracting, the evil tendencies of a general mixed institution. But these evil tendencies, exactly as they were noted by the Commissioners of 1834, are always at work; and sooner or later they have prevailed, in every Union of which we have investigated the history. After visiting personally Workhouses of all types, new and old, large and small, in town and country, in England and Wales, in Scotland and Ireland, we find that the descriptions of the Workhouses of 1834, so far as we have quoted them above, might be applied, word for word, to many of the Workhouses of to-day. The dominant note of these institutions of to-day, as it was of those of 1834, is their promiscuity. We have ourselves seen, in the larger Workhouses, the male and female inmates, not only habitually dining in the same room in each other's presence, but even working individually, men and women together, in laundries and kitchens; and enjoying in the open yards and long corridors * innumerable opportunities to make each other's acquaintance. It is, we find, in these large establishments, a common occurrence for assignations to be made by the inmates of different sexes, as to spending together the "day out," or as to simultaneously taking their temporary discharge as "Ins and Outs." It has not surprised us to be informed that female inmates of these great establishments have been known to bear offspring to male inmates and thus increase the burden on the Poor Rate. No less distressing has it been to discover a continuous intercourse, which we think must be injurious, between young and old, innocent and hardened. In the female dormitories and day-rooms women of all ages, and of the most varied characters and conditions, necessarily associate together, without any kind of constraint on their mutual intercourse. There are no separate bedrooms; there are not even separate cubicles. The young servant out of place, the prostitute recovering from disease, the feeble-minded woman of any age, the girl with her first baby, the unmarried mother coming in to be confined of her third or fourth bastard, the senile, the paralytic, the epileptic, the respectable deserted wife, the widow to whom Outdoor Relief has been refused, are all herded indiscriminately together.† We have found respectable old women annoyed, by day and by night, by the presence of noisy and dirty imbeciles.‡

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* In the large General Mixed Workhouse of a leading provincial town, one of our Committees noted that "Until quite recently, the pauper women scrubbed and cleaned all the men's quarters; now the latter clean one floor. The feeble-minded women do much of this cleaning and scrubbing, and consequently are more in contact with the men than is advisable." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 22 E., p. 53.)

† In a Union celebrated for its good administration, one of our Committees found the Workhouse, though clean and otherwise well-managed, more than usually "mixed." "There is very little attempt at classification in the Workhouse. The imbeciles and epileptics are scattered about amongst the other inmates, and there seemed to be no classification according to character. . . . Two features particularly struck us; first, the number of children in the house, eighteen girls and twenty-nine boys; and second, the fact that cases of infectious disease are treated inside, and are not removed outside the house to any isolation hospital. . . . The number of confinement cases has lately been unusually large" (*Ibid.*, No. 64, p. 132). In another Workhouse of a large provincial town in 1907, "we saw," notes another of our Committees, "the able-bodied women coming from dinner; there are a large number of them, and imbecile sane, epileptics are all together" (*Ibid.*, No. 24 D., p. 65). In one Union, reports our Children's Investigator, "the sleeping accommodation consists of a dormitory furnished with beds and cots; this is used for all the girls, the boys under eight, and the nursing mothers. Thus girls up to sixteen share a room with the mothers of illegitimate babies. This is, I consider, a very serious matter." (Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 107.) This is no exceptional case. Of another Union, the same lady reports that: "A large dormitory contains sixteen beds and some cots. Here sleep all the younger children, including babies. Nursing mothers also sleep here in beds beside the babies' cots. . . . Thus, little boys and girls share a room with the mothers of illegitimate children, an undesirable condition enough. . . . There is also a small dormitory containing eight beds for the older girls. These two are separated from each other by a passage." (*Ibid.*, p. 107.)

‡ In one South Country Workhouse, the 394 inmates included, at the date of our Committee's visit, 32 able-bodied men, 47 able-bodied women, 163 non-able-bodied men, 120 non-able-bodied women, 14 boys and girls, and 18 infants, among them all being no fewer than 47 certified lunatics, 6 certified epileptics, 7 sane epileptics, and 10 "observation cases." "The certified and uncertified female imbeciles are in the same ward with a few old troublesome women. There are four sane epileptics in the same ward. There is no special sick ward for these persons, and they are taken to the infirmary when they fall ill. . . . During the day the mothers visit the infants every two hours. . . . A number of able-bodied men were wandering aimlessly about the airing yard, no work of any sort being provided for them." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 54, pp. 107–8.)

"Idiots who are physically offensive or mischievous, or so noisy as to create a disturbance by day and by night with their howls, are often found in Workhouses mixing with others both in the sick wards and in the body of the house." * We have ourselves seen, in one large Workhouse, pregnant women who have come in to be confined, compelled to associate day and night, and to work side by side with half-witted imbeciles and women so physically deformed as to be positively repulsive to look upon. In the smaller country Workhouses, though the promiscuity is numerically less extensive, and, in some respects, of less repulsive character, the very smallness of the numbers makes any segregation of classes even more impracticable than in the larger establishments. A large proportion of these Workhouses have, for instance, no separate sick ward for children,† and, in spite of the ravages of measles, etc., not even a quarantine ward for the constant stream of newcomers.‡ Accordingly, in the sick wards of the smaller Workhouses, with no constraint on mutual intercourse, we have more than once seen young children in bed with minor ailments, next to women of bad character under treatment for contagious disease, whilst other women, in the same ward, were in advanced stages of cancer and senile decay.§ Our Children's Investigator reports, after visiting many Workhouses in town and country, "that children when detained in the Workhouse always come into contact with the ordinary inmates. Certainly, in a country Workhouse this seems impossible to avoid. Paupers are always employed to help with the rough scrubbing and cleaning, and though Matrons invariably try to send the more respectable women into the children's quarters, often the only women available are the mothers of illegitimate babies." || In many Workhouses we have ourselves found the children having their meals in the same room and at the same times as the adult inmates of both sexes, of all ages, and of the most different conditions and characters. Even the imbeciles and the feeble-minded are to be found in the same dining-halls as the children.¶ In some Workhouses, at any rate, the boys over eight years of age have actually to spend the long hours of the night in the same dormitories as the adult men.** In all the small Workhouses and in many of the larger ones, the infants are wholly attended to by, and are actually in charge of, aged, and often mentally defective, paupers; the able-bodied mothers having, during the first year, daily access to their own babies for nursing, and, subsequently, such opportunities for visiting the common nursery as the Master may decide. In the better managed, and in the largest establishments the nursery is, it is true, in charge of a salaried nurse, but even here, the handling of the babies is mostly left to pauper inmates. However desirable may be the intercourse between an infant and its own degraded mother, it is not to the advantage of the scores of infants in the nursery to be perpetually in close companionship for the first three or four or five years of their lives, with a stream of mothers of various types that we have mentioned. Such a nursery imbedded in the midst of an institution containing, not merely hundreds, but thousands of paupers of the most diverse classes is impregnated through and through with the atmosphere of pauperism.

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* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. VIII. (A) Par to 43 Vol. I.,

† We have been unable to ascertain how many Workhouses have separate sick wards for children, as the statistics have not been obtained. But of the three rural Unions visited by our Children's Investigator, two had no separate sick wards for children; out of five urban Unions, one had no separate sick ward, and another had some children in the adult female wards. (Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Miss E. Williams, 1908, p. 7.)

‡ "I have been struck," says our Children's Investigator, "by the absence in every Workhouse visited of any arrangement for quarantine for children under three. Considering how fatal the acute specifics are at these ages there should be some arrangement to prevent their introduction into the nurseries." (*Ibid.*, p. 112.)

§ "At . . . several older girls suffering from chronic diseases had spent months, and one or two years in the women's sick wards. . . . The cases of chronic disease in children, mostly tubercle, which one finds so often scattered about the adult women's wards in Workhouses, would . . . do very much better in a children's convalescent home, and would be saved from much undesirable company." (*Ibid.*, p. 113.)

|| *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¶ "The quarters for the children . . . are very incompletely separated from the rest of the house and its inmates. Except for separate dormitories for boys and girls, the children have no separate apartments, and take their meals in the dining hall. . . . The babies are with their mothers and have no separate nursery or attendant." (*Ibid.*, p. 109.)

** "Boys over eight in men's dormitories. . . . The older boys sleep in the dormitory for old men. . . . For boys too old to put with the girls and infants there are no quarters at all, and any boy over eight has to be put amongst men." (*Ibid.*, pp. 7, 107.) "The boys' dormitory is at the top of the house among the men's rooms. No room is specially appropriated to the boys, but they are given one or another of the rooms on this floor, according to their numbers. At the time of the visit, they had a fairly large room, but three male paupers were sleeping with them." (*Ibid.*, p. 107.)

(B) THE UNSPECIALISED MANAGEMENT OF THE GENERAL MIXED WORKHOUSE.

Apart from this promiscuity—which, be it noted, increases with the size of the establishment—it is an inherent defect of the General Mixed Workhouse that it makes impossible the proper treatment of any one of the various classes of paupers agglomerated within its walls. It is, indeed, largely on the ground that it actually prevented the subjecting of each class to its "appropriate treatment" that the General Mixed Workhouse was condemned by the Royal Commissioners of 1834. We have satisfied ourselves that this condemnation is still entirely justified. The very uniformity of regimen to which all the inmates are subjected makes it impracticable to deal properly with any one class.*

But a more insidious, and, as we think, equally disastrous incident of the mixed institution is what we venture to call the "mixed official." To place under the management of one man and his wife, an institution which, whether large or small, combines the functions of rearing children from infancy to adolescence; treating sickness in all its forms from phthisis to cancer, from maternity to senility; controlling the feeble-minded, the imbeciles, the epileptics and even the certified lunatics; reforming the mothers of illegitimate children; maintaining respectable deserted wives and widows, and setting to work the able-bodied of both sexes—not to mention the usual additional duty of harbouring vagrants—is to abandon all hope of getting expert training or specialised skill. To begin with, the mixture in a single institution, of both men and women—against which the Commissioners of 1834 expressly protested—has, for obvious reasons, involved placing the management in the hands of husband and wife. This leads constantly to an inferior or even an unfit Master being appointed or retained, because of the qualities of the Matron his wife; or an inferior or even unfit Matron being put up with, because of the excellence of her husband the Master.† But over and above this elementary difficulty, the union of so many different classes in one establishment makes it impossible for any head to acquire the training that is needed for such manifold duties. Neither man nor woman can be simultaneously trained and technically expert in the rearing of children, the setting to work of adult labour, the superintendence of a hospital, the tasking of vagrants, the control of lunatics and the wardenship of an almshouse.‡ Boards of Guardians are often blamed for entrusting the management of institutions containing hundreds or even thousands of inmates—children, and sick, aged and imbeciles, sturdy rogues and dissolute women, respectable old men and widows—to a promoted porter or ex-labour master, and the wife whom he happens to have married. We do not see what other course they can take. If they promote the schoolmaster or the nurse these more refined natures may be unfitted to cope with the sturdy vagrant or the "in and out" prostitute. There

* To this important feature of the General Mixed Workhouse we shall recur in Chapters III., IV., V., VI. and VII. of this Part, dealing with the infants, the children, the sick, the mentally defective, and the aged; and in Part II., dealing with the able-bodied. The uniformity of regimen is sometimes carried to an extreme. "Three meals per day," deposes one witness, "are served out to the inmates of —— Workhouse, rice milk being one of the tabulated diets and served twice per week. On cooking this diet a large quantity of fat is mixed into it, and the consequences are that many of the aged inmates, both males and females, cannot eat it because it makes them ill. I have noted ten of these dinners served out to the poor old folks, who preferred to go without dinner sooner than be made ill with the fatty rice milk. The attention of Dr. Fuller (medical inspector) was drawn to this matter, and he advised an alternative diet for such persons as could not eat it, but his advice has been set at naught by the Master, Matron, and superintendent nurse. Before these aged persons can have an alternative diet they must declare themselves sick, and go into the hospital." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 41761, Par. 8.)

† "There is an unwritten law," writes the Special Investigator of the *British Medical Journal*, "enforced by the Local Government Board, which requires that the Master and Matron be husband and wife, the reason alleged being that this ensures freedom of consultation in all official matters. This, however, is attained at great cost, for it favours collusion, and incompetence, and must restrict the range of selection. It does not follow that a competent Master is married to a woman of equal capacity, or *vice versa*. Freedom of action or independent criticism on the part of the Master or Matron is next to impossible, and the Guardians can with difficulty arrive at facts concerning the management of the House" (*British Medical Journal*, June 1st, 1895).

‡ The following are the separate classes in a typical urban Workhouse of medium size, all under the superintendence of a man and his wife: "On the first Saturday in this year, January 5th, 1907, we had in the establishment 81 persons, distributed as follows:—

164 Imbeciles.
235 Sick.
183 Aged and Infirm.
39 Children (generally too young for the Cottage Homes).
270 In main body of the house (men and women in health)

891

(Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 42781, Par. 11.)

is no conceivable training that would fit one man (and his wife) for the task. And the very mixture of functions—the impossibility of attaining technical excellence or, indeed, achieving any recognisable success, in any one of them—has, we have repeatedly noticed, a subtle deteriorating effect on the persons appointed. This is hard on the large class of excellent men and women, for the most part quite poorly remunerated, whom the General Mixed Workhouse has enlisted in its service. Here and there we meet exceptionally gifted natures, whose faith and love and moral refinement enable them, to some extent, to withstand the deadening influence of the non-specialised institution, and to persist in regarding each inmate as an individual soul. But to the common run of men and women who gain appointments as Master and Matron, there comes to be, amid all the differences of sex or age or character, or health, or strength, or defectiveness, but one category of inmate—the pauper; the person who ought not to be there; the semi-delinquent who ought to be grateful for being, at the public expense, just kept alive; whose condition, far from being improved, is supposed always to be kept less eligible than that of the lowest grade of independent labourer. The effect of having always to superintend and organize—not a hospital or a school, a lunatic asylum or even a reformatory, in which there is some recognisable standard of technical success *—but a hopeless mass of undifferentiated pauperism, with which there is nothing to be done, necessarily develops in the ordinary man or woman, during the years of fruitless service, a particular type of character, manifesting itself in a certain trick of bearing, even a peculiar facial expression quickly recognisable by the experienced visitor. "We all know," remarks a professional journal, "the common uneducated type of man to be found in this office in so many places; his mind stored, for the confounding of newly elected Guardians, with rules, by-laws and regulations, his heart hardened by long contact with a system under which deceit is the only means by which relaxation of rules can be obtained."† As some of the best among these Workhouse Officers pathetically complained to us, the men and women whom we harness to the service of the General Mixed Workhouse almost invariably develop an all-embracing indifference—indifference to suffering which they cannot alleviate, to ignorance which they cannot enlighten, to virtue which they cannot encourage, to indolence which they cannot correct, to vice which they cannot punish. The one attribute common to all Workhouse inmates which can be, and is, appreciated by those in authority over them, is ready and unhesitating obedience, passing into servility.‡ The faculties which the Master and Matron find developed in themselves are the trick of securing a machine-like order, and a suppleness of seeming compliance with the fancies of Guardians who are as devoid of specialised training as they are themselves. In too many cases, as has been well said, "Guardians and Master are satisfied if the floors are washed, the steps pipeclayed, and the regiments of books of entry in order for the inspector."§

(c) The Universal Condemnation of the General Mixed Workhouse.

So complete a condemnation of the General Mixed Workhouse will, to those who know that institution only by repute, or who have come to accept it as inevitable, appear exaggerated. Their first thought may be that we are expressing only a personal view, inspired by some unreasonable ideal, and based only on a few bad examples that we happen to have visited. This is not the case. We have to report that there exists in all parts of the Kingdom, among all classes, the greatest dislike and distrust of this typical Poor Law institution. The respectable poor, we are told, "have a horror of it," and they

* The "mixed" Superintendent has naturally no appreciation of the value of specialised subordinate-service. Of one small Workhouse it was reported that the "Master was of opinion that the male nurse has not enough to do, and that his duties might include the care of the schoolboys out of school hours. . . . The proposed doubling of parts is the bane of Workhouse organisation, where the authorities, in country districts at least, have not yet learnt that subdivision and definite duties, and the filling of the posts so defined by specially trained persons, are the secret of efficient and economical working." (*British Medical Journal*, February 9th, 1895, p. 327).

† *Ibid.*, July 7th, 1894, p. 30.

‡ To this influence must be added the subtly degrading effect of having always at command a limitless and costless host of household servants. One of the best Workhouse Masters confided to a Commissioner who was staying with him, his sense of the corrupting influence on himself, his wife, and his children of being, by this army of pauper servants, eager to help in the house and garden, relieved of every inducement to personal effort. The converse of this is the almost invariable appearance of the Master and Matron in broadcloth and silks, as obviously non-working costumes; seeming to the paupers to be doing nothing but look on. This is in marked contrast with the working dress and bearing of such specialised officers as the nurse, the schoolmaster and the farm bailiff.

§ *British Medical Journal*, October 13th, 1894, p. 845; *see* Evidence before the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, *Q.* 773.

will not go "into the House at all unless they are compelled."* The whole institution, reports our Medical Investigator, "is abhorred. . . . The Workhouse and everything within its walls is anathema excepting to the very dregs of the population."† It is, said one of our witnesses, "the supreme dread of the poor."‡ "Life in the Workhouse," sum up our Investigators, "does not build character up. It breaks down what little independence or alertness of mind is left. . . . It is too good for the bad and too bad for the good."§

This "evil reputation" of the General Mixed Workhouse among the respectable poor is, reports our Medical Investigator, "partly traditional or historical, and partly due to the curious and objectionable agglomeration of purposes which it now serves. It is a home for imbeciles, an almshouse for the destitute poor, a refuge for deserted children, a lying-in hospital for dissolute women, a winter resort for the ill-behaved casual labourer or summer beggar, a lodging for tramps and vagrants as well as a hospital for the sick." † "Being gathered into one establishment," says the Vice-Chairman of the Manchester Board of Guardians, "all must be subject to the same regulations—framed to be deterrent to the lazily disposed, and to prevent preference of the workhouse to labour. The day rooms and dormitories are necessarily shared by good and bad, and close association is inevitable. The cost of separation into small groups in a Workhouse is prohibitive of attempts to place like-minded inmates together. This aggregation of inmates is not at all unpleasant or irksome to the loafer, to the vicious, to the drunkard seeking the safety and rest of the Workhouse after a debauch, and to the careless idler, who is ever preying upon the labour of others. Their chief objection to the Workhouse is the curtailment of liberty and the absence of opportunity of self-indulgence. But to the reputable clean-minded inmate this association with the depraved is the bitterest and most humiliating experience of life."‖ It is to be noted that this condemnation applies alike to the five or six hundred smaller Workhouses or Poorhouses of rural districts of the United Kingdom, as well as to the two or three hundred larger establishments. These latter have terrors of their own. "The mere size of the Great House" may, indeed, as has been suggested, be in itself "a strong deterrent to the honest poor. Accustomed to live in a single room they are appalled at the size of the Workhouse, and as terrified to go into it as a child into the sea. It can seldom be possible . . . for any one man to grasp all the details of our largest Workhouses, and where he cannot do so there must be great danger of neglect and bad under-management."¶ But the smallest rural Workhouses exhibit, in some respects, the greatest mixture. "A small country Workhouse with fifty or sixty inmates," testifies a well-known and experienced county administrator in the North of England, "is a shame to our Christian civilisation. There may be found collected in it perhaps ten old men and ten old women, drunken, idle blackguards, the outcasts of society; and, compelled to live among them, perhaps five or six respectable old people who, through absolutely no fault of their own, having worked hard all their inoffensive lives, have come to poverty. There will probably be three or four imbeciles of each sex, sometimes harmless and amusing, very often vicious and annoying to the inmates; two or three single women waiting for their confinements—in many cases an annual visit; three or four loafing "ins and outs," able-bodied men; three or four feeble persons; and eight or ten illegitimate children, all practically living together, and too often under a master who is tyrannical in his treatment and careless of his duties. It is a life absolutely repugnant to the respectable poor. Surely the time has come when, for the sake of not only the aged poor, but of the sick, the imbeciles, and the children, a drastic reform should be made, which would, at all events, bring us to a level with

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 71398.

† Report . . . on the Methods and Results of . . Poor Law Medical Relief, by Dr. John C. McVail, 1907, p. 146.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. CXI., Par. 4 to Vol. VII.,

§ Memorandum on Certain Aspects of Poor Law Administration, by A. D. Steel-Maitland and R. E. Squire, p. 1. "The more respectable shrink, very naturally, from being herded together with the general ruck of undesirables found there" (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXVII., Par. 4, to Vol. VII.) "Some would rather starve than enter its portals." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXX., Par. 13, to Vol. V. "The Workhouse, as it exists at present," sums up the Vice-Regal Commission, "must be a place of torture for respectable married women with young children." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 51.)

‖"Classification of Paupers and Poverty alongside Pauperism," by A. McDougall, J.P., Vice-Chairman of the Manchester Board of Guardians, p. 4. Nor is this confined to the large urban Workhouses. "There are in the ordinary country Workhouse," writes a clerk to a Board of Guardians in the South of England, "a few characters utterly bad, and these try to make the life of the others miserable. The Master and the officials are helpless; in other words, classification is impossible."

¶ "Our Workhouse System," by R. J. Pye-Smith, in *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, September 7th, 1896.

Denmark and other European countries."* It is in the wards of such small country Workhouses that the visitor may see—to use the words of an experienced lady Guardian of the Poor in a southern county—"all the inmates under lock and key, good characters and bad classed together, imbeciles and epileptics amongst them, all dressed in ill-fitting Workhouse clothes of old-fashioned clumsy make, all sitting on hard benches round the long tables or the walls of the ward, while the building with its bare stone floors, curtainless windows, and harshly clanging locks seemed more like a prison for criminals than a last home for aged men and women."†

Nor is this condemnation of the General Mixed Workhouse any new-fangled complaint. From 1834 down to the present day there has been a stream of adverse comment on an institution which is, we believe, unknown to any other country. We need not quote again the opinion of the Royal Commissioners of 1834. In 1862 the principal author of their Report, Nassau Senior himself, recorded his protest against the perpetuation of the General Mixed Workhouse which they had done their best to rid the country from, and with which, nevertheless, Boards of Guardians, at the instance of the Poor Law Board, were covering both England and Ireland. "We recommended," he said, "that in every Union there should be a separate school; we said that the children who went to the Workhouse were hardened if they were already vicious, and became contaminated if they were innocent. We recommended that in every Union there should be a building for the children and one for the able-bodied males, and another building for the able-bodied females; and another for the sick. We supposed the use of four buildings in every Union—four distinct institutions—except this, that they need not be Workhouses. You might easily hire a house [apiece] for four distinct institutions separate from one another. *We never contemplated having the children under the same roof with the adults.*" ‡

The feelings of surprise and dismay with which Nassau Senior watched the perpetuation of the General Mixed Workhouse were widely shared. "During the last ten years," said a learned lawyer in 1852, "I have visited many prisons and lunatic asylums not only in England, but in France and Germany. A single English Workhouse contains more that justly calls for condemnation in the principle on which it is established, than is found in the very worst prisons or public lunatic asylums that I have seen. The Workhouse as now organised is a reproach and disgrace peculiar to England, nothing corresponding to it is found throughout the whole Continent of Europe. In France, the medical patients of our Workhouses would be found in 'hopitaux'; the infirm aged poor would be in 'hospices'; and the blind, the idiot, the lunatic, the bastard child and the vagrant would similarly be placed in an appropriate but separate establishment. With us a common *malebolge* is provided for them all; and in some parts of the country, the confusion is worse confounded by the effect of prohibitory orders, which, enforcing the application of the notable Workhouse Test, drive into the same common sink of so many kinds of vice and misfortune the poor man whose only crime is his poverty and whose want of work alone makes him chargeable. . . . It is at once equally shocking to every principle of reason and every feeling of humanity that all these varied forms of wretchedness should be thus crowded together into one common abode; that no attempt should be made by law . . . to provide appropriate places for the relief of each."§ Continental writers of authority, at one time admirers of our Poor Law, became equally condemnatory of the General Mixed Workhouse. "The English Workhouse system," declared Rudolph von Gneist in 1871, "notwithstanding the elaborate Orders, remains undeniably at a stage of development which most Continental administrations have passed. The Workhouse purports at one and the same time to be: (i.) A place where able-bodied adults who cannot and will not find employment are set to work; (ii.) an asylum for the aged, the blind, the deaf and dumb or otherwise incapacitated for labour; (iii.) a hospital for the sick poor; (iv.) a school for orphans, foundlings and other poor children; (v.) a lying-in home for poor mothers; (vi.) an asylum for those of unsound mind not being actually

* Statement of Evidence of Mr. John Hutton, J.P., Member of the County Council for the North Riding of Yorkshire (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXVII. (Par. 44) to Vol. IX.). The reader will notice the close resemblance between this description of the small country Workhouse of to-day, and that already quoted of the small country Workhouse of 1834.

† "Poor Law Questions as affecting Women Guardians," by Mrs. E. G. Fuller, in *Report of Poor Law Conferences*, 1901–2, p. 396.

‡ Evidence of Nassau Senior before Select Committee on Poor Relief, 1862. (House of Commons, No. 468 of 1862, p. 74.)

§ "Pauperism and Poor Laws," by Robert Pashley, Q.C., late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, author of "Travels in Crete," etc., 1852, p. 364.

dangerous; (vii.) a resting-place for such vagabonds as it is not deemed possible or desirable to send to prison. The combination of such mutually inconsistent purposes renders the administration defective as regards each one of them; subjects to shame and indignity whole classes of persons who never ought to be brought into such companionship; and in particular makes the institution as a place for children absolutely ruinous."* A quarter of a century later, a French critic made much the same complaint. "In the Workhouse as we have described it," wrote Monsieur Emile Chevalier, "we see many faults. The requirement of work from inmates, justified if it contributed towards the cost of maintenance, becomes, when it is so ludicrously unproductive, nothing better than an unwarranted punishment. Yet the institution might possibly justify itself, if not to the economist, at any rate to the philanthropist, as capable of affording a temporary refuge for unmerited distress, but for the fact that in these establishments the very notion of relief gives way to that of penal treatment, whilst in the majority of cases they result in complete promiscuity between the idle and the worthy, between vice and misfortune."† Nor have these weighty foreign condemnations of the very nature of the General Mixed Workhouse evoked any denial of the facts. The institution, admitted, in 1881, the Rev. T. W. Fowle, "contains those very classes whom one would least of all select to associate with each other; both sexes, extreme ages, different degrees of imbecility and disease, those who are much to be pitied and those who are much to be blamed. All these are under the same roof, and under the government of the same officials, who may be as fit to deal with one class of inmates as they are unfit to deal with another. Hence, there comes from this aggregation of classes something that may be described as the Workhouse essence; it is neither school, infirmary, penitentiary, prison, place of shelter or place of work, but something that comes of all these put together. Nor is it possible by any classification to prevent contact, and it may be, moral contagion; in the smaller houses classification is at all times difficult, and in no case does it hold good at meals, church and other occasions. And it may well be that the regular and peaceable (afflicted) inmates endure much preventible suffering from the operation of this cause."‡

(d) Why the General Mixed Workhouse has continued to exist.

In face of so universal a condemnation of the General Mixed Workhouse—begun in the Report of 1834; continued decade by decade by all sorts of critics, English and foreign; admitted during a whole generation by the Local Government Board itself; and abundantly confirmed by our own investigations—the question naturally arises why was this institution re-established by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–47; why was it continued by the Poor Law Board of 1847–71; and why has it endured down to the present day, in spite of the almost incessant endeavours of the Local Government Board, by urging successively the withdrawal of vagrants, the children, the sick, the able-bodied and the aged from its demoralising influence, to break it up altogether? Our inquiries show that the explanation of the re-establishment of the General Mixed Workhouse by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–47, in flagrant defiance of the Report of 1834; and its persistence in spite of the constant efforts of the Local Government Board to supersede it by specialised institutions, are both to be traced to the nature of the Local Authority concerned. The Poor Law Commissioners do not seem, on assuming office, to have intended to set aside, on this point, the clear and emphatic recommendations of the 1834 Report. They had no wish to re-establish the General Mixed Workhouse. There is evidence that they began, in the first Unions that they created, by trying to get organised a series of four or more separate institutions, specialised for different classes of poor. But Parliament had placed the care of all these classes of poor in each Union under a single Local Authority, and had charged that Authority, not with the treatment of any one of these classes, not with the education of the children or the prevention and cure of sickness, but generally, with the relief of the destitution of all of them. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 had substituted, in fact, by combining many parishes into one Union, a new Destitution Authority for the old Destitution Authority, with a somewhat larger district. The Assistant Commissioners quickly discovered that it was quite as much as the new Destitution Authority could do to govern one institution in or near

* "Das Self-Government," etc., by R. von Gneist. Edition of 1871, p. 748.

† "La Loi des Pauvres," by Emile Chevalier, 1895, p. 392.

‡ "The Poor Law," by Rev. T. W. Fowle, 1881, p. 142. The evils of the General Mixed Workhouse are, indeed, officially recognised. "I have," reports an Inspector, "on several occasions in former Reports commented on the evils of mixing up different classes of paupers in the same Workhouse; but I feel compelled to refer to the subject again, because of its great importance, of which I am convinced." (Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1906–7, p. 284; Mr. Lockwood's Report.)

the market town around which, as a nucleus, the different parishes were grouped. The numbers of persons in the different classes, in the rural Unions of that date, were small. To the Boards of Guardians of 1835, as to their successors in many a subsequent decade, it seemed a wanton waste of money to maintain a series of separate small institutions, all having vacant places. Within a few months we see the attempts given up, and all the classes of poor huddled into a single building.* Presently we see the Assistant Commissioners themselves converted to the General Mixed Workhouse; converting their official superiors to it as the only course practicable with the Local Authorities through which they had to work; and propagating the idea to their Boards of Guardians with all the zeal of converts. "The very sight," argued the ablest of these Assistant Commissioners, "of a well-built efficient establishment would give confidence to the Board of Guardians, the sight and weekly assemblage of all servants of their Union would make them proud of their office; the appointment of a Chaplain would give dignity to the whole arrangement, while the pauper would feel it was utterly impossible to contend against it. In visiting such a series of Unions, the Assistant Commissioner could with great facility perform his duty, whereas if he had eight establishments to search for in each Union it would be almost impracticable to attend to them. I would, moreover, beg to observe that in one establishment there would always be a proper governor, ready to receive and govern any able-bodied applicants, whereas in separate establishments this most important arrangement (the Able-bodied House) during harvesting, etc., would constantly be empty, and consequently would become inefficient in moments of emergency."†

The same Assistant Commissioner, in writing a farewell letter to the Kentish Boards of Guardians at the end of 1835, urges them not only to stick to the dietary, but also to appoint a chaplain "to your central house, which will shortly be the sole establishment in your Union. . . . As soon as this important object has been gained—as soon as you find that the whole of your indoor poor are concentrated in one respectable establishment—under your own weekly superintendence—when you see yourselves surrounded by a band of resolute, sensible, well-educated men faithfully devoted to your service—you will then, I believe, fully appreciate the advantage which you, as well as your successors, will ever derive from possessing one strong, efficient building, instead of having from false economy, frittered away your resources among your old existing houses."‡

What is specially interesting at the present juncture is that it was the existence of a Destitution Authority, charged with the "relief" of all sorts and conditions of men, that has rendered nugatory, decade after decade, every attempt to undo the harm done in 1835. Once the General Mixed Workhouse is established, the ease and apparent economy of the arrangement becomes, in the hands of a Destitution Authority, an obstacle always defeating the efforts of the Central Authority to reverse its own action, and to go back to the policy of the 1834 Report. For the Poor Law Commissioners themselves very soon realised the false step that they had taken in merging all classes of paupers in the General Mixed Workhouse. Their first remedy was to try to exclude the vagrants, and to provide, in London, for their treatment in specialised "asylums for the homeless poor." To this end orders were issued, joint boards established and even sites purchased. But the attempt failed. Nothing would induce the separate Boards of Guardians to relinquish their care, troublesome though it was, of all the classes of the destitute. The Poor Law Board had then to fall back on the imperfectly specialised Casual Ward of the General Mixed Workhouse. But to get any really specialised treatment of the vagrants out of a "Destitution Authority"—even to get carried out the explicit directions of the Local

* This is well seen in the history of the "Model" Union of that time, that of Westhampnett in Sussex, which was presided over by the Duke of Richmond. Here, on the advice of the Poor Law Commissioners, it was originally decided to retain five of the old parish poorhouses, so that, in conformity with the recommendations of the 1834 Report: "Certain descriptions of paupers should be sent exclusively to each, intending to retain the large Workhouse at Westhampnett for the able-bodied alone. . . . The house at Yapton was at first intended solely for the aged, that at Aldingborne for the children, and that at Pagham for the aged and infirm; that at Sidlesham to remain unoccupied till the Board should see what claims were made for admission to a workhouse. . . . It was found that four Workhouses would be quite unnecessary; and after great consideration it was determined to appropriate the house at Yapton entirely to the children, and to make other additions to that at Westhampnett where all the other paupers were to be brought. . . . Some inconvenience, however, was found to result even from the existence of two separate establishments. There could not be the same diligent supervision of the management of the house, the same attention to the treatment of the inmates, nor the same regularity of accounts as there might be if the whole establishment were concentrated under one roof." (Report of Westhampnett Union, March 14th, 1836, p. 23; in House of Commons, No. 108 of 1838.)

† MS. correspondence of Sir Francis Head, 1835.

‡ *Ibid.*

Government Board to that end—has proved quite impossible. Half a century of failure has recently driven the very experienced members of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy to recommend that this class of destitute persons should be wholly withdrawn from the supervision of the Local Authority dealing with the category of the destitute.

Even more disastrous in its results was the merging of the children in the General Mixed Workhouse. As early as 1841 the Poor Law Commissioners had realised their mistake, and had begun the attempt to transfer the children to district schools. Here again it was the very nature of the Local Authority that stood in their way. A Board of Guardians, elected to relieve the destitution of all the poor, refused to consent to cede the children to any other Authority, even to a joint Committee of Boards of Guardians. It needed a cholera epidemic among the Poor Law children at Tooting to enable the Poor Law Board to get even a dozen district schools established, and more than five hundred Unions persisted in keeping their children in their own Workhouses. Right down to the present day the Local Government Board, in spite of unwearied efforts, has failed to reduce the number of children actually living in General Mixed Workhouses below what is really the enormous number of 15,000. And there is no prospect of this number being lessened. There is indeed, in some cases a tendency to reversion. In a Welsh Union that we visited, which, at the instance of the Local Government Board, actually provided a separate building for its children, we found this empty and disused, the number of children having fallen to eight. It seemed more economical and more convenient to the Destitution Authority to take these eight children into the General Mixed Workhouse to live with the forty other inmates, who were mostly either semi-imbeciles and feeble-minded, or senile or paralytic old men and women, with half a dozen tramps, men, women and children, coming in every night.

It took thirty years to convince the Central Authority that it had made a mistake in merging the sick in the General Mixed Workhouse; but, once convinced, its action was, in London at least, decisive. From 1866 onward we see first the Poor Law Board and then the Local Government Board exercising the strongest and most persistent pressure on the Boards of Guardians to get them to provide entirely separate institutions for the sick poor. At first the attempt was to get neighbouring Unions to combine, in "Sick Asylum Districts," to maintain a joint infirmary. This has proved practically a failure. The Boards of Guardians, feeling that it was their function to look after all classes of the poor, and dominated by their one business, as they conceive it, of relieving destitution, flatly refused to remove their sick from the General Mixed Workhouse in order to place them in the infirmary of a joint committee. In the Metropolis the Local Government Board had to take the drastic step of taking the infectious sick and the imbeciles out of the hands of the Boards of Guardians, and entrusting them to a separate body, the Metropolitan Asylums Board, which has become virtually a Public Health Authority. Only in the Metropolis and in a score or so of large provincial towns has the persistent pressure of the Local Government Board now succeeded in inducing the Boards of Guardians to place the sick in separate Poor Law infirmaries; and that only imperfectly. In a majority of the Unions the local Destitution Authority, in the teeth of medical advice, insists on retaining all sections of the sick—the tuberculous, the cancerous, the venereal, the maternity cases, the children, the senile, and even sometimes the infectious—in the General Mixed Workhouse.

The next class which the Local Government Board strove to get out of the General Mixed Workhouse was that of the able-bodied. Again the Boards of Guardians resisted, seeing no advantage in paying for the establishment of specialised institutions, even as "Test Workhouses" for the able-bodied. Presently, at Poplar in 1871, and again at Kensington in 1882, the Local Government Board took the opportunity of there being vacant accommodation to persuade the Board of Guardians to set aside a special building for the able-bodied of their own and of adjacent Unions. Similar experiments were started at Birmingham and Manchester. We shall point out, when we come to deal in Part II. with the able-bodied, how all these experiments, though strikingly successful in their purpose of diminishing able-bodied pauperism, were one and all brought to untimely ends in consequence of being entrusted to a Destitution Authority unable to resist the constant temptation of using the vacant places for other classes of paupers. A similar tendency to reversion is seen in the various experiments that have been tried by individual Unions in segregating their own able-bodied for specialised treatment. Our study of their records shows that these experiments are always breaking down because the Destitution Authority cannot resist the temptation, when its other wards get full, of, first temporarily and then

permanently relegating to their so-called able-bodied block, detachments of such other classes of destitute persons as the men over sixty, the sane epileptics, and even the able-bodied of the other sex.

To complete the survey of the efforts of the Central Authority to break up the General Mixed Workhouse, we have to record its action on behalf of the only class not hitherto mentioned, by its successive circulars, from 1900 onward, urging Boards of Guardians to provide specialised accommodation for the worthy aged. These attempts have met with little result, as the great majority of Boards of Guardians have felt, and sometimes expressly reported, that the structural arrangements of the General Mixed Workhouse did not permit of any such separate accommodation as was suggested. In the whole of England and Wales fewer than a thousand old persons are as yet provided for in the separate Poor Law institutions on which the Report of 1834 insisted.

We need not recount the parallel histories of Scotland and Ireland, where the success of the Central Authorities in inducing the local Destitution Authorities to make specialised institutional provision for the separate classes has been, on the whole, even less successful than in England and Wales.*

We are anxious to make clear that it is not to any inferiority of calibre, or any lack of good intention, in the members of the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, and the Parish Councils of Scotland, that we ascribe their almost invariable failure to free themselves from the dominion of the General Mixed Workhouse. It is, we think, inherent in the nature of the Destitution Authority, having to deal with all classes of persons merely because they are destitute, to make this characteristic of destitution their dominant idea. In this connection, it is, we think, highly significant that, in the model Union of Bradford, in which—to use the words of its late Chairman—"the determination to break up the mass of pauperism into its component parts, and to deal separately with each of these parts," has "been the guiding principle of the Guardians in recent years,"† we see how hard is the way and how imperfect is the success of any Destitution Authority that aims at providing really separate institutions, under distinct management, for each of the heterogeneous series of classes committed to its care. The only class, even at Bradford, which has been completely separated off from the rest is that of the children, for whom admirable "Scattered Homes" are provided. Yet even here the Destitution Authority cannot refrain from sending in other destitute persons. "I was sorry," reports our Children's Investigator, in speaking of the St. George's Children's Home at Bradford, "to see a defective girl, aged seventeen, helping in the house work. These defectives are very often to be found in the Children's Homes. They are too old for the schools, they cannot be sent out to service, and are sent to help in the Children's Homes, pending a decision about their destination which the Guardians are very slow to make. They are very much out of place amongst young children. I feel very strongly that they should be sent to proper Homes for Defectives."‡ And it is the same with the other classes. Genuine philanthropic feeling has induced the Bradford Board of Guardians to build, a couple of miles away from the General Workhouse, a charming quadrangle of separate tenements for their most respectable aged. Yet, because it had presently to provide additional accommodation for destitute sane epileptics, and then a place for the destitute able-bodied men to be subjected to the Outdoor Labour Test, this Destitution Authority could not resist the temptation of housing its epileptics in the very quadrangle occupied by the old men and women; of setting the able-bodied men to work on the same site; and of placing all three classes—the most worthy aged, the sane epileptics and the Outdoor

* Though the system of Poor Relief in Scotland is assumed to be mainly one of Outdoor Relief, and though, in fact, four-fifths of the paupers are relieved in their own homes, it should be noted that the Poorhouse population is rapidly rising, having increased 50 per cent. in the last decade, and now amounts to 15,000. The seventy Poorhouses that have gradually covered the country, eight of which are great establishments (accommodating over 500 person seach), do not appear to us to differ essentially from the General Mixed Workhouses of England and Wales, which are, in proportion to population, not much more numerous. In Ireland, where only two-fifths of the paupers receive Outdoor Relief, the 159 General Mixed Workhouses seem to us to have all the characteristics of those of Great Britain, with even greater extremes of size and promiscuity. Many of them are quite small and primitive in their arrangements. On the other hand, seven have more than 500 inmates; and the South Dublin Workhouse, with an average of over 4,000 inmates of both sexes and of all ages, physical states and mental grades, within the Workhouse walls, appears to us, in more than one sense, the most monstrous aggregation of the United Kingdom.

† The History of Poor Law Administration in Bradford, 1838–1906, compiled from the MS. records, by Mrs. Spencer, B.A., D.Sc. (Econ.), p. 13.

‡ Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 105.

Labour Test Men—under one and the same Superintendent. Meanwhile, within the walls of the old Workhouse, we find the blocks of the able-bodied and semi-able-bodied men and women closely hemmed in by new and elaborate hospital blocks for different groups of the sick, the whole within the same curtilage, entered by the same gate, and under the formal superintendence of the same Master and Matron.

(E) Conclusions.

We have therefore to report:—

(1) That the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland, and the Poorhouses of Scotland, whether urban or rural, new or old, large or small, sumptuous or squalid, all exhibit the same inherent defects, of which the chief are promiscuity and unspecialised management.

(2) That these institutions have a depressing, degrading, and positively injurious effect on the character of all classes of their inmates, tending to unfit them for the life of respectable and independent citizenship.

(3) That the institution of a General Mixed Workhouse, whether large or small, was decisively condemned by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834; that it has been repeatedly condemned since that date by a succession of competent critics; that this condemnation has been confirmed by the evidence given before us, by the reports of our own Investigators and by the individual inspections that we have been able personally to make in many different parts of the United Kingdom.

(4) That the institution is everywhere abhorred by the respectable poor, and that, in our judgment, the continued incarceration within its walls of the non-able-bodied or dependent poor, who are admittedly incapable of earning an independent livelihood, cannot be justified.

(5) That the continuance of the General Mixed Workhouse as the main method of institutional treatment, alike by the Boards of Guardians of England, Wales and Ireland, and by the Parish Councils of Scotland, in spite of such long continued and widespread condemnation, is to be attributed to the fact that these bodies are essentially Destitution Authorities, charged with the "relief" of persons of the most different ages, ailments and conditions, in respect only of their destitution.

CHAPTER II.

The Outdoor Relief of To-day.

The common alternative to maintenance in the General Mixed Workhouse, in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, is, for all classes of the non-able-bodied, a small allowance, usually weekly, of money, food, and, less frequently, clothing.* This practice, which is as old as the Elizabethan Poor Laws, was not condemned, and was scarcely even criticised in the Report of 1834. In contrast with the emphatic condemnation of Outdoor Relief to the able-bodied, the authors of the Report of 1834, like the Poor Law Commissioners of 1835–47, seem, in fact, to have acquiesced, so far as the non-able-bodied classes were concerned, in a continuance of the then existing practice of staving off destitution by small money doles, which, in cases of permanent incapacity or old age, became weekly allowances almost mechanically continued during life. There were, however, two requirements made by the Report of 1834 in respect of the administration of relief to the non-able-bodied, as well as to the able-bodied. "Uniformity in the administration of relief," says the Report, "we deem essential, as a means, first of reducing the perpetual shifting from parish to parish, and fraudulent removals to parishes where profuse management prevails, from parishes where the management is less profuse; secondly, of preventing the discontents which arise among the paupers maintained in the less profuse management, from comparing it with the more profuse management of adjacent districts; and thirdly, of bringing the management, which consist in details, more closely within the public control."† And the uniformity of treatment on which the Report of 1834 laid so much stress was held to apply in a special degree to the administration of Outdoor Relief in respect of the character or past conduct of the applicants. "The natural tendency" of the relieving Authority, "to award to the deserving more than is necessary, or . . . to distinguish the deserving by extra allowances" was denounced in that Report as an evil. "The whole evidence," it was declared, "shows the danger of such an attempt. It appears that such endeavours to constitute the distributors of relief into a tribunal for the reward of merit, out of the property of others, have not only failed in effecting the benevolent intentions of their promoters, but have become sources of fraud on the part of the distributors, and of discontent and violence on the part of the claimants."‡

This system of granting doles and allowances to the non-able-bodied poor, accepted by the Royal Commission of 1834, has never been prohibited by the Local Government Board, and has accordingly continued, with its authority, down to the present day. The sum thus distributed is now very large, approaching, in the United Kingdom, no less than £4,000,000 sterling annually. It has, during the past fifteen years, greatly increased, and it is, at present, taking the whole United Kingdom, probably greater than at any time since 1834. More than two-thirds of the whole of the paupers are, in fact, in receipt of Outdoor Relief.

We were surprised to find that, as far as England and Wales are concerned, contrary to the usual impression, no Order has ever been issued regulating or controlling the very extensive provision thus made for the great mass of the non-able-bodied poor. So far as the orphans and deserted children, the aged and infirm, the sick and the mentally afflicted, and the widows with legitimate offspring, are concerned—and these make up nine-tenths of the pauper host—the Boards of Guardians all over England and Wales have been permitted to exercise unchecked their power of awarding doles and allowances, under such conditions as seemed to them fit.§

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* In this chapter we describe more particularly the Outdoor Relief administration of England and Wales. That of Ireland appears to us to be in all respects essentially similar, and to have, in full measure, the same shortcomings and defects. The administration of Outdoor Relief in Scotland—there called aliment—differs somewhat in form, and we shall describe these differences later. But, in our judgment, the criticisms that we make of the administration of England and Wales applies, in the main, also to that of Scotland.

† Report of Poor Law Commission of 1834, pp. 279, 280.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

§ This absence of any rules as to Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied was noticed by the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895 (Vol. II., *Qs.* 2073, 2074, 2124–6, 2420, 3192, 3193), when it was urged that the Local Government Board ought to frame such rules.

(A) Local Bylaws as to Outdoor Relief.

Under these circumstances many of the Boards of Guardians have, for their own guidance, framed Bylaws or Standing Orders as to Outdoor Relief, which afford an interesting vision of their divergent ideals of administration. The most frequent clause in the couple of hundred * such Bylaws that we have seen is one which makes the grant of Outdoor Relief dependent on the character and conduct of the applicant. This is expressed sometimes as excluding those who are actually of "immoral habits,"† or "habitual drunkards and bad characters,"‡ or merely "known to be in the habit of frequenting public houses."§ Some Boards exclude "common beggars"‖ or "persons known to be addicted to begging";¶ others disqualify anyone, whatever his present conduct, who "has wasted his substance in drinking or gambling, or has led an idle or disorderly life;"** or those who cannot satisfy the Relief Committee that their destitution has not been caused by "their own vicious habits"†† or their own improvidence or intemperance in the past. Occasionally a particular form of extravagance is specially penalised by the refusal of Outdoor Relief. In a large number of Unions we find a rule prohibiting the grant of Outdoor Relief to the widows of men who had been provident enough to insure for their funeral expenses, if, in the opinion of the Board of Guardians, such funeral money had been "lavishly or improperly expended."‡‡ The professed aim of these Boards of Guardians is to make the grant of Outdoor Relief not merely necessary relief, dependent exclusively upon the economic circumstances of the case, but (as some of them frankly avow) an indulgence "to persons of past and present good conduct, who require relief by reason of unmerited misfortune;"§§ who "can show a thrifty past,"‖‖ or that "whilst in work they did all they could to make provision against time of sickness or want of employment";¶¶ or "whose destitution has arisen from no fault of their own."*** This conception of granting Outdoor Relief according to the past conduct of the applicant is most fully carried out by the Sheffield Board of Guardians, which deliberately aims in its Bylaws at a "classification of the recipients of relief with a view to the better treatment of those of good character." Thus, those whose past life (which must be combined, by the way, with twenty years' residence within the Sheffield Union) entitles them to the utmost indulgence (Class A), get 5s. per week per adult; those who, *though equally destitute* and presumably costing as much to keep, fall short of this high standard by one or two or three degrees (Classes B, C, and D) receive, to live upon, respectively, 4s., 3s., or only 2s. 6d. per week per adult.††† This determination to discriminate, in the actual amount of Outdoor Relief allowed, between the deserving and the undeserving—which we find everywhere influencing the stricter type of Guardian, and which one of the most strictly administered Unions thus explicitly avows—is, as we have seen, significantly at variance with the recommendations of the 1834 Report.

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* In the course of an inquiry which one of our Committees directed to be undertaken into the policy pursued at different dates by the Boards of Guardians, a collection was made by one of our members of 234 local Bylaws now in force, regulating the administration of relief. About 350 Boards of Guardians stated that they had no such Bylaws, and the remaining sixty, mostly in small Unions, did not reply to the inquiry.

† Rules of Chorlton Board of Guardians; similarly at Salford, Prestwich, Bolton, Rochdale, Wakefield, Dudley, Ashton-under-Lyne, York, Newport, and many other Unions. The Monmouth Board of Guardians excludes also persons of "indolent habits."

‡ Rules of the Chertsey, Colchester, Leighton Buzzard, Llanelly, Reigate, Romsey, Steyning, and other Boards of Guardians.

§ Regulations of the Bristol Board of Guardians.

‖ Regulations of Bath Board of Guardians.

¶ Regulations of the Cheltenham Board of Guardians; also at Dudley and Warwick.

** Rules of the Shardlow Board of Guardians.

†† Rules of Biggleswade and Luton Boards of Guardians.

‡‡ Standing Orders of Bradford Board of Guardians. Similar provisions exist at Anglesey, Shepton Mallet, Norwich, Marlborough, and dozens of other places; sometimes merely suspending the Outdoor Relief of the extravagant widow for one, two, three or six months, or, more vaguely, "for a time."

§§ Rules of Mitford and Launditch Board of Guardians.

‖‖ Rules of Okehampton Board of Guardians.

¶¶ Regulations of the Merthyr Tydvil Board of Guardians; similarly at Halifax, Holbech, Hunslet, Brighton, Horncastle, Bridge, Whitchurch, Farnham, Hartley Wintney, Trowbridge, Bridport, Faversham, Eastry, Garstang, Weymouth, etc.

*** Rules of Narberth Board of Guardians. We have noticed more than a hundred Bylaws or Standing Orders, making the grant of Outdoor Relief dependent thus on conduct.

††† Rules of the Sheffield Board of Guardians; Evidence before Commission, *Qs.* 40854–40868, 40113–40118. Similar rules have now been adopted elsewhere (*see*, for instance, those of the Worksop Board of Guardians). The only justification for this distinction that can be given appears to be the assumption that: "Very often the more indifferent classes are hiding something from us." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 40115).

It is perhaps with regard to wives apart from their husbands, and widows, that the Bylaws relating to Outdoor Relief display the most extraordinary of their diversities. The Langport Board of Guardians professes to refuse all Outdoor Relief to healthy able-bodied widows under any circumstances, however large may be their dependent families.* Most Unions which have rules prohibit Outdoor Relief to widows, whatever their legitimate family, who have had an illegitimate child; indeed, "any person who may have given birth to an illegitimate child" is commonly excluded.† Widows who have only "a small family,"‡ or, if an able-bodied widow "of the working class," not more than two children,§ are made incligible in some Unions. Far more usual is it to require the widow with only one child to keep herself and child without relief at all, ‖ after the first six months—some say after the first three months,¶ after the first two months,** or even the first month††—of her widowhood; at least, say some Boards, if the child is a year old,‡‡ eighteen months old,§§ two years old,|||| or of school age.¶¶ Many Unions express the same idea by providing that children in excess of one or two should, in preference to any grant of Outdoor Relief—and in face of the present strong objection of the Local Government Board to the presence of children in this institution—be taken into the Workhouse,*** the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described. On the other hand, some Unions expressly provide for Outdoor Relief to a widow with only one child; ††† or without any dependent child at all, ‡‡‡ and even, subject to being considered by the whole Board, to widows with illegitimate children born since their widowhood.§§§ No less diverse are the fates in different Unions of wives deserted by their husbands. Most Boards of Guardians profess to refuse Outdoor Relief to all such cases, owing to the difficulty of preventing collusive desertions. Others withhold it only for six months,|||||or for a year,¶¶¶ or for three years,**** or even for five.†††† On the other hand, some Unions explicitly provide that deserted wives shall be treated as if they were widows.‡‡‡‡ One island Union does the same if the husband is "beyond the seas,"§§§§ whilst others give relief, notwithstanding their fear of collusive desertions, if there are several children.|||||| There are several Unions which, apparently without consideration of the effect on the children, make the Outdoor Relief to deserted wives conditional on the women and children first going into the Workhouse—the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described—for such time as the Guardians think fit.¶¶¶¶ If there is any validity in the assumptions of the

* Rules of Langport Board of Guardians.

† Rules of the Holborn Board of Guardians and many others. But various other Unions only exclude the mothers of young illegitimate children, and one (Norwich) merely forbids Outdoor Relief "until the child is at least three months old." At North Bierley, such cases have to be dealt with by the full Board; and the Board of Guardians of St. Thomas, Exeter, has a regular scale of 1s. 6d. per week prior to the birth of the child, and 3s. 6d. per week for four weeks afterwards.

‡ Rules of Kingsclere, Hartley Wintney, Weymouth and Farnham Boards of Guardians.

§ Regulations of St. Mary Abbot's, Kensington, Board of Guardians.

‖ This was recommended in a Local Government Board Circular of December 2nd, 1871. In Ireland Outdoor Relief to a widow with fewer than two dependent children is forbidden by statute (10 Vict., c. 31, sec. 1).

¶ Rules of Lewisham and Holborn Boards of Guardians.

** Rules of Mitford and Launditch Board of Guardians.

†† Rules of Banbury Board of Guardians.

‡‡ Rules of Monmouth Board of Guardians.

§§ Rules of Ellesmere Board of Guardians.

|||| Rules of Cardiff, Merthyr Tydvil, Narberth and Carmarthen Boards of Guardians.

¶¶ Rules of Anglesey and Burnley Boards of Guardians.

*** This was actually recommended in a Local Government Board Circular of December 2nd, 1871.

††† Rules of Marlborough and South Molton Boards of Guardians.

‡‡‡ Instructions to Relief Committee, Prestwich Board of Guardians; Regulations of Docking, Rugby, and Long Ashton Boards of Guardians.

§§§ Regulations of Leicester Board of Guardians.

|||| Rules of the Glanford Brigg Board of Guardians.

¶¶¶ Rules of the Brighton, Lewisham, Boston, Hinckley, Petworth, Farnham, Clutton, Lymington, Carmarthen, Cardiff, Swansea, Bath, Richmond, Haverfordwest, and Prescot Boards of Guardians. This was recommended by the Local Government Board Circular of December 2nd, 1871.

**** Rules of Horncastle Board of Guardians.

†††† Rules of Aston Board of Guardians.

‡‡‡‡ Rules of Leigh and Rochdale Boards of Guardians.

§§§§ Rules of Anglesey Board of Guardians.

|||||| Rules of Wakefield, Worksop, Leeds, Burnley and Alnwick Boards of Guardians.

¶¶¶¶ Rules of Crediton and Tiverton Boards of Guardians. The provision for the wives and families of absentee soldiers, marines, sailors, militiamen and Army Reserve men called up for service is equally diverse. In many Unions, the Bylaws forbid Outdoor Relief to any such cases; in others (*e.g.*, Docking and Medway), the Bylaws provide for it to be given at discretion; at Rugby, and Bristol, it can be given by the whole Board; at Wakefield and King's Norton, only if there is more than one child; whilst at Croydon the scale explicitly allows so much for each child. When in 1877 the Local Government Board was urged to prohibit Outdoor Relief to this class, it refused to do so.

Report of 1834 that an absence of uniformity in Poor Law administration, produces discontent amongst paupers and a perpetual shifting from place to place in order to take advantage of the Guardians' laxity, the divergencies in policy in the cases of widows with children, or widows who have had an illegitimate child, or deserted wives or unmarried mothers, would appear to be just those in which these assumptions would be most likely to apply.

Some Boards push their test of conduct beyond the applicant himself; and deny Outdoor Relief to applicants "residing with relatives of immoral, intemperate, or improvident character, or of uncleanly habits."* There are even Bylaws in many Unions—in spite of an express statutory provision that such women should be treated as widows—forbidding the grant of Outdoor Relief to "married women (with or without families) whose husbands, having been convicted of crime, are undergoing a term of imprisonment"; † a common rule sometimes loosely expressed so as to apply to the dependents of all persons detained in prison, even if merely awaiting trial.‡

But Boards of Guardians frequently have further By-Laws or Standing Orders as o Outdoor Relief, which are based on other considerations than the character or conduct of the applicant. More than a dozen South-country Unions, of which we have seen the rules, choose arbitrarily to limit the grant of Outdoor Relief, without reference to the character or conduct of the applicant, to such persons as have completed two years' residence within the Union.§ In Worksop the deserted wife having one or more children, if of good character, and if, in the judgment of the Guardians, her desertion is from no fault of her own, will, if she has resided within the Union for ten years, be granted 4s. a week, and 1s. 6d. for each child. If, however, she has resided there for any shorter period than ten years, she will only get 3s. a week, and 1s. 6d. for each child.‖ Many other Boards of Guardians profess the enlightened policy of insisting on a sanitary home; refusing Outdoor Relief to anyone, whatever his or her character or conduct, who is living in a cottage or a room "kept in a dirty or slovenly condition"; ¶ or "in premises reported by the Medical Officer of Health to be unfit for occupation, either from overcrowding or from being kept in a filthy condition"; ** or "reported by the Sanitary Officer as injurious to health"; †† or "in the opinion of the Relief Committee detrimental to the moral or physical welfare of the inmates"; ‡‡ or merely "premises in which it is undesirable, on account of its sanitation, condition or locality, that they should reside." §§ This restriction on the home is sometimes widened in scope and sometimes particularised. Thus, Outdoor Relief may be refused to an applicant, however deserving, who has the misfortune to live, as so many of the poor do live, "amid insanitary or immoral surroundings." ‖‖ Applicants must not live in common lodging-houses; ¶¶ nor lodge on premises licensed

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* Bylaws of Alnwick Board of Guardians.

† Regulations of West Derby Board of Guardians, and many others.

‡ Rules of Blandford Board of Guardians, and many others. But the Docking Board explicitly allows Outdoor Relief to the wives and children awaiting trial. On the other hand, the Prestwich Board expressly allows Outdoor Relief to prisoners' wives at discretion; the Chelmsford Board, if there is even one dependent child; other Boards, if there are two or more children; whilst only a few comply with the law (7 and 8 Vict. c. 101, s. 25; Art. 4 of Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order, 1844), and expressly treat them as if they were widows. At Merthyr Tydvil they get Outdoor Relief for the first six months only; whilst at Crediton and Tiverton the reverse course is followed, no Outdoor Relief being given until the wife and children have entered the Workhouse for a time. At Stafford only the wives of men who are hardened offenders, having, at any rate, been more than once convicted of crime, are denied Outdoor Relief. The Haverfordwest Board, on the other hand, denies it only to the dependents of men whose offences have been comparatively venial—that is to say, only if the husband has been given a sentence not exceeding six months; whilst the Holborn Board makes a special exception in favour of wives whose husbands are in gaol for assaulting them.

§ Rules of Newton Abbott, Okehampton, East Stonehouse, South Molton, Wells, Taunton, Blandford, Wellington, Marlborough, Wimborne, Wincanton, Shepton Mallet, Yeovil, Chichester and Medway Boards of Guardians.

‖ Rules of the Worksop Board of Guardians.

¶ Rules of the Godstone Board of Guardians.

** Regulations of the Cardiff Board of Guardians; also at Carmarthen.

†† Rules of the Kingsclere Board of Guardians; also at Bridport, Trowbridge, etc.

‡‡ Rules of the Newport Board of Guardians; similarly at North Bierley, Lichfield.

§§ Regulations of the Darlington Board of Guardians.

‖‖ Rules of the Leigh Board of Guardians.

¶¶ Rules of the Stafford, Newport, Willesden, Lichfield, Dudley, Leigh, Rochdale, North Bierley, Ashton-under-Lyne, Skipton, and Halifax Boards of Guardians.

for the sale of drink;* nor even live in "furnished lodgings," † nor rent "furnished rooms"; ‡ at any rate, if these are such as the Guardians deem "unsuitable." § On the other hand, too good a home is as fatal a disqualification in some Unions as too bad a home is in others. Outdoor Relief is, in some places, refused to persons, whatever their character and conduct, who live "in cottages rented above the average rent of the neighbourhood"; || or in a dwelling of "a higher rent than £3 (per annum ?) in a town or £2 in a rural district"; ¶ or "£5 rent rural and £6 urban"; ** or "£6 rent rural and £7 urban"; †† or "at the gross estimated rental of £10 or upwards"; ‡‡ or who occupy "a cottage and land (small holding)" of any kind; §§ or more than half an acre of land; |||| or any tenement "the rent of which is in the opinion of the Board unreasonably high." ¶¶

But the applicant for Outdoor Relief will, according to the particular part of England in which he or she lives, have also to fulfil other requirements. He or she must not be "living alone in a house;"***or, as it is more usually specified, must be "competent to take care of himself or herself," or be "residing with some person competent and willing to take charge of him or her;"††† or have "friends or relatives to attend to them."‡‡‡ But such relative or friend must not be a daughter, for Outdoor Relief will be refused to "any parent having a girl at home over thirteen years of age capable of earning her living;"§§§ or "over fourteen years," or "above fifteen years."|||||| At the same time, applicants for Outdoor Relief must not live together or share houses with each other, for Outdoor Relief "shall not be granted to more than one family in the same house;" ¶¶¶ nor must they even let off part of a house in lodgings without great discrimination; as "no Outdoor Relief" will be given "to persons who let lodgings or rooms to more than a married couple with children or to more than one lodger;" **** whilst "no woman on Outdoor Relief" is "allowed to take in a male lodger except by permission of the Relief Committee"; †††† nor may she have resident with her "any woman with an illegitimate child or children." **** We may add that in some Unions no Outdoor Relief is allowed to any person having a dog in his possession, or "keeping a dog or gun, or holding a licence for either;" ‡‡‡‡ or having an allotment ("except by way of loan";) §§§§ or, in one case, "keeping dogs, horses, donkeys, cows or poultry." ||||||||

The question of thrift seems to be a puzzling one to Boards of Guardians. As we have mentioned, many Unions require the applicant for Outdoor Relief to "have shown signs of thrift."¶¶¶¶ Yet, as we have seen, the occupation of a small holding, the holding of an allotment, the keeping of a cow or a donkey, or the possession of poultry is, in some Unions, actually a cause of disqualification.***** So is the possession of a cottage, a Post Office annuity, or a tiny investment of any sort, for "no Outdoor Relief" except as a loan, will be given to persons in receipt of money derived from property"; ††††† or except

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* Rules of the Richmond, Stafford, Lichfield, and Leigh Boards of Guardians.

† Rules of Medway Board of Guardians.

‡ Rules of Bristol Board of Guardians.

§ Rules of the Leigh and Skipton Board of Guardians.

|| Rules of the Kingsclere, Beaminster, Richmond, Bridport, Trowbridge, Hartley Wintney, Whitchurch, Merthyr Tydvil, Farnham, and Romsey Boards of Guardians.

¶ Rules of the Aberayron Board of Guardians.

** Rules of the Ellesmere Board of Guardians (limit raised in 1900 to £6 rural, and £7 urban)

†† Rules of Whitchurch Board of Guardians.

‡‡ Rules of the Leigh Board of Guardians.

§§ Rules of Anglesey Board of Guardians.

|||| Rules of Ellesmere, Whitchurch, and Langport Boards of Guardians.

¶¶ Rules of the Leek Board of Guardians.

*** *Ibid.*

††† Rules of Hemel Hempstead Board of Guardians; similarly at St. Neots, Hitchin, Towcester, and St. Albans.

‡‡‡ Regulations of Bristol Board of Guardians.

§§§ Rules of Newport Pagnell Board of Guardians.

|||| Rules of Hardingstone and Luton Boards of Guardians.

¶¶¶ Regulations of the Prescot Board of Guardians.

**** Rules of the King's Norton Board of Guardians.

†††† Rules of the Norwich Board of Guardians. At Ashton-under-Lyne widows may not take in male lodgers at all.

‡‡‡‡ Rules of Hartley Wintney, Mitford and Launditch, and Shardlow Boards of Guardians.

§§§§ Rules of Hartley Wintney Board of Guardians.

|||||| Rules of Farnham Board of Guardians.

¶¶¶¶ Rules of the Forehoe Board of Guardians.

***** "Another practice which I regard as objectionable is that of refusing relief because the applicant may keep a pig or fowls, both of which certainly mean food, and perhaps bring in a little money." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 72681, Par. 23.)

††††† Bylaws of the Alnwick Board of Guardians.

"to the actually destitute."* The only form of saving which Boards of Guardians seem willing to recognise and encourage in the concrete, and not merely by abstract advice, is that of subscription to a friendly society. In one Union, according to its Rules, "no Outdoor Relief" will be given "to any applicant under forty-five" unless he is actually "drawing sick pay from a friendly society."† Apart from the recent statutory direction that allowances from such a society not exceeding 5s. a week are to be altogether excluded from the Guardians' consideration, various Unions arrange for subscribers to "Benefit Societies to receive special consideration."‡ "A person who has been a member of a friendly society for at least ten years and has ceased to be a member through no fault of his own"—or the widow of such person—may even receive 6d. a week above the ordinary scale of Outdoor Relief.§ But even in this matter many Boards of Guardians limit their encouragement in various ways. Only one seems willing to exclude all "club pay . . . . in fixing the amount of relief."‖ Others will not take into account "any sum exceeding 10s. per week received from a Benefit Society," ¶ or even anything in excess of the bare statutory sum of 5s. a week; ** or only half of any such excessive savings.†† Various other Unions so far limit their Outdoor Relief to those who have provided themselves with sick pay, as to insist that the sick pay, together with the Outdoor Relief, must never exceed "the usual rate of wages."‡‡ There are even Unions which profess by their By-laws to ignore the recent statute; thus one will only leave wholly out of consideration such pay not exceeding 2s. 6d. a week, and will treat any greater provident insurance up to 5s. a week as if it were 2s. 6d., unless the applicant has a wife and family dependent on him.§§ Some other Unions still retain Bylaws providing merely for the supplementing of the sick pay by such Outdoor Relief as may be needed for support.‖‖ And the Runcorn Board of Guardians still defiantly print, in their Yearbook for 1906–7, the old-fashioned rule that "sick money received from a club by an applicant for relief shall be taken at the full value."¶¶

Even more inconsistent one with another are the local Bylaws relating to the earning of wages. Some Boards of Guardians profess to prohibit it altogether, ordaining that "no person in receipt of permanent Outdoor Relief shall be permitted to work for wages,"*** except, say some Boards of Guardians, widows to whom Outdoor Relief has been granted, who are expressly permitted to "work for wages."††† The prohibition is put in another form by Boards of Guardians which forbid Outdoor Relief "in aid of wages or other earnings."‡‡‡ Sometimes it is only earning more than a specified maximum that is made a disqualification for Outdoor Relief—more than 2s. per head per week, at Barton-upon-Irwell; more than 4s. per head per week at York and Halifax; or more than half a crown per head per week after paying the rent, at King's Norton and Bolton.§§§ The Worksop Board of Guardians makes an express exception for widows and deserted wives, who are thus permitted to earn money.‖‖‖ On the other hand, not only is a woman allowed to earn money to supplement her Outdoor Relief, as at Hitchin and Worksop; but various Boards of Guardians so far recognise the earning capacity of their recipients of Outdoor Relief as to lay down regular scales of relief diminishing in proportion to earnings. Thus the Prestwich Board of Guardians explicitly provides that "in case of relief given in aid of earnings . . . . where the earnings amount to at least one-third of the sum named in the scale . . . . the maximum amount of relief, including such earnings, shall not exceed the amount named in the following scale, viz., two persons, 6s. . . . six persons,

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* Rules of Whitchurch Board of Guardians.
† Rules of Romsey Board of Guardians.
‡ Regulations of the Lewes Board of Guardians; similarly at Godstone, Trowbridge, Petworth, Colchester, Chertsey.
§ Rules of the Keynsham Board of Guardians.
‖ Rules of the Worksop Board of Guardians.
¶ Regulations of the Burnley Board of Guardians.
** Rules of the Rugby Board of Guardians; similarly at Swansea and Derby.
†† Regulations of the Bristol Board of Guardians.
‡‡ Rules of the Aylesbury Board of Guardians; similarly at Banbury and Cheltenham.
§§ Regulations of the Leicester Board of Guardians.
‖‖ Rules of the Anglesey, Docking, and Mitford and Launditch Boards of Guardians.
¶¶ Rules of the Runcorn Board of Guardians.
*** Rules of St. Neots Board of Guardians. Analogous rules exist at Hertford, Wycombe, Leominster, St. Albans, Hemel Hempstead, Hitchin and elsewhere.
††† Rules of the Hitchin Board of Guardians.
‡‡‡ Rules of Mitford and Launditch and Whitchurch Boards of Guardians.
§§§ Rules of Boards of Guardians of Unions named.
‖‖‖ Rules of Worksop Board of Guardians.

14s. per week."* Another way of effecting the same result is to say that "the relief granted shall be on such a scale that, with the income coming into the house from other sources the amount shall not exceed 3s. per head."† On the other hand the Leigh Board of Guardians ignores any income or other resources not exceeding one-third of the scale of Outdoor Relief.‡ The earnings from letting lodgings are sometimes systematically computed and deducted from the amount of Outdoor Relief according to the scale in force; thus at Cheltenham, a male lodger boarding in the house is reckoned as equivalent to 2s. a week profit, and a female lodger at 1s. 6d. a week;§ whilst in the neighbouring town of Warwick a male lodger is regarded as worth 3s. per week.‖ Where the applicant lives with relatives, it is provided in the Bylaws of some Boards of Guardians that the aggregate earnings and income from all sources of the whole family group shall be taken into account, whether or not the members are legally liable to maintain the applicant.¶ Sometimes this is put in the form that Outdoor Relief will be refused to a widow "able to do all the usual household duties" who has an unmarried son at home "earning full weekly wages."** The climax is perhaps reached in those Unions in which Outdoor Relief, far from being restricted to the destitute, is explicitly confined, in the case of widows with children, to those who can prove that they are earning not less than three shillings a week.††

This analysis of local Bylaws reveals, we think, a hopeless confusion of policy on the crucial question of how far Outdoor Relief should be restricted to those who have been thrifty in the past, or who are still exerting themselves to earn a partial livelihood. Some Boards of Guardians profess to abide by an entirely contrary interpretation of the Poor Law, and to confine Outdoor Relief to the actually destitute. "It is the duty of a Board of Guardians," says one Board, "to relieve actual destitution, that is to say to relieve the poor who are unable, without support from the rates, to provide themselves with the absolute necessities of life,‡‡ and who have no relations who can be required by law to maintain them; but not to administer charity in the sense of alleviating the lot of those who are poor, but not actually destitute."§§ "Under the Poor Law," says another Board, "destitution, not poverty, gives the only claim to relief from the Poor Rates."‖‖ "Society," says another Board, "owes relief to those only who, by force of circumstances, are rendered unable to provide for the necessaries of life; to distribute relief in any other case is to create mendicity, to encourage idleness, and to produce vice. The function of the Guardians is to relieve destitution actually existing, and not to expend the money of the ratepayers in preventing a person from becoming destitute. Public relief is designed to meet destitution irrespective of the particular person, or of his good or bad character."¶¶

But whatever may be otherwise prescribed, an examination of the scales of Outdoor Relief embodied in these Bylaws makes it clear that these doles and allowances are practically always professedly fixed on the understanding that the applicants have earnings, or other sources of income, without which they must inevitably starve. Indeed, there are only two or three Unions in England in which we have found the case of persons having absolutely no means expressly differentiated in the Bylaws from that of persons

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* Rules of the Prestwich Board of Guardians. Other Boards direct that: "Any earnings of the family shall be taken into consideration in computing the amount of relief"—*e.g.*, Standing Orders of Ashton-under-Lyne, and Skipton Boards of Guardians.

† Rules of Skipton Board of Guardians.

‡ Rules of Leigh Board of Guardians.

§ Regulations of Cheltenham Board of Guardians.

‖ Rules of Warwick Board of Guardians.

¶ "No Outdoor Relief" will be allowed "to persons residing with relatives where the united income of the family is sufficient for the support of all its members whether such relatives are liable by law to support the applicant or not" (Rules of Northwich and Bradford Boards of Guardians).

** Rules of Godstone Board of Guardians.

†† Rules of Chorlton and Salford Boards of Guardians.

‡‡ In another Union, it is "a sufficiency of the common necessaries of life" (Regulations of St. Mary Abbot's, Kensington Board of Guardians).

§§ Bylaws of Richmond (Surrey) Board of Guardians.

‖‖ Rules of Godstone Board of Guardians; similarly at Calne, Luton, Oundle, North Bierley, Hemel Hempsted, St. Neots, Rugby, Hitchin, Farnham, Chard, Bedford, etc. The Williton Board of Guardians, on the other hand, make it a condition of "the *maximum* Outdoor Relief" that the applicants are destitute.

¶¶ Rules of Preston Board of Guardians.

working for wages or having other sources of income.* The lowest scale that we have come across is that of Hertford, which grants for each adult only 1s. a week and 5 lbs. of flour, or its equivalent in bread.† More usual is it to find the scale allowing 2s. 6d. per week for an adult (as at Bedminster, Prestwich, Nantwich, Epping, etc.); or 3s. (as at Cheltenham, North Bierley, Hardingstone, etc.); or 3s. 6d. (as at Warwick); though in a very few Unions it is put at as much as 4s. (as at Newport), and even 5s. (as at Loughborough and Bradford). For each child residing at home one Union still gives only 6d. and 5 lbs. of flour,‡ others 1s. and a loaf,§ occasionally 1s. and two loaves,‖ and in some cases 1s. 6d.,¶ or 2s.**—in most Unions, we understand, without anything additional being allowed for the mother, if she is an able-bodied widow—as compared with the 2s. per week for each child which the guardians of Bradford and Sheffield think necessary in addition to a sum for the mother herself. The scale is put in more complicated form at Derby beginning with man, wife and one child at 5s., and rising to man, wife and ten children at 12s. 6d. or widow and ten children, 13s. 8d.†† being about half what would be allowed at Bradford. One Union has a "summer scale" and a "winter scale," both very low, allowing a married couple with one child 5s. a week in summer and 7s. a week in winter; with 1s. additional for each further child.‡‡ It will be evident that, even allowing for differences in the cost of living, the lowest of these widely divergent scales of relief, can be described only—to quote the words of the Clerk of one of the most important Unions—as "starvation out-relief." §§

(B) The Practice as to Outdoor Relief.

The "Babel of principles" as to Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied, revealed in the foregoing analysis of the Bylaws formulated by the different Boards of Guardians, is in flagrant disregard of the policy of National Uniformity recommended in the Report of 1834. Moreover, we cannot take even these Bylaws as measuring the diversity that prevails. So far as we have been able to ascertain, only two-fifths of the Unions have any rules at all, the remainder professing to deal with each case "on its merits." Even where Bylaws or Standing Orders as to relief still appear in print, they have in many cases become obsolete, or are in practice more frequently transgressed than adhered to.‖‖ Our special Investigators into Outdoor Relief report that "Many Boards have drawn up scales of relief for their own guidance. These are printed, hung up, and often disregarded! 'Each case on its merits' is the formula used to conceal much caprice, prejudice and favouritism. The result is injustice. There is neither the superficial equality of treatment which adherence to a rigid scale gives, nor the deeper equality of treatment according to ascertained need. There is little or no attempt at discovering the whole position of a case and meeting it in a thoughtful fashion. Guardians prefer to give small sums to many persons to thoroughly helping a few. For the last fifty years the deterrent and repressive aspects of the Poor Law have been urged upon them. They have disagreed and rebelled, but instead of attempting a thorough-going remedial policy, they have halted halfway, and settled down to slipshod inquiry and the soothing dole. They are not relieving destitution, but supplementing small and precarious incomes."¶¶ It was in

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* "At Bradford, widows with dependent children who are unable to go out to work in consequence of their whole time being required in properly attending to their children; who have no adult male lodgers; whose children do not sell or beg in the streets; who attend to their children's health and cleanliness; and whose habits in every way are satisfactory to the Guardians or their visiting inspector," get 5s. a week for the mother, 4s. for the first child, 3s. for the second child, and 2s. for each of the other children, an exceptionally liberal scale. In other cases, the earnings of each child worker in excess of 1s. are deducted from the scale"—(Standing Orders of Bradford Board of Guardians).

† Rules of Hertford Board of Guardians.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Rules of Cheltenham, Epping, and Warwick Boards of Guardians.

‖ Regulations of Rugby Board of Guardians.

¶ Rules of Derby, Shardlow, Beaminster, Exeter, Prestwich and Loughborough Boards of Guardians.

** Regulations of the Merthyr Tydvil Board of Guardians.

†† Rules of the Derby Board of Guardians. The Medway Board of Guardians gives a widow with three or more children, 1s. 6d. per child; with fewer than three, 2s. per child.

‡‡ Rules of Bucklow Board of Guardians,

§§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 36025. In Kensington, the Board of Guardians directed it to "be assumed that in this parish a single person can live on 3s. 6d. per week *besides rent*, and a man and wife on 6s. 6d." (Regulations of Kensington Board of Guardians).

‖‖ "They are continually evaded." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. CI. (par. 15) of Vol. V.). "Refusals are seldom based upon the rules," reports an inspector, "even in Unions where such profess to be in force." "In practice," reports another inspector, "there is little difference between the Boards which have adopted regulations, and those which have not."

¶¶ Interim Report of Inquiry into the Effect of Outdoor Relief . . . in the Counties of Suffolk and Cambridge, by Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 17.

view of these facts that we paid special attention to the actual practice in different parts of the Kingdom, with regard to the grant of Outdoor Relief; alike in our oral examination of witnesses, in our personal visits to see Boards of Guardians and Relief Committees at their work, and in the appointment of special Investigators.

We find certain characteristics almost universal, alike in those Boards of Guardians which have formal scales of relief, and those which "treat each case on its merits." The dole given is practically never adequate to the requirements of healthy subsistence. The sums awarded are almost mechanically doled out, according as the Relieving Officer reports the applicant to come into one or other wide category, as widow, sick husband, aged person, etc., without any real consideration of the sum that it would require properly to maintain each household; and without any accurate ascertainment of the other resources. "They do not confess that they have a scale," says one of the Inspectors;* "but the frequency with which 1s. or 1s. 6d. per week will be given for each dependent child, and 3s. for each adult, makes the so-called "treating the case on its merits," really amount to the same thing." The Guardians, reports an experienced Clerk, "get into their heads that 2s. 6d. or 3s. a week is the proper sum, and they give it to a great number."† What weighs with them is that, if they give some such dole, "they have got rid of the case."‡ "As a matter of fact," reports one Local Government Board Inspector, "these half-crowns, eighteenpences and shillings are given because the facts are not ascertained."§ What we have ourselves seen of the practice of Boards of Guardians in different parts of the country completely confirms this testimony. "There are," noticed one of our Committees, "no relief rules or fixed scales, yet all the evils of rules and scales of relief are in existence. It is a rule to give 2s. 6d. to an aged person; sometimes 6d. less, but rarely ever more than 2s. 6d. One case was that of a widow, sixty-seven years of age, living alone; the rent was 2s. 6d. (a week); they granted only 2s. (a week); there was no other known income."‖ Many specific cases of wholly inadequate relief came before the notice of our Investigators. "This inadequacy," they report, "strikes us as being particularly injurious in the case of widows who have young children dependent upon them;"¶ to whom, as we have mentioned, only 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week is usually allowed for the entire maintenance of each dependent child. So important did this allegation appear to us—affecting, as it did, the conditions of life of no fewer than 170,000 children in England and Wales whom the State is maintaining on Outdoor Relief—that we appointed special Investigators to enquire into the conditions under which these children were living. The result of this Inquiry was to prove conclusively that, "in the vast majority of cases," the amount allowed by the Guardians is not adequate. "The children," sums up our principal Children's Investigator, "are undernourished, many of them poorly dressed, and many barefooted. . . . The decent mother's one desire is to keep herself and her children out of the workhouse. She will, if allowed, try to do this on an impossibly inadequate sum, until both she and her children become mentally and physically deteriorated. . . . It must be remembered," adds this medical expert, "that semi-starvation is not a painful process, and its victims do not recognise what is happening. . . . We give relief without knowing whether the recipients can manage on it; we go on giving it without knowing how they are managing on it."**

Along with this fact that the Outdoor Relief given is practically never adequate for healthy subsistence, goes the other fact, which we find almost invariable, namely, that Outdoor Relief is professedly not intended by the Guardians for those who are really destitute but for those who can, in some way or another, see their way to a few shillings a week.†† There has grown up, we are informed, a regular practice of giving Outdoor Relief in order to supplement the assumed other sources of income, whether petty earnings,

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 5092.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 35975.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 35937. The result is, as one witness informed us, that: "Either the spirit of cadging is fostered, and concealment encouraged, or else the people are left in a state of misery, children ill-nourished and ill-clad, old people half-starved on bread and tea." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 32267, Par. 11.)

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 8870.

‖ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 33 B, p. 82.

¶ Memorandum by Mr. A. D. Steel-Maitland and Miss R. E. Squire, p. 1.

** Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. Ethel Williams, 1908, p. 88.

†† Generally, in cases of Outdoor Relief, says one witness, "The applicants are not, as you might say, really destitute, and they are not actually starving; but their income is such as to necessitate some . . . addition." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 22863.)

charitable gifts * or contributions from relations—to such an extent, indeed, that applicants often fictitiously magnify these resources in order to induce the Guardians to grant the dole of Outdoor Relief; and Guardians will even refuse to grant Outdoor Relief, where the applicant, however worthy, really has no other means of livelihood at all.† We have already seen to what an extent the Bylaws of the different Unions recognise the receipt of sick pay from a friendly society, and even sometimes require it as a qualification for Outdoor Relief. The occasional allusions in the Bylaws to such sources of income as letting lodgings, cultivating gardens or allotments, or keeping a dog "for the purposes of his business," and even working for wages, thus become intelligible. So plain did it become to us that women, in particular, were habitually granted Outdoor Relief in aid of their wages or other earnings that we thought it necessary to appoint special Investigators into this practice all over England and Scotland.‡ These Investigators found many thousands of women who were regularly in receipt of Outdoor Relief, working as charwomen, laundrywomen, and domestic servants (outdoor); in dressmaking, tailoring and all the "needle" trades; in shoe-making and weaving, confectionery and box-making; in factories and workshops as well as in their own homes; holding permanent situations as well as temporary engagements; for weekly, daily and hourly wages as well as at piecework rates. Even the aged persons who are granted Outdoor Relief are habitually assumed to have some other means of support. Those who have absolutely no resources must, nearly everywhere, go to the Workhouse—to the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described. It is, indeed, clear that of the three to four million pounds a year annually given in Outdoor Relief, the greater part is given, not in relief of destitution, strictly defined, but in aid of poverty.§

We do not at this point discuss the debatable question of whether or not this almost universal system of granting Outdoor Relief in supplement of earnings, charitable gifts or the contributions of relations has injurious results upon either the market rate of wages or the flow of charity. We thought it important, however, to ascertain what steps were taken by the Boards of Guardians to satisfy themselves, before granting their manifestly inadequate doles of Outdoor Relief, as to the actual existence of the other resources which they tacitly assumed to exist, and as to whether the amount of such resources, joined with the Outdoor Relief, was sufficient, and no more than sufficient, for the proper maintenance of the household. We regret to say that, excluding a very few exceptionally administered Unions, we found nothing worthy of the name of an ascertainment of even the existence, let alone the amount, of any such resources. "In a great many instances," testifies the Clerk of a great urban Union, "Guardians guess at the amount that is coming in, and think that because there are charities in the neighbourhood these people must be getting some of it, whereas in some cases I fancy they do not get quite as much as the Guardians imagine they do."‖ The Guardians, in fact, as an Inspector assured us, "leave a good deal to the imagination in cases of that sort."¶ The Guardians, said another witness, give such inadequate relief "in the hope that there are (other resources); I do not think they give it from definite information at all."** This testimony is borne out by what we have ourselves seen of the way in which Boards of Guardians deal with the cases. "There was hardly any evidence," notes one of our committees, "that anything more than the statements of the applicants was used in deciding their cases. Very little verification except a visit to the home."†† "Enquiries as to resources," notes another

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* "One reason," said a Guardian, "of the slackness in properly relieving is the knowledge that there is so much charity money. The statement is made that friends will help, which means that the people beg to increase their miserable income." (Report . . . on Endowed and Voluntary Charities in certain places, and the administrative relations of Charity and the Poor Law, by A. C. Kay, and H. V. Toynbee, pp. 62, 110.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 19975–19980.

‡ *See* the several Reports on the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and other Conditions of Employment, by Miss Constance Williams and Mr. Thomas Jones; in London, in England generally, in Shropshire, in Suffolk and Cambridge, in Scotland, respectively; together with the "Final Report," by Thomas Jones.

§ "The Poor Law," sum up our Investigators, "was once supposed to deal with destitution rather than with poverty. To-day, however, the persons helped have few resources rather than absolutely none. . . . The policy of Out-relief throughout the country is one of granting small weekly doles to the aged and infirm, and small allowances per child to the widow with dependents. . . . Some Guardians encourage applicants to earn all they can, and do not reduce the relief. It is unusual to cut down relief when wages rise, except in the case of children beginning to earn." (Final Report of Inquiry into the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and the Conditions of Employment, by Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 10.)

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 35936.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 12729.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 32217.

†† Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 13, p. 26.

committee, "are practically not made at all. . . . Widows with children receive varying amounts; it seems quite a matter of chance how much."*

The lack of an ascertainment of resources does not always result in too little being given. We are convinced, not only by the testimony of competent witnesses, but also from our own observation, that Outdoor Relief is sometimes granted in cases in which the home could be quite well maintained without it. "It is far from infrequent," one official witness assured us, "to find that the Outdoor Relief paupers are in possession of considerable sums of money, or have other means, which they had not divulged to the Relieving Officer."† Owing to the persistent refusal of the Guardians to allow proper investigation, says the Superintendent Relieving Officer of a large London Union, "we are done every day we rise."‡ "Altogether seventeen cases were heard," notes one of our committees, "and the applicants seen. The majority of these cases were widows and children, the relief being on an unusually adequate scale. Thus, a widow with three children dependent, and earning 14s. a week and some food, was given 7s. a week relief, bringing her total weekly income up to 21s. and food. In another case a widow with four dependent children, and one boy earning 15s. a week, with a total income to the family of 25s., received 7s. a week, bringing their total income up to 32s. a week for six persons."§ We may cite in confirmation some recorded cases. "A widow living with her single daughter . . . aged thirty-nine, who was working at the ——— shoeworks and earning an average weekly wage of 18s. 3d. Two sons gave their mother 1s. each weekly, which made the income 20s. 3d. weekly for two persons. Guardians granted 3s. 6d. and 6d. grocery in addition. The Relieving Officer . . . reported each time the case came before the committee that 'it was not a case of destitution.'"‖ A Local Government Board Inspector "stated that on the morning he was present relief was granted where the united earnings of the family amounted to 34s. per week."¶ Two glaring cases were brought to our notice in which Outdoor Relief, to the extent of 3s. and 5s. a week respectively, was granted to two families, of which the total earnings were, in the one case 40s. 9d., and in the other 51s. 6d. per week.**

It is possibly connected with this general lack of ascertainment of the applicant's resources, combined with the absence of any guiding principle, that we find an amazing diversity in the treatment of similar cases, not only between Union and Union, but even within the same Union. We have ourselves noticed this divergence between committee and committee of one and the same Board of Guardians, uncontrolled by any superior authority.†† Nor is this by any means exceptional. "I have found," sums up one of the Local Government Board Inspectors, "different committees of the same Board dealing quite differently with similar classes of cases, which is obviously wrong." In a town where this habitually takes place, "it is known," testifies a competent witness, "that paupers shift from other districts of the town, where the maximum is not always given, to the more favoured locality and get the maximum."‡‡ Indeed, apart from divergence of practice between different Relief Committees of the same Union, we have ourselves noticed—what is in fact notorious—that the same Relief Committee of the same Board of Guardians will deal differently with similar cases (and even with the same case) at successive meetings, according to the accident of which of the Guardians happen to be present. "It is often a matter," say our Investigators, "of persuading a Guardian to take up the case. If the appeal succeeds, at the next meeting of the Relief Committee, the Guardian will present the claims of 'My Mrs. Smith' much as an outside charity worker will. When such personal relations are established there may

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* *Ibid.*, No. 75, p. 145.

† Evidence before the Commission, Q. 39776, Par. 13.

‡ Report on the Effect of Outdoor Relief . . in London, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thos. Jones, p. 13.

§ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 22, p. 49.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix XX. (A), to Vol. IV.

¶ *Ibid.*, Q. 49888, Par. 19.

** *Ibid.*, Q. 11889.

†† After seeing the relief work in a certain Union, one of our Committees reported: "There are three Committees which grant relief, but no uniformity is aimed at between them. There are no rules laid down for their guidance, and there is no commonly accepted guiding principle in the minds of the respective Committees." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 96, p. 112.)

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, Q. 52742. "I have known cases," deposed a Relieving Officer, "where outdoor relief has been refused in one district, but granted readily upon the applicant removing to and applying in another district" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXVIII. (Par. 26) to Vol. V. "There is not a fixed policy . . . each Committee varies . . . it depends who is sitting on the Committee." (*Ibid.*, Q. 50680.)

be as much or as little fraud in the one case as in the other, for in neither is inquiry always thorough."* "It was evident," noticed one of the committees, "that the amount actually given in each case varied according to whether such applicant had or had not a personal advocate among the Guardians. Thus, in one case personally advocated by a Guardian, an old man and his wife, living with their married daughter, and paying no rent, received 6s. a week. In another case, not vouched for by any Guardian, a woman aged fifty-eight, and disabled by debility, paid rent 1s. 9d. a week, and had no relatives able to assist her, yet she only received 3s. 6d., leaving her 1s. 9d. a week to live on after paying her rent."† Such cases of inequality of treatment, owing to the accidental or deliberate absence or presence of particular members of the committee are, we are informed, frequent;‡ and can, we are assured, with an Authority constituted as at present, scarcely be avoided.

We now come to what appears to us the worst feature of the Outdoor Relief of to-day. With insignificant exceptions, Boards of Guardians give these doles and allowances without requiring in return for them even the most elementary conditions.§ They are bound by statute to require that the children of school age should be in attendance at school, and this alone is what the average Relieving Officer sees to.‖ As we have mentioned, many of the Bylaws require the recipients of Outdoor Relief to live in houses that are maintained in a sanitary state, and in homes kept reasonably clean. But whether or not the Union has Bylaws to this effect, it is plain that, in the vast majority of cases, no such condition is enforced.¶ We draw here a distinction between the completely rural Union and that of the great town or urban district. In the former, though the conditions are not ideal, the lowest depths are rarely sounded. So far as the towns are concerned we have ourselves visited the homes of recipients of Outdoor Relief in Union after Union, only to find their condition, in the majority of cases, distinctly unsatisfactory, and in many instances, simply deplorable. We have found innumerable cases of gross insanitation and overcrowding, and not a few of indecent occupation. We have seen homes thus maintained out of the public funds in a state of indescribable filth and neglect; the abodes of habitual intemperance and disorderly living; and this—as it grieves us above all to say—even in families in which the Boards of Guardians are giving Outdoor Relief to enable children to be reared. One of our Committees, after visiting the homes

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* Report . . . on the Effect of Outdoor Relief . . . in London, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thos. Jones, p. 55.

† Report of Visits by Commissioners, No. 43 A, p. 94.

‡ Evidence before the Commission. *Q.* 36263, Par. 2. The Rochdale Board of Guardians appointed a special Committee in 1904 to consider why Outdoor Relief was mounting up. "The chief fact impressed upon us by our investigators," reported this Committee after detailed inquiry, "has been the inequalities of the Orders made, inequalities not only between the Orders of Committee and Committee, but between the Orders of the same Committee. By inequalities we mean variations in the relief allowance to cases of the same class in which circumstances are practically identical. . . . The Relieving Officers when asked what explanations they could give in the matter," alleged "that meetings of the same Committee are not always attended by the same members, and that views on cases, and the resultant Orders, vary with the varying composition of the meetings." The cases adduced indicate that one Committee differed from another in the amount of relief given to apparently similar cases by as much as the difference between 2s. 6d. and 4s.; whilst the same Committee would give, now 3s., now 5s., to seemingly identical cases. (Report of Special Committee appointed to consider the Question of Outdoor Relief, Rochdale Union, 1905.)

§ This has been pointed out to us by the Secretary of a Charity Organisation Society. "I consider," says this witness, "that from the first it should be clearly explained to the recipients that this supervision is a necessary condition of Out-relief. . . . I believe such increased supervision in the home would tend to diminish the desirability of Out-relief and act as a deterrent. . . . It would also ensure a much better result from the expenditure in Out-relief, and tend to diminish pauperism in some degree." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXII. (Par. 16) to Vol. VII. "Out-relief," say our Investigators, "when given under the supervision of an Officer or Guardian with a turn for constructive helpfulness, may improve an applicant's character or industrial position or domicile. Thus pressure from the Ipswich Board forced a woman from irregular sack-sewing at home, to cleaner and more permanent work at the stay factory. But this conception of a constructive function attaching to the granting of Out-relief is very rare, and is only met with in an individual here and there." (Report . . on the Effect of Outdoor Relief in England, by Miss Williams and Mr. Thos. Jones, p. 8.)

‖ The Metropolitan Relieving Officers' Association actually suggested to us that even this minimum of supervision of the household on Outdoor Relief should be dispensed with. "Seeing that school fees are abolished, it is unnecessary that Guardians or their Officers should be compelled to obtain evidence of children attending school." (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.*22535 (Par. 7), 22791, 22792, 22793.)

¶ There is even a contrary tendency. As we have already seen in the by-laws, some Boards of Guardians discourage the habitation, by persons on Outdoor Relief, of rooms or cottages of too high a rental. "If," sum up our Investigators, "Guardians think a woman is paying too much rent, she is told to move to cheaper rooms. Sometimes this hastens deterioration by withdrawing the support of a respectable street and placing the woman and children in an unfavourable environment." (Report . . . on the Effect of Outdoor Relief . . . in London, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thos. Jones, p. 63.)

of the Outdoor paupers in a large urban Union, reported "that the Guardians in distributing Out-relief pay no attention to the sanitary conditions in which the applicants live; that bedridden cases are not properly looked after; that there seems to be serious overcrowding; and that Out-relief administered on these lines . . . must not only lower the standard of public health and hinder the work of the Sanitary Authorities, but must also be really injurious to the recipients."* Another Committee "visited some thirty to forty Out-relief cases. For the most part they are living in houses which reflect most serious discredit on the Sanitary Authority, and on the great companies which have attracted to the district a large population. The overcrowding is of such a kind that ordinary decency is impossible; both sanitary accommodation and water supply are most inadequate."† A third Committee, visiting the Outdoor Relief cases in one of the principal cities of England, "went on to a wretched street; many of the houses stood forsaken with broken windows and doors, dirty, forlorn, and tumbling to pieces. We knocked at one which was inhabited. The door was opened by a big, hulking man, the son-in-law of the recipient of Outdoor Relief. She was blind, and lay on a dirty bed in the front parlour; she looked neglected, and the room was very dirty, the walls dilapidated. Almost the entire space was occupied by the blind woman's bed, and that of her daughter, who lay, I thought, not sober, certainly very dishevelled, though it was mid-day. I wondered how much of the Out-relief went to the blind bedridden mother, and how much to the daughter and her big husband."‡ Another Committee, attending the meeting of the Relief Committee in a great town, reports that "Drunkenness seemed to be considered a venial fault. In one case a widow with children had been receiving relief for two years, although the Guardians had several times been informed that she was drinking. She subsequently became a prostitute, neglected her children, was prosecuted and imprisoned at the instance of the N.S.P.C.C. Her children were taken charge of by the Guardians, and it was on her release from gaol that the case came up . . . as to what should be done with the children. We could not help feeling that the lax grant of Out-relief probably contributed to the moral ruin of this woman's life."§ So much were we impressed by what we had ourselves seen that we requested the Local Government Board to ask their Inspectors for general reports upon the character of the homes in their districts into which Outdoor Relief was being given.‖ These reports unfortunately bear out our own impressions. "The outdoor poor relieved in all large cities," reports one of these Inspectors, "may be broadly classified in three divisions: first, a minority of really respectable and decent folk" whose homes "are generally kept clean and often comfortable"; next, "the bulk of the recipients of out-relief who have sunk into pauperism from various causes or combination of causes, some self-created, such as drink, vice and thriftlessness. Old age, sickness, general inefficiency and lack of industrial training account for many cases. The homes of this class vary considerably according to individual character and circumstances. . . . Taken as a whole, their condition is not very much worse than their neighbours who are not chargeable, and sometimes it is better." But there is, as he adds, a third class to whom Boards of Guardians persist in giving Outdoor Relief without

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* Reports of Visits of Commissioners, No. 43 B, p. 95.

† *Ibid.*, No. 44 B, p. 97.

‡ *Ibid.*, No. 45 C, p. 102.

§ *Ibid.*, No. 19, p. 44. "There is no supervision," the Clerk of one of the most important Unions informs us, "as to how the Out-relief is expended. Many instances have come to the Guardians' notice where it has been ridiculously misapplied." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 39776.) Of one Yorkshire Union we are told that:—"Cases struck off the roll for misconduct are very infrequent, not one per annum. . . . When relief is stopped for immorality, the offenders appeal again to the Guardians and are reinstated." (Report . . . on the Effect of Out-relief in England, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thos. Jones, p. 83.) In one large town, "the Relieving Officers could recall but one case reported for bad conduct during the last three years." (*Ibid.* p. 63.)

‖ Summary of Reports on the Conditions of the Outdoor Poor by certain of the General Inspectors of the Local Government Board. The reports themselves were supplied to the Commission, but it was thought better to print only a summary of them, and to omit references to particular Unions. We therefore omit all names of persons or places. We append a few further quotations from these authoritative Reports. "There is no doubt whatever," says one Inspector, "that a large number of the Outdoor paupers are living in an environment of filth and immorality, and in many cases I fear they are participants in, and abettors of, these foul, insanitary and degrading conditions." Another says, "The conditions are very often bad indeed, and are quite incompatible with decent living for the adults or with a respectable and healthful upbringing of the children where they exist. . . . In the same street the Relieving Officer stated he had four other cases all living in single cellar rooms."

requiring any improvement.* "Too frequently they represent the most demoralised and diseased of the population. They include sane epileptics, imbeciles and cripples of the lowest class. Their homes are nearly always to be found in the poorest quarters where population is densest. Cleanliness and ventilation are not considered of any account. The furniture is always of the most dilapidated kind. The beds generally consist of dirty palliasses or mattresses with very scanty covering. The atmosphere is offensive, even fetid, and the clothing of the individuals, old and young, is ragged and filthy. Bankrupt in pocket and character, this class look to the rates to support them, and are never backward in making application. The children are neglected, furnish the complaints of the N.S.P.C.C. inspectors, and fill the homes of the Guardians. The men are drunkards, gamblers, workshy boys and often criminals. The women are too often immoral as well as unclean and neglectful. *Souteneurs* may be included in this class. . . . It is impossible with the present powers to deal satisfactorily with the various sub-sections of (this class). . . . The Guardians feel forced to give relief to bad cases because of the children, or for fear of some allegation of want of consideration to destitute ruffians or drunkards." We wish carefully to guard against it being supposed that this description applies to the bulk, or even to the majority, of the cases on Outdoor Relief. There are among them, even in the large towns, numbers of worthy and decent people of sober and respectable lives. But it is necessary to realise that, under the present administration of Outdoor Relief, there are many recipients who are of the kind described in the foregoing graphic report. And this report, authoritative in itself, is confirmed by those of the other Inspectors. "I found," writes one of them after visiting the Outdoor Relief cases, "far too much intemperance, and sometimes even drunkenness, in cases to which relief was being granted. It was most observable in the overcrowded quarters and slums. Closely allied to it, and as a rule the fruits of it, were filth, both of person and surroundings; and sadder even was the neglect and resultant cruelty to children who were ill-fed and ill-clad. . . . Though the living-room might be fairly clean, the rest of the house was a mass of filth, the bedding dirty, a heap of ill-smelling rags for bed clothes, and the atmosphere vile and vicious. In some instances even the living-room was a disgrace to humanity." We must add that another Inspector reports that "a not inconsiderable proportion of Guardians" take the view, first, that the disposal "of the relief granted by them is a matter for which not they, but the recipients, are responsible; and, secondly, that, however small the relief given to a person with little or no other apparent means of subsistence, it is no one's business to inquire further if the applicant is satisfied." "The first of these views," continues the Inspector, "which I have heard expressed even by a Chairman of a Board of Guardians, is almost an incitement to a careless parent to waste on drink money which should be devoted to the nourishment and clothing of the children; while the second may mean a bargain between a parsimonious Board of Guardians and liberty- or license-loving paupers for the lowest terms on which they will keep out of the workhouse." The same testimony is given, with a special emphasis derived from his professional experience, by our Medical Investigator. "The worst kind of public policy," sums up Dr. McVail, "is that under which an Authority representing a community confers personal benefits without any accompanying requirement of good order or obedience. I heard of a Relieving Officer in an urban Union who, reporting on an application, recommended that relief be refused because the applicant was a lazy loafer, continually to be found at public-house corners, and any money he received would be spent in drink. A Guardian listening to this report indignantly demanded to be told: What right has anyone to interfere with how a man spends his money? The wrong policy is crystallised in the Guardian's query. It is surely obvious that if individuals or their dependants are to be selected for maintenance in whole or in part by local rates or Imperial taxes,

* We give one case as it was reported by our Committee which heard it dealt with. "Widow, 53, two married sons and one son single at work, younger son, and one son, invalid, suffering from early phthisis, and two girls 12 and 9. The widow was a drinker threatened with paralysis. The single sons, the mother, and the two daughters lived together. The single son at work gave all his wages, 16s., to the mother. Half the rent of 5s. 6d. was paid by one of the married sons. The Guardians decided to give 4s. in kind weekly to the widow, and urged by the Chairman she agreed to 'put no obstacle' in the way of the phthisical son being sent by the Guardians to a sanatorium. As the mother was a drunkard, it seemed hardly well to give Outdoor Relief. If the House had been offered, the mother would have been kept from drink, the phthisical son sent to a sanatorium, and the girls cared for at the Cottage Homes. Now one fears the Outdoor Relief will promote the drinking and not stop the infection, from which one of the members of the family had already suffered and, died." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 25 A, p. 66.) Our Medical Investigator adduces the following case:—"A woman with three children, all suffering from itch, refused to go into the workhouse, and received Out-relief without any restriction on their movements. . . . The whole family lived unrestrainedly in the poor part of a town, mingled with others of their class, and had every opportunity to spread the disease." (Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. C. McVail, 1907, p. 60.)

they should in their maintenance be duly controlled by the authority which supports them. The principle is so elementary as hardly to require setting forth, but under the Poor Law it is abrogated every day of the year and every hour of the day. . . . Persons suffering from the most serious transmissible maladies are afforded relief without prevention of opportunities to inoculate the healthy or contaminate the next generation. . . . Phthisis cases are maintained in crowded unventilated houses where there is unrestrained facility to convey the disease to their own offspring. Diabetes cases live on the rates and eat what they please. Infirm men and women supported by the Poor Law are allowed to dwell in conditions of the utmost personal and domestic uncleanliness. Widows get money for the upkeep of their family without any advice or requirement as to the spending of it, or as to the healthy rearing of their children. . . . It is not worth while entering on any reform of the Poor Law unless this policy is changed. Beneficiaries must be compelled to obedience alike in their own and in the public interest." *

The gravest part of this indictment appeared to us to be the allegation that thousands of children, whose maintenance was being paid for out of public funds, were being brought up in homes such as have been described. We therefore specially directed the attention of the Investigators, whom we appointed to report on the conditions in which the children on Outdoor Relief were being brought up, to the moral environment in which they found these children to be living. The result was a complete confirmation of the testimony already adduced. The report† of our Investigators, with great wealth of statistical detail, divides the mothers of the 170,000 Outdoor Relief children into four classes: the first good, the second mediocre, the third including "the slovenly and slipshod, women of weak intentions and often of weak health, not able to make the most of their resources;" and the fourth "the really bad mothers; people guilty of wilful neglect; sometimes drunkards or people of immoral character . . . . unfit to have charge of children." The percentages of the different classes were found to vary greatly. In the rural districts, whilst the third or unsatisfactory class is large (19 per cent.), the fourth or unfit is small (6 per cent.). In the towns, conditions are, as a rule, much worse. We may honourably except Bradford, where Outdoor Relief is administered with great discrimination, but even here a few mothers of the fourth class were found in receipt of relief. In other towns the results of the investigation were simply appalling. In one great urban Union, in which every Outdoor Relief child was actually seen and inquired into—to say nothing of those living with "unsatisfactory" mothers—the number living with "really bad mothers—people guilty of wilful neglect; sometimes drunkards or people of immoral character"; all "unfit to have charge of children"—amounted to 18 per cent. of the whole number of children on Outdoor Relief. In another great Union, similarly completely investigated, this terrible percentage rose to as much as 22.‡ To sum up, our Investigators estimate that the number of Poor Law children on January 1st, 1908, in the very unsatisfactory homes of the third class, in England and Wales, is more than 30,000. The number of those in the fourth class where the home is demonstrably wholly unfit for children, is no fewer than 20,000.§ We can add nothing to the force of these terrible figures.

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* *Ibid.*, pp. 148, 149.

† Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908.

‡ It is, of course, only one result of such a way of bringing up the citizens of the future that (as was confidently asserted by the Clerk of an important Union) "there is no doubt that the children of Out-relief cases frequently become paupers themselves" (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 39776, Par. 26).

§ Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, pp. 61–63. It must, moreover, be remembered that all these figures present only the numbers of each class simultaneously in receipt of Outdoor Relief on one day. In 1892 it was found that the number of separate children relieved during the year was nearly two and a half times the total for one day (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix to Vol. I., p. 22); and this proportion was approximately confirmed by the result of the "year's count" that we had made. Thus, the total number of children relieved by the Poor Law during the year, but exposed to improper conditions, must exceed 100,000.

With regard to the 30,820 children under 16 on Outdoor Relief in Scotland (apart from children "boarded out") we have no statistical evidence. But, at any rate so far as the large towns are concerned, we have ascertained that, in many cases, the home conditions are deplorable. One of our colleagues, after watching the administration of relief in a large Scotch town, notes as follows:—

> "What struck me—apart from the procedure—was the complete ignoring of the probable "consequences of the decisions upon the children of the applicants. In phthisical cases, persons "were put on the roll for aliment, or struck off as fit for work, by the decision of the assistant "inspector, without any regard for the probable infection of the rest of the family. When I "suggested that a phthisical patient from whose family aliment had been withdrawn, on his discharge "from the hospital as fit for work, would infect his nine children, the assistant inspector merely "remarked that they were probably already infected. I then discovered that the eldest daughter, "marked on the case-paper as phthisical, had died in the interval of phthisis—a fact which, whilst "bearing out the inference, hardly improved the case." (Reports of Visits of Commissioners, Scotland, not yet in volume form.)

With regard to the 18,000 children on Outdoor Relief in Ireland (apart from children "boarded out") we have practically no information.

(c) The Cause of the Failure of the Present Administration of Outdoor Relief.

It becomes now our duty to state what, in our opinion, is the cause of the disastrous social failure of the present administration of Outdoor Relief. In order that any policy of domiciliary treatment of persons in need of support may be pursued without the gravest social and economic peril, the authority charged with its administration must be so constituted as to ensure the fulfilment of three fundamental conditions. There must be, in each case dealt with, an accurate ascertainment, first, of the particular needs of the applicant; and second, of the economic, sanitary and other circumstances of the household. There must be, further, in each case, an impartial judgment, upon uniform principles, whether, on the ascertained facts, relief or treatment in the home is necessary and desirable, and if so, to what extent. Finally, if the relief is not to become, in many cases, demoralising to the recipient, and injurious to the community as a whole, there must be imposed and enforced conditions as to the manner in which the publicly subsidised household shall be maintained, appropriate to the needs of each case. In our opinion, the Local Authority to which this important duty has been confided in the case of the Poor Law, namely the Board of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, and the Parish Council in Scotland, with its staff of Relieving Officers, is, by its very nature, inherently incompetent to fulfil the requirements that we have postulated.

(i.) *The Destitution Officer.*

We must begin with the Relieving Officer, who has to deal with all applicants for relief, whether men or women, children or aged, sick or well, in respect of the one characteristic of destitution. This "Destitution Officer," as he may be called, is, we are told, "very largely the pivot on which the Poor Law works."* And this is specially so in respect of Outdoor Relief. With regard to institutional relief, the Relieving Officer is but the portal; once the pauper has entered any Poor Law institution, the Relieving Officer has no further concern with the case. With regard to Outdoor Relief, on the other hand, this officer is, from first to last, all-important. It is to him that all applications have to be made.† It is he who has to decide, in the first instance, whether the applicant is eligible for relief at all; and in many cases his refusal is conclusive. He alone decides whether the applicant stands in need of immediate succour, and he administers what he judges to be necessary. It is he who visits the applicant's home, in order to form a judgment as to all the circumstances of the case. If there is ill-health, real or simulated, it is the Relieving Officer who decides whether or not to give the applicant access to the Poor Law Medical Officer; and indeed, whether the case is sufficiently grave to send into the Workhouse, or whether it should be treated at home.‡ It is he who decides, on his own responsibility, whether a poor person is sufficiently obviously of unsound mind to be forcibly conveyed, pending judicial determination, to the Workhouse or infirmary; and when, as some guide for this purpose, the "family history" is inquired into, it is upon the same officer that this difficult and delicate duty falls.§ It is on his report that all cases come before the Guardians. It is, in the vast majority of instances, his information alone beyond the applicant's own statement, that is supplied to the Guardians; whether that information relates to the earnings or other resources of the applicant, to the ability of his relatives to assist him, to his past character and present conduct, to the sanitary state of the house and street, to the cleanliness and decency of the home, to the number and conditions of the family, to the state of health and ability to work of the applicant, and even to the infectious or contagious nature of a disease such as phthisis, from which the applicant or some member of his family may be suffering, and to the likelihood of recovery under the conditions of the home.‖ It

* Evidence before the Commission, Q. 22652.

† *Ibid.*, Q. 232.

‡ "I use," testifies a Relieving Officer of twenty years' standing, "an equal amount of care and discretion in deciding what is a genuine and proper case for medical relief, as I do in any kind of case for relief other than medical." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. CXXVII. (Par. 1 (b)) to Vol. IV.) This is complained of by Mr. Sydney Holland, the Chairman of the London Hospital, and by other witnesses of medical experience. "I question," says Mr. Holland, "whether a Relieving Officer is the person to deal with it at all." (*Ibid.*, Q. 32866.)

§ "The Relieving Officer," deposes a representative Poor Law medical officer, "either upon his own authority in obvious cases . . . or upon the direction of a Justice of the Peace after medical examination in less apparent cases, conveys the alleged lunatic to the Workhouse or infirmary for detention until the Justice decides whether the case is fit to be discharged or to be transferred to the county asylum. . . . The family history is always gone into, but that is gone into by the Relieving Officers." (*Ibid.*, Qs. 26172 (Par. 1), 26199.)

‖ "In this district," reports a Local Government Board Inspector, "there are twenty cases of phthisis receiving Outdoor Relief."

is on the report of this Destitution Officer that the Guardians have to rely in such momentous issues of fact as to whether the character of a particular mother is or is not such as to warrant her being entrusted with the rearing of her children; or whether a particular tradesman is or is not a suitable person to whom to bind a boy apprentice. The Relieving Officer is even required to discover and state what is the cause of the destitution into which the applicant has fallen.

But all this array of duties, varied as it is, amounts only to the ascertainment of different classes of facts. When the case comes before the Board of Guardians, the Destitution Officer has to decide on a policy—has, that is to say, to give to the Guardians his responsible and authoritative advice as to the kind of relief, the amount of relief and the conditions of the relief that, according to the law of the land, the directions of the Local Government Board, and the best economic doctrine, the case ought to receive.* We have been puzzled, indeed, to discover what exactly is assumed to be the right relation in this respect between the Relieving Officer and the Guardians before whom he brings his cases. From the authoritative evidence of the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, experienced Clerks to Boards of Guardians and Poor Law experts, it appears that Relief Committees ought to be guided by specific recommendations from the Relieving Officer in each case, and that contrary action on the part of the Guardians calls, as a rule, for official criticism, if not for censure. "The Guardians," complains an Inspector with regard to some of his Unions, "will over-ride the plain facts of a Relieving Officer's statement, and deal with a case contrary to his advice."† "I rather fear," regretfully admits the Clerk of a great Midland Union, "that . . . . the reports of our Relieving Officers are not always acted upon."‡ It is "where the administration is bad" that "the Relieving Officer is set aside," suggests Mr. C. S. Loch, to which an Inspector replies "that is so."§ This being the view taken by their official superiors, it is not surprising to find that the Destitution Officers themselves place a high estimate on their right to pass judgment on the cases,‖ as well as to ascertain the facts. "Relieving Officers," asserts one of them, "should be held responsible for the strict and proper administration (of the Poor Law), and should not be interfered with in any shape or form, and if possible, should be given greater powers. From the time of application the Relieving Officer should see

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* How completely the Destitution Officer may himself adjudicate on his own cases may be gathered from the following description, by one of our Committees, of the procedure of the Relief Committee of a great urban Union. "The Committee sat on one side of a counter, the Relieving Officer on the other, with a pile of money beside him. He took names in order from the Application and Report Book (which seemed to be very fairly kept), summoned the applicant, stated the facts of the case, allotted the relief, and handed it to the applicant, at the same time giving a card to the Chairman of the Committee for endorsement. By this method, thirteen cases were decided in one Committee in four minutes." (Reports of visits by Commissioners, No. 5A. p. 18.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 7599. "Sometimes," says another Inspector, "a Relieving Officer makes a recommendation, and the recommendation is not accepted. . . . Sometimes the people have friends at Court, and the Relieving Officer may be over-ruled." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 5613–4.) "Fortunately," observes another Inspector, "the Relieving Officers as a rule have a sufficient sense of their own responsibility to make them withstand an extreme adoption of this policy, and even on the laxest Board of Guardians a sprinkling is generally to be found, to whom the officer can look for support." With regard to one important Union we have been supplied with a list "of case after case which has been reported by the Relieving Officer as unfit for Outdoor Relief, where the Committees have granted Outdoor Relief in opposition to the wishes of the officers." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 46893–6, and Appendix No. XX. (A) to Vol. IV.

‡ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. CXXVIII. (Par. 24) to Vol. IV.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 8523. "A Relieving Officer," complains Sir William Chance, "may be thwarted and discouraged in every way by individual Guardians until he gives up his efforts in despair." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 27061, Par. 41.) "The Relieving Officers," remarked an experienced Chairman of a Board of Guardians, "struck me as being very good men, who would administer the relief with greater discrimination if the local Guardians exercised a little less control over them." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 102, p. 169.)

‖ The poor themselves often regard the Relieving Officer, not the Board of Guardians, as their judge. When a new and reforming Relieving Officer came to a great Northern town, he presently found himself persecuted as the oppressor of the poor. "First of all," he relates, "I had my house broken into three times in three months. . . . I prosecuted two men, and one of them got a long term of imprisonment. It culminated in my family being attacked. My daughter was assaulted in the streets; my wife was followed about from the tramcar up to my house, and in the streets she was abused, and life became perfectly intolerable. An attack was made upon my daughter; she was almost stripped in the streets. A crowd of between 200 and 300 persons assembled outside my house, and I had to seek police protection. I came on the scene, and I recognised the ringleaders, who were three women. One was a woman whose husband had been prosecuted for desertion, one who had obtained relief by false pretences, and the other an unsuccessful applicant for relief, who was a drunkard. I prosecuted them, or rather the Board did on my behalf, and they were sentenced to imprisonment; but right the way along I was persecuted to such an extent that I have had to send my wife and children to live outside the boundary of my district." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 40050.) Similar evidence was given by the Superintendent Relieving Officer of West Ham. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 20487–20493.)

the case straight through, viz., kind and amount of relief to be given, recovery of maintenance from relatives, settlement and removal of paupers, etc."*

The function of the Destitution Officer is, however, not exhausted when he has ascertained the facts, and given to the Guardians his judgment upon them. He has also to carry out the course of relief decided on, alike in its responsible and in its mechanical aspects. "When the proceedings of the Guardians are ended," says an Inspector, "the real work of the Relieving Officer commences. He has to pay the new relief which has been granted, as well as the old cases; and he has to be ready to receive fresh applications as well as fulfil other duties and responsibilities which differ in different Unions. . . . To begin with he has his own books to keep. He has to remove pauper lunatics to the Workhouse or Asylum. He is nearly always Collector to the Guardians: in other words, the official who finds out what relatives of paupers are liable and able to contribute to the maintenance, and collects these contributions. For this he is paid a percentage. A good Collector must carry on a large correspondence, and the office, if properly filled, is a very necessary and important one."† It is, moreover, the duty of the Relieving Officer to watch carefully all the cases relieved, and to take upon himself the responsibility of reporting to the Guardians any facts which, in his judgment, ought to cause the relief to be stopped or varied.‡ If any pauper gets drunk, or begins to lead an immoral life, the Relieving Officer must take the initiative. He will himself stop the Outdoor Relief, in bad cases, and inform the Guardians at their next meeting.§ Nor is the work over when all the persons actually in receipt of relief have been dealt with. It is on the Relieving Officer, not upon the Board of Guardians, that rests the legal, as well as the moral, responsibility, in cases in which Outdoor Relief has been refused, and the applicants have not entered the Workhouse, for keeping the family continuously under observation, so as to be prepared to grant instant succour on "sudden or urgent necessity," in the event of any member of the family falling dangerously out of health in consequence of destitution.‖ We shall refer again to this responsibility at a later stage of our report.

The combination in a single Destitution Officer of such heterogeneous functions is, in our judgment, fatal to the establishment of an efficient service.¶ Struck by the imperfect qualification of the Relieving Officers for their varied and responsible duties, we asked what had been prescribed in the matter by the Local Government Board, only

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* *Ibid.*, Appendix No. CXXVII. (Par. 7) to Vol. IV. *See also* the Evidence of the President of the Metropolitan Relieving Officers' Association, which gives in a moderate and able manner, the attitude of the good Relieving Officer to his Board of Guardians. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 22532–22906.)

† *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XV. (A) (Par. 55) to Vol. I.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 19576.

§ One of our Committees heard a case dealt with in which the Relieving Officer had himself stopped the Outdoor Relief of a widow for a week, merely because her children's attendance at school was very irregular.

‖ We have had it forcibly brought to our notice that it is clearly the law that Relieving Officers are liable to criminal indictment for any negligence in relieving the poor; and that, if a person dies in consequence of such neglect, whether he has made application for relief or not, the officer may be committed to stand his trial for manslaughter (*see* Clark *v.* Joslin, 15 Cox Criminal Cases, 746, and R. *v.* Curtis, 27 *Law Times*, New Series, 762; Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 936–72, 1221, 13911–9, 22723–8). Such a case occurred in 1885 in England and one in 1893 in Scotland, where an Inspector of Poor had "thought his duty ended with the offer of the Poorhouse" (Procurator-Fiscal *v.* Sinclair, P.L.M. 1893, 387). "It has," we were informed, "been an official rule for a great many years" that, where an applicant has not accepted the offer of the house, the Relieving Officer should, by visits and inquiries, ascertain the conditions of the case from day to day so as to be able to give instant succour if needed. (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 956–7, 3520.) "There is always a criminal responsibility hanging over him." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 41062.) It is interesting to note that in this liability to the criminal law, as in other respects, the Relieving Officer in England and Wales has, in effect, simply succeeded to the old Overseer of the Poor, whose failure was ascribed to "the medley of confidence and menial duty" entrusted to him.

¶ A minor drawback of the combination of functions of the Destitution Officer is that there can be no adequate check on the accounts of an officer who, in his own person, alike receives the application, recommends the amount of relief, communicates the decision to the applicant, reports the facts on which its continuance depends, and week by week pays with his own hands the amounts awarded. It is not merely that the paupers, being still officially assumed to be unable to write, give no receipts. So long as one and the same officer is the sole medium of communication between the Board of Guardians and the pauper, so long will it be impossible, by any system of audit, to prevent a careless or dishonest Relieving Officer from paying the aged or the bedridden 6d. a week less than the Guardians have granted, from continuing such allowances for months after the old people have died, or from omitting to enter some of the shillings contributed by relatives. Such offences have been accidentally discovered in a few instances, and the delinquent officers sentenced to imprisonment. (*See* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 5947.) Only a few Unions have Cross Visitors, and a few others pay clerks, who may be made to serve to some extent as a check upon the Relieving Officers. We cannot regard it as satisfactory that the most helpless of the poor should be no better protected against a particularly mean fraud, or that a sum of more than £3,000,000 sterling should be annually dispensed with no greater security against peculation.

to find that no qualification whatever was required.* Nor could the Inspectors or the Clerks to Boards of Guardians suggest to us any qualification or training that could advantageously be insisted on for the office as it at present exists. "There is no standard," explained to us one of the Inspectors, "there is no college of Out-relief, there is no Faculty."† "You might impose an age limit," suggested another Inspector, "you might do some good by that; you might impose a certain amount of reading, writing and general information as a qualification, but I do not know that that would help you very much. It is very difficult to suggest a qualification which would ensure your having the men you want for the Poor Law work."‡ Even such examinations as those now required in the case of Sanitary Inspectors and Factory Inspectors could not, we were informed, be exacted from Relieving Officers, because "you cannot define a Relieving Officer's work." "You want the Sanitary Inspector to do certain definite work, but the Relieving Officer has no definite work. An Inspector of Factories and an Inspector of Nuisances . . . . have certain definite duties to perform, for the performance of which you can ascertain their competency to a great extent by examination; but with regard to Relieving Officers you cannot do that."§ And this we agree is substantially the case, not because this Destitution Officer's duties are indefinite, but because they are not limited to one specialism, or even to two specialisms. It does not appear to us that one and the same officer can be qualified to obtain accurate and sufficient information on (1) the financial resources and circumstances of the household and its relatives; (2) the sanitary environment, personal health and *prima facie* need for treatment or removal of the various members of the family; and (3) the educational requirements of the children, and the *prima facie* fitness for their nurture of the home and the parents. These three sets of leading facts seem to us to require, in each case, a certain measure of specialised training, which cannot be expected to be found combined in one investigator at between 30s. and £3 a week. The same is true with regard to improving the sanitation of the home, to seeing that the Medical Officer's orders are obeyed, and to giving the necessary advice in matters of personal hygiene, for lack of which, at present, the Outdoor Relief for the infant fails to keep it alive, and that given to the phthisical father too often results in the contamination of the family. Similarly neither the financial officer nor the health visitor can supervise the children's schooling, test the home influence, and see that proper apprenticeship or corresponding training is in due course provided. And if this is true of investigation and execution, still more is it true of the responsible task of recommending what financial assistance, if any, the economic circumstances of the household warrant, and by whom the burden should be borne; or what kind of education and what general regimen each child or each sick person requires.

It will be unnecessary to point out, to those who are conversant with English Local Government, how adversely the absence of any prescribed qualification acts upon the selection of persons for any salaried post. A Board of Guardians, having no definite test of fitness to apply to candidates for a vacant Relieving Officership is apt, at best, to take refuge in the known probity of an entirely inexperienced neighbour or a minor subordinate; and, at worst, to fall a prey to mere favouritism and jobbery or even (as in some notorious recent cases) a squalid corruption. We are glad to find that the first of these alternatives is that which the majority of Boards of Guardians have chosen. The 1,700 or 1,800 Relieving Officers as a class appear to us to be upright and honourable men, hard-worked and poorly remunerated, regular and diligent in the performance of what they conceive to be their duties. But not infrequently, as we regret to have to report, the impracticability of any professional training and the absence of any prescribed qualification, has resulted, in some Unions, in the office being filled, not by the men best fitted for it, but by those who most desire it and have friends at court. "Relieving Officers," says Sir William Chance, "are often appointed for every other reason except that of a knowledge of their duties."‖ "Many have qualified for the work," report our

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1052–6, 1872–3.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 7603.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 8943. The only courses of training and professional examinations for Relieving Officers that have been established are those started by the School of Sociology and Social Economics in London. The training has so far taken the form only of short courses of lectures. The examinations have been confined to the elements of the law relating to the relief of destitution, the special accounts to be kept, and the economic doctrines usually known as the "Principles of 1834." But this is to leave out of account the whole question of the course of life to be required from those to whom Outdoor Relief is granted. Apparently, there has been no thought of the instruction of the Relieving Officer in hygiene and sanitation, none in the methods of investigation, and none in the educational requirements of children, subjects which, however necessary for any proper performance of a Relieving Officer's duties, could scarcely be taught with the rest in the time available.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 9021, 9026, and 9028.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 27061, Par. 41.

own Investigators into Outdoor Relief, "as soldiers in the South African War, as Scripture-readers, or as gate-porters."* "You will sometimes see a man appointed as a Relieving Officer," testifies a Local Government Board Inspector, "simply because he has failed in everything else . . . he may have failed as a farmer; he may have failed as a contractor; he may have failed as a road surveyor; he may have failed in any sort of line of business to which he has devoted himself; but if he be well known and have a quantity of friends they will find something for him."†

But the difficulty of securing the appointment of suitable persons is not the only way in which the mixture of duties injuriously affects this Destitution Officer's service. It is one of the minor tragedies of the present arrangement that, as some of the best Relieving Officers have complained to us, the very heterogeneity of their functions, involving the absence of expert *technique* and the lack of any definite standard of professional efficiency, has a deteriorating effect on their character. Like the Workhouse Master and Matron, and for the same reason, this "Mixed Officer" almost inevitably comes to despair of the preventive and curative side of his task. "Any leaning towards thorough investigation," says our Investigator, "and plan-full relief which he may have had at his appointment, the Guardians will have steadily discouraged. The result is routine . . . The average officer has no policy, he works by rule of thumb."‡ Dealing indiscriminately, as this Destitution Officer must, without specialist training, with the vagrants and the unemployed, the widows and the unmarried mothers, the aged and the infants, the sick and the children, he is driven to ignore the special features of each class—and it is on these special features that its successful treatment depends—in the one common attribute of destitution. The one thing that is clearly expected of these Destitution Officers by their official superiors is to stave off this destitution from becoming pauperism.§ It is for a diminution in the number of unemployed men on the Outdoor Labour Test, in the number of deserted wives relieved, or in the number of medical orders granted, that the "model" Board of Guardians and the zealous Local Government Board Inspector will praise the Officer. "Their work," say our Investigators, "is such as to breed suspicion of their fellow men, and the more efficient the officer the more he comes to pride himself on his acuteness in ferreting out impostors."‖ They are, we fear—to use the words of one witness before us—"expected to make it disagreeable for applicants to apply."¶ "The general feeling," says another witness, "is that Relieving Officers are more in the nature of watch-dogs"** than anything else. The result is that even the kind and humane officer, excluded by lack of professional training from successful curative or preventive treatment of any one of the different classes with which he has to deal, feels it almost his duty to become, as a Medical Officer of Health complained to us, "a sort of detective who keeps out the improper cases."†† In some Unions, as a clergyman testified, "you do decidedly get men whose manner becomes, after years of work of that kind, harsh, and what you termed deterrent, which is fearfully painful to the deserving poor."‡‡ "It seems," said another witness, "as if the Relieving Officer was too

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* Report . . . on Outdoor Relief in London by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thos. Jones, p. 53.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 8937. There was, we may remind the reader, a similar succumbing to favouritism and jobbery in the appointments of elementary school teacher and sanitary inspector, until these offices were definitely specialised and safeguarded by examination tests and certificates.

‡ Report . . . on the Effect of Outdoor Relief . . . in Suffolk and Cambridge, by Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 17.

§ "The officers," reports a Chairman of a well-administered Union, "begin by considering not what a person wants, but whether the case ought not to go without. . . . They do not accept that the person is entitled to relief, but they rather try to see whether they cannot do without it." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 45545. "The ideal Relieving Officer," states an Inspector, "would be a man who had not a pauper in his district. If a man did his work thoroughly well, he would prevent anyone from becoming a pauper." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 8925.) "When he goes to the home, (he) will find out every possible incident connected with the families, what other resources may be available, whether the applicant can be got into an institution, whether work can be found for any of the children, and a thousand and one incidents by which the inquiry may lead to the solution of the case without its becoming a pauper." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 9414.)

‖ Report . . . on the Effect of Out-Relief in England, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 9.

¶ Evidence before the Commission. *Q.* 32280.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 43700.

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 41637. A special Committee appointed by the Willesden Board of Guardians in 1905, to inquire why Outdoor Relief had risen, reported: "That the whole question of Outdoor Relief depends to a very large extent on the manner in which the various Relieving Officers discharge their duties. The only effective way to prevent imposture and unnecessary relief is by a close and searching investigation into every application for relief, and constant and efficient supervision of those who have been granted an allowance by the Guardians." One Relieving Officer was thereupon censured (MS. Minutes, Willesden Board of Guardians, December 13th, 1905).

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 46249.

often tempted to be a bully. The result is to make the refined among the poor frightened, the weaker ones sly and cringing, the bad or strong-minded insolent and defiant."* For the Relieving Officers, as another witness rather despairingly put it to us, "are desperately tried by deceit and trickery on the one hand, by overwork and by the necessity of *not giving* if it can be helped." So the poor "press and fawn and lie"; and there grows on the unfortunate Relieving Officer the invidious habit of feeling it his duty to "resist and deprecate, and disbelieve."† "Thus," says a Local Government Board Inspector, "the best Relieving Officer is the one who keeps fewest paupers," just as "the best Workhouse Master is the one whose establishment is least loved by the able-bodied loafer."‡

To sum up, it is to the combination of heterogeneous functions in one and the same person that we ascribe the failure of the Relieving Officers to prevent the disastrous social failure in the administration of Outdoor Relief that we have described. It is not, as is sometimes supposed, a question of inadequacy in the number and organisation of the staff. It would, in our judgment, be of no avail to reduce the size of the districts and multiply the number of the officers, even up to such a point that every one of them had only to deal with hundreds, instead of thousands of families. It would not cure the evil to raise, as is sometimes vainly done, one of them in each Union to the post of Superintendent Relieving Officer,§ and to set apart others as Cross Visitors, so as strictly to check the work. What has been found impracticable is not to get a sufficient number of these officers, nor yet to get them to work conscientiously and zealously, but to secure, in any one of them, the manifold training that would be necessary for the really successful performance of their present duties. To fit a man to carry out adequately even the subordinate duties of a Relieving Officer in all their different aspects would require an impossible combination of the training and attitude of an accountant and an enquiry agent, a debt collector and an Assessor of Income Tax, a Sanitary Inspector and a Health Visitor, a School Manager and a School Attendance Officer. To fufil completely the higher moral and legal responsibilities of the office in all its ramifications—to qualify, that is to say, a Superintendent Relieving Officer to determine the policy to be pursued in regard to the due measure of financial assistance to be given, the contributions to be exacted from relatives, the health measures to be adopted, the conduct to be insisted on, and the education to be prescribed, for the children, the unmarried mothers, the widows, the phthisical members of the family, the chronic invalids and the acutely sick—would demand the training and intellectual habits of a Medical Officer of Health, a Director of Education and a County Court Judge.

(ii.) *The Many-Headed Tribunal.*

It is, however, to the Boards of Guardians, not to their Destitution Officers, that Parliament has entrusted the ultimate decision as to the grant of Outdoor Relief. We have therefore inquired how it is that these Boards have been so unsatisfactory in their decisions on the evidence presented to them. It was suggested to us by some witnesses that their failure to deal wisely with the problem of Outdoor Relief was to be attributed, in the main, to the character of their membership, and especially to a certain falling-off in social *status* which is alleged to have taken place since the abolition, by the Act of 1894, of the property qualification and the *ex officio* membership of the Justices of the Peace. Putting aside the question as to exactly what changes in social *status* may have taken place in different Unions, we have satisfied ourselves that, broadly speaking, the disastrous social failure of the Outdoor Relief administration neither began in 1894, nor has been increased or appreciably affected by the changes of that year. Moreover, though different Boards of Guardians tend to err in different directions—some granting Outdoor Relief where it ought to be refused, others refusing it where it ought to be given—we cannot say that, in our experience, we have found the so-called "strict" Boards appreciably different from the "lax" Boards, in such fundamental matters as the complete ascer-

* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 32267, Par. 11. This was confirmed by the manager of a large factory, who complained: "That the Relieving Officer, in his eagerness to keep down the cases, bullied the poor, and was so insolent to those who intervened for them that he had ceased to send deserving cases to him" (Report . . . on the Effect of Outdoor Relief . . . in Suffolk and Cambridge, by Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 17).

† Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. CXLVII. (Pars 12, 13) to Vol. IV. Much evidence as to the harshness of the manners of Relieving Officers was obtained by the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II. *Qs.* 993–4, 1530–2, 6566–70, 7036, 8441, 8557; Vol. III., *Qs.* 15210. 17762–6.

‡ Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1906–7, p. 306 (Mr. Fleming's Report).

§ "The present Superintendent Relieving Officers," testifies an Inspector of exceptional experience, "are of much the same stuff [as the Relieving Officers]; they have been promoted from one to the other." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 12827.)

tainment of facts, the specialised treatment of the different classes, the enforcement on the recipients of properly considered conditions of life, and, above all, impartial uniformity as between committee and committee, between meeting and meeting and even between case and case. The cause of so general and so prolonged a failure, common to all parts of the country, and to all periods of the past three-quarters of a century, must, we suggest, lie deeper than any personal characteristics of particular Guardians, or even of particular Boards.

We discover the cause of the failure of the Outdoor Relief administration in the very nature of the Local Authority itself. There is, first of all, the inherent difficulty that a "Destitution Authority" finds in providing itself with the varied technical advice necessary to the proper domiciliary treatment of so many different classes of persons. Just as the Destitution Authority, as we have seen, inevitably tends to have one General Mixed Workhouse, so it tends to content itself, for all classes alike, with the unspecialised counsel of the one "mixed official" known as the Relieving Officer. When it becomes conscious of the inadequacy of its staff, the only reform it can conceive is to multiply the number of these Destitution Officers, or to set one above the others as Superintendent, or to have one to check the others as Cross Visitor. It is significant that we have not discovered a single Board of Guardians that has sought to equip itself with a differentiated out-relief staff, in which one officer reported on personal hygiene and the sanitation of the home, another on the educational requirements and progress of the children, whilst a third specialised on the investigation of the financial resources and on the recovery of contributions from relatives. But apart from this lack of specialised officers, which is as inimical to successful Outdoor Relief as it is to successful institutional treatment, the present tribunal for hearing and deciding applications for Outdoor Relief has what, in our judgment, is the fatal defect of being a board—a board, by the way, of as many as twenty, forty, or even 100 members.* The Board of Guardians was established mainly for the purpose of administering the Workhouse. But the work of adjudicating upon individual applications for Outdoor Relief differs fundamentally from that of managing institutions. When a committee manages a school or a hospital, it does not decide what shall happen to each particular pupil or inmate. We recognise at once how fatal to efficiency it would be if the managing committee undertook to decide what should be taught to each particular child or gave orders about the treatment of an individual patient. In the administration of institutions, the resolutions of the committee, which are merely general decisions as to policy, do not become instantly and irrevocably operative in individual lives. In arriving at these decisions the suggestions and criticisms, the experience, and even the idiosyncracies of a number of different persons are all of use. The analogous work in the sphere of Outdoor Relief is the formulation, and from time to time the alteration, of the general rules according to which the relief should be given. This is essentially the work of a representative body.

Most unfortunately, the application of this well-established distinction between the functions of a representative body and those of its executive are obscured in the case of the Poor Law by a strong popular sentiment against officialism, and a general impression that the direct interference of the Guardians interposes a human element between the destitute and the soulless letter of the regulations. The Guardians themselves, jealous of the officers and their powers, and keenly alive to the electoral advantages of being able to oblige individuals and to obtain a reputation for sympathy with the poor in whole neighbourhoods, are naturally altogether on the side of popular sentiment in the matter. Even the educated classes are apt to be under the impression that the Poor Law of 1834 earned the execration of all benevolent men by its sacrifice of human rights to inhuman official theory. It is, therefore, necessary to point out that the restriction of a representative body to its proper function by no means dehumanises that function, any more than the fact that the jurymen in a criminal case are allowed neither to make the law nor to devise punishments according to their own fancy, withdraws from the prisoner the protection of that human element without which legal institutions would be impractical. It is not suggested that the Destitution Authority should not investigate grievances, or should be denied that access to the relieved without which it would remain in ignorance, not only of the grievances actually complained of, but of the far more important short-

* The more numerous the membership the less successful is the Board in its work. "It is a matter of common observation with me," reports one of the most experienced Inspectors, "that unwieldy Boards produce a certain uncertainty and laxity in administration." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XV. (A), Par. 85, to Vol. I.).

comings of which neither the paupers nor the officers are conscious. Apart from grievances, the main work of the Destitution Authority, that of drawing up the regulations and deciding general questions of policy, must depend for its effectiveness on continuous contact with and observation of its effect on the destitute, as well as on the community at large. There is, besides, the work of choosing the officers and, when necessary, dismissing them. In the exercise of duties thus scientifically limited there would be far more scope than at present for the exercise of that intelligent public-spirited humanity which at present is literally crowded out of the meetings of the Destitution Authority by the intrusion of individual applicants for relief, appealing to the short-sighted good nature, to the desire for electoral popularity, and to the inevitable tendency of the ward representative to be regarded by his constituents, and finally by himself, as a patron saint at whose intercession the Authority must either grant the prayer or slight the intercessor. We have ourselves repeatedly noticed the members of Relief Committees and Boards of Guardians, whilst the cases were being heard, paying very different degrees of attention to the evidence that was being given before them; swayed very differently by considerations other than those given in evidence; and governed by quite different views of social expediency. The joint decision of so composite a tribunal on individual cases can never be a good one.* All this is intensified if the Board or Committee is selected by popular vote of the districts in which it has to administer Outdoor Relief.† Moreover, the composition of the Board or the Relief Committee, whether elected or nominated, necessarily varies from meeting to meeting, and even from hour to hour. In some cases, to quote the description given by one of our committees, "the Guardians wander from one (Relief) Committee to the other at pleasure," and "administer relief to their own constituents."‡ When the Board does not divide into committees, the effect is much the same. "Each Guardian's attention," says a witness, "is attracted only by cases from his own parish," and, too frequently, "it is turned, during the rest of the time occupied with the relief lists, to other matters, to the loss of silence or orderly procedure."§ Under such conditions it is not surprising to learn, on the testimony of a Guardian in a large urban Union, that "Outdoor Relief granted on one occasion may on the next be reversed, without there being any change in the circumstances, but owing to different Guardians being present. This matter ought not to depend on the views held by individual Guardians, but upon a general policy of the whole, otherwise preferential treatment is obtained by some and in other cases the reverse."‖ "I find in my own experience," testifies the President of the Metropolitan Relieving Officers' Association, "that cases are dealt with differently

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* "Cases," says an Inspector, "are too often decided according to the sympathies of individual Guardians rather than on facts systematically ascertained by Relieving Officers." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. VIII. (A.), Par. 22, to Vol. I.) "The relatively high number of paupers in a parish," says our Investigator, "is sometimes to be explained by the presence of an influential Guardian, whose word carries weight with the Board; not because he is a Poor Law expert, but because he is a prominent county councillor, and very large farmer. He will get cases put on the books much more easily than will an insignificant Guardian, and will obtain a higher scale of relief for them." (Report . . . on the Effect of Outdoor Relief in . . . Suffolk and Cambridge, by Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 16.) It is this consideration which explains the very common hankering, among Local Government Board Inspectors and Clerks to Boards of Guardians, after the grant of more power of deciding cases to the Superintendent Relieving Officer or even to the ordinary Relieving Officer; and which explains also the relative success in this sphere of the far more influential "Inspector of Poor," who, instead of the English Relieving Officer, nominally "advises" the Parish Councils of Scotland.

† "Men being as they are," observes the Chief Inspector of the Local Government Board, "you cannot expect any body of elected Guardians to administer relief in the way which all experience, as I submit, shows to be the one which is in accordance with public policy. The difficulties are too great." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 3249.) We have ourselves come across the gravest instances of electoral perversion of Outdoor Relief. "The pressure at election times," reports our Investigators, "is considerable. 'If the Relieving Officer will not give you Out-relief, come to me' summarises the election addresses of some candidates." (Report . . . on the Effect of Out-relief . . . in London, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 4.) "At the last election," they report of a provincial urban Union, where Outdoor Relief is freely given, "one ward had posters, 'Vote for X. and Out-relief, or for Y. and the Workhouse.'" (Report . . . on the Effect of Outdoor Relief . . . in England, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 68.) "On one occasion," testified an Inspector, "I was pressing very much that a particular Board should inquire into the Out-Relief system, and a very prominent member got up and said: 'We are sent here to give Outdoor Relief to our relations—our fathers and our mothers, and our sisters and our brothers, and our cousins, and our uncles and our aunts—and if we did not do it we should very soon be sent about our business.' That statement was received without dissent from any of them." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 4586.)

‡ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 20. So objectionable is this practice that, in certain Unions, "some of the more conscientious and enlightened of the Guardians refuse to sit on the relief committee dealing with the district which they represent." (Report . . . on the Effect of Out-relief in England, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 96.)

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 69293, Par. 7.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 36263, Par 21.

according to the absence or presence of certain Guardians. Say my Relief Committee consists of eight persons. If Mary Jones comes one week, with certain Guardians present, she will perhaps get 3s. 6d. in grocery; but if she comes the following week before another batch of Guardians, she will perhaps get 5s." * "At present," says an Inspector, the Guardian "considers every case in his ward as 'my case,' and speaks and acts as if he was the specially appointed almoner of the ward that he represents. . . . When the case comes on the Guardian rises, and pleads the cause of his client. . . . I have observed," continues this Inspector, "that when Guardians have stated their cases, and have indeed acted first as counsel, and then as judge and jury for their client, they too often consider they have done their duty, and leave the room." † All this may be very human; but it is so in the sense in which to err is human; and the notion that such humanity is good either for the destitute or for the community at large must be thoroughly shaken off in reforming our system.

This fatal defect of "many-headedness," combined with that of mutability of membership, has, we need hardly say, no relation to the manner in which the board or committee is constituted. It is not a question of the name of the body, or of the method of its election or appointment, or the number of its members, or of the size of the area for which it acts, or even of the character and capacity of its membership. The business to be done is, by its very nature, unfit for decision by the votes of a board or committee, whether elected or appointed. There is in it absolutely no room for sentiment about an individual case, personal acquaintance or neighbourliness. It is, in fact, "one of the weak points" of the present "system of relief," says an Inspector, "that it gives opportunity for favouritism, or that preferential treatment which a spirit of neighbourly friendship is sure to engender." ‡ To let in any such considerations—still more to allow the decision to depend on the accidental presence or absence of particular members—is to deprive the community as a whole of its power of control, and to risk non-compliance with the general rules which, by its elected representatives, the community has deliberately laid down. Far from the plan of decision of individual cases by an elected Board being essentially democratic, the chance whim or the accidental non-attendance of one member becomes the means of thwarting the popular will. This is none the less the case because the interference has been caused by a member who has been himself elected. When, however, the intervention is that of an *ex-officio* or nominated member, the arbitrary and undemocratic character of this assumption of power by an individual member becomes glaringly apparent. The work of deciding whether or not a given case comes within rules, is, in fact, essentially of a judicial character. As such, the only way to obtain effective democratic control, and the only way to secure a uniform impartiality, is to entrust the detailed application of the popularly-formulated rules to one responsible person, adequately trained for and professionally engaged in the task of hearing and weighing evidence, who can be definitely instructed to apply evenly to case after case the principles laid down by the elected representatives of the people.

(D) The Scotch Inspector of Poor.

We have been able to include in one common description, and to subject to one common criticism the administration of Outdoor Relief in all parts of the United Kingdom, whilst paying attention more particularly to England and Wales, because the systems

* *Ibid.*, Q. 22657. "The worst feature in the system is that so many Guardians consider their responsibility ends when the cases from their immediate neighbourhood are disposed of. Over and over again I have seen them get up and go away after the cases from their own parish had been settled." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XV. (A), Par 53A, to Vol. I.)

† Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1902–3, p. 136. (Mr. Bagenal's Report.)

‡ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XV. (A), Par 86, to Vol. I. The testimony is abundant that, as an Inspector puts it: "Local feeling, sentiment, neighbourliness, and the fear of being called 'hard,' are the elements that fight silently against scientific principles of relief." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XV. (A), Par 53A, to Vol. I. It is for this reason that the Inspectors now advise against local relief committees, and even against Guardians serving on the Committee that deals with their own parishes. "It is very difficult," says a Poor Law expert, "to be impartial in your own district, when you know the people and their friends." (*Ibid.*, Q. 17686.) Thus, personal knowledge by the Guardians of the circumstances of the applicant is a positive drawback, and ought, it is suggested, even to be made a cause of disqualification for voting on the case. It is a special defect of the Unions of Wales that: "The Welsh Guardian," says an Inspector, "is practically the Relieving Officer of his parish." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. X. (A), Par 21, to Vol. I.) "The effect of it is," says one of our Committees, "that the Relieving Officer does not go thoroughly into the circumstances of a case, but relies to a great extent upon the local Guardian giving the particulars to the Committee, and naturally the officer does not press his opinion against that of the Guardian, who possibly knows the applicant better than he does. This system is condemned by the Relieving Officers, as it discourages them in thoroughly sifting their cases." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 96.)

and the practice of Ireland and Scotland are, in our judgment, both in methods and results, not essentially different. The resemblance of the Scotch Poor Law to that of England is obscured by differences of terminology. But from the evidence given to us, and from what we have ourselves seen, we have to report that the "aliment" granted by the Parish Councils of Scotland, though commonly less adversely criticised, is open to nearly the same animadversions as the Outdoor Relief given by Boards of Guardians in England. It is at any rate as completely unconditional. It is given with as little real ascertainment of the economic facts of the case. It is administered, not by a body elected to do what is required in the public interest for any particular class of persons, but by what we have called a Destitution Authority, concerned only to relieve the destitution of all. It is very frequently, if not quite so universally, inadequate for any healthy subsistence. In one respect, however, the working of the system in Scotland appears to us to be more in accordance with the recommendations of the 1834 Report and less open to criticism than that of England, namely, in being given with greater uniformity. We have been impressed with the much greater approach in Scotland to identity of treatment of similar cases in the same parish, and of similar cases in different parishes. We attribute this greater evenness and impartiality of administration to two important differences between the Scotch and English organisations. In Scotland, and not in England or Ireland, there is an appeal from the decision of the Destitution Authority, on some points to the Sheriff, and on others to the Central Authority. Whilst the number of such appeals to the Local Government Board for Scotland is not large, we believe that the effect of the right of appeal in securing general uniformity of treatment is wholly advantageous. But the most important respect in which the Scotch organisation differs from the English is, in our judgment, the existence in each parish of an Inspector of Poor, who occupies a position far superior to that of the English Relieving Officer. Like him, indeed, he is what we have termed a Destitution Officer. He is under the disadvantage of having to deal with all sorts and conditions of men, merely in respect of their destitution; and cannot, therefore, specialise in the appropriate treatment of any one class. But unlike the English Relieving Officer he is himself effectively in communication with the Central Authority, and, indeed, usually acts as Clerk to his Parish Council. This right of direct communication with the Local Government Board for Scotland puts the Scotch Inspector of Poor in a position to prevent the deviations from uniformity which, in England and Ireland, so often proceed from the favouritism or neighbourly sentimentality of individual Guardians. In some of the largest towns, indeed, where the Inspector of Poor is a salaried officer of position and attainments, the Parish Council, whilst retaining fully in its own hands the direction of policy and the formulation of the rules as to relief, in practice largely leaves to the Inspector of Poor the adjudication upon individual cases, with the result, as we believe, of a much nearer approach to an accurate, impartial and even-handed execution of the will of the elected representatives than any English or Irish Board of Guardians can count on.

(E) The Suggested Abolition of Outdoor Relief.

In face of the unsatisfactory results, and, in some cases, the disastrous social failure of the Outdoor Relief administration, some English Boards of Guardians have attempted to pursue the policy of practically abolishing Outdoor Relief altogether—not merely, as was recommended in the Report of 1834, to the able-bodied, but also, as was suggested by most of the Local Government Board's Inspectors of 1871-80, to the non-able-bodied. This prohibition of Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied has never been embodied in any authoritative document of the Local Government Board; but it has been, from time to time, practically effected in one Union or another, by the simple expedient of offering, to all applicants for relief, nothing but maintenance in the Workhouse—the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described.* We need not recount the well-known experience in this respect of such Unions as Atcham and St. Neots, Brixworth and Bradfield, St. George's-in-the-East, Stepney and Whitechapel. As has been forcibly represented to us, and demonstrated by repeated statistics, this policy undoubtedly reduces the number of persons maintained at the expense of the Poor Rate. The universal "offer of the House," whilst bringing rapidly to an end the swollen lists of outdoor poor, does not appreciably or permanently increase the number of the indoor poor. To a very large proportion of the non-able-bodied poor, the General Mixed Workhouse is, in fact,

* We were concerned to find that, even down to the present day, the children of widows and other persons to whom Outdoor Relief is refused are usually relegated—as at Bradfield and Atcham—not to any separate school, but to the General Mixed Workhouse itself; and in Atcham Workhouse they do not even go out to day school, but are taught within the Workhouse walls.

so deterrent that, rather than enter its portals, they will try every possible alternative, and even put up with almost any privation and suffering, to the physical and mental deterioration of their children and themselves. It would, however, be unfair to those Boards of Guardians who have adopted this policy, and to those advocates who have suggested it to us,* to imply that they are indifferent to this privation and suffering. They assert, on the contrary, that experience shows, "in the most incontestable manner, that the effective restriction of Outdoor Relief always improves the condition of the poor," and that there is no foundation whatever for the belief that its refusal inflicts any hardship.† The fact that the applicants refuse the offer of maintenance in the Workhouse is held to show that they are able, when pressed, to fall back upon other resources; and to prove that they were not really so destitute as they represented themselves to be.‡ In the Unions in which this policy has been adopted, it is asserted that the "hard cases" that occur have been dealt with partly by contributions from relatives able to assist, and partly by voluntary charities of one sort or another. On the other hand, it has been represented to us that the policy of refusing Outdoor Relief, whilst in some cases unnecessarily breaking up the home, and forcing women, children and the aged into the demoralising atmosphere of the General Mixed Workhouse, has, in others, resulted in failure to relieve destitution virtually equivalent to a local abrogation of the Poor Law, leading to misery, to degeneration, and sometimes even to premature death from want and exposure. We thought it necessary, in order to clear up this conflict of testimony, to supplement the very elaborate investigations that we set on foot as to the effect of Outdoor Relief, by the appointment of a special Investigator to make a detailed inquiry in six relatively "strictly" administered Unions in town and country—including some in which the Workhouse policy has been pursued for many years with apparent success—in order to ascertain what subsequently happened to families to whom Outdoor Relief had been refused, and who had not accepted the alternative offer of the Workhouse. Such an inquiry, involving personal investigation some time after the cases had been before the Board of Guardians, was beset with difficulties. Our Investigator was able, however, to trace out and report upon altogether forty-nine families in two Metropolitan Unions, one large provincial town, and three rural Unions.§

The results of this investigation, unfortunately, do not bear out the assertions that the refusal of Outdoor Relief is unattended with hardship to the poor, and that it is, if not actually beneficial, at any rate without injury to them. Our Investigator—herself an experienced Poor Law Guardian—sums up her conclusions as follows:—

> 1. "In no case was the support by relatives increased through the refusal of Out Relief. In practically all the cases they were so poor themselves that they were not in a position to give systematic assistance. If such additional help had been given it would have been at the cost of the physical efficiency of the younger generation.
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> 2. "In no case has any charitable agency effectively dealt with the destitution. Occasionally, I found that spasmodic gifts were made, but with one exception, no effort was attempted definitely to place the family upon a sound economic footing.
>
> 3. "There was no evidence to show that the applicants themselves had been stimulated by the refusal of relief to greater personal efforts. On the contrary, the denial of assistance appeared to have discouraged and disheartened many whose energy might have been roused by wise guidance accompanied by sufficient temporary aid to enable them to maintain physical efficiency.
>
> 4. "Two of the cases (out of forty-nine) found work. In one of these the man went back to his old employment straight from prison, and in the other the man got some irregular and possibly only temporary employment.
>
> 5. "In more than half the cases the refusal of Out Relief led to a gradual dispersal of the household furniture and wearing apparel, often not even excepting the most necessary clothing. There were also unmistakeable signs of a marked physical deterioration of the members of the families, owing

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* Evidence before the Commission, Mr. A. G. Crowder, *Qs.* 17387–18037; Sir W. Chance, *Qs.* 27106–27108; Mr. T. Mackay, *Qs.* 29843–30173; Mr. H. V. Toynbee, *Qs.* 30719–30725, 30782, 30799–30302, 30821; Sir George Young, *Q.* 31258; Miss M. Baines, *Q.* 39541, Par. 8; Mr. H. G. Willink, Appendix No. CCXI. to Vol. VII. Mr. Russell Barrington, Appendix No. XX (Par. 1) to Vol. VII.

† Evidence of Mr. H. G. Willink, Bradfield Board of Guardians, Appendix No. CCXI. (A) to Vol. VII.

‡ "It is said that the restriction of Outdoor Relief is a hardship to the poor, because it drives them into the Workhouse. It does nothing of the kind. It drives them into thrift and independence. How can it drive them into the Workhouse when it has reduced the number of the inmates of our Workhouses to less than one-half, when we have done away with all Outdoor Relief you may say?" (The Story of the Bradfield Union, by T. Bland Garland; Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. CCXI. (G) to Vol. VII.)

§ Report . . . of an Inquiry in Six Unions into Cases of Refusal of Out-relief, by Miss G. Harlock.

to lack of food, warmth, and proper clothing. If eventually the applicants are forced to enter the workhouse, they will do so with health gone, home gone, and spirit and courage shattered. This deterioration is, from the national standpoint, probably most serious in the case of the children. The homes which were being broken up were of two classes: firstly, respectable homes which have been in the past thoroughly comfortable; secondly, homes which possibly have never reached a high standard of comfort."*

These conclusions are of grave import. Moreover, it must be remembered that the effects of a policy of "offering the House" are not confined to the families to whom Outdoor Relief is actually refused. The policy of the Board of Guardians soon becomes known to the poor, and if nothing is to be obtained except an order of admission to the General Mixed Workhouse, even the destitute do not care to apply for relief. "They had very few cases of the refusal of Out-Relief," said one Clerk. "The people in the district knew the policy of the Board and did not apply for relief unless they thought they had a strong case."† "The applicants know the policy of the Board and rarely apply for relief," reports our Investigator, "in the circumstances when the only thing given would be an order for the house."‡ "Great hardships are undoubtedly borne in many cases by poor persons," reports one of the Diocesan Committees whose assistance we have sought, "because of their extreme unwillingness to enter the Workhouse. It is alleged that in some cases 'the House' is offered by the Relieving Officers where they know it will not be acceptable, in order to avoid giving Outdoor Relief, and thus to keep down the expenditure of the Guardians."§ "A sickly man will not go in," reports another Diocesan Committee, "because he is helpless when he comes out; the mother will not appeal because she may be separated from her children . . . Many would starve first."‖ The result is that, as one official witness candidly put it, "the very poor are sometimes very badly looked after . . . . . when they are ill."¶ The same witness adduced case after case in which grave injury had been caused, in some cases leading to death, owing to the lack of prompt Poor Law relief; the sufferers in most cases neglecting or refusing to apply to the Relieving Officer, because they did not want to enter the Workhouse; and the Relieving Officer not becoming aware of their need.** It is, in fact, not regarded as any part of the duty of this Destitution Officer to search out destitution as a School Attendance Officer searches out cases of non-attendance at school, or as a Sanitary Inspector searches out nuisances. As a general rule, the Relieving Officer neither discovers, nor is informed of, any case of want, otherwise than through the application of the sufferer. If—deterred by the known policy of the Board of Guardians—the poor do not apply

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* *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.*, p. 5. These conclusions, it may be said, are in accordance with the general impressions of our other Investigators into the effect of Outdoor Relief. Whilst believing that the "offer of the House" staves off a number of "bogus applications," and also elicits contributions from "the more benevolent children and relatives," the Investigators conclude that: "In the majority of cases where relief is refused because of the bad habits of the applicants, the bad habits continue. There is no direct and inevitable connection between a refusal of help by the parish and a reformation of character, or a search for work. The number of this class who 'float off and become independent,' or who seek better paid work, as a result of refusal, is infinitesimal. They are only independent of the Poor Law; they are dependent on everything else, on pawnshops, on shelters, on missions, on landlords, on neighbours in the East End and on servants in the West End. . . . Where institutional relief is offered, it is sometimes accepted, but oftentimes after a considerable interval has elapsed, during which the family is going from bad to worse. The furniture is sold bit by bit; rent falls into arrears, and the landlord becomes obdurate; the energy required for successful begging proves too much; and sooner or later they enter the House." (Final Report of Inquiry into the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and the Conditions of Employment, by Thomas Jones, p.18.) In the Bradford Union, where the administration, though on strict principles, appears to us to have been conducted, not only with exceptional ability, but also with an intention of genuine humanity, our Special Investigator traced out forty-seven cases in which Outdoor Relief had been refused, including seven women with children dependent on them. Out of these forty-seven cases our Special Investigator reported: "That the refusal of relief has involved the applicants in suffering either mentally, physically or both, in the following (nineteen) cases. . . .. I was particularly struck with the hardship of women with children, who are expected to be at the same time both the breadwinner and the housewife of their families. . . . These women so often go under in their struggle to perform this impossible task, dragging their children down with them. . . . From the lowest standpoint, that of a merely commercial one, would it not be a better investment of the national resources to help these women (*adequately*) while they are performing their duties as mothers, in order to assist them to bring up their children decently, instead of crushing them, and postponing the help until both the mother and the children are reduced to such a low state of mental and physical efficiency that no relief, when given, will ever be able to restore to them a decent home and their self-respect? The alternatives, then, are starvation or the Workhouse." (Inquiry into Cases of Refusal of Out-relief by the Bradford Board of Guardians; Report by Miss G. Harlock.)

‡ Report . . . on an Inquiry in Six Unions into Cases of Refusal of Out-relief, by Miss G. Harlock.

§ Report of the Durham Diocesan Committee on Poverty and its Relief.

‖ Report of Ripon Diocesan Committee on Questions of Poverty and its Relief by the Church.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 41489, Par. 25.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 41489, Pars. 25–47; *Qs.* 41629–41630.

for relief, they may, and sometimes do, sink gradually lower and lower in semi-starvation and misery until they are found actually dying, and are then removed to the Workhouse or infirmary in such a state that they survive their admission only a few hours or days.* It is clear that, in a few cases, they die of starvation.†

We may believe that, in particular instances, in small Unions, where persons of influence and means make a point of privately relieving every "hard case," the strict refusal of Outdoor Relief, to the non-able-bodied as well as to the able-bodied, may not actually increase the misery of the poor, or lead to death from starvation. But viewed from a national standpoint and having regard particularly to the children and to persons in the early stage of disease, we cannot say that the policy of refusing Outdoor Relief, even as described by those who believe in it, appears to us to be, in practice, any more satisfactory than the laxer policy that we have described. It appears to us, in fact, to fail at least equally in the two fundamental requirements of ensuring appropriate treatment to those in need of it and of enforcing suitable conditions of life upon those of irregular habits or improper surroundings. And the policy of refusing Outdoor Relief has the added drawback that—as is vividly shown by the Parliamentary Returns of deaths from starvation in the Metropolis—the cases do not usually come to the notice of any public officer until they have become hopeless. "I was much struck," reports our Investigator, "with the hopeless condition of some of the cases at the stage at which I visited them. With these, an earlier commonsense treatment would have prevented the development of destitution (and in some cases of degradation also) to its present acute form . . . . *To effectively suppress pauperism, cases of destitution should be dealt with at an earlier stage.*" And the earlier treatment must be, not deterrent but curative. "There are many cases," continues our Investigator, "which cannot suitably be met either by the grant of a Workhouse order or by"—the only alternative which most Boards of Guardians seem able to conceive, namely a money dole of—"out-relief. Some require curative treatment, others merely sound advice. *No case which has ever touched the Poor Law should be left to drift unaided.*"‡ We may cite as an example of the being "left to drift unaided" the case of one family, which was refused Outdoor Relief by an able and strict Board of Guardians, and in which, as our Investigator observes, "there were possibilities of development which were not taken. James, a lad of fourteen, when his parents first applied to the Board, was *allowed to remain untrained*, and now, at the age of twenty-four, is selling flowers in the streets instead of being employed at a good trade. The Relieving Officer calls the attention of the Guardians to the daughter Margaret, a girl of nineteen (a cripple) and suggests that she be taught some occupation by which she can earn her living, but nothing is done; and we now find her sometimes in the Workhouse and sometimes living with her mother, entirely untrained and incapable of supporting herself. In all probability she will be a source of expense to the State as long as she lives, and her happiness in life will be curtailed by her limitations. Yet when she first became chargeable she was only a child of eleven."§

(f) The Substitution of Charity for Outdoor Relief.

It is sometimes suggested that, if all Outdoor Relief were refused, voluntary charity of one s[illegible] or another would come forward to deal with the cases that would not really be bette[illegible] the Workhouse.‖ Without discussing the probability of this happening in country a[illegible] town, all over the Kingdom—for we have found no evidence whatever on which to ba[illegible] so optimistic an assumption—we were struck with the allegations that were made a[illegible] such voluntary charities as already exist. It was asserted that the work of these c[illegible]itable agencies, whether individual or corporate, was open to the same

* "The worst cases of distress due to reluctance to accept Indoor Relief," reports the Durham Diocesan Committee on Poverty and its Relief, "occur among the sick and aged who live alone, and do not receive adequate attention, medical treatment, or nourishment in consequence."

† See the Returns annually presented to Parliament of the number of deaths in the Administrative County of London, in which a verdict of death from starvation, etc., has been returned. The number varies from thirty to fifty annually. The Return for the year 1906 (House of Commons, No. 313 of 1907) contains forty-eight cases.

‡ Report . . . on an Inquiry in Six Unions into cases of Refusal of Outdoor Relief, by Miss G. Harlock.

§ *Ibid.*

‖ "There are occasionally—not often—cases of very worthy though destitute people who do not wish to go into the Workhouse; these may be proper objects of charity, and if so, should be given a small pension by their neighbours." (Reply of the Bradfield Board of Guardians to a Memorial from the Ratepayers of Pangbourne, December 3rd, 1889; Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. CCXI. (E) to Vol. VII.

criticisms as those made against the Poor Law Guardians' administration of Outdoor Relief. We therefore thought it necessary to have a special inquiry made into the results of the charities and charitable endowments in a dozen different towns and villages.*

The outcome of this investigation was very largely to confirm these allegations. It was found that, in place after place, the charitable gifts—whether of individuals or the churches, of benevolent associations or of endowed trusts—are distributed without any complete ascertainment of the recipient's resources, and with even less inquiry and protection against overlapping than is practised by the Relieving Officer. † There was evidence that many of the grocery tickets are sold at the public-house, ‡ and that, in one case, they had even been taken in payment at the local theatre. § "Charity givers," said a witness who had for thirty-eight years been a Local Government Board Auditor, "are more imposed upon than the Guardians, and the cases would not be sifted, and the gifts would go by favour." ‖ "I do not consider," says a rural clergyman, "it would be practicable to substitute charity for Out-relief. There could not be quite the same efficient investigation by the trustees . . . . as there is by Poor Law Guardians." ¶ So experienced a Poor Law official as Mr. A. F. Vulliamy informed us that he considered "it would be very mischievous indeed to substitute charity for Out Relief; because . . . the administrators of charities have seldom" the necessary training, "and would be apt to relieve, in the majority of cases, without system or proper investigation." ** "Of the two" (charity and Poor Law Relief), testifies the Secretary of a provincial Charity Organisation Society, "I consider here that the Poor Law relief has the less demoralising effect, because there is careful inquiry by an excellent relieving officer, and a certain amount of supervision which acts as a deterrent." †† "In a few cases," says another witness, "it was very beneficial, but as a rule it was rather the contrary, because so many ladies, young ladies especially, would take a district and deluge it with charity, get very tired of it and then say: Well, you must now go to the Poor Law, which they would not have done in the first place." ‡‡ The Taunton Union is adduced by an Inspector as an example of "rigid and good administration," by means of the strict limitation of Outdoor Relief. The Relieving Officers are vigilant and efficient, if not, as some say, "hard and somewhat brutal with the people." On the other hand the town is over-run with charities, administered by trustees. Here there is canvassing of individual trustees, and "the usual wirepulling. . . . The applicants are not seen by the trustees at their quarterly meeting when pensions and grants are awarded. There is no officer corresponding to a Relieving Officer or a Charity Organisation Society agent to investigate the circumstances of the applicants." §§

With regard to the no less important point of the recovery of the cost of relief, when the recipient or some of his relatives are in a position to repay it, the evidence goes to show that voluntary charitable agencies are far more remiss than the public authority. In fact, our Investigators report that they "rarely came across a case in which relations had been approached with a view to enlisting their assistance." ‖‖ There is the very minimum of attempt, except in the case of almshouses, to enforce among the recipients better conditions of living; often indeed, there is practically no discrimination according to character. In the practice of one society "for relieving the sick poor," which dis-

* Report . . . on Endowed and Voluntary Charities in certain places and the Administrative Relations of Charity and the Poor Law, by A. C. Kay and H. V. Toynbee.

† This overlapping among charities is reported by many witnesses. "The difficulty now is," says one of them, "that the clergymen and the ministers and voluntary and philanthropic societies in various parts of the town deal with the sums, and some of these people get doles from three or four, and they overlap." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 45392.)

‡ "An instance was given of a publican cashing thirty tickets at one time" (Report . . . on Endowed and Voluntary Charities, by A. C. Kay and H. V. Toynbee, pp. 120, 121).

§ The relief tickets of another society, of which we are told that the organisation "is excellent on paper," were not only passed freely from hand to hand, but also "sold for drink," and even "taken in payment at the theatre" (*Ibid.*, p. 97).

‖ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXIV. (Par. 14) to Vol. VII.

¶ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXXVIII. (Par. 8) to Vol. VII.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 73237, Par. 9.

†† Miss Marsland, Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, Torquay; Appendix No. LXII. (Par. 14) to Vol. VII.

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 34165.

§§ Report . . . on the Effect of Outdoor Relief in England, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. Thos. Jones, pp. 74, 75. It is impossible not to feel, in 1909, the force of the recommendation of the Poor Law Report of 1834 that: "Charitable foundations call for the attention of the Legislature because, in the districts where they abound, they may interfere with the efficacy of the measures recommended by the Commissioners with regard to poor relief." (Report of 1834, p. 300.)

‖‖ Report . . . on Endowed and Voluntary Charities, by A. C. Kay, and H. V. Toynbee, p. 65.

tributes above £800 annually, we are told that "poverty rather than character would appear to constitute a claim. . . . A lady who had been a visitor for the Society for three or four years said she had never rejected a case. . . . No attempt is made to co-operate with other societies in the weekly allowance cases, and there is a great deal of overlapping. . . . In a large number of cases the assistance is given in supplementation of Poor Law relief. For instance, out of twenty-five cases taken at random, it was found that ten were receiving Outdoor Relief." * This overlapping with the Poor Law, and with other charitable agencies was found to be almost universal.† Our Investigators report that "in the case of . . . almshouse and pension charities," not under revised schemes, "the beneficiaries are very commonly chosen from among persons receiving Outdoor Relief, and in the case of the Dole Charities it is only in the rarest instances that any attempt is made to discriminate between those who are and are not in receipt of Poor Law relief."‡ In one town, they state, "when lists . . . of the recipients of the charities were submitted by us to the Relieving Officers, over sixty cases of people receiving Out-relief were at once, *much to their surprise*, recognised by them." § As if to complete the parallel with the laxest Poor Law, there is even a practice "especially in country districts," of giving "charity to agricultural labourers and others in supplementation of the ordinary wages current in the district, and not at times of exceptional need or distress."‖ Above all, there is practically nothing in the nature of providing for each case exactly the treatment appropriate to its needs. "The work," reports our Investigators, "of providing assistance suitable to the varying circumstances of each case demands an amount of knowledge and interest in charitable work, and an expenditure of time and trouble which can rarely be found under the conditions of charitable administration . . . It is . . .much easier to find a body of trustees who will make good appointments of almspeople and pensioners than one which will satisfactorily perform the difficult work of from time to time giving appropriate assistance in cases of special need and distress."¶

It is interesting to find one small community in which organised charity has taken the place of the Poor Law. There are three small parishes in Herefordshire, adjoining each other, Letton, Bredwardine and Staunton on Wye, with an aggregate population of fewer than 200 families, which enjoy an honestly and, on the whole, ably directed charitable endowment producing (for almshouses, medical attendance and doles alone, besides boarding and day schools,) over £1,000 a year. Indeed, in these villages, the Trustees of Jarvis's Charity act instead of the local Board of Guardians. They relieve all temporary distress, distribute winter coals and blankets, educate and clothe and apprentice the children, provide gratuitous nursing and free medical attendance by their own doctor, pay for serious cases in the nearest hospitals, give regular weekly allowances to the aged, and accommodate those who need it in almshouses. The result is that there are practically no paupers in these villages, the total out-relief expenditure for them all being under 12s. a week. The Poor Law has, in fact, been superseded by organised charity. The result is significant. "There can be no doubt," say our Investigators, "that the Charity is doing the work of the Poor Law, *only on easier terms, and people get help from the Charity who would be refused by the Guardians.* For instance, no steps are taken to see that children do their duty by their parents and contribute to their support when able. On looking through his books, one of the Relieving Officers for the Weobley Union found that out of 107 cases he had on hand, in thirteen he had secured payments from children. As regards the Jarvis Charity there was not a single case in which the trustees had communicated with the children." It is interesting to note that the wages current in these villages are distinctly low for the county in which they are situated, and that "the cottages . . . are very poor." Practically no other charitable agencies exist, so that there is no overlapping, and none of that competitive philanthropy so much deplored in large towns. There are friendly societies,

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* *Ibid.*, p. 96.

† "Nearly all persons on Out-relief," says a Guardian with regard to one great town, "receive charity as well, as, indeed, some of our charities practically refuse to help people unless we give them parish money first. The idea is that the parish keeps the people from destitution, and the charities then come in and make their lives comfortable in a small way." (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 35693, Par. 67.) "It may happen, and, no doubt, does frequently happen," says the Clerk to another Union, "that relief is being given to the same family by more than one society, in addition to what is allowed by the Board of Guardians." (*Ibid.*, Q. 36693, Par. 17.)

‡ Report . . . on Endowed and Voluntary Charities, by A. C. Kay and H. V. Toynbee, p. 73.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 118. "The overlapping is not confined to endowed charities. Out of thirty recipients of help from the York Benevolent Society . . . nine were found to be on the Outdoor Relief List, and five in receipt of occasional relief." (*Ibid.*, pp. 62, 127.)

‖ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¶ *Ibid.*, pp. 78, 79

but it is doubtful whether their membership is up to the average, as "many young men who ought to be members . . . neglect to join . . . with the idea that the Jarvis Charity will be available should sickness overtake them." In short, in these three villages in which a relatively well-administered charity is "doing the work of the Guardians," and the Poor Law is practically non-existent, we have exactly the same complaints as those made against a lax Poor Law. It "does away with thrift," ; it "creates a great tendency to laziness and dependence" ; "it is difficult to get work done in the parish ; men prefer to loaf about, and there is plenty of drinking going on" ; it makes "the people careless, lazy and unthrifty ;" "there is no demand at all for small holdings or land for allotments, while there is a growing demand in all the adjoining parishes"; yet "you could not find a more discontented lot of people in any parish in England." * It is interesting to observe that the failure of the various voluntary agencies administering charitable doles and allowances—whether individuals or societies, churches or endowed trusts—to avoid shortcomings and defects exactly similar to those of the Poor Law, is to be attributed to the same imperfections in the dispensing authority. We have examined the constitutions and rules of dozens of charitable agencies up and down the country, including Charity Organisation Societies and Guilds of Help ; and we have not discovered one in which there is any requirement of specialist training in the "helpers," "visitors" or other workers, by whom the service is performed. The persons engaged, whether as paid officers or as volunteers, to inquire into the cases, to recommend the policy and to carry out the course of treatment decided on, have, in fact, no more specialist training in their complicated task—either in the ascertainment of economic circumstances, or in personal hygiene and sanitation, or in the educational requirements and progress of the children—than the Relieving Officers themselves. Indeed, they have usually less competence than the Relieving Officers, as they have not the advantage of being continuously employed on investigation and relief. They are, in fact, for the most part, merely amateur "Destitution Officers," without the professional experience which serves, at any rate, to enable the Relieving Officers to protect the community from imposture. Moreover, the voluntary committees before whom the cases are brought are as "many-headed" in their composition and at least as shifting in their membership as are the Boards of Guardians. And whilst there is only one Poor Law authority in each Union, there are often, besides uncounted individual donors, dozens of separate charitable agencies—in large towns hundreds, and in the Metropolis, nearly two thousand †—each spending "its income without any relation at all to the spending of its neighbours, guiding its policy solely with a view to its own individual interest, neither knowing or caring, as a rule, what is done by any other agency, and almost inevitably creating extensive overlapping with its consequent waste and demoralisation." ‡ It is therefore not surprising, that a majority of the witnesses to whom we put the question, regarded the substitution of charitable agencies for Poor Law relief as neither practicable nor advantageous.

(G) Conclusions.

We have therefore to report :—

1. That the abolition of Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied is, in our judgment, wholly impracticable, and, even if it were possible, it would be contrary to the public interest. There are, and, in our opinion, there always will be, a large number of persons to whom public assistance must be given, who can. with most advantage to the community, continue to live at home ; for instance, widows with children whose homes deserve to be maintained intact, sick persons for whom domiciliary treatment is professionally recom-

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* *Ibid.*, pp. 42, 217–221. This interesting case appears to exemplify the statement repeatedly made to us that : "By substituting charity for Out-relief there would be an enormous increase in pauperism, and a corresponding less degree of self-help and self-respect." (Evidence be fore the Commission, Appendix No. LXXIII. (Par. 15.) to Vol. VII. As it was put to us by a Guardian : "The poor, in a large number of cases, seem to look at the receipt of money and gifts from private benefactors in quite a different light from that in which they regard relief from the pockets of the ratepayers as a body. While they will fight very shy of seeking help from a Board of Guardians, even when they are in dire necessity, some of them will not be above accepting assistance in money or kind from half-a-dozen charitable persons at the same time, without intimating that they have other friends. I have found this to be the case in my experience in town and country. . . . The effect of private charity, I fear, is at times to induce persons to lay themselves out to get the better of those . . . whom they know to be kindly disposed. The effect of Outdoor Relief, on the other hand, does seem to be *far less harmful than that of private charity.*" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 72681, Pars. 27–30.)

† *Times*, January 13th, 1908. "There are," it is there said, "between 1,700 and 1,800 charities in London receiving among them £10,500,000 yearly."

‡ *Ibid.*

mended, the worthy aged having relatives with whom they can reside, and such of the permanently incapacitated (the crippled, the blind, etc.) as can safely be left with their friends. Nor can the community rely on voluntary charity providing for these cases. In many places such charity does not exist, and in many others there is no warrant for assuming that it would ever be adequate to the need. Moreover, our investigations show that voluntary charity, in so far as it exists in the form of doles and allowances to persons in their homes, has all the disastrous characteristics of a laxly administered Poor Law.

2. That so long as the alternative is admission to the General Mixed Workhouse, the policy of systematic refusal or restriction of Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied, pursued by a few Boards of Guardians in England, cannot be recommended for general adoption. We are unable to resist the evidence that this policy of "offering the House" even to the non-able-bodied, results, in not a few cases, in unnecessarily destroying the home and breaking up the family, in separating child from mother, and in exposing young and innocent persons to the demoralising atmosphere of the General Mixed Workhouse. Such a policy, moreover, by deterring the poor from applying for relief, leads, in far too many cases, to semi-starvation and physical and mental degeneration, from which the women and children especially suffer, and in a small number of cases, even to death from want and exposure. The proposal made to us by some witnesses that, in order to obviate this latter danger, the Destitution Authority should be granted powers of compulsory removal appears to us—in view of the character of the General Mixed Workhouse in which these poor people would be incarcerated—wholly out of the question.

3. That the present system of administering Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied in England, Wales and Ireland, and, to a lesser degree, also in Scotland, is open to the gravest criticism. The large sum of nearly four millions sterling which is now expended in this way annually—a burden on the community that is steadily increasing—is being dispensed, without central inspection or control, in doles and allowances, awarded upon no uniform principle, and differing widely from place to place. This lack of common principle is observable even in the Bylaws or Standing Orders by which the best administered Unions in England profess to guide their action. But in the actual practice the diversity between one place and another, in large districts between one Relief Committee and another, and sometimes even between one meeting and the next, according to the accident of which members attend—a diversity applying alike to the persons to whom Outdoor Relief will be given, to its amount and to its conditions—is still more extreme. It can, in fact, be described only as a total absence of principle.

4. That amid all this diversity of principle and practice, we find certain evil characteristics practically universal. Except in an insignificant number of well-administered districts in England and Scotland, the doles and allowances given are manifestly inadequate for healthy subsistence. They are given, not in relief of destitution, strictly so-called, but in supplement of other resources that are assumed to exist. In many cases, such other resources—whether earnings, charitable gifts or the contributions of relations—do exist, but are insufficient. In some cases, on the other hand, the total income of the household is such as not to warrant any relief from the Poor Rate. But no Destitution Authority that we have seen succeeds in ascertaining what other sources of income exist or whether any such exist; and the majority of them do not seriously attempt to do so. The result is that there are a great many cases in which, whilst Out-relief is given on the assumption that other resources will be forthcoming, none such are found; so that the dole of Poor Law relief—upon which thousands of old people, sick people and even widows with young children are steadily degenerating—is a starvation pittance.

5. That an equally grave defect in the Outdoor Relief of to-day, at any rate from the standpoint of the nation, is the unconditional character of the grant. With a few honourable exceptions, no attempt is made by the Destitution Authority even to ascertain how the household is actually being maintained upon the Outdoor Relief that is granted, still less to effect any necessary improvement in the home. The result, as we have grave reason to believe, is that a large part of the sum of nearly four millions sterling is a subsidy to insanitary, to disorderly or even to vicious habits of life. The saddest feature of all is that no small proportion of the 234,000 children whom, in the United Kingdom, the Destitution Authority elects to bring up upon Outdoor Relief—in the course of a year, probably, as many as 600,000 different children—are to-day, without any interference by these Authorities, chronically underfed, insufficiently clothed, badly housed, and, in literally thousands of cases, actually being brought up at the public expense in drunken and dissolute homes.

6. That we do not ascribe the disastrous social failure of the Outdoor Relief of to-day to any personal shortcomings of the individual members of Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, or of Parish Councils in Scotland. We have found no evidence that the corrupt and criminal practices which have unhappily occurred in certain places, are at all frequent or widespread. Nor have we reason to suppose that the evil influences of electoral or social pressure have been otherwise than exceptional. We have, indeed, been impressed by the vast amount of zealous and devoted service, unremunerated and unrecognised, that is being rendered in all parts of the Poor Law administration of the United Kingdom, by men and women of humanity and experience. We ascribe the defects and shortcomings of the present administration of Outdoor Relief to the very nature of the Local Authority to which this duty is entrusted.

7. That we attribute the almost universal failure of the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, and of the Parish Councils in Scotland, in the matter of Outdoor Relief, in all districts, and in every decade, partly to an illegitimate combination, in one and the same body, of duties which can be rightly done by a board or committee, and those which can be efficiently discharged only by specialised officers continuously engaged in the task. The "many-headed" body is exactly what is required, whether for Outdoor Relief or for the management of institutions, for arriving at decisions of general policy; for prescribing the rules that are to be followed in determining particular cases; and for examining grievances and preventing the abuse of their powers by the officers. But if the administration is to be democratic in its nature—if, that is to say, the will of the people is to prevail—it is absolutely necessary that the application to individual cases of the rules laid down by the board or committee, should be determined evenly, impartially and exactly according to the instructions, by a salaried officer, appointed for the express purpose. We recognise this at once in the management of a school, a hospital or an asylum, where the most democratic committee finds the best guarantee for the execution of its will in ordering its salaried officials to apply the rules that it lays down. But in the dispensing of Outdoor Relief the same "many-headed" body that makes the rules, has also attempted to apply them to individual cases; and in doing so inevitably brings in personal favouritism, accident and the emotion of the moment, to thwart the will of the community as a whole. The relative success of the Outdoor Relief administration of some of the best governed parishes of Scotland, is due, we think, to the fact that, whilst the Parish Council makes the rules, their application to individual cases is not left to the chance membership of a particular meeting, but is in practice largely entrusted, as a judicial function, to the Inspector of Poor.

8. That it is, however, not merely that "many-headedness" of the existing tribunal that is the cause of the failure of the Outdoor Relief administration of to-day. We ascribe that failure quite as much to the fact that the duty is entrusted to a Destitution Authority, served by subordinates who are essentially Destitution Officers. To entrust, to one and the same authority, the care of the infants and the aged, the children and the able-bodied adults, the sick and the healthy, maids and widows, is inevitably to concentrate attention, not on the different methods of curative or reformatory treatment that they severally require, but on their one common attribute of destitution, and the one common remedy of "relief," indiscriminate and unconditional. And just as this Destitution Authority tends always, in institutional organisation, to the General Mixed Workhouse, with its promiscuity and unspecialised management, instead of to the appropriate series of specialised nurseries, schools, hospitals and asylums for the aged that are needed, so it tends also, with its general "mixed official," the Relieving Officer, to provide, alike for widows and deserted wives, the sick and the aged, infants and school children, one indiscriminate unconditional dole of money or food, instead of the specialised domiciliary treatment, according to the cause or character of their distress, that each class requires.

CHAPTER III.

Birth and Infancy.

We find the care of maternity, and of the infants under school age, undertaken in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, by two Local Authorities, both spending public funds upon this service, without co-ordination, and almost without communication with each other. Everywhere the Destitution Authority is providing maintenance and medical treatment for expectant mothers, and for mothers with infants, applying for relief in respect of their destitution. Besides this, and apart from this, the Local Health Authority is, in a rapidly increasing number of areas, affording medical advice, and sometimes food to necessitous mothers and infants in the poorer districts. These rival Local Authorities are influenced by diametrically opposite conceptions of what is the public duty in the matter. Boards of Guardians, priding themselves on "good administration," restrict their relief of expectant mothers and of mothers with infants, by deterrent devices, with the object of reducing to a minimum the volume of "pauperism." The more "enlightened" of the Public Health Authorities, on the other hand, are perpetually striving to extend their ministrations to every necessitous mother and infant within their areas, with the object of diminishing infantile mortality. What is remarkable is that both policies are, at the present time, simultaneously receiving the encouragement of the Local Government Board. The result is that the Public Health Service, though in this department of very recent growth, and still only imperfectly sanctioned by Parliament, is creeping over the whole country; and will, in the near future, if not checked, practically supersede much of the work of the Poor Law. Meanwhile, the partial and uneven duplication of the service, together with the fragmentary and entirely unco-ordinated provision made by voluntary agencies, is undermining parental responsibility, and causing wasteful expenditure, whilst failing to prevent excessive infantile mortality.

(A) The Provision for Birth and Infancy made by the Destitution Authority.

The Report of 1834 gave practically no directions as to the provision to be made for infants, who were assumed to follow the father (or, in his absence, the mother). If the father of a legitimate child was able-bodied, or if the child was illegitimate, the infant however young or sickly, was to be relieved only by admission with its parents to the Workhouse, where no special arrangements were made for it. The legitimate infants of fathers who were not able-bodied, and those of widows whether able-bodied or not, would, it was assumed, continue to be maintained on Outdoor Relief, without any direct responsibility for the infant's welfare being undertaken by the Local Authority. What would be the best course for the infant does not seem to have been considered.

These two methods of provision are still in use. The expectant mother, or the mother with her infants, may receive either a Medical (including midwifery) Order, with or without other Outdoor Relief; or may be provided with maintenance and medical treatment in a Poor Law Institution.

(i.) *Domiciliary Treatment of Expectant Mothers and Mothers with Infants.*

We find to-day an extraordinary diversity of policy between one district of England and Wales and another with regard to Domiciliary Treatment of mothers—a diversity which bears no relation to the character of the district, to the needs of the mothers or to the rate of mortality among the infants. This diversity is even prescribed and insisted on by the Local Government Board for England and Wales; though for what reason and with what object we have been unable to discover. In those parts of England and Wales, (comprising two-thirds of all the Unions, scattered quite indiscriminately up and down the country) which are under the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order, expectant mothers and mothers with infants may be lawfully treated in their own homes, whether they are married or single, whether their husbands are able-bodied or not, and whether or not they have already had illegitimate children. In other parts of England and Wales, comprising about one-fifth of the Unions, where the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order is alone in force, expectant mothers and mothers with infants cannot lawfully receive

Domiciliary Treatment, whatever their character or circumstances, if they have able-bodied husbands, or if (being unmarried) they are themselves able-bodied. In yet other parts of England and Wales where the Outdoor Labour Test Order or the Workhouse Modified Test Order is in force along with the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order, the expectant mothers or the mothers with infants, having able-bodied husbands, may lawfully receive Domiciliary Treatment, but only if the husbands fulfil the conditions of work in the Labour Yard or residence in the Workhouse. But the diversity of usage with regard to Domiciliary Treatment thus prescribed for mothers and infants by the Local Government Board for England and Wales, according to the geographical situation of their homes—whatever may be its reason—is thrown into the shade by the still more extraordinary diversity of policy among the Boards of Guardians that we have already described. We need refer here only to the fact that whereas many Unions in England refuse Outdoor Relief altogether to expectant mothers who are unmarried, and to the mothers of illegitimate children,* other Unions grant it frequently in such cases. Sometimes, as at Norwich, the Board of Guardians will withhold it until the infant is at least three months old;† on the other hand, the Board of Guardians of the little urban Union of St. Thomas, Exeter, not only grants Outdoor Relief to the mothers of illegitimate children, but even provides expressly in its standing rules, without objection by the Local Government Board, for the expectant mothers of such children, at a regular scale of 1s. 6d. per week prior to the birth and 3s. 6d. per week for four weeks afterwards.‡

Quite as important, however, to the community, as the diversity of treatment of expectant mothers and of mothers with infants, is the almost invariable inadequacy of the provision made under Domiciliary Treatment for the proper nourishment of the child. An expectant mother, if granted Outdoor Relief at all, is seldom given more than 2s. or 3s. per week, no consideration being given to the special needs of her condition. "It is unfortunate," says a Medical Officer of Health, "that in Poor Law administration (so far as I know) no particular instructions are issued to Relieving Officers to grant special food to women who are about to become mothers."§ In due course the Midwifery Order, if granted, provides the attendance of the District Medical Officer, or (in a few districts) of a salaried midwife; but it is seldom accompanied by any nursing; and the doctor does not by any means always recommend the grant of "medical extras." When the infant is born, the Outdoor Relief granted is, as we have described, usually only 2s. or 3s. per week—often, indeed, only 1s. or 1s. 6d. a week for the child, and nothing for the mother! Only in one or two Unions, such as Bradford, is care taken to see that the Domiciliary Treatment, if decided on, is accompanied by really adequate provision for subsistence.

Combined with this inadequacy is the wholly unconditional character of the treatment afforded. We cannot discover that, when a Board of Guardians decides thus to maintain on Outdoor Relief a destitute expectant mother or a mother with infants, it ever occurs to anyone to accompany the money with any sort of instructions as to prenatal conduct and health;‖ or with any sort of directions as to how the child should be reared.¶ In view of the fact that the mothers are, in the great majority of cases, extraordinarily ignorant on these points, it does not seem to us economical that so large an expenditure should annually be incurred from the Poor Rate in order to provide for the birth of infants, without any precautions being taken to prevent these infants from dying within a few days or weeks of birth. Nor do we find the Destitution Authorities in any part of the Kingdom taking any heed whatsoever of the conditions under which the 50,000 infants

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* Rules of the Holborn Board of Guardians, and many others.

† Rules of the Norwich Board of Guardians.

‡ Rules of the Board of Guardians of St. Thomas, Exeter.

§ "Report on the Prevention of Infantile Mortality," by Alfred E. Harris, Medical Officer of Health, Islington, 1907, p. 25.

‖ "It is very doubtful whether we shall ever be able to influence materially those [deaths] occurring in the first month of life, except by advising the mother as to the conduct of her life while pregnant, most of these deaths being primarily due to the debilitated condition of the child at birth." (Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Salford, 1906, p. 19.)

¶ "There is," says a Medical Officer of Health, "probably no ignorance so profound as is that associated with the care of infants, and no lack of knowledge attended by such disastrous results as is that of the feeding of babies." (Report on the Prevention of Infantile Mortality, by Alfred E. Harris, Medical Officer of Health, Islington, 1907, p. 10.)

under five years of age, whom they have always on their books as Outdoor paupers,* are being reared. The mothers may nurse their infants themselves, or may use the most insanitary bottles; they may feed their infants properly, or give them potatoes and red herrings; † they may lock them up in a deserted room all day (since the Guardians make it necessary for the mothers to go out to work), or they may leave them (with dummy teats or "comforters") with the most careless neighbours; ‡ they may overlay them in bed; they may even insure their little lives with one of the Industrial Insurance Companies, and so use some of the Guardians' Outdoor Relief money thus hideously to speculate in death—all without the slightest instruction, without any warning or prohibition, and without even any attention by the Destitution Authority, out of whose funds these infants are being maintained. Under these circumstances we cannot but regard it as unfortunate that the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively, should never have procured any statistics as to the mortality among the 5,000 infants under one year whom the Destitution Authorities are now maintaining on Outdoor Relief.§

Some Boards of Guardians, as we have seen, solve the problem by refusing Outdoor Relief and even a Midwifery Order, to expectant mothers, or to the mothers of infants, unless under exceptional circumstances, or with deterrent restrictions. We are indebted to Mr. Theodore Dodd|| for pressing on our attention the fact that the rate of infantile mortality appears to be specially high in some Unions in which Outdoor Relief is practically always refused; and that no attempt is made by the Boards of Guardians actively to prevent such grave results of the destitution in their districts which it is their statutory duty to relieve. Mr. Dodd's statistical data are admittedly very imperfect, but the general purport of his evidence receives confirmation in other quarters.

> "A distressing element of the work," we read in the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Kensington, "is the poverty which, during the lying-in period, reduces many a mother to a state of destitution, rendering it impossible for her properly to nourish her infant in the natural way. . . . I think," adds the Health Visitor, "I must have seen quite fifty mothers who, I have every reason to believe, were in a state of dire need, with their babies of a few days old lying beside them. . . . Appeals to the Relieving Officer for Out-relief in such cases, unless the District Medical Officer is in attendance, result in the 'offer of the House,' of which the mothers of families are unwilling to avail themselves."¶

With regard to the very common restriction of Midwifery Orders, many of our medical witnesses attributed serious consequences, in the low standard of health of working women, in the excessive infant mortality, and in various defects in the children who survive, to the frequent lack, in poor families, of qualified attendance at childbirth.** "In many emergencies," we were told by a great Medical authority, "there is no time to obtain a Medical Order from the Relieving Officer; and by the time medical help is secured

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* In England and Wales alone, on March 31st, 1906, 40,344 under five years of age; in Scotland, 6,460; in Ireland, 3052.

† "No milk is given," we were informed (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 25373, Par. 142), by the Relieving Officer, in some Unions, when he gives relief in kind, unless it is an express recommendation of the Medical Officer, even where there are infant children and the mother is starving. We have it in evidence that, in one case in 1905, where application for relief was made by a man who was out of work, for his starving wife and infant twins of seven weeks old, the Relieving Officer gave, as a case of "sudden or urgent necessity," some rice and flour, bread and treacle (!); but no food for the babies beyond two tins of condensed milk in the course of six weeks, and no money to buy it with. One of the babies died; and the Coroner elicited the fact that the mother had tried to keep it alive on biscuits dipped in condensed milk. On the facts being subsequently represented to the Board of Guardians, the action taken by the Relieving Officer was not disapproved of (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 25531–25542); nor did the case lead to any Circular by the Local Government Board directing proper food to be supplied to infants, when they were relieved in kind, on the plea of "sudden or urgent necessity."

‡ At Woolwich, so great was the infantile mortality from these causes, that the Medical Officer of Health was driven to remonstrate with the Woolwich Board of Guardians, asking them "to allow sufficient Outdoor Relief to mothers with young infants, for whom the Guardians were responsible, so that the mothers would not be obliged to go out to work and leave the baby to be fed with a bottle by some neighbour." (Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Woolwich, for 1905, p. 22.)

§ In England and Wales alone, on March 31st, 1906, 4,616 under one year old; in Scotland, 590; in Ireland, 251.

|| Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 25625–25682; and Appendix No. III. (A) to (G) to Vol. III.

¶ *Ibid.*, Q. 25373 (Par. 90); Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for the Royal Borough of Kensington, for 1905.

** *See* especially the Evidence before the Commission of Dr. E. J. Maclean, Senior Gynæcologist at the Cardiff Infirmary, *Qs.* 49492, 49623.

the opportunity for successful treatment may have passed."* We were, for instance, confidently informed that a fourth or one-third of those blind from childhood—a large proportion of whom become permanent paupers—are blinded shortly after birth by *ophthalmia neonatorum*, which can usually be prevented by simple medical care.† Under these circumstances we have been surprised to find that—apparently without objection by the Local Government Board—many English Boards of Guardians have rules restricting the grant of Midwifery Orders—not, as might be supposed, to mothers in their first confinements—but to the experienced mothers only who have already had three children ;‡ or four children,§ or sometimes even to those only who have had five children, who have all lived.‖ Our Medical Investigator happened himself to see the working of this restriction.

> "Application was made to the Relieving Officer for an order for the doctor to attend a labourer's wife in her fifth confinement. But it turned out that only two of the four children previously born were still alive, and the Relieving Officer declined to grant the order, but promised to mention the matter to the Guardians, though without much expectation, as I understood, that they would break through their rule. Necessarily under the Poor Law, the point of view in these cases is solely the financial circumstances of the applicant, not the future health of the prospective mother. Manifestly for her health the most important confinement is not the fifth, but the first. If not properly guided in it, illness may result which will lead to permanent ill-health. But a labourer, it is held, should be able to pay for the doctor for the first confinement, and so it is only when the family has increased to four that relief is given."¶

We feel compelled, at this point, very seriously to draw attention to a diversity of treatment of these cases in Scotland, which results in no little preventible suffering and mortality, if it does not also have consequences gravely affecting domestic morality. Under the Scotch Poor Law, as it has been interpreted by the Law Courts, an expectant mother, or a mother with infants, who is the wife of an able-bodied man, may not, however dire her necessity, lawfully be granted by the Destitution Authority, whether in the Poorhouse or in her own home, either medical or midwifery attendance, or food or other necessaries, *so long as she is living with her husband.* In fact, the grant of any relief whatever to such a woman, even to save her or her infant from immediate death, and even with the sanction or consent of the Parish Council or the Local Government Board, would be an illegal payment, liable to be surcharged at audit. On the other hand, the expectant mother, or the mother with infants, who is unmarried, or whose husband has deserted her, may, if destitute, not only be granted adequate medical attendance and maintenance, whatever her past or present conduct or character, but can actually claim it as of legal right, whatever the Parish Council may decide in the matter, and can enforce this claim by summary appeal to the Sheriff.

We think that this extraordinary law should be at once amended, so as to give the necessitous married woman and the legitimate child at least as good a position as the unmarried or deserted mother, and the illegitimate child. At present, the Scottish Poor Law—we could scarcely have believed it if it had not been testified to us by the Legal

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 49492, 49623. This is confirmed by the Poor Law Medical Officers themselves. Their Council, we were informed, "think that much suffering is likely to accrue to poor lying-in women, owing to friction arising between District Medical Officers and Poor Law officials, owing to the refusal of midwifery orders by the latter, where cases of urgency have been attended by the former without first getting these orders. It is believed that the tendency will be more and more for the District Medical Officer to decline altogether—as he is legally entitled to—all pauper cases where a midwifery order is not forthcoming." (*Ibid.*, Q., 33391, Par. 12.)

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 28169 and 49516; *see also* Report on the Medical Services of the Poor Law and the Public Health Departments, p. 21.

‡ Rules of Chertsey, St. Thomas, Exeter, Beaminster, Romsey, Williton and Lymington Boards of Guardians.

§ Rules of Godstone, Eastbourne, Bridport, Warwick, Lewes, Whitchurch, Lewisham, Trowbridge, Merthyr Tydvil, and many other Boards of Guardians.

‖ In a Norfolk Union we read that: "An ordinary labourer earning not more than 2s. per head per week, may have an order (for the attendance of the midwife) for the fifth child." (Resolutions of the East and West Flegg Board of Guardians.)

¶ Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, p. 110. We notice that the Medical Officer of Health of Hawarden (Cheshire) where the rate of infantile mortality is excessive, and actually increasing, expressly attributes it, apart from maternal negligence, to the want of medical attendance at child-birth and during lying-in, and in the inadequacy or unsuitability of the food afforded to the infant. (Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Hawarden Rural Sanitary District, for 1905.)

Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland *—deliberately puts a premium on irregular sexual intercourse, on permanent unions without marriage, and on the desertion of wives and children by their husbands and fathers. The grave results of this law are, we are informed, familiar to those acquainted with the lives of the poor in the great cities of Scotland. One of the least of these is the simulation of wife-desertion which is frequently practised, with the wife's connivance, by respectable husbands who find themselves unable to pay the expenses incidental to another birth. But there are more serious evils. We cannot help connecting the continuance in Scotland of a high rate of illegitimacy, the prevalence of irregular unions, and the increasing frequency of wife-desertion,† with the state of mind that has permitted this disqualification of the married woman living with her husband to remain on the statute-book, and even to find defenders.

We are aware that the more humane Parish Councils seek to evade this extraordinary provision of the Scotch Poor Law, by directing their Medical Officers, when wives or legitimate children are patently starving, to find some excuse for certifying the husband or father as non-ablebodied, however ablebodied he may in fact be.‡ We are not satisfied that this "subterfuge" as it was described §—we prefer to say this demoralising evasion of an immoral law—is sufficiently universally practised by Parish Council Officers, or is sufficiently widely known among respectable working-class families, destitute through lack of employment, to check the preventible suffering and mortality entailed by the law itself. "In point of fact," admitted the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, "many cases of serious hardship do arise."||

It has been urged that the community has no reason to regret the large and unnecessary infantile mortality, which evidently results from the restriction of Domiciliary Treatment in England and from the refusal of all relief in Scotland to the dependents of ablebodied men, and from the ignorance and the suffering of the poorest class of mothers. It is suggested that this preventable mortality is but one aspect of the "survival of the fittest," by which the community is actually strengthened and the race improved. We prefer to say nothing as to the demoralisation of character which, in our judgment, attends upon any such deliberate condemnation of thousands of human beings to death or any such reasoned acquiescence in their preventable deaths, in order that the survivors may somehow be benefited. What will appeal more to those who take this view is the unmistakable evidence that there is no scientific justification for the assumption that the preventable deaths of infants either result in the survival of the fittest—whatever definition may be given of that term—or tend to the improvement of the race. The competition for the means of subsistence does not take place among the infants themselves. There is no evidence that the babies who perish in the first year of life, owing, not to their own physical or mental characteristics, but to the ignorance or the poverty of their mothers, are in any way mentally or morally inferior to those who survive; or even that they are physically inferior to the infants of other families who survive only by reason of elaborate and continuous care. We have to remember that, according to the best scientific evidence, "between 80 per cent. and 90 per cent. of the babies born in this country are born healthy. The greater part of the disease and mortality among infants is *not* due to ante-natal conditions; it is due entirely to the fact that a large number of babies cannot obtain food,"¶ and this virtual starvation of the infants is quite independent of their own physical fitness or strength. We cannot even assume, merely because the mothers are poor, that these children come of stocks in any way inferior to the average.** What is, however, more

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 53068 (Par. 97), 53448–53454. *See also Qs.* 56605 (Par. 24), 57054–57059, 57126–57131, 57449, 57636 (Par. 13), 58904, 58905, 58944–58951, 59627 (Pars. 56–61), 63374 (Par. 16), 63582, 63583, 65280–65283.

† It "puts a premium on wife-desertion and to the consequent disintegration of family life." (Evidence of Dr. Leslie Mackenzie, Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, *Q.* 56605, Par. 26).

‡ The Medical Officer, we were told by the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, "may, for instance, take into account not only the applicant's physiological fitness to maintain himself but also the mental distress (!) caused by the destitution of his dependants, *e.g.*, a starving wife and children. Some Medical Officers habitually take this into account in their estimate of an applicant's health or fitness." (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 56605, Par. 23.) "I know that is done." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 56626.) *See also Qs.* 57054–57059, 57131, 57449, 58087 (Pars. 137, 138), 58944–58951, 59356, 59362, 65019 (Par. 3), 65103–65108, 65183–65186, 65280–65283.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 56917.

|| *Ibid.*, *Q.* 56605, Par. 24.

¶ The Infants' Hospital and its Work: a lecture delivered by Ralph Vincent, M.D., B.Sc., M.R.C.P. March 6th, 1908, p. 19.

** Even illegitimacy is no proof of inferiority of stock. In visiting Poor Law institutions it has been noted that, whilst in some districts the illegitimates seemed mostly the backward and badly formed children, those in Hampstead, Kensington and Chelsea were often the most refined, well-built and promising.

important to those who have to consider (and perhaps to bear the expense of) the future maintenance of all the children is that the premature deaths of these infants imply a disastrous weakening of those who just escape death.

> "The infantile mortality question," says a high medical expert, "is one, therefore, of extreme importance . . . in regard to the physique of the nation. While thousands perish outright, hundreds of thousands who worry through are injured in the hard struggle for existence, and grow up weaklings, physical and mental degenerates. *A high infantile mortality rate, therefore, denotes a far higher infantile deterioration rate,* and this unwelcome fact must not be lost sight of."*

Sir John Simon, Chief Medical Officer to the Local Government Board, pointed out a generation ago that—

> "A high infantile mortality almost necessarily connotes a prevalence of those causes and conditions which in the long run determine a degeneration of the race."†
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> "The more we investigated," significantly declares a scientific expert on the disease of children, "the more we were struck with another factor, which we regard as even more serious, and that is the *condition of the infants that do not die.* The statistics of infantile mortality at the present time afford a very important index of the serious conditions that affect infant life. This mortality is not by any means the worst result of the conditions as they are found in this country. By far the most serious matter, affecting the commonwealth in every possible way at the present time, is the condition of the babies who do not die, but who are reared in a condition of hopeless malnutrition. Let us consider, for instance, one disease—rickets. Its effects on the nervous system are of the most far-reaching character. Of the 'convulsions' which cause the death of babies at about twelve months of age, rickets is practically the sole cause. At a later stage of life the manifestations of the injuries caused by this disease are seen in epilepsy and in insanity. The lunatic asylums are largely occupied at the present time by cases of insanity arising from injuries of the nervous system by rickets. Adenoid growths, one of the common troubles of childhood, are practically caused entirely by deformed structure due to rickets. If you go to the chest hospitals and select the patients who are under treatment for pulmonary tuberculosis, you will find the majority of them are suffering from deformities of the chest due to rickets. The pulmonary disease is simply a secondary result of the injuries to the chest, and of the injuries to the tissues arising from rickets. All sorts of deformities which go to make up the number of cripples that we are acquainted with are caused by the same disease. And in addition to specific disease and deformities, rickets is responsible for a general and permanent enfeeblement of mind and body."‡

In short, we do not feel sure, in view of the scientific evidence that has been adduced, whether, in a final analysis, the excessive infantile death-rate caused by maternal poverty and ignorance, is not really intimately connected with the annual recruiting of able-bodied destitution and the "Unemployed." Has not Dr. A. K. Chalmers § said: "The dead baby is next of kin to the diseased baby, who in time becomes the anæmic, ill-fed and educationally backward child, from whom is derived later in life, the unskilled 'casual' who is at the bottom of so many of our problems"?

(ii) *The Workhouse as Maternity Hospital.*

But a large and increasing part of the Poor Law provision for child-bearing women takes the form of Indoor Relief. Few persons realise the extent to which, in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, the Workhouses or Poorhouses are being used as Maternity Hospitals. In Glasgow the number of births in the Poor Law Institutions of the city has doubled in five years.‖ The Workhouses in the smaller rural Unions of England, Wales, and Ireland, and the Combination Poorhouses of Scotland, have perhaps only half a dozen confinements each in a year. In the town Workhouses they are numbered by dozens, or by scores. And in such populous Parishes or Unions as Liverpool, West Derby, Belfast, and Glasgow, a baby is born in the Workhouse nearly every day. We regret that the Local Government Board was unable to furnish us with any statistics as to this subject. From such statistics as are available we gather that the annual number of

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* Evidence before the Commission, Q. 25373 (Par. 81); "The High Infantile Mortality Rate, the Far Higher Infantile Deterioration Rate, and the Means to Check it," by George Carpenter, M.D., Physician to the North-Eastern Hospital for Children, and Medical Officer of Health for Beckenham, p. 2.

† Infantile Mortality, by Dr. George Newman, 1907, p. v.

‡ The Infants' Hospital and its Work: A lecture delivered by Ralph Vincent, M.D., B.Sc., M.R.C.P., 6th March, 1908, pp. 3–4.

§ Medical Officer of Health for Glasgow.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, Q. 58087 (Par. 93). At Glasgow, the Destitution Authority has gone so far as to provide a well-equipped modern maternity section of its new buildings.

births in the Poor Law institutions of the United Kingdom probably exceeds 15,000. In the thirty-four lying-in wards of the Poor Law institutions of the Metropolis, nearly 3,000 births occur annually.* In the Irish Workhouses the number actually reported was, in 1906–7, 2,012. From exact returns obtained by one of our members from 450 out of the 645 Unions in England and Wales, we estimate that of the 11,000 children thus born in the Workhouses of England and Wales, about 30 per cent. were described as legitimate and 70 per cent. as illegitimate, the latter amounting to about 18 per cent. of all the illegitimate births.‡

It is interesting to notice from the statistics that a large, and, as we have some reason to believe, an increasing proportion of these mothers, do not appear to be, in the ordinary sense of the term, destitute persons. They are usually not in receipt of Poor Relief of any kind prior to their lying-in; and they voluntarily take their discharge, with the infant, within a few weeks of its birth. In the Workhouses from which exact statistics were obtained, more than half the mothers in 1907 discharged themselves within a month —one-eighth of them, indeed, within a fortnight. In comparatively few cases are these women noted as being re-admitted to the Workhouse during the ensuing twelve months. In fact, they resorted to the Workhouse simply in order to be delivered.

The women who thus resort to the Workhouse in their hour of need are, we find, of all nationalities, all grades of character and conduct, and all degrees of intelligence. In the Metropolis especially there are many domestic servants, laundresses and the humbler members of such nomadic professions as that of the theatre and music-hall.§ "Poor girls refused the shelter of their own homes in time of trouble; syphilitic patients; women who have been knocked about, neglected, and ill-treated up to the last minute; cases actually in labour when admitted; in fine, all sorts and conditions of poor women who have nowhere else to go, find their way to the Poor Law maternity wards where," optimistically observes an Inspector, "they receive the most skilful and tender care for themselves and their little ones."|| Some of these are "Ins and Outs" of a peculiar type, recurring at something like twelve months' intervals. An examination made by one of our members showed that in many cases the same woman's name will be found occurring several times at varying intervals in the maternity ward register. In one case a name was pointed out as that of a person who had been in for three confinements, it having been verified that the woman in question had been in for three other confinements in the neighbouring Union, thus having been delivered of six illegitimate children at the public expense.

We were surprised to find that there is no system of classifying those who come in for confinement, a defect which, from the evidence of Matrons and Midwives, as well as of Poor Law Guardians, leads to the moral deterioration of many of those women who might otherwise have been induced to lead respectable lives.¶ This is true of the Workhouses and Poorhouses of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike. "In a large number of Workhouses," reports the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, "can be found in the same ward young girls awaiting the birth of their first baby, unmarried mothers with an infant or a child under two years of age, and unmarried mothers with two or more illegitimate children. These girls and women are also employed throughout the Workhouse as scrubbers, attendants, and laundresses, and continually have opportunities for conversation with one another and with other female inmates. The result

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* *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXVI. (A), Par. 5, to Vol. I.

† Annual Report of Local Government Board for Ireland, 1907–1908, pp. 446–67.

‡ It has been suggested that the mother's description of herself as married or unmarried is not to be relied on. From inquiries made of Poor Law officials, we are inclined to believe that the great bulk of the mothers describe their condition correctly, and that, where a false statement is made, it is, perhaps, as likely to err on one side as on the other. Some unmarried women will describe themselves as married, in order to hide their shame; or because they have really been living in durable (though unlegalised) union. A check upon this is the obstacle it places in the way of obtaining from the father any subsequent contribution towards the child's maintenance. On the other hand, some married women describe themselves as unmarried, in order to prevent any attempt by the Poor Law Authorities to recover the cost of their relief from their husbands, or to prosecute these for allowing their wives to become chargeable. In Scotland, it is only by some such subterfuge that a destitute wife, living with her husband, can lawfully receive relief.

§ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXVI. (A), Par. 13, to Vol. I.

|| Thirty-Sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1906–1907, p. 303; Mr. Fleming's Report.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXV., Par. 26, to Vol. IX. "It invariably undoes them altogether" (*Ibid.*, Q. 35478), deposed the Superintendent Relieving Officer of one of the most populous Unions.

is that in most cases girls lose a sense of shame and become more and more degraded." * "Nowhere," declared to us the Lady Inspector for the Local Government Board for England and Wales, "is classification more needed than in the maternity wards. The unavoidable and close intercourse between the young girl, who often enters upon motherhood comparatively innocent, and the older woman who is lost to all sense of shame and who returns again and again to the maternity wards for the birth of her illegitimate children, constitutes a grave danger. Too often the older woman invites the friendless girl to share her home on leaving and so leads her on to further ruin." † "We believe" declares the Vice-Regal Commission, with regard to Ireland, "that in the enormous majority of cases a Workhouse life debases such girls, who get used to their companions and surroundings; and they leave and return to the Workhouse as necessity compels or as their own blunted feeling inclines them."‡ And the demoralisation becomes, we might almost say, a matter of inheritance. "We have frequently found in the Workhouse," declares the same Commission, "an illegitimate baby, its mother and its grandmother; and in one case we were shown in the same Workhouse a baby, its mother, its grandmother and its great-grandmother, or four illegitimate generations in the female line." §

We find that it is generally assumed that the women admitted to the Workhouse for lying-in are either feeble-minded girls, persistently immoral women, or wives deserted by their husbands. Whatever may have been the case in past years, this is no longer a correct description of the patients in what have become, in effect, Maternity Hospitals. Out of all the women who gave birth to children in the Poor Law institutions of England and Wales during 1907, it appears that about 30 per cent. were married women. In the Poor Law institutions of London and some other towns the proportion of married women rises to 40, and even to 50 per cent. It has in some districts become common, we are informed, for the wives of unemployed but respectable working-class men to resort to the Workhouse for their lying-in, in order to escape the ordeal of another confinement with no money coming in.‖

The majority of these mothers, as we have mentioned, whether married or unmarried, stay only a short time in the Workhouse,¶—sometimes as little as ten days—and no arrangements seem to be made for usefully occupying those who remain longer in a convalescent ward, or for affording any of them any kind of instruction in the management of their own health, or in the rearing of their infants.** "In their time after working hours they are compulsorily idle." Expectant mothers are not even allowed to prepare for the coming event by making any clothes for the infant; still less are they instructed how to do so. "It is," we were informed, "against the Workhouse rules," for expectant mothers to make the baby clothes, which "are made in the sewing-room by the older women." †† "No instruction or help of any kind," observes a lady Guardian, "is given to young mothers. There is no one to give it." ‡‡ We have observed in our own inspections of Workhouses that even the part taken by the mothers in the management and upbringing of their children is decided more from the point of view of what is convenient to the institution, than from the idea of developing any sense of responsibility in the mother. The nursery is usually in charge of a paid attendant, not a trained nurse, but a woman of some experience in the care of children, who is aided by "grannies" or old pauper women who nurse the

* Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., pp. 41-42.

† Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXVI. (A), Par. 14, to Vol. I.

‡ Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 42. It is not unimportant in this respect to note that the sanitary accommodation in Workhouses for women and girls is sometimes so arranged, as women Guardians have brought to our notice, as to render impossible all delicacy or refinement (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXV., Par. 26, to Vol. IX.).

§ Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 42.

‖ At Glasgow, for instance, "a considerable number of married women" are confined in the Poor Law institutions (Evidence before the Commission. *Q*, 57087, Par. 96); more than one-third of the births being legitimate. (*Ibid.*, Par. 93.)

¶ "The usual habit now in Workhouses is that after three weeks or twenty-eight days the girl very often takes her discharge, and also that of her child, with the consequence that the mother may be in a good physical condition of health, but she has very little notion of what her duties as a mother are. The ultimate result is that before the child is six or eight months old, we very often get the child back in a practically crippled condition, and the child has not very much further chance in life." (*Ibid.*, *Q*. 26735.)

** *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14507-14512.

†† *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXV., Par. 26, to Vol. IX.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXV. (B). Part II. (1 tte- 24), to Vol. IX.

babies, and younger pauper women who do the scrubbing and charing. These are not usually mothers of children in the nursery. The matron finds that the children of such mothers cry after them, and it delays the work, and she prefers to employ the mothers elsewhere.* If mother and infant remain in the institution for nine months or a year the separation between them becomes complete. This being the organisation of the Workhouse, those mothers who come in for a temporary period, to whom some real training in responsibility, etc., would be valuable in their future life, have necessarily to fall in with the existing arrangements. When they leave the Workhouse with their babies, they pass officially quite out of the ken of the Destitution Authority, which takes no heed of how they are going to live, or whether, under the circumstances, the baby born at so much expense to the Poor Rate, is likely to live or die. The unmarried mother who takes out her infant finds on her no sort of pressure to take the trouble to keep it in health, or even to keep it alive.† There is not even any notification of the cases to the Local Health Authority, which is often simultaneously going to great expense in endeavouring to watch over all the infants in the district. "We have all births reported to the Health Department," said one Medical Officer of Health, "and it is the business of the Women Inspectors to visit and advise the mothers as to the feeding and rearing of infants. The infants who are particularly likely to die are the illegitimates. The mothers of these infants are to a large extent confined in the Workhouse Hospitals; and it is difficult for us to get the addresses of these children when they leave the Workhouse Hospitals, in order that they may be supervised." The result is, so far as can be gathered from those who come in contact with the facts, that the illegitimate babies whom their mothers take out with them after their two or three weeks' stay in the Workhouse lying-in ward only rarely survive. Many of them are dead within a few weeks. Here as elsewhere, in fact, we see the costly provision made by the Destitution Authorities so organised as to break down any sense of personal obligation on the part of the recipient, and so narrowly restricted as to avoid any stimulus or incentive to parental responsibility.

The only remedy for this grave social neglect that has been suggested to us on behalf of the Destitution Authorities is that they should have power to detain the mothers in the Workhouse for a certain period after childbirth.‡ We have been unable to ascertain how far this compulsory detention is advocated for the purpose of educating the mothers; how far for that of deterring them from "coming on the rates"; how far for that of punishing them for having caused expense; and how far for that of preventing them from further breeding. Whatever may be the value of compulsory detention as a remedy, it is, we think, clear that no such power can properly be granted to a Destitution Authority. In no case is the General Mixed Workhouse a place in which persons ought to be compulsorily immured. If the object of the detention is education, all our evidence goes to prove that the Destitution Authority, from its very nature, cannot be an efficient teaching body. If the object be deterrence or punishment, we cannot imagine any justification for its infliction without judicial trial and sentence for some definite offence. But we apprehend that the suggestion is really intended to apply only to those unmarried mothers who are so feeble-minded or so mentally or morally defective as to be unable to take proper care of themselves in the competitive world. We doubt whether, in practice, it will be found possible, with any sort of responsible medical and judicial discrimination, to bring any large proportion of women into this category. We agree with the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded that all such cases, whether few or many, ought to be wholly removed from contact with the Destitution Authority; and that they should be dealt with according to their condition, whether by detention under proper certificate or not, by the Authority responsible for all grades of the mentally defective.§

But the aspect of the Poor Law maternity hospital with which this chapter is primarily concerned is that relating to the infant. Early in our evidence our attention was drawn by Dr. Fuller, Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board for Poor Law Purposes, to the apparently excessive infantile mortality prevailing in Poor Law institutions. In the course of an inquiry into the care of infants made some years ago, he had

* "The discipline of the nursery is difficult," says the Lady Inspector of the Local Government Board, "owing to the number of mothers who return periodically [from other parts of the workhouse] to visit their babies, and who sleep with them in the night nurseries." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXVI. (A), Par. 22, to Vol. I.)

† We desire, however, to recognise the admirable work unofficially done by the Ladies' Committees in connection with some Boards of Guardians, in seeking to befriend the young mothers, and to find them suitable situations on discharge. (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXVI. (B) to Vol. I.).

‡ *Ibid*, *Qs.* 14044, 14243, 15619, 22136 (Par. 6), 22164–22166, etc., etc.

§ Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908.

obtained incomplete returns from 546 workhouses, which showed that out of an average total of 3,719 infants under two years of age always in the nurseries and lying-in wards, there had been an average number of deaths per annum during five years of 1,315,* or more than one-third of the average infant population annually. This very alarming proportion of deaths among a constantly changing stream of infants is, however, not statistically comparable with any standard death rate; and the Local Government Board does not seem to have followed up the subject by more exact inquiry. We were, therefore, interested in the mortality statistics of the 8,483 infants who were born during 1907 in the Workhouses of the 450 Unions responding to the inquiry made by one of our members. Out of these 8,483 infants, no fewer than 1,050 actually died on the premises before attaining one year. The Registrar-General, as is well known, gives, for the whole population, the number of babies, out of every 1,000 born, who die before the expiration of certain days, weeks and months of the first year of life. Similarly, there has been worked out for these 8,483 babies born in 450 of the Poor Law institutions in England and Wales during 1907, taking only the deaths actually occurring in the institutions, the proportion dying within corresponding periods of their first year—making the assumption, for the purpose of comparison of death-rates, that those who left the Workhouse within the year had a death-rate equal to those remaining in the institution. We append the result in the following table:—

NUMBER OF INFANTS, OUT OF EVERY 1,000 BORN IN THE POOR LAW INSTITUTIONS OF 450 UNIONS IN 1907, WHO DIED WITHIN THOSE INSTITUTIONS WITHIN THE PERIODS SPECIFIED; TOGETHER WITH CORRESPONDING STATISTICS FOR THE WHOLE OF THE BIRTHS IN ENGLAND AND WALES AND IN LONDON RESPECTIVELY FOR 1906.

TABLE I.

Infantile Deaths out of every 1,000 *Born.*

Age at Death.	In Workhouses outside London.		In London Workhouses.		Experience of England and Wales, 1906 (Legitimate and Illegitimate).	Experience of London for 1906 (Legitimate and Illegitimate).
	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.		
Days.						
0	18·9	7·9	13·0	11·4	11·8	–
1	23·7	32·2	28·0	23·5	13·2	–
Weeks.						
1	8·6	13·5	6·2	11·2	6·1	–
	51·2	53·6	47·2	46·1	31·1	37·6
2	15·0	13·9	11·7	11·6	6·2	–
3	6·4	10·7	26·6	9·0	4·6	–
	72·6	78·2	85·5	66·7	41·9	37·0
Months.						
1	45·2	55·1	23·8	67·2	14·3	13·4
2	27·6	30·8	33·3	49·0	11·4	11·2
3	31·0	27·6	42·4	54·0	10·2	10·1
4	33·1	16·5	22·6	30·3	8·7	8·6
5	12·7	12·3	5·9	23·3	8·1	8·6
6	10·0	11·9	18·2	31·6	7·4	7·7
7	13·7	7·9	18·4	20·2	6·8	7·3
8	7·1	8·9	12·3	20·4	6·6	6·7
9	28·9	6·4	31·4	16·7	6·1	7·0
10	18·5	4·6	6·3	12·6	5·6	6·1
12	11·3	8·4	19·5	–	5·4	6·2
	311·7	263·6	319·6	392·0	132·5	129·9
Number of Infants at risk	1,479	4,421	1,002	1,581		

* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (C) to Vol. I.

TABLE II.

Summary of Table I.

Ages at death.	Workhouses outside London.		London Workhouses.		England and Wales.	London.
	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.	Legitimate.	Illegitimate.		
Under 1 month -	72·6	78·2	85·5	66·7	41·9	37·0
1 to 3 months -	72·8	85·9	57·1	116·2	25·7	24·6
3 to 6 „ -	76·8	56·4	70·9	107·6	27·0	27·3
6 to 9 „ -	30·8	28·7	48·9	72·2	20·8	21·7
9 to 12 „ -	58·7	19·4	57·2	29·3	17·1	19·3
	311·7	268·6	319·6	392·0	132·5	129·9
Number of infants on whose experience from birth the above rates are based -	1,479	4,421	1,002	1,581		

This result appears to us somewhat startling. The infantile mortality in the population as a whole, exposed to all dangers of inadequate medical attendance and nursing, lack of sufficient food, warmth and care, and parental ignorance and neglect, is admittedly excessive. The corresponding mortality among the infants in the Poor Law institutions, where all these dangers may be supposed to be absent, is *between two and three times a great.* Out of every 1,000 babies born in the population at large, 25 die within a week and 132 are dead by the end of the first year. For every 1,000 children born in the Poor Law institutions, 40 to 45 die within a week, and, assuming the mortality among those who are discharged to be the same as those remaining, no fewer than 268 or 392 will be found to have died by the end of the year, the number varying according to whether we take the experience of the Poor Law institutions for legitimates or for illegitimates, in the Metropolis, or elsewhere.*

Corresponding statistics were obtained from the Poorhouses of eight great urban parishes in Scotland. In these institutions the births were only 391, but of these no fewer than 56 died on the premises before attaining the age of one year. Making exact allowance for the varying periods at which the other infants left the Poorhouse in the same way as has been done for England and Wales, these figures indicate that if none of the infants had been discharged, more than half of them would have been found dead before the expiration of one year. The infantile mortality for these eight large Scottish Poorhouses appears, in fact, to be much worse than that of the English Workhouses. For Ireland, statistics were obtained only for one large Workhouse, and in this case the results were as bad as those of the Scottish Poorhouses.

* We are fully aware of the shortcomings of the statistical data here analysed. It is never quite satisfactory to compare the mortality rates of institutions, having only limited numbers of inmates, placed under exceptional circumstances, and having peculiar antecedents, with those of the population at large. Moreover mortality statistics for a single year are always apt to be accidentally misleading. But there can be no doubt that, out of these 8,483 born in the Workhouses, 1,050 did die on the premises within twelve months of birth, notwithstanding that most of the infants were taken away long before a year had elapsed. Whatever caution may have to be exercised in drawing conclusions from the data, they are, we suggest, amply sufficient to warrant careful official inquiry; and we put them forward with no further claim. We only regret that the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, respectively, do not obtain annually, as a matter of course, properly corrected mortality statistics for the preceding five or ten years, with regard to each Poor Law institution. We have not been able to obtain exactly corresponding statistics for the infants born in voluntary maternity hospitals. But their annual reports give the total number of births and infantile deaths within the institution; and the stay in those of the Metropolis is so very generally a fortnight, that these statistics may be compared roughly with the deaths in the Poor Law institutions during that period after birth. The proportion of infantile deaths to the births during 1907 was, in the City of London Lying-in Hospital, 20·49 per 1,000; in the East End Mothers' Home, 21·07 per 1,000; in the Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital, 26·1 per 1,000; and in the General Lying-in Hospital, 59·3 per 1,000; or taken together, out of 3,414 births, 30 per 1,000—to be compared with the 46 to 53 per 1,000 recorded of the Poor Law institutions as a whole. In the well-known Rotunda Hospital at Dublin, out of 2,262 births in 1906, there died in hospital only 30 infants; in 1907, out of 2,318, only 21 infants. The usual stay in hospital is, however, apparently only seven days; so that the extraordinarily small proportion of infantile deaths—13 or 9 per 1,000 must be compared with the 25 per 1,000 for England and Wales, and the 40·1 to 44·9 per 1,000 of the Workhouses for the first week. We have not been able to obtain statistics as to the comparative mortality of the mothers in the maternity wards of Workhouses and voluntary hospitals respectively, and under domiciliary treatment. This too, we think, calls for inquiry.

It is interesting to observe that these heavy infantile death-rates in the Poor Law institutions do not seem to bear any exact relation to legitimacy or illegitimacy. Taking particular ages or particular districts, the death-rate among illegitimate infants is sometimes below and sometimes above that for legitimate children. Thus, for the Poor Law institutions of London taken together, the death-rate is, for the whole year, much higher among the illegitimate than among the legitimate. For the institutions outside London, on the other hand, the death-rate for the year is actually lower among the illegitimates than among the legitimates. The variations in this respect as between the different ages, whether in London or elsewhere, are apparently quite without connection with legitimacy. It would seem as if the protection and food enjoyed by the infants in the workhouse, legitimate and illegitimate alike, removed the presumption against the survival of illegitimate infants.

Equally interesting is it to notice that the excess of infantile mortality in the Poor Law institutions is actually greater at the ages between one and six months, than during the first month of life. Whatever allowance should be made for the fact that the Poor Law institutions receive many cases in which the mother has been exposed to adverse conditions,* it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the arrangements of the workhouse nurseries—to which Dr. Fuller so pointedly drew our attention—need serious examination.

This inference seems to receive some confirmation from the fact that the excessive infantile mortality in the Poor Law institutions is not universal; and that some have apparently a much higher death-rate than others. We do not wish to attribute too much importance to the statistics of particular institutions for so short a period as one year; but it cannot be right that there should be Workhouses in which 40 per cent. of the babies die within the year. When we find that out of the 493 infants born in ten Workhouses (having each not fewer than twenty births in the year) there were only fourteen deaths in the year, or 3 per cent., whereas out of the 333 infants born in ten other Workhouses (having each not fewer than twenty births in the year) there were as many as 114 deaths, or 33 per cent. we think it is high time for systematic enquiry. For these startling infantile death-rates, whether in all the Poor Law institutions, or in the worst of them, do not appear to result from epidemics, in the ordinary sense of the word. We do not find the deaths occurring in bunches, or even in excess in summer as compared with winter. It has been suggested to us, by persons experienced in the peculiar dangers of institutions for infants of tender years, that the high death-rates—especially the excessive death-rates after the first few weeks of life, right up to the age of three or four—may be due to some unnoticed adverse influence steadily increasing in its deleterious effect the longer the child is exposed to it. In the scarlet fever wards of isolation hospitals, it has been suggested that the mere aggregation of cases may possibly produce, unless there are the most elaborate measures for disinfection, a dangerous "intensification" of the disease. In the Workhouse nursery there is practically no periodical disinfection. The walls, the floors, the furniture must all become, year after year, more and more impregnated with whatever mephitic atmosphere prevails. The very cots in which the infants lie have been previously tenanted by an incalculable succession of infants in all states of health and morbidity. It may well be that human infants, like chickens, cannot long be aggregated together, even in the most carefully devised surroundings, without being injuriously affected.

A grave question arises on these statistics whether the policy of restricting out-door medical relief to expectant mothers, refusing Midwifery Orders, and offering only "the House" for lying-in, ought any longer to be allowed. If the effect of compelling the mothers to come into the Workhouse for their confinements is that twice or three times as many of their babies will die, as if they had been delivered in their own homes, we do not think that the community will, or should permit, such a policy to continue. We have not had time to give the matter the statistical investigation that it imperatively demands. But one of our members obtained, for the purposes of comparison, exact statistics of all the babies born during the same year (1907) under the care of the Plaistow Maternity Charity, an organisation for providing gratuitous midwifery attendance at birth, and for the first fortnight afterwards, *in the mother's own home*, in one of the most poverty-stricken districts of West Ham. Statistics were thus obtained for no fewer than 3,005 infants, all of them born in households having incomes of no more than twenty-one shillings a week. Of these, there died within the first fortnight only 47, or 15·33

* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXVI. (A), Par. 8, to Vol. I.

per 1,000 births.* In the four large voluntary maternity hospitals in the Metropolis, of which we have statistics, the infantile mortality taken together was, for the first fortnight, 30 per 1,000 births. This, too, was nearly the infantile death-rate for the first fortnight among the whole population (viz., 31·1). In the Poor Law institutions of the Metropolis the corresponding death-rate was, among legitimate children, 47·2, and among illegitimate children, 46·1 per 1,000 births. In the Poor Law institutions outside the Metropolis, the corresponding death-rate was, among legitimate children, 51·2, and among illegitimate children, 53·6 per 1,000 births. The three thousand infants attended to in their homes, poor and wretched as were these homes, by the competent nurses of the Plaistow Maternity Charity had, therefore, a death-rate, during the first fortnight after birth, considerably less than that in the most successful of the voluntary hospitals, and *less than a third* of that in the Poor Law institutions.†

(iii.) *The Workhouse as Infant Nursery.*

Some of the mothers who have come into the Workhouse to be delivered do not immediately take their discharge, but remain in the institution with their infants. Other infants of tender years are always being brought into the Workhouse by their destitute parents, or as orphans or foundlings. One way or another the Destitution Authorities accordingly find themselves having to provide in their institutions for a steadily growing number of children under school age—an infant population under five years old that amounts, in the United Kingdom, to about 15,000.‡ For this gigantic "State Nursery," there is practically no other place at present than the General Mixed Workhouse.§

We regret to report that these Workhouse nurseries are, in a large number of cases—alike in structural arrangements, equipment, organisation, and staffing—wholly unsuited to the healthy rearing of infants. It is in vain that the Local Government Board has for more than a decade laid it down that: "In every Workhouse where there are several children, too young to attend school, a separate nursery, dry, spacious, light, and well ventilated, should be provided. . . . In no case should the care of young children be entrusted to infirm or weak-minded inmates. . . . Unless young children are placed under responsible supervision they cannot be said to be properly taken care of."‖ The Boards of Guardians have not obeyed. We have visited many Workhouse nurseries in the different parts of the kingdom; and we have found hardly any that can possibly be regarded as satisfactory places in which children should be reared. The mere fact that the infants are almost universally handled by pauper inmates, many of them more or less mentally-defective, makes it impossible for a Workhouse nursery to be a proper place. The infants, deposed one lady Guardian, "are left to the paupers to look after them," and this has a bad effect, both on the infants and on the mothers.¶ "*I have*

* These figures include the sixty-seven cases received into a small maternity home, as being cases of difficulty, among which there were two deaths of infants.

† We have ascertained that in the births attended by the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Nurses in 1907 (over 15,000 domiciliary cases in all parts of the country) the infantile mortality during the first ten days was under 19 per 1,000; a remarkable confirmation of the Plaistow experience.

‡ On March 31st, 1906, 11,424 under five years of age; in Scotland, 750 only; in Ireland, as many as 3,185.

§ The age at which the infants are transferred (if at all) from the Workhouse nursery varies. The Local Government Board forbids them to be sent to the Poor Law schools until after three years of age (General Order of February 10th, 1899). On the other hand, we were informed that the Manchester Board of Guardians transferred its infants to its large school at Swinton at two years old. In 1878, when the North Surrey District School decided to refuse admission to any under four, the Local Government Board acquiesced. (*Selections from the Correspondence of the Local Government Board*, Vol. I., 1880, p. 178.) The period of residence in the Workhouse nursuries has actually been increased. "The separate schools," states the Senior Medical Inspector for Poor Law purposes, "formerly were allowed to admit children from two years and upwards, but they were a few years back brought into line with the district schools which have always been limited to three years, on the ground that the very young children are more liable to introduce infection than the older ones." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 23090.) It is extremely rare for a child under five to be sent to a certified school or home, and it is contrary to regulations to send such a child to an industrial school. In England and Wales it is also quite exceptional for children under five to be boarded-out, though this is done in Scotland and Ireland with orphan children (315 under five are thus boarded-out in Scotland). Hence the General Mixed Workhouse is, in England and Wales, the officially recognised place for infants up to three years of age, at least; and in most Unions until four or five. The City of London Union sends its infants to its Poor Law infirmary at Bow. In a few cases, latterly, in Unions having Cottage Homes, some of the infants have been placed in the homes with the elders.

‖ Memorandum on the Duties of Visiting Committees, June, 1895. (*See* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (C) to Vol. I.)

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 44973, 44974.

frequently seen," declared to us another competent witness, "*a classed imbecile in charge of a baby.*"* The whole nursery, says a lady Guardian, has often been found "under the charge of a person actually certified as of unsound mind, the bottles sour, the babies wet, cold, and dirty."† There are, of course, occasionally fatal results. The Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded draws attention "to an episode in connection with one feeble-minded woman who was set to wash a baby; she did so in boiling water and it died."‡ This state of things is not unknown to the Local Government Board.§ We were supplied by Dr. Fuller, the Medical Inspector for Poor Law purposes with a copy of a Report that he made to the Board in 1897, showing that:||

> "It is not an uncommon thing to find suckling mothers acting as ward-attendants, which means they rarely, if ever, get into the open air for exercise, and their infants rarely or never go out of the sick wards, except in the arms of a convalescent, into the airing courts. . . . In *sixty-four Workhouses, imbeciles or weak-minded women are entrusted with the care of infants*, as helps to the able-bodied or infirm women who are placed in charge by the matron, without the constant supervision of a responsible officer. In 370 Workhouses the inmates (a very large proportion of whom are aged or infirm women) have the charge of infants without any officer other than the Matron to supervise them. In 113 Workhouses, able-bodied or aged and infirm inmates are entrusted with the charge of the infants, with the occasional supervision of either the Assistant Matron, trained nurse, assistant nurse, industrial trainer, portress or labour mistress, in addition to the Matron, who visits twice a day."

We recognise that some improvement has since taken place. But, as we have ourselves seen, pauper inmates, many of them feeble-minded, are still almost everywhere utilised for handling the babies; and the Workhouse nurseries, so far as paid officers are concerned, are still so inadequately staffed as to make pauper help indispensable.¶ The sanitary arrangements are nearly always so primitive, and so far below the standard of the best day nurseries of the present time, that a very large amount of personal service is necessary, if the nursery and the babies are to be kept in a proper state of cleanliness and purity.** As things are, the visitor to a Workhouse nursery finds it too often a place of intolerable stench, offensive to all the senses, under quite insufficient supervision, in which it would be a miracle if the babies continued in health.

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* *Ibid.*, Q. 69293 (Par. 8).

† *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXV. (B), Part II. (letter 20) to Vol. IX.

‡ Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VI., p. 221 Vol. VIII. p. 22.

§ Ten years ago an Inspector officially reported that, in his district, in order "to avoid the cost of a competent official, the infants are, too frequently, left practically to the charge of the inmates. I say 'practically,' because there is an official nominally in charge, but the other duties attached to her office claim most of her time. The women placed in charge of the nurseries are, at the best, ignorant and often careless. The feeding bottles are not always properly cleaned, and the milk turns sour. The atmosphere of the nurseries is seldom fresh, and the light not always what could be desired. The infants are kept too much in these rooms and are not taken into the fresh air to the extent they should be. The result of this false economy is that the children so often grow up delicate. This leads me," he continues, "to consider the infant children of wards-women in infirmaries. There is generally a difficulty in obtaining women for the duties of wards-women, and the most able-bodied are those who enter the Workhouse to be confined; these are mostly young women with illegitimate children. Consequently, when the child is a month old, the mother is transferred to the infirmary and becomes a wards-woman. I cannot but think that, in some cases, the infants suffer from the effects of this work on the mother; but my special point is that the infant suffers in health from being too much confined in the atmosphere of the infirmary." (Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, 1898–1899, Mr. Wethered's Report, pp. 143–144.)

|| Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (C) to Vol. I. Another Inspector drew attention to the subject four years later. "Nothing has been said," observed Mr. Jenner-Fust in 1901, "about the nursery children, at present retained at the Workhouse till three years old, or even more, though the care of these requires attention as much as that of the older ones. They are almost always largely under the care of inmates and the conditions are seldom improved, even when these inmates are their own mothers. . . . I cannot but think that nursery homes with trained nurses as foster-mothers should form part of the equipment of all Cottage Homes, or if a separate receiving home be established, the nursery children might conveniently be placed there, the removal from the Workhouse not being delayed beyond the period when a child is able to walk." (Thirtieth Annual Report of Local Government Board for England and Wales, 1900–1901, p. 147; Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 96.)

¶ It is apparently not even now required by the Local Government Board that there should be a paid nursery officer for six children. "It *should* be a compulsory regulation," Dr. Fuller suggested to us, "that where there are on an average six infants under three years of age, a suitable paid officer should be appointed whose sole duty is the care and control of them." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (A), Par. 79, to Vol. I.)

** Even so elementary a requirement as suitable clothing is neglected. "The infants," states one lady Guardian, "have not always a proper supply of flannel, and their shirts are sometimes made of rough, unbleached calico. . . . The infants of twelve months and thereabouts have their feet compressed into tight laced-up boots over very thick socks doubled under their feet to make them fit into the boots." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXV., Par. 26, to Vol. IX.) "In some Workhouses the children have no toys." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXV., Par. 26, (viii.) to Vol. IX.); and we have heard of cases in which the toys remain tidily on a shelf out of reach, so that there may be no litter on the floor!

A further evil, to which practically no attention seems to have been paid, is the extent to which these Workhouse nurseries are continually being decimated by the admission of infants bringing with them incipient measles or whooping cough; "and that, just at an age," to quote the words of Dr. Downes, the Senior Medical Officer for Poor Law Purposes, "when the common infections are most fatal."* We were surprised to find, in Workhouse after Workhouse, practically no arrangements for quarantining the new-comers, or otherwise preventing "the great danger of the introduction of infection among them."† In all but a few quite exceptional Workhouses, the constant stream of entering infants, of all ages between a few weeks and five years, many of them coming straight from the most filthy and insanitary homes—some of them, indeed, the dependents of "ins-and-outs"—passes instantly into the midst of the nursery population. The very least that ought to be provided, to use the words of the Senior Medical Inspector for Poor Law Purposes, is "a sort of duplication of their nursery so that the newcomers could be kept apart from the main body of the children."‡ But, as the Lady Inspector of the Local Government Board for England and Wales observed to us, the Workhouses of the great towns "always more or less crowded, *do not admit of probation nurseries.* . . . The present mixture of all the children under three years of age, those who are more or less permanent and the 'ins-and-outs,' varying in age from the infant of three weeks old to the children between two and three who can run about, appears, speaking generally, to be an insuperable difficulty."§ What exactly is the result of this extraordinary exposure to infection, in the prevalence of measles and whooping cough in the Workhouse nurseries, is unfortunately not recorded. "In some cases," euphemistically observes the Senior Medical Inspector for Poor Law Purposes, "epidemics of measles and whooping cough have been very troublesome."‖ We have already mentioned the excessive mortality which Dr. Fuller found generally to prevail in England and Wales among the Workhouse children under two.¶ We have reason to believe that the mortality between two and five years is also excessive; and we regret that the Local Government Board has obtained no statistics on the subject.

We can add nothing to the gravity of the authoritative indictment of the Boards of Guardians, as managers of infant nurseries, with which Dr. Fuller and Miss Stansfeld —witnesses whose official position gives weight to their testimony—have thus supplied to us. But we may mention, as illustrative of the total incapacity of the Destitution Authorities to provide for even the most elementary requirements of an infants' nursery, three incidents that we have ourselves witnessed.

In one large Workhouse, our Committee noticed that the children

> "From perhaps about eighteen months to perhaps two and a half years of age, had a sickly appearance. These children were having their dinner, which consisted of *large platefuls of potatoes and minced beef*, a somewhat improper diet for children of that age, and one which may partly account for their pasty looks. The attendants did not know the ages of the children; the children are not weighed from time to time and a record kept."**

In another extensive Workhouse nursery, our Committee found

> "The babies of one to two years of age preparing for their afternoon sleep. They were seated in rows on wooden benches in front of a wooden table. *On the table was a long narrow cushion, and when the babies were sufficiently exhausted, they fell forward upon this to sleep!* The position seemed most uncomfortable and likely to be injurious. We were told that the system was an invention of the Matron, and had been in use for a long time."††

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* *Ibid*, Q. 23090.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* What is really required is a double probationary ward, the one half of it receiving the entering stream of babies day by day, and the other half taking them over in batches every three weeks, so that every child would have at least three weeks quarantine in the second half before passing into the general nursery.

§ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXVI. (A), Par 21, to Vol. I.

‖ *Ibid.*, Q. 23090.

¶ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXI. (C) to Vol. I.

** Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 20, p. 45. Elsewhere we were informed the "infants weaned, but unable to feed themselves, are sometimes placed in a row, and the whole row fed with one spoon . . . from one plate of rice pudding; the spoon went in and out of the mouths all along the row." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix Nos. LXXXV., Par. 26, viii., and LXXXV. (B), Part II. (l), to Vol. IX.)

†† Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 24 D., p. 65.

Finally, in the great palatial establishments of London and other large towns, we were shocked to discover that the infants in the nursery *seldom or never got into the open air.** We found the nursery frequently in the third or fourth storey of a gigantic block, often without balconies, whence the only means of access, even to the Workhouse yard was a lengthy flight of stone steps, down which it was impossible to wheel a baby carriage of any kind. There was no staff of nurses adequate to carrying fifty or sixty infants out for an airing. In some of these Workhouses it was frankly admitted that the babies never left their own quarters (and the stench that we have described), and never got into the open air, during the whole period of their residence in the workhouse nursery.†

(iv.) *The Cause of the Failure of the Destitution Authority.*

We do not attribute this failure to any personal shortcomings of the members of the Boards of Guardians and Parish Councils; still less to any lack of humanity among them. The fact that these bodies, almost alone among Local Authorities, include women in their membership, is a confirmation of this inference. In our visits up and down the country, we have been much impressed by the high social standing, the sympathetic character and the superior intelligence of the great majority of the women members of the Boards of Guardians. It is they, almost alone among our unofficial witnesses, who have brought to our notice many details of the extraordinarily defective provision now made for women and children.‡ But the attention of the Boards of Guardians has never been directed to the evils that we have mentioned *as problems to be solved by appropriate treatment.* To them, there is in the Workhouse no "Maternity Hospital," no "Rescue Home," no Infant Asylum." What they believe themselves to be doing—what they are charged to do—is merely to "give relief"; and relief which, as a Destitution Authority, they are authoritatively told must neither be insufficient to support life, nor more than will just suffice for that purpose, to the good as to the bad—relief which may begin only when "destitution" sets in, and must suddenly cease when "destitution" ends. So long as the task set to a Local Authority in this service of Birth and Infancy is merely the "Relief of Destitution," no body of men and women is likely to do better than the present Board of Guardians or (in Scotland) the Parish Council. If they were removed from popular control they might—however carefully selected—easily do worse. Nor is there any reason to assume that an enlargement of the area for which the Destitution Authority acts would cause any improvement in this particular service. On the contrary, our own opinion is that the provision actually made for Birth and Infancy at the present time in the smaller Unions of England and Wales is both less demoralising to the mothers, and less fatal to the infants, than the promiscuous lying-in wards and the crowded nurseries of the palatial Poor Law Infirmaries and mammoth Workhouses of the Boards of Guardians administering districts of a population of more than a quarter of a million. We cannot escape the conclusion that a Destitution Authority, whatever its area, whatever its method of appointment, and whatever the character of its membership, is, by the very nature of its task, unsuited and positively disabled for making whatever provision for Maternity and Infancy is, in the interests of the community as a whole, deemed desirable.

B. Voluntary Agencies for Providing for Birth and Infancy.

We are supported in our condemnation of the use of the Workhouse as a Maternity Hospital or as an Infant Asylum by the emphatic conclusions of the recent Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, which paid special attention to this subject.§ That Commission recommended that the General Mixed Workhouse should absolutely cease to be used, either for the reception of expectant mothers, or for lying-in, or as a nursery for infants of any age. It was proposed, in accordance with an overwhelming concurrence of testimony, that girls on their first lapse should be placed, both before and after their confinement, in suitable voluntary institutions devoting themselves to this service:—

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* "Until lately there was no perambulator," observes one lady Guardian, "so they could not go out at all." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXV. (B), Part II. (letter 104), to Vol. IX.).

† We have heard it remarked by officers of Poor Law schools that the children transferred to them from the Workhouse nurseries were no better in health and strength than those entering direct from the homes of parents driven by absolute destitution to apply for relief. The officers expressly attributed this to the insanitary conditions of a Workhouse nursery, and to the fact that the infants seldom got out of doors.

‡ *See* the very cogent "Statement of Evidence by the Women's Local Government Society," (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXV. to Vol. IX., in which is tabulated and summarised the testimony of 141 women Guardians of the Poor.

§ Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, Cd. 3202, 1906.

"In this way," it was suggested, "there would be a hope that the life of the girl would not be wrecked owing to her fall, but that she might, as far as practicable, be restored to the possibility of living a good and useful life. When the time for the girl's confinement arrives, we contemplate that she should be sent to the nearest district or other hospital, from which she would return with her baby to the special institution after the usual period for remaining in a lying-in hospital. We would rely upon kind and prudent treatment of the girls individually, and to the placing of each of them as far as possible, in suitable situations after they had spent a year or thereabouts nursing their babies, and after spending such additional time, if any, as the managers of the institution might think necessary for the strengthening of their character. As soon as a girl-mother could be provided with a situation, and the sooner the better, we think, after the nursing period, we suggest that her child should be boarded-out unless it should be kept for medical reasons in the institution a little longer. We would make such institutions open, as regards adults, only to girls after their first fall."*

In view of this authoritative recommendation, and of suggestions made to us on similar lines as regards Great Britain, we deemed it necessary to inquire how far voluntary agencies were available and suitable for undertaking this important work. We were unfortunately unable in the time allowed to us to make anything like a complete survey, but one of our members has placed at our disposal the results of inquiries into the provision that is actually being made for Maternity and Infancy by voluntary agencies in two important areas of England, the Metropolis and the West Riding of Yorkshire, which together comprise nearly a quarter of the whole population of England and Wales; and in one or two other areas. These voluntary agencies may be classified, roughly, into:—

(1) Rescue Homes.

(2) Maternity Hospitals.

(3) Domiciliary, Midwifery and Nursing Agencies.

(4) Day Nurseries; and

(5) Infant Asylums.

(i.) *Rescue Homes.*

The Rescue Homes usually receive unmarried expectant mothers for a few months before confinement, and for a few weeks afterwards, nearly always sending the woman to a Maternity Hospital for lying-in.† Such Institutions exist at present only in a few towns, and on a comparatively small scale relative to the total number of cases requiring attention. The information obtained with regard to twenty-four Rescue Homes in the Metropolis, half-a-dozen in the West Riding, and half-a-dozen elsewhere,‡ shows that they are supported by voluntary contributions, and to a small extent by payments made by the patients or their friends. In nearly every case they are managed by small committees, often connected with a religious denomination. They nearly all limit themselves to girls with their first illegitimate child, § and they can usually admit only ten or twenty cases a year each, hardly any among them having accommodation for as many as fifty at a time. The length of the girl's stay varies from three months to one year, during which she is trained in domestic service, and at the end of which a suitable situation is found for her. Foster-mothers are found for their infants, the mother being required to pay, from the time she gets a situation, 5s. per week for the support of her child. The idea that the girl must necessarily be ashamed of her child is fast disappearing, and she is encouraged to work for it and

* *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 42. Hardened offenders, it was recommended, should be dealt with in the same way, there being voluntary institutions devoting themselves specially to these cases. Married women needing institutional care in their confinements would go straight from their own homes to the maternity ward of the county or municipal (non-pauper) hospital, the cases being as far as possible segregated there in the three classes.

† The number of Rescue Homes in England and Wales appears to be nearly 300 (Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 175). Of these, 100 had received 14,725 inmates in the three years, 1902–4 (*Ibid.*), or an average of nearly fifty per annum each. A few of the homes have accommodation for a small number of lying-in patients. It is significant that many of them used to send their patients for lying-in to the maternity ward of the Workhouse (as some do still); but that most of them have relinquished this practice, as it was found that if the girl once entered the Workhouse for lying-in, she was so hardened and deteriorated as only too likely to return to it again for a similar purpose.

‡ Some evidence as to these homes was taken by the Commissioners. (*See* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 44924–44969, 45124–45128, and Appendix No. XX. (A) to Vol. IV.; also Appendix No. xxvi. (D) to Vol. I.).

§ With regard to one such home, however, it was given in evidence by the promoters that they were "very anxious not to take only first cases, because among the cases that we have helped, according to experience, sometimes the second cases have done better than the first." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 44946, 44947.)

to take a pride in its well-being, instead of placing it in an institution such as the Foundling Hospital, where the primary condition of admission is that the mother must be willing to cede all claims over her child and never see it again.

The most extensive of these agencies is, perhaps, that administered in connection with the Salvation Army, with Rescue Homes in various parts of the country. We have been much impressed by what we have learnt from various sources of the invigorating and restorative effect of the treatment of the large number of girl-mothers annually dealt with in these Homes, and by the practical wisdom and administrative skill displayed in all the details of their management. We think that the methods adopted in these Homes merit careful study by those who may be responsible for dealing with the problem at the expense of public funds.

We are impressed—as was the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland—with the admirable social work done by the various Rescue Homes, and by their far greater success in reclaiming the best class of unmarried mothers, and enabling them to make a fresh start in life, than can be claimed by any Poor Law Institution. We regret that more use is not made of these Homes by the Boards of Guardians.* We suggest, however, that they require official inspection and supervision, especially from the standpoint of the welfare of the infant. At present, they concentrate their attention almost entirely upon the mother, and her future welfare. Comparatively little thought is given to what happens to the babies; and no information is available as to the rate of mortality among them. In view of the supreme interest of the community in the coming generation, the arrangements made for the rearing of these infants ought clearly to be under special supervision by the Public Health Authority.

(ii) *Maternity Hospitals.*

Special Maternity Hospitals seldom exist, we believe, except in London (which has less than a dozen), Dublin (three, including one large one), Edinburgh and Glasgow,† though there are sometimes maternity wards in the general hospitals.‡ Such Maternity Hospitals date from the middle of the eighteenth century. They do not appear to be a popular form of charity, and they exhibit a much smaller growth than other institutions for the treatment of the sick—perhaps because they have suffered in the past from a high rate of mortality among the mothers. This drawback, we gather, has now been overcome. Nevertheless, so far as we have been able to estimate, only 5 or 6 per cent. of the births in London, and only an insignificant percentage elsewhere, take place in voluntary institutions. Only in Dublin does the proportion rise to a high figure; and there it appears to reach 20 per cent. Nor are these institutions always accessible to poor women. Most of the Maternity Hospitals in London admit only women who obtain "letters" from one of the hospital governors or subscribers. This "letter" system doubtless facilitates the work of the hospital; it regulates the number of patients; and absolves the hospital authorities from the difficulties of selecting cases; but on the other hand, it reduces a woman's chance of admission to a question of luck, and it frequently means that only those directly in touch with district visitors and clergy, who are given letters for use in their parish, can hope to obtain the benefits of the hospital. Such a system may become very demoralising, for by making people dependent on the favour or goodwill of the rich, it is apt to create a worse form of pauperism, with more disastrous results upon character, than any to be found in a public institution. It is impossible, moreover, to avoid the conclusion that these hospitals are run more for the sake of affording opportunities for the instruction of doctors and midwives than with any consideration of what is best for the mothers and infants. Under the present arrangements a woman is received only when actually in labour, and is usually retained only for fourteen days (occasionally only for eight days, rarely for three weeks). At the end of that time she has to return to her home, or to find a lodging; weak, quite unfit for the work of trying to make both ends meet, with an infant on her hands, and very little knowledge of how to look after it. The Maternity Hospitals, indeed, usually disclaim all responsibility, and refuse to make any domiciliary provision, for either mothers or infants, after they leave the wards. To some small extent this care and educational training before and after confinement is, as we have seen, supplied by the Rescue Homes. From the Public Health standpoint, however, it is clearly objectionable that any of the cases should disappear from ken, without instruction

* For such use, *see Ibid., Qs.* 14240–14242, 14453, 14454, 14500–14506, 44942–44949, and Appendix No. XXVI. (B) to Vol. I.

† *Ibid., Qs.* 58087 (Par. 95), 59988 (Par. 5).

‡ *Ibid., Qs.* 32579 37102–37104.

how to rear the baby, and without the stimulus to maternal responsibility that is given by the consciousness of being kept under observation. As it is, we are in the dark as to the rate of infantile mortality among the babies for whose birth the Maternity Hospitals are incurring so much expense. These hospitals, indeed, like the Rescue Homes, seem to pay comparatively little attention to the infants. Though the infant death-rate inside the best of the institutions is now far less than it used to be, and far less than that for the first fortnight in the lying-in wards of the Workhouses, there are some Maternity Hospitals which appear to lose three or four times as many babies in the fortnight as others. Here, too, there is clearly urgent need for supervision and inspection by the Local Health Authority.

(iii.) *Domiciliary Midwifery Agencies.*

There appear to be at least a score of large "out-patient" midwifery charities in the Metropolis, and there are others in connection with the general hospitals of the provincial towns, besides some smaller agencies in connection with missions and settlements. The most important of these are the out-patients' departments of the Maternity Hospitals, and of the General Hospitals having medical schools. The large number of medical students and midwives in training in London, Edinburgh, Dublin and the dozen other centres of medical education, each of whom has to attend a certain number of midwifery cases as a condition of obtaining a qualification to practice, renders the problem of public provision, as it does that of provident medical insurance, essentially different in these towns from that elsewhere. It was given in evidence that one hospital alone in this way provides medical attendance for 4,000 confinements annually.* The total number of confinements in the United Kingdom thus gratuitously attended to by voluntary agencies in the patients' own homes must, in the aggregate, run into many tens of thousands. The work is, however, confined to London and a score or two of other large towns. It is limited to the attendance of the doctor or midwife at birth, occasional subsequent visits by the midwife and sometimes daily visits by the nurse during ten days. No provision is made for the mother's instruction, or for subsequent care.

We can do no more than call attention to the extent of the domiciliary midwifery provision thus thrown, so to speak, gratuitously at the heads of the poor, practically without inquiry as to character or need, without any sort of co-ordination with other agencies, without connection with the provision for necessitous mothers both before and after child-birth, and without the cases being brought under the supervision of the Local Health Authorities.

(iv.) *Day Nurseries.*

For the children under the lower limit of school age—which may be three, four or five years—of mothers who are unable to look after them during the day, practically the only organised provision is that of Day Nurseries, or *crèches*.† In view of the fact that the Outdoor Relief afforded to mothers of young children is practically never adequate to allow them to forego earning money, and that many Boards of Guardians, as we have seen, actually incite the mothers to go out to work, it is important to inquire what becomes of the young children whilst the mothers are away. We found that in very few places was any systematic provision made for the care of these infants, or others in like case. Neither the Destitution Authority, which was assuming to maintain so many of these infants, nor the Local Health Authority, in its crusade against infantile mortality, has done anything in the matter. Voluntary charity has done very little.‡ We were supplied by one of our members with reports as to the charitable Day Nurseries of the Metropolis, the West Riding of Yorkshire, and a few other places. These institutions are far more prevalent in London than elsewhere; and even in London they appear to number only seventy or eighty, each accommodating between twelve and sixty infants; or, for all London's million families, not more than 2,000. They are managed by philanthropic

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 32578, 32579.

† "The word 'crèche' . . . has a fluctuating meaning. It is sometimes used for places where children are only retained to the end of their third year—which is the technical meaning of the word in France—and sometimes for places where children are kept to a later age, say, to the end of their fifth or even sixth year." (Report of the Consultative Committee upon the School Attendance of Children below the Age of Five, 1908, p. 16.)

‡ "At present, there are seventy-seven known crèches in London, and 103 in Great Britain." (*Ibid.*, pp. 107, 108.)

committees on voluntary contributions, but they make a charge to the mothers (usually 3d. or 4d. per day) which about covers the cost of the infant's food. These institutions, which are at present under no sort of public supervision or official inspection, are scattered most irregularly over the Metropolis. A few of them have excellent buildings, good sanitary arrangements, competent staffs, and well-contrived provision for all the infants' requirements. Most of them were found to be faulty in some of these respects; and more than a third were distinctly open to grave criticism. These showed an utter lack of knowledge of the most elementary principles of the hygiene of child life. Many of them were overcrowded, ill-ventilated, dark, dirty and foul-smelling. The babies were in charge of totally inexperienced women. The milk and the bottles were often wholly unsuitable.*

We do not wish to offer any opinion upon the vexed question of how far Day Nurseries are desirable. But it is clear that, wherever the Destitution Authority incites the mother to go out to work and leave her babies, or where it gives Outdoor Relief so inadequate as to compel the mother to go out to work, it becomes responsible for seeing that the little children whom it is thus maintaining as Outdoor Paupers are properly provided for.† We cannot regard it as satisfactory that no attention should, at present, be paid to this matter; and we cannot help attributing some of the very high infantile mortality among Outdoor paupers to the neglect of the Destitution Authorities to consider what effect their policy is having on the children. It is plain that any Day Nurseries that exist, in which there ought to be no large aggregation of children, need to be under the supervision and inspection of the Public Health Authority.

(v.) *Infant Asylums.*

We cannot pass over without mention the fact that there exist extensive voluntary institutions providing maintenance for infants, which might be made use of by Local Authorities unable satisfactorily to provide for their younger children. Some of these institutions admit babies from the very earliest age, and appear to surmount very satisfactorily the difficulties in nursery administration experienced by the Destitution Authorities. These institutions are proud of their success, and many of them would welcome a voluntary inspection, which could not fail to be of use in suggesting methods of improvement. It would be an additional advantage of a supervision of these institutions by the Public Health Authority that their rates of mortality and their valuable experience would become available for comparison.

(vi.) *The Insufficiency of the Voluntary Agencies.*

We are much impressed, as we have already mentioned, with the value of voluntary agencies in dealing with the problems of birth and infancy, especially with that presented by the young unmarried mother with her first child. We think that suitable agencies of this kind might, with great advantage, be far more extensively utilised by the local authorities for particular cases than has yet been done. "The mothers of illegitimate children," emphatically declares the Vice-Regal Commission with regard to Ireland, "should never, it is suggested, be in future admitted or retained in any Workhouse or institution where they would have freedom of ingress or egress, and where they could associate with other classes. Unmarried mothers should, in our opinion, be provided for in special institutions under religious or philanthropic management, *their infants being kept with them until weaned.*"‡ Any philanthropic institutions thus made use of should be placed on the list of "Certified Schools and Homes" at present issued by the Local Government Boards for England and Ireland, and the Local Government Board for Scotland should frame a similar list. It would, of course, be necessary for every such institution to be periodically inspected by duly qualified officers of the Local Government

* An association entitled the National Society of Day Nurseries was established in 1907 for the purpose of raising the standard among them, and of securing their legal registration. "At present," deposed the Secretary, "such institutions are not liable to inspection, and there are a large number of very inferior ones, which do more harm than good. It is thought that the aim of the Society would best be achieved through the establishment of a system of compulsory inspection. Witness suggested that the inspectors for this purpose should be women appointed by the Board of Education; but she would not mind what Government Department controlled the work so long as it was done thoroughly. It is desired to bring the public to see that unless crèches are kept up to a proper standard and are open to inspection, they ought to be abolished. Grants will be given by the Society to recognised institutions; and it is proposed to issue a magazine which will contain a list of crèches, indicating those which the public are advised not to maintain." (*Ibid.*, p. 107.)

† There is a like responsibility in those Unions, unhappily numerous, in which Outdoor Relief is systematically refused to mothers having one child only, or two children only.

‡ Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 61.

Board; and it should be a condition of such certification, and of the receipt of any patients, or of any payments, from any Local Authority, that the institution should come also under the regular inspection of the Local Health Authority.

But whatever may be the case in Ireland, there is in Great Britain no provision by Voluntary Agencies—whether Rescue Homes, Maternity Hospitals, Domiciliary Midwifery Charities, Day Nurseries or Infant Asylums—at all adequate to the need. This deficiency shows itself alike in amount of accommodation and in its geographical distribution, in the quality of the service and in its limited duration. As we have seen, none of the five forms of voluntary provision that we have described comes anywhere near being able to cover all the cases. What is done is limited to London and a comparatively small number of large towns. The efficiency of the service rendered is extremely unequal, and much of it would have to be very drastically reformed before it could be utilised by a Public Authority. Finally, all these Voluntary Agencies—the Rescue Homes being in this respect least open to criticism—share with the Destitution Authorities the drawback that they deal with these cases only during a narrowly limited period of time. Their patients come to them out of the unknown, and after the briefest of treatment, disappear again into the unknown, having received temporary physical advantage but the very minimum of mental or moral improvement. To be of any real value to the community, the temporary physical improvement afforded by these Voluntary Agencies to their patients must be set in a framework of more continuous preventive and educational activity, brought to bear on the character and intelligence of these persons both before and after the acute crisis of their distress.

We are, therefore, unable to share, so far at any rate as Great Britain is concerned, in the optimistic assumption of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland that Voluntary Agencies are in a position adequately to deal with the problems of Birth and Infancy. Whatever use of them by the Local Authority may prove possible, it is clear that they will need stimulating and supervising by public officers, and, in nearly every district, they will require to be supplemented by public provision at the expense of the rates, both in the form of institutions for specific classes of cases left wholly or partly undealt with by the philanthropist, and in that of more extended, more systematic and more continuous domiciliary treatment than is afforded by any Voluntary Agency.

(c) The Supervision of Birth and Infancy by the Local Health Authority.

The continuance of a high rate of infantile mortality in spite of a steadily falling mortality among persons of other ages has, within the last two decades, forced itself upon the attention of the Local Authorities. Whilst the general rate of mortality has fallen in the United Kingdom during the past forty years by at least one-sixth, the proportion of deaths under one year per thousand births has, until lately, remained almost undiminished.* The result has been a great outburst of sanitary activity in new directions. "The question of how we are to prevent so large an infantile mortality," says a recent report, "is now engaging the attention of every Medical Officer of Health throughout Great Britain, and more or less of every Sanitary Authority, and the great factors . . . . which they are to combat are ignorance, carelessness, and neglect of the hygienic laws. It, therefore, becomes necessary to instruct the people in these matters."† At first, "the efforts of Health Committees" were "directed chiefly towards reducing the deaths among infants from epidemic diarrhœa." But "statistics have clearly shown that the practice

* "It may safely be said that the health of the community at large, especially that of adults, depends upon many factors, some of which have been beneficially influenced by Public Health legislation; but the health of the infant population depends chiefly upon home and maternal influences, *i.e.*, upon the mode of feeding, clothing, etc., which Public Health legislation has only slightly touched. The general mortality reacts most quickly to sanitary measures of a municipal character, the infant mortality to domestic hygiene, and this, in my opinion, is the explanation of the different behaviour of the general death-rate and the infantile death-rate, during the last half-century. The fact is that personal and domestic hygiene, and in this I include all that relates to the proper care of infants, has been neglected in the past; it may be said in this respect we are very little better on the whole than a quarter of a century ago. With the exception, perhaps, of a nebulous idea that when an individual is known to be suffering from an infectious disease, such person should be separated from those who are healthy, the public, especially in crowded localities, may be said to possess no ideas on domestic hygiene, with the result that the community at large still suffers from an unnecessarily and preventably high infant death and sick rate." (Report of the Medical Officer of Health, on Hackney, for 1905, p. 105.)

† Report on the Prevention of Infantile Mortality, by Alfred E. Harris (Medical Officer of Health for Islington), 1907, p. 30.

of feeding infants with artificial food is chiefly responsible for the terrible wastage of life at present going on."* Thus the Local Health Authorities have found their work taking the novel forms of giving advice to mothers how to treat their babies—advice which it was difficult to distinguish from that given by the private practitioner or the District Medical Officer; and in some places of actually supplying the mothers with suitable food for their babies—food that might otherwise have been sought as Outdoor Relief from the Destitution Authority.

(i.) *Provision of Midwifery.*

We must first notice a small, and, we think, undesigned responsibility assumed by the Local Health Authority in some places, in connection with the provision of medical attendance on women in child-birth, who are destitute of the means of providing it for themselves. Under the Midwives' Act of 1902, and the rules framed by the Central Midwives' Board, the 12,000 practising midwives in England and Wales are legally required instantly to call in a qualified medical practitioner in cases of difficulty or danger.† No provision was made for the remuneration of the doctor thus imperatively summoned; and, in a large proportion of the cases, the patient is quite unable to pay him. Under these circumstances, the Local Government Board has permitted the payment to be made, sometimes by the Destitution Authorities, sometimes by the Local Health Authorities. In some places the Boards of Guardians have demurred to making any payment in such cases to a private practitioner, considering that the duty should fall exclusively on the District Medical Officers.‡ In some places the Boards of Guardians make the payment, provided that the doctor—summoned perhaps in the night—has first obtained a note from the Relieving Officer authorising his attendance, § or provided that it is proved that application was first made, and made in vain, to the District Medical Officer, or provided that the case is, after inquiry, considered by the Guardians to be destitute. In some places (as at Manchester, and Liverpool) the Town or District Council is, with the approval of the Local Government Board, making the payments under the general terms of Sec. 133 of the Public Health Act.‖ There is nothing to prevent both Local Authorities paying for the same service. For instance, both the Manchester Town Council and the Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians have actually resolved to make such payments under certain conditions.¶ On the other hand, in other places, the doctor fails to get his fee from either Local Authority.

(ii.) *Provision of Hygienic or Medical Advice.*

Whilst the provision of midwifery by the Public Health Authorities is, at present, occasional only, the provision of hygienic or medical advice for infantile ailments has already become an organised service. The most remarkable feature of this development has been its educational aspect. The Local Health Authority found the bulk of the poor mothers—those in receipt of Outdoor Relief no less than the others—totally unaware how to rear their babies in health. They were both unable and unwilling to pay for the private practitioner's advice, at any rate so long as the babies were not actually ill, and the Destitution Authority provided no instruction even for the mothers whom it was relieving. It was argued by the Local Authorities that: "No education in school is likely to have much practical result in lessening the vast amount of preventible mortality and sickness among young infants. Very few of the mothers in the working classes have either the time or the ability to understand books or leaflets on the management of children. What is required is that they should have actual practical instruction from some properly trained and tactful visitor soon after the child's birth, who would be able to show them that it would save them trouble in the long run if they spent a little pains in preparing for their child's food, in the event of their not being able to nurse it themselves."** The result has been the creation of a remarkable organisation, partly paid and partly ††voluntary, by

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* Report upon the Infantile Death-Rate at Newport, by J. Howard-Jones, M.D.,D.Sc., Medical Officer of Health for Newport (Mon.), 1907.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 21665–21673, 22981–22985, 38380 (Pars. 41, 42), 38573–38582.

‡ As at Lewisham, Southwark, Camberwell, Wolverhampton, Totnes, Derby, West Ham, etc.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 38324, Par. 12.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 36931 (Par. 2), 37103, 38380 (Par. 42), 38573–38582.

¶ Statement by the Midwives' Committees of the London and Counties Medical Protection Society, *Ibid.*, (not yet in volume form.)

** Report of Medical Officer of Health for Margate, 1905, pp. 14, 15.

†† There appear to be already between 200 and 300 salaried Health Visitors in the United Kingdom, and at least ten times as many regularly engaged volunteers; or, in the aggregate, more than the total number of Relieving Officers.

which the Medical Officer of Health attempts to keep under observation during the whole of the first year of life, all the babies born in the poorer families, including those who are on the Outdoor pauper roll of the Destitution Authority, and those among them who are actually under the attendance of the District Medical Officer. This organisation has already gone very far. It may be said that Parliament has sanctioned the new development by expressly legalising the appointment of paid Health Visitors by the Metropolitan Borough Councils;* and by passing the Notification of Births Act of 1907, the avowed object of which was "to give Sanitary Authorities the opportunity of effecting improvements in Infant and Domestic Hygiene by means of Health Visitors."† Accordingly, at the present time, in the poorer districts of many towns of Great Britain, every house at which a birth occurs, or at which a child under two years has died (even those at which the District Medical Officer is in attendance) is visited by an officer from the Medical Officer of Health's Department—in some places by a lady volunteer, in others by a semi-philanthropic paid agent, in others again by a trained professional Health Visitor, qualified by a sanitary certificate or a nurse's experience. Including the organised volunteers, there are already more Health Visitors than there are Relieving Officers in England and Wales. At Huddersfield and elsewhere some of these Health Visitors are even qualified medical practitioners. They interview the mother and inspect the baby; they advise how it should be fed, washed, clothed, and generally treated; they criticise what is being done wrong or unskilfully; they keep a sharp eye for the presence of disease to be reported to the Medical Officer of Health; they suggest hygienic improvements in the household; if the baby is ailing they are often able to suggest the cause and remedy; and, finally, if the case looks serious, they urge the obtaining of further professional advice either by the calling in of a doctor for payment, or by application to the Relieving Officer for the attendance of the District Medical Officer.‡ The adoption of this system of domiciliary "health visiting," as applied to the 2·45 per cent. of the population which is under one year of age, has apparently resulted in a great improvement in its health; although the proportion of those visited to the total population has not yet risen to a sufficient height to have any marked statistical result on the whole.

Three features stand out in this expansion of the work of the Local Health Authority, all of them in significant contrast with that of the Destitution Authority. The first is its humanising and educational character. The poverty-stricken mother, tempted to regard the newly-born infant only as an additional burden, finds herself reminded of the importance of the child's life, finds its welfare a matter of interest to the visitor, and finds herself gradually acquiring a higher standard of child-rearing. The second significant feature of the work is the extensive use made of volunteers in an altogether new relation to the official machinery. Such volunteers, numbering in towns like Huddersfield several scores, visit the poor in a friendly, unofficial way, and yet serve systematically as the eyes and ears of the Local Authority, working always under the supervision, guidance and control of the responsible salaried officer, and his representative Health Committee. The third feature is the stimulus given by the action of the Local Authority to parental

* London County Council (General Powers) Act, 1908.

† Report upon the Infantile Death-Rate at Newport (Mon.), by J. Howard-Jones, M.D., D.Sc., Medical Officer of Health, Newport, 1907. "The Local Government Board, as stated in their Circular of September 27th last, to the Councils of the Metropolitan Boroughs, however, are of opinion 'that there is no occasion for imposing upon parents and others, the obligation of notifying births, unless steps are taken to carry out the ultimate object of the measure, viz., the giving of advice and instruction to those who have charge of the infants, and in ordinary circumstances they would not be prepared to consent to the adoption of the Act unless it appeared that arrangements would usually be carried out by local agencies under the Medical Officer of Health. The Board trust the Council will consider the question of adopting the Act, and of co-operating with any agency that may exist, so as to secure its successful operation.'" (Report on the Prevention of Infantile Mortality, by Alfred E. Harris (Medical Officer of Health for Islington), 1907, pp. 31, 32.)

‡ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LVI. to Vol. IV., (as to Huddersfield); Appendix No. CXXXVIII. (Par. 2) to Vol. IV. (as to Birmingham); *Qs.* 41685–41689, 42546 (as to Leeds); *Q.* 41888, Par. 1 (d)(as to Sheffield); *Qs.* 37605 (Par. 29), 37616–37618, 37801, 37802 (as to Blackburn). In Huddersfield, for instance, all "newly-born children are visited as soon as possible by the official Health Visitors. Each Saturday, a list of the cases in her district is sent to a Lady Superintendent, who distributes the cases among her lady-helpers. These keep the cases under observation, and where it appears necessary, invoke the aid of the Department. Great care is exercised to avoid touching upon the domain of the family doctor, and also to avoid any action which even might have the appearance of diminishing parental, and particularly maternal, responsibility." (Report of the Medical Officer of Health of Huddersfield, for 1905, p. 30.) In particular, the Health Visitor keeps a "watchful guard over the illegitimate children who are nursed in the District, much to the advantage of these little unfortunates." (Report of Medical Officer of Health for Walthamstow, 1905, p. 5.)

responsibility, personal self-control and regularity, and self-help. The Destitution Authority, grudgingly giving its dole of Outdoor Relief to the destitute mother, leaves her not only without instruction how to make the best use of it, but also free to neglect her infant, to endanger its life by irregular hours, and even to let it starve quietly to death if she chooses. What the Local Health Authority does is to persist in inquiring after the health of that baby; to send its Health Visitors to see its condition; to make the mother feel that she is being helped; to induce her to take some pride in the infant's thriving; and to show her how she can make it thrive. We have been much impressed by the evidence afforded to us of the beneficial results of this kind of State action in positively increasing self-respect, a sense of personal responsibility and maternal care.*

(iii.) *Provision of Milk.*

In a dozen towns (St. Helens since 1899; also Liverpool, Battersea, Finsbury, Lambeth, Woolwich, Glasgow, Leicester) the Health Authority has gone a step further. It provides a municipal milk depot, or rather a "milk dispensary," at which babies requiring artificial feeding are supplied with pure milk (and hygienic feeding teats) on payment of a small sum.† At Liverpool this has developed into an elaborate organisation with branch depots in various parts of the city, supplying "humanised sterilised milk" of seven different grades, for infants of various ages (in addition to the babies brought to the depots) to many hundred families by direct delivery. But the special interest of the "milk dispensary" to the sanitarian is the personal supervision which it enables the Medical Officer of Health to exercise over these ailing babies. At Finsbury the supply of the milk is made conditional on the babies being brought regularly for inspection, accurate weighing, and hygienic advice. Those who cannot be brought are visited in their homes. At Glasgow a qualified medical practitioner (lady) visits every home as a matter of course. Practically, though not avowedly, the Medical Officer of Health becomes the medical attendant of each of these infants; to whom, indeed, he not infrequently supplies the milk gratuitously rather than let them die or compel the destitute parents to "go through the rigmarole" of obtaining Poor Law relief for them. "During the hotter portion of the year," reports the Medical Officer of Health for Norwich, "and to a lesser extent since, with the sanction of the Health Committee, I have distributed (through the lady health visitor) a considerable quantity of dried milk powder to necessitous mothers and, on the whole, have been well satisfied with the results."‡ "It is clear," says Dr. Newman, now Chief Medical Officer to the Board of Education, "that such a specialised milk supply does not meet the whole problem of infant mortality. . . . Nevertheless it is true that a *properly equipped and controlled* Infants' Milk Depot is part of the solution at the present time and under present conditions and is a practical step in the right direction."§

Here, too, as with the advice given to the mothers by the Health Visitors, the most prominent features of the work are the education of the persons aided, and the stimulus to their sense of responsibility. When the baby has to be regularly brought to be inspected and weighed, the mother's interest in its physical condition is not allowed to slacken; there is praise and approval if the baby goes on well; there is blame and warning if it sickens. The connection between irregular hours, dirt, carelessness about the food and other forms of neglect, and the ups and downs of the baby's physical development are brought home to the most ignorant and apathetic of mothers. In marked contrast with the practice of the Poor Law, the actual gift of material relief is made only an incident—for the most part only an occasional incident—in the process of education and inspection. The self-respect, the power of will, the sense of personal responsibility, instead of being weakened, as it is under Outdoor Relief, is, with a Milk Dispensary, actually strengthened.

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 42664–42671, 56933, 56934, 56961–56964, 94589.

† As to these municipal milk dispensaries, *see Ibid.*, *Qs.* 47191, 47266, 47501, and Appendices Nos. CXVI. (Par. 3), CXLIV. (Par. 5), and CL. (Par. 1), to Vol. IV. (for Leicester); *Qs.* 41489 (Par. 35), 41492–41514, 41585, and 41700 (for Leeds); *Qs.* 94287 (Paras. 23 (h), 25 (h)), 94335–94343 (for Finsbury); *Qs.* 95100 (Para. 13–16), 95106–95116, 95228–95243 (for Glasgow); Appendix No. xliv. to Vol. IX. (for Woolwich). Small as is the sum charged, it is sufficient to prevent the poorest mothers (those in receipt of Outdoor Relief) from obtaining the advantage of the municipal milk depot. At Liverpool and Finsbury, we have been informed that attempts have been made by the Town Council to get the Boards of Guardians to give orders for the milk, in lieu of other food, where there are young or delicate children; but so far with little success. At Battersea, the Board of Guardians sometimes give orders for milk instead of money.

‡ Report on the Health of Norwich, 1905, by the Medical Officer of Health, p. 10.

§ Report of the Medical Officer of Health on the Infants' Milk Depot, Finsbury, 1905, p. 7.

(D) THE NEED FOR A UNIFIED SERVICE DEALING WITH BIRTH AND INFANCY.

The rapid up-growth of the organised supervision of Birth and Infancy undertaken by the Public Health Authorities, and the confusion and overlapping with the work of the Destitution Authorities to which this is giving rise, compel a consideration of the question whether the whole of the public provision for Birth and Infancy—whatever that provision may be—ought not to be placed in the hands of a single Local Authority. If, on the one hand, the Local Health Authorities have trespassed on the domain of the Destitution Authorities in paying midwifery fees, and in supplying medical advice and milk to necessitous mothers, the Destitution Authorities are administering certain other services with regard to Birth and Infancy, which form indispensable parts of the Public Health machinery. Our attention has been called, by the Boards of Guardians themselves, to the fact that, owing to historical accidents, it is upon them and not upon the Local Health Authorities, that has been cast the administration of the registration of births and deaths, of vaccination, and (outside the Metropolis) of the inspection of "baby-farms." Throughout England and Wales it is the Board of Guardians which chooses and nominates the Registrars of Births and Deaths; and the Local Health Authority has absolutely no official contact either with these officers or with the indispensable registration which they conduct. The result is that the system of registration itself is less effective from the Public Health standpoint than it might easily be made; * and the Medical Officer of Health has no means of getting the instantaneous information as to every birth and every death within his district that should be automatically at his disposal. It is equally anomalous that the machinery for vaccination, a compulsory and universal provision against an infectious disease, should be entirely in the hands, not of the Local Health Authority, but of the Destitution Authority. We have found no one to defend this arrangement. All our witnesses recommend the immediate and complete transfer of both these duties of the Destitution Authority to the Local Health Authority, especially if that Authority acts for an area of adequate extent. It has been represented to us as no less anomalous that the administration of the Infant Life Protection Acts should, in England and Wales outside the Metropolis,† be entrusted to the Destitution Authority. This service is at present very imperfectly performed by the Boards of Guardians, several of which strenuously opposed the Infant Life Protection Bill in 1902; and it is by most of them wholly neglected.‡ The transfer of the three services of the registration of births and deaths, vaccination, and the administration of the Infant Life Protection Act—now the Children's Act, 1908—from the Destitution Authorities to the Local Health Authorities, which is necessary in the interest both of economy and efficiency,§ would, in our opinion, by concentrating in the department of the Medical Officer of Health all the available knowledge as to the local facts, make it inevitable that the whole responsibility for whatever public provision is made for Birth and Infancy should be concentrated in the Local Health Authority.

This suggestion receives support from another consideration. What is needed, for a treatment of Birth and Infancy from the standpoint of the community, is *continuous* observation of the household both before and after birth. The Destitution Authority, by the very nature of its work, has, and can have, no such continuity of knowledge. The expectant mother, or the mother with infants, only comes within its ken when "destitution" sets in, and disappears the very moment that "destitution" ceases. The Local Health Authority, on the other hand, is—by its ubiquitous machinery of Health Visitors, and house to house visitation—continuously observing the circumstances of the household, irrespective of temporary destitution. By its staff of Sanitary Inspectors, it knows the character of the street, and even of the house, in which the expectant mother is living, and is therefore in a position to gauge the probable risk to mother and infant in domiciliary confinement. Above all, the Local Health Authority is primarily concerned with the

* For instance, we are told that "The law now allows a Registrar, almost always a layman, to accept a certificate from an unqualified person, provided that he, the Registrar, is persuaded that no deception is being practised. The proper course is, without doubt, to hold an inquiry in every such case, and, where needful, a post-mortem examination. These steps will probably be taken only when the registration of the cause of death is placed under the control of the Sanitary Authority." (Report of the Medical Officer of Health, Norwich, for 1905, p. 21.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 434, 9820–9826, 40475 (Par. 5a), 40481, 45922 (Par. 5), 45957, and Appendix No. LI., to Vol. IV.

‡ *See*, for examples, *ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXV. (Pars. 19–23) to Vol. IX.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 9827. Curiously enough, the administration of the Infant Life Protection Act is under the Home Office. In the Metropolis the work already forms part of the County Health Service, under the London County Council.

prevention of disease and death, and has, for its responsible adviser, not a clerk or solicitor but a medical expert. Thus, if the Local Health Authority were responsible for the whole of the public provision for Birth and Infancy, it would decide the question of whether institutional treatment should be afforded to a confinement, upon grounds of the risk to health and life, and the chance of survival of mother and infant. Under the Destitution Authority, the decision is made, irrespective of considerations of health, or even of the character of the mother, according to the dominant policy of the Guardians against or in favour of "Outdoor Relief." As a matter of fact there is much evidence that, for the normal case, it is in many respects better, as well as less costly, to provide midwifery attendance in the home, than to require the mother to enter a Maternity Hospital. As we have seen, the statistics of infantile mortality in the lying-in wards of Workhouses and Maternity Hospitals alike, compared with those of domiciliary confinements where adequate food and attendance are provided, are such as to make us pause before we establish any more Maternity Hospitals at the public expense.* But there are other reasons, founded on the results upon personal character, and the integrity of the home, which make institutional treatment undesirable. For a poor mother to leave her home and family means often the abandonment of her children to most inadequate care, and an additional temptation to her husband to seek amusement elsewhere. Though her confinement in a crowded, poverty-stricken home may cause much inconvenience, she feels that she can still watch over her children, direct the elder ones what to do for the household, and (as it has been graphically put) "keep the purse under her pillow." We have been much impressed by the experience in this respect of the Plaistow Maternity Charity, to which we have already referred, a voluntary organisation for supplying midwifery attendance gratuitously to the homes of a very poor part of the West Ham Union. Here a great feature is made of the hygienic advice and instruction given to the mother. Those responsible for its organisation are firm in the belief that domiciliary treatment of confinement cases is the only sound one, for they consider that the nurse may leave behind her lessons of health which will long be remembered. This, however, is at present very imperfectly undertaken, owing to the absence of any co-operation with the Local Health Authority. The nurse only attends a case for ten days at the most, and it may require many months of simple instruction before a woman has the desire or knowledge for fighting against the overwhelming odds of a "slum" existence sufficiently well to obey even the simplest laws of health. It is here that the continuous supervision and friendly counsel of the Health Visitors—continued, as we have described, quite irrespective of whether or not the mother continues to be destitute—becomes of so much value. No such machinery is, or can be, at the disposal of a Local Authority concerned with the mere relief of destitution.

There are, however, a number of maternity cases which—whether on medical or social grounds—cannot properly be treated in the home. It is a powerful argument for entrusting the whole service to the Local Health Authority that such an Authority has, in its qualified staff, the means of discovering these cases in advance; and of arranging for their admission, not at the moment of labour, but in due time. It is clear that the Maternity Hospitals supported from public funds must be either supervised or administered by the Local Health Authority, which is already charged with the duty of dealing with puerperal fever. By its ability to exercise the necessary medical supervision, such an Authority would be able to do what the Destitution Authority never feels itself able to do, namely, make full use of philanthropic or charitable institutions undertaking the reclamation of girl-mothers. Above all, the Local Health Authority would be in a position, with regard to each case, to deal with it by the desirable combination of domiciliary and institutional treatment—to watch the patient at home, to arrange for admission to the appropriate institution just for the crisis, to continue the treatment at home, and to follow this up by the instructional care which goes far to strengthen and enforce personal responsibility. Whilst the good mother would be stimulated and encouraged, the bad mother would be kept under observation and, if necessary, prosecuted for letting her baby die.

It has been strongly represented to us that the special supervision of the Local Health Authority should not be confined to the first year of life; but should be continued until, at whatever age may be fixed, the children pass under the supervision of the Local Education Authority. "There is no doubt," testified the Clerk of the Glasgow School Board, "that the absence of public provision for children under five, so far as the poorest classes

* *See*, in confirmation, *Ibid.*, *Q.* 37104.

are concerned, is a crying evil. The evils of slum life in relation to these children cannot be minimised. Probably the evil influences of the slums upon them affect their whole lives and make the whole question of education right up to fourteen more difficult."* "Young children in poor districts," said an important London witness, "who do not attend school are often locked up in one room for hours without attention, while the mothers are out at work. Either they are in danger from a fire in an open grate, or there is no fire and they suffer terribly from cold. When not locked in a room they are left to run about alone in the streets. In either case it frequently happens that no attempt is made to keep them clean, this being done only when they go to school. Under such conditions it is hopeless to expect children to acquire good and clean habits."† The Destitution Authority, as we have seen—even with regard to the considerable proportion of these children which it is maintaining on Outdoor Relief—exercises no supervision over such cases. It is, we think, clear that it is the Local Health Authority that should be charged with the responsibility for the whole of the public provision that is made for the child under school age,‡ whether this takes the form of supervision, from the standpoint of Public Health, of infants at large, or the maintenance of infants discovered to be in a state of destitution. We are supported in this assumption of the proved necessity for a systematic supervision of infants up to school age by the recent authoritative Report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education. "The first three years of a child's life," states that Committee, "are the most critical of all, and . . . if the State acknowledges the duty of providing care and training for certain children after the age of three there is even greater reason for extending that care to children below that age. As to the permanent effect of proper care during the first three years of life, the Committee entirely agree. . . . They would like . . . to record their conviction that the improved treatment of such children depends almost entirely upon the improved conditions of their homes, and this opinion strengthens them in urging that in making provision for children over three nothing should be done which might arrest the development of the idea that the best place for all children under five is a good home."§

This unification in the hands of the Local Health Authorities of whatever public provision is made with regard to Birth and Infancy seems to us as desirable in the interest of economical expenditure of the public funds, as it is in the interest of efficiency of service. We do not agree that the assumption by the Local Health Authority of the work now done by the Destitution Authority in providing medical attendance and maintenance for sick or destitute mothers and infants, would involve any extension of gratuitous service. It has been found, in practice, easier for the Local Health Authority to obtain repayment of the cost of the milk that it now supplies to necessitous mothers and infants, than for the Destitution Authority to recover the cost of the "relief" doled out in the homes, or of the fortnight's sojourn in the maternity ward of the General Mixed Workhouse. The greater willingness of the poor to pay for the food thus obtained from the Local Health Authority arises from the fact that it is tendered in a spirit of helpfulness to persons discovered to be in need of it, with no accompaniment of humiliation, and conditional only on their making a right use of it; instead of being, like Poor Relief, grudgingly granted, without consideration or counsel, to such applicants as brave the deterrent tests, and submit to the humiliation of pauperism and the stigma of civil disability. But apart from this effect on the recipient, encouraging in him responsive effort, there is, in all the range of operations of the Local Health Authority, an even greater safeguard to the rates in the fact that this Authority prevents destitution, and is not confined to merely treating it when it arises. In all these cases, prevention is far more economical, as well as more efficient, than cure. The Destitution Authority has not, and never can have, any cognisance of the fact that an expectant mother, or mother with infants, is, owing to the neglect of her husband properly to maintain her, getting into such a state of weakness that she will shortly become chargeable to the rates. The Local Health Authority, by its machinery of Health Visitors and

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* Report of the Consultative Committee upon the School Attendance of Children below the Age of Five Years, 1908, p. 127. (Evidence of Mr. J. Clark, Clerk to the Glasgow School Board.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 116. (Evidence of Miss H. L. Pearse, Superintendent of the London County Council Nurses.)

‡ "This system," said the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, "of sanitary inspection, supplemented by the system of health visiting which is springing up in our Scotch towns, and under our Medical Officers of Health, your milk depots, and so on . . . are all tending to complete the supervision from infancy up to school age." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 56955.)

§ Report of the Consultative Committee upon the School Attendance of Children below the Age of Five Years, 1908, pp. 55, 56.

Sanitary Inspectors, can discover the approach of destitution, and by moral pressure and, if need be, by legal prosecution, can enforce on husband or parent the responsibility for maintenance, before actual destitution or chargeability arises. We see the superior economy of this preventive activity of the Local Health Authority in the work which it has already accomplished. The great improvements in town sanitation of the past half-century, which have so enormously diminished among adults both the death-rate and the loss by preventable sickness, have been effected quite as much by enforcing on owners and occupiers their obligation to keep their own dwellings in a sanitary condition, on traders their obligation to sell only wholesome food, and on employers their obligation to provide healthy workshops, as by expensive street improvements effected at the cost of the rates. It is only in default of private action that the Local Health Authority does the work itself; and then it is often enabled to recover the cost from the individual in default. This principle it is that we seek to extend from the sanitation of the environment to the personal hygiene of the mother and infant. At present, as we shall show in our chapter on "Charge and Recovery by Local Authorities," the law and practice of recovering the cost of maintenance from the persons benefited, especially in the present sphere of the Destitution Authority, is in a state of utter confusion and futility. In that chapter, and more definitely in the chapter giving our "Scheme of Reform," we shall point out how these financial responsibilities of husbands and parents may be really enforced.

(E) Conclusions.

We have, therefore, to report:—

1. That the Boards of Guardians of England, Wales and Ireland, and the Parish Councils of Scotland have proved themselves to be, by their very nature as Destitution Authorities, wholly unsuited to cope with the grave three-fold problem as to Birth and Infancy with which the nation is confronted. Alike in the prevention of the continued procreation of the feeble-minded, in the rescue of girl-mothers from a life of sexual immorality, and in the reduction of infantile mortality in respectable but necessitous families, the Destitution Authorities, in spite of their great expenditure, are to-day effecting no useful results. With regard to the first two of these problems, at any rate, the activities of the Boards of Guardians and Parish Councils are, in our judgment, actually intensifying the evil. If the State had desired to maximise both feeble-minded procreation, and birth out of wedlock, there could not have been suggested a more apt device than the provision, throughout the country, of General Mixed Workhouses, organised as they now are to serve as unconditional Maternity Hospitals. Whilst thus encouraging irregular sexual unions and the procreation of the feeble-minded, the Destitution Authorities are doing little to arrest the appalling preventable mortality that prevails among the infants of the poor. The respectable married woman, however necessitous she may be, can, with difficulty take advantage of the free food, shelter and medical attendance provided at great expense by the Destitution Authority for maternity cases. In Scotland she is—if living with her own husband, he being in good health—absolutely debarred from relief by law. In England and Wales she is, as far as possible, deterred.

2. That in view of the fact that the Destitution Authorities of the United Kingdom have constantly on their hands more than 65,000 infants under five years of age, and that there is grave reason for believing the mortality among them to be excessive, alike among the 50,000 who are maintained on Outdoor Relief and among the 15,000 in Poor Law Institutions, careful statistical enquiry ought immediately to be made, in order to discover where the mortality is greatest, and how this loss of life can be prevented.

3. That, in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, those unmarried mothers who come on the rates for their confinements and are definitely proved to be mentally defective, should be dealt with exclusively by the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective.

4. That, whatever provision is made from public funds for maternity, whether in the way of supervision, or in domiciliary midwifery, or by means of Maternity Hospitals, should be exclusively in the hands of the Local Health Authority.

5. That, in accordance with the recommendations of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, the fullest possible use should be made, under the inspection and supervision of the Local Health Authorities, of such Voluntary Agencies as Rescue and Maternity Homes, Midwifery Charities, and Day Nurseries.

6. That the system, which has already proved so successful, of combining the efforts of both salaried and voluntary Health Visitors with the work of the Medical Officer of Health and his staff, should be everywhere adopted and developed so as to extend to all infants under school age.

7. That the Local Health Authority should, in all its provision for birth and infancy, continue to proceed on its accustomed principles of :—

(*a*) The provision, free of charge, of hygienic information and advice to all who will accept it ;

(*b*) The strict enforcement of the obligation imposed upon individuals to maintain in health those who are legally dependent on them ; and

(*c*) Where individual default has taken place in this respect, the immediate provision of the necessaries for health, and the systematic recovery from those responsible, if they are able to pay, of repayment according to their means.

CHAPTER IV.

Children under Rival Authorities.

The authors of the Report of 1834 found only one Local Authority dealing with poor children, namely, that acting under the Elizabethan Poor Law. In 1909 we find the work shared among three distinct Local Authorities expending rates and taxes, the Destitution Authority, the Education Authority, and, in England and Wales, also the Police Authority. Each of these Local Authorities acts under its own set of Statutes, and is, in England and Wales, subject to the control of a different Government Department—the Poor Law and other Divisions of the Local Government Board, the Board of Education, and the Home Office. Of these three Local Authorities dealing with poor children, the Education Authority (which now often provides maintenance as well as instruction) has become, within the last few decades, by far the most extensive in its operations, now spending at least £25,000,000 annually. The total expenditure of the Destitution Authority on all its 237,000 children between five and sixteen,* including instruction as well as maintenance, may be estimated at nearly two millions sterling annually. The Police Authorities, the County and Borough Councils, which have sometimes established industrial schools of their own, take rank with the Voluntary Committees which, alongside of them, administer other schools of this kind at a cost of £600,000 a year, met partly by substantial grants in aid from the Home Office. All the three kinds of Local Authorities provide, in a certain proportion of cases, both maintenance and instruction; all three deal with children who, whatever else they may be, are certainly destitute; and, as a matter of fact, it is not uncommon to find the different children of one and the same family being treated by two, or even by all three, separate Local Authorities simultaneously.

(A) Children under the Destitution Authority.

We need not again recur to the fact that the authors of the Report of 1834 recommended that, for the destitute children of school age, there should be provided entirely separate residential institutions under schoolmasters; and that this recommendation applied, not merely to orphan or deserted children, but also to the families of all the able-bodied persons who were in any way relieved from the rates. The only children aided from the rates whom the authors of the 1834 Report would have left with their parents were those of sick or infirm persons, for whom alone Outdoor Relief was contemplated. This recommendation was ignored by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1835, who relegated to the General Mixed Workhouse the children of all those who received institutional relief; and left in the homes, on small weekly allowances without any education at all, the children of the constantly increasing number of parents—widows, the sick, the aged and the infirm, men on Outdoor Labour Test, etc.—who were excluded from the operation of the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order.

From 1841 onward, as we have already described, the Central Authority in England and Wales has been persistently striving to induce the Boards of Guardians to reverse the policy with regard to the children of school age which it unfortunately pressed on them in 1835. It has done its best to get the Guardians to provide efficient education for the children; to establish separate schools for them; to obtain trained and qualified teachers for them at adequate salaries; to get the children of school age out of the General Mixed Workhouse into which they had been driven; and to diminish the number of children who, on Outdoor Relief, were left without either adequate education or proper supervision.

Unfortunately, the Destitution Authorities have, nearly everywhere, shown themselves very slow and reluctant to adopt the new policy. At the present day, out of the 186,000 children between five and sixteen maintained by the Poor Law Authorities in England and Wales alone, there are 130,000 on Outdoor Relief, and about 3,000 in the ordinary wards of the General Mixed Workhouse, apart from several thousands more

* The number of children between five and sixteen among the paupers of England and Wales was, on March 31st, 1906, 186,105; those of Scotland, 32,075; and those of Ireland, 19,020.

who are in the sick wards of General Mixed Workhouses, and several thousands in addition who are in separate Infirmaries, usually without separate wards for children.

We have already described the treatment meted out by the Destitution Authorities of England and Wales to the 130,000 children of school age, whom they elect to maintain on Outdoor Relief. After the elaborate report of our Special Investigators into the conditions of these children, as well as from what we have ourselves witnessed, we are unable to resist the conclusion that the great bulk of these children are growing up underfed, wrongly clothed, and housed under insanitary conditions. They are demonstrably being stunted in their growth and physical development, falling, as they grow up, year by year, farther behind the average in height and weight.* What is even more deplorable is that, *with regard to ten or twenty thousand of them*, it is, as we have seen, only too probable that they are being subjected to the influences of parentage and homes of dissolute or immoral character. The condition of the children on aliment in the large towns of Scotland is, in these respects, quite as bad as that of the Outdoor Relief children in England and Wales.† "The out-relief children," emphatically sums up our Children's Investigator, "are definitely and seriously suffering from the circumstances of their lives."‡

With regard to the 3,000 children between five and sixteen (not including the 7,000 others who are in the sick wards or infirmaries) who are still living in the General Mixed Workhouses of England and Wales, we need do no more, after our description of the evil promiscuity of that institution, than emphasise the universal condemnation of such a method of providing for the rearing of the young. "The retention of children in Workhouses," reports our own Children's Investigator, "is always unsatisfactory. Even where they have special attendants they are never completely separated from the ordinary inmates. . . . In York certainly the children were dull and inert; they stood about like moulting crows, and did not seem able to employ themselves with any enthusiasm or vigour. The arrangements for their tendance and training are never as good as in an establishment wholly given up to them; the separation from the ordinary inmates of the Workhouse was very incomplete in each case I saw."§ Despairing of being able to induce the Destitution Authorities to send the children away to proper residential schools, the Local Government Board for England and Wales has, during recent years, contented itself with pressing the smaller Unions to let the children in the Workhouses attend the public elementary day schools.‖ This is doubtless an advance on the old school within the Workhouse walls; but we cannot too emphatically express our disagreement with those who accept this as any excuse for retaining children in the Workhouse at all.¶ The day school accounts for only about one-third of the child's waking life. The Local Government Board Inspectors themselves point out that it leaves the children, in practice, exposed to the contamination of "communication with the adult inmates whose influence is often hideously depraving."**

> "It is a serious drawback," says the Inspector, "that every Saturday and Sunday, to say nothing of summer and winter holidays, have, for the most part, to be spent in the Workhouse, where they [either live under rigid discipline and get no freedom, or else if left to themselves are likely to come under the evil influence of adult inmates. The Workhouse is at best a dreary place for children to

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* "At three years the Out-relief children are as tall and as heavy as the averages (for all England and Wales); after that age they are at every age smaller and lighter, and the defect becomes greater with increasing years. . . . The defect is greater in weight than in height. The Out-relief children are unduly light, even for their defective height." (Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 115.)

† Report . . . on the Condition of the Children . . . in Scotland, etc., by Dr. C. T. Parsons. No fewer than 24 per cent. of the children investigated in the Scotch towns were found to be living with "bad" mothers (*Ibid.*, p. 44).

‡ Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 116.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

‖ These efforts have been so far successful that on January 1st, 1907, it could be said that only 565 children of school age were being taught in the workhouses. (Report to the President of the Local Government Board, by T. J. Macnamara, p. 6.)

¶ "When sent out to school," observes our Children's Investigator, "they did not enter into the play or out-of-school life of the other children. I have often felt, as I have watched the little groups of workhouse children drawing off from the others, that, to certain natures at any rate, this must painfully emphasise their position." (Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 103.)

** Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1898–1899, Appendix B., p. 136; Mr. Preston Thomas's Report.

spend their lives in, and I should like to see them quite cut off from it."* "The most unpleasant feature of this system," says another Inspector, "is that in some of the small rural Unions there are so few children that the Guardians cannot reasonably be expected to pay additional officers to look after them. There are but few Unions where there is no paid officer in charge of the children, but there are many where there is only a female officer, and where a pauper inmate is placed with the boys and sleeps in their bedroom. The male pauper selected for this purpose is generally the best man available, but too often he is not the sort of character which it is good for the boys to associate with."†

We paid special attention to this point of the provision for children on our visits to Workhouses, large and small, in town and country, in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. We saw hardly any Workhouse or Poorhouse in which the accommodation for children was at all satisfactory.‡ We unhesitatingly agree with the Inspector of the Local Government Board who gave it to us as his opinion that "no serious argument in defence of the Workhouse system is possible. The person who would urge that the atmosphere and associations of a Workhouse are a fit upbringing for a child merely proves his incapacity to express an intelligent opinion upon the matter."§

From what we saw of the Poorhouses of Scotland, great or small, we came to the conclusion that the residence of children in those institutions was no more to be justified than it was in the Workhouses of England and Wales. It does not seem to be realised in Scotland to what a large extent the Poorhouse is used for children. Disregarding the infants under five, with whom we have already dealt, there were in the Scottish Poorhouses on March 31st, 1906, no fewer than 1,095 boys and girls between five and sixteen; or actually one-third of the corresponding number in England and Wales, which has seven times the population. Nor does this represent the whole story. The number of children found in the Poorhouses on any one day is less than half the total that passes through these institutions in the course of the year; so that we may infer that at least 3,000 boys and girls of school age came under the evil influences of the Scottish Poorhouse during last year. We do not think that it is generally known in Scotland that the General Mixed Poorhouse harbours at least twice as many children of school age, in proportion to population, as the General Mixed Workhouse does in England and Wales.

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* Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1899–1900, p. 115; Mr. Preston Thomas's Report. "On my last visit," notes the same Inspector as to a particular Union, "out of a total of 91 inmates there were no less than 15 boys, 22 girls, and 17 infants—a total of 54—for whose supervision no officer had been appointed, and who were left to the care of two women who are themselves inmates because unable to maintain their own illegitimate children. It is not hard to imagine the sort of influence which such persons would be likely to exercise on those under their charge. As stated in a previous Report, I have repeatedly remonstrated without success against this arrangement, as likely to affect injuriously the future of children for whom the Guardians are responsible, and last year I again brought the matter before them, but once more a majority decided, on the score of supposed economy, to make no change. I am glad to learn, however, while this Report is going through the press, that they have now reconsidered their decision, and that a paid caretaker will be appointed forthwith. Whether one officer will be able to supervise (out of school hours) nearly forty boys and girls, and to keep them entirely apart from adult inmates, is a point which will have to receive attention." (Thirty-second Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1902–1903, p. 103; Mr. Preston Thomas's Report.)

†† Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1904–1905, pp. 202, 203; Mr. Fleming's Report.

‡ "During their stay in the Workhouse," notes one of our Committees, "the boys are placed with the infirm old men, and the girls with the infirm old women." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 12, p. 25.) "Though they had separate day-rooms and dormitories," says another Committee, "there was practically no attempt to keep them from contact with the other inmates. Thus, for instance, the boys' playground opened directly into the yard for able-bodied and other men, and in the dining-hall both boys and girls sat close by the other inmates." (*Ibid.*, No. 57, p. 126.) "The boys' day-room," notes another Committee, "is absolutely dreary and bare; and they share a yard and lavatories with the young men. . . . An old man sleeps with the boys." (*Ibid.*, No. 82, p. 153.) Another Committee notices that "there seems no real attempt to separate them from the inmates. They dine together in the hall with the adults, and so far as we could see, on the girls' side female inmates were constantly going in and out, and on the boys' side there was no serious attempt to keep the lads from contact with the male inmates." (*Ibid.*, No. 83, pp. 154, 155.) We found that, even where the arrangements for segregation were least imperfect, the Workhouse children nearly everywhere had their meals in the presence of the other inmates, of both sexes and all ages, including the imbeciles and idiots. "There were," notes one of our Committees, "fifty-nine children resident in the Workhouse. I saw them just as they were coming to the dining-room to have their midday meal, seated along one side of the hall, the adult inmates occupying the centre and the other side. One could not help thinking that this must have a demoralising and deleterious effect." (*Ibid.*, No. 93, p. 163.)

§ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXIII. (G) to Vol. I. One witness only defended the maintenance of children in the Workhouse itself, namely, the Rev. Canon Bury, late Chairman of the Brixworth Board of Guardians, so long noted for its "strict administration." "I see no way," he said, "of treating them less eligibly than the independent labourer's child except by bringing them into the Workhouse." (*Ibid.*, Q. 48221.)

As to Ireland, we have been able to obtain only imperfect statistics. But we gather that, of children between five and sixteen years of age, there are over 6,000 in Poor Law Institutions. We infer that there must be, in the General Mixed Workhouses of Ireland, something like 5,000 boys and girls of school age, who are mostly being educated within the Workhouse walls.*

Turning now to the specialised treatment provided by the Destitution Authorities of the United Kingdom for about 60,000 out of the total of 237,000 children between five and sixteen whom they maintain, we are confronted with six different methods of provision varying greatly in the amount and quality of what is done, and therefore in the cost. The expense in fact, shows the most extraordinary variation—some children being maintained on eighteenpence or half-a-crown a week, whilst others run up to as much as twenty-five shillings a week. Without at present attempting to estimate the comparative advantages of these six methods, we proceed first to describe them in the order of their apparent cheapness, taking first that which is apparently the least costly.

(i.) *Boarding Out within the Union.*

Of the method of providing for children known as Boarding-Out, there are, in England and Wales, two varieties existing under very different conditions. Under an Order of 1889 Boards of Guardians may board out children "within the Union," which means, in practice, no more than paying a small sum weekly to a foster parent residing within the same Union, who undertakes to maintain the child. "In point of fact the cases boarded-out within the Union are cases with regard to which the Guardians would ordinarily give Outdoor Relief, and . . . did give ordinary Outdoor Relief prior to the . . . Order being sent out."† It is a system "which extends automatically," stated the Senior Boarding-Out Inspector:—

> "For many persons who might maintain children related to them, but for whom they are not legally responsible, will not do so if they see that their neighbours receive parish pay for children under similar circumstances. Also, though there are now about 107 committees within the Unions for which they act, there is no official inspector to report on, and help their work; while the rest of the children are only under the supervision of the relieving and medical officers, who cannot make the thorough inspection of the homes and bodily condition of the children which a woman can. It is, therefore, probable that many of the homes are accepted in ignorance of what the treatment of the children really is, and that many of the foster-parents would decline to receive them at the low rates of payment often given if official investigation were made into the nature of that treatment and their expenditure of those payments."‡

We regret to report that we have been unable to find any official information as to the condition of the 6,806 children thus dealt with in England and Wales, children who, though placed out at sums varying from eighteen-pence to five shillings per week, to persons not their parents,§ are not under the inspection of any officer of the Local Government Board, and usually, indeed, have in a majority of Unions not even the protection of a Boarding-Out Committee.‖ Because the foster-parents happen to live within the geographical boundaries of the Union to which the children belong, the theory of the Local Government Board is that the inspection and supervision of the Guardians themselves, the Relieving Officer and the District Medical Officer¶ will suffice to ensure that the children are being properly cared for, much as if they were children on Outdoor Relief. As we have seen, the Guardians, in the majority of cases, give no supervision at all, and there is evidence that the prescribed inspection of the children by the District Medical

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* "A child of ten had not been to school at all" and others not "for seven months" (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 99400–99402).

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 9689.

‡ Thirty-third Annual Report of Local Government Board (Report of Senior Inspector of Boarding-out), 1903–4, p. 264. *See also* Miss Mason's evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 9648–9655, 9688–9690, and Appendix No. XX. to Vol. I.

§ In some cases, by what is almost an evasion of the Boarding-out Orders, the child is "boarded-out" with a relation, who thus sometimes receives several shillings a week for providing for a niece or a sister; or even for a grandchild whom the grandparent is legally obliged to maintain (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 52556). This is permitted by the Local Government Board (*Decisions of the Local Government Board*, p. 78, Par. 5).

‖ Frequently a Boarding-out Committee, for children within the Union, is well-organised and efficient *see*, for instance, the Extracts from the Rules of the Bristol and Clifton Certified Committee for Boarding-out Union Orphans and Deserted Children, 1905, a pamphlet printed by the Local Government Board as a model to others.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 3982, 52552

Officer is seldom adequately carried out ; * and it is remarkable that where a Boarding-Out Committee exists, the official regulations enable such medical inspection to be entirely dispensed with.† The only responsible person is, in that case, the Relieving Officer. This "Destitution Officer" does not think it his duty minutely to inspect the children ; and even if he were a desirable person with whom to bring the child in contact, he can hardly be expected to be expert in ascertaining and enforcing the physical and mental requirements of healthy child life. The children are, in fact, often under no supervision at all. In one Union our committee heard of "Thirty-one children boarded-out within the Union at a cost of from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. per child. There is no list of boarded-out children except the entry in the Application and Report Book ; in fact it is really Out-relief. There is no superintendence and inspection except such as the Relieving Officers give." ‡ One of the Local Government Inspectors informed us that he had himself become aware of several cases of neglect, and even of cruelty to these totally uninspected children ; and he suggested to us the desirability of "an absolutely independent inquiry . . . to see how they do fare, and whether they are well treated or badly treated. All the people who take them want to make money out of them. The worse they treat them the more money they make." § Such an inquiry we found ourselves without time to undertake. But our Special Investigator into Children inquired into the condition of the children boarded-out within the Union in six different districts of England and Wales. The results of this sample inquiry are, in our judgment, very disquieting :—

> "It is clear," sums up our Investigator, "from the accounts of these six Unions, that effective supervision of boarded-out children and their homes is not obtained under the ordinary Poor Law administration. . . . Supervision of homes and children by Guardians and Relieving Officers was never found to be satisfactory. Relieving Officers have too much the standard of the ordinary Out-relief family ; also a man cannot investigate the sleeping accommodation, beds and clothes of girls in any effective fashion. He cannot discuss with the foster-mother the girl's health and temperament in the way a wise woman can do."‖

In view of these statements and of the very grave facts that are constantly being discovered by the lady Inspectors of the Local Government Board among the other boarded-out children who are inspected in England and Wales, we cannot but regard the total absence of official information with regard to these 6,806 children as unsatisfactory. This is the more important in that it is only this section of boarded-out children that, in England and Wales, shows any sign of increasing in numbers. Without waiting for any systematic reform of the Poor Law, they ought, in our opinion, to be at once made the subject of a special inquiry, and placed for the future under the same official inspection as the children boarded-out beyond the Union.¶ This, we may observe, would need no legislation, and could be instituted next week by a stroke of the pen.

(ii.) *Boarding-out in Scotland, and "Boarding-out without the Union" in England and Wales.*

But the system of boarding-out "within the Union" in England and Wales is but an anomalous offshoot of the general plan of placing out the children, far from Poor Law associations, with carefully chosen foster-parents who should care for them as for their

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* "The customary three-monthly examination by the Poor Law Medical Officer within the Union is," reports our Children's Investigator, "in my experience, mostly very perfunctory." (Report on the Condition of the Children, by Miss E. Williams, 1908, p. 95.)

† Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. C. McVail, 1907, p. 75.

‡ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 47, p. 118.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 12362–12369 ; *see also Qs.* 4594–4597. "My impression is that a good many bad cases would be found" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 4594). In 1888, a special inspection was made, which revealed a number of instances of neglect and cruelty (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 5960–5962), which led to new regulations, but not to any regular inspection. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 5417, 12363.)

‖ Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. Ethel Williams, 1908, pp. 91–92 ; *see also* the incidental references in the Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. C. McVail, 1907, pp. 76–78.

¶ "I do think," said to us a representative of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, "the boarded-out [children] within the Union want the same inspection exactly, by trained inspectors, as children who are boarded-out without the Union. It seems to me unreasonable to deny it to the children. We have had painful cases." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 33922.) This proposal was supported by the representative of the Association of Poor Law Unions (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 24860, 24861), and by other witnesses. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 39555, 39556.) We may add that we were informed that the system had been found so unsatisfactory by many Unions as to be abandoned.

own offspring. We need not recount the well-known story of the immemorial practice of the Scotch Kirk Sessions in boarding-out orphan and deserted children, which became, after 1845, the regular system of the Scotch Poor Law.* Nor need we describe the adoption after 1862 of a similar system for Ireland, and after 1870 also for England and Wales. To those who had become conscious of the terrible promiscuity and evil associations of the General Mixed Workhouse, or of the machine-like routine of the great "barrack schools," the plan of boarding-out the children in the cottages of foster-parents in the country promised the best substitute for the home life which the orphan or deserted child had irrevocably lost. "The testimony" of many witnesses, as the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools reported in 1896, "is emphatically in favour of the boarding-out of pauper children as the best system, and that which secures to them the healthiest and most natural life, and gives them the best chance of . . . becoming absorbed into the respectable working population." † Accordingly, there are at present over 10,000 children "boarded-out" in the United Kingdom (apart from the anomalous "boarding-out within the Union" already referred to), namely, about 6,000 in Scotland, 2,100 in Ireland and 1,800 in England and Wales; out of the total of about 305,000 infants and children under sixteen whom the Destitution Authorities are maintaining.

The provision for children in Scotland by means of boarding-out, though commonly assumed to be the principal, if not the only method there adopted, is made use of only for orphan, deserted or "separated" children, and is applied, in fact, only to one-sixth of the pauper children. But it is estimated that of the orphan and deserted children over 80 per cent. are now boarded-out. Of the 7,552 infants under five in receipt of Poor Relief on March 31st, 1906, 315 were boarded-out; of the 32,075 children between five and sixteen, 5,700 were boarded-out. There are, it must be remembered, in Scotland no Poor Law schools, Cottage Homes or Scattered Homes, and little use is made of institutions under voluntary management.

We have to report that the plan of boarding-out, as applied in Scotland to the orphan and deserted children, appears to be endorsed by Scottish public opinion.‡

It has, however, been observed to us that these thousands of children are entrusted for money to stranger foster-parents—sometimes four or five to one person, and a score or two to a single Highland village §—without any sort of independent official supervision or inspection. The work of selecting the foster-parents, and bringing the children, is left to the Destitution Officer of the Destitution Authority from whose district—often far distant—the children come.

Our own Investigator reports that—

> "When a child is once boarded-out, the supervision exercised over it is not very close. The Inspector of Poor for the parish in which the children are placed has no legal responsibility, and sees little of the children, unless, as in Lanark, he gives part of his time to visiting them just as he visits his own. The formal inspection by the parish to which the children belong is always the same, and consists of two visits a year by an inspector, once alone and once accompanied by two members of the Parish Council. These visits have little value in advice to, or control over, the foster-parent, but they may afford opportunities for gaining information as to the condition of the child. Parish Councils seem to rely a good deal on the informal supervision of neighbours, ministers and school-

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* The Boarding-out of Pauper Children, by J. Patten MacDougall, in Transactions of the Fourth International Home Relief Congress, 1904.

† Report of the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, 1896. The recent Commission on the Irish Poor Law strongly supports this view. "We think that nearly all children can and ought to be boarded-out, from (say) one year old up to whatever age it may be thought best to fix as a maximum limit of age for boys and girls, respectively. Those children, few in numbers according to our view, who, for any sufficient reason, cannot at once be boarded-out, might be placed temporarily in certified or industrial schools, according to circumstances." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 61.)

‡ Memorandum on Boarding-out in Scotland (Visits: Scotland. Not yet in volume form); the Boarded-out Children in Iona (*Ibid.*, also not yet in volume form); the Boarding-out of Pauper Children, by J. Patten-MacDougall.

§ From Edinburgh, there were sent, to thirty-five of the foster-parents, no fewer than 159 children, five of them taking six apiece. From Glasgow, there were sent, to 130 of the foster-parents, no fewer than 540 children, twenty of them taking five apiece. (The Boarding-out of Pauper Children, by J. Patten MacDougall, p. 13.) In the Island of Iona, with a total population of 216 (thirty-two being children) we found no fewer than twenty-nine children boarded-out from Glasgow, practically all families eagerly competing for them. (The Boarded-out Children in Iona, by Professor Smart.)

masters for bringing abuses to light, but people are not usually inclined to give information against their neighbours, especially in a small place where everyone knows everyone else, and a good deal of neglect and injudicious treatment, if not actual cruelty, might easily go on without anyone feeling it his business to bring such matters to the notice of those in authority."*

Such cases, we were informed, have been known to occur.† It appears to us, moreover, somewhat remarkable that there is no systematic medical supervision of the boarded-out children.

"There is," notes our Investigator, "no medical inspection of these children at all. The foster-parents are expected to take them to the doctor when necessary, and have a right to his attendance for them, but they are themselves the only judges of the necessity. One child, boarded in Saltcoats, was attending an eye hospital in Glasgow, on the advice of the inspector given at one of his half-yearly visits. There was a boy of ten in Lanark who had a tubercular knee, and ought to have been kept in bed. Indeed, when the doctor visited him he was there, but at other times he was found hopping about the room. Another girl (one of those belonging to Lanark itself) was feverish and obviously ill. When she was medically examined at school, she was sent home with a message that she was to be put to bed. She was found subsequently playing in the street, and though again advised to do so, her guardian did not put her to bed, apparently through sheer carelessness, and did not send for the doctor. It was afterwards found that this child had been in hospital for some time, and discharged because she had phthisis, and such cases were not treated there. She was under no kind of medical supervision."‡

We note that the practice of Scotland is to include as "boarded-out," children who would not, according to the English terminology, be so described. A certain proportion of the children said to be "boarded-out" are merely placed in institutions under voluntary management, some of which are of large size. Thus the Edinburgh Parish Council has always a score or two of children in a large Roman Catholic orphanage, and fifty or sixty in other voluntary institutions, which would, in England and Wales, be inspected by the Local Government Board, and "certified" as suitable for the reception of the children. Various other Parish Councils in Scotland dispose of children in this way, the total number amounting, apparently, to about 750; without, so far as we have been able to gather, any systematic inspection of these private institutions being conducted, either by the Local Government Board for Scotland, or by the Parish Councils concerned. We cannot approve of considerable sums of public money—amounting, as we understand, to thousands of pounds annually—being thus paid to private, and often denominational, institutions, without official inspection or public representation on the governing bodies.

There is also another practice disguised under the term "boarding-out." One of the General Superintendents under the Local Government Board for Scotland speaks "most emphatically of the success of the system . . . when the children are really boarded-out," but he goes on to say that: "In some cases the children have been left with relatives—a grandmother, elder sister or brother or aunt—who have probably offered to take the children at a reduced aliment, say 1s. 6d. a week each. In these cases I have not found the children so well accommodated and cared for." The proportion of children dealt with in this way, even in the poor "slums" of the great cities, appears to be sometimes considerable. In Aberdeen, for instance, where there were, on July 1st, 1907, altogether 1,557 pauper children, 1,297 were simply on Outdoor Relief and no fewer than 75 were living in the General Mixed Workhouse; 185 were nominally "boarded-out," being nearly 12 per cent. of the whole. But we found that of these 9 were in various private institutions, 29 were living with relatives on a low aliment, and only 147 were really boarded-out with strangers, and these by no means all outside the city itself. Of the whole 6,710 children reported as "boarded-out" in Scotland on May 15th, 1907, whilst about 750 were in institutions, 1,929 were boarded with relatives, and only about 4,000 with stranger foster parents.§

We hesitate to express an independent opinion on the Scottish plan of boarding-out. But we cannot escape the feeling that so extensive a system of "farming-out" the children

* Report on the Condition of the Children . . . in Receipt of Poor Law Relief . . . in Scotland, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, p. 66.

† It was stated that the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children had proceeded against some foster-parents for cruelty to boarded-out children (Evidence before the Commission, not yet in volume form; *see* the report of the discussion at the meeting at Edinburgh in 1904 in Transactions of the Fourth International Home Relief Congress, 1904).

‡ Report on the Condition of the Children . . . in Receipt of Poor Law Relief . . . in Scotland, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, pp. 66–67.

§ Thirteenth Annual Report of Local Government Board for Scotland, 1907, p. xiii.

of the poor, great as may be its advantages in the best cases, ought not to continue without systematic medical inspection once a quarter, and regular visitation of all the cases at least once a year by trained lady inspectors under the Local Government Board for Scotland.

Very different are the conditions under which the Destitution Authorities in England and Wales have been permitted to board out their children beyond the limits of their own districts. There must be a Voluntary Committee* of local residents, individually and collectively approved by the Local Government Board, each of whom must engage in writing to undertake the responsibility of choosing the foster-parents, supervising the homes, visiting them at least every six weeks, making the payments for the children's maintenance, and reporting periodically on the children's condition. The master of the local Public Elementary School must report quarterly on each child on an official schedule. A definite contract must be made with a local medical practitioner for the attendance of the children in sickness. And over and above this local supervision, which is strictly insisted on, the Local Government Board maintains three trained and specialised lady inspectors who do nothing else but travel up and down the country examining the homes, the health, the food and clothing, and the physical and mental condition of these 1,800 children.† On the other hand—in sharpest contrast with the arrangements which content the Local Government Board for Scotland—the Relieving Officers, whether of the Union from which the child goes, or of that in which the foster-parent lives, have absolutely nothing to do with the case. The Board of Guardians into whose district the child comes knows nothing of it. And what is the more remarkable, the Board of Guardians which pays for the child, and is responsible for its welfare, is strongly discouraged, if not even actually forbidden, to send any of its officers or to depute any of its members to visit the child's new home or personally inspect its condition.‡ Any such visitation or inspection would, it has been officially stated, be objectionable, "as keeping up associations of pauperism which it is one of the objects of the boarding-out system to remove,"§ and expenses incurred for this purpose would, it has been intimated in at least one Union, be liable to be disallowed and surcharged by the District Auditor.

The vigilant and incessant supervision of the three lady inspectors of boarding-out in England and Wales—not extended, we must repeat, to the 6,000 children "boarded-out within the Union,"—has, we gather, resulted in these carefully watched children being, on the whole, kindly treated.. Many of them, it is clear, receive the great advantage of a first-rate working-class home. "Boarding-out," states our own Children's Investigator, "when properly supervised, and with an active and wise Boarding-out Committee, is, I believe, the ideal system both for boys and girls, but especially for girls."‖ But we have some doubt whether the system can, under present circumstances, be greatly extended in scope. We do not think, for instance, that it can be used for children who have mothers of their own, not being such as deserve to be completely and permanently deprived of their offspring. Nor is it applicable to the not inconsiderable number of children who, from mental or physical peculiarities, have to be dealt with by persons skilled in the treatment of the abnormal child. Thus the percentage of children who can be made eligible for boarding-out cannot, we think, appreciably exceed the present class to which the Boarding-Out Order applies, which probably comprises only about one-tenth of the total number of Poor Law children. Further, the number of foster-parents who are both able and willing to receive boarded-out children and who possess suitable homes is, in England even more than in Scotland, plainly very limited. We have regretfully to admit that, good as it is as far as it goes, "boarding-out can only touch the fringe of the problem of the training and upbringing of pauper children."¶

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 3977.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 3978; *see also* the able Statement of Evidence and other documents handed in by Miss Mason, the Senior Lady Inspector of Boarded-out Children, and the evidence given by her, *Qs.* 9574–10174, and Appendix No. XX. to Vol. I.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 9771.

§ Local Government Board to West Ham Board of Guardians, July 23rd, 1906; MS. Minutes of West Ham Board of Guardians, August 30th, 1906.

‖ Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, pp. 95, 103.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

Moreover, amid all the advantages of the foster parent's home, we have felt uncomfortable, in such personal inspections as we have been able to make, in Scotland, Ireland and England alike, as to whether sufficient care was being taken to see that these boarded-out children were in all cases being fed, clothed, educated and medically attended *in such a way as to make them into healthy and productive citizens.* The official inspection in England, and local public opinion in Scotland, may, in cases of open abuses, protect them (in all but a few exceptional cases) against wilful cruelty, or gross neglect. But it ought frankly to be recognised that the standard of efficiency of the average mother in the rearing of children is a low one, often not consistent with the continued health and adequate training even of her own children, to which she brings the incalculable compensating advantage of instinctive care. It cannot be said that the present occasional inspections protect the boarded-out children against a foster parent's low standard of knowledge of how to bring up a child, or against a foster parent's lack of means. Practically nothing can be done by the Local Government Board Inspectors to ensure that the children get continuously sufficient food of the proper kind, or the right sort of clothing, or even adequate sleep.* The amount usually paid for their maintenance—3s., 4s. and occasionally 5s. a week, with 10s. a quarter for clothes—is, with the usual limited knowledge as to how best to lay out this sum, insufficient for adequate food and clothing of a growing child and ordinary remuneration for the very real labour of attending to it.† We do not feel any assurance that the boarded-out children, if properly weighed and measured, would be found to be much more nearly equal to the average weight and height for their years than the children on Outdoor Relief. Unfortunately the boarded-out children are, as a rule, not medically inspected,‡ or even periodically weighed and measured at all; and we have it in evidence that this lack of medical inspection results in many minor ailments remaining untreated.§ "I believe," sums up our Medical Investigator, with regard to these Boarded-out Children, "the main reason for present defects to be that the children are regarded as belonging to the Poor Law system of the country, are under charge of the Poor Law Authority, and that their whole management is pervaded by the Poor Law spirit. They are a burden on the rates; no more should be done for them than the absolute minimum demanded by necessity. It is the duty of the Guardians to keep down expenditure, and to see that pauper children shall not be better cared for than the children of the poorest labourer. Proposals as to better treatment, better feeding and better control hardly belong to the sphere of Poor Law work." ‖ And, seeing that the very object of the system is to free the child from any connection with the Poor Law, so that neither the members nor the officers of the Board of Guardians responsible for the child's maintenance and welfare can properly be allowed to visit or inspect it, lest this should keep up "associations of pauperism," we fail to see why the Destitution Authority should continue to have anything at all to do with the boarded-out child. Such a child might, it would seem, just as well be entrusted to the care of the Local Education Authority—"an authority," to use the significant words of our Medical Investigator, "whose special duty would

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* "Nearly a dozen cases came under my notice where children were suffering from not having sufficient sleep at night, owing to not going to bed in good time." (Thirty-fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1905–1906 (Report of Inspector of Boarding-out), p. 548.)

† "The payments made by Guardians for clothes do not nearly cover the cost with older children. Boots and shoes for girls and boys over ten cost at least 15s. to 25s. a year, especially in the country where they have a long walk to school." (Report on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 96.)

‡ It is a strange anomaly that whilst the Local Government Board insists that every child boarded-ou within the Union where there is no Boarding-out Committee, should be regularly inspected once a quarter by the District Medical Officer, who is paid a fee of half-a-crown for this medical overhauling, there is no such requirement for children boarded-out beyond the Union, *who are accordingly not medically inspected at all.* "Where," says our Children's Investigator, "a small regular payment is made by Guardians for medical attendance for children boarded-out without the Union, this is often regarded as of the nature of a provident payment to ensure attendance in sickness, and not to provide medical inspection and supervision." (*Ibid.*, p. 95.)

§ "Regular medical inspection of all boarded-out children is," says our Children's Investigator, "essential. These are often children of poor physique who need special care. In almost every case I saw, the child's teeth needed attention. I saw several cases of very much enlarged tonsils, enlarged glands and adenoids, also defects of vision, all needing attention. *I saw no set of boarded-out children amongst whom there were not untreated defects.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 95.) "The Medical Officer," notes our Medical Investigator, "is not expected," with regard to boarded-out children, "to suggest the calling in of dental aid for the right ordering of the growth of the teeth. Operations for removal of enlarged tonsils, or adenoids, are not so regularly done among labourers' children as to yield a good precedent for their performance among pauper children." (Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. C. McVail, 1907, p. 88.)

‖ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

be the proper guidance and control of these children . . . so as to fit them for a useful life, and to remove as far as practicable the evil effects of their mental and physical heritage" *—an authority which is now to have systematic arrangements for medical inspection by doctors having special knowledge of children's physical needs, and which has its own staff of School Attendance Officers, and its own voluntary bodies of School Managers or Children's Care Committees, free from any of the "associations of pauperism."

(iii.) *Certified Schools and Institutions.*

Closely connected with the system of boarding-out the children with foster-parents, is that of placing them in schools and homes under the management of voluntary philanthropic committees, to which, in England and Wales, the Destitution Authority pays a sum, approved by the Local Government Board, of from 3s. to 10s. 9d. per child per week.† Other institutions, not certified, are made use of by special permission of the Local Government Board in each case.‡ This method of providing for the children is now resorted to by about half the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales, who place out in this way over 11,000 children, mostly of school age; 8,171 being sent to the 269 certified homes and schools,§ and about 3,000 to uncertified institutions.‖ About a score of Unions have each more than a hundred boys and girls so disposed of. In a large number of cases, these are children of Roman Catholic parentage, for whose reception about fifty-five Roman Catholic certified schools, homes and orphanages are maintained, having altogether about 5,000 Poor Law inmates. There are a score of certified institutions for the blind, deaf and dumb, crippled or idiotic, with about 700 inmates. There are three certified training ships, having about 250 Poor Law boys. The other 191 certified institutions, containing about 2,200 Poor Law children (or, on an average twelve apiece) include a great variety of "homes" and "schools" and "orphanages," mostly small in scope; frequently undenominational, but sometimes definitely Anglican, and occasionally Wesleyan or Jewish in character; established, as a rule, by little groups of philanthropists; almost invariably unincorporated, unendowed and supported partly by voluntary contributions; and administered by Voluntary Committees, largely composed of benevolent ladies. "They are," somewhat optimistically deposed the Chief Inspector of the Local Government Board, "perhaps the best illustration of charity working in co-operation with the Poor Law. Good people start these homes; we certify them; the Guardians pay for the children going there; and we inspect them." ¶

The striking feature about this method of providing for over 11,000 of the "Children of the State" is the lack of official knowledge of what is happening to them. Of the 3,000 in the uncertified institutions—which include other training ships, sanatoria of various kinds, schools for epileptics, blind asylums and farm colonies—we have found no information at all. But even of the officially certified institutions little is apparently known. Some of them are large,** ably administered and apparently very successful. Others are small and obscure places, with indefinite variations according to the personality and means of the persons who happen, for the time being, to be taking an interest in them. Some that we happened to visit seemed to leave nothing to be desired. Others were much less satisfactory.†† The first question that is naturally asked with regard to children

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* *Ibid.*, p. 88.

† This method of provision dates from 1859, and was formally recognised in 1862, when the Certified Schools Act authorised the certifying of such institutions by the Central Authority, for the purpose of receiving Poor Law children. *See* The Children of the State, by Florence Davenport Hill, pp. 86–117.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 3461, 40151.

§ List of Schools and Institutions certified by the Poor Law Board and the Local Government Board etc., January 24th, 1908, *Ibid.* (not yet in volume form).

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 3461.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 3460.

** There are a dozen certified as accommodating 300 or upwards, one taking 697, and another over 900.

†† One of our Committees visited a small "home" for boys, and reported that "the impression left on our minds was of dirt, discomfort and inefficiency." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 22 D., p. 52.) We notice that, from one large certified school containing hundreds of Poor Law boys, the Local Government Board in 1902 withdrew its certificate, presumably because the conditions were not satisfactory. The school was re-organised, and afterwards re-certified. In the case of a children's "home" in the Midlands, the certificate was withdrawn, because it was found that adult women suffering from acute disease were also being received.

of school age is what are the arrangements for their education; but there are no official Reports published as to either the educational attainments or the physical condition of these eleven or twelve thousand children, most of whom are of school age, and nearly all the others are supposed to be still under educational training of one sort or another. The Local Government Board presumably obtains, at the outset, all the necessary evidence before certifying that an institution is in all respects fit to receive Poor Law children; but we gather that it relies on a visit by one of its General Inspectors, who "satisfies himself that the children are properly fed and clothed, and that the cubical and superficial space is sufficient," for the number for which the place is then certified.* We understand that no Report is obtained from any educational expert as to the sufficiency and suitability of the education provided—in fact, we have been unable to discover that the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board even knows which of these places are themselves schools and which of them merely board and lodge the children.† Down to 1871 they were not inspected. Those which are certified are now subject to an annual visit by the General Poor Law Inspector in whose district they happen to be situated, but no reports of these visits are published or were supplied to us; it is no part of the duty of the Inspector to estimate the efficiency of the children's education;‡ and we have been unable to ascertain whether the inspection extends nowadays to more than it did in 1888, when it was officially stated to relate to no more than seeing that the children had enough food and clothing, and were not overcrowded.§ Representations appear from time to time to have been made as to the desirability of some inspection being made of the educational work by qualified inspectors. In 1883 a London Board of Guardians inquired, with some anxiety, whether there was any Government inspection at all of the education in these certified schools for which the Boards of Guardians were paying large sums. In consequence of this inquiry arrangements were made, in the course of the next few years, for getting twenty-three out of the fifty-five Roman Catholic institutions—*but no others*¶—regularly inspected by the Inspectors of Poor Law Schools. In 1904 the duty of inspecting the education in these twenty-three schools (and in these only) was transferred to the Board of Education, who have communicated to us an interesting report on the results of the recent visits to them of His Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.** So far as we can ascertain, the education given in the other Roman Catholic schools, some of which have over a hundred boys or girls,†† and that given in the schools and homes belonging to other denominations or to no denomination‡‡—apart from a score of institutions which happen to receive grants also from the Board of Education as being public elementary schools—is, to this day, not subject to any inspection whatever.

We gather that in many of the smaller "homes" no schooling at all is provided, and it is assumed by the Local Government Board that in these cases the children of school age are sent out to the local public elementary school. We find that it is not generally known to the Boards of Guardians concerned, any more than it is to the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board, which institutions provide schooling and which

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* *Qs.* 430, 431, in Report of House of Lords Committee on Poor Relief, 1888.

† Owing to the courtesy of the Poor Law Inspectors, we have ascertained that at least 80 of the total of 269 certified institutions are themselves schools, and about 180 are merely residential homes, not professing to provide instruction for children of school age, though often undertaking the domestic economy and other education of older girls.

‡ In the official form on which the Inspector is required to make his report, the various points to which his attention should be directed are specially set forth under seventeen heads. *Among these education is not included*, though "industrial training" is. The Inspector has to report the number of Industrial Trainers employed, but nothing about the teachers of elementary school subjects. As one of the Inspectors pointed out, "there is not a word said about my having to make inquiries or report on schooling. As a matter of fact that is not part of my business at all."

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 452.

¶ We have been unable to discover why this particular selection was made.

** Report upon the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, and in the twenty-three schools certified under the Poor Law (Certified Schools) Act, 1862, which are inspected by the Board of Education, 1908.

†† Thus, the Paul's Roman Catholic Home at Coleshill (Warwickshire) has 161 Poor Law boys; and the St. Clare Roman Catholic Orphanage at Pantasaph (Flint) has 146 Poor Law girls, both without educational inspection; and there are others.

‡‡ Many of these are themselves providing the schooling of several scores of boys or girls.

are merely homes; and there is no arrangement for ensuring that the managers of the institutions of the latter kind cause the children entrusted to them to attend school at all, still less that they attend regularly and continuously up to the age for legal exemption. It has been suggested that it may be assumed that the Local Education Authority should see to this matter; but there is, we find, no arrangement for informing the Local Education Authority when Poor Law children are sent into its district; it has no power to inspect residential institutions which are not public elementary schools; and we do not feel sur- that children in residential institutions are always included in any systematic scheduling of children that may be undertaken by the School Attendance Officers.

Moreover, we fear that the annual visit of the General Poor Law Inspector to the certified institutions does not necessarily ensure, even in respect to the matters which he attends to, that every one of these 8,171 children that have been sent to these institutions will be seen by him. The Inspector is not supplied with any list of names of the Poor Law children who ought to be presented to him in each institution, and does not even know how many ought to be seen by him. There is accordingly nothing to prevent some of the Poor Law children from being withheld from his inspection, either because they were not in a fit state, or because they had been sent out to work, or because they were in excess of the maximum number for which the institution was certified, or because they had been, without the knowledge of anybody concerned, illegally boarded-out.

We feel bound to call attention to this remarkable laxness, because—though we have no further information on the subject—it has been given in evidence, by an officer of the Local Government Board, that cases have been accidentally discovered in which children, entrusted by a Board of Guardians to a home duly certified by the Local Government Board, were found to have been illegally boarded-out in cottages with foster-parents, for payments less in amount than those which the certified home was receiving.* And it must be remembered that these children have no other protection than that which official inspection affords. "The Guardians," reports one of our committees, "practically wash their hands of them entirely."† Some Boards do visit a few of the institutions they make use of,‡ but such visits are officially discouraged; and in at least one Union they have been discontinued on a threat from the District Auditor that he would disallow and surcharge the expenses. It has been held, in fact, that it is the duty of the Guardians to rely on the certificate of the Local Government Board. We cannot feel that it is either right or convenient that the power of placing children of school age in these voluntary institutions—which thus receive about £200,000 a year from public funds—should continue to be exercised by Destitution Authorities, who cannot be expected, any more than the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board, to be qualified to form any skilled judgment as to the efficiency of the training given at the public expense.§

(iv.) *Scattered Homes.*

In view of the fact that it was impracticable to board-out more than a fraction of the children who had to be maintained from the poor rates, the Sheffield Board of Guardians, in 1893, started what has since been termed the system of "Scattered Homes":—

> "The Guardians set themselves the problem of how to procure for children, unsuited for boarding-out, the best available conditions for health and education, with such supervision as would prevent abuses. They began by renting houses—such as are generally occupied by families of the working-class—in which they placed from fifteen to eighteen children with a motherly woman as housekeeper. They aimed to retain, as much as possible, the original character of the house, taking pains, however,

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 9634, 9638, 9639, 9797, 9930–9932. This has also been officially reported. "In more than one case," reports the Senior Inspector of Boarded-out children, "I have discovered that children sent by the Guardians to certified homes under such an association had been illegally boarded-out in cottages in the neighbourhood without the knowledge or sanction of the Local Government Board or Guardians." (Thirty-third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1903–1904 (Report of Senior Inspector of Boarding-out), p. 266.)

† Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 48, p. 103.

‡ Thus, the Whitechapel Board of Guardians appoints two of its members to visit once a year each of five institutions only, out of eighteen to which it sends children. (Annual Report for 1907–8.)

§ The Chief Inspector of the Local Government Board himself appears to have some doubts as to the quality of many of these institutions. "These homes vary very greatly in efficiency, and it may be hoped that ultimately they will be put under the management of some Central Committee who should be able to classify the children in them, and to provide for a more efficient training than is possible at some of the smaller institutions." (Thirty-third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1903–1904, p. 156.)

> that the drainage should be good, and the air-space sufficient for children. At the same time, they established an administrative centre, for the reception of all children who might be thrown on the rates of their Union, which centre, unconnected with any other Poor Law institution, was designed to lodge each child during the few weeks necessary for the observation of its health and character, until it could be sent, without any Workhouse memory, and with fair security of success, to one of the houses. All the houses are under the supervision of a superintendent and his wife, who keep the necessary accounts, report to the Guardians on the state of the homes, form a necessary link between the various homes, and generally secure that order which is essential in the expenditure of public funds under the control of the Local Government Board."*

This system, which "has the advantage over all the others [except boarding-out] that there is less capital expenditure,"† costs only a few shillings a week more for maintenance than boarding-out itself; and has now been adopted by about sixty Unions, for nearly 5,000 of their children, practically all of them being of school age.

There are many persons of knowledge and experience who regard this system as, on the whole, the best yet devised for the normal child whom the community has to maintain. It has distinct advantages over boarding-out, in that it is applicable to children whose parents are themselves in the Workhouse; the food, clothing and housing are always adequate; the foster-parent is more carefully selected and is a salaried officer; regular medical inspection is provided for; and there is continuous skilled supervision of the home. It is claimed that it is superior to the system of Poor Law Schools and Cottage Homes, presently to be described, in that, whilst being much less costly, the children are less "institutionalised," and mix naturally with other children at school and at play. But, in our opinion, it is a drawback that the children in the Scattered Homes are still in contact with the Poor Law. They usually pass through the Workhouse‡ or some other Poor Law institution before admission to the Scattered Homes, or on discharge from them; § they are officially visited by officers of the Poor Law, and by the Poor Law Guardians, || instead of, like other children, by the officers of the Local Education Authority and members of the Children's Care Committee; and they are classified as being in the category of the destitute, rather than according to their several talents and requirements. As we have mentioned, "defectives are very often to be found in the Children's Homes,"¶ merely because they are destitute like the rest. "In one of these Homes," deposed the father of the system at Sheffield, "we had a girl of feeble mind, now about fifteen. . . . She grew worse as her womanhood developed. . . . She corrupted the other girls in the Home. . . . There are two or three other girls in our Home who look to me to be going in the same way."** Moreover, it is impossible not to admit that, as compared with the most modern of the Poor Law Schools or Cottage Homes, the children in the Scattered Homes do not, under the administration of the Destitution Authority, get such good opportunities for manual instruction, for learning swimming, for domestic economy and generally for industrial training, as can be afforded in the more highly organised institutions. All this, however, merely comes to the fact that the children in the Scattered Homes are the wards, not of the Local Education Authority, but of the Destitution Authority, which cannot be got to think of much beyond their board and lodging. They suffer, in fact, from not being specially provided for by the Local Education Authority, which, if the Scattered Homes were within its jurisdiction, might well arrange for the children to share, over and above the ordinary schooling, ending at thirteen or fourteen, in the necessary industrial training and domestic economy instruction which the wisest parent wishes to secure for his family, and which the most advanced among Local Education Authorities are already beginning to provide.

(v.) *The Boarding School of the Destitution Authority.*

All the systems for the specialised treatment of Poor Law children that we have so far described have arisen since 1870, and depend on the ubiquitous provision of public

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* The Sheffield or Scattered Home System (State Children's Association).

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 6937.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 40676–40679.

§ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XV. (A), Pars. 110*a* and 111, to Vol. I.

|| It is the Poor Law doctor who comes to inspect them; it is the Poor Law superintendent to whom they have to look for protection; it is this Poor Law officer who gives permission for them to receive visits, even from their own parents. (*Ibid.*, Par. III.) "The Local Government Board insists," we were told, "that ladies [Guardians] shall visit all the homes once a week if possible" (*Ib.d.*, *Qs.* 39557–39559).

¶ Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 105.

** Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908. Vol. II., *Qs.* 11318, 11320.

elementary schools by the Local Education Authorities. Prior to 1870 the only method of withdrawing Poor Law children from the General Mixed Workhouse or the unconditional Outdoor Relief that we have described, was to establish the separate boarding schools recommended in the Report of 1834. As we have mentioned, this policy, though rejected by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1835, became, from 1841 onwards, the favourite policy of the Central Authority,* and in the course of the next forty years, several dozens of such schools came into existence in England and Wales and two in Ireland.† Some of these, serving combinations of Unions, were of huge size, accommodating over 1,000 children.

We need not describe the change in opinion that has taken place during the last twenty years, and the consequent arrest of this policy, leading to the breaking up of two of the largest of the "barrack schools," and to the adoption, for all new boarding schools, of the plan of building the children's residences in detached blocks, which sometimes take the form of the separate villas known as "Cottage Homes," grouped into "Village Communities."‡

Of these boarding schools of the Destitution Authority, of the old type or the new there are, we gather, at present about 100, containing just over 20,000 children, all between three and fourteen years of age.§ Whether this plan of providing for the children who have to be maintained by the community is or is not superior to that of placing them in Scattered Homes or in Certified Institutions, or of boarding them out with foster parents, is a matter of great controversy. The last official examinations of the problem are those made by the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools of 1896,|| the conclusions of which were generally adverse to these boarding schools, and the suggestively critical report on the industrial training that they afforded to girls, by Miss Stansfeld in 1899.¶ On the other hand, such scanty evidence as we have received on the subject has been, on the whole, in their favour; ** and it seems as if great improvements had taken place in the last decade, alike in the organisation of the institutions and in the education provided.††

The issue between those who advocate and those who oppose the extension of these boarding schools for Poor Law children seems to have been obscured by a constant intermingling of two separate considerations; whether boarding schools furnish an advantageous method of bringing up some or any of the "Children of the State"; and whether schools of any sort are, or are ever likely to be, from an educational standpoint, economically and successfully administered by a Destitution Authority. The advantages of corporate life among equals and the incalculable mental and physical education of organised games have caused the boarding school to be preferred for their own children by the majority of parents who are in a position to choose what they think best for them. On the other hand, no middle or upper class parent would dream, if he could avoid it, of immuring his child in a boarding school for the whole twelve months of the year. We

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* Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, pp. 23–24, 54–55; Report of Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, 1896, Vol. I., p. 6; Vol. II., *Qs.* 15967–15988.

† None were ever established in Scotland.

‡ We class together the separate school, whether in a single building or divided into blocks, and the Village Communities of Cottage Homes with their partially independent housekeeping, as they all partake of the institution type, as compared with the Scattered Homes already described. In a few cases, the Cottage Homes (though grouped together under a single superintendent) do not include provision for schooling, and the children go out to the neighbouring Public Elementary School. This, though in some respects a beneficial arrangement, runs the risk of falling between two stools, and of securing for the children neither the advantages of the everyday home, nor those of the boarding-school.

§ These figures do not include the boys and girls, nearly 2,000 in number, in the schools (for ophthalmic or ringworm children, etc.), of the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

|| Report of Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, etc., Cd. 8027 (of 1896).

¶ Report to the Local Government Board on the Industrial Training of Girls in the Separate and District Schools of the Metropolitan District, by Miss Ina Stansfeld (Cd. 237, of 1899).

** Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 3485–3493, 10807–10809, 14276–14281, 14394–14581, 14611, 14612, 23108, 23594, 23620, 28470–28774, 33911, 36628, 39421, etc.

†† On this point we have the Report by Mr. T. J. Macnamara, when Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board (Cd. 3899, 1908); and, most recent of all, a valuable Report on the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, by Mr. J. Tillard, His Majesty's Inspector, and Miss M. B. Synge (July, 1908), published by the Board of Education.

regret the almost universal practice of the Destitution Authority,* of making no provision to enable the children whom it places in its boarding schools to spend a month or two in every year, by way of holidays, *in the home of everyday life*; either boarded-out with suitable relations or friends, or provided for in country cottages.† It is to this lack of holidays out of school, to this absence of experience of home life, to this extraordinary immuring of the child continuously for seven or ten years in an institution, that nearly all the cogent objections to the "barrack schools" are to be attributed.

One solid objection to the boarding school as a system of providing for poor children is its great expense, compared with the actual cost of maintenance of the child in a working-class home. The various Poor Law schools and Cottage Homes established during recent years show that it costs from £100 to as much as £250, in capital outlay, to accommodate one Poor Law child,‡ and from £30 to £55 per annum for its maintenance. To deal at this cost with all the 237,000 Poor Law children of school age up and down the kingdom appears to us out of the question. And whilst part of the expenditure on this or that costly new institution may have been an unnecessary extravagance, it is clear that, alike in capital outlay and annual maintenance, the cost of the boarding school must always greatly exceed the five or six shillings a week for food and clothing, and the four or five pounds a year in the public elementary school which is all that is spent on the average child, even in the most prosperous sections of the wage-earning class. The boarding school run "on the cheap" has no good points. We are far from suggesting the discontinuance of the existing residential schools, but we think that these boarding schools, by whatever Authority administered, should be specialised for particular classes and reserved for those children who cannot be successfully provided for in their parents' homes on adequate allowances, or in Scattered Homes. or in suitable certified schools or homes, or by boarding-out.

We are, however, of opinion that such boarding schools cannot, from the educational standpoint, be economically and efficiently administered by a Destitution Authority. We may pay an ungrudging tribute of admiration and respect to the managers and staffs of the Poor Law schools, and to the officers of the Local Government Board who have been concerned, for the success with which they have, in the main, overcome the difficulties formerly experienced by these schools in maintaining the children in health and vigour; and in protecting them from the "blight" which in former times too often devastated the young lives whom the community was in this way rearing.§ Indeed, the majority of the Boards of Guardians, having such schools, have certainly not spared

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* Various enlightened Boards of Guardians have lately instituted holiday excursions. The West Ham Board of Guardians sends the children from its schools for a fortnight's sea-side holiday at Clacton; but does not disperse them in cottages. (Minutes of West Ham Board of Guardians, September 6th, 1906.) On the other hand, our own Investigator found, in the Poor Law school of the Glasgow Parish Council that "the children go to church in the grounds, and practically *never go outside until discharged.* When it is remembered that some of the children have been in the hospital" (Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow) "for years, this arrangement cannot be too much condemned." (Report on the Condition of the Children . . . in receipt of Poor Law Relief . . . in Scotland, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, p. 94.)

† It would probably be easy to arrange to utilise for this purpose some of the Cottage Homes already used by the Children's Country Holiday Fund, either before or after the August holidays.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 1634–1637, 1863, and Appendix No. V. (4) and (5) to Vol. I.

§ "Whatever may have been the case in the past," reports the late Parliamentary Secretary of the Local Government Board, "there is no doubt that to-day the Barrack School is usually conducted in such a way as to secure that the children shall leave it physically well set up; and every care is taken to anticipate the spread of those contagious diseases to which children are particularly liable." (Report by Mr. Macnamara, Cd. 3899, 1908, p. 20.) The Board of Education Inspectors bear testimony to the fact that "the training in cleanly habits, the regular feeding, good clothing and housing, and all the healthy physical surroundings provided in Poor Law schools have a wonderful effect in transforming half-starved weakly children into strong and healthy boys and girls. As long as they remain in these schools, they are protected from the evil influences of home, from bad language and violent and debasing scenes. Not only are they hedged in from evil, but every care is taken that they may be as far as possible exposed to positive influences for good. They are watched over and encouraged, trained to be useful and obedient. Games, too, are organised for them; physical training, gymnastics and swimming still further improve their health and strength. Teachers of Public Elementary Schools which are attended by Poor Law children testify to their superior habits of cleanliness and obedience. In the best of schools *esprit de corps* is developed, which is worthy of comparison with that of a public school, so that children are proud of their school, and jealous for its good reputation." (Report upon the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, by Mr. J. Tillard, His Majesty's Inspector, and Miss M. B. Synge, 1908, p. 18.) Many of them have now "old boys' clubs" and similar societies.

expense. We have frequently noticed, in personally inspecting the Poor Law Schools and Cottage Homes, that these institutions—like the Poor Law Infirmaries—tend to be needlessly elaborate and extravagant in buildings, ornament and arrangements, without really securing the highest technical efficiency. Neither the Destitution Authority, nor any of its officers, nor yet the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board which sanctions the plans, has any continuous experience or expert technical knowledge of what a modern educational building requires to be. Even the largest Destitution Authority only builds a school once in half a century, whereas the Local Education Authority for the same area may be building one a year, or even (as in London) one a quarter. The Destitution Authority, is, in fact, for any such building, almost necessarily at the mercy of an architect casually selected for the job by persons having no experience of educational buildings.* In the same way, we have found that the Destitution Authority, even if willing to spend largely on buildings, seldom realises adequately the importance of obtaining a sufficiently large and sufficiently highly qualified teaching staff. The salaries to the headmasters of the large Poor Law Schools, like those of the assistants, are habitually "very appreciably lower" than those paid by the Local Educational Authorities around them for work of equal magnitude and difficulty; † whilst the holidays in the Poor Law service are shorter, and the teachers are usually expected to perform much of the work "which properly belongs to paid attendants."‡ It is, in fact, almost impossible for a Destitution Authority to free itself from the feeling that the teaching of pauper children,—still more the responsible duty with regard to his pupils that falls to the headmaster of a boarding school—is a matter on which it would be unreasonable to spend as much as upon the same duties with regard to other children. Yet it is plainly work of at least equal difficulty and importance. Nor is it easy for a Destitution Authority, even if it seeks to do so, to get the best teachers. The Poor Law Schools do not form part of the educational service of the country; and the teachers in that service cannot pass into that of the Boards of Guardians without encountering pecuniary loss. § The separateness of the service prevents the Boards of Guardians attracting the best of the certificated teachers; || and stands in the way of their getting the utmost out of such teachers as they do attract into their service. It gives rise, the Board of Education Inspectors report:—

> "To a special difficulty in dealing with weak teachers in Poor Law schools. Guardians have no choice of schools, and are, therefore, unable to move worthy but weak teachers from places for which they are unsuitable to places where, by means of stronger support and guidance, they may become passably efficient. Their only alternatives are to dismiss a weak teacher, or to let him stay on in a place for which he is unfit; and being human, they usually choose the latter course.¶

Even if the legal difficulties were removed which at present impede free circulation of teachers between the educational and the Poor Law services, there would still remain the drawback, in the latter, of professional isolation and aloofness.** "Poor Law teachers," as the Inspectors of the Board of Education report, are:—

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* Thus, the Board of Education reports, of a new Poor Law school, built at a huge cost, that "it is most disappointing in many respects. . . . The class-rooms are all built along a corridor, so that supervision is very difficult; in the infants' room the teacher stands facing the light, and there is a large high gallery." "Again at the —— Cottage Homes," which were erected regardless of expense, "the school has been placed in a remote corner of the site, so far from some of the houses, that in rough weather the infants can hardly go to school. In this school, too, there are serious defects of lighting, and no attempt has been made in planning the school to admit the sunshine, even to the rooms occupied by the infants." (*Ibid.*, p. 9.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 28308, Par. 4.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ They have to sacrifice any growth of their prospective superannuation under the Elementary School Teachers (Superannuation) Act, 1898; whilst, once in the Poor Law service, they are not only debarred, in practice, from chances of better appointments in the Elementary School Service, but they cannot even pass back again into that service without giving up all growth of their accrued rights to Poor Law superannuation. (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXII. to Vol. V. *Q.* 28470, Par. 54.) Moreover, promotion in the Poor Law schools themselves is slow, and seems scarcely to exist. There are Superintendents who have come from one school to another, but, in general, each school acts as a single independent unit, seldom exchanging officers with another, and usually not promoting its own but taking in for higher posts teachers from the Elementary Education service or Voluntary Schools.

|| Report upon the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, by Mr. J. Tillard and Miss M. B. Synge, 1908, p. 10. "The teachers in Poor Law schools," states the Headmaster of one of them, "are not equal in training or attainments to the teachers in the ordinary Public Elementary Schools in which I worked for twenty years." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXII. (Par. 8) to Vol. V.) "The teacher in the Poor Law school, as a rule, is a teacher of lower grade and lower qualifications than the teacher in the Council or Board School." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 28320.)

¶ Report upon the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, by Mr. J. Tillard and Miss M. B. Synge, 1908, p. 10.

** Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXII. to Vol. V.

> "A class apart from teachers of Public Elementary Schools, and each Poor Law school is a water-tight compartment. The teachers miss the stimulus to self-improvement, and the interchange of ideas on their work, which do so much to refresh their fellow-teachers outside, and to extend their views; nor do they share in the friendly rivalry which grows up when many people are working under one large Authority."*

Nor is the influence of the Destitution Authority any better upon the curriculum of the Poor Law School than it is upon the teaching staff.

> "The average Guardian," it has been said, "has but little opportunity of seeing other schools at work, and his consequent inexperience of what is good in education, and what is merely fustian has been the origin of the 'show work,' which is still so prominent in the Poor Law schools. . . . As a result of the visits of inexpert managers, there is to be noticed in many Poor Law schools a desire to make a display, whether it be by means of a 'showy' piece of needlework or drawing, or by 'pretty' groupings and posings in physical exercises or recitations by a few 'show' infants. It is not unlikely that teachers have discovered that the average Guardian is impressed more by these trifles than by solid work, of which it is not easy to make an attractive display."†

This backwardness in "booklearning" is sometimes supposed to be compensated for by the superior industrial training. Boys and girls in the Poor Law schools spend a large part of their time—in some cases, it is reported, at an earlier age than is legally allowed under the Education Acts ‡—in industrial and domestic work, from which they doubtless derive some training. But we doubt the educational value of much that, in these schools, is called industrial training. What is most evident is the desire to utilise the elder boys and girls in digging and scrubbing and turning the handles of the machines used in the laundry, partly out of a vague feeling that the children have got to be "taught to work," but principally with the object of reducing the expenses of the establishment. Even where boys are supposed to be taught a trade, such as shoe-making or tailoring, the work is of little value as industrial training.§ The latest report shows that:—

> "The work that is done in the shops is generally of a utilitarian character, and consists of making and mending for the institution. As its aim is so different, it is unfair to compare it with the handicraft instruction of the Public Elementary School. It is felt by many of the Board of Education Inspectors, with much reason, that it would be possible, without serious interference with the present system, to make industrial instruction more intelligent and educative; but no effective reform can be expected in this department unless the training of the boys themselves on educational lines, and in ways that will develop their intelligence and skill, and give them a thorough technical training is given precedence over the merely industrial work of the Institution. *This is now organised mainly with a view to saving the poor-rate, by causing the young lads in the institution to do as much as possible of the various jobs needed in its daily working.*"‖

The girls are employed in the kitchen, the scullery and the washhouse, but in many of the schools it cannot be said that they are taught cookery or laundrywork.

> "We found," say the Board of Education Inspectors, "that, while all the girls did a certain amount of washing and ironing, their work was incomplete; that is to say, they would iron collars they had not learnt to starch, and wash articles they never learned to iron, exactly in the same way in which they peeled potatoes that they could not cook. They assisted as 'hands' in the work of

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* Report upon the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, by Mr. J. Tillard and Miss M. B. Synge, 1908, p. 10.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 15. "In a large number of cases," it has been said, the educational work of "the school seems to be regarded as little more than a 'side-show' by the Guardians, who, while taking the greatest interest in the bodily comforts of the children, or the economics of the Institution, were disposed to rest content with a comparatively low standard of efficiency in all matters appertaining to the schoolroom and its work." (*Ibid.*, p. 6.)

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

§ The Departmental Committee of 1896 reported: "The industrial trainers . . . are, as a whole, poorly qualified. Very often they are good people who are doing a great deal of work in their shop, but they are not teaching the children the foundation of a trade, because the physical labour of the child is employed for the purpose of keeping the institution at the lowest cost. This . . . is the great difficulty, and until we get over that we shall never get the best results out of the schools. The result of this inadequate training is that the boys are not interested in their work, and are rarely able, when they leave the school, to take good positions in the trades for which it was supposed they had been trained. Indeed, the Educational Inspector went so far as to say that masters who had had experience of boys trained in Poor Law schools preferred to engage those who had not received any instruction in the particular branch of trade for which they were intended. . . . They say: 'No, I will choose a boy out of the general school. If I take any of these others, I shall have to unteach him all that he has learned here, he only learns to botch and cobble.'" (Report of the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, 1896, p. 46.)

‖ Report upon the Educational Work in the Poor Law Schools, by Mr. J. Tillard and Miss M. B. Synge, 1908, p. 21.

a large laundry; but for that very reason, they failed to acquire any practical knowledge of the complete art of washing clothes." *

Indeed, "many Boards of Managers," of Poor Law schools, made up, as these are, exclusively of members of the Destitution Authorities, "have so little experience of the value of improved methods" of industrial training, "that expenditure on such methods often seems to them to be to the loss rather than to the gain of the ratepayers." †

Hence, alike with regard to buildings and equipment, to teaching staff and to curriculum, "it is difficult to avoid the conclusion," to which the Inspectors are driven, "that the educational part of the work, which is now done by Guardians, would, in the majority of cases, be much more efficiently performed by the local bodies, whose primary function is to deal with schools, and which are, or might be, composed of persons who are interested in and conversant with educational matters." In view of the enormous importance of "giving an efficient education (both general and technical) to girls and boys who are in the public care, very often up to sixteen years of age, and of the many difficult problems involved in planning and working a good system of education for children of such varying ages and capacities, it seems deplorable that the experience and knowledge which have been and are constantly being acquired in these very matters by the members and officials of Local Education Authorities should not in some way be brought to bear upon the problem." ‡

There remains, however, a further drawback to the Poor Law school. However well the members of a particular Board of Guardians might happen to be qualified for the task of educational administration, however wisely they might select the school architect, their headmaster, their specialist teachers and their industrial trainers, and however educational might be the curriculum upon which they decided, they would still be baffled, in their desire to build up a really successful school, by the extraordinarily inept selection of the children for which they had necessarily to provide. In visiting some of the best administered Poor Law schools, we have been struck by seeing, side by side in the same class, doing the same lessons, under the same teacher, a bright child of "scholarship" capacity, a child of criminal type, the anæmic child of defective circulation and dull wits, and the ordinary normal child. All these children of the same age are being taught together, not by reason of anything in themselves, but merely because their parents happen to be destitute and to have their legal settlements in one and the same Union. The attempt to remedy this mixture of capacities by sorting the children into classes of equal attainments leads to groupings even more injurious to educational efficiency. There may be seen "in infant classes . . . elder children, admitted in a state of almost absolute ignorance. Thus it is not uncommon to find children of ten and eleven learning to read and write by the side of children of five and six. Such big children sit in small desks with evident discomfort, they are depressed at finding themselves among much younger children, and they apparently learn little under the circumstances. The situation becomes absolutely grotesque when the infant classes turn out for organised games, and well-grown boys of eleven years old are required to play infantile games. Thus we found such boys playing 'Who killed Cock Robin?' with the infants, and a boy of thirteen reading aloud from a primer (already read twice) 'What Dottie did,' before a class of children half his age." § In one Union no

* *Ibid.*, p. 23. "As a rule, though we saw many boys working in the garden, we saw little evidence, of any systematic instruction in gardening. . . . Girls who are capable of scrubbing are taught to scrub, not with a view to improve their domestic capacity, but in order that the floors may be kept clean. . . . They have had no definite industrial training in the real sense of the words. And, somewhat reluctantly, we must add that, with a few exceptions, they leave the institution at the age of fourteen, fifteen, or sixteen, with little or no training of that nature. . . . Not only is the needlewoman too busy, but she is untrained to teach, so that here again the girls receive no training of real educational value." (*Ibid.*, pp. 22, 24.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 48. Report of the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, 1896.

‡ Report upon the Educational Work in the Poor Law Schools, by Mr. J. Tillard and Miss M. B. Synge, 1908, pp. 7, 28.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 17. "The great difficulty," sum up the Inspectors, "is that the Poor Law school has to deal with children of all grades of intelligence in the lump, and the existing circumstances as regards administrative areas, finance and management are very unfavourable to discrimination and to the employment of different methods of instruction for different classes of children. Thus, on the one hand, children of special ability, who might profit by an opportunity for higher education, and, on the other, children of stunted mental development, who require to be taught by methods approaching those used in schools for the mentally defective, are all placed and dealt with in one school. This difficulty is almost insurmountable so long as children belonging to a Union are all placed in the same school, and, where any classification is now attempted, it is apt to be too much determined by age. If, on the contrary, all the children of school age in a town, irrespective of whether they were destitute in the Poor Law sense or not, were placed under the charge of the Local Education Authority (at all events for educational purposes), the classification of them all could be properly organised. The defective or seriously unfit children could then, even though technically destitute, be given a share in the benefits already provided from public funds for such children; the ordinary children could be graded suitably; the cleverest children could be fitted into the local system of Higher Elementary Schools, or possibly the scholarship system leading to Secondary Schools; and so forth." (*Ibid.*, pp. 19–20.)

fewer than fifty-one mentally defective children were found intermingled with the other children in a very costly Poor Law school, to their mutual detriment. None of the fifty-one appeared to the skilled investigator to be beyond the reach of special training, but they were getting none. *

Finally, there is, in this association of the school with the Destitution Authority, the insuperable objection that the child never does get absolutely free from the evil influence of pauperism. Because they are built by Destitution Authorities, these schools are, in too many instances, actually within the curtilage of, or closely adjacent to, the workhouse.† In nearly all Unions the children are taken to the Workhouse first, and spend some time there, before going to the separate school or Cottage Homes.‡ When they leave the school they are usually taken to the Workhouse, or at any rate to the porter's lodge,§ before passing out into the world. Whilst at the school, they see constant comings and goings of children to and from the Workhouse, ‖ frequent comings and goings of Poor Law officials, and occasional visits of Poor Law Guardians. "These arrangements," as one of our committees noted, after inspecting one of the best administered of the Poor Law Schools, "to a large extent defeat the object of removing children from the evil associations of Workhouse life." ¶ It was in recognition of these inevitable consequences of the connection of these schools with the Poor Law Authorities that the Departmental Committee of 1896 was emphatic in declaring that "all children should be cut off absolutely from the first from all association with Workhouses and their officials, and that no child of three years old or upwards should, under any circumstances, be allowed to enter a Workhouse." It was for this reason that it recommended that all "children over three years of age should be immediately handed over," to an authority other than that of the Boards of Guardians, "which should have the absolute care of them so long as they remain chargeable to the State." ** The experience of the last twelve years, and the latest reports of the Educational work in the Boarding Schools of the Destitution Authorities in England and Ireland alike, appear to us, for all the improvement that they reveal, only to confirm the validity of this decisive judgment.

(vi) *The Receiving Home.*

The undesirability of admitting and discharging children through the Workhouse has led some Boards of Guardians, during the past decade, to establish Receiving Homes or Probationary Schools. This course was, after the Report of the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, suggested by the Local Government Board, who thought it "most undesirable that children should be . . . detained in the Workhouse, and also very desirable that those who ordinarily continued in receipt of relief for very short periods should be kept separate from the children of the more permanent class in the District or Separate School."†† Twenty-four Unions in the Metropolis, and several in other parts of England and Wales, have now provided such Receiving Homes for children at an expense, for the Metropolitan Unions alone, of about £200,000.‡‡ In respect of these Receiving

* Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 20.

† As at West Ham (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 21141). We are informed that the Local Government Board sanctioned, as recently as 1905, the erection of a new school in the Sunderland Workhouse grounds; and another in 1908 at Bromley.

‡ "The usual method is for the children to go into the Workhouse with their mothers, and remain there until the Medical Officer of the Workhouse is able to certify them as being fit to be removed to the Cottage Homes" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 50555). In some Unions the[y] are always deliberately retained in the Workhouse—the General Mixed Workhouse that we have describ[ed]—until the Guardians are satisfied that they are "likely to be permanently chargeable." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 43341–43343.)

§ Even in such a well-administered Union as Bradford, where a special Receiving Home for Children has been erected, all the children are brought in the first instance to the porter's lodge of the General Mixed Workhouse, and there examined by the Workhouse doctor, before entering the Receiving House or the Scattered Homes. The clerk explained in 1906, that "in every Workhouse there is a small building at the entrance gates called the porter's lodge. [The children] do not go beyond the lodge. They are there seen by the Resident Medical Officer." (Report of House of Commons Select Committee on Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Q.* 17566.)

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 50561–50563.

¶ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 4B., p. 17. *See also* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 50560–50563.

** Report of the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, 1896, p. 144.

†† Local Government Board to Paddington Board of Guardians, March 28th, 1898; in Annual Report of Paddington Board of Guardians, 1897–1898. A similar letter appears in the records of other Unions.

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 13514.

Homes, England is in advance of either Scotland or Ireland, where every child who comes under the complete care of the Destitution Authority has to enter the General Mixed Workhouse or Poorhouse, and reside there for a longer or shorter period, before it can be boarded-out.

But even the best of the English Receiving Homes for children suffer from their connection with the Poor Law. We note that, where the Boards of Guardians have, on the incitement of the Local Government Board, incurred the expense involved in establishing these separate Homes, in order to free the children, as far as possible, from association with the Workhouse, the mere fact that it is the Destitution Authority which has undertaken this task has gone far to nullify all that has been done. Thus, more than one Board of Guardians has insisted on establishing its Receiving Home as near to the Workhouse as possible, sometimes actually within the curtilage of the Workhouse, entered by the Workhouse gate, and guarded by the Workhouse porter's lodge, through which every tramp and pauper passes.* Moreover, even when the Receiving Home is quite away from the Workhouse premises, the children are—by an arrangement for which there seems to us no rational excuse whatever—actually sent to the Workhouse, or the Workhouse lodge, whenever they have to be reunited with their parents, on these taking their discharge from the Workhouse.† The usual practice is for children to go from the Workhouse to the Receiving Home in charge of the porter or one of his messengers—often an elderly pauper—or a paid officer who assists in that part of the Home. From the Receiving Home children go to the schools in charge of one of the Receiving Home attendants, either the Matron, one of the nurses, or even the cook. If they are discharged with their parents they usually return to the Workhouse to be clothed in their own garments again, and then discharged. In such cases they are taken by a Receiving Home Officer to the Workhouse; or an officer may come from there with the notice of discharge and take the child back with him. The business of discharge is very rapid. A message or messenger comes from the Workhouse, and within a few minutes the child has been found and despatched in return. They seem even to be taken when half way through their meals. We strike here one aspect of the most baffling problem of child life with which the Destitution Authority finds itself forced to deal—the problem of what to do with the child of parents unwilling or unable to afford it a proper home.

(vii) *Children of Unfit Parents.*

This problem, so far as the Destitution Authority is concerned, takes three main forms—the children of "Ins-and-outs," the children of vagrants, and the children in the Workhouse of parents who have deserted them or definitely proved their unfitness to have the control of them.

(a) *The "Ins-and-Outs"*

We deal first with the children of the so-called "Ins-and-Outs." There are, among the Workhouse inmates in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, especially

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* In one of the most recent cases, the clerk to the Board of Guardians, as he himself informed us, advised that it should be built "so that access would be provided to it from the front road, without going through the porter's lodge. That was agreed to, but I am sorry to say that a week or two ago, a Committee upset that, and they would have the access for all and sundry through the porter's lodge." (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 52660.) The Receiving Wards (of the Metropolis) in several Unions are in charge at night of a pauper attendant, not necessarily selected for his or her respectability of character, and it is not to be expected that there should be any restraint on lewd talks and actions. The customary pauper is the kind who will be up to the tricks of the place and is usually ready enough to put the children up to them too, and instruct them in all the little meannesses and lies which gain petty advantages in such institutions.

† Some Boards of Guardians used actually to send the wife and children of a man in prison to be formally handed over to him at the prison gate, on his discharge at the completion of his sentence, before he could possibly have provided a home or even a night's lodging for them. This inhuman and irrational practice—which was defended as being the only way to prevent the discharged prisoner from leaving his family on the Guardians' hands—was expressly forbidden by the Local Government Board for England and Wales. It is still customary in Scotland. "When," it was given in evidence, "a woman, usually accompanied by a child, is arrested for vagrancy or begging, she is committed to prison, and the child (if over twelve months old) is handed over to the parochial authorities. In the Poorhouse it is taken care of, washed and fed, but just when beginning to benefit an officer is sent off with the child to the prison, to hand it over to its dissolute mother on her discharge. When the child sees its mother, it frequently screams and clings to the official. This may seem incredible, but for proof of this statement I refer you to the officers at the Calton Prison. They could testify to some painful scenes of this kind. No questions are asked or information sought as to whether the parent can provide the child with food, or even shelter for the night." (*Ibid.*, Q. 62808, Par. 2 (b)).

in the large towns, a certain number who are not permanent residents, but who are perpetually claiming their discharge, going away for a few days or weeks or months and then returning to the shelter of the institution.* There is even, in Scotland and Ireland, as well as in England, the habitual "week-ender," who makes a practice of entering the Workhouse or Poorhouse for a few days' rest whenever he finds himself absolutely penniless or exhausted by debauch or inanition.† These "Ins-and-Outs," or—to use an American term—these "revolvers," are sometimes able-bodied men or women, sometimes feeble-minded or half-witted, or more or less incapacitated or crippled. What is important is that they very often have dependent children, whom, as the law at present stands, they have the right to take with them when they leave the Workhouse, and of whom, in fact, they are required to assume the custody on being discharged, whether or not they wish to do so, or have any means of providing a home or even a night's lodging for them. "Children of this class give great trouble to the Guardians everywhere. They are sometimes discharged and readmitted several times in the year; they often bring back disease, dirt, and bad habits, and though permanently belonging to the pauper class, are unable to receive the regular instruction and discipline in either the district or the separate school."‡ Such children are, indeed, the despair of those in charge of Poor Law schools.§ As was graphically said by Miss Florence Davenport Hill, they "come and go like buckets on a dredging machine," passing in and out of "all sorts of horrible places and scenes of vice," and periodically mixing "with the children in the school and . . . . turning their moral filth on them."‖ To protect the more permanent children from this contamination and this perpetual interruption of their studies, some Boards of Guardians turn their Receiving Homes into regular "schools for Ins-and-Outs." Thus the Kensington and Chelsea Guardians have a "school for 'permanent' children at Banstead, but the 'Ins-and-Outs' are kept and taught at Marlesford Lodge, Hammersmith, until the Managers are satisfied that their parents will remain in the workhouse permanently or, at any rate, for some considerable time. The children are then drafted to Banstead. In this way Banstead Cottage Homes are to a great extent immune from the trouble and interruption caused by 'Ins-and-Outs.' The same system has been adopted at Olive Mount, Liverpool."¶ One of our colleagues has extracted the following tables from the Admission Books to show the extent to which the Receiving Homes are made use of for the children of "Ins-and-Outs."

Name of Receiving Home.	Number for which it is certified.	Number of Families who are Ins and Outs.	Greatest number of times any family has been admitted within five years.	Average number of times, etc.
Camberwell - - - - - - -	? 60	35	76	33
Paddington - - - - - - -	35	12	20	10
St. George's, Hanover Square - -	70	25	36	10
St. Marylebone - - - - - -	?	21	35	14
Shoreditch - - - - - - -	77	15	111	42
Stepney - - - - - - -	108	12	15	7
Wandsworth - - - - - -	103	63	70	29
Whitechapel - - - - - -	69	60	43	10

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 3084, 3085, 3935–3959, 4120–4151, 7572–7574, 8553–8556, 9542, 11557, 12479–12482, 13225, 14073, 15413, 15679, 16624 (Par. 12), 16793, 17978–17985, 18041 (Par. 17), 18330, 18492, 19466 (Par. 23), 19535, 22249, 22396–22773, 23785 (Par. 4), 23796, 28470 (Par. 16), 28577, 28657, 33856 (Par. 31), 33880–33891, 33977, 35693 (Par. 39), 36128, 36696–36698, 40519, 40643–40645, 45464–45467, 48811, 49303, 50050–50096, 50127.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 3956–3959.

‡ Report of the Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, 1896, p. 8.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 43432, 45467.

‖ Miss Florence Davenport Hill, in Report of Departmental Committee on Poor Law Schools, Vol. I., p. 72, Vol. II., *Q.* 3081.

¶ Report on the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, by Mr. J. Tillard and Miss M. B. Synge, 1908, p. 19; Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 28657, 36014, and Appendix No. XXVI. (A), Par. 69, to Vol. I.

The returns of the Kensington and Chelsea School District Receiving Home (certified for 137) show, with 680 to 820 admissions yearly, the following percentages of re-admissions, the large majority of which are "Ins-and-Outs."

—	Kensington.	Chelsea.
1903–4 - - -	28 %	15 %
1904–5 - - -	38 %	12 %
1905–6 - - -	31 %	13 %
1906–7 - - -	30 %	20 %
1907–8 - - -	39 %	14 %

Out of twenty special cases of which details have been obtained, twelve families have been in and out ten or more times. One child has been admitted thirty-nine times in in eleven years; another twenty-three times in six years.

The Wandsworth Union has a large number of dissolute persons in the Workhouse with children in the Intermediate Schools. The parents never go out without taking the children and seem to hold the threat of doing so as a rod over the heads of the Guardians. Any quarrel or strictness of discipline at the Workhouse, or even a refusal on the part of the Matron at the Receiving Home to let the children receive presents of sweets from their parents in the Workhouse, is followed by a demand for a discharge and the children in the Home must be sent for at once. One mother frequently had her child brought out of his bed to go out into the cold winter night. It must be remembered that children who are discharged are sent out in their own clothes unless these are hopelessly ragged or too small. There is also the fact that parents of this class have some feeling against the children going to the District Schools, which are further away; and whenever the children are transferred to the schools the parents discharge themselves at once. One boy, who had been re-admitted twenty-five times in ten years, had been sent more than once to the Banstead Schools, but had never stayed there long. Whenever he knew that he was to go there he used to write to his mother in the Workhouse, and she would apply for her discharge and go out with him.

This plan of using the Receiving Home as an Intermediate school protects the Poor Law school from what a Board of Education Inspector calls the "aggravating influx and exodus," which, in other Unions, goes far to render nugatory the expensive provision of schooling, especially in the junior classes.* But it affords this protection at the cost of largely depriving the Receiving Home of the character of a strictly temporary probationary ward, and even to some extent unfitting it for this use.† It does nothing to protect the children from being dragged in and out, as it suits their parents' whim or convenience. The man or woman may take the children

* At the magnificent "Village Community" of Cottage Homes built by the Chorlton Board of Guardians at great expense for the children of that Union, the Board of Education's Inspector notes that the school, which has an average attendance of 260, is perpetually disorganised by the coming and going of "Ins-and-Outs," many of whom stay less than a week, and who make up, at all times, *from one-fourth to one-third of those under instruction.* The Wandsworth Board of Guardians informed the Local Government Board in 1906, that "from a return prepared by the matron it would appear that during the last twelve months 422 children were sent to school, and 310 brought back, to be discharged to parents, etc., at a cost of £58 1s. 2d., and the Guardians feel that it is simply useless to try to educate children when parents have the power to claim them the moment they are sent to the District School, and they would be glad if the Board would advise them of the best way of dealing with the difficulty." (Wandsworth Board of Guardians to Local Government Board, December 7th, 1906.)

† Evidence before the Commission, Q. 28093, Par. 2. "There are many Boards of Guardians," deposed a witness who was himself a Poor Law Guardian, "who keep children of ins-and-outs for nine or twelve months consecutively in the Workhouse or Receiving House." Cases have been brought to our notice in which parents have deliberately contrived to prevent their children being sent away to the Poor Law school. The Wandsworth Board of Guardians informed us that: "Upon the last admission day, a child who had been resident in the Intermediate School for over a month, and, therefore, could hardly be classed as one of the "ins-and-outs" was sent to Anerley, but before the Officer had left the school, a telephone message was received, stating that the parent was taking her discharge, and the child must be brought back. It would almost appear, on the face of it, that certain parents, the moment their children are sent to Anerley, decide to take their discharge, and then return to the Workhouse the same evening, so that their children shall remain at the Intermediate School." (Wandsworth Board of Guardians to the Local Government Board, December 7th, 1906.)

to a succession of Casual Wards or the lowest common lodging-houses; there may be no prospect whatever of an honest livelihood or a decent home; the parents may go out with the intention of using the children, half-clad, and blue with cold, as a means of begging from the soft-hearted; or they may go out simply to enjoy a day's liberty from workhouse restrictions, and find the children only encumbrances, to be neglected and half-starved. One family of children at Wandsworth used to be taken to the Common in rain or shine and left there without food for the day. Another family of children used to go out with their father and follow him from one public-house to another till evening when he would hand them his Workhouse admission order and send them back with it. As the Porter would not admit them without their father they would wait about until late and then find a policeman, who would take them to the gates and have them admitted. The father would return later when the public-houses were closed. All this misuse of liberty is, to the Destitution Authorities, a matter with which they have and can have no concern. As Destitution Authorities their jurisdiction ends absolutely as soon as a person ceases to be chargeable to the poor rate. They have neither the legal power nor the official machinery for following the children from the Workhouse or the Poor Law school to the lodgings to which they are taken, and for seeing that they are provided with a home, food and clothing, and a continuous education. The Local Education Authorities, on the other hand, do not become aware of the children's existence unless and until they are discovered by the School Attendance Officers in their periodical schedulings of their districts. Between these two Authorities—the one dealing with children only as destitute persons, the other responsible only for the education of children resident within a given district—the unfortunate boys and girls who are dragged backwards and forwards by parents of the "in-and-out" class practically escape supervision. They pass the whole period of school age alternately being cleansed and "fed up" in this or that Poor Law institution, or starving on scraps and blows amid filth and vice in their periodical excursions in the outer world, exactly as suits the caprice or the convenience of their reckless and irresponsible parents. The class of "in-and-out" children is a large and, we fear, an increasing one.

(b) *The Children of Vagrants.*

The children of the Vagrant are, even more than the children of the "in-and-out," excluded from the benefits provided and the protection given by the Local Health and Education Authorities to the children who are known to be resident in one locality. Dragged along the roads by day and spending night after night either in the common lodging-house or the Casual Ward, they may never, in practice, come within the ken either of the School Attendance Officer or of the Sanitary Inspector. For such vagrant children —who number at any one time in the United Kingdom at least several hundreds, and probably several thousands*—the Destitution Authority does nothing except provide a night's lodging and food in the Casual Ward in England and Wales, in the Workhouse in Ireland, and (whatever may be the strict law on the subject) in the Poorhouse or "Casual Sick House" in Scotland. Yet the Destitution Authority is the only organ of the State with which these unfortunate children come in contact.

For their attitude of official indifference to the fate of the children of the "ins-and-outs," and the children of the Vagrants, the Boards of Guardians can plead that the policy of opening and shutting the door of the Workhouse and Casual Ward simultaneously upon parent and child alike—unconcerned as to what happens to the child—is strictly in accordance with the principles on which the 1834 Report proceeded. Throughout that Report it was laid down that the able-bodied man, if married, and the able-bodied woman, if unmarried, should be considered as alone responsible for maintaining their offspring. Unless the able-bodied parents consented to enter the Workhouse, no child of theirs was to be admitted; and whenever they decided to leave its shelter, their dependents were

* "Children represent a proportion varying from about 2 to 5 per cent. of the total" vagrant population, or they may sometimes even be as much as 6 per cent. (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. I., pp. 19, 113, Vol. II., *Qs.* 265–270, 10931). This vagrant population varies, in Great Britain, from 30,000 to 80,000, according to "the conditions of trade, weather and economic causes." (*Ibid.*, p. 22.) The number of children thus "on the road" in Great Britain, at any one time may, therefore, vary between 600 and 4,800. *Only a small proportion of these will be found in the Casual Ward.* Very frequently the man will go to the Casual Ward, and send the woman and children to a common lodging-house (*Ibid.*, Vol. II., *Qs.* 1461, 5557), or a shelter (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 5922–5925). Similar conditions obtain in Scotland and Ireland. In one Scotch parish, where "the Parish Council has a Casual Sick House for tramps," an average of 112 children have been admitted (with their parents), in each of the last ten years, or more than two a week. (Evidence before the Commission, not yet in volume form).

to go out with them. The only way by which they could get Poor Relief for their children, without entering the Workhouse themselves, was to desert the children, a proceeding which, whilst it threw the children on the rates, exposed the parents to criminal prosecution. Omitting, for a moment, the effect upon the child of this policy of 1834, we may note that its advantage to the ratepayer depends upon continuously maintaining the deterrent character of the Workhouse to the particular class concerned. Now, in spite of all the horror which the General Mixed Workhouse excites among the respectable poor, this institution, as it exists in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, is found, in fact, to offer distinct attractions, as a place of temporary residence, to the dissolute and worthless men and women who comprise the growing class of "ins-and-outs" or "week-enders." When such persons have children, this periodical use of the Workhouse becomes even more advantageous to them. At some ages, and at certain seasons of the year, children are necessarily a burden on their parents; at other ages, especially at particular seasons, they may be made sources of actual profit. For the Destitution Authority to follow in this respect the policy of 1834—to maintain the whole family in the Workhouse whenever the parents think fit to come in, and to let the whole family go out whenever the parents see any advantage in going out—is, at the cost of the rates, to offer the maximum of subsidy to a particularly disreputable and injurious perversion of parental rights.

Passing from the effect of the present policy on parental responsibility to its results on the children concerned, it is plain that the existing arrangements are about as bad as they can possibly be. Imagination fails to picture the evils of the life of the child of the "in-and-out" or habitual Vagrant, during the periods when it is outside the Workhouse or the Casual Ward. It is the smallest part of the injury thus done to no trifling proportion of the coming generation of citizens that such children, as we have already mentioned, usually get practically no schooling. These children might be properly brought up if their parents remained in the Workhouse; they might conceivably be passably brought up if their parents were refused all relief whatsoever. But the present arrangement of letting them pass alternately in and out of the Workhouse or Casual Ward combines all possible disadvantages to the unhappy children thus dragged in and out, and to the other children whom they are perpetually contaminating.

(c) *The Abandoned Child.*

The third class of children belonging to unfit parents are those who are left on the hands of the Destitution Authorities, either because the parents have simply deserted them or because the surviving parent is in prison, in a lunatic asylum or in an inebriates' home.

In respect to the class of deserted children we have again to draw attention to the demoralising provision of the Scotch Poor Law which makes it impossible for an able-bodied man, however destitute, to get food or shelter for his children without deserting them. We have been informed that child desertion, especially in Scotland, is becoming steadily more frequent.* It is not uncommon for parents who have thus voluntarily or perforce abandoned their children subsequently to appear and claim them as soon as they attain an age at which they can be made to earn money.

(d) *The Assumption of Parentage.*

To meet this threefold problem of the unfit parent—the child of the Vagrant, the child of the In-and-Out, and the deserted child—the only expedient afforded to the Destitution Authority has been to give it power itself to "adopt" any child that it found in the Workhouse by reason of parental neglect. By Acts of 1889 and 1899 the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales are authorised to assume, up to the age of eighteen, complete rights and responsibilities of parentage in respect of orphan or deserted children, in respect of the children of parents in confinement, and, in certain cases, also in respect of the children of parents of vicious life or habits. This expedient of adoption gets over the difficulty presented by the deterioration of the child, at the cost of depriving the parents of their parental rights and responsibilities, and at the expense of placing the child wholly on the rates. Some Unions have already made considerable use of this power of adoption, there being now, in England and Wales alone, no fewer than 15,000 children so taken away from

* *See*, for instance, *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 61481, 61482. We have been unable to verify this by statistics.

parental control. It has, however, so far been used most largely with regard to children who are orphans or whom their parents have deserted.*

It has been represented to us that, by the Acts of 1889 and 1899, Parliament has laid down the principle that, whenever there is reason to believe that a child is being habitually and seriously injured in body or mind by the evil or disorderly life of its parents, it is desirable, quite apart from any punishment meted out to the guilty parents, that the community, in the interests of the child, should itself assume full parental duties and responsibilities with regard to it. It has been forcibly pointed out to us that all the considerations that lead to the adoption of the deserted child, or the prisoner's child, or the cruelly treated child, apply equally to the child of the habitual Vagrant or "In-and-Out." The recent Departmental Committee on Vagrancy did not hesitate to recommend that the present power of adoption should be explicitly extended to the children now found in the Casual Ward. The Local Government Board itself has suggested its application to the children of habitual "Ins-and-Outs." † Other witnesses pressed us, in the children's interest, to extend the advantages of adoption to larger and larger circles.‡ The extension of the law to Scotland has been demanded.§ The Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland has made still larger proposals of the same nature.|| These authoritative proposals for the increased use or legal extension of the power of adoption open up serious considerations. To many persons it is a matter for grave concern that the community should thus relieve parents of all financial and other responsibility for their offspring. And the further question arises whether, if there is to be any such assumption of parentage by the community, the power and obligation should not be entrusted to an Authority charged with the education and care of children, rather than to a mere Destitution Authority.

We think it is clear that, in view of the paramount importance of protecting the children from deterioration, the policy of the Assumption of Parentage must be continued, and that it must be extended to all cases in which leaving the child under the control of its natural parents can be plainly shown to lead to its grave physical or mental injury. From the standpoint of the ratepayer, there is even more reason for this power of taking the children away from their parents, when these are "Ins-and-Outs" or Vagrants, than when the children have been deliberately deserted. For it has been given in evidence that a large proportion of the parents who now come in and out of the Workhouses and Casual Wards would, if they ran the risk of having their children permanently taken from them, hesitate thus wantonly to throw themselves and their families periodically on the rates—partly because these parents often retain a real affection for their children, and partly because they find them profitable.¶ But we see grave objection, not merely with regard to any extension, but also with regard even to a continuance, of the present

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 15413, 15459, 28572, 36128, 46104, 46105. Regret has, for instance, been expressed that the power of adoption is not used with regard to the children of Vagrants, however unfit may be the lives that they are leading. (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. II., *Q.* 5011.) From statistics obtained as to the action of the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians under the Act of 1899, it appeared that three-fifths of children adopted were orphans or deserted; and two-fifths the offspring of parents unfit to have their custody.

† "I think the Guardians ought to adopt them," said the present Chief Inspector (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 3943). And when the advice of the Local Government Board was sought by a Board of Guardians as to the course they should adopt when a woman with illegitimate daughters habitually discharged herself and her daughters from the Workhouse in the summer months, and went on tramp with a man whose character was notoriously bad, the Board referred the Guardians to this power of adoption. (Decisions of the Local Government Board, p. 45, Par. 3.)

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 244, 23778, 28605–28758, 46000 (Par. 13*a*).

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 61832 (Pars 22, 23), 61866–61873, and the evidence on behalf of the Society of Inspectors of Poor, *Q.* 57038, Pars. 9, 49 (10).

|| "In our opinion the test for permitting such a woman to remain in charge of her children should be a formal determination by the Local Authority in each case whether she is fit to have charge of children If it be decided that she is not fit, we think she might be dealt with like the mothers of two or more illegitimate children, but in any case of separation of parent and child, we think a parent should have the right to appeal to some Court of Justice, clear indication being given by Statute as to the grounds upon which separation between parent and child might be enforced." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 51.) "If the mother could satisfy the local body managing the institution, of which she is an inmate that she could properly maintain herself and her child, we think she might be permitted to take her child with her on her discharge. Otherwise we think that the child ought to be boarded-out, but that the mother should have no right to resume possession of the child until she could satisfy the local body in charge of the child that she was in a position to support it, and that her conduct since the birth of the child had been good." (*Ibid.*, p. 50.)

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 46086.

power of adoption, alike in its procedure and in the Authority to which it is entrusted. At present the parent may be deprived of his child without notice, by a mere resolution of the Board of Guardians, arrived at on the mere opinion of such members as happen to attend,* without necessarily hearing any evidence, and without any kind of judicial decision. Moreover, if the child is adopted, the parent is, in practice, wholly relieved of the cost of maintenance,† and, apart from particular criminal acts, he is not made liable to prosecution and punishment for the fact of having so conducted himself as to make it necessary to take his child from him. Whenever it is deemed necessary in the public interest that the community should deprive the parents of their control over a child, and that the full responsibilities of parentage should be permanently assumed by a Local Authority, the case ought to be properly dealt with, however contemptible and unworthy the parents, by a judicial authority, and that authority should, in our judgment, be empowered at the same time to make such an order for a contribution towards the cost of maintenance, and to inflict on the parents such a punishment as the circumstances may require. And when adoption by the community is decreed, a Destitution Authority is, in our judgment, the very last to which the responsibilities of parentage should be transferred. The object clearly is to free the new "Child of the State" from evil associations and bring it up as a healthy, independent citizen. It stands to reason that such a child should be kept as scrupulously clear of association with the Workhouse as with the gaol; that it should never see the Destitution Officer or be brought into any kind of contact with pauperism. What the community undertakes is to watch over the child's life up to the age of eighteen; and the Destitution Authority has normally no jurisdiction except over persons actually in receipt of relief, and no machinery, other than the Relieving Officer, for continuously watching over the life of the young person. It is, in our opinion, plain that all such rights and duties in connection with the adoption of children ought to be entrusted to the Local Education Authority, which is specially charged with dealing with children, which has its own officers looking after children, which is experienced in children's requirements, and which would find no difficulty in including all necessary provisions for the adopted child among those which it already makes for the other children in its special residential schools. Moreover, if the full responsibility for the well-being of the children, including the power of adoption in default, were entrusted to the Local Education Authority, it would, in our opinion, probably become less frequently necessary to make use of so extreme a measure. At present the Destitution Authority must either do all or nothing. When a child is discharged from any of the institutions of that Authority, it has no further control over it, and ceases, in fact, to be cognisant of its existence. If, however, the child were discharged from one of the residential institutions of the Education Authority, that Authority, with its School Attendance Officers, could follow that child to his home, even after the destitution of the parents had ceased. The Education Authority, in fact, is rapidly developing, in the most advanced districts, in its highly differentiated series of schools and scholarships, its continuation classes, its technical institutes, its medical inspection, its attendance officers, its systematic house-to-house visitation and scheduling, and its local managers and Children's Care Committees, all the machinery for following up all the children coming in any way within its ken, even those of migratory or worthless parents, and for bringing a duly graduated pressure to bear on all the parents, so as to induce them continuously to fulfil their parental responsibilities. By this constant supervision of the children of unfit parents, before and after the crisis of destitution, it would be possible, in many cases, to prevent, at an early stage, any such flagrant neglect or ill-treatment of children by careless or vicious parents, as might otherwise be continued to the point of making necessary the extreme measure of public adoption.

(B) Children under the Police Authority.

The first rival to the Destitution Authority in its work of maintaining the children of poor persons was not the Local Education Authority, but the Home Office, acting through the magistrates and the police. Under a series of statutes extending from 1854, and now consolidated in the Children's Act of 1908, there grew up, before there existed any Local Education Authority, a number of so-called Industrial and Reformatory Schools, to which

* The procedure of Boards of Guardians in this important matter is sometimes very lax. "Children," said an experienced Poor Law official, "are adopted at one meeting of a committee, and at the next Board Meeting I shall find an order to discharge them to their parents." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 46066.)

† "As for getting the money from the parents afterwards, the powers might very nearly as well not exist." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 9531); *see* also *Qs.* 19224–19226.

poor children might be sent by the magistrates,* quite irrespective of the Poor Law, and in which they were maintained at the expense, partly of such contributions as could be extracted from their parents, partly of voluntary contributions or the County Rate, but mainly of a substantial Government Grant administered by the Home Office. The Reformatory schools began as alternatives to the prison, and were designed for juvenile offenders. The Industrial Schools were the direct heirs of the Ragged Schools founded in the first half of the nineteenth century. But the inclusion in the Ragged Schools and in Industrial Schools of children whose destitution, among other circumstances, placed them in danger of growing up to be criminals, caused them to infringe on the sphere of the Poor Law. At first the schools were sharply divided into Reformatory Schools, to which young criminals alone were sent, and Industrial Schools, to which perfectly innocent but neglected children were sent. Gradually, however, this line of demarcation has become obscured; and in the latest classification, though the original names are maintained, these schools are divided principally according to the age of admission and discharge. Thus, the 30,000 boys and girls now under detention in these schools belong to many different categories, the majority of them falling distinctly within the sphere of the Poor Law.†

These Industrial and Reformatory Schools have in common the characteristic of being mainly places of compulsory detention, to which children, though not necessarily criminals, are committed by judicial authority. But "voluntary cases" are now also received, amounting in 1906 to one-tenth of the whole.‡ The 211 separate schools are now managed either by voluntary committees or by County or Borough Councils, at a total expense of over £600,000 annually, of which amount about five-twelfths are contributed by the Government and more than five-twelfths from local rates whilst one-twelfth only is derived from voluntary subscriptions, and one-twentieth is extracted from the parents of the children.§ They are controlled, not by the Board of Education nor by the Local Government Board, but by the Home Office, which certifies them, inspects them, and controls their Grant-in-Aid.

We have not had time to inspect many of these schools, although they constitute no small proportion of the public provision for destitute children;‖ and although, of the 30,000 children whom they maintain, a large proportion would otherwise have to be maintained in Poor Law institutions. They even contain a number of pauper children, sent to them by the Destitution Authorities.¶ We received a certain amount of evidence

* *See* the Report of the Departmental Committee on Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Cd. 8204, 2 vols. 1896; the fifty Annual Reports of the Home Office Inspector, 1856–1906; and the interesting evidence by Mr. J. G. Legge before the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. I., *Qs.* 1159–1316.

† The children who can be sent to industrial schools may be thus classified:—(1) *Destitute children*, if orphans; if found wandering; if surviving parent is in prison; if mother is in prison having been twice convicted of crime. (2) *Mendicants*. (3) *Vagrants*, if destitute; if not having proper guardianship. (4) *Paupers from workhouses*, if refractory; if either of the parents has been convicted of crime punishable with imprisonment. (5) *Truants* from Public Elementary Schools, if education neglected; if found habitually wandering; if found not under proper control; if found in company of rogues; also truants from day industrial schools. (6) *Incipient criminals*, viz., those charged with offences or found associating with thieves. (7) *Children of bad parents*, viz., children taken from disorderly houses; children not having proper guardianship if found wandering; children not under proper control; children having a surviving parent in prison, if destitute; children whose mother, having been twice convicted of "crime," is in prison, if they are destitute; workhouse children either of whose parents has been convicted of crime punishable with imprisonment. (Home Office Circular to County Councils, December 30th, 1903; Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. III., p. 186.) Truant schools are industrial schools which have been certified solely for the reception of boys committed by the magistrate for persistent non-attendance at the public elementary school. The day industrial school is one providing industrial training, elementary education and one or more meals a day, but not lodging. Reformatory schools are for older children, over twelve or fourteen, who have been convicted of criminal offences.

‡ Fiftieth Report . . . on Industrial and Reformatory Schools, 1906, p. 162.

§ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 7.

‖ "Destitution," says the report of the first of these industrial schools to be established in London, "is the primary condition of a boy's admission." (The Report of the Boys' Home Industrial School Incorporated Society, 1907.)

¶ Thus, the residential industrial schools received in 1906, from the various Destitution Authorities in Great Britain, £6,230; representing payment for over 300 boys and girls. (Fiftieth Report . . . on Reformatory and Industrial Schools, 1906, p. 22.) Especially in Scotland have the Industrial Schools been used for Poor Law children; and about half the money now collected by the Home Office in respect of children in the Scottish Industrial Schools is collected from Parish Councils; a sum which will be, under the Children's Act, 1908, largely increased. We shall recur later to the extent to which, in Glasgow and Liverpool the Destitution Authorities send Outdoor Relief Children to the Day Industrial Schools.

about them. and we made special inquiries of the London County Council, from whom we have received three valuable statements on the subject.* What has most particularly struck us is the overlapping and confusion which results from the division of authority. The Industrial Schools have so essentially the same object and task as the Boarding Schools of the Destitution Authorities and the Certified Schools made use of by these Authorities, and they deal to so large an extent with the same classes of children, that we see no reason for any separation or distinction between them. The Destitution Authority themselves make no such distinction, sending boys, for instance, indiscriminately to those training ships which the Local Government Board has "certified" as schools or homes,† and those which the Home Office has "certified" as Industrial Schools.‡ Indeed, in half a dozen cases, at least (including one out of the seven English training ships), the same institution is certified both by the Home Office and the Local Government Board; § receives, in respect of identical children, grants from the former and payments by the Boards of Guardians under the authority of the latter; and is presumably visited by the Inspectors of both departments who do not communicate to each other their several reports. In Scotland, where the device of "certifying" is unknown to the Local Government Board, we gather that suitable children (who are usually returned among those "boarded-out") are sent by the Destitution Authorities indiscriminately, and the weekly payments made at the same normal rates, to the Industrial Schools to which the Government is paying grants, and to other institutions unconnected with the Home Office, the Government Grants being paid in respect of pauper and non-pauper children alike.

What stands out is the extraordinary lack of co-ordination, or even of mutual consciousness of each other's existence, between the operations of the Destitution Authority and of the Authorities administering the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Acts. Both Authorities are admittedly dealing to a large extent with children of the same class. "The fact of children being sent to one kind (of school) or to the other, is," we are informed, "largely accidental;" || depending, as we gather, when no offence against the criminal law has been committed, chiefly on which Authority gets hold of the case first. It was expressly stated that: "There is at present no co-operation between the Council," acting under the Industrial and Reformatory Schools Acts, "and Boards of Guardians." ¶ "There is no record," we are informed, "as to whether any of the families from which children are sent to Industrial Schools are in receipt of Poor Law relief. No inquiry is made . . . upon this point, and the fact of such relief being granted would not disqualify a child for admission to an Industrial School." ** "The parents of many of the children" in the Industrial Schools of the London County Council "are . . . persons who frequent Workhouses and Casual Wards." †† No fewer than 113 cases were brought to our notice in which, within a single year, in London alone, the same family had been relieved out of the same fund of rates and taxes, by one or more children being sent to Industrial Schools, whilst other children, together with the parents, were being maintained (often as "Ins-and-Outs") in one or other Poor Law institution. Many parents who have already been relieved by having some of their children placed in Industrial Schools are subsequently relieved under the Poor Law, by admission to the Casual Ward or Workhouse, and even, occasionally, by Outdoor Relief. It not infrequently happens that different children of the same family will be simultaneously maintained in Industrial or Reformatory Schools and in Poor Law Schools.‡‡ We have even come across a case in which the mother was in receipt of

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 3549, 39993–40002, 45157, 46000, 46070, 93187, and Appendices No. LXXXII., Par. 12, to Vol. IV., and Nos. IX., LXXIII. and LXXIV. to Vol. IX.

† The "Indefatigable" at Birkenhead, the "Mercury" at Southampton, and the "Wellesley" at Newcastle.

‡ The "Clio," the "Mount Edgecumbe," the "Wellesley," at Newcastle, the "National Nautical" (late "Formidable"), and the "Southampton."

§ These doubly certified schools, under both the Home Office and the Local Government Board, appear to include the St. Joseph's Home at Darlington, the Northumberland Village Homes at Whitley, the Princess Mary Village Homes at Addlestone, the St. Elizabeth School of Industry at Salisbury, and the Training Ship "Wellesley" at Newcastle. The Church of England Waifs and Strays Society, which has between 700 and 800 children "boarded-out," and about 2,700 in 100 "Homes" of various grades, has some of these Homes certified by the Local Government Board, and some (as industrial schools) by the Home Office. (Report of Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. II., *Qs.* 12994, 13003–13004, 13009.)

|| Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. IX. (Par. 23) to Vol. IX. *See* Q. 93187.

¶ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. IX. (Par. 23) to Vol. IX.

** *Ibid.*, Par. 22.

†† *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXIV. (Par. 3) to Vol. IX.

‡‡ A case was adduced to us in which, three daughters being already in a Poor Law school, a fourth daughter was sent to an industrial school. In another case, one child was sent to an industrial school and another, simultaneously, to the Workhouse. (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXIV, (A) to Vol. IX.).

Outdoor Relief in respect of some children, another child was in a Poor Law School, and another in an Industrial School; and we may here add, though it anticipates a future section of this Report, that some of the children are being fed at school during the winter under the auspices of the Local Education Authority.

There is one development of the Industrial School which comes very near indeed to the work of the Destitution Authority. In a score of towns in England and Scotland there have been established Day Industrial Schools. "The first idea of a preventive institution," we are informed, "seems indeed to have been a day feeding school which, planted in the thick of the slums, was to fight at close quarters against parental neglect and the evil association of which the children were the victims."* At the Day Industrial School the child attends from 6.0 a.m. or 8.0 a.m. in the morning till 6.0 p.m. at night, having provided for him not only instruction, but also properly supervised recreation and three meals of plain wholesome food. The children may be committed by the magistrate, or ordered to attend by the Local Education Authority, or merely admitted on the application of their parents. In every case the law has required a payment of at least 1s. to be made by or on behalf of the parents, whilst the Government Grant is limited to 1s. per week. For these and other reasons the Day Industrial Schools have not made much progress, and in half a dozen towns they have even been discontinued. Such schools, however, especially under the wider powers given by the Children's Act, 1908, appear to us to have a very distinct use for the large class of parents—usually widowed mothers—who can earn a livelihood only by being absent from home for the whole day, and who are quite unable properly to look after their children. We have already described in what an enormous proportion of cases the children whom the Destitution Authorities are maintaining on Outdoor Relief are demonstrably suffering in body and mind, and growing up to be themselves weaklings, paupers and criminals, from the inability or neglect of the parents, to whom the Destitution Authorities are entrusting the scanty dole of Outdoor Relief for the children, to give them the necessary amount of care and attention.† It is, we think, a most unfortunate consequence of the separation of the provision for the children who come under the Poor Law from that made for other children in the same locality, that only in two towns does it seem to have occurred to the Destitution Authority to make use of the Day Industrial Schools as a means of providing for the children on Outdoor Relief. At Liverpool the Board of Guardians pays 9d. a week to the Local Education Authority for each child admitted with their approval, the cases being "the children of poor widows whose means are insufficient to provide the children with adequate food, or of women who have been deserted by their husbands, both of which classes have to earn what living they can in employment which very frequently requires them to leave home early in the morning." In Glasgow, too, the Parish Council arranges with the Local Education Authority for a number of children of widows on Outdoor Relief to be sent to one or other of the four Day Industrial Schools which the Joint Delinquency Board, a municipal authority, maintains; and the Parish Council pays 1s. a week for each child so sent. It has been suggested to us that such "day feeding schools," to use the old phrase, are apparently exactly what is needed for the children of those widowed mothers who cannot be trusted to expend wisely on their children the full amount necessary for their maintenance, and yet who are not morally bad enough, or mentally defective enough, to warrant their children being completely taken out of their control.‡ If the children attend the Day Industrial School from morning to night, it is possible absolutely to ensure their being properly fed, clothed, taught and supervised, without running the risk of subsidising the mother in careless or irregular habits of life. The mother, in fact, may be set free to earn her own living, and, if possible, provide the rent, without Outdoor Relief in any ordinary form, and without the family home being broken up. Such a "Day feeding School" has, we believe, once or twice been started by English Boards of Guardians, only to be abandoned.§ The Day Industrial School stands, in a score of towns, ready to hand,

* Fiftieth Report . . . of the Inspector . . . of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, 1906 (Cd. 3759), p. 15.

† We asked one doctor, with reference to the insufficient relief allowed to widows with children, Is that bringing up the children to be good wage-earners and healthy men and women? And he replied: "No, I am afraid it is not . . . the next generation will suffer." (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 75939, 75940.)

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 30622 (Par. 44), 43441–43446, 43649–43654, 44215, 45157, 46502, 46503; Appendix No. LXXXII. (Par. 12) to Vol. IV.; Appendix No. LXXIII. to Vol. IX.

§ Under its Local Act of 1831 the Birmingham Poor Law Authority had power to establish such a school (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 43653). The Manchester Board of Guardians actually maintained such a school, including three meals a day, for its Outdoor Relief Children, for some years between 1856 and 1866.

offering exactly what is needed. Yet so strong is the influence of the separate existence of the Destitution Authority, and so intense is its jealousy of any other Authority, that only in two towns have any children been sent to what apparently seems to the Board of Guardians the institution of a rival Authority.* In Edinburgh, the Parish Council, rather than send the children whom their widowed mothers could not look after in the middle of the day to the Day Industrial School which the Edinburgh School Board maintains, where they would be properly supervised, has preferred to start a feeding scheme of its own, distributing to such Outdoor Relief children as desired them, tickets entitling them to cheap meals in eating-houses, where (as we ourselves noticed) the conditions as to the serving of the meals, and the manners of the children—entirely without supervision—are anything but civilising.† Everywhere else the children of the widowed mother on Outdoor Relief are left, so far as the Destitution Authority is concerned, in the condition that we have described.

It has, however, come to be regarded as an anomaly that children should be dealt with by a Police Authority; and the maintenance of the Industrial Schools of Borough or County Councils in England and Wales has now, on the pressing advice of the Home Office itself—possibly even to a stretching of the law—been transferred to the Education Committees of those Councils.‡ This transfer has been emphasised by the modifications in the law effected by the Children's Act of 1908. The provision for the children now in these schools has accordingly become part of the work of the Local Education Authority, which we have now to describe.

(c) Children Under the Education Authority.

The principal public body in England and Wales dealing with children of school age is, of course, the Local Education Authority. Beginning originally as the School Board, a mere supplementary organisation, established only where required, to supply elementary schooling only for those poor children for whom their parents and the various churches and voluntary agencies had failed to provide, it has become definitely the Local Education Authority, necessarily existing in every district of England and Wales, empowered or required, not merely to supply deficiencies, but to see that all the children of the locality whatever their social grade, have provided for them all the education, whatever its kind or degree, which is, in the public interest, deemed necessary. Thus, in place of the "common school," of uniform type, provided in sufficient numbers as required, we have the Local Education Authority systematically laying itself out to equip its area with the varied array of different kinds of schools that the multifarious needs and idiosyncrasies of its children demand—elementary schools and secondary schools; day schools and boarding schools; schools for the precocious and schools for the mentally defective; schools for the blind, the deaf and dumb, and the crippled; trade schools and domestic economy schools; schools for the children who are well, and schools for the children who are suffering from anæmia or incipient tuberculosis, favus or ringworm. In Scotland the School Boards are at least keeping pace in development with the Local Education Authorities of England and Wales. Only in Ireland are there yet no Local Authorities for Education.

(i) *Medical Inspection and Treatment.*

But the Local Education Authorities do not stop at the provision of schooling. Many of the children attending the public elementary schools were found to be suffering from lack of medical attendance and treatment: they had upon them untreated cuts and sores; they had adenoid growths requiring surgical removal; their glands and tonsils were

* The Children's Act of 1908 removes all possible doubt as to the competence of the Destitution Authority to pay the necessary shilling a week for the child's voluntary admission to a day industrial school (Secs. 75, 78); and both to punish drunken parents, and to enforce committal to a residential industrial school of their neglected children (Secs. 11, 56).

† "A feeding scheme, whereby the children of paupers residing in Edinburgh, who apply for its benefits, are supplied with hot dinners daily (except Sunday) has now been instituted for some years, and is very successful. It is under the charge of a lady inspector, who reports to a committee monthly. The dinners to the children are supplied at restaurants near the several schools in the city. The outlay is not large, £60 per month or thereby; and the average number of children daily supplied is about 390. The class for whom this scheme is specially meant to apply is the children of widows who are employed at work all day, such as charing, etc., and who have little time to attend to the wants of their children." (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 61371 (Par. 12), 61552-61563, 61832 (Par. 9).

‡ Home Office Circular, 1903.

swollen and inflamed; they had incipient curvature needing remedial drill; their eyesight was often defective, sometimes rapidly degenerating for lack of proper spectacles; they had discharges from the ears, and inflamed eyelids, and skin diseases of various kinds—to say nothing of such gravely contagious conditions as ringworm and favus, and "dirty heads." * In the large towns of Scotland the condition of the children in these respects was found to be, if anything, even worse than in England.† These tens of thousands of children were, from one cause or another, plainly destitute of the medical attendance that was necessary for them. According to law it was the duty of their parents to provide this needed medical attendance, and, in case of inability to pay for it, to apply to the Relieving Officer for a medical order. It was the duty of the Board of Guardians to grant that medical order whenever necessary, and to prosecute the parents under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act if they failed to apply. It is difficult at the present day to understand how the Destitution Authorities, even from their own standpoint of keeping down pauperism, can ever have reconciled themselves to allowing so great a mass of destitution (with respect to medical attendance) to remain unrelieved. So far as we can ascertain, they do not seem either to have taken any steps to furnish the medical treatment of which these children were clearly destitute; nor yet, in the majority of cases, to have acted upon their statutory duty of proceeding against the parents who were thus guilty of neglect of their children. We find them even complaining of the action of the School Boards in pressing that every child detained at home through illness should be seen by a doctor. Thus the Chairman of the Atcham Board of Guardians—so widely known for its strict administration—complained in 1890 of the steps taken by the Local Education Authorities. "The action of School Boards," he writes, "is telling upon the question of Medical Relief, as some School Boards insist upon medical certificates being obtained when the reason for non-attendance of the child at school is alleged to be sickness; and thus many poor people, who would be able to provide for slight ailments by warmth, care and attention, are driven to the District Medical Officer for the sole purpose of obtaining this certificate, and thus becoming pauperised. This might be avoided by the School Boards engaging a medical man to visit, examine and certify for these purposes, if not satisfied with their existing officers. It appears to be necessary for the Guardians to watch this most closely so as to prevent Medical Relief being abused. It is desirable to study what steps can be taken for this end." ‡ In Scotland, where the services of the Poor Law doctor are seldom, if ever, granted to persons not already on the pauper roll, even less is done than in England. The Parish Councils have, of course, the excuse that the Scottish Poor Law does not permit the grant even of medical relief to the dependents of able-bodied men, however destitute the men and however ill their dependents might be.§ But the law does not prevent the Scottish Parish Councils from providing medical treatment for the children of widows or for those of disabled men; and we do not find that any better provision has been made for the relief of the glaring destitution of these children than for those of the able-bodied men.

What is even worse, we do not find that the Destitution Authorities have even troubled, in this respect, to look after the children whom they were themselves maintaining. The Reports ‖ of our own Children's Investigator, as to the physical condition of these Outdoor Relief children in London, at Liverpool, and elsewhere bring to light innumerable cases of untreated [illegible] and eczema, untreated erysipelas and swollen glands, untreated ringworm and impetigo, untreated heart disease and phthisis. "There was," she reports, "one exaggerated instance. . . . The children," whom the Board of Guardians were maintaining on Outdoor Relief, "were in so filthy and neglected a state that the School Nurse herself interviewed the mother. Later the mother was formally warned"—*not by anyone sent*

* We may give two testimonies out of many. At Wimbledon, which is not a "slum" district, the Medical Officer of Health found, in 1904, "out of an average attendance of 5,430 in the total of schools, 358 cases of defects of sight have been detected in the year . . . 216 affections of the nose, throat and ear . . . and the total number of notifications sent to parents in the year from the 5,430 is 852, which works out at 15·6 per cent. of the total number of children." (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, Vol. II., Cd. 2784, p. 200, *Q.* 5582.) Out of 2,378 children in Worcestershire Schools examined by the Schools' Medical Officers under the new Act, 1,660 were in such a condition that it was necessary to call the attention of their parents; 545 had neglected heads; 254 had neglected teeth; 279 had enlarged tonsils and adenoids; there were 44 cases of external eye diseases; 120 cases of defective eyesight; 70 children were consumptive; and 115 were anæmic.

† *See* the Report of the Royal Commission on Physical Training (Scotland), 1903, *Qs.* 56943, 56945–56950, and the special investigations into the physical condition of the children in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee.

‡ Report of Chairman of the Atcham Board of Guardians, June 24th, 1890.

§ In Scotland, as we were informed by the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, "an able-bodied applicant as such is not entitled to relief, even if he is destitute, and it does frequently happen that he has sick dependants. These, if not in desertion, cannot receive medical or other relief, although they may be dying of disease." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 56605, Par. 24.)

‖ Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908.

by the Guardians—but by "the National Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children, whose Inspector visited her and examined the children." * The state of things is the same in the large towns of Scotland. In the elaborate investigations that have been made into the condition of the school children in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee, the fact is brought to light that a large proportion of the children who are found to be suffering from lack of medical attendance, with all sorts of untreated ailments, are children whom the Parish Councils are maintaining on Outdoor Relief.†

Owing to this widespread failure of the Destitution Authorities in England and Scotland alike to relieve the destitution of children in the matter of medical attendance, and to the equal failure of voluntary agencies,‡ we find the duty gradually undertaken—even to the stretching of their legal powers §—by one of two other authorities. In the smaller Boroughs we see the Local Health Authority permitting the Medical Officer of Health to accede to the express or implied invitation of the Local Education Authority to institute a medical examination of all the children in the public elementary schools; sometimes on the plea of detecting infectious disease, sometimes frankly to discover physical defects rendering the children unfit to profit by the instruction. In town after town we see the Medical Officer of Health advising on the children's diseases, as well as on defective eyesight and hearing, sometimes systematically weighing and testing all the children.|| We see the Town Council's Health Visitors following the children back to their homes, and giving advice to the parents how to treat the defects discovered.¶ Occasionally a special nurse is engaged by the Town or District Council,** to visit the homes, in order to offer her services gratuitously for actual treatment of the cases as well as to advise the mothers how to remedy the trouble and prevent its recurrence. In this way the Local Health Authority has, in many towns, undertaken a proportion of the Medical Relief of poor children, which the Destitution Authority, dominated by its desire at all hazards to restrict its work, had failed to provide.††

In London and the larger Boroughs we see the work which the Destitution Authorities refused or neglected to do undertaken by the Local Education Authorities themselves. School Medical Officers and School Nurses have been appointed, whose business it is to examine all the children; to discover all physical defects; to test eyesight and hearing, and advise what steps should be taken as to treatment; to instruct the mothers how to remedy the evils; to supply gratuitously or at a nominal charge the spectacles required by the child's defective eyesight;‡‡ and, in not a few cases, even systematically to provide the treatment required.§§ "In Liverpool . . . over 50,000 dressings have been done in the

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* *Ibid.*, p. 155.

† Report of the Royal Commission on Physical Training (Scotland), 1903.

‡ Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. I., Cd. 2779, Par. 7, p. 2; Report of Royal Commission on Physical Training (Scotland), 1903.

§ As lately as 1905 it could be said that "there is no specific statutory provision for Local Education Authorities to conduct the medical inspection of the children attending the Public Elementary Schools." (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. I., p. 2.) School doctors and school nurses were appointed as being "necessary officers" to schools, under the general powers of the Education Act (*ibid.*, Vol. II., *Q.* 99.)

|| Thus at Salford, we learn, "children suffering from ringworm are excluded from school, and parents [are] advised what to do. . . . Children suffering from pediculosis are pointed out to the teachers, who interview the children and give instructions as to treatment. Where the teacher's influence is insufficient, the parents are seen by the Medical Officer. In this way a considerable improvement has been effected." (Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health, Salford, 1904, p. 9.)

¶ Thus, to give one example out of many. At Liverpool, the female Inspectors of the Public Health Authority "visit children suffering from ringworm, sore eyes, sore heads, skin diseases, etc." (Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for Liverpool, 1905, p. 89.)

** As at Reading and Widnes and Wimbledon (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. I., p. 6; Vol. II., pp. 161–166).

†† For the extent to which the Medical Officers of Health, had, even by 1904, carried the medical inspection and treatment of school children, *see Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 89–99.

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 38758 (Par. 8), 38766.

§§ Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. I., pp. 89–99; *see also* *Q.* 3744 of Vol. II. of the same. At Croydon, the Local Education Authority itself cures ringworm, free of charge to all children attending the Public Elementary Schools, by the Röntgen-ray process, at an expense of about £100 a year. (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 22952; Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for Croydon, 1905, p. 90; Annual Report to the London County Council of the Medical Officer (Education) for 1906–1907, p. 34.) In various towns, as at Glasgow (under its Police Act), and in several of the Metropolitan boroughs, verminous children are treated free of charge by the Local Health Authority, under the Cleansing of Persons Act, 1897. (Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health for Glasgow, 1905, p. 132.)

course of 1904. In Birmingham there have been in four schools over 20,000 dressings in twelve months. . . . At Reading a nurse is employed . . . to attend to the heads of verminous children where the parents fail to do so."* In 1907, by statute and by order of the Board of Education, these duties were not only sanctioned, but were even made obligatory on all Local Education Authorities, with regard to all the children in attendance at public elementary schools.† Nor are the Local Education Authorities to stop at mere inspection. "It is important," declares the Board of Education "that Local Education Authorities should keep in view the desirability of ultimately formulating and submitting to the Board for their approval under Section 13 (1) (*b*) of the Act, schemes for the amelioration of the evils revealed by medical inspection, including in centres where it appears desirable, the establishment of school surgeries or clinics, such as exist in some cities of Europe, for further medical examination, or the specialised treatment of ringworm, dental caries or diseases of the eye, the ear or the skin. It is clear that to point out the presence of uncleanliness, defect or disease does not absolve an authority from the consequent duty of so applying its statutory powers as to secure their amelioration, and to prevent, as far as possible, their future recurrence or development."‡ Accordingly, a "school clinic" has already been established by the Bradford Education Committee.

This deliberate invasion of the sphere of the Destitution Authority by the Local Education Authority, so far as concerns the medical attendance of the 20 per cent. of the population who are of school age, has been unfavourably commented on.§ It has been represented that should the action taken by some Local Education Authorities become universal—as seems now to be required by the Board of Education as a condition for its Grants—there can be, in respect of the medical attendance of this large section of the population, no destitution left to be relieved by the Destitution Authorities. On the other hand, it is urged that the medical inspection, and consequent medical treatment, of school children is not only financially advantageous to the Local Education Authorities by securing a higher average attendance, but also vital both to national health and national wealth production, and has been, by the virtual abdication of the Destitution Authorities, too long delayed. Nor can we altogether blame the Boards of Guardians and Parish Councils for this abdication. They have never been told to search out destitution in the matter of medical attendance. They have been called upon only to provide such medical relief as was actually applied for. They have been praised for deterring people from applying for medical orders by means of inquisitorial inquiries, giving such orders "on loan" and recovering the cost, and even making it a condition that the head of the family should enter the workhouse when his child was ill. In Scotland, as we have seen, the Poor Law does not permit even the visit of the Parish Doctor to the sick child of any able-bodied man.

We are of opinion that it is, on the whole, advantageous that the medical attendance of poor children of school age should not be undertaken by the Destitution Authority. If that Authority does the work, it does it as "Medical Relief"; such relief, as we have seen, is afforded grudgingly; granted only to those who apply to the Relieving Officer; almost necessarily made to depend, not on the gravity of the illness of the child, but on the *status* of the parent; withdrawn as soon as the parents wish to be without it; and, when given, given wholly unconditionally and usually without even the necessary hygienic advice. On the other hand, the medical examination and treatment of school children by the Local Education Authority (or by the Local Health Authority at its instance) is never of the nature of relief, but rather of hygienic discipline. It is systematically applied without any implication of pauperism to all children who are found to need it, without waiting for application to be made. It is continued so long as is found necessary, whether or not the parents actively desire it. And it always takes the form, to a very large extent, of hygienic advice, obedience to which is strongly pressed both on the child and on the parent. This medical inspection, it has been given in evidence before us, has actually a tendency to increase parental responsibility. When, for instance, under the London County Council, the School Nurse visits a school to put in force the cleansing scheme, "she examines every child, noting all that have verminous heads. The parents are notified by a white card, on which is also printed directions for cleansing. . . . At the end of a week, if not

* Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. I., p. 6.

† Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1907, Sec. 13; Memorandum on Medical Inspection of Children (Board of Education Circular, No. 576), November, 1907.

‡ Memorandum on Medical Inspection of Children (Board of Education Circular No. 576), November, 1907.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 22952–22953.

cleansed, the child is made to sit separately from the rest of the class, and the School Attendance Officer serves a more urgent warning 'red card' at the home. The Nurse, too, often visits to offer advice; and then, if in another week the child is still unclean, it is excluded, after having been seen by the Medical Officer; and the parent is prosecuted for not sending the child in a fit state to school." * Under the influence of such a system, the obligations of the parents in this one matter of cleanliness have, in the course of the last few years, been so greatly increased that the proportion of verminous children has, through the exertions of the mothers, steadily diminished. The expenditure incurred from public funds, far from being "relief" to the parents, has been actually the means of compelling the less responsible among them to devote more time and money to their children's welfare.

(ii) *School Feeding.*

We come now to the most remarkable, and, it must be admitted, the most controversial, of the invasions by the Local Education Authority of the sphere of the Destitution Authority. During the past two or three decades, in London and more than 100 other towns, in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, there has grown up a system by which, under the auspices and with the active assistance of the Local Education Authorities, many thousands of destitute children are provided with food.† In some towns a larger number of children are now, each winter, fed in the schools of the Local Education Authority, than are maintained as paupers by the Destitution Authority. The statistics for the Metropolis are specially remarkable. Between the ages of five and fourteen the various Boards of Guardians in London relieve on any one day some 14,000 children as indoor paupers and some 10,000 children as outdoor paupers. But in March, 1908, the London County Council was organising the simultaneous feeding of no fewer than 49,000 children between these ages,‡ or more than twice as many as those relieved by all the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians put together. The cost of this new service of school feeding has hitherto been largely provided from voluntary donations; though the organisation, most of the paid service, nearly all the plant and even some of the fuel, have long been provided from the Education Rate. During the year 1906, however, Parliament not only directed the formation by the Local Education Authorities of England and Wales of "School Canteen Committees" definitely to undertake this service, but also empowered them, subject to the approval of the Board of Education, to supply the necessary food at the cost of the Education Rate.§ In the very first winter under the Act, though London still relied on voluntary donations, no fewer than fifty such Authorities—nearly one-sixth of the whole—obtained the necessary sanction to feed their necessitous school children out of the Education Rate.|| The number has already grown to more than seventy. We cannot but anticipate that this action will become general throughout the towns of England and Wales. The nation is thus superseding the Destitution Authorities, so far as the provision for destitute children of school age is concerned, not merely in such specialised services as schooling and doctoring, but actually also in the simplest and most primitive of all needs, that of food. This paradoxical situation compels us to consider the reality of the alleged child destitution which the Local Education Authorities are relieving, the character of the relief given, and the advantages and disadvantages of so important a supersession, so far as regards the children of school age, of the Destitution Authority by the Local Education Authority.

We have made no inquiries of our own as to the number of children who were, in the winter of 1907–8, so far destitute as to be provided with meals under the auspices of the Local Education Authorities; though it is clear that the total for the kingdom must have

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* Report of Medical Officer (Education) to London County Council, 1905, Appendix III., p. 17. During the year 1906–1907, 81,629 children were thus examined, 12,975 white cards were issued, 6,090 red cards, and there were 277 prosecutions, at which fines were imposed. (*Ibid.* for 1906–1907, pp. 32, 33.)

† Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. I., Appendix II; Report of House of Commons Select Committee on Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Qs.* 5–7.

‡ Report of the Sub-Committee on Underfed Children to the London County Council, 1907–1908.

§ Education (Provision of Meals Act), 1906. The Act does not apply to Scotland or Ireland.

|| Annual Report of the Board of Education for 1907–1908. Among the towns so feeding their children are London, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Hull, Bradford, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Birkenhead, Bootle, Coventry, Norwich, Nottingham, Swansea and Cardiff; residential centres such as Bath, Brighton, Hastings and York; suburbs of London such as Tottenham, Walthamstow and West Ham; and even non-municipal parishes in the Counties of Durham, Kent, and the West Riding, administered by the County Councils. In a majority of cases, the amount applied for and sanctioned was the maximum of a halfpenny rate.

risen, at its maximum, to over 100,000, and that this number must be largely exceeded during the winter of 1908–9.* Nor have we taken any systematic evidence as to the reality or the cause of the destitution in these cases. The subject had been so recently investigated by no fewer than four successive Commissions or Committees,† within five years, that we thought ourselves justified in utilising their evidence as our own, and in accepting their statement of the facts. We received, however, some important independent testimony on the subject, which was generally in support of that already given.‡ Moreover, the general conclusions of the four official inquiries as to the nature and extent of child destitution have since been confirmed and illustrated by an elaborate investigation, undertaken by the Sub-Committee on Underfed Children of the London County Council, into the actual family circumstances of a large sample of the 49,000 children whom it was feeding as necessitous in March, 1908; the sample being carefully chosen so as to be accurately typical of the whole number. This latest inquiry, which was carried out by paid investigators who had been specially trained for such work, appears to us conclusive as to the facts. Taking what seems to be the low "Poverty Line" of a family income, after the rent was paid, at the rate of 3s. per week § per adult unit, or a little over 5d. per day, the Investigators found that by no means all the necessitous children had been reported by the teachers; that of the whole 3,334 children whom they investigated, 78·88 per cent. were genuinely necessitous "in the sense of lacking sufficient food and 21·12 (per cent.) non-necessitous; and that school meals will be required by the former until effective Care Committees are able to check the diseases attendant on partial employment, bad housing and other evils." ‖ Such information as has been supplied to us of the proceedings in Liverpool, Manchester,¶ Leeds,** Blackburn,†† West Ham, ‡‡ Swansea, §§ and other places, indicates that the lines on which action has been taken do not differ essentially from those followed in London. We find it, therefore, difficult to resist the conclusion that, estimating the total of children fed by Local Education Authorities throughout the kingdom to be 100,000, at least three-fourths of these were genuinely "destitute," that is, in want of food, and lacking means to obtain it, whilst it is probable, on the analogy of the London cases,

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* "The proportion of children in utter want in London," deposed an experienced Divisional Chief Inspector of the Board of Education, "is certainly not greater—I am inclined to think it is smaller—than in Birmingham or Liverpool and Manchester." (Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Q.* 2818.)

† See the Report of the Royal Commission on Physical Training (Scotland) 1903; Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, 1904; Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools, 1905, Vols. I. and II.; Report from the House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906 (House of Commons No. 288, of 1906).

‡ *See*, for instance, in our evidence, *Qs.* 246–250, 6076, 6077, 6445, 6446, 8525–8529, 12037, 18730, 18731, 20418–20741, 25154, 29769, 30540, 30622–30731, 36182–36226, 37605–37861, 39648, 43626–43810, 46493, and Appendices Nos. XXXVII. (Pars. 11–13), XXXVIII. (Par. 17), LXIII. (Par. 11), and LXXXII., to Vol. IV. and Nos. XXIV. (Par. 3), and XXIX. (Par. 18), to Vol. V., together with the incidental references in the Report of our Medical Investigator.

§ At Birmingham, the practice is to supply meals where the net income, after the rent has been paid, does not exceed 2s. 4d. to 2s. 9d. per week per head, *including children.*

‖ Report on the Home Circumstances of Necessitous Children in Twelve Selected Schools (London County Council), July, 1908. Out of the sample 1,218 families investigated, the family income was definitely ascertained in 663 cases. Of these, 331 had less than the "poverty limit," adopted for comparison, of 3s. per week per adult, after the rent had been paid; and 187 more had less than 4s. per week per adult. Thus, 78 per cent. may be taken to have less than 7d. per day per adult to live on. With this may be taken the evidence afforded by the home; 911 out of the 1,218 families or 74 per cent. were found to be living in the "overcrowded" condition of more than two persons to a room. In no fewer than 544 out of the 1,218 families or 44·7 per cent., one or other parent was reported to be "intemperate and wasteful." But though this may have caused the poverty, the poverty was demonstrably there. In these families the children were undeniably necessitous, in the sense of not having sufficient food; the families to the extent of 80 per cent. of them were living in an "overcrowded" condition; and, what is even more cogent, of all the cases in which the family income of this class was definitely ascertained, 68·5 per cent. fell below the line of 7d. per day per adult (after paying rent). So that, although intemperance may conceivably have brought the families into that state, it cannot be said, in these 68·5 per cent. of cases, that the income (of less than 7d. a day each) would have permitted the feeding of the children, even if there were now nothing spent in drink.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXXVII. (Pars. 11–13) to Vol. IV.

** *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXII. to Vol. IV.

†† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 37605 (Pars. 36–42), 37680–37692, etc

‡‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 20445–20454, 20689–20710.

§§ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXIV. (Par. 3) to Vol. V.

that some thousands more who were equally destitute were never reported by the teachers. And this calculation omits altogether the child destitution, doubtless much less in proportion, of the large number of towns in which no similar action has yet been taken by the Local Education Authorities.

The first attempt to cope with this evil of child destitution was made by voluntary philanthropic agencies. As the hunger among the school children became known to the benevolent public, there grew up, at intervals during the last forty years, a whole series of charitable agencies for giving, sometimes during spells of severe weather, sometimes throughout the whole winter quarter, and occasionally throughout the whole year, free meals, or meals at nominal charges below cost, to the hungry children of the poorer districts. We do not find that these agencies acted, in any one case, in co-operation with the Destitution Authorities, and they do not appear to have even sought to discriminate between the hungry children already nominally provided for by Outdoor Relief, and those who were not being so relieved. It is impossible to withhold our admiration from the many thousands of humane and benevolent persons who have thus come forward, often at great sacrifice of money and personal service, to relieve the destitution of the children. But this unco-ordinated and irregular distribution of gratuitous or cheap food by irresponsible agencies had many obvious disadvantages. The relief given was in nearly all cases quite inadequate for the really destitute children, seldom amounting for each child to more than two or three meals a week. It was usually spasmodic and temporary, money being collected freely, when a cold snap, or a dramatic cessation of employment, brought home to the hearts of the charitable the perennial destitution that existed.* The relief was usually afforded in the least advantageous manner. Sometimes doles of soup, bread and pudding were shovelled out to crowds of hungry children without any attempt being made to secure the ordinary decencies of civilised meals.† Sometimes dinner tickets were distributed, which had to be presented at eating-houses of a cheap type, where the children were fed without responsible supervision; and where, moreover, the tickets could sometimes be exchanged for cigarettes or sweets. It was rare that any adequate investigation was made into the home circumstances of the children who looked anaemic and hungry. Finally, from beginning to end of these attempts to meet the need by charitable agencies there was, we may say, no thought of anything but unconditional relief: there was no suggestion of obtaining, in return for the food, any greater exertions by the parents for the benefit of their children, or of securing from the children any improvement in manners or greater regularity of life, or of enforcing by the prosecution of negligent and drunken parents, any greater fulfilment of their parental responsibilities.‡ After all that was done by charitable agencies, there remained, in certain schools, in certain districts and at certain seasons, an amount of child destitution which public opinion eventually found to be intolerable.§

The existence of this enormous mass of child destitution in the schools was very slowly, and we may add, very reluctantly, perceived by the Local Education Authorities; and still more slowly and reluctantly were any steps officially taken by them for its relief. Established to provide schooling only, the School Boards were naturally averse from assuming responsibility for the home circumstances of their pupils. They were under no legal or

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* Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Q.* 1015; Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. I., p. 75.

† In London, it was found on inquiry by the London County Council in 1908 that, in some of the centres, absolutely no plates or mugs or knives or forks were provided, the children, as it was said, being "fed like hounds," and eating the food out of their hands. In other centres no sufficient provision was made for washing the plates, etc., and several children had to use the same article without any attempt being made to cleanse it. Only rarely did the children sit down, at a table provided with a table-cloth, to a meal served with decent amenity. Great stress has been laid by educational experts—in our opinion, rightly—upon the importance of so serving the meals, and so supervising the children's methods and manners at table, as to raise their standards of decency and civilised amenity, as well as of mastication. We regret that these considerations have, so far, where the work has been undertaken by Voluntary Agencies or the Destitution Authority, usually not received sufficient attention. (*See* Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Qs.* 76, 1082, 1831–1834, 2396, etc., 2464, 2779, 3505, 3544; and the valuable Report of the Medical Superintendent . . . on a course of Meals given to Necessitous Children (Bradford Education Committee, 1907).)

‡ To use the description given by Mr. C. S. Loch, it was "purely a movement against destitution without regard to education." (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, 1904, *Qs.* 10192–10199.)

§ "I would taboo voluntary agencies feeding in a wholesale way altogether," deposed one experienced witness, "they are fluctuating, they are inadequate, and not co-ordinated." (Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Q.* 2458.)

even moral obligation to see that their pupils were properly cared for out of school. What forced them to realise the existence of child destitution was the manifest absurdity of wasting costly education on hungry or starving children. When active physical exercises, which could not be shirked by the child, were added to mere sedentary listening to the teacher's lesson, which did not need to be learnt, this absurdity approximated to cruelty. To the keen educationalist, as to the practical teacher, it became apparent that the semi-starvation, from which in "slum" districts whole schools were suffering, was producing two types of abnormality, both disastrous alike to the future welfare of the community and to the present efficiency of the school. These results of child destitution are graphically described by the medical expert who examined the children in the schools of the Liverpool Education Authority:—

> "Starvation acting on a nervous temperament," reported Dr. Arkle as to the children whom he examined, "seems to produce a sort of acute precocious cleverness. Over and over again, I noted such cases of children, without an ounce of superfluous flesh upon them, with skins harsh and rough, a rapid pulse, and nerves ever on the strain, and yet with an expression of the most lively intelligence. But it is the eager intelligence of the hunting animal, with every faculty strained to the uttermost so as to miss no opportunity of obtaining good. I fear it is from this class that the ranks of pilferers and sneak thieves come, and their cleverness is not of any real intellectual value. On the other hand, with children of a more lymphatic temperament, starvation seems to produce creatures much more like automata. I do not know how many children I examined among the poorer sort, who were in a sort of dreamy condition, and would only respond to some very definite stimulus. They seemed to be in a condition of semi-torpor, unable to concentrate their attention on anything, and taking no notice of their surroundings, if left alone. To give an example of what I mean, if I told one of these children to open its mouth, it would take no notice until the request became a command, which sometimes had to be accompanied by a slight shake to draw the child's attention. Then the mouth would be slowly opened widely, but no effort would be made to close it again, until the child was told to do so. As an experiment, I left one child with its mouth wide open the whole time I examined it, and it never once shut it. Now that shows a condition something like what one gets with a pigeon that has had its higher brain centres removed, and is a very sad thing to see in a human being. I believe both these types of children are suffering from what I would call starvation of the nervous system, in one case causing irritation, and in the other torpor. And further these cases were always associated with the clearest signs of bodily starvation, stunted growth, emaciation, rough and cold skin, and the mouth full of viscid saliva, due to hunger. With such children I generally had to make them swallow two or three times before the mouth was clear enough to examine the throat. . . . I do not think I need say any more to show that the extent of the degeneration revealed by this investigation has reached a very alarming stage. . . . What is the use of educating children whose bodies and minds are absolutely unable to benefit by it. In my opinion, the children must first be taught how to live, and helped to get food to enable them to do it."*

The question arises why the Destitution Authorities had not already relieved the obvious destitution—not of education or of medical attendance, but actually of food—of this appalling number of children found to be positively suffering from hunger. The first answer is that, in quite a large number of cases—we suspect, in all, many thousands—the Destitution Authorities were actually providing simultaneously by Outdoor Relief for the very children whom the Local Education Authorities found themselves driven to feed, because the Outdoor Relief allowed to the family was positively insufficient for its support. In the Metropolis it was found in 1907–8 that 3·29 per cent. of the 49,000 children fed were at the time in receipt of Outdoor Relief, whilst no fewer than 13·46 per cent. had recently been in receipt of such relief, though it had been brought to an end before the date of the investigation.† Thus, it would appear that of the 10,000 children of school age on any one day maintained by the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians on Outdoor Relief, *something like* 1,600, *or one in every six, were actually being fed, in the winter of* 1907–8, *by the Local Education Authority;* whilst of the 30,000 separate children who got Outdoor Relief during some part of the year, no fewer than 7,000, or one in every four or five, also got fed in that winter at school.‡

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* The Condition of the Liverpool School Children, by A. S. Arkle, B.A., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P. (Liverpool, Tinling & Co., 1907, p. 15).

† Report on the Home Circumstances of Necessitous Children in Twelve Selected Schools (London County Council, July 1908).

‡ Similar overlapping is reported in other towns. In the elaborate Report on the Physical Condition of 1,400 School Children in Edinburgh, extracts from which are given in our evidence (not yet in volume form), many cases are given of families in receipt of Outdoor Relief receiving also for one or other of their children, school dinners, school clothing and boots, free meals provided by the Destitution Authority itself and maintenance in Industrial Schools. The Outdoor Relief, in fact, was inadequate. "In many cases," sums up our Medical Investigator, "the amount allowed by the Guardians for the maintenance of Outdoor pauper children cannot possibly suffice to keep them even moderately well." (Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907. p. 79. (*See* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2413, 2415, 2830, 5092, 8867, 9127, 12729, 12741, 17037, 20394, 25449, 25543, 31837, 32103–32229, 32384–32393, 35968, 36061, 37280–37292, 40362–40411, 43439, 44209–44216, 43004, 43005, 44976, 45067–45069, 45160, 46398, 46399, and various Appendices to Vol. IV. and Vol. V).

The second answer of the Destitution Authorities is, apparently, to say that no application for relief had been made to them by the parents of the children. On this we have to point out that the Poor Laws do not require application to be made before relief is granted. It is the statutory duty of the Destitution Authority to relieve all the known destitution within its district, whether application be made or not.* The Destitution Authority could hardly plead that it was unaware of the existence of hungry children unable to get food. The fact that children at school were actually suffering from want of food, was known to every Board of Guardians or Parish Council in the principal towns of the United Kingdom. Moreover, in the case of children, the Destitution Authorities have been, since 1868, under a special statutory obligation to proceed against parents who fail to supply their children with food—an obligation which was specially brought to the notice of the House of Lords Committee on Poor Relief in 1888 :—

> "There is," said the late Rev. W. B. Waugh, speaking for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, "an Act of Parliament, 31 & 32 Vict., c. 122, Sec. 37, which requires that every Board of Guardians shall (the word 'shall' is used) institute prosecutions and pay the costs where they have reason to believe that children are not sufficiently fed. . . . The Guardians do not act upon it to any great extent. . . . There are cases in which they are habitually doing it, chiefly where ladies are upon the Board, but in a very small number of cases, indeed, throughout the country. . . . It is a matter of fact that the Relieving Officers know of cases of children starving to death, and take no action. . . . I will take a case at Swindon. Last week, we sent to prison two persons who had seven children in their custody, all of whom were looked after by the Relieving Officer to this extent. In January last he visited and reproved the woman, and I think he called the house very filthy in March, but no action was taken. The children were all dying. . . . They were children who might have been looked after by the officers of the Poor Law ; children who ought to have been looked after under that section."†

Since this remarkable testimony, the law has been so far altered, owing to the neglect of the Boards of Guardians, as to allow other persons as well as these Boards to institute prosecutions in these cases ; and we gather that the Destitution Authorities have thereupon practically ceased to institute any proceedings whatever. It is, however, under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, 1904 (now re-enacted in the Children's Act, 1908), still open to them to do so in all cases that come to their knowledge. The Local Government Board for Ireland specially drew the attention of the Irish Boards of Guardians to this fact in sending them the Act of 1904.‡ We have it in evidence, from one of the English Local Government Board's Inspectors that : "The laws of the land are perfectly adequate for bringing every man, who neglects his children by starving them, to the Police Court. . . . If the law was stringently administered . . . you would stop the starving of children to a great extent." The Boards of Guardians have "a power of prosecuting" and also "a power of relieving." § The Destitution Authorities, we were informed by another witness, have "ample authority" to punish parents who neglect their children, but "they think it is not advisable to do so." ||

It has been urged on behalf of the Boards of Guardians that, in the early stages of the movement for the feeding of hungry children, no effort was made by the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board to put them in a position to carry out their statutory obligations. Where the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order was in force, the Destitution Authority could lawfully relieve the children of able-bodied men only by receiving both father and child in the Workhouse. In other Unions, where the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order was in force, it had long been customary for the Board and its Inspectors to press Boards of Guardians to adopt the same policy of refusing Outdoor Relief to able-bodied men and their dependents. Not until 1905 did the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board reverse that classic policy. In that year an Order

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* We were authoritatively informed by the Legal Adviser to the Local Government Board that the Relieving Officer "has not to wait for an application from the head of the family," or from anyone else. "A third party's notification would be equivalent to an application," even to the extent of making the officer personally responsible. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 970–972.)

† Report of House of Lords Committee on Poor Relief, 1888 (*Qs.* 5957–5965.)

‡ "The Act does not impose upon Boards of Guardians the duty of instituting proceedings in these cases, but it contemplates that they will do so where the circumstances are such, as, in their opinion, render it desirable in the public interest that proceedings should be instituted by them ; and they are by Section 21 empowered to pay out of the funds under their control, the reasonable costs and expenses of any proceedings," etc. (Circular of Local Government Board for Ireland of October 27th, 1904.) The Local Government Board for England and Wales made an intimation to the Boards of Guardians to the same effect in its Circular of January 1st, 1907, pointing out that they could proceed either under the Vagrant Act of 1824, or under the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, of 1904, against fathers who habitually neglected to provide their children with food. We have not found any Report showing that any such proceedings were taken by the Boards of Guardians, merely for not providing food.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 7609–7611.

|| *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 8528–8531.

was issued empowering Boards of Guardians, on the application of the Local Education Authority or its officers, to grant relief to the child of an able-bodied man, without requiring him to enter the Workhouse, or to perform the Outdoor Labour Test. But all such relief was, if the father was deemed guilty of neglect, to be given only "on loan" and might be so given in all cases; proceedings were (except in any special case to be reported to and sanctioned by the Local Government Board) always to be taken for the recovery of the amount from the parents; and whether or not the amount was so recovered, the parent became legally a pauper and was consequently disfranchised. For some reason that we fail to understand this Order was expressly stated not to apply to the children of widows, or to children residing with other relatives than their father, or to children who were blind or deaf and dumb, or to children whose fathers were for any reason absent from them.*

This belated attempt of the Local Government Board to spur the Destitution Authorities on to perform their statutory duty was a complete failure. In very few Unions was there any action at all taken under it. The express exclusion from its scope, without explanation, of the children of widows and deserted wives, and of absentee fathers seemed, to many of the Authorities concerned, to render it almost useless.† We do not find that the Local Government Board explained that the only reason for omitting these classes from the Order was that the Boards of Guardians had already, without any Order, unlimited power to grant Outdoor Relief at their discretion for the support of all destitute children, except such as resided with fathers who were able-bodied. Nor was it explained that it was open for the Local Education Authorities, or for anyone else conversant with the facts, quite irrespective of the Order, to send in lists of destitute children, every one of which would then have to be dealt with by the Destitution Authority. Amid all the misunderstanding and confusion, the Order quickly became a dead letter.‡ "The labour given to the officials," one of the Local Government Board Inspectors informs us, "and the expense to the Guardians, appear to be out of all proportion to the benefit conferred."§ At Manchester, Leeds and Bradford, where most seems to have been attempted under it, the action quickly broke down. The Local Education Authorities and the Boards of Guardians found it impossible to agree on any systematic scheme. When children were reported as underfed, the Boards of Guardians struck four-fifths of them off,‖ not because they disputed the children's need of additional food, into which they did not inquire, but because they chose to assume, on the information supplied to them by the Relieving Officers, that the parents could have provided food for their children if they had chosen to do so. But the Guardians took no steps whatever to enforce on these parents their legal responsibilities, and the children remained unfed. For the small minority of children whose parents the Guardians admitted to be destitute, they issued tickets which could be exchanged, at eating-houses of a cheap type and at other shops, for any food desired, this plan having all the unsatisfactory features of private charity. The fathers of many of the children who had received such tickets, indignantly refused to allow them to continue to receive them, when they understood that it involved, not only the striking off of their names from the electoral roll, but also the subsequent refunding of the value of the tickets under circumstances of public indignity. The numbers fell off to a nominal figure. Meanwhile, on the assumption that the Guardians were meeting the need, private donations declined: and a large number of children remained hungry.¶

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 246–254.

† "The whole Order," deposed the Clerk of the Education Committee of the Manchester Town Council, "was a most perplexing thing. Very early in the year there came down to Manchester a Poor Law Inspector who said that the construction of the Order was that the children of widows or deserted women should not come under the Order. That swept away a great many of these we had been feeding." (Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Q.* 1208.) Similar evidence was given by School Managers and officers of the London County Council, who thought that the Order "rules out two classes of parents who really form the most difficult classes." (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools, 1905, Vol. II., *Q.* 483, etc.).

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 5795, 6076, 6440, 6076, 7608, 8524, 8602, 9530, 12475, 13529, 18730, 18731, 20418–20756.

§ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XIII. (A) Par. 34, to Vol. I.

‖ The same result followed at Kettering, Northampton, and Norwich, among other places. (*Ibid.*, Appendices No. XIII. (A), Par. 34, and No. XXIII. (G), to Vol. I.).

¶ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXII. to Vol. IV., (as to Leeds); Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Qs.* 1173–1218 (as to Manchester), and *Qs.* 1651–1839 (as to Bradford); Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, etc., 1905, Vol. I., p. 83; Vol. II. *Qs.* 2270–2273, 5670, 5671.

The result of this long-continued abdication of duty by the Destitution Authority has been, in England and Wales, after calamitous delay, the assumption by the Local Education Authority of the obligation of seeing that hungry children are fed. There was no power to provide food out of the Education Rate, but we see the Local Education Authorities, in town after town, gradually driven to put themselves at the head of the movement, to do their utmost to spread out the charitable gifts so as to cover evenly the whole ground, to lend the aid of the school organisation, and to provide premises, equipment, staff and even fuel.* At last Parliament felt itself compelled to intervene. A Bill to enable Local Education Authorities to undertake the feeding of necessitous children was read a second time, and referred to a Select Committee. This Committee recommended "that the Local Education Authority ought to undertake the administration rather than the Board of Guardians," † up to the limit of a rate of ½d. in the £; and a measure to that effect became law in 1906.‡ In the winter of 1907–8, and still more in that of 1908–9, most of the Local Education Authorities of the great towns in England and Wales were, as we have mentioned, feeding children out of the Education Rate.

(D) The Failure of the Destitution Authority to Relieve Child Destitution.

We do not attribute the failure of the Destitution Authorities to prevent child destitution, to prosecute the negligent parents or to feed the hungry children—any more than we do their failure properly to supervise the host of children on Outdoor Relief—to any defects of the unit of area of Poor Law administration, or to any shortcomings in the persons who constitute Boards of Guardians. We have, indeed, been much impressed by the humanity, zeal and self-sacrificing industry displayed by the members of these Authorities—especially the women members—in all their dealings with the children. The failure is certainly as great in the large Unions, wielding practically the whole powers of populous Urban communities, as it is in the smaller ones. Thus, no alteration in the membership, no change in the constitution, no enlargement of the area of the Destitution Authority would remedy the defects that now stand revealed. The failure of the Boards of Guardians in the great centres of population in England, Wales and Ireland, and of the Parish Councils in those of Scotland, to relieve so much of the child destitution, is rooted in the very fact that they are Destitution Authorities, with a long established tradition of "relieving" such persons only as voluntarily come forward and prove themselves "destitute." § What is required is some social machinery, of sufficient scope, to bring automatically to light, irrespective of the parents' application, or even of that of the children, whatever child destitution exists. We see such machinery actually at work, so far as regards all the children of school age, in the organisation of the Local Education Authority. From its fifth or sixth to its fourteenth or fifteenth birthday, every poor child resident in the district is daily under the notice of the officers of this Authority. A staff of School Attendance Officers is occupied in searching out all children who ought to be on the school rolls. Once on the roll, if a child stays away, the School Attendance Officer visits its home as a matter of course. In school, the child is hour by hour under the observation of the teacher. The amount of its energy is being perpetually tested, mentally or physically. The systematic medical inspections now commanded will reveal the less obvious causes of malnutrition, for experience has shown "that it is very difficult to trace the source from which the unhealthy condition of the children arises, and that it might be due to congenital causes,

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* Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children attending Public Elementary Schools, 1905.

† It was represented to the Select Committee by the President of the Association of Poor Law Unions that, in the opinion of the Association, the provision of food to necessitous children "must be unquestionably allowed to be a question of the relief of the destitute," and the Association submitted "that their past experience in relief matters entitles them to the confidence of the country." (Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Q.* 2167.) But the witness doubted the existence of many cases needing relief (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 2177–2273). On the other hand, other Poor Law witnesses expressed a desire to be rid of the work. "I should prefer," said the Clerk of the Bradford Board of Guardians in 1906, "that the Education Authority should have the whole of the machinery" for providing food for necessitous children at school. "I think it would work better." At the same time he thought that the Poor Law Authority should undertake the necessary prosecution of neglectful parents, as it already possessed the legal powers to do so. (*Ibid.*, pp. 88, 89.)

‡ An amendment was inserted by the House of Lords excluding Scotland from the scope of the Act. It is significant that, after two years' experience, the power to feed necessitous children has now been given to the Scottish School Boards by the Education Act of 1908.

§ "From what I know of those neglectful parents," said a witness of great experience, "when the child is starting for school he will be warned that if he dares to tell his teacher that he wants a meal he will get a thrashing when he gets home, because his father will be locked up for not feeding the child." (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, etc., 1905, Vol. II., *Q.* 423.)

late hours, insanitary surroundings, uncleanliness, or work out of school hours." * It is clear that the Destitution Authority could not possibly duplicate this official machinery for keeping constantly and automatically under observation the entire child population. The evil to be remedied is not the destitution of a day or of a month, but the continuous carelessness and ignorance bred of chronic poverty. This fact was abundantly demonstrated in the four official inquiries the reports of which we have quoted, as well as in evidence that we have ourselves received. Though money and food were often necessary, it was not school dinners that would remedy the evils from which the children were suffering :—

> "The general features," we were informed, "prevailing in the homes of these neglected or underfed school children are strikingly alike. . . . There is an absolute lack of organisation in the family life. It seems to be entirely absent under conditions where careful and minute organisation of the family resources is more essential than anything else. Existence drags along, anyhow; the hours of work, leisure and sleep are equally uncertain and irregular. . . . The underfeeding of the children is but a part of a more important feature of the life in this district. The children's health is affected by many different evils, overcrowding, want of sleep, dirt and general irregularity of life."†

An Authority dealing with the child, or with the family, merely at the crisis of destitution, having no excuse for intervening before or after this crisis, can never cope with the conditions here revealed. What is required is the steady and continuous guidance of a friend, able to suggest in what directions effective help can be obtained where help is really needed, which will gradually remedy parental ignorance or neglect. In many cases friendly advice and warning will suffice.‡ Such an organisation for systematic friendly visiting can, we think, only be supplied by voluntary effort, working as part of the machinery of the Local Education Authority, and enabled in ways that we shall subsequently describe to bring to bear the material aid that the children, in some cases, are found actually to require. These Children's Care Committees, under one title or another, are now becoming part of the machinery of the Local Education Authority. They were, for instance, required by the Act of 1906, and their establishment has been expressly called for by the Board of Education.§ It is obvious that Committees of this sort, equipped with the personal knowledge of each child derived from the School Attendance Officers, the Teachers, the School Nurse, and the medical inspection, and sending their members as friendly visitors to the homes of the parents, are far better able to effect the improvements required than any machinery that the Destitution Authority can devise. Where the parents prove recalcitrant to moral suasion, the Local Education Authorities, besides their full power to prosecute the parents under the Children's Act, 1908, have at hand, in the Day Industrial Schools that we have described, which they have in some towns already established, a method of ensuring the proper sustenance of the children,

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* Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, p. v. It was largely for this reason that the House of Commons Committee were of opinion "that the Local Education Authority ought to undertake the administration" of the meals provided for necessitous children, "rather than the Boards of Guardians. It is true that the Boards of Guardians are in touch with the extreme poor in their districts, but the Local Education Authorities are in touch with the children. The latter have a machinery ready to deal with the problem reaching to the homes of the children. . . . The Local Education Authority through its managers and officers, assisted, as far as possible, by voluntary helpers, would form the desired connecting link with the home. The duty of investigation and inquiry appears to be one peculiarly suitable for them to assume." (*Ibid.*, p. viii.). "I would rather keep it in the hands of the Local Education Authority," deposed the Roman Catholic Vicar-General of the diocese of Southwark, after a lifetime of experience of extremely poor parishes, "than put it in the hands of the Boards of Guardians, for this reason, that once you bring it under the Boards of Guardians you inevitably bring the child, as it were, on the threshold of the workhouse. The next thing to not being fed at school is to be 'offered the House,' because Outdoor Relief is not given much in many of the Unions in London where there is an able-bodied man." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 1030.) The difficulty that the schools are not open and the meals are not provided, in the holidays, has been met, in practice, by the teachers arranging for the children known to be specially necessitous to be otherwise provided with meals during these periods. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 937, 938, 3395–3399.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 83251 (Pars. 38, 39, 69) (being the Report of an Inquiry by Miss Phelps in connection with Underfed School Children in the Dock District in Liverpool).

‡ "The moment they were inquired into," says one witness, "they began to feed them." (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. II., *Q.* 176.) "In many instances, warning has proved to be sufficient." (Report of House of Commons Select Committee on Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, p. ix.).

§ Such committees were often called Relief Committees, or Children's Relief Committees, but Miss Frere found the term objectionable as importing Poor Law Associations. (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, 1905, Vol. II., *Qs.* 630–633.) Parliament, thinking only of meals and of the *cantines scholaires* of Paris, adopted the term School Canteen Committee. This was felt by the London County Council to be open to various objections, and the term Children's Care Committee has been adopted in London and in some other towns.

without relieving those parents who can maintain their offspring from the burden of providing for them. These Day Industrial Schools, originally established for the purpose of dealing with the neglect of parents to take the trouble to send their children regularly to school, have proved very successful in enforcing this particular parental responsibility.* The parent, far from escaping scot free, is ordered to make such weekly contribution to the cost of feeding his child as his means will allow; and experience shows that, far from dealing laxly with such parents, the Local Education Authorities have been quite strict in their enforcement of this parental obligation.† This use of the Day Industrial School has had a wonderful effect in stopping the particular form of parental neglect which shows itself in the child's truancy.‡ It has been suggested that the Local Education Authority has in the power of committing children to these schools an instrument which, whilst ensuring the proper feeding of the child, and not relieving the careless or neglectful parent of its cost, is likely to be equally efficacious in bringing to an end a large amount of wanton parental neglect to provide meals.§

(E) The Supersession of the Destitution Authority by the Local Education Authority.

The legislation of 1906–7, authorising the Local Education Authorities to give medical treatment and food to children found at school destitute of these requisites, sets the seal, in our opinion, on the necessity for completing, so far as children of school age are concerned, the supersession of the Destitution Authority by the Local Education Authority. It is, we think, clear that wherever the Local Education Authority performs what is now its statutory duty, and provides, or gets provided, not only schooling, but also medical inspection and treatment, and food for all who are in need of it, the Destitution Authority, in respect of the 20 per cent. of the population who are between the ages of five and fourteen, becomes superfluous. Where both Authorities are actively at work, there will be perpetual friction, overlapping and waste.‖ Moreover, the rapidly developing machinery of medical inspection at school, and the visits to the homes of School Attendance Officers,

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* Appendix No. LXXIII. to Vol. IX.

† Throughout Great Britain the parents of the children at the Day Industrial Schools, taken together, actually paid, on an average, more than 1d. per child per day. (Fiftieth Annual Report of Inspector of Reformatory and Industrial Schools, 1906, p. 7.) In Manchester, the Local Education Authority gets an average of 9d. per week. (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, etc., 1905, Vol. II., *Q.* 2939). In the sixteen day schools for the physically defective (crippled) children maintained by the London County Council, all the children, about 1,100 in number, are provided with meals every day. The Council provides the accommodation, the stoves and utensils, the fuel, the nurses who supervise, and about half the wages of the cooks. The parents are required to pay 1d. or 2d. a day, according to their means; about 3 per cent. only being altogether excused owing to extreme poverty. The balance of the expense is provided from charitable funds. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1–134.) In Chapter VIII. of this Part of our Report we shall deal fully with the question of recovering the cost from parents or other persons legally chargeable.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXIII. to Vol. IX.

§ This suggestion has been made to us by witnesses of the most varied opinions and diverse experience. Thus Mr. Toynbee thought "that a Day Industrial School would, on the whole, be the best way of dealing with exceptional cases." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 30622, Par. 44.) A similar suggestion was made by the Clerk to the Education Committee of the City of Manchester. (Report of Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection, etc., 1905, Vol. II., *Q.* 2933.) We have the proposal brought before us by many other witnesses, *see* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 43441–43446, 43649–43654, 44215, 45157, 46502, 46503, Appendix No. LXXXII., (Par. 12) to Vol. IV.; Appendix No. LXXIII. to Vol. IX.

‖ Our own Children's Investigator informs us that, at one non-provided school in the Metropolis, "the level both of education and of discipline is distinctly lower than that of other schools in the same district. *Unfortunately, a particularly large proportion of Out-relief children attend this school, because free breakfasts are given in the winter, and an outfit of clothing every year.*" (Report . . . on the Condition of the Children, by Dr. E. Williams, 1908, p. 155.) At Bury St. Edmunds, we learn that it was found last winter that a large percentage of the families whose children were fed at school were in receipt of Outdoor Relief of an amount which the Education Authority thought inadequate. The attention of the Board of Guardians was called to the fact, but no steps were taken by them. The Education Committee of the Town Council accordingly continued to feed the children, whilst the Board of Guardians continued to give Outdoor Relief, and, we may add, the Distress Committee under the Unemployed Workmen Act provided relief works and wages to men who were, in many cases, the fathers of the children thus fed. This is what is happening this winter, in town after town. In Edinburgh, Liverpool, and various other large towns there is even another committee concerned. The Police-aided Clothing Association, administered in close connection with the Watch Committee and the municipal police force, supplies destitute children with clothing, children who may be simultaneously getting Outdoor Relief from the Board of Guardians, and free meals from the Education Committee, besides private charity, none of the donors being necessarily aware of the operations of the others. The Annual Report of the Edinburgh "Police-aided Scheme for Clothing Destitute Children," for 1905–1906 (which clothed 1,136 destitute children in the year), actually specifies, as the two typical examples of its work, two cases in each of which the family was known to be in receipt of Outdoor Relief (pp. 8, 9). At Liverpool, it has been brought to our notice that "a family received help from the Central Relief Society, the clergyman of the parish, the Police-aided Clothing Association, the 'Hot Pot Fund' and finally the parish authorities, in the space of four months." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 83251, Par. 65.)

School Nurses and members of Children's Care Committees seems to furnish, for the first time, an effective instrument for keeping under practically continuous supervision the 160,000 children of school age for whom Outdoor Relief is being granted, and the 35,000 more who, in different parts of the United Kingdom, are boarded-out or placed in residential homes. With such continuous supervision by the Local Education Authority, we believe that by far the best way for the community to provide for a destitute child is, so to speak, "to board it out with its own mother," upon an allowance really adequate for its full maintenance, provided that the mother is not mentally or morally unfit to be entrusted with its care. For undertaking the complete custodial care of children of school age who are without parents, or who have been compulsorily withdrawn from their unfit parents, the Local Education Authority offers manifest advantages over an Authority limited to the relief of destitution. Here the Local Education Authority has ready to hand, not only the device of Boarding-out already employed by that Authority under the supervision of Special Committees of philanthropic workers for some of the defective children, but also its residential schools, at present used only in the form of schools for special classes of children.* If, for other sections of children, the plan of Scattered Homes commends itself, the Local Education Authority can most conveniently place these Homes in proximity to the day schools which the children should attend, and can allocate the children among them in such a way as to provide each of them with accommodation in the type of school that its faculties make most appropriate. In so far as "Certified Schools and Homes" are made use of for particular kinds of children, the Local Education Authority, unlike the Destitution Authorities, will have at its command, qualified inspectors, accustomed to deal with the managers of voluntary institutions, and able to satisfy themselves of the value of the care and instruction given. Compared with the Local Education Authority in this respect, the Destitution Authority, even at its best, stands at a grave disadvantage. It either has to divorce the children from all the official machinery which it directs—the Guardians and the Relieving Officers striving, so to speak, to hide themselves from the children's view, in order to free them from all associations with the Poor Law—or else it smears their young lives over with the stigma of pauperism, and brands them as a special caste. What the Destitution Authority does in this dilemma is to impale itself alternately on each of the horns; never succeeding in wholly dissociating the children from the Workhouse or its precincts, and yet failing to maintain over them the watchful supervision that all systems require. Finally, even if it overcomes all these drawbacks, the Destitution Authority, as an Authority for children of school age, has, in the matter of education, an impossible task. The children with whom it has to deal are arbitrarily selected from the general child population by circumstances wholly irrelevant to their classification in the school, namely, by the destitution of the parents—the result being that old children and young, bright children and the mentally defective, criminal children and scholarship children, children who have been regularly under instruction and those who have been wandering untaught, are all dumped down in the same building, in the same classes, before the same teachers. In short, for the grouping of children in schools, as for the grouping of the sick in hospitals, the category of the destitute is a mischievous irrelevancy.†

(F) Conclusions.

We have therefore to report:—

1. That the Destitution Authorities of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland have proved themselves—in spite of the devoted personal service of many of their members—

* It is not generally realised that the Local Education Authorities in England and Wales are already providing and maintaining residential or boarding-schools (thirty-two under the Children's Act of 1908, formerly under the Industrial Schools Acts; and eleven under the Education Acts, for blind or deaf children). (*See* Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1905, *Qs.* 19–21.) These have now increased to fifty, which is half as many as those of all the Destitution Authorities put together. For particulars of the practice of Education Authorities in "boarding-out," and otherwise providing for the maintenance of special classes of children, *see* Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. V., Appendix B., pp. 49–61. There are elaborate rules made by the Board of Education, regulating this boarding-out (Statutory Rules and Orders, 1900, No. 158); see *Ibid.*, pp. 206–210.

† "What all these children require," says a competent authority, "to whatever class they may belong, is moral, physical, and industrial education. The supreme authority in charge of delinquent and dependent children should be the Education Department of the State. So long as these children are looked at, as at present, through the eyes of the Criminal Department, or through the eyes of the Pauper Department, they will not receive the humane consideration to which their miseries entitle them; and Society will be punished for refusing them this consideration by seeing an ominous percentage of them relapsing into a life of habitual criminality and becoming a permanent danger to the community." (Juvenile Offenders, by Rev. W. D. Morrison, 1896, p. 304.)

inherently unfitted, by the very nature of their functions, to have the charge of the 237,000 children of school age for whom the State, in the United Kingdom, assumes the responsibility of whole or partial maintenance.

2. That, as a result of this inherent unfitness of a Destitution Authority for the rearing of children, it has been demonstrated to us by our own expert investigators, and confirmed by other evidence, that certainly a majority of all the Outdoor Relief children—probably 100,000 boys and girls—are to-day suffering, definitely and seriously, in health and character, from the circumstances of their lives—these circumstances being, in great part, the inadequate and unconditional character of the Outdoor Relief upon which they are supposed to be maintained, and the lack of care and supervision exercised by the Destitution Authorities, and of inspection by the three Local Government Boards, to prevent the too frequent neglect and ill-treatment of these wards of the State.

3. That, in spite of almost universal condemnation and notwithstanding a whole generation of effort on the part of the three Local Government Boards to get the children otherwise maintained, there are, in Great Britain three or four thousand, and in Ireland as many more, children of school age being brought up in the demoralising atmosphere of the General Mixed Workhouse; and we have found no evidence of any effective desire or intention on the part of the Destitution Authorities to take steps to bring to an end this discredited method of providing for children.

4. That the system of "boarding-out" the children with foster-parents, or placing them in certified institutions—a system which, under careful and continuous supervision, and confined to a minority of suitable cases, has much to recommend it—is, at present, seriously prejudiced by the fact that the Destitution Authorities and their officers are, by the very nature of their functions, unqualified to maintain an efficient inspection of the homes and institutions which they select for their children, let alone any continuous supervision of their welfare. In some cases it has even been deemed advisable to discourage or prohibit such visiting of the homes or institutions in order to avoid the connection of the children with the Destitution Authority which is supposed to look after them.

5. That the children in Poor Law Schools and Cottage Homes—the conditions of which have, for the most part, greatly improved—are, in many instances, maintained at an unnecessary cost; an excessive expenditure sometimes directly attributable to the inexperience of a Destitution Authority in school management, and one which still leaves the children suffering, even in well-administered institutions, from:—

(*a*) The difficulty of getting the best teachers in Poor Law Schools.

(*b*) The impracticability of affording these "institutionalised" boys and girls proper experience of life in a small home; and

(*c*) The educationally defective grouping together of children merely by the common attribute of their parent's destitution, instead of allocating them severally to the particular types of school (*e.g.*, mentally-defective schools, crippled schools, higher-grade schools, technical schools, etc.) that their individual characteristics require.

6. That owing to their lack of any appropriate machinery for the purpose, the Destitution Authorities fail to-day even to discover a large amount of the destitution that exists among children in the great towns; and this not merely in the matter of medical treatment urgently required, but even in the matter of actual inadequacy of food, so that the powers entrusted to the Boards of Guardians for the prosecution of cruel or neglectful parents are hardly ever put in force, and many thousands of children are, for lack of the necessaries of life, growing up stunted, debilitated and diseased.

7. That, as a consequence of this failure of the Destitution Authorities to prevent or to relieve child destitution, Parliament has been led, after many official investigations, to entrust to the Local Education Authorities the duty of providing meals for the children found at school unfed, at any rate on those days of the week, and those weeks of the year

when the elementary schools are open; with the result that these Authorities are in England and Wales, during the present winter, feeding more than 100,000 children, and probably nearly as many children of school age as are being relieved, otherwise than in institutions, by all the Destitution Authorities put together.

8. That these competing systems of relieving child destitution by rival Local Authorities in the same town—in many cases simultaneously assisting the same children—without any effective machinery for recovering the cost from parents able to pay, and for prosecuting neglectful parents, are undermining parental responsibility, whilst still leaving many thousands of children inadequately fed.

9. That it is urgently necessary to put an end to this wasteful and demoralising overlapping, by making one Local Authority in each district, and one only, responsible for the whole of whatever provision the State may choose to make for children of school age.

10. That the only practicable way of securing this unity of administration, and also the most desirable reform, is, in England and Wales, to entrust the whole of the public provision for children of school age (not being sick or mentally defective) to the Local Education Authorities, under the supervision of the Board of Education; these Local Education Authorities having already, in their Directors of Education and their extensive staffs of teachers, their residential and their day feeding schools, their arrangements for medical inspection and treatment, their School Attendance Officers and Children's Care Committees, the machinery requisite for searching out every child destitute of the necessaries of life, for enforcing parental responsibility, and for obviating, by timely pressure and assistance, the actual crisis of destitution.

11. That in Scotland, the whole of the public provision for children of school age might be entrusted, at any rate in the large towns, to the School Boards, and elsewhere, perhaps, either to the District Health Committee or to the newly-formed "County Committee of the District," under the supervision of the Scottish Education Department.

12. That in Ireland, where no Local Education Authorities exist, it should be considered whether the whole of the public provision for children of school age might not advantageously be entrusted to the County and County Borough Councils, acting through special "Boarding-out Committees," on which there should be women members, and sending the children to the existing day schools.

CHAPTER V.

The Curative Treatment of the Sick by Rival Authorities.

We find, throughout the United Kingdom at the present time, two separate and distinct public authorities dealing with the sick poor, the Destitution Authority, providing medical attendance, nursing and medicine, and often institutional treatment, for destitute sick persons whatever their diseases; and the Local Health Authority, providing, in the same area, medical attendance, nursing and medicine, together with institutional treatment where required, for persons whatever their affluence, suffering from certain specific diseases. Alongside of these two ubiquitous rate-supported Medical Services, we find a whole array of medical charities of one sort or another, dealing with essentially the same classes of persons and many of the same diseases.

(A) The Medical Service of the Poor Law.

Of the 915,000 simultaneous paupers in England and Wales, probably 120,000 are acutely sick, requiring, not merely maintenance, but also appropriate medical treatment. It is, therefore, somewhat remarkable that the Report of 1834 contained no recommendations as to the treatment of the sick.* Among the four separate institutions which the authors of that Report recommended as the minimum for each Union, a hospital found no place.† This was not because they were careless of the sufferings of the sick poor, but because the institutional treatment of sick persons was, at that date, hardly recognised as important, either from a curative or a preventive standpoint. What the authors of the 1834 Report contemplated providing for the sick poor—what indeed, was at that time the customary provision for the sick of all degrees—was merely the attendance of a medical man in their own homes and a plentiful supply of medicine. Accordingly when the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–47, instead of establishing in each Union these four separate institutions, pressed for the building of one General Mixed Workhouse, this did not include any specialised provision for the sick. The most that was done was to set aside a room for such of the Workhouse inmates as became ill, for medical attendance upon whom the Board of Guardians contracted with a local doctor. Thus, whether within the Workhouse or in the sufferers' own homes, the conception of medical care was, in 1834, of the simplest.

During the past seventy years the influence of the Central Authority on the Boards of Guardians has, in this branch of their work, been of a two-fold character; it has attempted to restrict the area of Outdoor Medical Relief, whilst striving to improve the quality of Indoor Medical Relief. The crusade against Outdoor Relief, conducted, as we have seen, by the Inspectorate of 1869–86,‡ included as one of its departments a tightening-up of the conditions on which Medical Orders were habitually granted. Boards of Guardians were encouraged to subject the applicant for a Medical Order to the same inquisitorial inquiries and the same treatment by the Relieving Officer as if the application had been for money or food; to grant the relief "on loan," and to threaten to recover its cost; and generally to deter persons from applying for the services of the District Medical Officer except in dire necessity. On the other hand, there has been, especially from 1866 onwards, a steady pressure on the Boards of Guardians to improve the institutional provision for the sick poor, by erecting separate hospital buildings, by augmenting the medical staff, and by substituting trained nurses for the pauper attendants. This apparent inconsistency between the two parts of the medical policy of the Central Authority is explained by the assumption that Outdoor Medical Relief, whilst not in itself deterrent, was an open door to other forms of pauperism, to which it was apt to

* We estimate, though no statistics are available, that the pauper sick in England and Wales numbered on March 31st, 1906, probably 120,000; in Scotland, probably 16,000; and in Ireland, possibly 24,000, apart from the merely infirm aged, and the mentally defective. Including "chronic" cases, the number would be much greater. A Return obtained by the Commission from 128 Unions, comprising 31 per cent. of the population of England and Wales, showed that on a given day, 31·4 per cent. of all the paupers, indoor and outdoor (excluding lunatics in asylums) were actually receiving medical treatment. This indicates that throughout the United Kingdom there are probably 300,000 paupers under treatment. But half of these are merely "chronic" or "senile" cases.

† Report of 1834, p. 303.

‡ Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907

lead ; * whilst Indoor Medical Relief, however good in quality, would, by its very nature, always be deterrent, owing to the necessary loss of liberty, and would thus never be taken advantage of by any but those who were absolutely destitute.

The two-fold policy thus emanating from the Local Government Board has been reflected in the medical administration of the Boards of Guardians up and down the country, in an irregular manner and to a varying degree. Some Boards have distinguished themselves for diminishing, almost to the vanishing point, the number of Medical Orders given for the attendance of the sick poor in their own homes. Other Boards have marked themselves out by the efficiency and elaborateness of the costly "infirmaries" or "hospitals" that they have provided for the sick poor, and by the complete separation of these institutions from the General Mixed Workhouse. We have, however, to record that, in the great majority of Unions, especially those of rural or semi-rural character, the Boards of Guardians have shown themselves equally impervious to both sides of the advice and injunctions of the Local Government Board; and have continued, with a minimum of improvement, much the same primitive provision for the sick poor, alike for those residing in their own homes and those within the General Mixed Workhouse, in which the authors of the Report of 1834 seem tacitly to have acquiesced.

(B) Domiciliary Medical Treatment under the Poor Law.

The domiciliary medical treatment of the sick poor is entrusted, in England and Wales, to 3,713 District Medical Officers, averaging five or six for each Union, severally appointed for life or during good behaviour by the Boards of Guardians concerned. The Local Government Board insists that the person appointed shall be legally qualified; that he shall reside within the district assigned to him, and that he shall receive a permanent and personal appointment. Subject to these requirements, the selection of the District Medical Officer, the amount of his remuneration, and the detailed conditions of his appointment are left entirely to the discretion of the Guardians, who have usually, for this purpose, no expert advice at their command. In the first years of the Poor Law Commissioners the new Boards of Guardians were urged by them to put these appointments up to competition among the medical practitioners of the Union, and to appoint the man who, being duly qualified, offered to take the post (including the supply of the necessary medicines) at the lowest price.† This gave rise to much objection, and the Poor Law Commissioners

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* Investigation did not give much support to this assumption. Our Medical Investigator, for instance, reports that to him at the outset it seemed "a perfectly natural one, and I had no doubt of finding abundant evidence of its soundness in the first Union to be inspected. I decided to ask every inmate of its Workhouse who could give any information on the subject whether he or she had received medical Out-relief before getting any other kind of relief from the Guardians, and accordingly spent an afternoon interviewing the paupers. dependently of other Out-relief. The replies were so unexpected that I asked the master to continue catechising on the same lines and to give me a note of the particulars of all the answers obtained. He did so, and the result was similar." Dr. McVail then extended his inquiry, so as to include persons on Outdoor Relief. The outcome was that: "In only four out of 490 indoor paupers, and in only twelve of 1,198 outdoor paupers, or in practically 1 per cent. of each of the two classes, had general pauperism begun with Medical Out-relief only, so that in only this 1 per cent. is it possible that, in the rural Unions, Medical Out-relief had led the way to Indoor Relief, or to Outdoor Relief in money or in kind. The figures given for January 1st, 1905, correspond very closely to these. In a total of 6,018 paupers in the eleven rural Unions only sixty-six, or very little over 1 per cent., were in receipt of Medical Relief only. And it cannot be assumed that even this 1 per cent. was led into pauperism by receiving Medical Out-relief. In short, I found it impossible to get on a statistical basis any evidence of this alleged evil influence of Medical Out-relief" (Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, pp. 141–2). In the Metropolis, where it is "the nearly unanimous opinion of Relieving Officers," that "the obtaining of Medical Orders, especially in the cases where nourishment is prescribed," is "a most prolific cause of pauperism," our Investigators into industrial conditions "found that of a total of 237 male operatives in the boot and shoe trades, a Medical Order formed the kind of relief first given in thirty-four cases, or about one-seventh of the total" (Report . . . on the Effect of Industrial Conditions on Pauperism, by Mr. A. D. Steel-Maitland and Miss R. E. Squire, p. 15). This, however, leaves it uncertain whether, even in those cases, the cause of pauperism was not the disease, rather than the issue of the Medical Order. We have been unable to get any evidence as to the relative effect on subsequent pauperism of cases of disease left unattended to, and cases of disease for which a Medical Order was granted.

† First Annual Report of Poor Law Commissioners, 1835, p. 53; Report of the Poor Law Commissioners on the Further Amendment of the Poor Law, 1839, pp. 73–78, 156–287; Reports of House of Commons Committees of 1838, 1844, 1854, and 1864; *Life and Times of Thomas Wakley*, by S. Squire Sprigge, 1897.

and their successors in office gradually became converted to the advantage of transferring the competitive pressure from price to quality—offering an adequate salary for the duties required, of paying separately for drugs and other accessories of the treatment, and even of providing an official dispensary and a salaried dispenser. Unfortunately, but few of the 650 Boards of Guardians have yet adopted the new policy, in spite of all the pressure that the Local Government Board has exercised. In the great majority of Unions the District Medical Officers still have to find their own drugs and medicines, and any dressings and bandages that are required, and they are paid fixed stipends which vary from as little as £10 or £15 a year up to as much as £300 or £400, a very usual figure being £100; together with additional fees for midwifery cases and operations. Many of them declare that they do not receive more than 4d. or 6d. per visit.* Both the amount and the method of the remuneration of the District Medical Officers have repeatedly been made the subject of official criticism, which was brought forcibly to our notice. "It is undeniable," testified the Poor Law Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, "that the majority of medical officers, in or outdoor, are paid salaries miserably inadequate."† This is obviously due to the continuance, in a veiled form, of the practice unfortunately encouraged by the Poor Law Commissioners, of putting the office up to competitive tender. The Medical Inspector himself informed us that when, on one occasion, he "was a candidate for an outdoor medical officership, . . . a colleague of mine offered to do the work for nothing for one year if he was appointed, and afterwards at a much less salary than I asked for."‡ "When I tell guardians that their . . . medical officers are not adequately paid," remarked to us one of the General Inspectors of the Local Government Board, "they answer: 'Well, at all events, we have only to advertise it, and we shall get any amount of candidates who are perfectly ready to come forward and do the work on the terms we offer. In the face of that, can we, in the proper performance of our duty to the ratepayers, offer more than we can get what we want for?'"§ What was not fully considered by the Poor Law Commissioners, and is still not adequately realised by the Boards of Guardians, is that so long as these appointments are thrown open to private practitioners, they will be taken for other reasons than the salaries offered. "One knows," testified a competent witness, "that the medical men in a great many instances do not take office for the emolument which they will get from the office, but for various other considerations. Probably one of the chief considerations is to keep somebody else out. There are a certain number of men who have the medical work in a certain area between themselves and they naturally want to keep another practitioner from coming in. That is one motive. Another motive is that holding Poor Law offices does indirectly bring them practice. . . . Even taking all that into consideration, I do not think that there is any justification for not paying a man a fair value for his work. I think it is very undesirable that Medical Officers should be able to say: "Well, if they find fault with me, at all events I feel this—that I am giving them more than their money's worth."‖ "The evils arising, or likely to arise, from this underpayment," says a competent witness, "are various. The Medical Officer is compelled to economise his time too strictly; he cannot afford to supply expensive medicines or to carry out modern improvements in medical

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* Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, pp. 119–121; Report by Mrs. Sidney Webb, on the Medical Services the Poor Law and Public Health Departments, p. 13. It seems gradually to have become customary for the Guardians in their contract with the District Medical Officer, to undertake to supply certain "expensive" drugs, usually cod liver oil, and quinine. The selection of these drugs in this way seems, in view of altered prices and the changes in medical practice, somewhat out of date. Potassium iodide, for instance, is sometimes included, sometimes not. Diphtheria antitoxin is hardly ever supplied; though the Local Government Board has informed one Union that this may be done (Local Government Board to Winchcombe Board of Guardians, July, 1906). One District Medical Officer found that he spent 8s. upon it for two cases only, so that the antitoxin is, in fact, hardly ever used for paupers. The Local Government Board has lately declared, in answer to an inquiry, that, not only the above, but also antiseptic surgical dressings, cocaine, phenacetin, trional, antipyrine, salicylate of sodium, tincture of digitalis, and serum preparations ought all to be included in "expensive medicines."

† Evidence of Dr. Fuller, Inspector for Poor Law Medical Purposes in the Provinces of England and Wales, Appendix, No. XXI. (A), Par. 25, to Vol. I.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 10460.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 8920, 9320.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 9320. This evidence was confirmed by that given by the Secretary of the Poor Law Medical Officers' Association, *Ibid.*, *Q.* 33419.

treatment."* Nevertheless, only in two or three instances have the whole services of a Medical Officer been secured, at a "full-time" salary. Only in the Metropolis and a few other towns is an official dispensary or a salaried dispenser provided.† Practically only in these few cases is the District Medical Officer set free to prescribe what he may deem necessary for the patient, without having to pay for it out of his own pocket. Everywhere, with but two or three exceptions, the whole duty is entrusted, at a scanty and inclusive stipend, to one of the local practitioners.

The conditions under which the District Medical Officers carry out their duties are as unsatisfactory as their remuneration is demoralising. They are at the beck and call of the Relieving Officer, a non-medical authority, who has the right, at his unaided discretion, to refuse a sufferer access, to direct him to call at the doctor's house, or (by merely marking the medical order "urgent") to require the doctor himself immediately to visit the patient's residence.‡ If the District Medical Officer, obeying the dictates of humanity, attends any urgent case without the Relieving Officer's order, he not infrequently finds himself refused, "on some frivolous pretext or another," the midwifery fee or other emolument to which he would normally have been entitled.§ The majority of the cases that he has to attend are, moreover, of the most disheartening kind—largely old people, with chronic complaints, or persons of more than the average degree of ignorance, carelessness, intemperance and, above all, grinding poverty, with the drawbacks of bad housing, the poorest kind of clothing, insufficient and unsuitable food, inadequate attendance,‖ and an almost total absence of skilled nursing. The Boards of Guardians have power to appoint salaried nurses for the outdoor sick, but they have almost uniformly refused to do so. In a small minority of Unions they pay a subscription to the local nursing association, so that the paupers may obtain a share of the services of the district nurse. But over the greater part of the country there is no district nurse; and it is rare for the Guardians to make any sort of provision for nursing the outdoor sick poor.¶

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* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 33391, Par. 4. In one rural Union, the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Guardians stated that the District Medical Officer got no allowance for even the most expensive medicines, and that he had been heard to complain that his salary hardly covered the cost of the medicines he supplied (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 71432, 71433). "The poor do suffer to some extent," declared a District Medical Officer, "we could do much more justice if we were paid better; if there is a choice between an expensive and better method of treatment and an inexpensive method of treatment not quite so good, I am afraid they get the inexpensive method." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 74925–8). "Drugs should be provided by the Guardians," said a Medical Officer of Health, "the doctor giving a prescription to be taken to the chemist. The poor would then get the drugs they need, and not what the Medical Officer thinks he can afford to give them on his diminutive salary" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. CLIX, (Par. 8) to Vol. VII.

† The Poor Law Dispensary, with premises, drugs, and a salaried dispenser provided by the Board of Guardians, where the District Medical Officer attends at stated times to see such of his patients as can come to him, has been, since 1867, established at the instance of the Central Authority in all but two of the Metropolitan Unions. Similar dispensaries have since been established by the Boards of Guardians of a score of provincial towns. This brings with it the advantage of freeing the District Medical Officer from the misplaced duty of providing, out of his meagre stipend, the drugs and medicines that he prescribes, and also, to some extent, of facilitating his work by enabling him to deal more expeditiously with the half of his patients who come to the dispensary, at the cost, however, of diminishing for that half the opportunities for diagnosis and appropriate hygienic advice that are afforded by seeing the patient at home. In all other respects the arrangements are the same as where no Poor Law Dispensary is provided. The shortcomings of the Poor Law Dispensaries from the standpoint of curative treatment are stated in our Medical Investigator's Report. (Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, pp. 126–139; *see also* Report . . . on the Medical Services of the Poor Law and Public Health Departments, pp. 14, 15.)

‡ It is said to be a practice in some Unions to mark all Medical Orders "urgent," that are given out of regular hours.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 33391, Par. 11.

‖ Here is a case which one of our Committees happened to visit. Their Report says: "This is the case of a man dying of cancer in the throat. We found the door locked, and but for a kindly neighbour who opened a window and found the key, we could not have got in, the man being quite alone, hardly able to speak, and horribly ill. The house very poor. A daughter earns 9s., the only regular income, and the rent is 4s. 2d. The old wife had gone to a neighbour where she would earn 4d. by minding the house. The Relieving Officer did seem to see the horror of this man lying there locked in, and suggested sending the ambulance. Relief, 5s. and a loaf." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 22 G., p. 57.)

¶ There used to be an idea that one outdoor pauper could nurse another; and some Boards of Guardians still embody in their By-laws that: "Out-paupers will be required to attend other out-paupers in sickness, when ordered by the Relieving Officer to do so." (Rules of Kingsclere Board of Guardians.) Some Boards occasionally allow a shilling or two to a neighbouring woman to look in upon a sick patient. This is, however, discouraged and restricted. "No allowance," run the rules of several Unions, "shall be made for nursing except in special cases." (Rules of Warwick Board of Guardians; similarly, in various terms, at Brixworth, Cheltenham, Banbury, etc.) At Chichester, where it so happens that the Workhouse Medical Officer is also the Outdoor Medical Officer for the whole Union, the Workhouse nurses are—as at Merthyr, Rochdale and Soulcoates—sent out as required, to attend to the patients on Outdoor Relief." The result is," says the Medical Inspector, "that at Chichester we get a vastly better nursing staff than we have in other Workhouses of the same size," and the Outdoor poor are better nursed (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 10376–9).

Our Medical Investigator reports that "In many villages and their surrounding neighbourhood, I found that no district nurse whatever was available. District Medical Officers complained very much of this want of assistance, and the complaint was well founded. . . . Quite unquestionably, in some rural districts the want of sick-nursing of paupers is a serious defect in the present system of Poor Law medical relief." * This was, indeed, frankly stated by the General Inspectors of the Local Government Board. "The lack of nursing upon the outdoor sick poor," testified one of them, "is another source of hardship, and one which urgently needs to be dealt with." † The fact that wool, lint and bandages are hardly ever supplied by the Guardians aggravates the evil. The District Medical Officer can order nothing better than clean rags for dressings, lest" (as one of them said "the bad legs should ruin him."‡ As things are, it is unfortunately painfully true, as an experienced District Medical Officer informed us, that "many cases die simply from want of proper nursing. I cannot," he said, "speak strongly enough on this point. It is one of the Medical Officer's greatest drawbacks that he cannot get efficient nursing for his outdoor cases." § "It is dreadful," reports a Local Government Board Inspector, "to think of the amount of unnecessary inconvenience, to say the least, suffered by outpatients now, looked upon as a matter of course, and allowed to continue with no practical effort to prevent it. If expense were incurred it would be doubly justifiable. Firstly, because of the suffering it would alleviate. Secondly, for the more cynical reason that it would restore the patient to health, and get him off the rates much more quickly. Medical Officers are handicapped in their work when they have no intelligent nursing power behind them, and know that it is useless to try many things that might be done if there were the requisite attendance at hand." || Finally, the District Medical Officers are deprived of the stimulus and encouragement of official recognition or supervision. They have no medical superior to whom they can report; they are not even in official communication with the Medical Officers of Health of their districts, or with the County Medical Officer. As some of them have complained to us, they are never asked, either by the Boards of Guardians or by the Local Government Board, for particulars of their success or failure in treating cases, or for details of any improvement in treatment that they may have introduced. There are no medical statistics of their work. According to the "year's count" of pauperism that the Commission had taken for England and Wales, no fewer than 216,022 persons received "Medical Relief only" in the course of one year, to say nothing of those who got other relief as well. Yet, by what seems to have been an official oversight that we do not understand, these 3,713 District Medical Officers are left to do their work without either supervision or inspection by the Local Government Board.¶ From 1834 down to the present day there has been no official inspection of this Poor Law Medical Service, which costs in salaries, dispensaries, and drugs alone, nearly £500,000 sterling annually.

Under these circumstances, we were not surprised to find existing a certain dissatisfaction with the Outdoor Medical Service of the Poor Law. The Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, who "has no duties in connection with the supervision or administration of Outdoor Medical Relief," ** informed us, in reply to our questions, that, "unofficially," he was "constantly hearing complaints" that patients on Outdoor Medical

* Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, p. 112.

† Evidence of Mr. Baldwyn Fleming, Appendix No. XIX. (A), Par. 22, to Vol. I.

‡ "Many of the old people whom I saw," reports our own Medical Investigator, "were afflicted with ulcers of the legs; the use of proper and sufficient dressings for such ulcers was the exception. Lint and gutta-percha tissue and other non-porous coverings are seldom provided. Linen rags are the rule. These are usually obtained from neighbours or from the charity of the better-off in the community. Linen rags saturated with a medicated lotion may be comfortable enough, so long as the rags are kept wet, but at night, when the patient goes to sleep, the lotion will quickly evaporate, and in the morning the rag and ulcer will be closely adherent, and not separable without a good deal of pain." (Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. McVail, 1907, p. 102.)

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 34566, Par. 6 (c). "There is no doubt in my mind," testifies another witness, "but that the medical assistance to the poor (paupers) is seriously affected by the complete absence of any organised scheme for the proper nursing of the patients in their own homes." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 75774, Par. 6.) Nor need this attendance be wholly that of a trained nurse. "Much help could be given, and better results obtained," says a District Medical Officer, "by the employment of respectable women to thoroughly cleanse and keep clean the homes of the poor where there is sickness in the house, and a qualified nurse is not necessary for this purpose." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. CXLVIII. (Par. 6) to Vol. VII.) "The very poor people, I am sure," says another witness, "are very much neglected indeed; there are a great many deaths due to it (inadequate nursing) that would otherwise get better." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 34672.)

|| Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1905–6, p. 466. (Mr. Fleming's Report.)

¶ This lack of official inspection was made the subject of complaint by several of the District Medical Officers themselves; *see* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 34566 (Par. 6 (b)), 34648, and Appendix No. XCI. (Par. 6) to Vol. VII., We were informed that, with the exception of two Reports on the London dispensaries, there were no systematic Reports in existence on the working of Outdoor Medical Relief. (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 22923.)

** *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXI. (A), Par. 29, to Vol. I.

Relief were not well and sufficiently attended.* The District Medical Officers, said one witness "do the work according to the pay." He did not think the paupers were treated as well as the paying patients. "The doctor," he said, "takes these positions in order to further his private practice, and I am afraid the poor very often have to suffer for that reason; he takes it too cheap." † "The present plan of medically assisting the poor under the Poor Law," says a medical practitioner, himself a Guardian, "is not an efficient system. The average Poor Law Medical Officer (outdoor) does not give the satisfaction he ought to his patients." ‡ "The working classes," says another medical practitioner, "have the idea that the attention they get from the Poor Law Medical Officer is not satisfactory."§ "They feel," said another witness, "that the District Medical Officers have not the time to attend to them." ‖ "I am inclined to think," deposed a Shropshire Guardian, "that they do not get much of his services. He goes round to them in a casual way, but there are great complaints that the patients of the Poor Law . . . do not get very much attention from the doctors . . . I merely speak from my knowledge of the cottagers themselves, and where there is illness, I find if there are more important cases in the neighbourhood the poor are neglected." ¶ "The poor people are very dissatisfied, I find," said the Hon. Sydney Holland, "with the medical relief that they get from the Poor Law authorities; it is given in a very grudging spirit, and they do not believe in it." ** One of the District Medical Officers himself admitted to us "that the tradition of the service is that every pauper is to be looked on as being such through his or her own fault, and the tendency is to treat the case accordingly. . . . In the town . . . I believe that the tradition, as to a pauper, is that he is a shade only above a criminal. . . . Now to this tradition the Medical Officer tends, like all other officers, to become a victim, and the tendency is that the case of sickness is treated as a 'pauper' and not as a 'patient.' The Commission will, I trust, see the distinction." ††

These complaints appear to us to do less than justice to the District Medical Officers themselves. So far as we have been able to see anything of their work, we have been struck by their personal kindness to the poor, and by their desire to relieve suffering. When we consider the method and amount of their remuneration, and the conditions of their duties, we are impressed with the zeal and devotion displayed, with the humanity shown to the poor, and with the large amount of unpaid, unrecognised and unrecorded work performed by them as a class. But taking into account all the evidence, we have to make two main criticisms on the Outdoor Medical Service as a system involving a large expenditure of public money. In too many Unions, it is clear, outdoor medical relief begins and ends with a bottle of medicine and, in the twentieth century, we have ceased to believe in the bottle of medicine. It is not regarded as any part of the duty of the Poor Law Medical Officer to insist on, or even to inculcate, the personal habits necessary for recovery. "Under the Poor Law," reports our Medical Investigator, "there is practically no sanitary supervision of phthisis in the home of the patient. . . . Phthisis cases are maintained in crowded unventilated houses. . . . Diabetes cases live on the rates and eat what they please. Infirm men and women supported by the Poor Law are allowed to dwell in conditions of the utmost personal and domestic uncleanliness. . . . It is not worth while entering on any reform of the Poor Law unless this policy is changed. Beneficiaries must be compelled to obedience, alike in their own and in the public interest. And the officers who are placed in direct charge of the beneficiaries must themselves be subject to supervision and discipline."‡‡ Our second criticism is that, from first to last, there is, in the Poor Law Medical Service, no thought of anything but "relief." It is not regarded as any part of the duty of the District Medical Officer to take any steps to prevent disease, either in the way of recurrence in the same patient, or in its spread to other persons. His work is entirely unconnected, on the one hand, with the institutional treatment of the

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* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 10572.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 71430–4.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 42509, Par. 2.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 43150.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 44672.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 71725, 71774.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 32536.

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 51859, Par. 7. "I certainly think," says a county medical practitioner, "the health of the community suffers owing to the insufficiency of the medical assistance." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXVIII. (Par. 7) to Vol. VII.) "The poor," said another medical practitioner, who is himself a Poor Law Guardian, "are choked off by the Relieving Officer, and by the Guardians in many cases; and I am afraid the manner of some of the Medical Officers chokes them off as well." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 42519.)

‡‡ Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, pp. 91 and 149.

sick in the workhouse or Poor Law Infirmary, and on the other with the operations of the Medical Officer of Health. It is not regarded as any matter of reproach to a Board of Guardians or to its staff, that numerous mild cases of scarlet fever or chickenpox and even thirty or forty per cent, of the cases of measles or whooping cough, ringworm or mumps should be wholly destitute of medical attendance, to the serious danger of the public health.* It is not even the business of the District Medical Officer to reduce the amount of sickness in his district. All that he is charged to do, as it is all that he is paid to do, is to "relieve destitution" in a certain specialised way, namely, to supply medical relief to those applicants who have braved the deterrent attitude of the Relieving Officer and satisfied him that they would otherwise be without it. From first to last, in short, the Outdoor Medical Service of the Poor Law has no conception of the Public Health point of view.

(c) The Restriction of Domiciliary Medical Treatment.

In the early part of our inquiry it was brought to our notice by the advocates of strict administration, that many Boards of Guardians had failed to carry out the policy pressed on them by some of the Inspectors of the Local Government Board to restrict the grant of Medical Orders to persons actually destitute. We found, indeed, that in a large number of Unions the grant or refusal of a Medical Order was practically left to the discretion of the Relieving Officer—on occasions, indeed, even to the discretion of the workhouse porter.† One of our committees, for instance, after visiting a large urban Union reported that the "orders for medical relief were sanctioned *en bloc.*"‡ Of another populous Union our committee reported that "the medical relief was in all cases ordered by the Relieving Officer, the Committee (of the Board of Guardians) merely confirming his action. The order in each case lasted for a month."§ Under these circumstances the tendency naturally is for the Relieving Officers to grant Medical Orders freely and indiscriminately; sometimes in order to protect themselves against the risk of having an applicant die for lack of help;‖ sometimes "with a view," as the President of the Association of Poor Law Unions informed us, of "getting rid of" applicants for relief on the easiest possible terms. A Relieving Officer will say, for instance, "we will give you a Medical Order if you like, but we will give you nothing else."¶ Frequently every person, well or ill, who receives Outdoor Relief, is put on "the permanent list," and becomes entitled himself to send for the District Medical Officer whenever he chooses.** In the laxest Unions, as we have gathered, Medical Orders are given to all who apply for them, without even being entered in the Application and Report Book.†† We have even had it given in evidence that, in one Union, the practice is for the Relieving Officers to sign a batch of such Orders at a time, with the names and dates blank, and to leave them with the shopkeepers of the villages, from whom any person gets one who chooses to ask for it.‡‡

This lavish and indiscriminate grant of Medical Orders, by medically unqualified persons, without any verification of the fact of illness, or of its urgency or gravity, has, we think, a disastrous effect, both on the quality of the service rendered and on the spirit in which it is accepted. Under such a system a District Medical Officer is quite in the dark as to the weight to be attached to the Order that he receives from the Relieving Officer; he can feel no assurance that his services are really needed, or that the case is one of urgency. We have even heard of instances in which he has suspected, apparently with some justification, that the Order has been applied for by a malingerer, given by a Relieving Officer, or marked by him urgent, in order to vex or harass the doctor in

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* *See* the statistics given in the Report . . . on the Medical Services of the Poor Law and Public Health Departments, p. 47.

† *Ibid.*, p. 8.

‡ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 24 C., p. 63.

§ *Ibid.*, No. 2 E., p. 11. Another of our Committees found that: "Medical Orders are given with practically no inquiry, and the recipients do not appear before the Committee" (*Ibid.*, No. 112, p. 177). These facts were confirmed by the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, who informed us that, in some Unions, "an order for Outdoor Medical Relief is given without any inquiry, simply on the application of the person." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 10302.)

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 22767–71.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 25024.

** In the Metropolis alone there are 20,000 persons on "the permanent list."

†† Report . . . on the Medical Services of the Poor Law and Public Health Departments, p. 8; *see also* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 10302.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 70671–82.

revenge for some former lack of compliance on his part with an unwarranted request. Moreover, a lavish distribution of Medical Orders to all applying for them is a contravention of the present contract with the District Medical Officer, who is paid a meagre salary for attendance only on parishioners who are both sick and actually destitute. All this tends to make the District Medical Officers reluctant and suspicious—to quote again the words of one of them, to make them regard the holders of Medical Orders "as paupers rather than as patients." It is to the credit of the District Medical Officers that their representations to us have taken the form, in the main, of complaints that many poor persons who in fact need their attendance are, under the present system, deterred from getting it; and that, when such persons do succeed in obtaining a Medical Order, the delay has often injurious results. It has been pointed out that this would not be the case if, instead of the Relieving Officer, it was the District Nurse, the Certified Midwife, the Health Visitor, the Sanitary Inspector, or any qualified person under obligation to search out and report cases of illness, who notified to the District Medical Officer that a sick person was in need of medical attendance. Nor is the effect of this indiscriminate grant of peremptory orders to the District Medical Officer, to visit persons who may or may not be ill, any less harmful to the recipients. Whatever may be the advantage of a public organisation of medical assistance, as universal and as free—if not also as compulsory—as that of education, a careless and ignorant issue, by a Destitution Authority, of Poor Law Medical Orders to persons not really entitled to them, encourages fraud and malingering. The holder of a Medical Order may have merely pretended to be ill or pretended to be destitute; he is under no responsibility with regard to his own illness, or to the order which he has obtained; he presents it or not, as he chooses; he takes the medicine or throws it away at his option; he follows the doctor's advice, or remains dirty and dissolute, exactly as he pleases—without feeling under any obligation to the community to co-operate in his own cure, or under any kind of compulsion to abandon the evil courses which may have led to his ill-health.

On the other hand, it was represented to us that, in some Unions, there has been a persistent, and in a sense successful, attempt to restrict the use by the sick poor of the services of the District Medical Officers provided for them. In these Unions "Good administration of the Poor Law Medical Service" is apparently taken to mean not curing the sick or preventing ill-health, but cutting down the number of Medical Orders. This policy is even expressed in standing orders or bylaws. Thus, Relieving Officers are often forbidden to grant Medical Orders without first paying a personal visit to the home of the applicant and investigating his circumstances,* in order, not to find out how best to cure the sufferer, but if possible to discover some ground which makes him ineligible for aid. Other Boards expressly say "that orders by the Relieving Officer for Medical attendance must be more charily given, due inquiries being made when possible at the house before being granted, or at any rate at the earliest moment possible after being granted." † In some Unions the applicant for a Medical Order is required to attend personally before the Guardians at their meeting, and explain, to this non-medical authority, how he comes to need medical aid. "Midwifery Orders," says one Board, "shall not be given by the Relieving Officer, except in urgent cases, without the consent of the Board of Guardians, given on personal application to them." ‡ An even more usual way of staving off applicants is, whatever their circumstances, to insist on granting the Medical Order only as "relief on loan," this being sometimes printed, as a matter of course, on the form. "All orders for medical attendance," says a Suffolk Board of Guardians, "shall be granted in the first instance by way of loan, the applicant to repay 10s. for each midwifery case, and 5s. for each other case." § The applicants then remain liable to repay the cost; and the Relieving Officer is sometimes allowed a commission of 20 per cent. on what he can recover. Occasionally the grant of Medical Orders in midwifery cases is restricted to families having less than a prescribed income, it may be 15s. or 18s. or 21s. a week, whatever the number of children,‖ or it may be at the rate of 2s., 2s. 6d., or 3s. a week for each member of the family.¶ In the Ellesmere Union we were informed that Medical Orders were never

* Regulations of Bromsgrove Board of Guardians; also at Calne, and many other places.

† Instructions of Wincanton Board of Guardians.

‡ Rules of Keynsham Board of Guardians.

§ Rules of Mitford and Launditch Board of Guardians; similarly in various terms, at Hinckley, Ruthin, St. Asaph, Llanfyllin, Warwick, Yeovil, Monmouth, Cosford, Nantwich, and many other places.

‖ Rules of the Chertsey, Lymington, Godstone and Lewisham Boards of Guardians.

¶ "That where the earnings of a family amount to 3s. per week for each member thereof, orders for medical aid be not given, except in fever or other extreme cases." (Regulations of Evesham Board of Guardians.) "Able-bodied people, if earning less than 2s. 6d. per head in family, may have Medical Orders for man, wife, and children. . . . Midwife; basis not to exceed 2s. per head in family." (Resolution of East and West Flegg Board of Guardians, 1904.)

given to anyone, however ill, who was not otherwise in receipt of relief ; in fact, the Guardians were under the impression that it could not lawfully be done. * A more ingenious way of deterring applicants is to resolve " that when relief is administered to a labouring man who is himself ill (if the disease is not contagious) the Board requires that some of the children shall come to the Workhouse during the sickness,"† that is to say, into the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described. When the Medical Order has been given, it is made the duty of the Relieving Officer to visit the case frequently and regularly ;‡ not to see whether the patient is obeying the doctor's orders, or whether anything else is needed to restore him to health, but in order to discover whether he has not some undisclosed resources which would permit of the relief being withdrawn. The Guardians are, in fact, as one committee reports, " strongly of opinion that a large number of the cases relieved would manage without assistance from the Guardians if they were properly and systematically visited and dealt with by the Relieving Officer."§

We have found the practice of some Boards of Guardians even more severely restrictive of the use of the District Medical Officers than is implied by the foregoing Bylaws. Thus, the Bradfield Union in this way claims to have reduced the number of Medical Orders granted from 700 to forty-seven per annum.|| In the Bermondsey Union, where the poor are said to " have more difficulty in getting relief now than they used," the permanent list of those on whom the District Medical Officers have to attend has fallen from over 1,000 in 1901, to 322 in 1906, not because there is less sickness in Bermondsey, or less destitution, but merely because more difficulty has been put in the way of the sick poor getting Medical Orders ¶ Nor is there any doubt as to the cause of the reduction. One District Medical Officer informed us that he was convinced that the reduction in the number of Medical Orders granted in a particular Union was due entirely to the deterrent effect of insisting on prior investigation and personal application to the Board of Guardians.** The St. Pancras Board of Guardians reduced the number of its Medical Orders from 5,324 in 1899 to 2,546 in 1903,†† by making stringent inquiries on every application, requiring the applicant to appear personally before the Board, tendering the Medical Relief on loan in many cases, and offering the alternative of admission to the Workhouse whenever deemed advisable. Thus the Medical Superintendent of the Mill Hill Infirmary of the West Derby Union (Dr. Nathan Raw) states " people will struggle on with a disease and spend all their money, and then apply to the Poor Law, in some cases almost when the people are dying . . . in many cases they are deterred from seeking it until it is too late."‡‡ " The neglect of the poor to apply for Medical Relief," says another witness, " is partly due to the idea that Poor Law relief is a degradation. It has been so officially styled by the Poor Law Board, and I believe it is so considered by many of those engaged in the administration of the Poor Law."§§ " You will find," we were told, that " in most cases where " the delay in getting prompt medical assistance " is the fault of the people, it is because sending for the doctor means making themselves paupers."|||| The representatives of the British Medical Association were emphatic in their testimony that the association of the public medical aid with the Poor Law was in itself deterrent; it was, they said, " the experience of every practitioner . . . that people avoid calling in

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 71420–6.

† Report of Atcham Board of Guardians, 1871 ; also adopted by the Pewsey Board of Guardians. " The method," states the Report of the Atcham Board of Guardians, " also acts as a test of destitution, for in almost every case where the parties have refused to send the children "—refused, that is, to plunge their children into the General Mixed Workhouse, for the Atcham Union has no separate institution for its children— " they have gone without relief altogether," and, as the Report optimistically assumes, " have had other means of support, and should not have applied to the Relieving Officer."

‡ " That the Relieving Officers be required to make at least fortnightly visits to the homes of all persons receiving relief on account of temporary sickness, and to visit the old and infirm cases at least once a quarter." (Regulations of Evesham Board of Guardians) ; similarly at Cheltenham, Warwick, Haverfordwest, Oxford, Luton, Holywell, and many other places.

§ Report of Special Committee of Willesden Board of Guardians ; MS. Minutes, Willesden Board of Guardians, December 13th, 1905.

|| Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 9499, 19781, and Appendix No. CCXI. (A) to Vol. VII.

¶ Report . . . on the Medical Services of the Poor Law and Public Health Departments, p. 22.

** Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 34076–8, 34164.

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 23074.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 37946 ; *see* Confirmatory Evidence by Dr. Niven, Medical Officer of Health, Manchester, *Qs.* 38380–38626.

§§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 25373, Par. 157.

|||| Evidence of Dr. J. S. Cameron, Medical Officer of Health, Leeds, *Ibid.*, *Q.* 41629.

the parish doctor because he *is* the parish doctor." * The reluctance to come forward and state their need is increased by the fact that it is not to a medical man or a nurse that the sick persons have to make their applications for public medical assistance, but to the Relieving Officer, who,† as we have seen, almost inevitably comes to think of himself as bound to do all that he can to keep people "off the rates." ‡ To the Relieving Officer, under the instructions of the Local Government Board and the Bylaws of the Boards of Guardians, this medical treatment of the sick by the District Medical Officer, even without other aid, is not to be denied to those who are both in need of it and actually destitute, but nevertheless to be restricted to as few cases as possible. The Hon. Sydney Holland, who has been a Poor Law Guardian in two different Unions, and whose experience of hospital administration is very great, informed us that when he was a Guardian he himself entirely acquiesced in this policy and "thought it was a very good thing. I thought that everybody who came before us was a swindler and must be most carefully inquired into, and asked whether he had not drunk too much, and all the rest of it. That is the ideal Guardian, a man who prevents imposition. . . . All Poor Relief," he continues, "is given reluctantly. Every Guardian is told to give it reluctantly; every Poor Law Officer gives it reluctantly, and, in fact . . . the only person you relieve in the Poor Law is the person who is starving. . . . It is exactly the same with regard to medical relief. You are not to treat medically unless they are paupers." The result is, as he informed us, "that the poor people were dissatisfied with the medical relief they got from the Poor Law; that it is given grudgingly . . . the man going to the Relieving Officer, being put in the dock, questioned up hill and down dale, and treated as a thief." §

The advocates of this policy of restricting the use of the District Medical Officers asserted that it resulted in no hardship to the poor, or injury to the community. Other witnesses declared that it was "a real danger to the public," ‖ and that it was responsible for much of the excessive mortality among infants and unnecessary ill-health and premature invalidity among the wage-earners. In face of this conflict of testimony, we thought it necessary, not only to appoint a special medical investigator, but also to consult those who were officially responsible for the public health—taking evidence, oral or written, from no fewer than 51 Medical Officers of Health. We regret to report that the authoritative testimony thus obtained does not support the optimistic assumptions of the advocates of restriction of public medical aid. Whilst some of the witnesses seemed to take for granted the present system as inevitable, and not to have noticed any of its drawbacks, the great majority of the medical practitioners who gave evidence were definitely of opinion that a "deterrent" administration of Poor Law Medical Relief had a gravely adverse effect on the public health. Many of them went further, and deposed that, in their opinion, the stigma of pauperism that was attached to the mere use of the services of the District Medical Officer, by the very fact of his connection with the Poor Law,¶ and the inconvenience and delay caused by having first to make application to the Relieving Officer,** were, in themselves, even without stringent administration, inimical to the health of the district. This has been demonstrated by many instances. We were informed that the present high mortality from the diseases of young children, and also many serious complications among those who survive, are undoubtedly due to the common

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 39389–91.

† "It stops the more decent ones, the really more deserving cases," deposed one District Medical Officer (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 51863).

‡ "Probably as long as medical relief is only granted on an order obtained from the same officer who with grudging hand gives an order for ordinary relief, the respectable poor will be as unwilling to apply for the former as for the latter" (*Ibid.*, Appendix XLIV. (Part III.) to Vol. IX.).

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 32776–86.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 25373, Par. 157.

¶ "There is very considerable unwillingness on the part of the working classes to apply for an order for medical treatment," testified a Medical Officer of Health, "on the ground that they lose caste, lose their vote and become paupers. It is not generally known that by having medical relief the franchise is not lost. It is probable that the Relieving Officers, in their endeavour to diminish Outdoor Relief, do not concern themselves to make known the fact that the Legislature has drawn this distinction between medical and other forms of relief" (*Ibid.*, Appendix XLIV. (Part I. (B)) to Vol. IX.).

** Thus, as one medical witness put it to us: "A pauper, therefore, being taken suddenly ill at twelve o'clock, cannot see the Relieving Officer before next morning, the necessary inquiries into his case will not be made until, perhaps, the afternoon of that day, and the doctor may not see the patient until the day after that" (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 38631, Par. 12). "The present system of medical assistance to the poor," we were informed, "is unsatisfactory, as cases of serious delay from time to time occur in obtaining orders for medical attendance in urgent cases. . . . The method by which medical assistance can be obtained in the absence of the Relieving Officer, who may be gone, for instance, in charge of a pauper lunatic to the asylum, causes dangerous delay" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. IV. to Vol. VII.). The difficulties and delay caused by this procedure in rural districts were forcibly put to us by District Medical Officers (*see Ibid.*, *Qs.* 34566 Par. 6 (*a*), and 34631–4); and emphasised by the British Medical Association (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 39013, Par. 31).

lack of medical attendance in the families of the poor, for what are regarded as the simple affections of measles and whooping-cough, and mild and often unrecognised cases of chicken-pox and scarlet fever.* "There is a widespread disinclination," testified a Medical Officer of Health for a Metropolitan Borough, "to utilise the services of the Poor Law doctors. In consequence of this failure to seek skilled medical advice, many cases of infectious disease go unrecognised, and to this fact we must attribute the comparative ineffectiveness of our modern methods of dealing with scarlet fever and diphtheria."† Nor does the Board of Guardians, aiming at restricting medical relief, make things easier for those responsible for the health of the district. "Both friendly suggestions," publicly states a Medical Officer of Health, "and simple reports, appear to cause irritation and resentment on the part of Relieving Officers and all officials connected with the Poor Law administration."‡ A case was brought to our notice in which, when an officer of the Public Health Department was seeking to get sick children treated by the District Medical Officer, this action was made the subject of serious reproof by the Destitution Authority.§

> "As a typical illustration of the great waste of money entailed by the present methods of Poor Law administration," officially reports a Medical Officer of Health, "I may mention a case that occurred in this district. Two cases of scarlet fever occurred in a family of six children. The mother was a widow with no income. There was sufficient room in the house for the proper isolation of the cases, and they could have been nursed at home, if a little help could have been obtained. Every possible effort was made to get assistance from the Poor Law authorities, but without success, and the cases were removed to the Isolation Hospital. Nine days later, two more children had to be removed, and ten days later still another two. The total cost to the district for the treatment of these cases was £55, whereas a total allowance of £5, or even of food only, would certainly have prevented this unnecessary expense. This is a single instance. The sacrifice of life, health, and money resulting from the untreated cases of disease is beyond estimation."‖ "Among the poor," says the same authority, "there is a vast amount of infectious illness continually present. Many of such cases remain unreported, untreated, practically unknown. They serve, however, as a continual and ever-present focus for the spread of such diseases among the general public. There is thus constituted a most grave public danger. The only possible way to remove such danger is to devise improved and more easily available means for treating these cases. Treatment and prevention are inseparably associated in practically all disease. The one is essentially the complement of the other. By adequately providing for the early recognition and the proper treatment of all disease, an almost incredible improvement in the public health would rapidly result. The mere existence of disease, altogether apart from any consideration as to whether it is accompanied by destitution or not, should be sufficient to ensure proper medical treatment, if the public are to be relieved of the ever-present dread of the sudden and rapid spread of infection." ¶

Nor is the danger confined to the notifiable zymotic diseases. It was given in evidence on high authority that the very great mortality from phthisis—a disease to which no less than one-seventh of the total cost of the Poor Law is said to be directly or indirectly due**—is to be attributed in no small degree to the fact that sufferers are not encouraged to present themselves for treatment in the early stages of the disease,†† when it is often curable, but when they are still capable of going to work, and are not regarded as destitute and thus not technically eligible for a Medical Order. Under the present arrangements of the Poor Law medical service, such cases are left outside its ken, until in due course the ravages of the disease have reached a stage at which the sufferer, having in the meantime perhaps infected other members of the family, becomes simultaneously eligible for Poor

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* Even in the country "the health of the children suffers somewhat," admitted a rural District Medical Officer, owing to the restriction of relief. (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXVI. (Par. 7) to Vol. VII.)

† *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLV. (Par. 2) to Vol. IX.

‡ Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Handsworth District, 1908, by R. A. Lyster, Medical Officer of Health, p. 9.

§ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XLV. (Par. 20) to Vol. IX.

‖ Report on the Sanitary Condition of the (Handsworth) District, 1908, by Robert A. Lyster, Medical Officer of Health, p. 11.

¶ *Ibid.*

** Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 38213.

†† "At the Out-relief Committees," reports a Local Government Board Inspector, "one hears of men and women who have struggled with the disease (phthisis) as long as possible before applying for relief, often sleeping in small rooms with children. . . . Out-relief is generally given till finally the sufferer enters the Workhouse infirmary to die, in the meantime, possibly, having infected other members of his family" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XI. (A), Par. 133, to Vol. I.). "Those people," said one District Medical Officer, "are very often too far gone for one to do any good to them" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 51899). They do not "come under the Poor Law Medical Officers," deposed the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, "until . . . the patient is probably . . . incurable as far as being returned to work fit as an able-bodied man" (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 10216–8). "We have had very rarely what are called curable cases, or cases in the first stages of phthisis pulmonalis, under treatment by Poor Law Medical Officers or in Poor Law medical institutions" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 10482). "The whole of my experience up to now is that it is very unusual indeed for what is called a curable case to come to the Poor Law" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 10687).

Law medical relief and incapable of deriving from it any real advantage. In fact, the Poor Law doctor seldom knows phthisis in any but its incurable stage, shortly before the sufferer enters the Workhouse to die. In some places, we were informed, one-third, and even one-half, of the deaths from phthisis take place in the Poor Law institutions.* Much the same may be said of cancer, which fills so many Workhouse beds, but which the Poor Law doctor hardly ever sees at a stage at which he can operate with any advantage. "Every year," we were authoritatively informed, "many persons die of cancer whose lives could have been saved had they sought medical advice in time. Especially is this true of the poor."† The Poor Law medical officers, says our Medical Investigator, see any amount of "inoperable cancers, and incurable Bright's disease, and overlooked rheumatic fever in children, causing heart disease later on." ‡ Less dramatic, but even more frequent, are the cases of chronic disability brought about by rheumatism and gout, heart disease in its various forms, varicose veins and ulcerated legs, and other affections which account for so many of the premature invalids among the workhouse inmates, and which could have been cured, and many years added to the working life of the sufferers, if they had received proper medical treatment at an early stage, before neglect of the incipient disease had led to actual cessation of wage-earning and consequent destitution.§ "I have carefully examined over 4,000 cases of consumption," deposed the Medical Superintendent of a Poor Law Infirmary, "and of these people approximately 60 per cent. would never have come within the range of the Poor Law had they not had that disease." || In short, as one witness significantly put it, "Guardians who deter the poor from coming for medical relief are themselves causing pauperism, for, as Mr. Joseph Chamberlain has said, 'preventable disease is the great agent for filling our Workhouses.'" ¶

(D) The Hospital Branch of the Poor Law.

As we have seen, the authors of the 1834 Report, and the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–47, never contemplated the establishment, under the Poor Law, of institutions for the hospital treatment of the sick poor.** What they visualised was a continuance of the practice of granting to the sick Outdoor Relief and the services of the District Medical Officer. In the course of a generation, however, the Workhouses were found to be very largely peopled by the infirm, the disabled, the chronically sick, and even the sufferers from acute diseases. By 1869 it was recognised that what was then officially termed "the hospital branch of Poor Law administration"†† had reached large dimensions. The policy of the Central Authority thenceforth definitely took the form, so far as the sick were concerned, of pressing for the provision of the most efficient institutional treatment that could be obtained. "There is one thing," said the President of the Poor Law Board in 1865, "that we must peremptorily insist on, namely, the treatment of the sick in the Workhouses being conducted on an entirely different system, because the evils complained of have mainly arisen from the Workhouse management—which must, to a great extent,

*"More than half the deaths from this disease in Finsbury occur in institutions, and, with few exceptions, Poor Law institutions" (evidence of Dr. Newman, Medical Officer of Health, Finsbury, *Ibid.*, Q. 94237, Par. 7).

† Evidence of Dr. G. F. McCleary, Medical Officer of Health, Hampstead, *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLV. (Par. 9) to Vol. IX.

‡ Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. McVail, p. 108.

§ A grave problem which, in our judgment, cannot be any longer ignored, is that presented by the widespread suffering of the poor from venereal diseases. "These," testified a medical expert, "constitute one of the greatest evils of the age. I am not sure that they do not give rise directly and indirectly to more suffering and more injury to us as a nation than even tuberculosis." (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 52840, Par. 15.) Here the lack of medical attendance has very grave results. The Boards of Guardians habitually refuse a Medical Order in such a case, if they become aware of it. Thus one Union puts in its bye-laws: "Persons affected with venereal disease to be granted indoor relief only." (Rules of Docking Board of Guardians.) We are told that: "Provident associations, friendly and trade societies rigorously exclude persons suffering from these (venereal) diseases from their medical benefits. Most general hospitals refuse to admit them." (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 52840, Par. 16.) A very large number of cases thus remain untreated in the early stages of the diseases, with terrible effects in the contamination of innocent persons, and of a new generation. Presently, when the ravages of disease have gone so far as to make life outside an institution quite impossible, the sufferers enter the Workhouse—too late to be really cured—to be, at great cost, relieved, patched up, and discharged; returning often again and again until eventually they die in the Workhouse.

|| *Ibid.*, Q. 38219.

¶ *Ibid.*, Q. 25373, Par. 63. We do not need again to call attention to the prohibition by the Scottish law of any medical relief to the sick dependents of an able-bodied man.

** Report on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 5. We have been informed that, until 1865, there was no medical inspector or adviser regularly attached to the Poor Law Commission or the Poor Law Board. (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 22913.)

†† Twenty-Second Annual Report of Poor Law Board, 1869–70, p. x.

be of a deterrent character—having been applied to the sick, *who are not proper objects for such a system.*" * If you have a sick man upon your hands," said one of the Local Government Board Inspectors in 1888, " the best thing you can do with him is to give him the best possible attention, to cure him and restore him to his work again." † Such an improvement in the institutional treatment of the sick seemed, to the Inspectorate of 1869–1886, a useful auxiliary, if not the logical complement, of their crusade against all Outdoor Relief. ‡ Especially since the establishment of the Local Government Board has the pressure of the Central Authority on the Boards of Guardians to get them to provide better structural accommodation, new infirmaries, elaborate hospital equipment, trained nurses, and additional medical staff § been persistent and unrelenting.

Unfortunately, the great majority of the Boards of Guardians have failed to carry out this policy. We have had it brought to our notice by the Medical Inspectors of the Local Government Board, by accredited representatives of the medical profession, by philanthropists acquainted with the Workhouses in the rural Unions and the smaller towns, as well as by Poor Law Guardians and their officers, that two-thirds of the sick now receiving institutional treatment at the hands of the Destitution Authority—amounting as we have reason to believe, in England and Wales alone, to something like 60,000 persons—are still in the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described. We were informed that they were, in many cases, receiving treatment inadequate to their needs and inappropriate to their diseases; and that this was resulting, not only in unnecessary personal suffering, but also in a prolongation of the period during which they were maintained at the public expense, and, in too many cases, in their premature permanent disability. On the other hand, so deterrent are the conditions in these General Mixed Workhouses that many poor persons suffering from incipient disease—sometimes of a contagious character—and requiring institutional treatment, refuse to enter their doors, until they are driven in by actual destitution in a moribund state. So grave an indictment led us, in view of the importance of the subject to Public Health, to obtain much medical evidence, to visit many sick wards, and to appoint our own Medical Investigator. We regret to have to report, after considering all the evidence, that the continued retention, in the General Mixed Workhouses—never even contemplated by the Report of 1834—of a large number of sick persons requiring curative treatment, amounts at the present time to a grave public scandal.

We may conveniently consider first the small rural Workhouse, of which there are about 300 with fewer than fifty sick beds in each. Such a Workhouse—containing habitually a score of men and women with chronic rheumatism and asthma, and suffering more or less from senile imbecility and paralysis; half-a-dozen children from one to thirteen subject, from time to time, to the usual diseases of childhood; the " village idiot," and various harmless lunatics and feeble-minded of both sexes and all ages; every few months a lying-in case; a few phthisical patients; occasionally individuals with all sorts of ailments; and now and then a tramp with smallpox upon him—is, over nearly half the superficial area of England and Wales—the only institution in the nature of a hospital available for the country side.|| These 300 small rural Workhouses accordingly deal, in the aggregate—apart altogether from the " chronics," and the persons suffering merely from senility—with thousands of sick persons annually, who require curative treatment.

In most of these rural Workhouses, the buildings—which, as we have seen, were never intended for the reception of sick patients—are, to quote the words of a Local Govern-

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* Mr. Gathorne Hardy (*Hansard*, Vol. CLXXXV., p. 163.)

† *Q.* 381, in House of Lords Committee on Poor Relief, 1888.

‡ " It was admitted," says one witness, " by the sterner opponents of Out-relief, that the success of their restrictive regulations rendered necessary proper provision for the remedial treatment of the sick poor elsewhere than in their own homes, where the conditions were 'destitution' of the means necessary for recovery." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 43626, Par. 9.)

§ Report of the Departmental Committee on Nursing; " Nursing in Workhouses and the Report of the Departmental Committee," by Dr. Arthur Downes, in Report of Poor Law Conferences, 1903–4, pp. 91–106.

|| Over half the superficial area of England and Wales—largely the same half—there is, it seems, also no isolation hospital accommodation provided by the Public Health Authority. Medical practitioners and benevolent neighbours often attempt to send acute (non-infectious) cases, and those requiring more than the simplest surgery, to the voluntary hospital in the county town, but there is, even for these cases, frequently no such hospital available within fifty miles. In the Atcham Union, for instance, celebrated for the relentless persistence with which Outdoor Relief has been refused, " pauper infectious cases of all sorts have to be treated on the Workhouse premises, in the midst of a community of 400 or 500, many of whom are children " (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 70186, Par. 3). Scarlet fever epidemics and isolated small-pox cases have been so dealt with. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 70197–8.)

ment Board Inspector, "old and ill-adapted to meet modern requirements . . . . for the treatment of the sick."* Some of them, reports our Medical Investigator, were not even erected "for Workhouses, but for factories or other purposes; and in one or two cases the institution consists of a curious conglomeration of old houses of various sorts, set up anywhere within the boundary walls, and apparently altered or added to in irregular fashion as occasion arose . . . . In at least one case the buildings are much too crowded on the site . . . . The floors . . . were of wood, often old wood, with wide seams for dirt to lodge in." More than one-fourth of the wards that he had measured "failed to comply with requirements," as to the minimum cubic space per inmate. In more than one-third of those visited, the hot water supply—"an absolute essential for the proper management of a Workhouse or Workhouse infirmary"—was "more or less defective."† The bathing and sanitary accommodation for the sick is, as we have ourselves noted, often sadly old-fashioned. Perhaps the most important consequence of the structural defects of the old Workhouse building—with its small and often ill-ventilated rooms, its old wooden floors and absorbent walls, and its primitive sanitation—is that they often involve a disposition of the patients that is, to say the least of it, neither comfortable nor curative. "At present," reports an Inspector, "in the sick wards of a small country Workhouse, it sometimes happens that children and adults, persons suffering from phthisis, offensive cases, and imbeciles are not separated from each other, and it seems to me that classification in this respect is what is most needed."‡ One of our own committees found, on visiting the sick wards of a provincial Workhouse, "that one mentally deficient patient keeps crying out, day and night, at frequent intervals, disturbing the other patients. He seemed to be in great discomfort, if not pain; but is not removed on the ground of economy."§

But however desirable may be the structural advantages of a modern hospital building, with its elaborate classification by wards, we are bound to say that we regard the somewhat primitive buildings of the old rural Workhouses as the least of their drawbacks. We have come across, in Workhouse sick wards, no such scandalous instances of overcrowding, dirt, and insanitation as were formerly revealed in Workhouse inquiries; and, as we are glad to add, no such neglect and inhumanity. The worst defects of the rural Workhouse sick wards of the present day, apart from the general conditions of admission, centre round the medical attendance and nursing. None of these 300 rural Workhouses has, or indeed needs, a resident Medical Officer; but the conditions under which the medical attendance is afforded are, in our judgment, such as to make curative treatment almost impossible. The Guardians appoint one of the local practitioners to be the Medical Officer of the Workhouse, and expect him, at the most meagre stipend, to do all that is required for all the patients. These stipends—we have it on the authority of the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board—are, in the majority of cases, "miserably inadequate."‖ In one Workhouse that we happened to visit, containing as many as sixty-seven sick patients, we found that the Medical Officer, who has held the post for thirty years, received only £70 a year, out of which he stated that he sometimes spent as much as £25 in medicines.¶ We desire to bring no accusation against a hard-worked and ill-remunerated class of doctors. "It would be easy," we are told, "to name Medical Officers whose work is beyond praise . . . . Unfortunately, there is another side to the picture."** We are unable to escape from the conclusion that, in not a few Unions, the Workhouse Medical Officer finds himself able to attend only irregularly and infrequently, and to give only

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* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XI. (A) Par. 44, to Vol. I.; also *Q.* 5360.

† Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Poor Law Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, pp. 19, 22, 23.

‡ Thirtieth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1900–1, Appendix B., p. 120, Mr. Preston Thomas's Report; and again, Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1905–6, p. 473.

§ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 65 C., p. 134. Our adverse judgment on the General Mixed Workhouse in the rural Unions, as, for half England, the "hospital branch of the Poor Law," does but follow the verdict of the medical profession. The *British Medical Journal* in 1895, after an elaborate investigation of the sick wards of the rural Workhouses, summed up as follows in terms which, we fear, are still in the main, true: "The buildings match the service; we read of no bathrooms; no supply of hot and cold water, but such as is carried from a distance; sanitary arrangements defective or absent; no proper provision for the comfort or privacy of lying-in women; no surgical supplies; no screens for decency; overcrowding in wards where the helpless sick live, sleep, and eat all the year round; miserable dark rooms for the use of the coarsely termed 'dirty cases'; no classification; no means of isolation; dreary airing courts; indeed, an absence of all intelligent appreciation of the needs of the sick." (*British Medical Journal*, June 1st, 1895, p. 1231.)

‖ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (A), Par. 25, to Vol. I.

¶ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 93, p. 163.

** Thirtieth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1900–1, Appendix B., p. 106, Mr. Flemings' Report.

a perfunctory service. We learn that "instances may be quoted where (making all allowances for the possible inaccuracies in the porter's book) a few minutes in the house two or three times a week constitutes the ordinary attendance of the Workhouse Medical Officer."* Nor can they afford to spend much time when they do attend. "Entries recently taken from porters' books in several Unions," declares the Inspector, "show that some Medical Officers frequently only stay for a few minutes in the house, and very rarely long enough to make an examination of the bodily condition of the patients and of their surroundings. The Medical Officer should certainly, and with sufficient frequency to ensure the object, thoroughly examine each of the patients, and particularly the bed-ridden ones, as to bodily condition and cleanliness, also the beds, bedding, appliances, and all other details connected with the proper treatment and nursing of the cases."† Our impression of the inadequacy of the medical treatment afforded to the sick poor in some of the small rural Workhouses does not rest on such general evidence only. "It is most desirable," said to us one of the General Inspectors of the Local Government Board, "that the Medical Officers should be much better remunerated than they are. They should be so remunerated that they could fairly be called upon to do the work as it ought to be done. There is a difficulty now if you say to a Medical Officer, 'I find that you have been very little in the Workhouse,' and he says 'I do all that I consider necessary; that is my business, not yours' . . . . I have come across striking instances in which I have been able to show a complaint. I remember going into a Workhouse when the Medical Officer was not there. I said to the nurse 'Have you any bed sores?' She said: 'There is not a bed sore in the place.' I went into some of the wards, and I saw one man looking very miserable. I said to the nurse 'Is that man all right?' She said 'Yes.' I said 'Let me see his back." She turned him over. He had a bad bed sore. I looked at several other cases, and I found many bed sores. I sent for the doctor . . . . 'I am horrified,' he said . . . . If (he) had been properly paid to do his work thoroughly, he would probably have examined those patients. But he took the nurse's word for it because he was receiving an inadequate salary, and did as much work as he thought the money was worth."‡ We ourselves found on our visits some confirmation of this testimony. In one Workhouse where the sick ward seemed unsatisfactory, our committee saw the Workhouse Medical Officer, and on questioning him, he "quite frankly admitted that he was not able to give to the patients as much attention as they ought to have. This he laid at the door of the Guardians, who, he said, would neither remunerate him sufficiently, nor provide him with an assistant."§ With the meagre remuneration of the Workhouse Medical Officer goes the system—in the rural Workhouses, still, we are informed almost universal ‖—of requiring him to provide, at his own expense, all the medicines that he prescribes. This system leads to serious results. It encourages, we are told, the Workhouse Medical Officer to prescribe alcohol (which the Guardians pay for) instead of the other remedies of the pharmacopœia.¶ The Workhouse Medical Officer practically finds himself limited to the simplest remedies. "Human nature," says one of the Inspectors, "will not allow him to use anything which is very expensive. He cannot try the up-to-date drugs which may save a person's life. . . . It is a very important point, and I believe the present system may cost the life of an inmate of a Workhouse."** What is far worse is the fact that "there is nothing to prevent an unscrupulous Medical Officer," as a Workhouse doctor himself pointed out to us, "from using inferior drugs and stinting his patients with medicine."†† That such things do happen is unfortunately borne out by authoritative evidence. "About three weeks ago," testified the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, "I was inspecting a Workhouse, and I noticed a case in bed: I asked the Medical Officer what the case was, and he told me that it was a case suffering from syphilitic disease, and apparently, from what he said, it was curable. I asked him if the case was having drug treatment. He said, 'No, I cannot afford it; my salary is not sufficiently adequate for me to find the expensive drugs necessary.' I asked

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* *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 9480.

§ Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 20, p. 45.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 4943, 10779, 11781. This system is now deplored by the Local Government Board, and the Boards of Guardians are advised—often in vain—on the making of a new appointment to agree to provide the drugs. But the more common practice has not yet been forbidden by the detailed regulations in which the Local Government Board minutely prescribes the conditions of the appointment (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 4943, 10194–10203, 10453–8, 11782–3, etc.).

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 10199–10201.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 4943.

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 34566, Par. 3.

him then whether he had reported this matter to his Guardians, and he said 'No,' and I advised him to do so . . . . I think," added Dr. Fuller, "*that is a very good example of cases that frequently come under my notice.*" *

The inadequacy of the medical attendance in the small rural Workhouses is rendered more disastrous by defective nursing. In spite of all efforts of the Local Government Board, which have, in the past two decades, effected great improvements, there are still many rural Workhouses without even one trained nurse; † there are still scores in which there is absolutely no nurse, trained or untrained, available for night duty; ‡ there are even some, so far as we can ascertain, in which there is no sort of salaried nurse at all. Everywhere the Master and Matron have still to employ pauper assistants to help in attending to the sick. In spite of all that has been done, "the Reports of the Local Government Board inspectors. . . show very clearly that this deplorable system of pauper assistants is far from decreasing in as rapid a manner as may have been hoped after the issue of the Nursing Order of 1897."§ "Looking at the facts with regard to the individual rural Unions which I visited," reports our Medical Investigator, "I have concluded that the nursing staff is insufficient in the majority of them. . . . In one Workhouse the sick wards contain twenty-four beds, of which sixteen were occupied, nine of them by bed-ridden cases, and one of these with a bedsore. For all this work there was only a single nurse, both for night and day service, and her duty included attendance on confinements in the lying-in ward, though these fortunately were infrequent. . . . In only two or three of the rural Workhouses have I been able to form the opinion that the staff is sufficient." ‖

It does not need statistics of the mortality and of the recoveries in Workhouses, which unfortunately are lacking, to persuade us that, under such conditions as we have described, curative treatment of the thousands of sick patients in the 300 small rural Workhouses is, to say the least, difficult. The phthisis cases, of which there are many hundreds, seem to be given up as hopeless, there being usually no sort of special provision for them.¶ The acute cases needing prompt treatment, constant nursing or expensive remedies, appear sometimes to fare almost as badly. "When I [came to this Workhouse]," said a nurse, "I was told 'the pneumonia cases generally die with us.'"** A dim appreciation of the medical conditions in these small rural Workhouses, combined with the stigma of pauperism, explains why the sick poor insist on remaining in their own homes, however insanitary and overcrowded these may be. The General Mixed Workhouse is, in fact, as long as possible, shunned even by those who would benefit by it, to the grave detriment of the public health. Where such conditions exist—and we fear that they are characteristic of the majority of the rural Unions—the Guardians, as it seems to us, would not be warranted in adopting a policy, so far as the sick are concerned, of "offering the house," and refusing Outdoor Relief. Any suggestion for entrusting to the Destitution Authority powers of compulsory removal to such a General Mixed Workhouse as we have described—even of the worst cases of neglected sickness and dangerous insanitation—appears to us quite out of the question.

We do not wish to suggest that the structural conditions and medical and nursing attendance characteristic of the 300 small rural Workhouses, with their few thousands of

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 10610–1.

† The Nursing Order of 1897 requires that, where there are three salaried nurses, one of them must possess training, and hold the position of Superintendent Nurse. But there is nothing in the Order or elsewhere, making it obligatory on the Board of Guardians to employ three salaried nurses; or, indeed, any salaried nurses at all. The result is, that there is, as the Senior Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board informed us, "some little tendency . . . to evade the Order by calling the nurses anything but nurses, or in some cases, perhaps, by not appointing an extra nurse which would just bring them within the Order" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 23144). In some Workhouses the Order is evaded by appointing what are called "ward maids" to do the work of nurses (Memorandum from the Workhouse Nursing Association; Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LVII. (Par. 2) to Vol. IX.)

‡ In one Inspector's district, he reports: "In fourteen Workhouses it has not been found possible to provide a night nurse." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LVII. (A) to Vol. IX.)

§ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LVII. (Par. 2) to Vol. IX. One Inspector actually reports, in his district, an increase in the number of pauper attendants in the sick wards. On January 1st, 1905, there were 159, and on January 1st, 1908, there were 175.

‖ Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. McVail, 1907, pp. 28, 29.

¶ *See* the Return by the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (D), to Vol. I. "Generally speaking," says an Inspector, "there is no provision for the treatment of these (phthisis) cases in the Workhouse." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XI. (A), Par. 133 to Vol. I.)

** Memorandum from the Workhouse Nursing Association, *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LVII. (Par. 2), to Vol. IX.

sick, are equally characteristic of the 300 General Mixed Workhouses of the urban or more populous Unions, in which, as we regret to infer, there are ten times as many sick cases. In London, and a score of other large towns, there have been developed separate Poor Law Infirmaries, which we shall presently describe. But short of this development there is, among the General Mixed Workhouses of the 300 urban Unions, every possible variety in the character and efficiency of their provision for the sick. Some of these General Mixed Workhouses are as old, as ill-adapted for use in the "hospital branch of the Poor Law," as badly equipped, and furnished with as inadequate a medical and nursing staff* as the worst of the small rural Workhouses that we have seen. But under the constant pressure of the Local Government Board there has gone on, for forty years, a steady process of improvement. Here and there we find new sick wards added to the old Workhouse building; the Guardians have begun to provide the drugs and medicines; the pauper attendants have been gradually replaced by salaried "ward-maids," and these by nurses; the nurses have got trained and a superintendent nurse has been installed; occasionally on the occurrence of a vacancy we find that a young resident doctor has been appointed; the Superintendent Nurse and the Resident Medical Officer gradually win greater independence from the Master and Matron; until finally, when the Workhouse has long been overfull, the Guardians have perhaps yielded to the repeated suggestions of the Inspector, the criticisms of the Medical Inspector and the injunctions of the Local Government Board itself, and agreed to erect an entirely new and independent Poor Law Infirmary.† We have not found it possible to estimate how many Unions, and what proportion of their aggregate sick population of thirty or forty thousand, are, at this moment, at each of these various stages of development. But all these sick wards of General Mixed Workhouses, however far they may have developed along the lines of improvement, seem to us—from the standpoint of curative treatment of the sick—to suffer from the blight of being, and being felt to be, pauper establishments. This blight shows itself in the inability of the Boards of Guardians wholly to exclude—even from Workhouse infirmaries having a dozen paid nurses—the pauper "wardsman" and the pauper attendant;‡ it is seen in the incapacity of the Guardians to realise the necessity, in what is becoming virtually a hospital ward, of a medical and nursing staff out of all proportion to what had formerly been customary in the Workhouse day room or night

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* In one Inspector's district alone there was, in 1906, out of forty Unions, one Workhouse having 352 sick patients, and there were four having between 200 and 300 sick patients, without a resident Medical Officer; there were two Workhouses having over fifty sick patients without a Superintendent Nurse; there were a dozen in which there were more than fifty patients to each nurse on night duty, and a dozen also in which each nurse on day duty had more than half that number to attend to. (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXII. (C) to Vol. I.)

† Unfortunately some large towns have not yet taken this step. "The most conspicuous exception," observes one Inspector. "is at Plymouth, where the Guardians, some years ago, decided to build a new infirmary, but subsequently rescinded their resolution, and have since expended a good deal on old buildings without a satisfactory result. The wards are old-fashioned, ill-constructed and ill-ventilated; they are so scattered as to make proper administration and supervision very difficult; they have been repeatedly reported as quite inadequate for the cases requiring admission; a good many of the nurses have to live in the town for want of room, and the whole workhouse has been overcrowded. The Medical Officer has frequently represented to the Guardians the serious evils of the present arrangements, but so far nothing effectual has been done." (Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1904–5, Appendix B., p. 219, Mr. Preston Thomas's Report). And at Bristol, where hundreds of sick of all kinds are crowded together in most unsuitable buildings, old and even unsanitary, there is a deadlock between the Guardians, who want a cheap scheme, and the Local Government Board, which refuses to sanction such a scheme but cannot, apparently, compel the adoption of any other, (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 5362–4.)

‡ To take only one Inspector's district out of twelve, such pauper attendants are still to be found in the sick wards of no fewer than sixteen Workhouse infirmaries, having over fifty sick patients, including some with several hundred sick patients, and definitely organised staffs of paid nurses. (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXII. (C.) to Vol. I.) We regret to infer that between 2,000 and 3,000 paupers are still thus employed in England and Wales, to eke out the deficiencies in the nursing staff. "So long, however, as the employment of paupers in sick wards as 'attendants' is tolerated," says an experienced Inspector, "it is almost impossible to be sure that the somewhat undefined line which separates the duties of an 'attendant' from those of a nurse is never overstepped. The placing of the larger Workhouse infirmaries under separate management, which is viewed with increasing favour, will, however, do more than anything else to free the sick wards from all paupers other than the patients themselves." (Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1897–8, Appendix B., p. 125, Mr. Jenner Fust's Report.) These so-called "wardsmen" gamble with the patients at dominoes (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 36465–70), and are said even to divert eggs and other things from the sick, to sell them to others. (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 36472.)

dormitory ;* it shows itself in the friction which so frequently arises between the Resident Medical Officer or the trained Superintendent Nurse, and the Workhouse Master and Matron, who remain in command of the whole institution ;† and it is manifested, above all, in the repugnance of the sick poor to enter even an institution for curative treatment when admission brings them plainly into contact with the Workhouse itself.‡

We have now to pass to the separate Poor Law Infirmaries which form, in the Metropolis and some other large towns, the most extreme development of, to use the official phrase, "the hospital branch of the Poor Law." These institutions, erected on separate sites apart from the workhouse, independent of the Master and Matron, administered by their own Medical Superintendents, having their own resident staffs of doctors and nurses, and wholly free from pauper attendants, are increasing annually in number, in size and in cost per bed, and now probably accommodate, though in only a few score of the most populous Unions, at least a third of the aggregate total of sick persons for whom the Boards of Guardians provide institutional treatment.§ Here undoubtedly, to quote the congratulatory words of a Northern Board of Guardians, the sick poor "receive care and attention such as the average ratepayer would find it difficult to provide for himself and his family."‖ Their "most significant feature," we are informed, "is that they have become largely surgical,"¶ some of them having daily operations under general anæsthesia.** In some places, the Poor Law Infirmaries receive a large proportion of acute cases of many different kinds; in some, there are frequent cases of measles, whooping cough, chicken-pox and other infectious diseases ; in one or two the number of tuberculous cases is very large ; in others there are many cases of accident ; the maternity ward is sometimes non-existent, sometimes a speciality ; and in one we have it noted that it has a specially large amount of "surgical operative work, . . . five-eighths of its cases belonging to the hospital as distinguished from the infirmary class."†† We do not feel competent to determine how far the claim often made on behalf of these Poor Law Infirmaries ‡‡—that they are now fully equal to the endowed or voluntary hospitals—can be substantiated. But we notice certain general characteristics of these most modern of the institutions of the Destitution Authority. The structure tends to be elaborate, ornate and expensive. The lighting and heating, the ventilation and sanitation, the operating room and the dispensary, are all of the most costly, if not always of the most useful character. On the other hand, it is clear that, in the proportion of doctors and nurses to patients, and in the variety and specialisation of the staff, even the best Poor Law Infirmary falls markedly below the standard of the London hospitals.§§ It has been suggested to us that this is at once caused and justified by the fact that the Poor Law Infirmaries, though receiving yearly an increasing variety of diseases and accidents, still

* "The majority of Guardians," observes the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, "naturally do not understand or appreciate the necessary standards of medical and nursing administration which should obtain." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXI. (A.), Par. 14 (i), to Vol. I.) Even in some of the large urban Workhouses, our Medical Investigator, after taking all the circumstances into account, came to the conclusion "that the medical staff is hardly ever sufficient. The amount of medical work is too great to permit of its thorough performance." He reports, in particular instances, "the nursing staff . . . insufficient" ; in one case "seriously inadequate." (Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, pp. 45, 49.)

† "The dual control now exercised by the Workhouse Master, Matron, Medical Officer, and Superintendent Nurse," testifies the Clerk of a large Lancashire Union, "gives rise to friction, and is not to the advantage of the sick poor. Difficulties arising from this dual control have been experienced frequently in this Union within the last few years." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 36693, Par. 1.)

‡ Where the infirmary is in the Workhouse building there is, we were repeatedly informed, "quite a great aversion" to enter it. (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 51479.) The spirit in which it is regarded by the Destitution Authority, may be inferred from the fact that at Birmingham in 1885, the Board of Guardians actually made a rule, to which the Local Government Board extended its express approval (Local Government Board to Birmingham Board of Guardians, December 9th, 1885), that patients desiring admission to the infirmary should be made to enter it through the main Workhouse gate, upon orders of admission to the Workhouse itself, in order to impress upon them that they were making themselves paupers. (*Q.* 381, in Report of House of Lords Committee on Poor Law Relief, 1888.)

§ As already indicated, there is a tendency for the sick wards of the large progressive Union to pass, by insensible gradations, into the Poor Law infirmary. In several cases, where the last stages of the evolution are not yet quite completed in form, the institution has become substantially separately administered.

‖ Sixth Annual Report of the Workhouse Committee of the Whitehaven Board of Guardians, 1904.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 36971.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 23303, Par. 2.

†† Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, p. 49.

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 23314, 39235, etc.

§§ Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, pp. 48–50.

habitually contain a large proportion of chronic cases, requiring neither specialised medical skill, nor continuous nursing. To some extent, no doubt, this contention is valid,* but we think the weight of medical evidence is in favour of the view that, so far at any rate as the surgical and acute cases are concerned, there is, even in the best of the Poor Law Infirmaries, still inadequacy of medical attendance and nursing. "My general conclusion is," says our Medical Investigator, "that even where Guardians provide excellent, or perhaps extravagant, modern buildings, and equip these most elaborately with the most modern medical and surgical appliances, and furniture and furnishings, yet when they come to the appointing of a staff to do the work of these fine institutions, liberality of policy fails them, and parsimony takes its place. They may have most advanced views as to the manner in which the poor should be housed and fed, but when they come to medical work they are likely to adopt unknowingly a policy of sweating both as to the amount of work required and as to the payment made for it."† We are inclined to attribute the backwardness in medical attendance and nursing, not only to the inadequate salaries, but even more to the lack of other *stimuli*. The medical staff of a Poor Law Infirmary has not the advantage of being under the supervision and inspection of the medical profession; the Boards of Guardians publish no medical reports of their work; they are tested by no statistics of recoveries or case mortality, and encouraged by no inquiries from the Guardians or the Local Government Board as to their remedial treatment or their surgical successes. And whilst their doors are, by Local Government Board order, shut to medical students, and their work is divorced from the general current of clinical research, they suffer also from being equally divorced from the laboratory experiments and statistical investigations of the officers of the Public Health Authorities.

Perhaps the most striking contrast between even the best of the Poor Law Infirmaries and a good London hospital is the lack of specialism in the institution of the Destitution Authority. The Medical Superintendent has to admit every case sent to him by the Relieving Officers, and these non-medical functionaries naturally go more by urgency and destitution than by the kind of disease. In some Unions, indeed, the Guardians assume that all cases requiring medical attendance and nursing should be sent to the Infirmary, which has, accordingly, simultaneously to treat a congeries of hundreds of patients of the most diverse kinds—the acutely sick and mere "chronics"; the expectant mother and the senile feeble-minded; children with measles or whooping-cough, and the sufferers in advanced stages of venereal disease;§ the phthisical, the cancerous, and the rheumatic; the man knocked down by a motor car and the charwoman with bronchitis. "Children suffering from . . . infectious diseases have to be mixed up with adult patients."‖

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* It is, however, a mistake to suppose that the cases so common in a Workhouse infirmary do not require a staff of nurses, almost as large as do the acute or surgical cases. "A general principle in nursing in Workhouses," says the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, is "that helpless, or wet and dirty cases, or cases bordering upon or actually suffering from senile dementia, require much more skilled care and attention from suitably trained nurses, and should take up, necessarily, much more of their time night and day than average cases of illness, such as pneumonia, rheumatic fever, etc., after the very acute stage is passed." (Memorandum from the Workhouse Nursing Association, Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LVII. (A) to Vol. IX.)

† Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, p. 46. "These Poor Law infirmaries," said one of our witnesses, "should have special surgeons and physicians appointed to them . . . a visiting medical staff. . . . They should not be left altogether in the hands of the resident superintendents." (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 36971, 36972.)

‡ The attendance of medical students at the "sick" asylums to be provided under the Metropolitan Poor Act, 1867, was expressly authorised by that Statute (Section 29); but this provision was expressly repealed in 1869 (32 and 33 Vict. c. 63, sec. 20); and the Local Government Board declined in 1884 to sanction the admission of medical students to the Kensington Poor Law Infirmary (*Selections from the Correspondence of the Local Government Board*, Vol. III., 1888, p. 224), apparently on grounds of Poor Law policy, as the then Medical Officer of the Board was strongly in favour of their admission as being advantageous to the patients, and not displeasing to them (*Qs.* 5474–8, 5501–8, in House of Lords Committee on Poor Law, 1888). As to the desirability of such admission, *see* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 39237—41. It was suggested by Mr. C. S. Loch that the utilisation of the Poor Law infirmaries for medical instruction might have the effect of causing patients to be detained in the infirmary as "interesting" cases, longer than need otherwise take place. (Q. 4204 of House of Lords Committee on Poor Law, 1888.)

§ "All cases of venereal disease are now practically debarred from the general hospitals . . . it has to be taken up by the Poor Law as a last resort." (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 37927, Par. 10; 37928–29.)

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 23318, 23529. This drawback was pointed out long ago. "There is no ward set apart for sick children," noted the Investigator into Workhouses of the *British Medical Journal* in 1895," in health, they are carefully kept from mixing with the adults, but when sick are put among the older people, and in a short time all the result of careful training may be undone." (*British Medical Journal*, January 5th, 1895, p. 26.)

There are not even any mutual arrangements among the thirty Poor Law Infirmaries of the Metropolis by which each of them, in addition to its general wards, could provide specialised accommodation for one particular class of disease. In every Poor Law Infirmary—and some of them exceed in size the largest voluntary hospitals in the Kingdom—all the cases have to lie in the common wards, and be diagnosed, physicked and operated on by the overworked Medical Superintendent and his two or three assistant medical officers. The absence, even in the Metropolis and the largest towns, of visiting physicians and surgeons is here a patent drawback of these extraordinarily mixed institutions. We do not, however, gather that there has been any official encouragement to specialisation, but rather the contrary. The development of the "hospital branch of the Poor Law" has, in fact, brought us to the dilemma that it may become apparently too efficient. Boards of Guardians have been officially advised to provide for their lying-in cases in the General Mixed Workhouse, rather than develop a maternity ward at the Infirmary, on the ground that the former course would deter applicants, whereas "there would be considerable danger of the Infirmary becoming a lying-in hospital, as there is great readiness and facility for obtaining admission to an Infirmary of cases that would not come into the Workhouse."* The far-sighted provision, by the Bradford Board of Guardians, of an admirable sanatorium for cases of incipient phthisis, and the actual encouragement, by a circular to all the medical practitioners of the town, of such patients to come in and be treated, before they are actually destitute, has caused some apprehension among those who cling to the idea of restricting the area even of the medical side of the Poor Law. All specialisation in medical treatment, it is suggested, whether phthisis sanatoria, Finsen Light or Röntgen Rays, or the new serums, should be excluded from the Poor Law institutions.† "Unless some organisation and co-ordination of the relief is arranged," urged the Senior Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, "we shall have expensive specialisation set up for persons who qualify for its receipt by becoming paupers."‡ "It would be a temptation to a man to come to the Poor Law," in order to obtain these privileges.§

For good or for evil the Poor Law Infirmaries are growing rapidly in popularity.‖ The excellence of the dietary and the accommodation—even, as has been suggested to us, the freedom from the perpetual observation and discipline of the students and nurses of a voluntary hospital—are attracting, to these Poor Law institutions, an ever-increasing stream of non-destitute persons.¶ It has become the custom, in certain residential quarters of the Metropolis, for the servants of wealthy households freely to use the Poor Law Infirmary. In the more industrial quarters, the skilled artisans and the smaller shop-keepers are coming to regard the Poor Law Infirmary—especially when, as in Camberwell, or Woolwich, or Wandsworth, it happens to be the only general hospital in the locality—much as they do the public park or library—as a municipal institution, paid for by their rates, and maintained for their convenience and welfare. To use the phrase of more than one of our witnesses, the Poor Law Infirmaries "are fast becoming rate-aided hospitals." "It seems to me," observed to us the Chairman of one of the most populous Unions, "an important point for the Commission to decide whether this state of things should be allowed to continue and increase, or whether it should be retarded?" **

We did not have time to make any systematic investigation into the Poor Law Medical Service of Scotland, which was the subject of enquiry by a Departmental Committee in 1904. From the information that we obtained we formed the opinion that

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* Third Triennial Report of Bethnal Green Board of Guardians, 1903, p. 14.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 35116–21.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 23193.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 35117.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 32790–2, 33127, 33128.

¶ "The Workhouse infirmary has in this and similar districts come to be looked upon as the general hospital for the district." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 34233, Par. 9, 34351, 34352, 34468, 34469, 36142–5.) "Practically," notes one of our Committees, after visiting a great Poor Law infirmary in the north-west, "this . . . is a rate-supported hospital. . . . There is no reluctance to enter it on the part of the poor, and all acute cases (except confinements) are freely admitted. . . . Last year, over £2,000 was recovered from patients." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 2 C., p. 10.) To quote the words of the Clerk: "The old idea of its being a degradation or a disgrace to go into a Poor Law infirmary has quite ceased" (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 36146). "The infirmary," says another of our committees, "is practically a general hospital, and caters for a class slightly better than the ordinary *habitues* of a Workhouse. A considerable sum is recovered each year from relatives, as much as 10s. a week being paid in some cases. One patient, a paralytic, was mentioned as being the brother-in-law of one of the richest men (in the town), who repaid the whole cost of treatment, etc., to the Guardians." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 25 B., p. 68.) *See*, on the same point, the Report of House of Commons Select Committee on Metropolitan Hospitals, 1892.

** Statement of the Chairman of the Wandsworth Board of Guardians (Canon H. Curtis).

Poor Law Medical Relief in Scotland did not differ essentially from that in England and Wales, and that it was open to the same criticisms. The General Mixed Poorhouses seemed to us to exhibit the same defects, as institutions for the treatment of the sick, as the General Mixed Workhouses of England and Wales. There is the same tendency to the development of a "hospital branch" of the Poor Law. "Owing to the splendid equipment of our modern Poorhouse hospitals," reports the Departmental Committee on the Methods of Administering Poor Relief in Eight Great Towns of Scotland (1905), "it is not thought a degradation to have relatives treated in them. They are, to a large extent, taking the place of public hospitals or infirmaries, and being separate establishments their connection with the Poorhouse is altogether lost sight of. In the case of the three hospitals recently erected by the Glasgow Parish Council, the name "Poorhouse" has been dropped." (p. xxv.) On the other hand, the largest Poorhouses, even in the most important towns, appear to be sometimes terribly understaffed. One of our committees gave us the following report after visiting two of the most important Poorhouses in Scotland. "In one of the Workhouses there were about 600, in the other about 800, inmates of all kinds, the numbers rising 25 to 30 per cent. in the winter. *Each of these vast Workhouses had only a single resident medical officer*—in both cases a young woman. Aided only by a consultant visiting thrice a week, her duties were to examine thoroughly every inmate on entrance, in order to discover what exactly was his or her disease or infirmity; to certify which of the adults—all presumably non-able-bodied—were fit for the "test" (work); to settle the diet and treatment of all persons actually sick; and to supervise the arrangements for the children and infants. In each of the Workhouses the "hospital cases" alone numbered between two and three hundred. In one of them at any rate there was a phthisical ward, a surgical ward, an ophthalmic ward, a lying-in ward, and, strangely enough a male venereal ward—all under the sole charge of the same young lady doctor who had the medical supervision of the rest of the establishment. The nursing staff was far below an English standard, extensive use being made of pauper inmates. In many of the large wards that I entered there was no trained nurse in attendance, even in the daytime. In one of these institutions (I forgot to ask in the other) there were only three night nurses for all the hundreds of patients. The operations—some abdominal sections, and others of apparent difficulty—were performed by the same one young lady doctor with the help of the consultant, who was a physician! No record of the results was kept. The same one young lady doctor had to extract the teeth of patients requiring this service.

"Altogether, I venture to suggest to the Commission that the condition of the hospital wards in these two large Workhouses demands special investigation."*

(E) The Defects of the Poor Law Medical Service traced to their root.

We have, therefore, to report that the Medical Branch of the Poor Law, now becoming an exceedingly costly service, is, in our opinion, far from being in a satisfactory condition. There is, to begin with, all over the Kingdom, a remarkable lack of uniformity between district and district in the treatment accorded to the sick poor. In respect of domiciliary medical attendance we find in some places the doctor's services lavished on all who ask for them, whilst in other places they are refused to any one who is not actually destitute of the means of subsistence. "It is indefensible," rightly declares the Poor Law Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, "that a sick and destitute person who happens to be ill in one Union should be less well nursed than his *confrère* who falls ill in the next Union, where he is well cared for and restored to the community at a much earlier period on this account alone, while his *confrère* in the neighbouring union, owing to the inadequacy or inefficiency of the nursing staff, or both, becomes a permanent charge upon the rates."† Yet the institutional treatment provided for the sick poor varies from mere reception in the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described, with little or nothing beyond pauper nursing and the scanty visits and inefficient treatment of an underpaid Medical Officer, unable to afford either the time or even the remedies required by the disease, up to the almost luxurious maintenance and relatively excellent medical care and nursing of the newest Poor Law infirmaries, not unjustly called rate-supported hospitals. These

* Reports of Visits by Commissioners in Scotland, not yet in volume form. That the Poor Law Medical Service of Scotland was, in spite of great improvements, still extraordinarily inadequate, was repeatedly testified to us. "The health of the community suffers grievously owing to the insufficiency both in amount and quality of the medical assistance." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 65889, Par. 10.) "The system is not adequate," said the Medical Member of the Local Government Board (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 56605, Par. 111). "Many die without being seen by a medical man" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 53510, Par. 117). "Pauper nursing is still legal" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 60852).

† Statement of Dr. Fuller (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (A.), Par. 53 to Vol. I.).

extremes of deterrence and attractiveness in the institutions provided by the Destitution Authority in different districts for the sick poor, result in an even greater diversity in the classes of persons maintained in them under the common designation of paupers—varying from those miserables whom nothing but the imminent approach of starvation drives into the hated General Mixed Workhouse, up to the domestic servants of the wealthy, the highest grades of skilled artizans and even the lower middle class, who now claim as a right the attractive ministrations of the rate-maintained Poor Law hospitals characteristic of some of the great towns. But the absence of national uniformity, which the authors of the 1834 Report regarded with such disfavour, appears to us, in 1909, the least of the evils to which we have to call attention. What seems, from the standpoint of the community, most urgently needing reform is the deterrent character which, in all but a few districts, clogs and impedes the curative treatment offered to the sick under the Poor Law. It has been demonstrated to us beyond all dispute that the deterrent aspect which the medical branch of the Poor Law acquires through its association with the Destitution Authority, causes, merely by preventing prompt and early application by the sick poor, an untold amount of aggravation of disease, personal suffering and reduction in the wealth-producing power of the manual working-class. Scarcely less harmful in our eyes is the unconditional character of the "medical relief" given under the Poor Law. The District Medical Officer finds it no part of his duty—for it, indeed, he is neither paid nor encouraged — to inculcate better methods of living among his patients, to advise as to personal and domestic hygiene, or to insist on the necessity of greater regularity of conduct. No attempt is made to follow into their homes the hundreds of phthisical and other patients discharged every week from the sick wards of the Workhouses and Poor Law infirmaries, in order to ensure at any rate some sort of observance of the hygienic precautions without which they, or their near neighbours, must soon be again numbered among the sick. From one end to the other of the Poor Law medical service, costly as it now is, we find, in fact, a complete and absolute ignoring of the preventive aspect of State medicine. To the Relieving Officer it is officially a matter of indifference whether the applicant is most likely to recover, or to recover most rapidly or most completely, in the Workhouse or in his own home. It is no part of his duty to consider whether the applicant's wife and children will suffer most in health by his removal to the infirmary, or by his struggling on in his avocation, with his lungs getting steadily worse, in order to avoid the stigma of pauperism. If a poor family takes measles or whooping cough badly, and cannot afford competent medical attendance, it seems to the Destitution Authority a wanton incitement to pauperism to urge them to apply for the attendance of the District Medical Officer; though abstention may mean, through neglected *sequelæ*, the lifelong crippling of the health of one or more of the children. The prevalence of ophthalmia of the newly born, with its result of entirely preventable blindness, will not appear as any matter of reproach to those Destitution Authorities which have managed to restrict their Midwifery Orders. Nearly the whole of the children of a slum quarter may go on year after year suffering from adenoids, inflamed glands, enlarged tonsils, defects of eyesight, chronic ear discharges, etc., which will eventually prevent many of them from earning their livelihood, without inducing the Relieving Officer and the Destitution Authority to notice anything beyond the total sum coming in to the household of each applicant for a Medical Order or other relief. Even to the average Poor Law doctor, it does not seem so important to prevent the spread of disease, or its recurrence in the individual patients, as to relieve their present troubles. In short, from beginning to end of a Poor Law expenditure of over £4,000,000 annually upon the sick, there is no thought of promoting medical science or medical education, practically no idea of preventing the spread of disease, and little consideration even of how to prevent its recurrence in the individual. The question cannot fail to arise whether so large an expenditure on mere "relief," with so complete an ignoring of preventive medicine, can nowadays be justified.

Under these circumstances we cannot recommend any extension of Public Medical Service by the Destitution Authority. We do not think, for instance, that it is desirable for the Destitution Authority to undertake the urgently needed service of the treatment of tuberculosis in its early stages—still less that it should, as at Bradford, actually encourage persons to become paupers in order to be treated. We agree with the Senior Poor Law Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board in deploring the tendency for the Destitution Authority to "set up . . . expensive specialisation" in the treatment of the sick "for persons who qualify for its receipt by becoming paupers."* An equally pressing public need, urged upon us by every sort of witness, is some power of compulsory removal to

* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 23193.

an institution of persons found lying neglected, dangerously sick or contaminating their surroundings. Yet so long as the institutions for the sick poor are in the hands of a Destitution Authority, with its stigma of pauperism, its deterrent machinery and its failure in many districts to provide anything better for the unwilling patient than the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described, no responsible Minister of the Crown could propose, and no Parliament would permit, the concession to an Authority dominated by the idea of "relieving destitution" of any such power of compulsory removal. Thus, all the defects and all the shortcomings of the Poor Law Medical Service as it at present exists are inherent in its association with the Destitution Authority.

(f) The Treatment of the Sick by Voluntary Agencies.

It has been represented to us that the whole provision for the sick now made by the Destitution Authority, alike in its domiciliary treatment and in its "hospital branch" —being legally confined to the destitute—is but the fringe of a more general provision for the sick made by other agencies; that these other agencies impinge upon the medical work of the Poor Law, and are themselves impeded by it; and that, if the Poor Law medical work were brought to an end or seriously restricted, they might with advantage undertake the whole service. These voluntary agencies in some cases provide their service gratuitously; others claim to be wholly self-supporting; whilst others again exact a partial contribution for their benefits. Across this classification runs the cleavage between those voluntary agencies maintaining residential institutions, and those supplying only domiciliary treatment.

To begin with the domiciliary treatment of the sick poor, we find overlapping the work of the District Medical Officer, (*a*) the Free Dispensary or "Medical Mission;" (*b*) the out-patient department of the voluntary hospital; (*c*) the doctor's medical club, or the Friendly Society or other "contract practice"; and (*d*) the Medical Provident Association started by a combination of the local doctors, or the Provident Dispensary managed by a philanthropic committee. These four classes of agencies for domiciliary treatment of the sick poor differ widely from one another in their geographical extension, the doctor's medical club or contract practice being, for instance, widespread over town and country alike, and the out-patients' department being confined to the Metropolis and a few large towns. They differ also in the degree to which, in one place or another, they impinge upon or overlap the Poor Law.

The free dispensaries and "medical missions," on the one hand, and the out-patients' departments of the voluntary hospitals on the other, have in common the attribute of offering medical attendance and medicine gratuitously to those who come for it at prescribed times and places—sometimes without the slightest fee or formality, sometimes on presentation of a subscriber's letter, and sometimes on payment of a few pence for the medicine supplied. Started originally on a small scale, in order to afford relief to the suffering poor who had access to no other doctor, these centres of gratuitous doctoring now minister, in the Metropolis and in certain other towns, to literally hundreds of thousands of cases annually. Here, at any rate, we have unrestricted access to medical treatment—a widely advertised gratuitous provision which to some extent mitigates the hardship of a restriction of Poor Law Medical Relief, and which goes far to explain, in the Metropolis and the other towns in which it exists, the slow growth of any form of medical insurance. "In our great cities," states a great hospital authority, "and especially in the Metropolis, the vast out-patients' departments of the voluntary hospitals, with their ever-open doors, offering gratuitous treatment to all comers, are a standing obstacle to any efficient reform of the home treatment of the sick poor. No organisation of Provident Dispensaries or Public Medical Service, no system of mutual insurance for medical attendance, no scheme based on thrift, supplemented by State-aid, can hope successfully to compete with the open hand and high prestige of the great voluntary hospitals." * This objection to the out-patient departments—that of preventing more self-supporting forms of medical treatment—will, however, not be conclusive to those who desire that the sick poor should have every possible access to medical assistance in their hour of need. What appears more serious is the assertion that the treatment afforded to the bulk of the patients is, from the standpoint of preventive, or really curative treatment, wholly unsatisfactory. "These great institutions," continues the eminent physician of Guy's Hospital whom we have already

* "The Future of the Voluntary Hospital and its Relation to a reformed Poor Law Medical Service," by Dr. Lauriston Shaw, Physician at Guy's Hospital, *British Medical Journal*, June 20th, 1908, p. 1,472.

quoted, " while preventing the proper development of other agencies, are quite unable efficiently to fill their places. They cannot carry their services to within reasonable distance of every patient's door, nor can they follow the patient to his home when too ill to attend at the out-patient department, and not ill enough, or not suitably ill, for admission to the wards." * Indeed, from the necessarily hurried way in which the work has to be done, no less than from the crowding together of all sorts of sick persons—sometimes men, women, and children of all ages—with sores and ulcers, with coughs and expectorations, not infrequently with a case of zymotic disease among them, kept waiting for hours cooped up in dirty and insanitary waiting-rooms, we cannot help regarding these mammoth out-patients' departments as positive dangers to the public health. Nor is this merely our own opinion. " As a matter of well-known fact," testified a medical practitioner of experience, " the out-patient department is so crowded that the work has to be done in a slipshod fashion, and unless the case happens to be an ' interesting ' one, the patient is put off with the stereotyped ' How are you to-day ? ' ' Put out your tongue.' ' Go on with your medicine.' No one who knows the system can blame the infirmary doctors, as they are notoriously overworked. Many people go there who could well afford to pay for outside advice, and whose complaints are of the most trivial character. The consequence is that cases which really require time and consideration frequently fail to get it from the overworked house-surgeon or physician." † However profitable may be the out-patients' department in attracting the subscriptions of the benevolent ; however convenient it may be as a means by which the hospital can pick out " interesting " cases which are wanted inside ; and however genuinely useful it may be as a preliminary diagnosis which promptly sifts out and admits the cases requiring institutional treatment, we are bound to conclude that, to a large proportion of the patients dealt with, it is, so far as any preventive or really curative effect is concerned, little better than a delusion. It is, indeed, difficult to take seriously in the twentieth century, as an organisation professing to treat disease, the typical arrangement under which an overworked and harassed house-surgeon gives a few minutes each to a continuous stream of the most varied patients ; without knowledge of their diet, habits or diathesis ; without any but the most perfunctory examination of the most obvious bodily symptoms ; without even the slightest " interrogation of the functions " ; and without any attempt at domiciliary inspection and visitation. " At present," summed up one experienced medical practitioner, the out-patient department of the voluntary hospital " is to a great extent a shop for giving people large quantities of medicine." ‡

We need not describe the Free Dispensaries and " Medical Missions " which abound in the slum districts of a few large towns. All the arguments against the gratuitous, indiscriminate and unconditional medical attendance afforded by the out-patients' departments of the hospitals appear to us to apply, in even greater strength, to the Free Dispensaries and Medical Missions ; with the added drawbacks, that they are not, as a rule, under responsible and specialised medical supervision, and that they are not able to offer immediate institutional treatment to those of their patients whom they find to require it. The " Medical Missions," in particular, were stated to us to be " the worst of the whole lot . . . mixing up medicine and religion," and seeking to attract persons to religious services by the bait of " cheap doctoring." § In our opinion, all these centres for the gratuitous, indiscriminate, and unconditional dispensing of medical advice and medicine, far from meriting encouragement, or offering opportunities for extension, call imperatively—at any rate where they involve the gathering of crowds of sick persons in halls and passages—for systematic inspection and supervision by the local Medical Officer of Health, in order to ensure that they are not actually spreading more disease than they are curing.

We pass now to those agencies for domiciliary treatment which are based on contributions from the persons attended to, wholly or partially covering the cost of the service. The most widespread of these agencies is the more or less formally organised medical " club," or " contract practice "—it may be a regular friendly society giving also sick pay ; it may, on the other hand, be merely a scratch enrolment of members got up by the doctor himself for his own convenience and profit—the members in either case paying a small sum weekly or quarterly whilst they are well, in order that, when they happen to be ill, they

* *Ibid.*, p. 1,472.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 51859, Par. 4 ; *see also Q.* 50873 ; *Qs.* 33240–33245 ; and *Q.* 41868, Par. 10. Where " the home life " is not " properly attended to," sums up a medical witness, " the relief they get at the out-patient department " of the great hospital is " of very little value."

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 51896.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 33690, 33691.

may obtain medical attendance and medicine free of charge. This "club practice" which has, in one or other form, greatly increased during the past few decades, has plainly some advantages. The poor pay something towards their own doctoring, and the feeling that they are themselves paying for it increases their independence and self-reliance. They pay for it, too, by the device of insurance, by which the cost of the years of sickness, being spread over a large number of persons, falls in effect upon the years of good health, when the small periodical instalments can be borne with the least inconvenience.

Notwithstanding these advantages, there is, we notice, a feeling of uneasiness among the medical profession,* and, we think, also among the clients of this club or contract practice—as to the real benefits of the arrangement. The contracts so extensively made by the organised Friendly Societies for medical attendance on their members are constantly producing strain and friction in the relations between the societies and the local practitioners whom they employ, breaking at intervals into open warfare. The doctors allege that the remuneration allowed to them is so insufficient as hardly to cover expenses, whilst many persons of substantial means take advantage of the society membership.† The members of the friendly societies, on the other hand, complain that they get only perfunctory attendance, that the doctor favours the committeemen or other influential members, and that he seeks to recoup himself by charging fees for all the other members of the family. We need not consider these mutual recriminations, except in so far as they reveal conditions inherently inimical to the cure and prevention of disease. We have it in evidence that "the club doctor is not infrequently regarded as an inferior kind of practitioner. I have known," says a Medical Officer of Health, "several cases where members of clubs on the occurrence of serious illness in themselves or their families, have discarded the services of the club doctor and incurred the expense of employing a private practitioner. A few weeks ago I was asked by a workman whether I thought a 'club doctor' was competent to treat a case of scarlet fever. . . . From my own experience in club practice, I can testify to the extremely unsatisfactory conditions under which it is carried on. The examination of a patient should be conducted on the principle laid down by Trousseau: 'Interrogate all the functions,' but in a busy club practice it is impossible to interrogate even one function with sufficient care."‡ But besides the adverse influence on the public health which medical attendance upon such conditions must necessarily exercise, the contract practice of Friendly Societies fails altogether to provide for some of the classes for whom the provision of medical aid is, in the public interest, most essential. Speaking broadly, the Friendly Societies do not provide medical assistance for any woman, whether married or single,§ or for children. They do not, if they can help it, admit "bad lives," against which all Friendly Societies protect themselves by a medical examination prior to admission, or any persons suffering from constitutional defects, or incipient disease. Nor do they provide for persons, even if already admitted to membership, who suffer from venereal diseases, or the results of alcoholic excess. Taken together these excluded classes must amount to more than three-fourths of the population.

Much the same objection applies to the private medical clubs established by doctors for their own profit. It is true that, unlike most of the Friendly Societies, they do provide

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* It has been represented to us that the great growth of these medical clubs and of "contract practice" in some districts has seriously undermined the remuneration of the local medical practitioners; and that a large part of the growth has been actually at their expense. In view of the facts that the work of the Poor Law Medical Officers has certainly not decreased, and that of the Public Health Authorities and voluntary hospitals has steadily increased, it appears probable that the increase in club and contract practice represents, in part, at any rate, an absorption of those who formerly paid fees as individual patients.

† A vivid picture of this friction and conflict was given in *The Battle of the Clubs*, by the Special Commissioner of the *Lancet*. Much of the conflict is waged round the so-called "income-limit." "Clubs," said one of our witnesses, "were originally started to afford sick pay and medical attendance to the class immediately above paupers, that of artisans, labourers, etc., and the contributions were so arranged as to pay the doctor something, perhaps half of what he would have charged, taking an average; but they have now been taken possession of by a higher class which ought to pay better fees, and the contributions are utterly inadequate to pay for modern medical attendance, involving, as it does, estimation of opsonic index, bacteriological investigation of secretions, serum therapy, etc., and the performance of many operations which were unthought of when the rates were fixed" (*Ibid.*, Q. 70631, Par. 7).

‡ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLV. (Par. 29) to Vol. IX.

§ The Friendly Society contract for medical attendance habitually includes members only, not their dependents. Friendly Societies for women are objected to. The doctors, we are told, "boycott female Courts." In one town, the Medico-Ethical Society, to which all the best doctors in the town belong, have a rule that: "No female club be accepted by any member of the Society" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. CI. (Par. 26) to Vol. V.).

for children and also for wives, though midwifery is not included. But the remuneration is practically never sufficient* to enable the doctor to devote the time and attention necessary for really curative work. There is the same exclusion of "bad lives,"† with the additional drawback that, in the doctor's own medical club, there is no obligation to continue the membership of any member who develops chronic disease, or even to continue the club at all if he thinks that the average sickness becomes too great.‡ Needless to say there is no idea of prevention, or even of taking precautions against the communication of disease. "The long waiting in the crowded waiting rooms at the doctor's surgery," we are authoritatively informed, "tends to spread infectious disease, to injure the health of the patient and to cause a considerable loss of time, which in many cases inflicts inconvenience or even actual loss on the poor. Moreover the doctor should take account of the home conditions of the patient. In the home there are various influences which assist or retard recovery, and the doctor should make himself acquainted as far as possible with those conditions and endeavour to modify them in the interest of the patient. For instance, sanitary defects should be reported to the sanitary authority, and advice should be given as to the due sanitary ordering of home. The overworked club doctor, however, has time for none of these things. He reduces his domiciliary work as much as possible and encourages the patients to come up to his surgery for treatment, and it is extremely rare for him to report anything to the sanitary authority except cases of notifiable infectious disease."§ There is the same temptation to supply only the cheapest medicines that we have seen to prevail where the Poor Law Medical Officer has himself to provide drugs. There is even a tendency, it is said, to pander to the medical superstitions of the sick rather than correct their bad hygienic habits. "To the poor people who crowd his surgery," as one overworked club doctor explained, "he must be equally subservient. They must not be allowed to grumble about the club medical man; and to ensure their goodwill it is best to treat them more in accordance with their palates than with their symptoms. To satisfy these patients it is necessary to give them a lot of medicine. It must be a dark medicine with a strong taste, preferably of peppermint."‖ Hence we are not surprised to be informed by a responsible medical witness that, to the "medical profession, club practice is most distasteful. No practitioner remains a club doctor any longer than he can possibly help. The disadvantages of club practice constitute a burning question for the medical profession at the present time. In various parts of the country practitioners are banding together to resist what are spoken of as the 'sweating' methods of the clubs, and the weapon of the strike (with the concomitant ostracism of the 'blackleg') is being freely employed by these associations of medical practitioners in their struggle for better conditions of club practice."¶ To quote the words used by a medical witness, himself a Poor Law Guardian, "the clubs are a failure, both for the patients and for the medical men." **

It is, we think, impossible to avoid the conclusion that the spontaneous and competitive organisation of medical insurance—far from being in a position to supersede the Poor Law Medical Service—has, in all its varied forms, proved in practice to be inimical alike to the medical profession and to the public health. This result has gradually forced itself upon the conviction of philanthropists and the medical organisations. In certain provincial towns the local medical practitioners have combined to establish "Provident Medical Associations," on a plan which, after some hesitation, has received the endorsement of the British Medical Association.††

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* "The amount paid by these clubs to medical men," says one witness, "is generally 3s. per annum per member, and as the doctor provides all medicines this does not give a living wage to the doctor, hence the work is often unsatisfactory" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXIII. (Par. 15) to Vol. IV.) "Club fees are so low," deposed a local secretary of the British Medical Association, "that the medical men cannot do justice to the patients. The fees vary from 3s. to 4s. a member per annum" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. CIV. (Par. 2) to Vol. IV.) "I may state this with the greatest positiveness," states a Medical Officer of Health, "that medical men would much rather be without any such form of contract practice than have it. They simply take clubs . . . in order to keep somebody else out" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 38844). "I . . . am opposed to them on principle," testified a hospital surgeon, "because . . . it means a sweating of the medical profession on the one hand, and a perfunctory and inefficient performance of duties on the other" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXVI. (Par. 17) to Vol. IV.).

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 74818-74822. "They take very great care," deposed Sir William Chance, "only to take in cases they know will pay them" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 29297).

‡ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXV. (Par. 13) to Vol. VII.

§ *Ibid.*, Appendix XLV. (Par. 29) to Vol. IX.

‖ *The Battle of the Clubs*, by the Special Commissioner of *The Lancet*, p. 120.

¶ Statement of Dr. McCleary, Medical Officer of Health for Hampstead (Evidence before the Commission Appendix No. XLV. (Par. 29) to Vol. IX.).

** *Ibid.*, Appendix No. CLIX. (Par. 9) to Vol. IV.

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 39153, etc.

These Provident Medical Associations differ from the medical clubs got up by individual doctors, and from the contract practice of the Friendly Societies, only in the fact that all the medical men of the locality who are willing to take part share in the practice and in the contributions, in exact proportion to the number of members who select each of them as their doctor. "We consider it undesirable," testified the representatives of the British Medical Association, "that there should be the existing monopoly in contract practices; we think they should be thrown open so that all the patients should have a choice of all the medical men in the district." * The Provident Dispensaries established by philanthropists in London and some other places, are, for the most part, based upon the same plan of allowing the contributing member a choice of doctors, and sharing the contributions among all the doctors on the list in proportion to the number of patients whom they severally attract. These deliberately organised arrangements for combining medical insurance with free choice of doctors have made little headway; owing, it is said, to the difficulty of inducing the doctors to combine, and, in the Metropolis and other large centres of population, also to the rivalry of Free Dispensaries and Medical Missions and the out-patients' departments of the hospitals that we have already described. But as it has been suggested to us by responsible witnesses that charitable persons might be urged to foster the Provident Dispensaries and Provident Medical Associations; that Poor Law Medical Relief might be so restricted as to compel all poor persons to join them, as the only way by which they could obtain medical assistance in their hour of need; † and even that some such system of Provident Medical Insurance, with free choice of doctors, might well receive a state subsidy, and might actually be made to take the place of the Outdoor Poor Law Medical Service, we have felt compelled to examine with some care both its results and its possibilities.

After careful consideration of the working and results of medical insurance in all its various forms, our conclusion is that we should hesitate before recommending to the charitable any deliberate extension of it, even at its best. "It must be borne in mind," observes a Medical Officer of Health, "that the 'self-supporting' character of a medical club is largely an illusion. There are many diseases that a club doctor does not attempt to treat. The vast majority of notifiable cases of infectious disease, lunacy, and an increasing number of cases of tuberculosis are treated in rate-supported institutions. Abdominal surgery, ophthalmic surgery, any surgical operation except the most trivial, and many other conditions are treated in hospitals that are supported by private charity. If these institutions were not available, clubs and provident dispensaries could not be conducted on their present conditions, and, therefore, it is true to say that, in a sense, these so-called 'self-supporting' medical agencies are partly supported by the rates and partly by private charity." ‡ But even with regard to the kind of sickness with which they actually deal; the indigestions, the chronic catarrhs, the sores and eruptions, the palpitations, the dragging pains of the woman worker, the rheumatism and lumbago of the outdoor labourer—the quality of their ministrations leaves, as we have seen, much to be desired. In nearly all these cases, as has been over and over again pointed out to us in evidence, what is needed is not so much "a bottle of physic" or an ointment, as some alteration in the unhygienic methods of living to which so many of the poor, whether from ignorance, from sheer poverty or from lack of self-control, are unfortunately addicted. But this is just where all the forms of provident clubs or dispensary practice fail. To quote the words of an experienced physician "they give people a bottle of medicine, but they do not do much else. They take no supervision of their home surroundings, and no supervision of the general hygiene, and they never provide anything in the way of food and nourishment. It is very often much more food that is wanted, for instance, with the children. The cost of feeding an infant alone is 3s. a week, and the people cannot always afford it. They only get an attempt at food in the shape of cod-liver oil or something of that kind from the hospital." § "The amount of medicine consumed," deposed a medical expert with regard to perhaps the largest and most flourishing of the Provident Dispensaries, "is out of all proportion to the amount of advice taken." ‖ All this applies

* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 59151.

† It is claimed that this has been done at Bradfield. By making Poor Law Medical Relief more irksome and even more costly to the recipient, than belonging to a medical club, it has been practically superseded by a great growth of such medical clubs (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 29895, 29896).

‡ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLV. (Par. 31) to Vol. IX.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 36946.

‖ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. CXXXII. (Par. 38) to Vol. IV.

with even greater force where, to the device of medical insurance, there is added a free choice of doctors. The medical practitioner who is chary with his drugs, but prodigal and plain spoken in his advice about giving up bad habits and injurious excesses in eating and drinking, is seldom popular among the poor. To give either public encouragement or public aid to any system of medical attendance among the poor that was based on a free choice of doctors, and on their remuneration according to the number of patients that they severally attracted, could not fail, in our opinion to perpetuate and intensify the popular superstition as to the value of medicine and the popular reluctance to adopt hygienic methods of life; and—as we fear we must add—could not fail also to foster the injurious "medical demagogy" to which, in the stress of competition, these popular feelings already give occasion.*

Apart from the general shortcomings of any system of medical insurance so far as its contributing members are concerned it is, in our judgment, for other reasons quite impossible to employ it as a substitute for the Poor Law Medical Service. We note, to begin with, that neither the Medical Association nor the Provident Dispensaries have themselves had any hope of including in their membership those for whom the Poor Law Medical Service is provided, namely, the destitute. It has, however, been suggested to us that the Local Authority, instead of having a Poor Law Medical Officer, might enrol all the persons now or hereafter entitled to medical relief as members of the local Provident Association, simply by paying the requisite contributions in their names. But, if this were done, or done whenever any case might prove to require medical aid, we fail to see what motive there would be for any person to pay his own contribution to the Association. We have it in evidence that one of the strongest inducements at present to join a medical club or otherwise to pay for one's own doctoring, is the free choice of doctors which is thus secured. The poor, we are told, strongly resent having to go to one particular doctor whether or not they like him or have confidence in his treatment. But if the labourer who has neglected to contribute to the Provident Medical Association finds himself, when illness overtakes him, with just the same privilege of choosing his own doctor and of changing with equal facility from one doctor to another,† as if he had himself contributed, it is difficult to see why anybody should be at the pains of contributing at all. Thus the use of these Provident Medical Associations by the Destitution Authority, in order to provide for the paupers requiring medical treatment, would very shortly bring the self-supporting side of these associations to an end.

It has been suggested that the difficulty would be avoided if the Provident Medical Associations were fortified by a compulsory enactment, requiring every adult to become a member for himself and his dependents. The short answer to this suggestion is that it is in this country, under present conditions, totally impracticable. For the Government to extract any weekly contribution—let alone the substantial contribution that would be necessary—from the millions of unskilled and casually employed labourers of our great cities, from the hundreds of thousands of homeworkers in the sweated trades, from the women workers everywhere, from the tens of thousands of Vagrants and their dependents, would be an impossible task. To bring the Government into the field as a rival collector

* To the Chancellor of the Exchequer the proposal to supersede the present Poor Law Medical Service by a system of State-subsidised medical insurance, involving free choice of doctors, will appear impracticable for quite other reasons. Any such system of provident insurance, coupled with the boon of free choice of doctors, must necessarily be offered simultaneously to the poor all over the country. The 3,713 District Medical Officers in England and Wales, the 800 in Scotland, and the 845 Dispensary doctors in Ireland, hold definite salaried appointments, nearly always during good behaviour, from which they could not be displaced without the usual compensation. This, upon the customary basis, would involve a lump sum payment of about £5,000,000. On the other hand, the mere transference of these officers, at their existing emoluments, to a reorganised Public Health Medical Service, which could take place simultaneously all over the country, leaving desirable readjustments to be made only as vacancies occurred, would involve no compensation.

† It is an incident of the absurd popular belief in medicine, and the anarchy fostered by the full choice of doctors, that there is already any amount of overlapping. "It is quite possible," says a Medical Officer of Health, "that a Poor Law doctor, a club doctor and the doctor in charge of the hospital out-patient department may attend the same patient at the same time. I once heard of a case where the patient had secured in this way three bottles of medicine from three different doctors, and took from one in the morning, from the second in the middle of the day, and from the third in the evening. (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 41888, Par. 8, 41921–41923.) "It is common," testifies a District Medical Officer, "for people to use two institutions (for outdoor medical treatment) at the same time . . . and to throw away one or both lots of medicine." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 43998, Par. 50.) Apparently 11 per cent. of all the out-patients at the voluntary hospitals of London are, or have recently been, in receipt of Poor Relief (Report . . . on the Overlapping of the Work of the Voluntary General Hospitals with that of Poor Law Medical Relief, by Norah B. Roberts).

of weekly pence in the skilled trades—whether or not deducted by the employer from the wage — would excite the strongest opposition not only from those doctors who have large medical clubs of their own, but also from the whole Trade Union movement, from all the friendly societies and from the tens of thousands of agents and collectors and the millions of policy-holders of the industrial insurance companies—an irresistible phalanx! Nor would such a method of levying the revenue required to pay for universal medical attendance be, in accordance with the classic canons of taxation, economically justified. It would, in short, be in the nature of a poll-tax; and England has not had a poll-tax since 1381. Finally, for the Government in this way to guarantee the revenue of these Provident Medical Associations would, we suggest, involve the Government in the necessity of guaranteeing the management. We should thus have got round again to a State Medical Service, but this time to one of gigantic dimensions.

We have left to the last the objection that seems to us the most serious against the proposal to supersede the Poor Law Medical Service by any system of medical insurance, whether voluntary or compulsory, which involves the free choice of doctors by the persons for whom the medical attendance is provided. In the treatment of poor persons, the problem is complicated by the frequent necessity for supplementing the medical attendance and medicine by "medical extras," that is to say, nourishing food and stimulants of one sort or another. It must necessarily be left to the doctor to recommend authoritatively in which cases this extra nourishment is required for curative treatment. If the patient can choose his doctor, he will inevitably choose the one who is most addicted to ordering "medical extras," and the medical practitioner whose remuneration is dependent on the number of patients whom he attracts will be under a constant temptation to recommend, for any person who looks anaemic, at the cost of the ratepayer, the additional food or stimulant for which all poor patients have a craving. To give to the destitute, at the cost of the rates, not access to the particular medical treatment that their ailments really require, but the power to choose, and to enrich with their fees, that one among all the doctors of the town who most commends himself to them, would be, we suggest, most disastrously to aggravate all the existing temptations to "medical demagogy."* To expect this freely-chosen doctor to give, not the "strong medicine" beloved by the poor, or the appetising "medical extras" for which they crave, but the stern advice about habits of life on which recovery really depends—to look to him to speak plainly about the excessive drinking or the unwise eating which cause two-thirds of the ill-health of the poor; or to stop the overcrowding and bad ventilation that encourage tuberculosis; to insist, in measles or whooping-cough, on the troublesome precautions against infection which may check the spread of these diseases; or to press for the removal of his patients to an institution whenever he believes that they would be better cured there—would clearly be chimerical.† What would tend to be provided under such a system would be, not preventive or curative treatment or hygienic advice, but, in the literal sense of the words, medical *relief*, and that wholly without conditions. On all these grounds, the proposal to supersede the Poor Law Medical Service by any system of universal medical insurance appears to us, not only politically impracticable, but also entirely retrograde in policy, and likely to be fraught with the greatest dangers to public health and to the moral character of the poor.

We have still to consider the institutional treatment of the sick provided by voluntary agencies. This is practically confined to the endowed and voluntary hospitals, and, of these, fortunately, the merits are so well known as to enable us to be brief. They are already made use of freely by the very poorest, and Boards of Guardians everywhere transfer suitable cases to them from the Workhouse infirmary, usually making, as is recommended by the Local Government Board, a contribution towards the cost of mainten-

* We had it given in evidence that any plan of letting the pauper choose his own doctor "would be very bad because the pauper would not . . . be under proper discipline" (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 34179),

† The lack of connection in the public mind—even the divorce in the minds of medical practitioners themselves—between the medical treatment of an ailment, and "the cure of the . . . bad habit" which (*Ibid.*, Q. 38758, Par. 28) are actually producing that ailment, seems to us, from the standpoint of Public Health, one of the strangest anachronisms of the present day. We were actually informed by some medical practitioners, in one and the same statement, that the arrangements for the medical attendance of the poor left nothing to be desired, and that the infants were dying in heaps; that no further medical attention was required, and that the people were living most unhealthy lives. "The poor," says one doctor, "do not suffer from insufficiency of medical attention. . . . [There is] an utte want of knowledge . . . of the ordinary rules of health and treatment of minor ailments. The treatment of babies by young mothers, from ignorance, is appalling." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXII. (Pars. 8, 9) to Vol. VII.

ance either of these particular patients or of the institution as a whole.* But the endowed and voluntary hospitals are very far from sufficing for the needs of the sick poor.† They appear to provide in the aggregate little more than 25,000 beds, which is only about one-fourth of the number of sick beds already actually occupied in the Workhouses and Workhouse infirmaries. Moreover, instead of being distributed geographically as required, the voluntary hospitals, whether general or special, are mainly concentrated in London and the sixty or seventy larger or more ancient provincial towns, where physicians and surgeons and their students love to congregate. The selection of the diseases which these hospitals are willing to admit for treatment is, alike from the standpoint of preventive medicine and from that of the needs of the poor, equally arbitrary. It was because the voluntary hospitals refused to provide for zymotic diseases, or for any epidemic, that the municipal hospitals arose. It was because they would not deal with cases of chronic disablement that the Poor Law had to develop its "hospital branch." "No general hospital," stated a Local Government Board Inspector, "will admit a man who is suffering from delirium tremens: hence the Poor Law Infirmaries are charged with such cases."‡ "All cases of venereal disease," says a Poor Law Medical Officer, "are now practically debarred from the genuine hospitals, to the great detriment of the community." § To-day there is no sign of any development of medical charity competent to provide institutional treatment all over the country for the two gravest national diseases, tuberculosis and syphilis. In fact, what the voluntary hospitals like to deal with is the acute case and the unique or "interesting" case—just those which are least prevalent and which, in all probability, are, to preventive medicine, the least important. Moreover, even where voluntary hospitals exist, and even in those diseases which they select for treatment, their provision, excellent as it is so far as it goes, has the capital drawback of disconnection with domiciliary inspection and supervision before and after the acute stage of the illness. In fact, as it has been paradoxically put, the voluntary hospital is not concerned with the treatment of disease: what it treats and treats so magnificently is collapse from disease; until the patient is so ill that he cannot continue at his employment, he does not enter the hospital. As soon as he is well enough to be discharged, his case disappears from the ken of the hospital staff. And it has been given in evidence that this tendency to get rid of a case as soon as the acute stage is passed, or as soon as it is apparent that the disease is a chronic or incurable one, is leading more and more to the prompt transfer of such patients from the hospital to the Workhouse or Poor Law Infirmary. ‖ Thus, whilst it may be foreseen that the Local Authority dealing with the sick poor will, under proper conditions as to payment, be able to make increasing use of the voluntary hospitals for the treatment of the acute stages of certain diseases, and especially for operative surgery, these hospitals, far from rendering unnecessary "the Hospital Branch" of the Poor Law Medical Service, will, on the contrary, tend more and more to reject or to transfer all other cases to rate-supported institutions of one kind or another.¶

(G) The Treatment of the Sick by the Public Health Authorities.

The voluntary agencies treating the sick poor are not the only rivals whose work overlaps or surrounds that of the Poor Law Medical Service. It has been formally brought to our notice by the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board for England and Wales,** by the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland,†† and by the Medical Commissioner of the Local Government Board for Ireland,‡‡ as well as by the Medical Officer of the Board of Education for England and Wales,§§ that ubiquitous and expensive as is the Poor Law Medical Service, it is not the only one maintained out of

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 268, 737, 930, 5046, 6019, 7938, 8994, 11044, 18653, 18753, 20888, 21335, 21378, 21383, 21494, 23384, 32608–32610, 32805–32807, 42237, 45586, 47501, 37921, 50468, 50856, 51107, 52533, 52577–52587, and Appendices No. LXV. (Par. 4), LXXXVI. (Par. 10), XCIII. (Par. 14), CXXII. (Par. 13), CXXXII. (Par. 33), CL. (Par. 23 (a)) to Vol. IV.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 2887.

‡ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXVI. (A), Par. 41, to Vol. I.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 37927, Par. 10.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 32618; 32675–32677; 32757–32763; 33380; 49171, Par. 20; 49192; 51119.

¶ Report [illegible] on the Overlapping of the Work of the Voluntary General Hospitals with that of Poor Law Medical Relief, by Norah B. Roberts, p. 14.

** *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 92531–93029; *see also* Dr. Newsholme's "Memorandum by the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board on the Unification of the Official Medical Services."

†† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 56601–57036, 61904–62080.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 99927, 99882; *see also* Dr. Stafford's "Some Notes on Public Health, and its Relation to the Poor Law in Ireland."

§§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 94283–94628.

the rates. Every part of the United Kingdom is now provided with an equally ubiquitous, quite as highly qualified, and nearly as costly a service of public medical officers, maintained by the Local Sanitary Authorities. To mention only England and Wales, under the various Public Health Acts, the Municipal and Urban District Councils on the one hand and the Rural District Councils on the other, are charged, under the supervision of the County Councils, with explicit responsibility for the health of their several districts —that is to say, for the maintenance in health of all the inhabitants thereof. To this end the councils have been granted elaborate statutory powers, both of regulation and provision, some of them optional and some obligatory. We have had described to us by the responsible heads of the medical departments above mentioned, as well as by numerous medical officers of the Local Authorities concerned, the very extensive functions which those Authorities are now fulfilling in the treatment and cure of the sick poor amounting, in fact, to the provision of medical advice, attendance or medicine, in one way or another, for possibly nearly as many patients—certainly as many acutely sick patients—as are under the care of the Poor Law Medical Service. And it has been given in evidence by the responsible heads of the Departments concerned, as well as by the Medical Officers of Health themselves, that neither in legal theory nor in practical administration are the destitute sick excluded from their ministrations. We have, in fact, in every part of the Kingdom, two public medical authorities legally responsible for, and in many cases simultaneously treating the same class of poor persons, sometimes even for the same diseases. So extensive and costly an overlapping has compelled us to explore in some detail and to describe at length the various developments of the Public Health as well as of the Poor Law service.*

(i) *Municipal Hospitals.*

Starting from the provision of temporary isolation hospitals for cholera patients and then for those attacked by smallpox, the Public Health Authorities now maintain over 700 permanent municipal hospitals, having, in the aggregate, nearly 25,000 beds,† or nearly as many as all the endowed and voluntary hospitals put together. These vary in size and elaboration, from the cottage or shed with two or three beds set aside for an occasional small-pox patient, up to such an institution as the Liverpool City Hospital, divided into seven distinct sections in as many different parts of the city, and having altogether 938 beds, served by six resident and seven visiting doctors, and treating nearly 5,000 patients a year, for an average period of seven or eight weeks.‡

The Manchester Town Council maintains the Monsall Fever Hospital, with 415 beds, which makes no charge whatever to the patients; another at Baguley, with 100 beds; and a third at Clayton Hill for small-pox cases.§ The Birmingham Town Council has a couple of hospitals, having together 610 beds.‖ The Leeds Town Council provides a series of hospitals and isolation dwellings, principally for scarlet fever, diphtheria and small-pox, accommodating over 600 persons, where patients are admitted "without any charge whether they belong to the families of ratepayers or of paupers."¶ These towns are typical of many others. Mention must here be made of the hospitals of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, because, though administered by a body largely made up of representatives of Boards of Guardians, and actually maintained out of the poor rates,** they have become, both by statute and by Local Government Board decisions, practically public health institutions. The dozen great hospitals thus maintained for small-pox, scarlet fever, enteric fever and diphtheria, now admit all cases recommended by any medical practitioner, irrespective of the patient's affluence. The maintenance and treatment, once made matter of charge, is now by virtue of the Public Health (London)

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* *See* the Report by Mrs. Sidney Webb on the Medical Services of the Poor Law and Public Health Departments of English Local Government in their relation to each other, to the public and to the prevention and cure of disease; and "Some Notes on Public Health, and its Relation to the Poor Law in Ireland," by Dr. T. J. Stafford, Medical Commissioner of the Local Government Board for Ireland.

† We regret that no official return of these Municipal hospitals has been published; and that no more complete list is available than that given in Burdett's *Hospitals and Charities Annual*, for 1908; or that to be gleaned from the return of deaths in public institutions in the Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England and Wales.

‡ Report on the Health of the City of Liverpool during 1905, by the Medical Officer of Health.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 38380, Par. 37.

‖ *Ibid.*, Appendices No. CXXXVII. (Par. 1 (a)) and CXXXVIII. (Par. 2) to Vol. IV.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 41489, Pars. 2–5.

** *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 4–9; 23253–6; 24155–499; Appendix No. XVI. to Vol. II

Act, 1891, universally free. The inmates, originally exclusively paupers, are now explicitly declared to be not pauperised, the treatment, and even the maintenance, being (by the Diseases Prevention Act of 1883) expressly stated not to be parochial relief and to involve no stigma of disqualification whatsoever. The 3,000 to 6,000 patients in these hospitals, costing nearly £1,000,000 a year, may, therefore, be reckoned, though under a Poor Law authority, as virtually patients of a Public Health Department, and they are accordingly excluded by the Local Government Board from the statistics and computed cost of pauperism. The municipal hospitals of the provincial towns, provided in the first instance usually for small-pox, have had their spheres extended to scarlet fever, enteric fever, and usually diphtheria; in addition to any stray cases of plague, cholera or typhus that may turn up. But they do not stop there. The Public Health Acts do not prescribe the kind of disease to be treated in the hospital which they authorise,* and whatever may have been the primary object for which it was established there is nothing to prevent the Local Authority from admitting any sick patients whatsoever.† Hence, although it is generally assumed that these so-called "Isolation Hospitals" are for infectious cases only, the list of diseases dealt with is steadily growing. In most towns of any size the municipal hospitals are willing to deal with puerperal fever (as at Crewe)‡ and with serious erysipelas. Cases of chicken-pox are occasionally found in them; children suffering from scabies and pediculosis are occasionally admitted for temporary treatment;§ and the door is now being opened to the two most deadly diseases of children beyond infancy. The Liverpool Town Council has decided to receive in its municipal hospitals "infants suffering from whooping cough and measles . . . together with the mother or other natural guardian of the child if necessary,"‖ so far as there is room; and since it is recognised that "the isolation of the infectious sick in hospital is important and necessary," special steps have been taken to make room. "Provision of hospital accommodation for a limited number of cases," reports the Medical Officer of Health, "has now been made for measles."¶ Moreover, "isolation for a limited number of [whooping cough] cases has been found."** At Liverpool, indeed, the municipal hospitals admitted and treated during the year 1905 nearly 200 cases, and in 1906 between 500 and 600 cases, of other diseases, including gastro-enteritis, pneumonia, tubercular meningitis, bronchitis, tubercular peritonitis, cystitis and nephritis, erythema, influenza, varicella, septicœmia, abdominal tumour, empyema and tubercle, psoas abscess, tetanus, syphilis, tonsilitis, laryngitis, pharyngitis, angina ludovici, and appendicitis, besides four cases of poisoning. It appears to us difficult to believe that these can all be explained as being cases of mistaken diagnosis.††

The assumption that the power of the Public Health Authority in the provision of hospitals is limited to contagious or infectious disease is, indeed, a mistake, though a common one. There are no such words of limitation in the sections of the Public Health Acts dealing with the matter.‡‡ For a long time, however, probably influenced by the common impression that their powers applied only to infectious diseases, no Public Health Authority sought to establish anything but an isolation hospital. In 1900 the Barry Urban District Council (which sends its infectious cases to a joint isolation hospital at Cardiff, and provides home nurses for such of them as are not moved), established, with the express sanction of the Local Government Board, a free municipal hospital exclusively for non-infectious cases, intended principally for accidents and urgent surgical cases, This municipal hospital has a medical staff of eight visiting surgeons and physicians, an organised nursing staff, and maintains seven beds.§§ The Widnes Urban District Council,

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 37989, 39302, and Appendix No. XXXVIII. (Par. 10) to Vol. IV. It is only the Isolation Hospitals Act of 1893 permitting combinations of Public Health Authorities to establish hospitals for infectious diseases, that is limited to notifiable diseases. There is equally no limitation in Scotland under the Public Health (Scotland) Acts, 1867 and 1890.

† It is somewhat remarkable that there is neither systematic governmental inspection nor central audit of these municipal hospitals. Beyond sanctioning the loans for hospitals under the Public Health Acts, the Local Government Board, we understand, has no other official knowledge of this branch of civic activity than it can glean from the Local Taxation Returns, and from reading the Annual Reports of the 1,800 Medical Officers of Health, with which it is supplied, but which it does not tabulate, summarise, or review statistically. There appears to be no official statement how many sanitary authorities, or what proportion of the whole, either maintain their own hospitals, or make arrangements to use other hospitals, or make no provision at all.

‡ Report on the Health of Crewe, 1905, by the Medical Officer of Health, p. 39.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 92534, Par. A (i).

‖ Report on the Health of the City of Liverpool during 1905, by the Medical Officer of Health, pp. 19, 37.

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

** *Ibid.*, p. 37.

†† *Ibid.*, pp. 202–209.

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 22940–22942.

§§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 22942, 49222 (Par. 1), 4923, etc., and Appendix No. XXV. (Par. 24) to Vol. V.

which runs a fever hospital and a temporary small-pox hospital, was definitely informed by the Local Government Board that it was free to start also an accident hospital, and accordingly did so.*

But the greatest recent development has been in the provision for tuberculosis. The Brighton Municipal Hospital in 1906 actually dealt with more cases of phthisis than of any other disease, they forming a third of its whole number of patients, and amounting to nearly 2 per 1,000 of the entire population of the town. The object of their admission is not so much immediate cure as treatment with a view to instruction in good hygienic habits. They are therefore admitted preferably at an early stage, before being invalided, and they are retained only a few weeks, passing then to their homes, where they are periodically visited. About half of all the known consumptives in Brighton have already been thus through the municipal hospital, with the result, it is believed, of great prolongation of life.† Special hospital provision for tuberculosis primarily with educational objects is accordingly now being made, one way or another, by many public health authorities. At Manchester, the Town Council not only pays for beds at the Delamere and Bowden Sanatoria, but has for several years opened special phthisis wards at its Clayton Vale Hospital.‡ At Leicester, the Town Council has set aside a special hospital block for curable cases, no charge being made for maintenance and treatment during the first month. They may stay for a second, a third and even a fourth month, on payment of 10s. a week.§ It is, however, not only by admission to hospital that the public health authorities now treat individual cases. In certain instances, and for particular purposes, individual cases of disease are dealt with out of hospital. Alike in numbers and in degree this municipal outdoor medical service is rapidly growing. In Scotland it has even been definitely laid down by the Local Government Board that it is for the Local Health Authority to treat all cases of phthisis; and that sufferers from this disease should not come under the Poor Law at all.‖

(ii.) *Notification and Disinfection.*

We may notice first the notification of disease, the inspection as to isolation, the treatment of "contacts," and the arrangements for disinfection. This organisation, at first dependent on voluntary, and only subsequently on obligatory notification, has been extended from disease to disease, until it now covers not only plague, cholera and typhus; erysipelas, puerperal fever, small-pox, scarlet fever, enteric and diphtheria; but also, in one town or another, for this or that period, influenza, measles, and chicken-pox. Puerperal fever, too, has become in a sort of way also separately notifiable by midwives. Arrangements for the voluntary notification of phthisis have been made in numerous towns (including Liverpool, Blackburn, Brighton, Northampton, Southwark, Finsbury), a payment of 2s. 6d. being made for each case. At Sheffield and Bolton this notification of phthisis has been made obligatory by a Local Act. Scotland has gone still further. Under the Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act, 1889, phthisis is compulsorily notifiable in Edinburgh and a large part of the country, including the whole of Lanarkshire outside Glasgow; and with or without compulsory notification, the local Health Authorities are now required to deal with phthisis as with other infections diseases. And now, throughout England and Wales, the Local Government Board has ordered the Poor Law Authorities everywhere to notify to the Local Health Authorities every case of phthisis that is observed in the pauper population. Arrangements are also made by direction of the Board of Education for the Medical Officer of Health to receive weekly notifications, from the head teachers of all the public elementary schools, of all cases in which the children stay away on account of such diseases as measles, whooping cough, chicken-pox, mumps, ringworm, scabies, etc.¶ A Board of Guardians has strongly urged that ophthalmia should be made compulsorily notifiable.** Medical Officers are now suggesting that not only pneumonia, influenza, and diarrhœa, but also

* Evidence before the Commission *Qs.* 10728, 10729, 22942.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 92543, Par. A (iii.); 92541-92605; and Annual Report on the Health . . . of Brighton or . . , 1906, by Arthur Newsholme, p. 26.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 38380 (Pars. 38, 39), 38437, 38438, 38445–38448; *see also* Report on the Health of the City of Manchester, 1905, by James Niven, pp. 168, 169.

§ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. CXLIV. (Par. 3) to Vol. IV.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 53286–9, 54029–54035, 62676 (Par. 24).

¶ *See*, for instance, *Ibid.*, *Q.* 37605, Pars. 26–28.

** Kensington Board of Guardians to Kensington Borough Council, 1900; Monthly Report of Medical Officer of Health for Kensington, October, 1900, p. 109.

cancer should be added to the list of notifiable diseases.* "As the result . . . of recent additions to our knowledge of cancer," reports one Medical Officer of Health (and this is only an echo of similar proposals made at Finsbury and elsewhere during the past decade), "I am of opinion that it is a disease which calls for public health measures; not indeed of a stringent nature, but dealing more with the necessity of destroying the dressings of cancerous ulcers, and for issuing warnings that persons dressing these cases should be careful to protect cuts or wounds of the hands, and to boil sheets and pillow-cases used by patients.†

(iii.) *Supply of Medicines and Anti-Toxin.*

The importance, in certain diseases, of the prompt administration of specific remedies has led the Public Health Authorities to supply these gratuitously to all who will accept them: just as vaccination has, since 1840, been performed by the Poor Law Authorities free of charge, on all who will submit to it. The Manchester Town Council, and various other bodies, distribute bottles of diarrhœa mixture to anyone in need of them, using all the police stations as distributing agencies. But the remedy usually distributed gratuitously is the anti-toxin serum for diphtheritic cases. The extreme importance of promptitude in the administration of this remedy, and the great saving of expense implied by the prevention of the spread of diphtheria, have led very many Public Health Authorities, sometimes after a vain attempt to enlist the co-operation of the Board of Guardians, to supply it gratis, on demand, to any medical practitioner; sometimes,as at Blackburn, through the police stations among other agencies.‡ In some cases the Municipal Authorities have gone further, and have paid Poor Law doctors and private medical practitioners to use it. Thus, the urban district council of Fenton, in Staffordshire, decided in October, 1905, on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health, and as being less costly to the ratepayers than institutional treatment, to undertake the domiciliary treatment, so far as the injection of anti-toxin was concerned, of all diphtheritic patients, and of all who had come in contact with them. For this purpose every medical practitioner in the district, including the District Medical Officers of the Board of Guardians, was, in effect, made, temporarily, an additional officer of the Urban District Council as Public Health Authority, and paid a fee for each case so treated—amounting, for the next few months, to three or four per week.§

(iv.) *Municipal Out-patients' Departments.*

Another direction in which the Public Health Authorities have extended their treatment of individual cases is by opening an out-patients' department. At Willesden, finding that from 25 to 50 per cent. of the cases were without any sort of medical treatment, the Public Health Authority, on the recommendation of the Medical Officer of Health, has established an out-patients' department at its isolation hospital for persons suffering from ringworm, impetigo, scabies, or ophthalmia.‖ At Newcastle-on-Tyne, where the Town Council subscribes 100 guineas a year to the Dispensary, something like eight hundred "letters" are, in return, placed at the disposal of the Municipality. These "letters" each entitle the bearer to two months' gratuitous treatment, including domiciliary visits where required, and, in practice, recommendations for admission to various voluntary hospitals, etc. if institutional treatment is necessary. At present, these "letters" are distributed by Town Councillors. The Town Council also maintains salaried Health Visitors, who go round the town under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health, and who thus discover many cases of disease, but have, at present, no organised method of securing medical attendance. "The Medical Officer of Health himself has . . . recently suggested to the Corporation that they should increase their subscription to the Dispensary . . . with the object of getting more letters, *and that these letters should be distributed by the Health Visitors.*"¶

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* Report on the Health of the County of Dorset for 1905, by the various Medical Officers of Health (Sherborne Report), p. 28.

† Report on the Health of Southend-on-Sea for 1905, by the Medical Officer of Health, p. 59.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 37605, Par. 14.

§ Report on the Health of Fenton, 1905, by the Medical Officer of Health, p. 49.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XLIII. (Par. 17) to Vol. IX.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 51466 (Pars. 12, 14, 16), 51511, 51601–51607.

(v.) *Pediculosis and Scabies.*

For the particular bodily affections of pediculosis and scabies—which, as being morbid conditions of the body susceptible of treatment and cure, must be classed as diseases—Parliament has expressly authorised gratuitous provision, which is not to be deemed parochial relief or charitable allowance.* "Baths and disinfecting chambers for the cleansing and purifying of the bodies and clothing of persons infested with vermin or parasites" are now provided by various municipal authorities. "No charge is made for the use of these facilities, and applicants will be treated with every consideration." † This small "attempt in the treatment of certain skin diseases," as it has been apologetically described, represents, it is admitted "a departure from the principle of not treating disease, but it has its justification in the contagious nature of such disease"—a justification which would carry us far. But even for pediculosis alone one Public Health Authority (that of Marylebone) has successfully treated 32,500 patients in seven years.

(vi.) *Health Visiting.*

The system of "health visiting" now adopted in some scores of towns, which we have already described in Chapter III., is, of course, not confined to newly-born infants and children in "baby farms." The Health Visitors go at once to every house at which either an infantile death or a death from phthisis or any infectious disease is notified, with a view of inquiring into the sanitary condition of the premises, ensuring the execution of any necessary disinfection, and (with regard to deaths of infants under two years old)‡ also obtaining elaborate particulars as to the method of feeding, source of milk supply, etc. The health visitor goes also to any house in which sanitary defects are complained of. She follows up "contacts." She visits all the cases reported from the public elementary schools of children staying away or excluded on account of measles, whooping cough, ringworm, etc. She investigates cases of erysipelas for the Medical Officer of Health. She visits the patients discharged from the municipal hospital, and exercises a certain amount of supervision over them.§ She may even, so far as time permits, visit from house to house in blocks or districts in which special sanitary care is for any reason required. Wherever she goes, she makes such inspection of the inmates as she can; she is able to report to the Medical Officer of Health where and what diseases exist, and which cases are without medical attendance; she gives hygienic advice; she makes known the facilities with regard to phthisis; and she advises the calling in of a medical practitioner where necessary. Her advice is found specially useful in those children's ailments which are so often treated lightly without medical aid.‖ The Medical Officer of Health for Warwickshire, points out in one of his reports (1903) that "the work of the Health Visitor does not trench on the work of the Sanitary Inspector; that she is not an inspector in any sense of the word, and that her functions are those of friend of the household to which she gains access. He also states that although at first there may have been some opposition to her entering a house, it rapidly died away, and in numerous instances she has been asked to return and aid the family by her help and counsel. He also believes that in this new departure of carrying sanitation into the home, we have not only an important, but almost the only, means of further improving the health of the people, and that in the future, although sanitary authorities, by providing water supply, drainage, and decent houses, have done much in the past, the most important advance will come from an appreciation by the people themselves of the value of good health."¶

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* The Cleansing of Persons Act, 1897.

† Public notice by Medical Officer of Health for Hackney, April, 1905. Similar facilities are afforded by the Metropolitan Borough Councils of Marylebone, Woolwich, etc., whilst that of Finsbury pays the Board of Guardians to perform the service. (Report on the Health of Finsbury, 1907. by Medical Officer of Health, p. 193.)

‡ "The dead baby is next of kin to the diseased baby, who, in time, becomes the anæmic, ill-fed, and educationally backward child, from whom is derived later in life the unskilled casual, who is at the bottom of so many of our problems." In the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of the Education Committee of the London County Council for 1906, Dr. Kerr gives statistical grounds for concluding that physical defects are more marked in children born in years of high infantile mortality than in years of low infantile mortality.

§ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XLVI. (Par. 11) to Vol. IX.

‖ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LVI. Pars. 5–8) to Vol. IV.

¶ Report on the Prevention of Infantile Mortality, by Alfred E. Harris, (M.O.H. Islington), 1907, p. 31

(vii.) *Municipal Home Nursing.*

In addition to the work of the health visitors and school nurses, some Public Health Authorities have begun a system of domiciliary treatment of the adult sick by municipal home nurses. At Brighton, for instance, under a Local Act, the Town Council employs a trained nurse, who is employed in attending at home on cases, such as puerperal fever or erysipelas, in which removal to hospital is not considered desirable.* Nurses are also provided "in special cases of infectious diseases," by the Barry Urban District Council.† Even more interesting is the action of the Health Committee of the Worcestershire County Council, which maintains a staff of nurses for the domiciliary treatment of the sick poor in certain of the sanitary districts within the county, in which the Local Authorities do not, either in their capacity of Guardians of the Poor or in that of Rural District Councillors, make adequate provision for home-nursing.‡

(viii) *Diagnosis.*

One of the most important branches of the Public Health Medical Service is that of diagnosis. The bacteriological laboratory of the Medical Officer of Health, or that at the municipal hospital, frequently undertakes the investigation of "swabs" for diphtheria or of sputum for tuberculosis, for all the medical practitioners of the district. But the service does not stop here. The Medical Officer of Health frequently acts himself as diagnostician in individual cases, being called in (without payment) by the medical practitioner to suspected cases of small-pox, etc. In times of epidemic, the active Medical Officer of Health goes even further and himself spontaneously visits the common lodging houses and other suspected centres, in order to search out cases of small-pox which are not being medically attended at all, and to hurry them off to the municipal hospital. The services of the Medical Officer of Health as diagnostician are rapidly extending. Not only in diphtheria and tuberculosis cases, but also in typhoid fever, in cerebro-spinal-meningitis, in affections of the throat, and in the whole realm of opsonic diagnosis, he is more and more coming to serve as the general consultant of the district. It is he who considers "suspects" and "contacts" and "carriers," who, not being themselves ill, are not remunerative patients. Yet it may be upon their prompt treatment that the health of the district depends.

(ix) *Home Aliment.*

Possibly more important, in its future development, is the practice of Local Health Authorities of granting free lodging and an alimentary allowance, to "contacts" or persons (whether dependents or not) who have been in contact with a patient suffering from infectious disease. In order to prevent new cases of disease these "contacts" are often segregated and kept under medical observation. It then becomes necessary to provide for the maintenance of the persons thus prevented from working. The Leeds Town Council has "frequently paid part wages of those who, though not themselves apparently ill, have at request remained away from work on account of having been exposed to contagious disease. . . . The practice has been to pay half the wages, and to maintain the contacts in . . . cottages . . . under medical observation."§ They may, however, in other cases remain at home but abstain from working, receiving allowances for their maintenance. This practice is followed as a matter of course in cases of suspected plague or cholera, and frequently for small-pox. With regard to other infectious diseases, the state of things is chaotic, and great hardship arises. One such case has been brought specially before the Commission. A widow working as a laundry woman had a child ill with fever, who was removed by the Local Health Authority to its hospital. The Local Health Authority, apparently, in the public interest, stretching its legal powers, peremptorily ordered the widowed mother not to go to work, it being a penal offence to spread infection. The widow being thus rendered destitute applied to the Relieving Officer, who refused to give Outdoor Relief, and referred her to the Local Health Authority; from which however, she received no maintenance allowance. The Board of Guardians thereupon reported the matter to us, demanding legislation to make it obligatory on the Local Health Authority to grant aliment to heads of families so prevented from working, owing to their having come in contact with infectious disease.‖

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 92534, Par. A (iv.); 92762–92765.
† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 49222, Par. 1.
‡ Annual Report of the Medical Officer (Worcestershire County Council).
§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 41489 (Par. 8), 41515–41523, 41531–41534.
‖ Resolution of Kingston Board of Guardians, July 2nd, 1906.

The question of allowing aliment to "contacts" forced, in the public interest, temporarily to suspend work, is, however, comparatively simple. The practice of the Local Health Authorities brings them, as the Medical Officer of Health for Manchester has explained to us, up against the far more serious problem presented by the necessity of granting aliment to the dependents of patients admitted to the municipal hospitals or sanatoria. The Poor Law Authorities in many places grant Outdoor Relief freely for the families of men in hospital. This, however, involves the stigma of pauperism and accordingly (as is actually intended and desired by the Boards of Guardians) many respectable wage-earners struggle to continue at work in gradually failing health, and put off entering the hospital as long as they possibly can. In cases of tuberculosis, especially, this delay, besides spreading the disease, militates against a cure; and makes, in fact, in the vast majority of cases, all recovery hopeless. The Local Government Board Inspector attending "Out-relief Committees . . . hears of men and women who have struggled with the disease as long as possible before applying for relief, often sleeping in small rooms with children. It too often happens that application is made too late for the disease to be arrested." Even when they enter an institution, they are so eager to get back to work to maintain their families, "that as soon as the disease is arrested, they take their discharge before a cure is effected," and return soon "much worse than when they first came under treatment. . . . Finally, the sufferer enters the Workhouse infirmary to die, in the meantime possibly having affected other members of his family."* In this dilemma the Bradford Board of Guardians, like the Brighton Town Council, seeks actually to induce and persuade the man with phthisis to come into its sanatorium at an early stage of the disease, when he can still earn wages. "All persons resident in the Union," states the Clerk to the Guardians, "found to be in that stage of the disease, whose income does not allow them to reside at a private sanatorium, are accepted on the recommendation of their private medical attendant."† This particular "Workhouse" is clearly run almost on the lines of a municipal hospital, with the added advantage that the Board of Guardians is able to induce people to take advantage of it by proffering liberal Outdoor Relief to their families. Some Local Health Authorities now want to use the same inducement. Dr. Niven has explained to the Commission the importance of the Health Committee of the Manchester Town Council being free to provide aliment, without the stigma of pauperism, for the dependents of patients suffering from incipient phthisis, whether removed to hospital or treated by the municipal doctor in their own homes. "It is to my mind very plain," says Dr. Niven, "that this would be an economic expenditure. One of the great means of combating phthisis would be to raise the nutrition of the families in presence of the disease. The family falling into a state of poverty, the rest of the family are exposed to infection just in that condition which lays them open to attack, and if we are to deal really effectually with the prevention of consumption I feel sure that it is necessary to improve the nutrition of the families in presence of the disease." Dr. Niven explained that he would put it on the same plane as money given in the plague or cholera cases.‡ Hitherto Local Health Authorities have limited any such grant of aliment to cases connected with plague, cholera, and small-pox, and have always coupled it with complete isolation of the patient. There does not, however, appear to be any legal limitation to their power to grant such aliment, at any rate as regards all notifiable diseases. This incipient development of a second public body granting what is virtually Outdoor Relief to the sick poor appears to us to demand the most serious consideration. We shall recur to this point in our subsequent chapter on "The Scheme of Reform."

(x.) *The Characteristics of the Public Health Authority's Treatment of Disease.*

All treatment of the individual patient by the Local Health Authority has for its object, not the relief of immediate suffering, but the prevention of disease. It is plain that this involves the treatment and cure of existing diseases in the individual patient, because, as one Medical Officer of Health remarks, "the cure of a sick person tends to prevent disease in that person."§ But, unlike Poor Law medical practice, even of the

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* Evidence before the Commission, App. XI. (A), Pars. 133, 139 to Vol. I.

"In a large number of cases the disease was in an advanced state when notified, the sufferers continuing to work for the support of their families, and having refused to see a doctor until absolutely compelled. The longer we work the more are we impressed with the need of a sanatorium to which the sufferers could be removed in the early stage of the disease, which, however, cannot be brought about without provision being made for the support of the families during the period devoted to isolatior." (Report of lady inspectors. in Report on the Health of Kensington for 1905, by Medical Officer of Health, p. 51.)

† Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXIII., (Par. 9 (*f*)) to Vol. IV.

‡ *Ibid.*, Q. 38442-38456.

§ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLV. (Par. 28), to Vol. IX.

best type, it involves much more. In the obviously communicable diseases, such as plague, cholera and typhus, small-pox, scarlet fever and enteric, it involves the securing of complete isolation of the patient, and even the isolation and medical observation of healthy "contacts." In other infective cases, such as phthisis, trachoma and chronic ear, throat and skin affections, it involves the education of the patient in a method of living calculated to minimise the recurrence or spread of the disease.* But the special sphere of the Public Health Authority in the treatment of disease is not that of infectious or contagious, but of *preventable* disease. It was, indeed, not to stop the spread of disease from individual to individual, but to prevent its arising from dirt and filth, that the Poor Law Commissioners first made their public health investigations, and importuned the Government to give the local authorities public health powers. It was preventable disease which Chadwick found to be so great a cause of unnecessary pauperism. It was for the reduction to a minimum of this preventable disease that the Public Health Act of 1848 was passed; and it is to preventable disease, whether communicable or not, that the powers and duties of Public Health Authorities to-day extend. The accident of the widely-published advance of bacteriological science since 1848 has tended unduly to concentrate attention on the zymotic diseases, which, taken altogether, cause only 11 per cent. of the deaths, and account, probably, for only a twentieth or a thirtieth of the persons ill at any one time. But as the Medical Officer of Health for Coventry remarks: "It is a great mistake to suppose that it is only infectious diseases that are preventable."† "Our activity as health officers," writes another Medical Officer of Health, "cannot be limited to the infectious diseases. There are indeed greater opportunities of preventing illness among the non-infectious ailments, *e.g.*, ailments of the digestive system, almost, than in the case of infectious illnesses." To the long list of common infective diseases already given, we must add as plainly preventable: "infectious eye diseases, such as conjunctivitis in most of its forms (trachoma, etc.); infectious ear diseases (abscesses, etc.); infectious nose and throat diseases; abscesses of all kinds not due to tuberculosis; parasitic skin diseases, and some others. To these again we may add as due to immediate environment, and preventable, the occupational (non-infectious) diseases; chronic arsenical poisoning, chronic lead poisoning, chronic phosphorus poisoning, mercury poisoning, coal-miner's lung, steel-grinder's lung; the diseases due to dusty occupations, skin diseases, lung diseases, bowel diseases; and many others due to special manufactures, as rubber works, chemical works, dry cleaning, rag works, etc., etc. . . . . Similar reasoning can be legitimately applied to chronic bronchitis, which can usually be prevented if the acute stage is properly treated; to catarrhal pneumonia, which is often the precursor of phthisis; to the heart diseases that are due to acute rheumatism; to chronic kidney disease, which often follows neglect of acute kidney disease; to some forms of cancer, which are curable if operation is early enough."‡ Thus, the special characteristic of the treatment of disease by the Local Health Authority is, not to wait until the patient is so ill that he is driven to apply, but positively to search out every case, even in its most incipient stage. "An active Medical Officer of Health," sums up one of them, "attempts anything and everything which promises to reduce death rates or to prevent disease." The one recurring note of all the statements and oral evidence of the Medical Officers of Health is the vital importance of "early diagnosis." "I am satisfied," writes Dr. Newman, "that much illness is prolonged quite unnecessarily, and that there is a lamentable and disastrous amount of failure to deal with the *beginnings of disease*. Neglect of such things leads to mortality more than many other factors."§ The disastrous effects of failure to seek early treatment, in consumption, diphtheria and other diseases, are continually coming to the notice of medical men. It is a necessary condition of the Public Health Medical Service that there must be no delay in searching out and discovering all the cases; there must be no delay in securing the necessary isolation; there must be no delay in applying the necessary treatment; there must be no delay in the adoption of the appropriate hygienic

* It is worth noting how extensive is now the class of legally recognised infectious diseases. "The Local Authority for Public Health," says Dr. Leslie Mackenzie, "may legally deal with the following well-known and common infectious diseases:—Anthrax, cerebro-spinal fever, chicken-pox, cholera, diphtheria, dysentery, endocarditis (infective), enteric fever, enteritis (infective), erysipelas, gangrene (acute infective), German measles, influenza, measles, mumps, osteomyelitis and periostitis (acute infective), phagedæna, plague pneumonia, pyæmia, pyrexia of uncertain origin, relapsing fever, rheumatic fever, scarlet fever, septicæmia, small-pox, tetanus, tuberculosis, typhus, whooping-cough—thirty orders of disease. These are taken from the official "Nomenclature of Diseases, 1906." For special reasons I have omitted the venereal group." (Statement of Dr. Leslie Mackenzie. *Ibid.*, *Q.* 56605, Par. 128.)

† Report on the Health of Coventry for 1905, by Medical Officer of Health, p. 109.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 56605, Pars. 129, 130, and 133.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 94287, Par. 28.

habits. It is the consciousness of the importance of this "early diagnosis," the immense superiority in attractiveness of the incipient over the advanced "case," the overwhelming sense of the dire calamities that may come from a single "missed case" that mark the characteristic machinery of the Public Health Medical Service—its notification; its birth, death and case visitation; its bacteriological examination; its school intimations; its house to house visitation; its domiciliary disinfection; its medical observation of "contacts," and its prolonged domiciliary supervision of "recoveries" and patients discharged from institutions in order to detect the "return case." But besides the preventable diseases brought about by environment, and by neglect of acute diseases, there are those now recognised to be caused by bad hygienic habits of the individual himself. "The chief factor in disease production," says Dr. Newman, "is personal rather than external."* To quote the epigram of a distinguished doctor: "We have pretty well removed the filth from outside the human body; what we have now to do in order to lower the death rate, is to remove the filth from inside." "Diseases spread not alone by infection and contagion," says another Medical Officer of Health. "The habits and practices of people are responsible in even greater measures for the continuance of diseases. These cannot be combated by the popular panacea of a bottle of medicine."† It may be said, in fact, that "the public health method of treatment is superior to that of the Poor Law because it is largely educative and for the future." Nor is this merely a matter of cleanly living and the avoidance of excess. The prevention of disease, which, as the Medical Officer of Health always remembers, "is far more effective and infinitely less costly than the treatment of disease that is accrued," may depend on the adoption of a particular mode of life. Incipient phthisis, in particular, may be thus curable. "Such conditions as diabetes, granular kidney and aneurism," says another authority, "are not necessarily diseases. If the condition is recognised early, and the patient adopts the proper *regimen*, the symptoms which really constitute the disease may be postponed for a considerable period."‡ We come even to the study of individual proclivity or diathesis, as a branch of preventive medicine. "Thousands, nay, hundreds of thousands of young men and women with hereditary or acquired tendencies to various diseases are, *owing to want of knowledge*, brought up, enter upon occupations, and lead modes of life which inevitably result in disease and early death."§

Passing from the characteristics of the Public Health Medical Service to its effects on its patients, there comes to light an interesting contrast with the Poor Law Medical Service. It has been strongly urged upon the Commission that Poor Law Medical Relief is not merely "deterrent" but that, when accepted, it breaks down the independence of the recipient and frequently leads him to become a chronic pauper. It is alleged that the labourer who begins by asking the Relieving Officer for a midwifery order or for medical attendance on his ailing infant is easily led on to apply for a medical order for himself and presently for Outdoor Relief. No such allegation is made with regard to submission to medical treatment of the Local Health Authority. On the contrary there is absolute uniformity of testimony, from all sorts of witnesses in all parts of the country, that the medical attendance and medicine of the Public Health Department has no pauperising

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* *Ibid.*, Par. 26.

† *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLIII. (Par. 30) to Vol. IX.

‡ *Ibid.*, Appendix XLV. (Par. 28) to Vol. IX.

§ *The Prevention of Diseases other than Infectious Diseases* by Roger McNeill, Medical Officer of Health for the County of Argyll (1896). Dr. Newsholme, in his Paper at the 1907 Meeting of the British Medical Association, gave the following tabular classification of deaths in England and Wales:—

Caused by.	Per cent.
Acute notifiable infectious diseases	2·39
Acute non-notifiable infectious diseases	18·58
Chronic infectious diseases, including pneumonia and rheumatic fever	11·21
Accident	2·99
Preventable non-infective diseases	3·31
Partially preventable non-infective diseases	17·63
All other diseases	43·89
	100·00

Thus, nearly two-thirds of all the deaths are due to diseases which can be classed either as "infectious" or as otherwise "preventable."

tendency. The fever-stricken patient who is removed to the isolation hospital, or the mother who receives hygienic advice about her infant, is not thereby induced to find her way to the Poor Law. Indeed, it has been repeatedly given in evidence by witnesses with practical experience that the essential characteristic of the Public Health Medical Service—that it is rendered in the interest of the community and not in order merely to relieve the suffering of the individual—actually creates in the recipient an increased feeling of personal obligation, and even a new sense of social responsibility.* This sense of obligation is, we are informed, seen in a new responsibility as to not creating nuisances or infecting relations and neighbours; in a deliberate intention to remain healthy, and therefore to control physical impulses; and in an altogether heightened parental responsibility in the matter of the conscientious fulfilment of the daily—even the hourly—details of family *regimen* necessary for the rearing of the infant or the recovery of the invalid. The very aim of sanitarians is to train the people to better habits of life. The object of health visiting is to make the people understand that prevention is better than cure.† It has, indeed, been urged upon us that actual experience of public health administration indicates that universal medical inspection, hygienic advice and the appropriate institutional treatment of those found out of health might have as bracing an effect on personal character, by imposing a new standard of physical self-control, as it would have on corporeal health. Nor is this a mere figment of the imagination. "The form in which medical aid would be given," states Dr. Newsholme, the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board, in the light of his actual experience with the hundreds of phthisical patients whom he has treated, "would be such as constantly to enforce on the minds of the patients their duty to the community and to themselves in matters of health. Though they would pay nothing, they would not be merely passive recipients of advice and attention. The influence of the doctor would demand from them habits of life and even sacrifices of personal taste in the interest of the health of the community, their families and themselves, which would leave them conscious of a sensible discharge of duty in return for the attention which they received. The discipline of responsibility into which the system would educate them should, in my judgment, suffice to avoid the loss of self-respect liable to arise from the merely passive receipt of gifts; and it would introduce into the national life an attitude towards matters of personal health that would have an indirect influence upon conduct while directly restricting disease." ‡ But the Public Health Medical Service, as it exists to-day, has grave defects. Though nominally co-extensive with the kingdom and applicable to all preventable disease, it exists, over a large part of the country, merely in skeleton outline. So far as we have been able to ascertain, positively a majority of the 650 rural Sanitary Authorities of England and Wales and not a few of the smaller urban Sanitary Authorities, have no hospitals even for the most infectious diseases, no domiciliary visitation for the searching out of disease, and nothing more in the way of a Medical Officer of Health than the scrap of the time of a private practitioner, to whom the small fee of a few guineas comes with instructions "not to be meddlesome." Some sanitary districts are far too small for efficiency, there being even "urban districts" with less than 1,000 population. It is true that there is provison for voluntary combinations of districts, and such exist; but they are difficult to arrange—and not permanently satisfactory. Even in many considerable urban districts the Local Authorities have not yet realised the importance either of extending their isolation hospitals to anything but three or four of the "chief zymotics," or of any sort of supervision of infantile ailments. A large town like Norwich was, in 1906, making "no provision for the treatment of other infectious ailments, such as measles, German measles, whooping cough, chicken-pox and mumps; nor for the tuberculous diseases, nor for such contagious diseases as scabies and the other pediculi, nor for venereal diseases."§ The varied activities that we have described have, in fact, often emanated from the zeal and energy of the Medical Officer of Health himself. It is a

* *See*, for instance, the striking evidence of Dr. Leslie Mackenzie, Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 56927–34.

† "I look," stated to us the distinguished sanitarian who was recently Medical Officer of Health for Finsbury, and is now the Medical Officer to the Board of Education, "to a betterment of the personal factor as likely at the present time (now that environment has reached a high standard of excellence) to be most effectual in the betterment of physical life. I would, if I could, bring to bear upon the homes of the people of Finsbury more suitable health visitation, by which we should gain :—(*a*) Information as to the occurrence of illness; (*b*) information as to insanitary conditions; (*c*) advice on domestic hygiene, dietaries, cleanliness, etc.; (*d*) direction and advice on the whole question of care of infancy and children; (*e*) counsel in the carrying out of medical treatment; (*f*) special health work in the direction of phthisis prevention, physically defective children, invalid children, and so on. Such health visitation would act as a deterrent to malingering and unsupportable complaints of which we now receive a large number. They might also assist in providing some check on school non-attendance, employers' certificates in relation to infectious diseases, etc." (Evidence before the Commission of Dr. Newman, Medical Officer of Health for Finsbury, *Q.* 94287, Pars. 27, 28.)

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 92534, Par. 36. *See* also *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 42664–71.

§ *Ibid*, Appendix No. XLVI, (Par 7) to Vol. IX.

further drawback that the apathy of the Local Authorities is not systematically exposed by any regular inspection by the Local Government Board, and that the zeal and enterprise of the best among them meets, so far as published documents go, with little official recognition or encouragement. Even in the largest provincial centres of population, where the Public Health Medical Service is most fully developed, the systematic medical observation of the children is limited to the entirely arbitrary period of the first twelve months; there is no regular inspection or house-to-house visitation for children between one and five, during which ages measles and whooping cough are most deadly; the medical supervision of pupils at school is practically restricted to those whom the teachers report as absent through illness; there is no systematic treatment of their affections of the eyes, ears, nose, teeth, throat, and skin—not to mention incipient curvature; there is no study of diathesis in order to advise as to occupation; and there is no regular system of observation of the "children of larger growth"—not even of the pregnant mothers of the race. After infancy, in fact, the activity of the most public-spirited Medical Officer of Health is limited practically to particular diseases, to such, in fact, as the Local Authority may choose to consider sufficiently infectious. The most energetic are no further advanced than, following the lead of Dr. Niven at Manchester, and Dr. Newsholme at Brighton, to have begun to include tuberculosis, and to provide for a tiny proportion of the cases—usually the advanced cases—of phthisis in their districts; though "between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five more than one-third of all deaths are due to this cause." None of them, so far as we have been able to ascertain, deal with venereal diseases, though these account, it is said, for an enormous proportion of the inmates of lunatic asylums and a vast amount of the pauperism of disease. In short, the Public Health Medical Service, though excellent in its aims and results, and demonstrably successful in a few zealous districts, for such diseases as it has there touched, is, from a national standpoint, suicidally deficient in its volume and geographical extension.

(H) The Need for a United Medical Service.

It is, we think impossible, after considering all the evidence, to avoid the conclusion that what is before all else needed, with regard to the curative treatment of the sick poor, is the establishment of one united Public Medical Service, in which the medical services of the Poor Law and the Public Health Authorities would be merged. It has been abundantly proved to us that: "At the present time the question of treatment of sickness is in a state of chaos and confusion entailing a great deal of overlapping and unnecessary expense." * "There is," we are told, "considerable waste of energy and money. Two sets of officials visit the same houses, one for one object, the other for another. Neither completely attains his object—the cure of the social bad habit—and neither has much hope of doing so under existing circumstances. Much of this waste of money and energy would be saved by amalgamation of Poor Law and Sanitary Authorities." † In consequence of this overlapping and confusion, the community is at present spending an untold amount of public money—apparently as much as seven or eight millions sterling annually—on the curative treatment of the sick by the rival Authorities. In return for this large expenditure we have two conflicting Public Medical Services, both rate-paid, overlapping in their spheres, practically without communication with each other, working on diametrically opposite lines, and sometimes positively hindering each other's operations. Between them, as we have it in evidence, they fail to provide for a large proportion of the illness—even of the preventable illness—of the community. The number of cases of sickness—even of dangerous infective sickness—that go entirely without medical attendance of any sort, private or public, is demonstrably enormous. The proportion of uncertified deaths, indicating a total lack of any sort of medical attendance even in the most advanced stages of disease, amounts, as the Registrar-General warns us, in certain towns in England to 4 or 5 per cent., in certain counties of Scotland to 20 and even 30 per cent., in some islands to as many as 60 or 70 per cent.‡ But to the community it is of less importance that people should die without medical attendance than that they should live without it. What is above all deplorable is the enormous amount of incipient disease that exists—undiscovered, untreated and unchecked—in the infants, school children, and young persons who constitute one-half of the entire population, and upon whose health the productive power of the next generation depends. Even in the Metropolis, where hospitals and free dispensaries abound, and where the Poor Law Medical Relief is specially well organised, it is evident that a large proportion of the 18,000 infants who die annually in the first year of life are medically attended, if at

* *Ibid.*, Q. 37927, Par. 56 (c).
† *Ibid.*, Q. 38758, Par. 28.
‡ *Ibid.*, Q. 56605, Par. 111.

all, only in the last days or hours of their brief existence—often merely in order to avoid trouble with the coroner or the insurance company. Among the 1,000,000 or more older children in the Metropolis, some 40,000 of whom are probably ill at any one time, thousands of the cases of measles and whooping cough are not medically attended at all. The married woman, left without medical or even midwifery attendance at her first childbirth, is not infrequently injured for life, both as mother and as industrial worker. The young artisan with the seeds of tuberculosis in him, goes on, for lack of medical inspection and advice, in habits of life which presently bring him, too late to be cured—after, perhaps, he has infected a whole family—to the sick ward of the Workhouse. Scarcely less important to the nation are the ravages of venereal disease, which now goes almost entirely untreated, either by the Public Health Medical Service or by the Poor Law Medical Service (except when advanced cases enter the Workhouse as destitute), whilst the sick clubs and provident dispensaries definitely or by implication exclude treatment of such cases. Yet it is proved that, owing to lack of medical treatment or to insufficient medical treatment, such diseases as syphilis and gonorrhœa are eventually responsible for a very large proportion of the pauperism of disease and insanity. For all these cases, so vital to the interests of the community, the Poor Law Medical Service—costly though it be—is, with its stigma of pauperism, its deterrent tests, its consequent failure to get hold of incipient disease, its total ignoring of the preventive aspect of medicine, its lack of co-ordination between domiciliary inspection and institutional treatment, practically useless. Medical "relief" may even be regarded, for all its attempted palliation of individual suffering, from the standpoint of national health (at any rate in a large proportion of cases), as worse than useless. In so far as it encourages in the patient faith in the taking of medicine instead of reliance on hygienic *regimen*—wherever the District Medical Officer dispenses physic rather than advice—it positively counteracts the efforts of the Public Health Medical Service in the promotion of personal hygiene. And when the District Medical Officer, conscious that his physic will not avail, orders "medical extras," he provides the fatal introduction of the patient to reliance on the food or money doled out by the Relieving Officer. On the other hand, the existence of a separate Poor Law Medical Service, with its hundreds of thousands of patients under medical treatment in the course of each year, gives the Local Health Authority an excuse for not—except for this or that particular disease, or for infants under twelve months old—acting upon what are actually its statutory powers to provide hospital accommodation for all, and temporary medical attendance and medicine for the poorer classes.*

It is, we think, equally clear that the united Public Medical Service, in which those of the Poor Law and Public Health Authorities will have to be merged, must be established on the lines of scientific prevention of disease and the appropriate treatment at the earliest possible stage of such disease as is not prevented—its medical practice, in short, must be based upon Public Health rather than upon Poor Law principles. We might have hesitated to express so definite an opinion on such a subject as the proper basis of organisation of the Public Medical Service of the State—vitally connected as it must be with the prevention and treatment of destitution and pauperism—were it not for the fact that the Commission has been led to investigate this part of its subject matter with special thoroughness, and that the weight of testimony, both administrative and medical, appears to us to be overwhelming. A certain number of the doctors whom we have consulted, including private practitioners and Poor Law doctors, and even some Medical Officers of Health, have, indeed, like many of the Poor Law officials, expressed themselves as inimical to a

* The Local Sanitary Authority is even warranted, though the tramp on discharge may infect a whole town, in refusing to treat the most infectious or communicable diseases when these occur in destitute paupers. At Bristol, between 1886 and 1894, the Board of Guardians itself provided isolation hospital accommodation for all the destitute infectious sick, whilst the Town Council provided similar (only far superior) accommodation for the non-destitute infectious sick. The results of this administrative duplication were so injurious (small-pox twice becoming epidemic in the city), the friction and delays were so great, and the total expense was so unnecessarily increased, that after eight years' trial the Board of Guardians ceded the whole service to the Town Council, which has since dealt alike—but only for these particular three or four diseases—with the destitute and the non-destitute. As regards all other kinds of disease the conflict continues, and the results, although not so dramatically obvious, may be no less disastrous. It is quite another kind of anomaly that two of the most important instruments of the Public Health Medical Service, the registration of births and deaths and vaccination, have no connection whatever with the public health organisation, but are attached, more or less closely, to the Poor Law. The nomination of local registrars of births and deaths, who receive authentic information of what is essential for the Medical Officer of Health to know, by the Board of Guardians, and their almost complete lack of connection with the local health service, is explicable only on historical grounds. The same is true of the vaccination doctors and officers who now administer at enormous expense a specific medical treatment, free to all alike, destitute or non-destitute, in order to prevent the ravages of a disease that has now been made far less disabling to the individual and far less destructive to the community than either tuberculosis or syphilis.

unified Public Medical Service, either because they were, through long habit, not conscious of the defects in the existing arrangements, or because they could not see how a united service would work. Some of these—forgetting, we think, the large amount of actual treatment of disease now carried on by the Public Health Authorities—urged upon us that it was positively advantageous for preventive work to be carried out by one department and curative work by another.* We have, however, been much impressed by the very wide concurrence in the recognition of the superior advantages of a unified State Service expressed by those who had given thought to the subject.† The Medical Investigator whom we appointed specially to inform us on this subject found himself, as he relates, irresistibly driven to the same conclusion.‡ What is perhaps even more convincing is the fact that the imperative need for unifying the present competing Public Medical Services is felt by the heads of all the four public departments concerned. "I think it was unfortunate," says the Medical Commissioner of the Local Government Board for Ireland, "that Public Health did not precede Poor Law, and that the medical relief of the poor, both indoor and outdoor, was not organised as a Public Health Service. A Health Service having for its first and great aim the prevention of disease, embracing the present Public Health, Medical Charities and Poor Law Hospital Services, and in fact charged with the prevention and treatment of disease among the poor would, I consider, particularly if managed as a State Service, be a forward step of immense benefit to the public health and poor of the country. Everything points to the fact that the future of all medicine, but particularly of Poor Law medicine, lies in the adoption of preventive measures; the time has passed when the principal function of the Poor Law Medical Officer is merely to dispense drugs."§ The need for union of the rival medical services has been equally pressed on us by Dr. Newman, formerly Medical Officer of Health for Finsbury and for the County of Bedford, and now Medical Officer of the Board of Education. "My experience," says Dr. Newman, "convinces me that from a medical point of view further co-ordination is imperatively necessary . . . between Public Medical Services, and if practicable a unification under one Authority. . . . Personally I am disposed to think that the medical part of the Poor Law Service might suitably be organised, partly or wholly, in conjunction with the Health Authorities. . . . By some such unification the Medical Service would be more economical as well as more efficient and effectual."‖ We have already quoted the striking testimony to the same effect of Dr. Leslie Mackenzie, the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland as to the urgent need for a complete provision by the community for all cases of sickness.¶ Most emphatic and impressive of all has been the evidence in confirmation of Dr. Newsholme, given first as Medical Officer of Health for Brighton, and then on wider and fuller information, officially repeated to us by him as Medical Officer of the Local Government Board for England and Wales. "Under the present conditions of treatment of sickness for the poor," says Dr. Newsholme, "diagnosis is usually belated, treatment is curtailed, and its efficiency is correspondingly diminished. . . . I entertain little hope of success (in respect of measles and whooping cough) until more efficient medical attendance is promptly available in the homes of the very poor. . . . The divided responsibility as to cases of puerperal fever and erysipelas needing institutional treatment at the present time leads to inefficient arrangement for such cases, and to much suffering and some loss of

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 47745, Pars. 10 and 11.

† Amongst these we may mention, in particular, Dr. Nathan Raw (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 37927, Par. 47), and Dr. Bygott (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 44088); Dr. Burnett (*Ibid.*, *Qs.*44424, 44588); Dr. Longbottom (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXIII. (Pars. 18, 18) to Vol. IV.), of the Poor Law Medical Service; Dr. Meredith Young (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 38758, Pars. 15–19); Dr. Barlow (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 38631, Par. 20, 38723); Dr. McCleary (*Ibid.*, Appendix XLV. (Par. 28) to Vol. IX.); Dr. Richards (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLVII. (Pars. 25–29) to Vol. IX.); Dr. Cooper-Pattin (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLVI. (Par., 31) to Vol. IX.); Dr. Davies (*Ibid.*, Appendix XLIV. to Vol. IX.); Dr. Chalmers (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 95100, Pars. 30–51); Dr. Gould (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXXVIII. (Pars. 14–19) to Vol. IV. Dr. Morrison (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 52434, Par. 8), of the Public Health Service; and Dr. McAlister Hewlings (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 47501, Par. 45 (9)); Dr. Lea (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 36982, 37062); Dr. Reid (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 50912), and others who are private practitioners.

‡ "Should the control of all the health conditions of the poor be put under a single health authority? . . . Should this health authority supervise the work of the District Medical Officers, or, on the other hand, should there be two medical services supported by the State? . . . Having no previous knowledge of the English Poor Law, I believe I approached the question with an open mind. . . . As my inquiry progressed however, the conclusion has forced itself on me that transference of functions should take place if that be practicable" (Report . . . on the Methods and Results of the Present System of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Poor Law Medical Relief, by Dr. J. C. McVail, 1907, p. 153).

§ Some Notes on Public Health and its Relation to the Poor Law in Ireland, by Dr. T. J. Stafford, p. 5, cited in Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 99927.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 94287, Par. 31; *see also Qs.* 94367–70, 94379, 94380, etc.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 56601–57036.

life. . . . Such instances represent only a small part of the mischief caused by the division of responsibility and powers." And he sums up significantly "that the present division of medical duties is gravely mischievous to public health and the unification suggested is very desirable."* Such authoritative official testimony, we feel, cannot be disregarded.

(I) Conclusions.

We have therefore to report:—

1. That the continued existence of two separate rate-supported Medical Services in all parts of the Kingdom, costing, in the aggregate, six or seven millions sterling annually —overlapping, unco-ordinated with each other and sometimes actually conflicting with each other's work—cannot be justified.

2. That the very principle of the Poor Law Medical Service—its restriction to persons who prove themselves to be destitute—involves delay and reluctance in the application of the sick person for treatment; hesitation and delay in beginning the treatment; and, in strictly administered districts, actual refusal of all treatment to persons who are in need of it, but who can manage to pay for some cheap substitute. These defects, which we regard as inherent in any medical service administered by a Destitution Authority, stand in the way of the discovery and early treatment of incipient disease, and accordingly deprive the medical treatment of most of its value.

3. That it has been demonstrated to us beyond all dispute that the deterrent aspect which the medical branch of the Poor Law acquires through its association with the Destitution Authority causes, merely by preventing prompt and early application by the sick poor for medical treatment, an untold amount of aggravation of disease, personal suffering and reduction in the wealth-producing power of the manual working class.

4. That the operations of the Poor Law Medical Service, being controlled by Destitution Authorities and administered by Destitution Officers, inevitably take on the character of unconditional "medical relief"—that is, relief of the real or fancied painful symptoms —as distinguished from remedial changes of regimen and removal of injurious conditions, upon which any really curative treatment, or any effective prevention of the spread or recurrence of disease, is nowadays recognised to depend.

5. That whilst domiciliary treatment of the sick poor is appropriate in many cases, it ought to be withheld:—

(i.) Where proper treatment in the home is impracticable.

(ii.) Where the patient persistently malingers or refuses to conform to the prescribed regimen; or

(iii.) Where the patient is a source of danger to others.

It has become imperative in the public interest that there should be, for extreme cases, powers of compulsory removal to a proper place of treatment. Such powers cannot, and in our opinion should not, be granted to a Destitution Authority.

6. That where Destitution Authorities cease to abide by the limitation of their work to persons really destitute, or pass beyond the dole of "Medical Relief," their attempt to extend the range or improve the quality of the Poor Law Medical Service brings new perils. We cannot regard with favour any action which, in order to promote treatment, openly or tacitly invites people voluntarily to range themselves among the destitute; or which tempts them, by the prospect of getting costly and specialised forms of treatment, to simulate destitution. Nor do we think that an Authority charged with the relief of destitution, whatever its method of appointment or whatever the area over which it acts, or any Authority acting through officers concerned with such relief, whatever their official designation, can ever administer a Medical Service with efficiency and economy.

7. That, with regard to the suggestion that the medical treatment of the sick poor should be left either to provident medical insurance or to voluntary charity, it has been demonstrated to us that these offer no possible alternative to the provision for the sick made by the Public Authority. With regard to domiciliary treatment, the evidence as to medical clubs, "contract practice," Provident Dispensaries and the out-patients' depart-

* Memorandum by the Medical Officer of the Local Government Board on the Unification of the Official Medical Services for the Poor; *see also* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 92531–93029. This consensus of weighty testimony is supported by the definite recommendations of the Vice-Regal Commission on the Irish Poor Law, in favour of the complete separation of all Medical Relief from the Poor Law, and the organisation, under the County and County Borough Councils, of a unified system of hospitals, dispensaries and domiciliary treatment. (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906.)

ments of hospitals is such as to make it impossible to recommend, in their favour, any restriction of the services at present afforded by the District Medical Officers and Poor Law Dispensaries. Nor do we feel warranted in giving any support to the proposal made to us that the whole of this Outdoor Medical Service of the Poor Law should be superseded by a publicly subsidised system of letting the poor choose their own doctors. Any such system would, in our judgment, lead to an extravagant expenditure of public funds on popular remedies and "medical extras," without obtaining, in return for this enlarged "Medical Relief," greater regularity of life or more hygienic habits in the patient. With regard to institutional treatment, we gladly recognise the inestimable services rendered to the sick poor by the hospitals, sanatoria and convalescent homes supported by endowments or voluntary contributions. We approve of the use now made of these institutions by Public Authorities, and we think that many more suitable cases than at present might, on proper arrangements as to payment, be transferred from rate-maintained to voluntary institutions. But it is clear that such institutions provide only for a small fraction of the need, and that they leave untouched whole districts for some cases, and whole classes of cases everywhere, which there is no prospect of their being able or willing to undertake.

8. That the Medical Service of the Public Health Authorities, which now extensively treats disease, and actually maintains out of the rates a steadily increasing number of the sick poor, is based on principles more suited to a State medical service than that of the Poor Law. These principles, which lead, in practice as well as in theory, to searching out disease, securing the earliest possible diagnosis, taking hold of the incipient case, removing injurious conditions, applying specialised treatment, enforcing healthy surroundings and personal hygiene, and aiming always at preventing either recurrence or spread of disease—in contrast to the mere "relief" of the individual—furnish in fact the only proper basis for the expenditure of public money on a Medical Service.

9. That such compulsory powers of removal in extreme cases, as have been asked for, are analogous to those already exercised, with full public approval, by the Public Health Authorities; and that the proposed extension of such powers can properly be granted only to an authority proceeding on Public Health lines.

10. That we therefore agree with the responsible heads of all the four Medical Departments concerned—the Chief Medical Officer of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, the Medical Commissioner of the Local Government Board for Ireland, and the Medical Officer of the Board of Education—in ascribing the defects of the existing arrangements fundamentally to the lack of a unified Medical Service based on Public Health principles.

11. That in such a unified Medical Service, organised in districts of suitable extent, the existing Medical Officers of Health, Hospital Superintendents, School Doctors,* District Medical Officers, Workhouse and Dispensary Doctors and Medical Superintendents of Poor Law Infirmaries—the clinicians as well as the sanitarians—would all find appropriate spheres; that one among them being placed in administrative control who has developed most administrative capacity.

12. That we do not agree with the suggestion that the establishment of a unified Medical Service on Public Health lines necessarily involves the gratuitous provision of medical treatment to all applicants. It is clear that, in the public interest, neither the promptitude nor the efficiency of the medical treatment must be in any way limited by considerations of whether the patient can or should repay its cost. But we see no reason why Parliament should not embody, in a clear and consistent code, definite rules of Chargeability, either relating to the treatment of all diseases, or of all but those specifically named; and of Recovery of the charge thus made from all patients who are able to pay. In our chapter on "The Scheme of Reform," we propose new machinery for automatically making and recovering all such charges that Parliament may from time to time impose.

* The question has been raised of the relation in which, with a unified Medical Service, the nascent medical activities of the Local Education Authorities should be placed. The question is one to be determined, in our opinion, by the dominant characteristic of the service. Within the limits of school age, the predominant service should be that of education; and the responsibility for the normal child should rest with the Local Education Authority. The case is different with the mentally defective child, for which the new Local Authority for the mentally defective will have the responsibility; and with the child withdrawn from school for definite illness, for which the Local Health Authority will be responsible. But when the child, without being so ill as to be withdrawn from school, requires the services of a doctor—as, for instance, in school medical inspection, in medical examination for Scholarships, and in the treatment of minor ailments, we suggest that the Local Education Authority should, where the two Authorities are Committees of the same Council, not set up a medical staff of its own, but call in the Local Health Authority as its agent; just as it does already with regard to inspecting and certifying the drainage of the school building. On the other hand, where the children in the hospitals and sanatoria of the Local Health Authority are in need of education (a point now often neglected), we suggest that the Local Health Authority should not have its own teachers, but should call in the Local Education Authority as its agent. The case may be different where (as at present in England and Wales, outside the County Boroughs) the two Authorities are not Committees of the same Council, and do not serve the same areas. But even here arrangements could usually be made on similar lines.

CHAPTER VI.

The Mentally Defective.

The Mentally Defective were scarcely alluded to in the Report of 1834. To-day in the United Kingdom they number, in all their grades, more than one-sixth of the entire pauper host—an army approaching 200,000 in number, constantly receiving maintenance from the rates, in respect, nominally of their destitution, but really, as we shall see, by reason of their infirmity. In view of the elaborate investigations of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland (1902–6) and of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded (1904–8), although we received some useful testimony, we have abstained from doing more than cursorily surveying this part of the field of the Poor Law, and we accept the valuable evidence obtained by those Commissions as if given to ourselves.

(A) The Rival Authorities for the Mentally Defective.

In England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, in spite of minor variations, we find the public provision for the different grades of the Mentally Defective everywhere divided between two or more Local Authorities acting for the same districts; and supervised by two, by three, and even by four different Departments of the National Government; with the result that whilst there is, in some respects, duplication and overlapping, the total provision made is far from satisfactory, and we have it in evidence that there has been considerable waste of money.*

In England and Wales it is, speaking generally, the County or County Borough Council† acting through its Asylums Committee, which is the Local Lunacy Authority, charged by statute to make the necessary institutional provision for persons certified to be of unsound mind, irrespective of their affluence. If they, or anyone on their behalf, repay to the Council the average weekly cost of their maintenance (not including the cost of the asylum site and buildings), they rank as "private patients,"‡ and are not deemed to be in receipt of relief. But in nine cases out of ten no payment is made direct to the Council; and the sum is then claimed from the Board of Guardians of the Union in which the patient has a settlement. That Board endeavours to recover some contribution from the relatives liable to maintain the patient; who remains a pauper whether or not the full cost is repaid to the Destitution Authority. The relations legally liable for his maintenance also become constructively paupers by the mere presence of a dependent in the County Asylums as a pauper.§ It is a curious feature of the arrangement that the Asylums Committee of the County or County Borough Council has practically no interest in managing its asylums economically, as the actual weekly cost has to be paid by the Boards of Guardians concerned. On the other hand, these Boards of Guardians, who pay the bill, have no connection whatever with the management. Indeed, as we shall subsequently describe, the National Government chooses to make its grants-in-aid in such a way as to afford the Boards of Guardians a direct financial inducement to get as many persons as possible certified to be of unsound mind, to transfer as many of them as possible to the more expensive institutions, and to refrain from obtaining repayment from relatives of more than a

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* The Local Government Board for England and Wales officially deposed that "the lack of co-ordination between the Local Authorities who have to deal with lunacy administration appears to the Board to involve *a large amount of unnecessary expenditure.*" (Report of Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. IV., *Q.* 33766, Par. 14.)

† Certain other Municipalities, not being County Boroughs, are also Lunacy Authorities in themselves; for example, the City of London and twenty small towns (*Ibid.*, Vol. VIII., p. 336).

‡ The definition of pauper lunatics is merely "all lunatics who are not entitled to be classed as private patients" (Lunacy Act, 1891, Sec. 3). (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 321, 325.) If no settlement can be discovered, the lunatic has to be paid for from the county rate, but is, nevertheless, a pauper.

§ Hence, in the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908, when it was desired to exclude such persons from the disabilities attendant on the receipt of parochial relief, it was found necessary expressly to enact that the maintenance of a dependent in an asylum should not, for the purposes of that Act, be deemed parochial relief.

portion of the cost.* Meanwhile the supervision and control of the Local Lunacy Authorities is divided among no fewer than three Government Departments—the Home Office, the Lunacy Commissioners, and the Local Government Board †—each of them, nominally, wielding peremptory powers, but none of them charged with clearly defined responsibility for either the efficiency of the service as a whole, or for economy, and none of them exercising any control over the large Grants-in-Aid that the Government contributes towards the expenditure of the Local Authorities. The result is that the capital cost of a lunatic asylum has mounted up to £300, £400, and even to £500 per patient, because there is no one Government Department strong enough, and expert enough, to combine technical and financial control; and the total cost of the public provision for persons certified to be of unsound mind has risen, in England and Wales alone, to more than £3,000,000 annually.

The bulk of this amount is paid by the Boards of Guardians out of the Poor Rates. But they, too, make extensive provision of their own, alongside that made by the County or Borough Council, for the various grades of the Mentally Defective. Whilst more than four-fifths of the persons actually certified to be of unsound mind are now in asylums, the Boards of Guardians have over 5,000 on Outdoor Relief, and they still maintain more than 11,000 of these certified lunatics, imbeciles and idiots in the General Mixed Workhouses. Moreover, as has been proved by the elaborate investigations of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, there is, in these Workhouses, a further contingent who ought to be certified as being distinctly "feeble-minded" or epileptic, and requiring special treatment, numbering, if we may accept the careful estimate made by the Royal Commission of 12 per cent. of the inmates of the urban Workhouses, and 18 per cent. of those in the rural Workhouses, at least 40,000, besides 12,000 more among the paupers on Outdoor Relief.‡ Thus the Boards of Guardians of England and Wales, notwithstanding their very free use of the County Asylums, have to-day, under their own administration, nearly 70,000 mentally defective persons. The Asylums Committees of the County and Borough Councils, though professedly the Local Lunacy Authorities, have themselves no more than 120,000.

There is yet another Local Authority entering the field, to spend public money in providing for the Mentally Defective. Under statutes of 1899 and 1902 the Local Education Authority is authorised and required to provide for the mentally defective children, of whom it appears there are no fewer than 47,000, in some cases up to sixteen years of age. In London and in some other large towns special schools for these children are being provided; they are sometimes "boarded-out" in families to enable them to attend such schools; and they are now even maintained in residential schools at the cost of the Education Rate. To quote the phrase of one of our colleagues, in this way "a considerable relief system of so-called maintenance is growing up," § without any co-ordination with the Poor Law, or with the Lunacy Authorities. In the Metropolis, in particular, "the residential homes of the Metropolitan Asylums Board duplicate, for so-called defective pauper children, the homes which have been established by the Education Committee for school children who are equally defective though not technically pauper." || It happens now in London that a father may find one child thus taken off his hands by the Local Education Authority, whilst another may be sent to an industrial school, and the others, perhaps, supplied with school dinners, whilst he or his wife may be getting infirmary treatment or even Outdoor Relief, without one Authority necessarily even knowing what the others are doing. The various authorities will even compete among themselves. "There has been with us," stated one witness,

* In the Metropolis there is yet another Local Authority concerned, alongside the County Council and the Boards of Guardians, namely, the Metropolitan Asylums Board. This independent Authority, the whole expenditure of which is met from the poor rate, besides providing hospitals for the infectious sick (maintenance in which is not deemed parochial relief, and is never repaid), has asylums for imbeciles and idiots, and special schools for children, which are pauper institutions. There is most extensive overlapping between these asylums and those of the London County Council, patients being sent, to a great extent indiscriminately, to the one or the other, the Unions exhibiting the most remarkable differences in the proportion of cases so distributed. We note that it was given in evidence that "in sending to [the County] Asylums, the Medical Superintendent [of the Poor Law Infirmary] gets a fee, but in sending to the Metropolitan Asylums Board Asylums he does not get a fee." (Report of Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. IV., *Q.* 33915.) All such fees should be merged in fixed salaries.

† We might add the Board of Education, in respect of the mentally defective children now being dealt with (and sometimes maintained) by the Local Education Authorities.

‡ Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., pp. 21, 193.

§ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., *Q.* 289 (Mr. Loch).

|| *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII., p. 66.

"several times a conflict between the Education Committee and the Guardians as to who was responsible" for the custodial care of Mentally Defective children.*

In Scotland there is a similar duplication of Authorities, though to a lesser extent. The Local Lunacy Authorities are the District Boards of Lunacy, which are, in effect, district committees of County Councils or joint committees of groups of County Councils.† These District Boards of Lunacy provide asylums, to which the Destitution Authorities (the Parish Councils) remit their certified patients, much as in England and Wales. The Parish Councils, however, retain under their own charge, not only a small number of certified persons whom they maintain on Outdoor Relief, but also 2,780 whom they "board out" for payment to persons who make use of the lunatic's labour, and also 1,300 who reside in "certified wards" of the Poorhouses. In the ordinary wards of the Poorhouses it is estimated that there are, in addition, at least one or two thousand persons who ought to be certified as distinctly feeble-minded or epileptic. Thus apart from the fact that six important Parish Councils are themselves the Lunacy Authorities as well as the Destitution Authorities, these latter are actually in charge of half as many Mentally Defective persons as the District Boards of Lunacy.

In Ireland, herein differing from Great Britain, the County Lunatic Asylums are in no way connected with the Poor Law, and maintenance in them, even if gratuitous, involves no pauperism. But, alongside of the Asylums Committees of the County and Borough Councils, the Boards of Guardians also maintain, out of the Poor Rate, as paupers, more than 3,000 certified lunatics and idiots in the General Mixed Workhouses,§ besides a number more on Outdoor Relief. Moreover, there are estimated to be, in these Workhouses, at least 6,000 more who ought to be certified as distinctly feeble-minded, and needing appropriate treatment.‡ Thus the Boards of Guardians in Ireland have under their own charge half as many Mentally Defective persons as the Local Lunacy Authorities themselves.

We have still to mention the asylums for inebriates, which are maintained in one or two cases by Local Authorities, and elsewhere by voluntary committees administering funds which are almost entirely derived from the rates and taxes; and the special institutions for epileptics, which two or three Boards of Guardians have combined to establish.‖

(B) The Mentally Defective under the Poor Law.

Apart from the unnecessary expense to the public, and the wanton undermining of family responsibility, that this overlapping and confusion of Authorities necessarily causes, we find grave deficiencies in the service itself. We have been painfully impressed, in our visits to the General Mixed Workhouses in England, Wales and Ireland, with the almost universal herding of the idiots, imbeciles, epileptics and feeble-minded of all grades indiscriminately with the other inmates of these institutions.¶ This is an extensive, and, we regret to say, contrary to the usual impression, an increasing evil. In 1859 there were, in all the Workhouses of England and Wales, only 7,963 persons certified to be of unsound mind. In 1906 there were in these same Workhouses no fewer than 11,151**, an increase during the forty-seven years of 40 per cent. And though the numbers of

* *Ibid.*, Vol. II., *Q.* 11320.

† In six large towns, they are the several Parish Councils, namely, at Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, Leith and Govan.

‡ Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 424; Report of Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I.

§ "On March 11th, 1905, lunatics and idiots to the number of 3,165 were inmates of Workhouses, and the greater number of them, it may be assumed, are chronic or harmless, though some are excitable and troublesome. Others, again, are in need of special skilled care, owing to filthy or degraded habits." (*Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 38.)

‖ This has been done by the Manchester and Chorlton Unions, and by those of Birmingham, Aston and King's Norton. Authority for similar action has been obtained by the Liverpool and West Derby Unions, and by those of Croydon, Kingston and Richmond, but these schemes have not yet been carried out.

¶ "In the majority of rural Workhouses which I visited," reports our Medical Investigator, "the practice is to provide no separate accommodation for imbeciles, either as to dormitories, or as to dayrooms. They live and sleep and eat with other inmates." (Report . . . on the Present Methods of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. J. McVail, 1907, p. 25.)

** Report of Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. IV., *Q.* 33765 (Par. 3). This is irrespective of 6,591 in the institutions of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. The number on Out-door Relief had remained practically stationary at about 5,700; notwithstanding that the number sent to County or Borough Asylums had risen from 16,369 to 85,990. (*Ibid.*).

these actually certified persons has, of recent years, remained nearly stationary, by no means all the imbeciles are certified as such; and, with the change that has come over the Workhouse population, the proportion of those who ought to be certified as distinctly feeble-minded is now estimated to amount, in addition to the certified lunatics and idiots, in Urban Unions to more than 12 per cent., and in Rural Unions to more than 18 per cent., of the total.* The total number of mentally defective persons now residing *in the ordinary wards* of the General Mixed Workhouses of the United Kingdom must amount to more than 60,000.†

These 60,000 persons, of all ages and conditions, exhibiting all grades of mental defectiveness, are receiving practically nothing in the way of ameliorative treatment. We do not suggest that all the 60,000 are suffering, either in body or mind, from this lack of special care or treatment. In many a small rural Workhouse, under a kindly Master and Matron, among companions in misfortune who happen not to tease or wrangle, we have found the merely feeble-minded middle-aged men and women harmlessly and happily employed. But we have ourselves witnessed terrible sights. We have seen feeble-minded boys growing up in the Workhouse year after year untaught and untrained, alternately neglected and tormented by the other inmates, because it had not occurred to the Board of Guardians to send them to (and to pay for them at) a suitable institution.‡ We have ourselves seen—what one of the Local Government Board Inspectors describes as of common occurrence §—"idiots who are physically offensive or mischievous, or so noisy as to create a disturbance by day and by night with their howls," living in the ordinary wards, to the perpetual annoyance and disgust of the other inmates. We have seen imbeciles annoying the sane, and the sane tormenting the imbeciles. We have seen half-witted women nursing the sick, feeble-minded women in charge of the babies, and imbecile old men put to look after the boys out of school hours. We have seen expectant mothers, who have come in for their confinements, by day and by night working, eating and sleeping in close companionship with idiots and imbeciles of revolting habits and hideous appearance. "I have known," testifies Dr. Milsom Rhodes, "a noisy dement in the next bed to a case of acute pneumonia, to whom sleep was an absolute necessity, a *sine qua non* she had small chance of obtaining." ‖ "All over England, urban and rural," says our own Medical Investigator, "epileptics are found lodged in Workhouses and Poor Law infirmaries. Sometimes there are only a very few . . . sometimes as many as fifty. Often they occupy day rooms and dormitories along with ordinary or imbecile inmates. . . . In smaller Workhouses in the rural districts the arrangements are usually most inadequate. . . . The epileptics may not have suitable and sufficient outdoor employment, they cannot have the best kind of supervision, nor be preserved against irritation by their companions, and the spectacle of their seizures is detrimental to ordinary inmates."¶ The Irish Workhouses, declares the General Inspector of the

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* *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII., pp. 21–193.

† Some of them are among the most incorrigible and hopeless of the "Ins-and-outs." "Of 6,538 men, 3,318 women, and 192 children, 993 were admitted three times [to the Workhouse in Glasgow] during the year 1905, 512 four times, 290 five times, 164 six times, and so forth; and it was alleged that the bulk of these 'ins-and-outs' were mentally defective persons who could not be certified as 'lunatics,' and should be detained compulsorily in Poorhouses or Labour Colonies." (*Ibid.*, Vol. VIII., p. 396 (Scotland, Glasgow). Of a certain group of feeble-minded paupers it was reported that "nine of these have been inmates of the Workhouse on several previous occasions; they belong to that class who manage in fair weather to obtain a living by begging, hawking, or odd jobs, but are driven into the House by stress of weather. Under proper care they would be able to earn the greater portion of their keep." (*Ibid.*, Vol. VIII., p. 5.)

‡ An Inspector of the Local Government Board deposes that "the provision for the training of feeble-minded children is absolutely inadequate. I was at P—— the other day. They have got about a dozen children in the imbecile block of the Workhouse, simply because they can find no place to which they can send them to be trained" (*Ibid.*, Vol. I., *Q.* 2199; Vol. VIII., p. 37)—except, that is to say, for a substantial payment. "Special provision is called for for the . . . defective children attending the Workhouse schools, as also for the . . . defective children who were in the Workhouses . . . none of these appeared to me beyond the reach of special training." (*Ibid.*, p. 20.)

§ Thirty-third Annual Report of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, 1903–4, Appendix B., p. 184 (Mr. Preston-Thomas's Report).

‖ Report of Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. I., p. 549 (Dr. J. M. Rhodes).

¶ Report . . . on the Present Methods of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. McVail, 1907, pp. 53–54. An epileptic boy of sixteen, placed in the ordinary ward of a Workhouse infirmary (where there was only one night nurse to six rooms and forty-nine patients), was found dead in the morning, having suffocated himself. (*Times*, August 5th, 1908.)

Local Government Board, as "is only too obvious to anyone who has had an opportunity of inspecting them," are "under existing management . . . most unsuitable places for the accommodation of persons of unsound mind, and . . . *the condition of the latter at present housed in these establishments is in many instances disgraceful.*" * We cannot but agree with our own Medical Investigator that this "herding of imbeciles with the ordinary inmates of a Workhouse is injurious to both. . . . The sane-minded should not be compelled to have continually amongst them the victims of imbecility and the gibbering speech and untidy habits of some of the afflicted." †

The evil consequences of this herding in the Workhouses of the mentally defective with the sane have been repeatedly pointed out for the last two decades. For at least twelve years they have been referred to, almost every year, in the Annual Reports of the Local Government Board for England and Wales,‡ yet it has been found impossible to move the Boards of Guardians to reform. To them, indeed, by their very nature as Destitution Authorities, the idea of ameliorative treatment does not seem to occur. What they are doing is merely "relieving destitution." For these unfortunate imbeciles and epileptics, as for all other paupers, "the system of indoor relief" is, as Mr. Adrian, the Legal Adviser to the Local Government Board, has pointed out, legally only "*a housing system.*" § It was in vain that the scandal of the retention of imbeciles and idiots in the old people's wards of the Workhouses was pointed out in one of the Reports of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor.|| It was in vain that the Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1899 recommended the removal of all mentally defective persons from the Workhouses.¶ Ten years have elapsed since that recommendation, and the number of mentally defective persons in the Workhouses is actually greater than at that date. So obstinate a neglect to carry out an obvious reform provokes enquiry into its cause. We think we are not wrong in attributing the retention of these 60,000 mentally defective persons in the Workhouses to the fact that their labour is found useful—in the small rural Workhouses, indeed, actually indispensable to their administration on present lines. We have ourselves been informed, in Workhouse after Workhouse, that they had to rely on the imbeciles for practically all the manual work of the establishment. We gather that it was principally on this ground that the Local Government Board for England and Wales did not issue an Order requiring compliance with the recommendation of the House of Commons Committee of 1899, and the removal of all imbeciles from the Workhouses.** The President seems to have been advised that, without the mentally defective women in particular, the General Mixed Workhouse in the rural Unions could not be carried on. "If," said an objector, "you remove the feeble-minded women from the Workhouse who will do the scrubbing?" ††

(c) The Mentally Defective under the Local Lunacy Authorities.

We turn now to the 100,000 mentally defective pauper patients in the County and Borough Asylums in England and Wales and the District Asylums in Scotland. Built and equipped at great expense, by the watchful care of the Lunacy Commissioners in England and Wales and the General Board of Lunacy in Scotland, well staffed with doctors and nurses, and maintained at a cost for annual maintenance alone of something like £3,000,000 annually, these 180 institutions have become highly efficient mental hospitals for brain disease. Whilst many cases are permanent and hopeless, some 10,000 patients

* Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 419 (Ireland).

† Report . . . on the Present Methods of Administering Indoor and Outdoor Medical Relief, by Dr. McVail, 1907, p. 54. We have it in evidence that the removal of "the imbecile or semi-imbecile from the Workhouses . . . would add immensely to the comfort of the sane old folk." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LI. (Par. 10) to Vol. VII.)

‡ We feel that one of the Inspectors, Mr. Preston-Thomas, deserves credit for his persistence in exposing what he rightly describes as "one of the greatest blots on Poor Law administration." (Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1898–9, Appendix B.).

§ Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 33.

|| Report of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895 (Mr. Henry Broadhurst's Minority Report).

¶ Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Cottage Homes Bill, 1899.

** Report of Royal Commission on Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. I. *Q.* 106 (Mr. Adrian).

†† *Ibid.*, Vol. I., *Q.* 887.

are discharged annually as cured. The average stay of all the patients, indeed, works out at less than five years; and of the curable cases, the majority remain under treatment only a few months.

Here the great blot appears to us to be the stigma of pauperism which is, in England and Wales, needlessly and uselessly inflicted on these persons and on their relations:—

> "The households in which the presence of a mentally afflicted member of the family is a danger, a degradation and an intolerable burden, are not necessarily those of paupers . . . many of" the so-called pauper patients "have never been in a Workhouse, and some of them cost the local rates nothing at all. Many of them are children of small farmers, tradesmen in a small way of business, clerks, artisans and others, who, unable to pay the full charge, are yet able to contribute 5s. or 6s. per week, or even more, for the maintenance and training of their children. In order to make up the full charge of from 10s. 6d. to 14s. per week, the parents pay their contributions to the Board of Guardians, who receive the 4s. grant, add to it the parents' contributions, and thus, in some instances, make up the required amount. This pauperises the parent, though it does not do so in the case of children sent to blind or deaf and dumb institutions, or educated at Public Elementary Schools, where the schooling is paid for out of the rates, or even in the case of criminal or neglected children sent to reformatory or industrial schools."*

The case is all the harder when a wife, a child, or a parent is compulsorily removed to an asylum, on the ground of possible danger, or even merely of annoyance to the neighbours. The relations liable are then called upon to contribute 10s. or 12s. a week, on pain of being stigmatised as paupers and deprived of the franchise. Indeed, unless they take care to make the full payment direct to the County or Borough Council, they will, notwithstanding their repayment to the Board of Guardians of the whole of the cost, still leave the patient a pauper, and included in the statistics of pauperism:—

> "The evidence shows that the division between pauper and non-pauper is quite unreal in the case of the mentally defective. The son of respectable parents, who is permanently supported, wholly or in part, by relatives and friends, requires, as mentally defective, the same treatment as another person whose relatives and friends cannot help him at all; and the greater or less possibility of obtaining payment for the treatment—the more or less poverty or destitution—is not the dividing line in these cases, but the existence of or non-existence of mental disease."†

In Scotland, the Court of Session has held that the maintenance of a dependent of unsound mind out of the Poor Rate does not pauperise those responsible for him.‡

In Ireland the patient in the County Lunatic Asylum has, from first to last, no connection with the Poor Law, and even if he is treated gratuitously, neither he nor his relatives are thereby made paupers.

(D) The Recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded.

We are relieved from formulating any judgment of our own upon the Mentally Defective under the Poor Law, by the authoritative findings and unanimous recommendations, not only of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland (1902–1906), but now also of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded (1904–1908). The latter extend to the whole range of the Mentally Defective, from the merely feeble-minded child, the inebriate unable to restrain himself from alcohol and the sane epileptic, up to the dangerous lunatic and the undeveloped idiot. With regard to the whole of this army of poor persons, probably approaching 200,000 in number, being more than one-sixth of the entire pauper host, the Royal Commission is emphatic in its judgment that "a Poor Law Authority cannot suitably undertake the care of the Mentally Defective."§ Both Commissions are decisive in their recommendation that the Mentally Defective should be wholly removed from the Workhouses.‖ It is accordingly recommended that the Mentally Defective of all grades and all ages should be taken out of the Poor Law, and that the Destitution Authority should henceforth have nothing to do with their maintenance or treatment. It is declared to be:—

> "The mental condition of these persons, and neither their poverty nor their crime," that "is the real ground of their claim for help from the State. It follows that their aid and supervision should be undertaken by some powerful local Authority, who can ensure that they will receive it from other quarters or, failing this, will provide it themselves. Hitherto, a large number of adults, young persons, and children, who cannot be certified under the Lunacy and Idiots Acts have been supported by Public Authorities as paupers, on the ground of destitution, or, as prisoners, on account of their crime, but they have not been dealt with primarily on the ground of their mental defect."¶

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* Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., pp. 54, 56.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII., p. 53.

‡ Palmer v. Russell and Others, 1871, 10 M. 185; P.L.M., 1871–2, 182.

§ Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 84.

‖ With regard to Ireland, "at least seventy witnesses recommended that all lunatics should be transferred from Workhouses to asylums, and no evidence was given in favour of a continuance of the present system." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 37.).

¶ Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 7.

"In the development of any organisation for the care of the Mentally Defective, the precedent of the Lunacy Acts should, we think, be followed, rather than the precedent of the Poor Law. Under the Lunacy Acts, intervention is due to the existence of mental incapacity; under the Poor Law to the existence of poverty and destitution."*

"If there is to be co-ordination between the Authorities and agencies concerned, it is essential that the care of the Mentally Defective should be made a duty not of the Poor Law Authorities, but of specially qualified Authorities organised with that object."†

"There should be one Authority in the County or County Borough, which should have supervision of all institutions for the Mentally Defective, and be able, through its Medical Officers and by its annual survey of all cases, to ensure that the institutions should, as far as possible, be used each for its several purposes, and that those persons who require custodial treatment should be passed on to institutions fitted for them."‡

The Local Education Authority should give up the provision that it is beginning to make for mentally defective children.§

"The fact that there was throughout and for all purposes one single and responsible Authority would make irrelevant all proposals for the transfer of the child at a certain age from one Authority to another, as, for instance, as some have suggested, at sixteen, or any age up to twenty-one, from the care of the Education Authority to the Board of Guardians, and from them to the Lunacy Authority. Whatever the mentally defective person might be, and in whatever way the Local Authority might provide for his maintenance, he would remain under the care and control of one Local Authority only."‖

It is accordingly recommended that the entire responsibility for the Mentally Defective of all grades and at all ages should be entrusted in England, Wales and Ireland to a committee of the County or County Borough Council, to be called the Committee for the Mentally Defective, in which the existing Asylums Committee would be merged, and in Scotland to the County Councils and principal Town Councils, from which the District Boards of Lunacy are at present selected.

(E) THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE MENTALLY DEFECTIVE FROM THE POOR LAW.

We do not see how, in face of the facts now definitely revealed, and of the unanimous recommendations of so authoritative a Commission, any other conclusion is possible. We entirely concur in these recommendations, and we are glad to find ourselves, on this point, in agreement with the majority of our colleagues. We, however, think that the withdrawal from the Destitution Authorities of so large a number of paupers as 200,000, and particularly the complete removal of the whole class of the feeble-minded from the Workhouses, entails, in practice, the break up of the Poor Law system. The Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded has come, in fact, with regard to all grades of the Mentally Defective, to the same conclusions to which we, with regard to the children and the sick, have concurrently been driven, namely, the supersession of the Destitution Authority in favour of an Authority dealing with these patients in respect of the cause and character of their distress. It would indeed, be strange to remove from the charge of the Destitution Authority, from the demoralising General Mixed Workhouse, and from the stigma of pauperism, the inebriates, the feeble-minded and the epileptics, and to leave in the same unsatisfactory conditions the promising children and the curable sick. We may confidently predict that, unless we break up the Destitution Authority, and allocate to the more specialised Local Authorities the classes with which they severally deal, we shall find, years hence, the General Mixed Workhouse continuing still in existence, and the imbeciles and feeble-minded still herding within its walls.

(F) CONCLUSIONS.

We have therefore to report:—

1. That the existing provision for the Mentally Defective persons maintained in the United Kingdom at the public expense, probably approaching 200,000 in number, is far from satisfactory.

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* *Ibid.*, p. 54.
† *Ibid.*, p. 66.
‡ *Ibid.*, p. 176.
§ "We cannot but conclude that there should be such a unification of Authorities as should operate, so as to dispense with this duplication or even triplication of certificates and orders, from the officers of the Boards of Guardians and the Asylums Board, the Education Authority, and the Justice of the Peace under the Lunacy Act. The children in the different institutions and under the different Authorities appear to be more homogeneous than the system of certificates that separates and classifies them." (*Ibid.*, p. 78.)
‖ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

2. That the existence everywhere of rival Local Authorities maintaining the Mentally Defective, and the division of the supervision and control over their work among three (or even four) different Government Departments, no one of which has full responsibility, or combines in itself technical knowledge and financial control, involves—to use the emphatic words, formally given in evidence, of the Local Government Board for England and Wales—"*a large amount of unnecessary expenditure.*"

3. That the continued detention in the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland, and, to a lesser degree, those of Scotland, of no fewer than 60,000 Mentally Defective persons, including not a few children, without education or ameliorative treatment, and herded indiscriminately with the sane, amounts to a public scandal.

4. That the practice of Ireland, where the inmates of the County Lunatic Asylums are wholly unconnected with the Poor Law, and are not stigmatised as paupers, should be adopted for Great Britain.

5. That we concur with the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland in thinking that all persons of unsound mind, whatever their mental state, and whatever their age, should be everywhere wholly removed from the Workhouses.

6. That, in the words of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, it is "the mental condition of these persons, and neither their poverty nor their crime" that "is the real ground of their claim for help from the State."

7. That we accordingly concur with that Commission in the view that all grades of the Mentally Defective (including the feeble-minded, the epileptics, the inebriates, the imbeciles, the lunatics and the idiots) should, at all ages, be wholly withdrawn from the charge of the Destitution Authorities, and from pauperism, as well as from the Local Education Authorities, and that the entire responsibility for their discovery, certification and appropriate treatment (whether institutional or domiciliary) should be entrusted in England, Wales and Ireland. to the County and County Borough Councils, acting by statutory Committees for the Mentally Defective, in which the present Asylums Committees would be merged, and in Scotland to the County Councils and principal Town Councils, from which the District Boards of Lunacy are (with the exception of six towns) selected.

8. That the whole duty of supervision and control of the action of the Local Authorities in respect of the Mentally Defective, including the administration of the Grants-in-Aid, should be concentrated, in England (including Wales), Scotland and Ireland respectively, in a single self-contained and fully equipped Division or Department, concerned with the Mentally Defective alone, however that Division or Department may be grouped with others under a Minister responsible to Parliament.

CHAPTER VII.

THE AGED AND INFIRM.

The Aged and Infirm, who constitute about one-third of the entire pauper host, make up the most baffling of the categories into which the non-ablebodied poor are, under the Poor Law Amendment Act and the Orders of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, officially classified. It is to be noted that, ever since the Elizabethan Poor Law, the Old and Impotent—who have since been officially designated the Aged and Infirm—are always referred to as forming one and the same class, of which no official definition has ever been given.* The persons included in this class from time to time, by the instructions of the Central Authority and the practice of the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland and the Parish Councils in Scotland, comprise, in fact, all sorts and conditions of men, children only excepted. We find among them persons so sick as to require continuous medical treatment and nursing; others so mentally defective as to be continuously under restraint; others on the verge of imbecility; others, again, so fully ablebodied and intelligent as to be given quite a fair day's work. No man or woman is too young to be comprised within this class, if only they are permanently incapacitated; none are too vigorous or skilled if they are over a certain age, often arbitrarily fixed at sixty. Men and women, married or widowed, of every grade or variety of character or conduct, past or present, are alike included; persons who have been thrifty and industrious or wastrel and drunken; persons who are respectable and refined or dirty and dissolute; the orderly or disorderly; the active-minded and intelligent, the mentally defective and the senile.

In view of the numerous official inquiries of the past fifteen years into the question of the provision for the aged poor,† we have narrowly limited our own investigation into this part of our subject, taking evidence and inspecting institutions principally with the object of ascertaining how far the voluminous information that has been accumulated needed modification or correction in the light of the existing condition of things. We have not needed, in this branch of our subject, to go beyond the operations of the

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* It will be remembered that there was originally no separate provision even for the acutely or temporarily sick, who fell also into this class. On the other hand, old age alone may not have secured admission to it, so long as physical and mental vigour lasted. In the eyes of the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–1847, the aged and infirm were (omitting the case of children) the exact complement of the able-bodied (in the sense of those able to be employed for hire). This, at any rate, as regards men, appears still to be the legal classification under the Scottish Poor Law, and under the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order in England and Wales. "The Local Government Board," deposed one of its Inspectors, "always decline to fix an age, because one man may be quite able-bodied at seventy, and another man may not be able-bodied at sixty-five." (Report of House of Commons Select Committee on Aged Deserving Poor, 1899, *Q.* 2265.) In support of this contention it may be pointed out that the Workhouse classification required by the General Consolidated Order refers not to the aged at all, but to men and women "infirm through age, or any other cause." Thus, it has been contended by strict administrators that, in granting Outdoor Relief to really able-bodied men of seventy, Boards of Guardians are "going behind" that Order—to use a phrase from Mr. Pell's examination of Mr. Knollys, Local Government Board Inspector, in Report of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Cd. 7684, Vol. II., *Qs.* 835–849. *See also*, in the same Report, the entertaining cross-examination of a pertinacious "strict administrator" by the Royal Commissioner who represented the Local Government Board. "If I might answer by a question," said this witness, "I should like to know what is meant by 'aged' . . . . Very often a case comes up that is over sixty, and I think that there is nothing at all the matter with that man or with that woman, and I maintain as Chairman that that is an able-bodied person, although he or she may be over sixty." The Royal Commissioner was reduced to retorting: "Leave those cases alone; you may say that that class of case comes under the Prohibitory Order, but I say that the cases of persons not able-bodied do not come under the Prohibitory Order." (*Ibid.*, Vol. II., *Qs.* 4486–4488.) What, in fact, has happened since 1834, in England and Scotland alike, has been, without alteration of the Statute or the Orders, a silent, gradual shifting of the classification, the temporarily sick and the acutely sick of whatever age being more or less taken out of the class of the aged and infirm, and all persons over sixty, however able-bodied, being more or less admitted to it. Sixty, usually adopted as the age at which the inmates of a Workhouse are classed as aged and infirm, (*Ibid.*, Vol. II., *Q.* 31) is doubtless taken from the Statute enabling man and wife of that age to live together. (Report of House of Commons Select Committee on Aged Deserving Poor, 1899, *Qs.* 2266, 2267). But in the Friendly Society Acts, 1875 and 1887, old age is defined as any age after fifty.

† Report of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vols. I. to III. (Cd. 7684); Report of the Committee on Old-Age Pensions, 1898 (Cd. 8911); Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on the Cottage Homes Bill, 1899 (House of Commons No. 271 of 1899); Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on Aged Deserving Poor, 1899 (House of Commons No. 296 of 1899); Report of Departmental Committee on the Financial Aspects of the Proposals . . . about the Deserving Aged Poor, 1900 (Cd. 67 of 1900); Tables . . . in Connection with the Question of Old-Age Pensions, 1907 (Cd. 3618 of 1907).

Poor Law itself. It is one of the many anomalies of the situation that, whereas there are, as we have seen, two rival Local Authorities for dealing with the sick poor, three different Local Authorities for treating those who are mentally defective, and four separate Local Authorities competing for the care of infants and children, there has been, down to the autumn of 1908, only one Local Authority providing for all the diversified medley of individuals classed as Aged and Infirm. Whether they are sick or well, able-bodied or incapacitated, over seventy or under forty, intelligent or feeble-minded, of admirable past and present conduct or the very dregs of the populace, they have been, in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, all heaped up under the jurisdiction of the Destitution Authority.

(A) The Three Policies of the Destitution Authority.

Since 1834 there have been, in England and Wales, three successive lines of policy laid down by the Central Authority for the treatment of the Aged and Infirm*—either by Orders, or through the Inspectorate, or in the President's Circulars. These three policies may be conveniently termed :—

(*a*) The Policy of an indiscriminate use of the General Mixed Workhouse, tempered in practice by general Outdoor Relief to all kinds of Aged and Infirm;

(*b*) The Policy of applying the Workhouse Test to the Aged and Infirm, assumed to be mitigated by the extraction of support from relations or the charitable ; and

(*c*) The Policy, so far as the Aged alone are concerned, of deliberate discrimination by Boards of Guardians according to past or present character, with generous treatment of the deserving.

These three lines of policy are, in our judgment, inconsistent and incompatible with each other ; they have all left their marks on the authoritative documents that are still in force ; they have all been more or less adopted by one or another of the 1,679 separate Destitution Authorities of the United Kingdom; and the result is the confusion, uncertainties and inequalities that to-day especially mark this department of Poor Law administration.

The first of the three Policies with regard to the Aged and Infirm was established by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–47, and continued by the Poor Law Board of 1847–71. This was not due to the 1834 Report. The meagre references to the Aged and Infirm in the Report of 1834 can hardly be said to amount to any recommendations as to policy. The authors of that Report accepted without question the almost universal practice of relieving the Aged and Infirm by small weekly allowances in their own homes, and they suggested no alteration in this practice.† The one change that they definitely advocated with regard to the Aged was that, where these had to be maintained in institutions, they were to be rescued from the General Mixed Workhouse, and accommodated in entirely separate buildings, under entirely separate management, expressly in order that "the old might enjoy their indulgences."‡ Unfortunately, as we have seen, the Poor Law Commissioners quickly found that, with the Destitution Authority that the Act of 1834 had established, it was impracticable to carry out the strong and reiterated recommendations of the Report of 1834 for the abolition of the General Mixed Workhouse. The separate institutions for the Aged, where "the old might enjoy their indulgences," were therefore not established. But a further step followed. As the existence of the Destitution Authority had involved the continuance of the General Mixed Workhouse, so the use of that institution for all classes of paupers prevented even the humane and considerate treatment of the Aged, on which the authors of the 1834 Report had laid stress. The Poor Law Commissioners found that they had to set themselves strictly against any discrimination inside the Workhouse between one class of paupers and another. There was, as they recognised in 1839, "a strong disposition on the part of a portion of the public"—who had perhaps read the 1834 Report—"so to modify the arrangements [of the Aged and Infirm Wards of the Workhouse] . . . as to place them on the

* Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907.

† Pp. 42, 43 of Report of 1834.

‡ P. 307 of Report of 1834 ; *see also* Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 65.

footing of almshouses. The consequences which would flow from this change have only to be pointed out to show its inexpediency and its danger. If the condition of the inmates of a Workhouse were to be so regulated as to invite the Aged and Infirm of the labouring class to take refuge in it, *it would immediately be useless as a test between indigence and indolence and fraud.*"*

On the other hand, so far at any rate as their official documents or public utterances are concerned, neither the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–47, nor the Poor Law Board of 1847–71, saw any reason to discountenance the very general practice of the Boards of Guardians of providing, by means of Outdoor Relief, for all the Aged and Infirm who could anyhow manage to exist upon what was allowed to them. There had been no such suggestion in the 1834 Report. "It is not our intention," the Commissioners had declared in 1839, "*to issue any such rule* [requiring the Aged and Infirm to receive relief only in the workhouse]" unless we shall see, in any particular Union or Unions, frauds or abuses imperatively calling for our interference."† No such Order was ever issued. It is to be noted that the Central Authority always argued against any discrimination between one aged person and another according to past character, and even according to past thrift. No person was to be relieved unless he was destitute; no more was to be given than sufficed to sustain life; and no less could possibly be given even to the worst person. It was expressly held that any allowance from a Friendly Society, or other income, was to be counted at its full amount.‡ This policy of indiscriminate, insufficient, and unconditional Outdoor Relief to all the Aged and Infirm who could manage to exist outside, coupled with indiscriminate accommodation in the General Mixed Workhouse for the rest of them, was that adopted in practically all the Unions of England and Wales between 1834 and 1871.§ What it has always tended to be, in practice, is a sort of bargain between a good-natured but penurious Destitution Authority, and each Aged or Infirm person in turn, as to how little that person would consent to make shift on, rather than come into the abhorred General Mixed Workhouse.‖

The second of the three policies—that of applying the test of "the offer of the House" to the Aged and Infirm, as to other classes—appears to have prevailed among most of the Inspectors of the Local Government Board between 1871 and 1890, and the school of "strict administrators" with whom they were in communication. We may take as the best exponent of this policy Mr., afterwards Sir Henry, Longley, K.C.B., an able, zealous and experienced official of great influence in Poor Law administration, whose reports on the subject obtained a wide circulation. Mr. Longley assumed, in every paragraph of his well-known Report of 1873–4,¶ that the "Workhouse principle" was universally applicable to "the Disabled"—that being the term he used for the Aged and Infirm—as well as to the Able-bodied. His policy seems to have embodied, in what we think a confused way, several different hypotheses. It was advocated as an inducement to individual saving. A rigid adherence to the policy of "offering the House" would, Mr. Longley argued, lead the poor to provide, or induce their relations to provide, for

* Special Report of Poor Law Commissioners on the Further Amendment of the Law, 1839, p. 47. That it was their fear of destroying the utility of the Workhouse as a test for the able-bodied, that made the Poor Law Commissioners of 1835–1847 refuse to discriminate in favour of the Aged and Infirm within that institution, and not any desire to be harsh to this class in order to encourage provision for self-support, is shown by the fact that they took no steps to prohibit or to restrict, as regards the aged, the far more attractive Outdoor Relief.

† Special Report on Further Amendment of the Law, 1839, p. 61.

‡ Minute of Poor Law Commissioners, 1840; Poor Law Board to Mr. R. H. Paget, M.P., January 5th, 1870, in Twenty-second Annual Report of Poor Law Board, 1870, p. 108; Report of Royal Commission on Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Q.* 299; Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority, p. 126.

§ Thus, at Bradfield, which was, from the outset a "model" Union, we find a committee of the Board of Guardians reporting that they "do not recommend the Board to incur the expense of new buildings for increasing the accommodation for this class of paupers [the aged and infirm]; they rather advise that out-relief should be granted to them in all cases where necessity is certain; and that the workhouse should be kept as a test against imposition, more than as a permanent means of support for disabled persons." The Report was adopted. (MS. Minutes, Bradfield Board of Guardians, July 6th, 1858.)

‖ "Guardians," said an experienced Local Government Board Inspector, "are very apt to give what the individual pauper is willing to be content with." (Report of Royal Commission on Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. I., p. xxii., Vol. II., *Qs.* 246, 1442–1444.)

¶ Report on the Administration of Outdoor Relief in the Metropolis, in Third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1873–1874.

old age as well as for sickness and widowhood. If the aged had, however, not been able to save, and had no relations legally liable to maintain them, the "offer of the House" would, it was alleged, bring forward other relations, not legally liable, who rather than have the disgrace of a relation in the Workhouse would support them.* This was even held, in some queer way, to be specially true of the aged who had led really good lives.† Finally, in the cases, which were assumed to be very rare, of the deserving aged person having been neither able to save nor to attract the affection of relations able to support him, voluntary charity was supposed to come to the rescue. It was an integral part of the policy that Mr. Longley strongly deprecated any deviation in particular cases from what he euphemistically called "the offer of indoor relief." "That which an applicant does not know certainly that he will not get," he forcibly argued, "he readily persuades himself if he wishes for it that he will get; and the poor, to whom any inducement is held out to regard an application for relief as a sort of gambling speculation, in which, though many fail, some will succeed, will, like other gamblers, reckon upon their own success."‡ For every "hard case" he relied on the springing up in every Union of intelligently directed private charity. "It is, in fact, the very existence of charity"—assumed thus to be always at hand whenever required—"which strengthens the hands of the Poor Law administration in adherence to rule."§ There was thus to be a sharp division between those aged and infirm who were provided for in their old age by their own savings, by the kindness of their relations and friends, or by voluntary charity, on the one hand—assumed to be coincident with "the deserving"—and on the other hand those aged and infirm who had no alternative but Poor Law relief. For these latter—assumed to be coincident with "the undeserving"—there was to be nothing but the General Mixed Workhouse. And in order to emphasise this assumed coincidence of the aged who had to accept Poor Law relief and those who were undeserving, every effort was made to retain and even to deepen the "stigma of pauperism." This was officially expressed in the phrase "the degradation of parish support."‖ "I think," said in 1893 the then Chief General Inspector and Assistant Secretary of the Board, "that a man should feel that there is some degradation in living upon funds that have been raised . . . *by compulsion* from his neighbours."¶ Mr. Longley's Reports so far received the endorsement of the Local Government Board that they were not only published with commendation, but were officially circulated to Boards of Guardians. Other Inspectors were always pressing the same views. The half a dozen Unions that adopted this policy of "Thorough" were repeatedly held up for admiration by the Inspectorate and in the Official Reports. It even came to be commonly assumed that this was, in some special sense, the "orthodox" Poor Law policy. We do not, however, find that the Local Government Board ever expressly embodied it in any published Order, Circular, or other authoritative document.**

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* "One of the chief defects," he said, "in the present administration of the law in respect of the disabled class, and especially of that large section of it which consists of the aged and infirm . . . is its failure to relieve the rates from the burden of the maintenance of paupers, whose relations, whether legally liable or not, are able to contribute to their support. It is, I believe, within the experience of many Boards of Guardians, that while there are persons who, even when in prosperous circumstances, readily permit their aged relations to receive out-relief, an offer of Indoor Relief is frequently found to put pressure upon them to rescue themselves, if not their relations, from the discredit incident to the residence of the latter in a workhouse." (*Ibid.*, p. 188.) Another Inspector expressly reported that he urged Guardians with regard to the aged "to apply the workhouse test *in order to put pressure on relations who are not legally liable.*" (Mr. Culley's Report in Third Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1873–1874, p. 76.) So, again, in 1875, Mr. Longley argued that the "deterrent discipline" of the Workhouse was "the keystone of an efficient system of indoor relief," not merely for the able-bodied, but also for the aged ("directly on the able-bodied, and more remotely upon the disabled class of paupers," the term he always used for the aged). (Mr. Longley's Report on Indoor Relief in the Metropolis, in Fourth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1874–1875, p. 47.) It may, however, be noted that Mr. Longley never pretended that this was the policy of the Report of 1834, or of the Act of 1834. To him it was "*a further and special development* . . . of the principles of the Poor Law Amendment Act." (*Ibid.*, p. 41.)

† Report of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Q.* 2305. One of the strangest of the assumptions of this period—and one which, as in fairness it should be said, was, perhaps, the main justification for the policy—was that hardly any person could fail to be able to provide for his old age (and that of his wife), unless he had been in some way undeserving. "I think myself," said a noted Poor Law Guardian, "that what should be called deserving (aged) poor are so very very few in number that they might easily be dealt with by organised charity outside." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 2061.)

‡ Mr. Longley's Report in Third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1873–4, p. 144.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

‖ Poor Law Board to Mr. R. H. Paget, M.P., January 5th, 1870 (*see* references above).

¶ Report of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Q.* 1129.

** Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 115.

This policy of "offering the House" to all aged persons was qualified by exceptions. Thus the Paddington Board of Guardians adopted the following rules: "Outdoor Relief may be granted only to such aged and infirm persons as :—

"(1) Are deserving at the time of application.

"(2) Have shown signs of thrift.

"(3) Have no relations legally or morally bound to, and able to, support them.

"(4) Are unable to obtain sufficient assistance from charitable sources; and

"(5) Are desirous of living out of the Workhouse and can be properly taken care of."*

It will, however, be noted that it was still definitely laid down that persons who complied with Nos. 1, 2 and 4 of the regulations, but not with No. 3 or No. 5—persons, that is, who were admittedly deserving, thrifty and wholly destitute, but whose relations (not being legally liable) refused to support them; or who had no one to look after their little needs—were to be relieved only in the Workhouse—in the General Mixed Workhouse, made deterrent and intended only for the undeserving.

We pass now to the third policy—that of discriminating, with regard to persons over some prescribed age, between the deserving and the undeserving poor, alike in the amount of Outdoor Relief, and in the amenities of institutional treatment. This policy, diametrically opposed as it was to that inculcated by the Inspectorate of 1871–1890, has been described to us, by the present Chief Inspector of the Local Government Board, as characteristic of "the political decade of Poor Law administration." † By this ambiguous phrase—unusual in the mouth of a Civil Servant—we understand to be meant that the policy was adopted by the Local Government Board in obedience to the wishes of Parliament and in compliance with a widespread public opinion. We note that the policy has been equally characteristic of Presidents of different political parties.‡ It is interesting to see that the new departure began over the indulgence of an allowance of tobacco.§ The Liverpool Select Vestry—the Destitution Authority of that great city—determined to give the well-conducted old men in the Workhouse the privilege of a weekly screw of tobacco, whether or not they were employed on disagreeable duties. The Auditor objected. The Vestry insisted. The Central Authority was obdurate. The local body appealed to its Parliamentary representatives. It was suggested as a compromise that the medical officer might be got to include it in the dietary table, when the Central Authority would not refuse to sanction it.|| The Vestry declined to compromise, and insisted on allowing tobacco as a non-dietetic indulgence. Finally, the Inspector was instructed to say that objection was withdrawn. No publicity was given to the concession, but it gradually leaked out. During the year 1892 we see the Central Authority sanctioning by letter, without any official publication on the subject, such applications as were made by individual Boards of Guardians to be permitted to allow an ounce of tobacco weekly to the men over sixty in the Workhouse.¶ At last, in November, 1892, a General Order was issued permitting it in all

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* Report of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Q.* 2373. For rules of the St. Pancras Board of Guardians to similar effect, *see Ibid.*, *Q.* 2049. These rules were pressed on the Local Government Board for embodiment in a General Order (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 2124, 2413); but in vain.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 3338; *see also Q.* 3344.

‡ Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 118.

§ It is not clear from the published documents at what date, or in what unions, the Central Authority had first allowed tobacco. In 1880, it decided that it could not legally be given to the Workhouse inmate (not being sick), if it had not been specially ordered by the medical officer under Arts. 107 and 108 of the General Consolidated Order of 1847. (Selections from the Correspondence of the Local Government Board, Vol. II., 1883, p. 372.) Yet, by 1885, at any rate, the allowance of tobacco or snuff to non-able-bodied paupers or to such as were "employed upon work of a hazardous or specially disagreeable character," with permission to smoke in such rooms as the Guardians might determine, had been exceptionally granted in particular cases; *see*, for instance, Special Order to Carlisle of June 22nd, 1885, not published in the Annual Report.

|| "It is the invariable custom," said Mr. Ritchie approvingly, "to provide for the aged paupers a better diet than that for the other classes." (Mr. Ritchie in House of Commons, May 6th, 1892; *Hansard*, Vol. IV., p. 277.)

¶ Local Government Board to Bourne Union, August, 1892 (*Local Government Chronicle*, August 13th, 1892, p. 578); Local Government Board to Caistor Union, September, 1892. (*Ibid.*, October 8th, 1892, p. 859.)

Unions, irrespective of sex, and without limit of amount.* Little more than a year later, as some compensation to the old women (though they had not been excluded, in terms, from the indulgence of tobacco or snuff) they were allowed " dry tea " with sugar and milk, irrespective of that provided for in the dietary table.† Presently this indulgence is extended to " dry coffee or cocoa " if preferred, and the men also are allowed to receive it.‡

Meanwhile an agitation had grown up in favour of the grant of pensions, quite apart from the Poor Law, to the aged deserving poor. This movement led to a series of official inquiries into the condition and treatment of the aged poor, beginning with the Royal Commission of 1893–95. This Commission, which alike from its membership and the extent of its inquiries must be accounted as of great authority in Poor Law administration, found that neither the exercise of thrift, nor the support of relations, nor the intervention of voluntary charity, could be absolutely relied on to prevent deserving persons from requiring public assistance in old age ; § and they recommended that Boards of Guardians should be advised to discriminate in their relief between the deserving and the undeserving. They insisted that Outdoor Relief ought to be given in all suitable cases ; and that when the deserving aged had to accept institutional relief, they should be separated from, and treated quite differently from, the undeserving ; and that these conditions should be definitely published to the poor, so that they might know with certainty what they might rely on in their old age. ||

In conformity with this extremely authoritative recommendation, the Local Government Board issued two lengthy Circulars in 1895 and 1896,¶ under the presidency of Sir Henry Fowler and Mr. Chaplin respectively, systematically laying down principles of Workhouse administration, so far as the aged were concerned, in sharp contrast with those advocated by Mr. Longley, and ,indeed, with those which had been inculcated from 1835 to 1892. It was expressly stated that, as the character of the Workhouse population had so completely changed since 1834, the administration no longer needed to be so deterrent. The old idea of fixed uniform times of going to bed and rising and of taking meals was given up, it being expressly left to the Master and Matron to allow any of the aged (as well as the infirm and the young children) to retire to rest, to rise and to have their meals at whatever hours it was thought fit. The visiting committees of Workhouses were now specially enjoined to see that the aged were properly attended to, and recommended to confer with them as to any grievances without any officials being present.** It was suggested that the great sleeping wards should be partitioned into separate cubicles. The Guardians were reminded that aged and infirm couples might be provided with separate rooms. The well-behaved aged and infirm were to be allowed, within reasonable limits,†† to go out for walks, to visit their friends, and to attend their own places of worship on Sundays. The rules were to be relaxed to allow them to receive visits in the Workhouse

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 169, 17547; General Order of November 3rd, 1892; Circular of November 9th, 1892 ; Twenty-Second Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1892–3, pp. 35–36, 85 ; Report of Royal Commission on Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Q.* 96, and Vol. III., Appendix No. II., p. 967.

† General Order of March 8th, 1894 ; Twenty-fourth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1893–4, p. 99.

‡ Special Order to Gateshead, February 15th, 1896 ; *see also* the " Specimen Order " given in Macmorran's *Poor Law Orders*, Second Edition, 1905, p. 1061.

§ " Though private charity may frequently prevent persons from becoming paupers, it should not be relied upon as a substitute for the legal obligations in cases of destitution." (Report of Royal Commission on Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. I., p. 27.)

|| These recommendations received the signatures (subject to some qualifications) of ten Commissioners, including Lords Lingen, Brassey and Playfair, and Messrs. Henley, Pell and C. S. Loch. A minority, including Messrs. J. Chamberlain, Ritchie and Charles Booth, recommended further differentiation between the deserving and the undeserving. There was no Minority Report in the other direction.

¶ Circular on Workhouse Administration of January 29th, 1895 ; Memorandum on Visiting Committees of July 1st, 1895 ; Circular on Classification in Workhouses of July 31st, 1896 ; Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1895–6, pp. 85, 107–112, 121–123 ; Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1896–7, pp. 9–10.

** Memorandum on the Duties of Visiting Committees, June, 1895, in Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1895–6, p. 122.

†† Sunday morning, and one day a month, was held to be not sufficient outing. " In the case of aged inmates of respectable character," said Mr. Chaplin, " leave of absence might well be allowed on week-days more frequently than is now the case " [at Old Gravel Lane Workhouse]. (*Hansard*, May 23rd, 1898, Vol. LVIII., p. 326.)

from their friends. There was to be no distinctive dress. Those of them who were of good conduct and who had "previously led moral and respectable lives" were to be separated from the rest, who were "likely to cause them discomfort," and were to have the enjoyment of a separate day-room. The whole note of the administration of the old people's wards of the Workhouses was, in fact, to be changed, so far as the Central Authority could change it. In the words of the 1834 Report, the old were to enjoy their indulgences. Four years later another Circular was issued in stronger terms, reiterating the suggestions of privileges that the guardians ought to allow to the deserving inmates over sixty-five—freedom to get up and go to bed and have their meals when they liked, to have their own locked cupboards for their little treasures, in all cases to have their tobacco and dry tea, to be free to go out when they chose, and to be allowed to receive the visits of their friends. They were to be given separate cubicles to sleep in, and special day-rooms, "which might, if thought desirable, be available for members of both sexes . . . and in which their meals, other than dinner, might be served at hours fixed by the Guardians. . . . It is hoped that where there is room the Guardians will not hesitate to take steps to bring about improvements of the kind indicated in the arrangements for the aged deserving poor." * Four or five months later the Guardians were stirred up by letter, and asked what they had done towards creating the specially privileged class of deserving aged inmates that had been so strongly pressed on them.†

Nor was there any hesitation on the part of the Local Government Board in equally accepting and endorsing the new policy with regard to the grant of Outdoor Relief to the Aged. In July, 1896, the Board, under the presidency of Mr. Chaplin, issued a Circular to Boards of Guardians outside the Metropolis, drawing attention to the importance of the Relieving Officers and Medical Officers discharging their duties with the greatest particularity. In a concluding paragraph the Board significantly reminds the guardians of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, of which an extract is appended. "We are convinced," runs the recommendation thus exceptionally brought to the Guardians' notice, "that there is a strong feeling that in the administration of relief there should be greater discrimination between the respectable aged who become destitute, and those whose destitution is distinctly the consequence of their own misconduct; and we recommend that Boards of Guardians, in dealing with applications for relief, should enquire with special care into the antecedents of destitute persons whose physical faculties have failed by reason of age and infirmity; and that *Outdoor Relief should in such cases be given* those who are shown to have been of good character, thrifty according to their opportunities, and generally independent in early life, and who are not living under conditions of health or surrounding circumstances which make it evident that the relief given should be indoor relief."‡ But this was not all. The poor, far from being left uncertain as to the grant of Outdoor Relief, were to be specially told that they would receive it if only they led deserving lives. "It accordingly appears to us eminently desirable," continues the Report of the Royal Commissioners, as communicated to the Boards of Guardians, "that Boards of Guardians should adopt rules in accordance with the general principles which we have indicated, by which they may be broadly guided in dealing with individual applications for relief, and that *such rules should be generally made known for the information of the poor of the Union, in order that* those really in need may not be discouraged from applying." § This policy was emphasised four years later, still under Mr. Chaplin's

* Circular of August 4th, 1900, in Thirtieth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1900–1901, pp. 19–20.

† *See*, for instance, Local Government Board to Bradford Union, January 10th, 1901, in MS. archives, Bradford Board of Guardians. There were then, in the Bradford Workhouse, twenty aged paupers of the first class, and seventeen of the second class. Both these day wards had cushioned armchairs, lockers with keys for each inmate, carpets on the floor, curtains to the windows, and were made comfortable with cushions, coloured table-cloths, pictures and ornaments. The inmates had special dormitories. (Bradford Union to Local Government Board, January 26th, 1901.) The General Consolidated Order of 1847 was still nominally in force.

‡ Circular of July 11th, 1896, in Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1896–7, pp. 7–9. No mention is made of this Circular in the Annual Report itself.

§ *Ibid.* In September, 1896, under Mr. Chaplin's presidency, the Central Authority "saw no objection" to a proposal of the Poplar Guardians to "board out" an aged married couple in a country cottage at 12s. a week, and added that its sanction was not required, if the case fell within "exception 2 to Art. 4" of the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order. It was simply "non-resident relief." But the Central Authority declared that it was impossible for such relief to be made chargeable on the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, as "boarding-out" of adults was merely Outdoor Relief. (Local Government Board to Poplar Union, September 25th, 1896; MS. archives, Poplar Board of Guardians.)

Presidency, by another Circular urging that "aged deserving persons should not be urged to enter the Workhouse at all," unless from actual infirmity and lack of a suitable home; but that adequate Outdoor Relief should be granted to them.* Nor did the Central Authority rest content with a mere Circular. Letters were sent a few months later to all the Boards of Guardians, asking what action had been taken with regard to the suggestion that Outdoor Relief should be granted to the deserving aged, and, in particular, whether the practice was to grant an adequate amount in each case. This is, down to this day, the latest official utterance of policy with regard to the deserving aged.†

(B) THE AGED AND INFIRM UNDER THE DESTITUTION AUTHORITY OF TO-DAY.

We have to report, after considering all the evidence afforded by the numerous official enquiries of the past decade into the condition of the Aged and Infirm, and after supplementing this evidence by fresh witnesses and inspections of our own, that we find all the three policies that we have just described, as well as an indefinite number of modifications or combinations of these policies, simultaneously in full operation at the present day among the Destitution Authorities of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland. We infer from our investigations that the First Policy—that of indiscriminate, insufficient and unconditional weekly doles, coupled with the General Mixed Workhouse for all who cannot subsist on them—is to-day the policy adopted by practically all the Destitution Authorities of Ireland and Wales, and by a considerable majority of the Destitution Authorities of England. This policy is at once cruel to many of the deserving and wholly undeterrent to the undeserving. We could give in support of this judgment a mass of evidence; but it must suffice here to quote the very authoritative statement, with regard to the two-thirds of the aged who are existing on Outdoor Relief, of the present Chief Inspector of the Local Government Board, Mr. J. S. Davy.

> "The relief," deposed this witness in 1893, "which is now usually given to outdoor paupers is inadequate, and the pauper is not properly looked after as he ought to be, either by the relieving officer or by the medical officer. *This is part of the system.* . . . Half-a-crown a week is about the outside relief that is given to old people. . . . It is not enough for them to live upon." "When," he continued, the Guardians "have by a *quasi*-judicial decision accepted a man as a pauper, and given him Outdoor Relief, they are responsible for his treatment. *They ought to see that he is properly clothed, properly housed, and properly fed.* They have no business to send him 2s. a week and wash their hands of him."‡

The same information has been given by other official witnesses.

> "I think," said an experienced Inspector in 1898, "the way in which relief is administered now in too many cases is intensely cruel to the [aged] poor; I think that to try to make old people live on 2s. 6d. and a loaf for a week is intensely cruel."§

We have already described in how large a proportion of all the two or three hundred thousand cases of Outdoor Relief, this is the standard adopted. "It is rare," summed up the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, "to find a Union in which it is not the exception to give sums which would suffice alone to provide even the barest necessities of life. . . . It cannot be doubted that, owing to the absence of the other means generally pre-supposed, great hardship must result."‖ Unfortunately, it is only too clear that what was described by Mr. Davy in 1893 and by Mr. Baldwyn Fleming in 1898, as "the system," is, in nine-tenths of the Unions of England and Wales, still "the system" in 1909. "I do not think to-day," deposed one of the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, "that the aged and deserving poor, in the immense majority of cases, receive sixpence more than they did before the Circular (of 1900) was issued."¶ We have ourselves seen cases of aged and obviously respectable persons, lingering out an existence in the most squalid surroundings, on a dole of Outdoor Relief insufficient to provide even

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* Circular of August 4th, 1900, in Appendix to Thirtieth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1900–1901, pp. 18, 19. As to this Circular, *see* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2310, 2815, 3131, 3344, 4932, 5336, 5403, 5538–5347, 6953, 6954, 7272–7285, 8609, 9128, 11086, 11087, 12877–12884, 13813, 25781 (Par. 4), 25900, 27061 (Par. 29), 29326, 35461, 35679, 40477 (Par. 7), 40535, 41072, 47191 (Par. 34); and Appendices No. X. (A), Par. 33, XI. (A), Pars. 105–107, XV. (A), Par. 176, XVII. (A), Par. 7, and XIX. (A), Par. 13, to Vol. I; No. LXLI., Par. 6, of Vol. III.; and No. LXIX., Par. 4, and CXIII., Par. 3, to Vol. V.

† Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 117.

‡ Reort of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. I., p. 221, Vol. II., *Q.* 1715.

§ Report of House of Commons Select Committee on Cottage Homes Bill, 1899, *Qs.* 495, 961; ditto. on Aged Deserving Poor, 1899, p. 4.

‖ Report ot Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. I., pp. 20, 21.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 9138.

the barest food, clothing and shelter; not merely unprovided with any of the comforts, indulgences or amenities of life, but actually without fire or necessary covering. We realise that this irresponsible penuriousness of the Destitution Authority may, in the neighbourliness of rural life and in the customary generosity of the Irish and the Welsh to the aged, be supplemented by casual gifts which may frequently obviate the worst hardships. But the majority of the destitute aged in England and Wales are now to be found in large towns of mean streets and migratory populations, where such supplements are, as experience only too sadly proves, not sufficiently to be counted on. There is even worse to be told. It is a common practice of, we fear, the great majority of Boards of Guardians, to refuse Outdoor Relief altogether to the most destitute of all the cases that come before them—however genuinely deserving such cases may in all respects be—*merely on the ground that the applicants have no resources whatever.** "The rule of the Board," we were told, with regard to one Union, "is, and always has been, that they never give (Outdoor Relief) to those who have nothing."† This strange policy, which, however well intentioned, we cannot but condemn as cruel, of providing nothing better than the General Mixed Workhouse, even for the most deserving of the aged, on the ground of the extremity of their destitution, is, we fear, to be attributed to the characteristic penuriousness of a Destitution Authority. Rather than give a lonely old woman as much as seven shillings a week, they refuse to give anything. But the policy may be due, in part, to a wholly unfounded belief, derived from the early Orders of the Poor Law Commissioners,‡ that it is illegal, or in some way objectionable, to meet the rent out of the Poor Rate. "Unless," said one witness, "the rent is covered we decline to give Out-relief," § even to the most deserving cases. "We cannot pay a pauper's rent," expressly stated another witness.‖ The worst of the tragedy is that it is especially the shrinking, silent semi-starvation of the lonely old women, or disabled old men, of respectability and moral refinement, who have outlived relations and friends, which is least likely to be helped. When such persons, finding starvation actually upon them, consent to enter the workhouse—the General Mixed Workhouse that we have described—they come in, to use the expressive words of Miss Clifford, "with a feeling that it is just like death."¶

On the other hand, this policy of indiscriminate and unconditional weekly doles, however inadequate in amount, combined with optional sojourns in the promiscuous General Mixed Workhouse, with its ample food, sleep and warmth, and its unlimited idleness and low gossip, is exactly what suits the inclinations of the dirty, dissolute, and vicious old man or woman, who can, by bringing petty pilfering and assiduous begging to the aid of the Guardians' dole, manage to make out a not disagreeable life. The Guardians who pursue this policy in crowded urban districts find themselves faced by two problems which, for a Destitution Authority, are hopelessly insoluble. No inconsiderable number of aged persons in the great towns are now, as the Local Government Board's Inspectors have described to us, regularly spending their Outdoor Relief at the public-house, whilst habitually living in a condition "verminous and dirty beyond description," in rooms "stinking and loathsome;" a positive danger to the Public Health.** The Destitution Authority would like to relieve them only in the Workhouse; but they refuse to come in, and it cannot bring itself absolutely to refuse its dole of inadequate Outdoor Relief. It would like to have authority to compel them to come in, but it has

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 18048, 18281–18286, 31379; *see also* Report of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Qs.* 2049, 2126, 2127; Vol. III., *Qs.* 10845, 10846, 18281–18289, 31379.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 18284.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 2973, 3073–3076. Owing to the abuses prior to 1834 in the payment of paupers' cottage rents the payment of rent was forbidden in the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order. But this means only payment direct to the landlord (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 2973), and the payment of arrears of rent (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 3073–3076). There is nothing forbidden and nothing objectionable in granting to the pauper the means of providing himself with necessary lodging. (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 3073.)

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 16733; *see also* Report of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Qs.* 1568–1573, 1614–1616, 4066.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 67757; *see also Q.* 25373 (Pars. 129–131).

¶ Report of Royal Commission on Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Q.* 6316; *see also* Vol. III., *Qs.* 15209, 15341, 15360, 15762, 15778, 15822, 15823. It is, most of all, the promiscuity and lack of privacy of the General Mixed Workhouse that is objected to. "These old people," said one witness, "do not like to go, and will not go, into an institution where they are bound to mix with people that they would not otherwise mix with in life." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 73003.)

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 6636, etc.; *see also* Summary of Reports on the Condition of the Outdoor Poor by certain of the General Inspectors of the Local Government Board, *Ibid.* (not yet in volume form).

nowhere in which to receive them, except the hated General Mixed Workhouse—with its promiscuity, its brand of pauperism, and its chilling deterrence into which no Parliament will ever force anybody. An equally intractable problem to a Destitution Authority is that presented by those aged persons who belong to the army of "Ins-and-Outs." At the first snap of cold weather, there crowd into the urban Workhouses, autumn after autumn, a herd of the worthless old persons of either sex, who manage in the warm weather to pick up some sort of a living; but who prefer, for the winter, the substantial comforts and agreeable promiscuity of the General Mixed Workhouse. Many of these persons know exactly how to dodge the limited powers of detention which alone can be confided to a Destitution Authority; and we see them about once a week "taking their discharge" in the morning and invariably presenting themselves in the evening at the porter's lodge, often in a more or less intoxicated state, for re-admission in time for supper. For this problem the Destitution Authority has no other remedy than compulsorily detaining the "In and Out" person for as long as a week, the maximum term allowed by law.* This amounts, in practice, to no more than limiting the "day out" to one per week. And the very nature of a Destitution Authority and its General Mixed Workhouse stands in the way of Parliament granting any further powers of detention, which is the remedy asked for.†

We cannot but conclude, therefore, that the provision for the aged and infirm actually made by the great mass of Boards of Guardians in England, Wales, and Ireland is wholly unsatisfactory, and, in a quite peculiar sense, "too bad for the good and too good for the bad."

The Second Policy—that of applying the "Workhouse Test" to the Aged and Infirm, with the object of restricting Poor Law relief to the undeserving, and giving it only in the form of maintenance in a deterrent Workhouse—is unknown in Ireland and Wales, and has only been feebly attempted in a few parishes in Scotland. But in England the manifest success—judged only by the standard of reducing the number of persons accepting relief—of this policy of applying the "Workhouse Test" to the Aged and Infirm, or, to use Mr. Longley's term, the Disabled, led, between 1871 and 1890, to its partial adoption by an increasing number of Unions. The policy was, indeed, as easy to administer as it was certain in its results. If, as Mr. Longley suggested, the General Mixed Workhouse was to be kept deterrent and disciplinary; if it was to be deemed the resort of the undeserving; and if everyone who entered its portals was to be made to feel the "degradation of parish support," it was clear that those only who were reduced to the last extremity of want would "pass the test." Hence, although in the Unions in which this policy was adopted with any thoroughness nearly the whole expenditure on Outdoor Relief was saved, the number of persons in the General Mixed Workhouse did not increase. In defiance of the authoritative directions of the Local Government Board half a dozen Boards of Guardians continue to this day to enforce this policy in all its severity.

We recognise that the advocates of this policy, actuated by the greatest humanity, profess to arrange so that only "the undeserving" aged have actually to enter the Workhouse, all others being adequately provided for outside the Poor Law, either by friends or relations or by voluntary charity. How little these optimistic assurances are to be depended on is shown by the elaborate investigations that we set on foot into the results of the refusal of Outdoor Relief in some of the so-called "strict" Unions.‡ But whether or not it is possible in any Union to provide by voluntary charity for all the deserving aged persons who are legally entitled to apply for relief to the Board of Guardians, we cannot understand how it can be contended that any public body has the right, by a policy of withholding Poor Law relief from destitute persons, to force them to accept voluntary charity. If there is to be discrimination in the treatment of the deserving and the undeserving aged, the deserving person may certainly claim to receive his allotted treatment at the hands of the public authority, instead of being relegated to the caprices, the irresponsible judgments, and the arbitrary conditions of the individual private donor. Unfortunately, it is only too plain that, at any rate in the populous cities, not a few aged persons, who ought to be relieved, linger out their existence in semi starvation, quite inadequately provided for, and

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 155, 3084, 3085.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 5016, 5778, 5872, 7572, 8908, 9542, 11245, 14076.

‡ Report . . . on an Inquiry in Six Unions into Cases of Refusal of Outdoor Relief, by Miss G. Harlock; Evidence before the Commission (not yet in volume form).

eventually succumb prematurely to disease and privation, rather than apply for admission to the Workhouse. We must content ourselves with quoting here the testimony of one who has had a lifetime of experience and devoted personal service among the poor of Manchester, Mr. Alderman Macdougall, who has been for many years a leading member of the Board of Guardians there :—

> "The large majority," testifies this exceptionally competent witness, "of those who endure biting poverty without seeking relief from the Guardians are women. Men do not so frequently attain to old age under disadvantageous circumstances as women do. Old men go more readily into the Workhouse than old women. Women struggle longer and with greater determination with the difficulties of poverty, and the incapacities of old age. Families in poor circumstances find it is less possible to provide food and shelter for an old man who is a relative than for an old woman. He is more in the way, he expects not only a larger portion of the food, but to share in the better portions. He does not fit into the household of a working family as an old woman does, and is not so useful in domestic matters. His welcome is colder, and he desires to get out of the way, and goes to the workhouse. A decent old woman will cling to a home where she may be regarded as the drudge rather than as the grandmother or the aunt, and she will exist on the plainer portions of the meals, and will wedge in both day and night without encroaching much on the means of the family." But there are even harder cases. "There are, in every Union, aged women of good character, who belong to no families into whose domestic life they can fit and on whom they can depend—women who have been domestic servants, assistants in shops, mill hands, nurses, seamstresses, women who have denied themselves in younger days to support parents and bring up younger sisters and brothers, widows of good repute who have out-lived husbands and children, daughters of fathers who have failed in business, and women left with some provision which has been exhausted. If absolutely unable to earn small sums, they must, of course, apply for relief, but many of them do manage by sewing, knitting, washing, hawking of small articles, or minding children for mothers going to work, to eke out a very scanty living. They dread the associations of pauper life. Having been self-supporting up to old age, they have the most intense desire to keep from even Outdoor Relief, and an utter repugnance to entering the Workhouse. Yet they have the daily fear that the Workhouse must be the final refuge, and this fear is harder to bear than the pinch of hunger, the cold of insufficient clothing, or the poverty of their surroundings."*

We must refer here to a special form of this policy of applying the "Workhouse Test" to the aged, which appears to prevail—to the serious hardship of some of the aged poor—in about a score of Unions. In some Unions in which Outdoor Relief is not systematically refused to the well-conducted deserving aged, there is a practice of refusing it in particular cases, not because of any defect in the applicant, but as a means of inducing relations or friends to come forward and undertake the maintenance of the destitute aged person. There is the same liability to contribute, and the same powers of enforcing contribution for any person chargeable to the Poor Rate, whether the relief is indoor or outdoor. But as there is usually a much greater repugnance in relations or friends to allowing a person in whom they are interested to enter the General Mixed Workhouse than to allowing him to receive Outdoor Relief, the Guardians, *without regard to the hardship to the destitute person himself*, play upon this repugnance, and refuse Outdoor Relief, with the object of extracting contributions from relations or friends who might otherwise refuse to make them. Sometimes Outdoor Relief is refused and an "offer of the House" is made, or the Outdoor Relief is reduced to a purely nominal amount, when there are sons legally liable to contribute, *merely as an alternative to enforcing contribution*—the Destitution Authority choosing to let the old people suffer the consequences of their sons' neglect, rather than take the proper legal steps for compelling these to contribute.† More often, however, the refusal of Outdoor Relief takes place with a similar object, when there are no relations legally bound to contribute, but when there are other relations under no such liability, or even mere friends or benevolent persons, whom the Guardians hope, by threatening the destitute person with the horrors of the General Mixed Workhouse, to persuade to contribute. This policy is occasionally even carried so far—we should not have credited it had it not been avowed by the Chairman of the Board of Guardians concerned—as to refuse all relief whatsoever, either indoor or outdoor, in order to make such non-liable relations or friends undertake, on pain of seeing the person in whom they may be interested suffer, a duty which, whether rightly or wrongly, the law has cast, not on them but on the Destitution Authority.‡ We regret to say that, in some Unions, this refusal, for ulterior objects, of Outdoor Relief to persons otherwise deserving it, is not merely a matter of practice, but is actually embodied in

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* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 36513, Pars. 17–19.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 19732, 19757, 27164. One witness expressly deposed that: "Many applications have been refused where children are known to be of sufficient ability to wholly maintain their parents." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 67743, Par. 16.) *See also* Report of Royal Commission on Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. II., *Qs.* 4188, 4640, 4645, 4650, 4783, 4784, 4931, 7920, 7921; Vol. III., *Qs.* 15848–15857, 15908–15924, 15954, 15983, 15984, 16088–16096, 16191–16217, 17793.

‡ *Ibid.*, Vol. II., *Qs.* 2283–2295.

rules, which have not—so far as we can ascertain—been objected to by the District Auditors or by the Inspectors of the Local Government Board. It is not infrequent to find in the rules a prohibition of Outdoor Relief to persons who, being otherwise in all respects qualified, have relations, not legally liable to support them, but who are, as the Guardians consider, "morally bound" to do so, or "in a position" to do so, or "fully capable" of doing so.*

The Third Policy—that promulgated by the Local Government Board in 1895-6 and the one now in force—of securing to every aged, deserving, destitute person Outdoor Relief fully adequate for subsistence, or, if he or she is unwilling or unable to use such an allowance, good maintenance in comfortable quarters apart from the General Mixed Workhouse, has, despite the fact that it is the authoritative policy of the Local Government Board,† been adopted by only about a score of Boards of Guardians in England. The policy has usually been adopted subject to certain arbitrary qualifications, such as the absence of relations "morally bound" to contribute, the fact of continuous residence for twenty years within the boundaries of a particular Union, or the attainment of eighty years of age. We have already given our criticism of the first of these qualifications—the attempt on the part of a public authority, by an arbitrary exercise of its discretion, to force a third party to do something that the law does not require, by deliberately subjecting the person as to whom the discretion has to be exercised to a course of treatment which is not that deemed the most suitable to his condition. When, however, the alternative to Outdoor Relief is not, as at Brixworth or Bradfield, the General Mixed Workhouse, but maintenance on a higher scale in comfortable separate quarters, where the old people can come and go at their will, the policy of "offering the House" with the object of putting pressure on other people loses much of its cruelty and objectionableness. But then it loses also most of its efficacy. It becomes, in fact, a policy of "bluff," which may succeed in proportion to the ignorance or simplicity of the third party—those alone being imposed upon who remain unaware of the genuine superiority of the indoor provision made for the deserving old people. With regard to the stipulation that only such aged persons as have completed ten or twenty years' continuous residence within the particular Union, we have only to observe that it amounts, in effect, to an attempt, on the part of a particular Board of Guardians—as we think, an illegitimate attempt—to alter the Law of Settlement as enacted by Parliament. Even stranger for a public Authority charged with the relief of destitution is the rule of several Unions making the amount of the Outdoor Relief vary according to the age of the pauper; actually giving, irrespective of the cost of subsistence in any particular case, sometimes sixpence additional for each lustrum attained in excess of sixty-five years.‡

Omitting such strangely irrelevant local qualifications of the policy laid down since 1895-6 by the Local Government Board, we have to express our appreciation of the admirable provision for the aged deserving poor now made, according to this policy, by such Unions as Bradford, Sheffield, Ecclesall Bierlow, Woolwich, Hunslet, Dewsbury, Sculcoates, and Birmingham.§ The Boards of Guardians of these and a few other Unions have definitely adopted the policy of allowing, to their selected class of deserving destitute aged, Outdoor Relief of 5s. a week for each person.‖ The assumption, at any rate, is

* Such rules appear to exist in the following (among other) Unions: Paddington, Marlborough, Halifax, Chichester.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 3778-3781.

‡ Report of House of Commons Select Committee on the Cottage Homes Bill, 1899, p. 7. The rules of various Boards of Guardians prescribe a definite scale according to age, which may be as follows: Under 65, 2s. 6d. a week; between 65 and 70, 3s. a week; between 70 and 75, 3s. 6d. a week; between 75 and 80, 4s. a week; between 80 and 85, 4s. 6d. a week; and over 85, 5s. a week. (Rules of Mansfield Board of Guardians; for other age scales, *see* Rules of Croydon, Derby, Hertford, Honiton and Shardlow Boards of Guardians.) In another Union, the scale is 4 lbs. of bread per week and a pair of boots once a year, plus 1s. to 2s. a week, to persons between 60 and 70; plus 2s. 6d. to persons between 70 and 75; plus 3s. to persons between 75 and 80; and plus 3s. 6d. to those over 80. (Rules of the Medway Board of Guardians.) We do not understand why the grant of Outdoor Relief, according to these rules, irrespective of the amount actually needed in each case, has not been objected to by the District Auditors.

§ In the Annual Proceedings of the Poor Law Conferences for 1901-1902, will be found Reports from thirty-two Unions as to the action taken under the Circular of August 4th, 1900 (pp. 775, 803), giving particulars of the steps taken also at Abingdon, Bolton, Bristol, and Warwick.

‖ We notice that the Birmingham Board of Guardians, in July, 1908, resolved that "all aged poor over the age of seventy, who are at present in receipt of Outdoor Relief from the parish, and who have exercised any sort of thrift, or have been respectable residents in the Parish of Birmingham during a number of years should be granted 5s. each per week from January 1st, next." (*The Times*, July 16th, 1908.) A similar resolution has been adopted in some other Unions, including that of Camberwell.

that no such person will ever be forced to accept indoor relief. If the aged person is unable to get properly taken care of, or for any other reason prefers to come inside, he or she is maintained in comfortably furnished apartments, separate from the General Mixed Workhouse, sometimes (as at Dewsbury and Birmingham) in a distinct block,* sometimes (as at Woolwich) in a separate house quite away from the Workhouse premises,† sometimes (as at Bradford) in a quadrangle of separate tenements,‡ or (as at Sheffield) in a row of cottages, each with two inmates. § They have often each a room to themselves, or at least (as at Birmingham) a cubicle, furnished with carpet, chair, and dressing table with drawers underneath. Sometimes (as at Nottingham) "afternoon tea" is served at 4 p.m. ‖ Dinners are usually cooked in a common kitchen¶ and served in common in a separate dining-room, but the old people may often prepare their other meals for themselves, over their own fires.** They have tea, sugar, tobacco and snuff served out to them weekly, to be used when they like.†† They have comfortable, non-distinctive clothing provided for them,‡‡ or they may retain their own; and they may receive visits in their own apartments§§ and come and go during the daytime at their will.‖‖ They are sometimes allowed to retain pet animals,¶¶ and to cultivate their own little gardens.*** They may receive and retain for themselves any gifts from friends, other than alcoholic drink.††† "They get up when they like and go to bed as they please."‡‡‡ They need do no work unless they choose, but if they desire to do so, they are to be provided with "congenial" employment, "suited to their age and capacity."§§§ With the one exception that no pocket-money is provided for them, and subject to this one drawback that, disguise it as we may, the

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* Evidence before Commission, *Q.* 25159.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 3778, *see also Qs.* 14196–14199.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 14144.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 41006.

‖ Year Book of Nottingham Board of Guardians, 1906–1907.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 41010.

** Year Book of Sheffield Board of Guardians for 1906–1907.

†† "Women to have 1½ ozs. of tea and 6 ozs. of sugar, and men ½ oz. of tobacco weekly, when over sixty years of age." (Rules of Hunslet Board of Guardians.)

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 41017. Year Book of Sheffield Board of Guardians.

§§ Regulations of Hunslet Board of Guardians.

‖‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 26944, 41018.

¶¶ Year Book of Sheffield Board of Guardians.

*** Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 27752.

††† Report of Paddington Board of Guardians for 1901–1902.

‡‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 25159.

§§§ Regulations of Hunslet Board of Guardians. We may quote two descriptions by our own committees. At Bradford, "the Homes for the Aged and Deserving Poor were erected to comply with the urgent recommendations of Mr. Chaplin's Circular. They may be described as adequately supported almshouses, under disciplinary conditions such as obtain and are enforced among the passengers of a mail-steamer. Each room accommodates either husband and wife, or two aged persons, male or female, who, before leaving the workhouse decided that they could and would like to live together. The rooms are comfortably furnished, well-lighted and warmed, and the occupants have on the walls, etc., the little possessions, pictures, etc., which originally found a place in their old homes. They have their meals in their own rooms; the materials for breakfast and tea are served out weekly; and the inmates have these meals when they think fit; within reason, they get up when they like and go to bed when they like; dinner is cooked in a common kitchen by the wife of the Superintendent, and properly served in each room. There is a kind of common room, where religious services, concerts, etc., are provided. The swing gate of the Institution is always open. The inmates go out when they please, but we understood that they seldom go beyond the garden; they prefer that their friends should come and see them, and we are told, not a few look in for a 'cup of tea.' The old folk dust and tidy their own rooms, but the rougher work is done by some sane epileptic young men, who have been transferred from the House, in order that they may be made as comfortable as possible, having regard to the malady which has blasted their lives." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 21, p. 48.) In one Union, "the accommodation for the *first or highest class* provides for twenty-eight men and twenty-four women. Both the men and women have two dormitories and two sitting-rooms, the latter having linoleum or a canvas covering on the floor, and being furnished with arm chairs, rocking chairs, tables and couches. Meals are served in the sitting-room that appears to be in daily use (the other being reserved for Sundays or for receiving friends). As regards food, the inmates get a loaf and a pot of jam for the 'cupboard' whenever they require them. They are also allowed a cheap and wholesome currant cake to their tea. The inmates may, with the consent of the master, go out any day after 'the performance of their small duties.' Friends likewise are admitted on any evening." (*Ibid.* No. 20, p. 45.)

inmates of these comfortable quarters for the aged are, owing to their being under the Destitution Authority, legally stigmatised as paupers,* the small and highly selected class of deserving aged have, in these few Unions, where the new policy of the Local Government Board has been fully adopted, as good conditions as could possibly be desired.

It is to the credit of the Destitution Authorities of Scotland that, with the cognizance of the Local Government Board for Scotland, they have for the most part long adopted an equally generous policy with regard to the deserving aged. In one respect they have even gone further than the most up-to-date of the English Boards of Guardians. They have combined the provision of agreeable quarters with Outdoor Relief. In the comfortable cottages, or in the old villa residences that are termed, in some Scotch Parishes, "Parochial Homes," we ourselves found the deserving aged inmates, not only enjoying the furnished lodgings, free firing and attendance that is provided, but receiving in addition, to dispense as they think fit, their "aliment" of three or four shillings a week. They may, if they choose, hand their money, or any part of it, to the salaried housekeeper, to provide their meals with; or they may, if they prefer, make any or all of their purchases for themselves, and cook their own meals over their own fires in their own way. This appears to us the best thing that has yet been done in the way of public provision for the aged. We can only regret that this policy of discrimination and generous treatment of the deserving aged has been extended, in England, owing to the inability of the Local Government Board to overcome in most places the almost inevitable reluctance of a Destitution Authority to provide anything beyond the barest subsistence, to only an insignificant minority of the deserving aged.

To the infirm and permanently incapacitated who are not "aged"—whatever be the age-limit locally adopted—the new policy has not yet been applied at all, with the one partial exception of the sane epileptics, for whom, in the Manchester, Chorlton, Bradford, and one or two other Unions, special provision is made.† There is obviously just as much need for classification according to present character among the infirm and incapacitated who are young, as among those who are old. There are just as many deserving persons among them. "It is very hard," as one witness pointed out to us, "upon the younger persons, who are thoroughly infirm, to be kept as they are with rather a degraded class. The younger infirm people do not get the liberties that the old people do, and they have really nothing to brighten their lives."‡ For the physically defective, the crippled, the half-paralysed, the blind and the semi-blind, the gravely rheumatic, and other men and women, not acutely sick, but chronically unable to earn in the competitive labour market an independent subsistence—of whom there are, we fear, many thousands destitute—we find nothing better prevailing than a fluctuating alternation between the First Policy and the Second; with the result that these thousands of physically incapacitated persons either get unconditional doles of inadequate Outdoor Relief, or are herded with the rest in the General Mixed Workhouse. Here no special provision is made for them. The sane epileptics, in particular, "spend their time . . . fighting and quarrelling, and passing a miserable existence till they die."§ "No arrangements," said another witness, "are made for their occupation; the disease grows upon them; they deteriorate morally and mentally till a worse fate befalls them, and they end their days in the lunatic wards." ‖ Moreover, among these incapacitated men and women—whether crippled or merely broken down by infirmity, epileptic, half-blind or partly paralysed—even more than among the aged, there has accordingly been developed a terrible variety of parasitic outdoor paupers, or of Workhouse "Ins and Outs," who alternate their periods of begging and pilfering and living in filth and degradation, with recuperative spells in

* It is, however, to be noted that, even when the Destitution Authority has done its best to separate the selected class of deserving aged from the rest of the Poor Law, it seldom succeeds in quite consistently doing so. Sometimes, as at Dewsbury, it cannot bring itself to put the quarters for the aged outside the porter's lodge, so that the deserving aged have to pass in and out with all the other paupers. Even at Bradford, where the deserving aged have a quadrangle of charming tenements to themselves, the Board of Guardians, having to find accommodation, first, for the sane epileptics of diverse ages and varied characters, and then for the able-bodied men on the "Outdoor Labour Test," dumped these all down on the land adjoining the old people's cottages; and then, as a climax, placed the whole—deserving aged, sane epileptics and able-bodied men in the Labour Yard—under one and the same Superintendent.

† There is an admirable special "colony" for the sane epileptics, established at an expenditure of over £75,000 by a Joint Committee of the Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians at Langho, near Blackburn. (Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., pp. 307, 308.)

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 15419.

§ Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908. Vol. I., *Q.* 7136; Vol. VIII., p. 308.

‖ *Ibid.*, Vol. II., *Q.* 16491, Vol. VIII., p. 308.

the idleness, gossip, food and warmth of the Workhouse.* For the many thousands of young infirm, even more than for the aged, the provision made by the Destitution Authorities is, indeed, everywhere wholly unsatisfactory—cruel to the deserving, demoralisingly attractive to the undeserving, and degrading to all.

(c) The Establishment of a National Pension Scheme.

The definite adoption by the Local Government Board since 1895–1896 of what we have called the Third Policy—of discrimination among different classes of the Aged, with generous treatment of the deserving—has now developed into the establishment, during the year 1908, of a National Pension Scheme. Under the Old-age Pensions Act of 1908,† which is not yet actually in full operation, every person of British nationality and twenty years' residence within the United Kingdom, becomes entitled as of right, on attaining the age of seventy, to a pension payable from the Exchequer, if he does not come into any of certain definitely excepted categories. These excepted categories comprise :—

(*a*) Those who have incomes exceeding £31 10s. per annum.

(*b*) Those who have "habitually failed to work . . . according to ability, opportunity and need, for the maintenance" of themselves and "those legally dependent" on them.‡

(*c*) Those actually under detention as lunatics.

(*d*) Those undergoing a sentence of imprisonment, or under a judicial order of disqualification for not exceeding ten years, subsequent to imprisonment or detention under the Inebriates Act ; and

(*e*) Temporarily, until December 31st, 1910, those who are, or who have been at any time since January 1st, 1908, in receipt of Poor Law Relief other than medical relief.§

The amount of the pension, beginning from January 1st, 1909, or from any subsequent award, will, if the aged person has not more than £21 per annum of income, be 5s. a week ; and if the aged person has between £21 and £31 10s. of income, be from 1s. to 4s. per week according to a fixed scale. Finally, it remains to be said that the whole class of aged persons thus becoming National Pensioners are to be wholly taken out of the Poor Law, and removed from any connection with the Destitution Authorities, the whole of the business relating to the award and payment of the pensions being assigned, subject to appeal to the Local Government Board, to special Pension Committees of the County and County Borough Councils, and the Councils of Boroughs and urban districts exceeding 20,000 in population,‖ with the aid of the Post Office and of a staff of special Pension Officers appointed by and responsible to the Treasury.

There will accordingly be, from now onwards, a new class of the Aged, that of National Pensioners, whose applications for public assistance, though they may be destitute, will not be dealt with by the Destitution Authorities. It is estimated that this new class will, before the expiration of the first year, amount to between 500,000 and 600,000. It is, however, quite impossible, pending further experience of the working of the Act, to estimate with any precision what proportion of the persons who now become paupers and are classed as Aged and Infirm will, in future years, become National Pensioners and thus escape the Destitution Authorities. The National Pension Scheme is, indeed, admittedly incomplete, as it has yet to be decided by Parliament what, after the end of 1910, is to be the position of those temporarily disqualified for a pension on the ground merely of having received Poor Law relief of other than the excepted kinds between the arbitrary dates of January 1st, 1908, and December 31st, 1910.

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* Among the worst cases of Outdoor Relief to persons of squalid and dissolute lives, the Inspectors found "epileptics, imbeciles and cripples of the lowest class." (See *ante*, p. 28.)

† 8 Edw. VII., c. 40.

‡ It is "provided that a person shall not be disqualified under this paragraph"—nor shall his wife be disqualified—"if he has continuously for ten years up to the age of sixty, by means of payments to friendly, provident, or other societies, or Trade Unions, or other approved steps, made such provision against old age, sickness, infirmity, or want or loss of employment as may be recognised as proper provision for the purpose" by the regulations under the Act.

§ With Medical Relief for this purpose is included not only any relief expressly declared not to be a disqualification for the Parliamentary franchise, but also "any medical or surgical assistance (including food and comforts) supplied by or on the recommendation of a Medical Officer," and also "the maintenance of any dependent . . . in any lunatic asylum, infirmary or hospital, or the payment of the expenses of burial of a dependent."

‖ In Ireland the population limit is 10,000; and in Scotland it does not apply, all Royal, Parliamentary, or Police Burghs having their own Pension Committees. The Scilly Isles are treated as a county.

(D) The Need for Diversified Provision for the Aged and Infirm.

After the most careful consideration we have to report that the diverse medley of persons who are officially included within the class of the Aged and Infirm do not appear to us, in any scientific analysis, to constitute a single category. Apart from those old persons who are acutely sick or mentally defective—who fall, notwithstanding their age, into the categories of the Sick and the Mentally Defective respectively, to be dealt with by the Authorities charged with those services—we must distinguish among the Aged and Infirm no fewer than five separate classes for which distinct provision has, in our judgment, necessarily to be made.

(i) *The National Pensioners.*

We may conveniently begin with the National Pensioners, the class of aged persons to whom the community as a whole decides to grant, as of right, an unconditional national superannuation allowance. By the passage into law of the Old Age Pensions Act of 1908, we are relieved from the necessity of discussing, in principle, the propriety of such a policy, in which we fully concur. Some of our witnesses—nearly all of them unconnected either with the wage-earning class or with the actual working of the Friendly Societies—have taken the view, based, as we understand, on *à priori* theory, that such non-contributory pensions would be likely to discourage thrift and saving.* We have, however, been more impressed by the fact that, of the representatives of Friendly Societies and Trade Unions who gave evidence before us, the official leaders and a majority of the witnesses were in favour of some such system of national superannuation allowances, without specific personal contributions, to be granted, on the attainment of a prescribed age, to all who need them. These witnesses, from their experience of Friendly Societies and of working class life, anticipated that such a national pension scheme—far from being injurious to the existing Friendly Societies and Trade Unions—would, by removing the present difficulty felt by the poorer labourers in ever being able to save enough to become independent of Poor Law relief, and with it their consequent scepticism as to saving for old age being of any avail, actually encourage thrift and saving, and increase the membership of all provident associations.†

Accepting, therefore, the principle that the needy aged should be provided for by national superannuation allowances, we have to report that the Old Age Pensions Act of 1908 fails, in various respects, to dispose of even this part of the problem of the Destitution Authorities. This Act, in the first place, obviously requires to be amended before the end of 1910 so as to remove the disqualification of those persons who, being otherwise eligible for a pension, happen to have received Poor Law relief, other than Medical Relief, since the arbitrarily chosen date of 1st January, 1908. As it has been decided—a decision in which we fully agree—that pauperism prior to 1st January, 1908, however prolonged and whatever the cause, should not disqualify, there can be no justice in withholding pensions from deserving aged persons, merely because—without having any notice of the intention of the Government—they accepted, after that date, the provision which the law had made for them. The Local Government Board itself, as we have seen, has, since 1896, deliberately instructed the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales to make generally known the advantages to be offered under the Poor Law to the deserving aged, "*so that those really in need may not be discouraged from applying.*" ‡ Under this official encouragement the number of deserving aged paupers (a majority of them being women) has, year by year, steadily increased. For the Government now to turn round, and penalise by ineligibility for a pension the very men and women whom it has been trying to encourage to apply for Poor Law relief—and, so far as concerns those who became paupers between January and July, 1908, actually without notice that this would make them ineligible for a pension—is plainly unjust. We fully agree with the Departmental Committee of 1900 in thinking it "by no means easy to defend the exclusion of those aged paupers who could give reasonable

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 27061 (Par. 32), 27287, 29772–29779, 30915, 35283, 35308, 41383, 44811, 47464, 50009 (Par. 19), 50973 (Par. 8), 50998, 52951 (Par. 31) and various of the Appendices to Vol. V., Nos. XXXI. (Par. 5), XXXIV. (Par. 5), LXXXVI. (Par. 7), CVII. (Par. 8).

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 43125, 50728 (Par. 11), 51760 (Par. 31), 51782, 51811, 67890, 67891, 68683 (Par. 18), 68745, 68746, 69047 (Par. 47), 72626–72633, 77352–77359, 77295, 77296, 77457, 77468 (Par. 16), 77501, 77502, 77663; Appendices No. XLII. (Par. 14), LXXIII. (Par. 13), XC. (Par. 9), to Vol. V.

‡ Circular of July, 1896, in Twenty-sixth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1896–1897, pp. 7–9.

proof that, had they not had the misfortune to pass the Rubicon in pre-pensionable days, they would have been able to satisfy the requirements of the Pension Authority." *

To retain any such disqualification as the acceptance of Poor Law relief, even after notice given that such relief will disqualify for a pension, appears to us both undesirable and in practice impossible. In view of the fact that the most thrifty and deserving persons may be rendered destitute by some accidental cause, to deprive them of their right to eventual superannuation merely because they had, in the time of their need, accepted, for their dependents or themselves, the provision which the law had made for them, would be felt to be unfair. It must be remembered that the receipt of parochial relief is final and conclusive in its disqualifying effect. *Even if the whole cost is subsequently repaid to the Guardians, the disqualification remains.* Even if the sons or other relatives pay their contributions to the Guardians before the aged person receives his dole of Outdoor Relief or his maintenance in the Workhouse, so that there is not even a monetary expense to the Guardians, the case is not altered. These facts add weight to the practical objection that evasions could not be prevented. It would, in many cases (and in a rapidly increasing number of cases), be impracticable, in future years, to find out whether or not an applicant for a national pension had received Poor Law relief at any time since 1907. Poor Law relief is being given this year separately by each of 646 Unions in England and Wales, by each of 874 parishes in Scotland, and by each of 159 Unions in Ireland. Many of these 1,679 separate Poor Law Authorities are keeping very imperfect records even of their present proceedings; and they have still more imperfect records for 1908. The almost universal practice is to treat each application as a new case, and to record particulars in separate entries, case by case. There is, of course, no common aggregate list of paupers. There is not even in any place a list of the persons who have received Poor Law relief during the past in the one Union. There is seldom even a complete list of the paupers of any one year in any one Union; and where such a list is compiled, it is nearly always made up separately for each of the score of constituent parishes of the Union; and then often altogether omits some minor classes of paupers. In very few cases would even these incomplete and separate lists be in alphabetical order. It might be difficult in any populous Union to prove, years hence, that a particular applicant, admittedly resident in that same Union, and not some other person of the same name, had received Poor Law relief ten or fifteen years before. It would be impossible, amid all the confusion of registers of different years and different classes of relief, for any officer of that Union, to be sure (and therefore to certify) that the applicant had never received any one of the various kinds of Poor Law relief, at any time since 1907—even if the inquiry were confined to the one Union. What clerk to a Board of Guardians could feel certain that the applicant or some member of his family for whom he was liable, had not, years before, spent a night in the Workhouse, or had a loaf of bread from the relieving officer on "sudden or urgent necessity"? The pauper does not always give his real name—he sometimes gives somebody else's name; and there are Unions in which the registration of such names as are given is by no means perfect.

But the relief may not have been given in the Union in which the applicant resides. A large proportion of the population, especially that of great towns, and that of new or rapidly growing urban centres, such as Barrow-in-Furness and Middlesbrough, Cardiff and Barry, is, or has been, migratory, It must be remembered that the Poor Law relief given by each Union is not confined to the settled inhabitants of that Union; though even a settlement is now acquired by three years' residence, and, in the case of a woman, by mere marriage. A person may have had in his life half-a-dozen settlements in succession. Relief is given in the Casual Ward or in the Workhouse proper, or even (by way of "sudden or urgent necessity") at his home, to any destitute person, whatever his real or pretended residence, and however brief his stay in the Union. A large proportion of the applicants for old-age pensions will, at various times, have resided in other Unions; and they can

* Report of Departmental Committee on the Financial Aspects of the Proposals . . . about the Aged Deserving Poor, 1900 (Cd. 67), p. 9. As the law at present stands the only persons now actually paupers who might obtain National Pensions are those over seventy who are not otherwise disqualified, and who, not having since January 1st, 1908, received any other kind of Poor Law relief, are now in receipt of Medical Relief only, including "food or comforts"—and therefore (according to the decision in Kirkhouse *v.* Blakeway, 71 L.J.KB. 130) presumably maintenance for the purpose of treatment or cure in a Poor Law institution—"supplied by or on the recommendation of a Medical Officer." But as most of these would be inmates of Poor Law infirmaries, they would not, until they had sufficiently recovered to leave those institutions, cease to be legally paupers, or under the care of the Destitution Authorities, who could presumably impound their pensions in repayment of the expense of their maintenance.

hardly be compelled to recount all their wanderings and all their excursions on "hopping," or "haymaking," or merely on holidays. Those who had received Poor Law relief, and who subsequently wished to apply for a pension, would naturally remove, and apply in some other Union. If they found it necessary to apply for their pensions in their real names (so as to prove age by birth registers) they would soon learn to make their application for Poor Law relief under assumed names, so as to have their real names untainted when they attained the pensionable age. How can it be certified, years hence, that the applicant (or any member of his family for whom he is liable) has not, under any name whatsoever, received Poor Law relief, in any one of its numerous forms from any one of the 1,679 Poor Law Authorities of the United Kingdom, during any one of the preceding years since 1907? Who could search all the records, for instance, of the Casual Wards all over England, Ireland, and Wales; and what value would he give to the particular names under which their nightly inmates, knowing the penalties to which habitual tramping exposed them, chose to register themselves? Who could certify that an Irish applicant for a pension had not received temporary relief on some haymaking or harvesting tour in England or Scotland? How would it be possible to be assured that the applicant in Bermondsey or Bethnal Green had not been, since 1907, temporarily accommodated in the Workhouse of some Kentish Union on one or other of his annual "hoppings"?

It is true that various small and local pension endowments do prescribe as a condition of eligibility that the applicants shall not have been in receipt of parochial relief during a certain period. But it is to be noted:—

(*a*) That the term is a short one, usually five years;

(*b*) That the applicant is always required also to have been a resident during at least that period in the particular parish, so that it is comparatively easy to ensure that he has not had parochial relief at his residence;

(*c*) That the pensions are given as a matter of favour to such applicants as the trustees may choose, so that any doubtful case can be rejected without cause assigned; and

(*d*) That the condition has for its main object to ensure that pension and Poor Law relief shall not be received by the same person simultaneously, so that a mere general compliance completely attains its purpose, irrespective of possible chance receipt of temporary relief years ago in some other Union.

All these considerations would be absent in the case of a national superannuation allowance.

It is, perhaps, a minor point that, so far as women are concerned, the incident of marriage may present great difficulties to any making of pauperism a disqualification for an old-age Pension. There is first the change of name. Wives receive relief in their married names, and their maiden names are not recorded. But there is nothing to prevent them eventually resuming their maiden names and at seventy applying for a pension, duly armed with a birth certificate, and sinking all mention of the marriage (or one or other of their marriages), during which they had received parochial relief. They might well feel that it was their husbands who were really the paupers, not themselves. Indeed, it must be conceded that a wife accompanying her husband has no option in the matter. *She cannot prevent her husband making her a pauper if he chooses to do so.* It is very doubtful, in strict law, whether a wife or a child can ever be said to have accepted parochial relief. It does not seem possible to deprive her eventually of her national superannuation allowance on this ground. In fact, we gather that the better opinion is that no woman is legally disqualified in respect of relief received as a wife.

Far more important, both numerically and otherwise, are the difficulties presented by widowhood, *to which not less than* 30 *per cent. of all the pauperism is due.* The young widow of the labourer, suddenly bereft of the bread-winner, with a family of young children on her hands, often incapacitated for earning a livelihood by having an infant in arms, is the most pathetic and the most difficult of the Poor Law problems. At all times and in all places her moral claim to at least temporary Poor Law relief has been admitted. In the most strictly administered Unions, at the most severely restrictive periods of Poor Law history, under the advice of the most rigorous Poor Law critics, the claim of the widow has not been rejected. But whether or not the widow will be eligible for a pension at seventy, or whatever may be the pensionable age, will, under the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908, depend on whether she had been lucky enough to have her husband die, and to pass through her inevitable time of difficulty, *before* 1908! In this fortunate conjecture she may have taken her six months' Outdoor Relief, which the Local Government Board regulations freely allow, and may hope to get into a position of earning her livelihood—probably by marrying again—and thus be eligible for a pension. If, however, cruel fate permitted her

husband to live on until after January 1st, 1908, and then carried him off, her "widow's six months" of Outdoor Relief, which is often necessary to prevent the children from starving, and which the harshest economist has not denied her, will carry with it, however hard and however successfully she might subsequently work to maintain herself in independence, the eventual loss of her old-age pension—unless, indeed, she is sharp enough to suppress all mention of her unlucky episode of marriage and its consequent widowhood and pauperism, and to present herself at seventy, smiling, in her second husband's name (which would, indeed, be the natural case); or even *in her maiden name*, under which she would never have received parochial relief anywhere.

In view of the fact that the sudden or premature removal of the family bread-winner, as things are now ordered, almost necessarily plunges into pauperism, at least for a time, a large proportion of the families of the wage-earning class, and that, under existing marital arrangements, it is usually quite impossible for the wife either to *compel* her husband to provide for her possible widowhood, or to "make a purse" for herself, even if it were desirable for her to do so, it is submitted that any disqualification of widows by reason of their having, subsequent to January 1st, 1908, at some time of their widowhood, accepted parochial relief, would be inequitable. Indeed, if they find themselves without the means of properly bringing up their children, they are legally bound to apply for parochial relief on their children's behalf; and they can be criminally prosecuted for not doing so. It is, moreover, clearly in the interests of the community that they should apply for parochial relief in such cases, in order that the children may not suffer. It is plainly against public policy to penalise such an act by eventually disqualifying the mother for her national superannuation allowance. It would be felt to be a monstrous injustice to make relief to a widow a ground of disqualification, when relief to a wife is not.

Even if the difficulty of discovering who had received Poor Law relief could be overcome (as it might be by postponing the operation of the condition for fifty years, and in the meantime introducing a scientific system of registration by thumb marks, and a well-arranged national register), there would still remain the difficulties presented by the differences in the law and practice between one place and another. We regret to learn that the Commissioners of Inland Revenue have given instructions to the Pension Officers all over the Kingdom—contrary to the decision of the Court of Appeal in Kirkhouse *v.* Blakeway—that maintenance in the workhouse or workhouse infirmary is never to be regarded as Medical Relief and is always to be held to disqualify for a pension, even if the applicant has been admitted on the recommendation of the Medical Officer, for the sole purpose of being medically treated. If this interpretation of the law, under which many hundreds of helpless poor persons are actually being denied their pensions, is ultimately upheld, we shall be face to face with a new crop of anomalies. Whether the person stricken with sickness, and institutionally treated at the public expense, thereby becomes disqualified for a pension will depend solely on *whether he lives in one part of the United Kingdom or another, or even in one town or another.* Thus outside the Metropolis, a person who becomes anywhere in the United Kingdom an inmate of any Poor Law Institution—it may be as a patient entering a Poor Law Infirmary with an infectious disease—thereby necessarily becomes a pauper, and, as the Commissioners of Inland Revenue are now declaring, disqualified for an Old Age Pension. But within the Metropolis (and those adjacent Unions who happen to have made agreements with the Metropolitan Asylums Board), admission to certain institutions of that particular Poor Law Authority, though these were established exclusively for paupers and are still maintained out of the Poor Rate, is, by law, not to be deemed parochial relief, and, therefore, does not disqualify for a pension. It is a further anomaly that this privilege does not attach to all the institutions of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, but only to some of them; and not even to all those that deal with infectious diseases.* Moreover, in Scotland, where, as we have mentioned, the Poor Law does not allow any kind of relief of the able-bodied, at any rate, for adult men, all admissions to the Poorhouse take place on the recommendation of the Parish Doctor, who certifies that the applicant is suffering from some ailment—it may be sciatica, it may be rheumatism, it may even be no more than sore feet—for which he needs medical or

* There will be other geographical inconsistencies under the Act. Where the Board of Guardians pays for a nurse to attend a sick person in his own home, that person thereby becomes a pauper in receipt, *not of Medical Relief, but of ordinary Outdoor Relief.* Where the Board of Guardians has a nurse permanently in its employment, and has merely directed her to attend, this will have been classed as Medical Relief only. Where the Board of Guardians contributes (as is now common) a fixed sum to a local nursing association, in consideration of the cases notified by the Relieving Officer being duly nursed, the patients do not thereby become paupers at all.

surgical treatment, including food and comforts. Even the provision for Vagrants has to be called, not a Casual Ward, but a "Casual Sick House." Thus, all the inmates of the Poorhouses of Scotland who have come in on medical certificate for treatment—though we have definitely ascertained that many of them are just as "able-bodied" as the inmates of the Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland *—may claim to be in receipt of Medical Relief only; and not to be disqualified, under the terms of the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908, for a national superannuation allowance. To continue a disqualification which may affect practically no Scottish pauper—or, at any rate, no male adult—not even the most disreputable "Ins-and-Outs" or week-enders or the most hardened old Vagrants—whilst it operates against the most deserving of those who may be driven to take temporary refuge as able-bodied in an English or Irish Workhouse, will be politically impossible.

But the diversity in practice is far more perplexing than these geographical differences in the law. Thus, throughout the Kingdom there is, as we have described in Chapter V., a second rate-supported medical organisation, conducted by the Local Authorities under the Public Health Acts, the use of which entails no stigma of pauperism. The relative spheres of the Poor Law, assistance from which is held to disqualify for a pension, and the Public Health Department, assistance from which does not disqualify, vary indefinitely from place to place. If a patient, unable to get cared for at home, is taken to one of the seven hundred Municipal Hospitals—established primarily for certain infectious diseases, but now often extending their work to others—he does not, even if his treatment is gratuitous, lose his future pension. If he happens to be taken to a Poor Law Institution, for the very same disease, he is to be deprived of his pension, even if he contributes or repays the whole cost. If a man is found in the streets, senseless or helpless, he may (if the case looks like one of acute accident) be taken by the police to one of the voluntary hospitals, in the sixty or seventy towns which alone enjoy such institutions, treatment at which does not make him a pauper. But the patient may, equally probably, be taken, even in those same towns, to the nearest Poor Law Infirmary, treatment at which necessarily and irrevocably disqualifies him for a pension, even if he subsequently sends ten guineas to repay the cost of his treatment. *In many parts of the United Kingdom there is no alternative.* In the absence of any municipal or voluntary hospital, all patients meeting with accidents in the open, or found helpless or senseless on the road, or requiring treatment which cannot be given them at home, are taken to the Workhouse, where they become, for the time, paupers; and, according to the present interpretation of the law, will be eventually disqualified for an Old Age Pension.

The difference in practice between one locality and another applies even to the case of institutions established for the treatment of the same disease. At Brighton, for instance, a workman having incipient phthisis is received into the Municipal Phthisis Sanatorium, taught how to live, and discharged, all without the stigma of pauperism. *At Bradford exactly the same kind of institution, treating the same disease in the same way, and receiving largely the same class of patients, is maintained by the Board of Guardians out of the Poor Rate.* At Bradford, as at Brighton, the workman with incipient phthisis is sought out and *urged*, in the public interest, to come in and be treated at the public expense. At Bradford he becomes technically a pauper by so doing and loses thereby his right to a pension; at Brighton he does not.

No less striking is the variety of practice with regard to the co-operation of the Board of Guardians with the Town or District Council in regard to the Municipal Isolation Hospital. It is common, as we have mentioned, for the Board of Guardians to make a payment to the Town or District Council, so as to be able to send patients to these hospitals in order to avoid having to treat them in the Workhouse. *The status of the patient in such cases depends merely on the form in which the payment is made.* In those towns in which no payment is made, or where a fixed annual contribution is paid, the patient is not a pauper while in the Municipal Hospital, even if he is sent from the Workhouse, and he does not lose his right to a pension. In those towns in which the payment is made at so much per head per week, the patient admitted to the Municipal Hospital at the request of the Board of Guardians becomes or remains a pauper (being, by the Local Government Board's instructions, registered as in receipt of Outdoor Relief) even if he has not previously been in receipt of relief. He is not a pauper in any of these Municipal Hospitals if he is admitted on the order of the Medical Officer of Health; he is a pauper (but only in some towns) if he is admitted on the order of the District Medical Officer. Whether or not he is disqualified for an Old-Age Pension, depends, therefore, in practice, on which doctor gets hold of the case first.

* Report . . . on the Physical Condition of the Able-bodied Male Inmates in certain Scotch Poorhouses, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, p. 14.

In the same town the form of the payment by the Board of Guardians has sometimes been varied within recent times. Thus, the scarlet-fever patient will, or will not, have been registered as in receipt of parochial relief according to the year in which the disease occurred. Or a town may change the character of its provision for such cases. In Bristol, the Board of Guardians for some years provided its own hospital for infectious cases. Subsequently this was abandoned, and the Town Council Hospitals were used at a fixed annual payment. In such towns, accordingly whether or not the patients so treated were registered as paupers, will be found, to depend on the date of their disease. Much the same may happen in every town which provides for the first time—as a score or two do each year—a Municipal Hospital. A similar change is taking place, in one town after another, with regard to the provision for sufferers from phthisis.

Sometimes the difference of practice depends on the kind of disease. In some towns the Municipal Hospitals will only take in cases of small-pox, enteric, and scarlet fever. Patients with other diseases must go to the Workhouse or Poor Law Infirmary, and become paupers. In other towns the Municipal Hospitals will take in diphtheria, phthisis, and even measles and whooping cough, and thus enlarge the area of non-pauper treatment. In Scotland, we understand that, by the order of the Local Government Board, all phthisis patients are henceforth to be dealt with by the Local Health Authorities. In England and Wales they are mostly treated by the Destitution Authorities. At Barry and Widnes there are Municipal Hospitals for accidents and surgical cases. If a drunken labourer breaks his leg or falls over a scythe, he will, in most parts of England, usually be taken to the Workhouse, and will become a pauper and lose his right to a pension; if he does so in Barry or Widnes, he will be equally treated at the expense of the rates, but will not become a pauper nor be disqualified for a pension.

We have accordingly to report that it is not only inequitable, but also quite impracticable to withhold the national superannuation allowance from those who, whilst satisfying all the other conditions, have, at some time or another, received the kind of public assistance that the law has provided for their case.

Even this widening of the scope of the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908 will leave undealt with a large number of aged persons who now are provided for by the Destitution Authorities. So long as the pensionable age remains at seventy, the widest scheme of national superannuation allowances will fail to meet the general need. It is between sixty and seventy years of age * that the majority of those who have hitherto maintained themselves in independence, succumb to the dread necessity of submitting to the pauper's fate. We recognise that any national scheme of superannuation must necessarily adopt a relatively high age limit. But the effect of all our evidence appears to us to support the now generally admitted contention that any age limit above that of sixty-five—we might even say over sixty—will do little more than touch the fringe of the problem of Old-Age pauperism.

(ii.) *Provision for Persons ineligible for National Pensions.*

The suggestion has been made to us that the pensions for persons excluded from the national scheme, and especially the provision for breakdown before the age at which the national superannuation allowances begin, should be made dependent on some system of contributory insurance in early life. We have every hope that optional and voluntary methods of insurance, so as to provide for the period prior to the commencement of the national superannuation allowance, or in supplement of it when granted, will, under the stimulating effect of the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908, be greatly developed.† But after carefully considering all the proposals that have been published we fail to see that any such system of insurance, voluntary or compulsory, can take the place of the provision now made under the Poor Law for the majority of aged and infirm persons excluded, for one reason or another, from the National Pension Scheme.

The insuperable difficulties inherent in any contributory scheme of Old-Age Pensions have been well expressed in the Reports of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor in 1895, and of the Committee on Old-Age Pensions in 1898, in a manner and with an authority that we take to be conclusive. Those difficulties, which may be said to have prevented the adoption of any such scheme as the basis for the national superannuation

* *See* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 29827, 43118–43124. Whilst the proportion of paupers to the number living at those ages is, between 35 and 45 only about 15 per 1,000, between 45 and 55 about 20 per 1,000, and between 55 and 60 about 30 per 1,000, it rises steeply between 60 and 65 to 70 per 1,000, and between 65 and 70 to 140 per 1,000.

† *See Ibid.*, *Qs.* 43125, 50728 (Par. 11), 51760 (Par. 31), 51782, 51811, 67890, 67891, 68688 (Par. 18), 68745, 68746, 69047 (Par. 47), 72621–72633, 77352–77359, 77295, 77296, 77457, 77468 (Par. 16), 77501, 77502, 77663.

allowances, appear to us to be even greater when it is a question of providing a supplementary pension. To state summarily the objections and difficulties that compel us to dismiss any contributory scheme for this purpose, we must first distinguish between proposals for voluntary and those for compulsory contributions. If it is suggested that contributions for the supplementary pension should be optional and wholly voluntary, the State contributing nothing, we have only to say that such a scheme amounts to no more than is provided, or could easily be provided, by the deferred annuity department of the Post Office, or by the existing Friendly Societies, Trade Unions and Insurance Companies. But unfortunately we cannot anticipate that these will be taken advantage of by the poorest labourers * or by many women, and it is from the ranks of these that come the most numerous and most deserving cases of Old-Age destitution. If it is suggested that the cost of such voluntary insurance should be lowered by means of a subsidy from the Exchequer, then, whilst the scheme would still inevitably fail to bring in either the women or the poorest men, the objections to it become considerable. Such a subsidy would involve the taxation of the very poorest for the benefit exclusively of those who were better off, largely the taxation of women for the benefit mainly of men; its benefits would be enjoyed only by a limited section of the relatively well-paid artizan class, rich enough to be able to take advantage of it, and not too rich to expect to be able to do without it; those benefits could not, except by extraordinarily costly temporary arrangements, themselves open to grave objection, begin to accrue for a whole generation; if the scheme were worked through the Post Office alone, it would be in serious competition with the existing Friendly Societies; if these also were subsidised, it would bring them into unfair competition with the Trade Unions giving friendly benefits, which would demand to be granted equal advantages; the State could hardly subsidise any of them without appearing to guarantee their eventual solvency, and this it could not do without exercising a right of supervision and control to which neither Trade Unions nor Friendly Societies would submit. And after all the expense to the community had been incurred, and the difficulties had been overcome, the problem of dealing with the destitute deserving aged who, for some reason or another, had not insured and who could not get the national superannuation allowance, would still be upon us. If, in order to avoid some of these objections, it be suggested that the scheme should be made compulsory and universally applicable, it becomes at once, at any rate in this country, wholly impracticable. A universal and compulsory scheme would not be able to confine itself, as the far from universal scheme of the German Government mainly does (so far as the actual securing of adequate pensions is concerned), to persons in relatively stable wage-earning employment. For the Government of the United Kingdom to seek to extract—for a benefit to be enjoyed many years hence if the contributor lives so long—a weekly contribution, not only from the relatively well-paid and durably employed skilled artisans, but also from the hundreds of thousands of casual labourers and sweated home-workers, from the crofters and peasants of Scotland, Ireland and Wales, from all the uncounted host of hawkers and pedlars and costermongers and petty dealers of one kind or another, and from the millions of independent working women, appears to us to be wholly impracticable. Moreover, even if this could be done, it would still leave untouched the huge problem—which the German Government Scheme has not yet been able to touch—of how to include the 7,000,000 or 8,000,000 of non-wage-earning wives of the wage-earning class, who unfortunately furnish the greater part of the Old-Age destitution. No scheme which leaves out of account this large section of the population—and practically every scheme for contributory pensions that we have seen does leave them out of account—can possibly obviate the need for non-contributory pensions, or have any chance of acceptance. But apart from these fundamental objections, the mere difficulties of a universal compulsory contributory scheme appear to us insuperable. To keep the separate accounts for half a century of all these millions, to register them in their changes from industry to industry and from place to place, and to receive and manage all the contributions, would in itself be a colossal task; and to enforce against the defaulters the obligation of payment would be an impossible one. But, in this country at any rate, the Government would never be permitted to undertake it. It is clear that, as Mr. Broadhurst, speaking specially on behalf of the Trade Unions, pointed out in his Minority Report in 1895:—

> "Any scheme involving contributions otherwise than through the rates or taxes would meet with much opposition from the wage-earners of every grade. The Friendly Societies and the Trade Unions to which the working-class owe so much, naturally view with some apprehension the creation of a gigantic rival insurance society, backed by the whole power of the Government. The collection of contributions from millions of ill-paid households is already found to be a task of great difficulty intensified by every depression of trade or other calamity. For the State to enter into competition for the available subscriptions of the wage-earners must necessarily increase the difficulty of all Friendly Societies, Trade Unions and Industrial Insurance Companies, whose members and customers within the United Kingdom probably number, in the aggregate, from 11,000,000 to 12,000,000 of persons."†

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* *Ibid.*, Q. 27288.

† Report of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, Vol. I., pp. xcix.–c. (*See* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 47087, 47088.)

Any attempt to *enforce* on the people of this country—whether for supplementary pensions, provision for sickness or invalidity, or anything else—a system of direct, personal, weekly contributions must, in our judgment, in face of so powerful a phalanx as the combined Friendly Societies, Trade Unions and Industrial Insurance Companies, fighting in defence of their own business, prove politically disastrous.

(iii.) *Local Pensioners.*

We come, therefore, to the conclusion that the minimum provision for the destitute aged who are temporarily or permanently omitted from the National Pension Scheme, must take the form of Local Pensions, not dependent on personal contributions, and granted only to the destitute aged who live decent lives upon such pensions.* There will be, for instance, the case of the man who has resided in England since childhood, but is not a British subject, or has only recently become naturalised; the case of the woman who has lost her British nationality by marrying such a man;† the case of the British subject who has returned to his home after residence in the Colonies or abroad, or the widow who has come home after her husband's death;‡ there will be the case of the man or woman who finds himself disqualified merely on account of some trivial breach of the conditions. Moreover, whatever the age-limit, there will be many cases of thoroughly deserving persons who are physically and mentally older than their recorded age in years—men and women who are as thoroughly broken down and permanently incapacitated at sixty-one or sixty-two as others are at seventy. For all such persons who have fallen into destitution, the only proper provision, as some witnesses have suggested to us, is, so long as the applicants are in good health, or can be properly looked after at home, a Local Pension,§ such a pension, in fact, as many of the Destitution Authorities have already been driven, in effect, to award, under the guise of 5s. or even 7s. a week Outdoor Relief.‖ Such Local Pensions, to our mind, would, for this class, have actually an advantage over what might be secured by a contributory scheme, in that they would not need to be awarded and continued unconditionally as of right. We regard it as distinctly advantageous that they should be granted and continued only on condition of decent living and orderly behaviour. We see no advantage in connecting the grant of these Local Pensions with the Destitution Authority. In fact, with a separate Pension Committee awarding the national superannuation allowances, there would be grave difficulties and dangers in any other body but that Pension Committee dealing with the matter. The difference between a Local Pension and a National Pension, according to our view, should be merely that the Local Pension—

(i.) would be payable from local funds

(ii.) would be given and continued, not as of right but only to such persons, settled in the locality, as the Pension Committee find could and would live decently by its aid, and

(iii.) might begin at as early an age as sixty,¶ if deemed advisable.

(iv.) *The Helpless Aged.*

It has to be recognised that there are among the deserving aged many persons who from infirmity of body and lack of friends are unable to live independently on their small means, or on the Outdoor Relief that they may receive. At present there is, over the greater part of the Kingdom, no more satisfactory provision for these helpless aged persons, however deserving they may be, than the General Mixed Workhouse, with its promiscuity, its hated associations and its stigma of pauperism. To give one instance out of many, we

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 6922, 7161–7163, 17252–17255, 36272, 36273, 36317, 36541–36545, 68550, 72681 (Par. 30).

† It is interesting to note that, under the Old-Age Pension Law of Victoria, and now under that of the Commonwealth of Australia (No. 17 of 1908) (though not under those of the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and New South Wales), the right to a pension of such a woman is specially preserved, notwithstanding her change of nationality by marriage. (Report of Australian Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, 1906, p. 9; law of the Commonwealth, No. 17 of 1908, Sec. 21.)

‡ These cases will, with the progressive adoption of Old-Age Pensions in the different Colonies, involve the hardship that the applicant may become technically ineligible for the Colonial pension because he no longer lives in the Colony, and for the English pension because he has not resided twenty years in the United Kingdom. It is to be noted, moreover, that the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles are, for this purpose, in the same position as the Colonies.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 6922, 7161–7163, 17252–17255, 36272, 36273, 36317, 36541–36545, 68550, 72681 (Par. 30).

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 19752.

¶ The Pension Laws of New South Wales and Victoria—and now also that of the Commonwealth of Australia—which adopt the age of sixty-five as that at which pensions are normally awarded, permit them to be given between sixty and sixty-five, on account of physical unfitness. (Report of Australian Royal Commission on Old-Age Pensions, 1906, p. 8; Law of the Commonwealth, No. 17 of 1908, Sec. 15.)

have ourselves seen, in a small rural Workhouse, an aged postman, who had by long and honourable service earned a pension of 12s. a week. But he was helpless from paralysis, and having no family or friends, had no other refuge available in which to linger out his life, than the ordinary ward of the General Mixed Workhouse, enjoying conditions no more eligible than those allotted to the most debased old vagabond of the Union. The Board of Guardians impounded his pension, which fully covered all the cost of his maintenance. Nevertheless he was, and remained, a pauper. Such cases will, it is clear, become much more numerous when the national superannuation allowances have become payable.

Besides the persons in this condition who come voluntarily to the Workhouse, for lack of better refuge, there are, as many witnesses have told us, many helpless aged persons who struggle on, sometimes among their friends, more often in their lonely lodgings, with their tiny pensions or Friendly Society pay, their casual pittance of alms, or, at present, their dole of Outdoor Relief, whose conditions become steadily more insanitary and their wretchedness more extreme.* These, too, will become much more numerous when the national superannuation allowances become payable. But already such cases are frequent enough to cause much trouble to the Destitution Authorities, which have sometimes to watch them day by day so as to prevent actual starvation or death from neglect. There is no subject brought before us on which there has been such unanimity of testimony as the need, in the public interests, for some power of compulsory removal of infirm old men or women, who refuse to accept an order for admission to the Workhouse, and who linger on, alone and uncared for, in the most shocking conditions of filth and insanitation.† But so long as the only accommodation available is the General Mixed Workhouse, deliberately made deterrent, and publicly stated to be intended for the undeserving, no Parliament could possibly grant compulsory powers of removal to, and detention in, such an institution. Moreover, it is not compulsory removal and detention that, in the vast majority of these cases, is really needed. What these cases require is an Authority which, by its daily operations, will automatically become aware of them before the neglect or the inanition reaches extremity; an Authority which can provide from its staff of nurses the necessary daily attendance which is all that many of the cases need;‡ an Authority which would have available under medical superintendence suitable asylums for the really helpless deserving aged persons who cannot be said to be, in the ordinary sense, wholly destitute; an Authority, therefore, which must be quite unconnected with the Destitution Authority. This duty, it appears to us, should fall to the Public Health Authority. Just as that Authority already exercises what is, in effect, a kind of general guardianship over infants, in order to be able to step in where there is neglect, so it must exercise a similar guardianship over the citizen falling into second childhood. By the staff of Health Visitors and Sanitary Inspectors, daily going their rounds, the Public Health Authority will become aware of cases in which the helpless deserving aged, notwithstanding their little pensions or the attentions of the charitable, are suffering from neglect or lack of care. There ought, moreover, to be some practicable method by which a helpless old person may escape from or protect himself against the tyranny and repeated petty cruelties to which the aged are occasionally subjected, even by their own children.§ There should be for all such cases, available in every district, asylums or "retreats under a more accurate and less degrading title" than that of Workhouse, "and under less stringent and kindlier

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 5781, 6635, 6636, 6936, 10412, 1112 (Par. 7), 11129, 15417, 19555, 20189–20198, 25091–25095, 25109, 25110, 25264 (Par. 8), 25296–25305, 25306, 25310, 34687–34689, 40936, 42597–42601, 53068 (Par. 228).

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 3014, 4988, 5028, 5162–5166, 6636, 6936, 7441, 8904, 9373, 10412, 11129, 11150, 11921, 13946, 15417, 15888, 15911, 19466 (Par. 30), 19555, 19556, 20117 (Pars. 4, 15), 20189–20192, 22535 (Par. 2), 22569, 25264 (Par. 8), 25296, 25300–25310, 28796 (Par. 10), 28943, 29073, 34101, 34687, 34811, 38613, 39776 (Par. 71), 39980 (Par. 6), 40007, 40310 (Par. 50), 40932–40936, 41105 (Par. 16), 41489, 42781 (Par. 14), 43825 (Par. 13), 43889 (Par. 44), 43977, 50438–50482, 67743 (Par. 18), 67771, 67909 (Par. 20), 68091 (Par. 8), 68125, 68514, 68687 (Par. 8), 70408–70413, 71172 (Par. 15), 71214–71220, 75944–75947, and various Appendices to Vols. I., IV., and V.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 42597–42601.

§ Although there are special legal provisions for the prevention of cruelty to animals, to children, and to wives, there is, as yet, no corresponding statute with regard to the aged, however helpless. To treat a helpless aged person with persistent and long-continued cruelty is—apart from assault and short of actually causing death—apparently not a criminal offence. An aged person without property is sometimes terribly helpless in the face of persistent neglect or cruelty in the family in which he or she is being maintained. The law would compel sons to contribute, if they are able to do so; but such contribution is not in support of the parent, but in reimbursement of the Destitution Authority; and to set the law in force the aged father or mother must become actually chargeable to the poor rate; which means, in not a few Unions, entering the General Mixed Workhouse. This is no imaginary grievance of the aged. Sons, said a competent witness, "know that the parent must come to the Board of Guardians before they can be made to pay anything towards their parent's maintenance, and therefore they really have the whip hand, and if they are so inclined they treat their parent badly." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 36840.)

discipline" *—often taking the form of voluntary almshouses provided by private charity—where the helpless deserving aged can be looked after by nurses and doctors just as much as required, and where their little pensions will go far to cover the cost of their maintenance. The "Parochial Homes" for the deserving aged which we find in some of the parishes of Scotland, and the endowed almshouses which exist in various parts of England come nearest to the kind of institution that needs to be available under the superintendence of the Medical Officer of Health of every district.† If such a system were established of kindly guardianship of the aged of providing the necessary attendance on lonely old people, and of maintaining for their reception when really unable to live alone such "almshouses" or "Homes for the Aged" as we have described, there would be little need for compulsory powers of removal; and such as might, in exceptional cases, still be required for the prevention of insanitary conditions or of conditions actually endangering life would form but a small and unobjectionable extension of those already exercised without demur by the Public Health Authority.‡

Besides those aged poor who live decently on their tiny means, and the helpless deserving poor for whom Homes for the Aged have to be provided, there exists, we regret to say, no inconsiderable class of old men and women, whose persistent addiction to drink makes it necessary to refuse them any but institutional provision. For this class, indeed, the Aged Poor of Bad Conduct, out of all the pauper host, it might well be urged that the Destitution Authority at present makes a not unsatisfactory provision. For old men and women of this kind, the General Mixed Workhouse, with its stigma of pauperism, its dull routine, its exaction of such work as its inmates can perform, and its deterrent regulations, seems a fitting place in which to end a mis-spent life. But, far from being a deterrent, experience shows that what the Destitution Authority provides, whether in the Workhouse or outside, is exactly what suits the inclinations of this class, from which some of the most habitual "Ins-and-Outs" are, in fact, recruited. They pass in and out of the Poor Law at their will—they come on the rates when they choose, and are free, whenever they choose, to live as they like. In this way, we combine the maximum of demoralisation and contamination of those with whom, either in or out of the Workhouse, they are perpetually coming in contact. To regard these old persons as "able-bodied," and to commit them to the charge of the Authority maintaining disciplinary Colonies for the Able-bodied, would be inevitably to relax the discipline of these establishments for the really able-bodied man in the prime of life. Repeated experience of the Able-bodied Test Workhouses (which we shall describe in Part II. of our Report) has proved that the introduction of men of sixty-five or seventy, even if medically certified as able-bodied, into an establishment designed for men of thirty or forty, gradually but surely destroys the *regimen*. It is vital to the efficacy of the semi-penal establishment for the really able-bodied man that the man of advanced age should be otherwise dealt with. What seems essential in the institutional provision for this class is that it should be undertaken by an Authority having through its ordinary staff the means of becoming aware of the disreputable existence of such old persons, and providing suitable institutions for their reception, with powers, in cases in which they were leading grossly insanitary lives, of obtaining magisterial orders for compulsory removal and detention—not for the sake of punishing these old people, who cannot be reformed, and can hardly be made

* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 24670 (Par. 7). The need for some such Institutions has been pressed upon us by many witnesses (*see Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14142–14146, 15474–15477, 16223 (Par. 50), 27359 (Par. 11)–27843, 36278, 36521–36525 42566, 44976 (Par. 6), 45266, 45786 (Par. 19), 45804, 45910, 67743 (Par. 16), 67750–67758, 72990–73024, 73628 (Par. 9), 73705–73712, and Appendices No. CXIII. (Par. 14) to Vol. IV., No. LXXX. (Pars. 14–17), and LXXXVII. (Par. 5) to Vol. V.) This is the recommendation of the Irish Commission. "The infirm or aged inmates are at present in 159 Workhouses; we recommend that they shall, in future, be in (say) thirty-two 'Almshouses,' or such other name as may be preferred." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 35.)

† The establishment of such separate institutions for the infirm aged was authorised by 14 Eliz., c. 5. Sec. 18; Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 76; and was, as we have seen, contemplated by the authors of the Report of 1834. In 1840, there was even a Government proposal, never carried into effect, to establish, apart from the Workhouse, "district infirmaries" for persons permanently incapacitated for earning a livelihood; and this proposal was supported by the Poor Law Commissioners. (*Official Circular*, No. 15, June 16th, 1840, p. 52; Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907 not yet in volume form.)

‡ The analogy is used by the Irish Commission. "From time to time instances occur in which it is found impossible to induce sick or feeble old people, without any persons to take care of them, to go into the Union sick or infirm wards for treatment or care. We think it would be desirable that in such cases compulsory removal should be authorised *in the same way as is provided for infected persons in Section* 141 *of the Public Health (Ireland) Act*, 1878." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 32.)

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 27359 (Par. 11), 36696–36698, 40644, 49303, and various Appendices to Vols. IV. and V.

of any value to the community, but in order to place them where they will be as far as possible prevented from indulging their evil propensities, where they will be put to do such work as they may be capable of, and where they will, at any rate, be unable to contaminate the rest of the community. This need not be a prison. The aged person cannot usually be reformed, but experience shows that, within an institution, he is not, as a matter of fact, either recalcitrant or badly conducted. We cannot help thinking that the duty of looking after this class, to whom Outdoor Relief would be rigidly refused, seems, accordingly, to fall most appropriately to the Public Health Authority, with its constant "searching out" of cases, and the compulsory powers of removal and detention which it already enjoys in cases of infectious disease.

To sum up, whatever institutional provision has to be made from public funds for the aged, had better be administered by the Local Health Authority. This does not mean the agglomeration of all the helpless aged, deserving or undeserving, well-conducted or ill-conducted, into one and the same huge establishment. On the contrary, there will have to be a grading of Homes for the Aged, and classification of the inmates—not, we suggest, according to past conduct or desert, on which no human being can really be a judge—but partly according to physical needs, and still more according to present characteristics and conduct. What we look to see is the provision, for all the destitute aged who have not received pensions, or who cannot live decently on their pensions, and have failed to find admission into any of the various almshouses or asylums for the Aged, of a number of small establishments for each sex; each accommodating only a few dozen or a few score of persons; of various grades of comfort and permitting of various degrees of liberty. Into these the old people would be sorted, as far as may be in accordance with their present characteristics and conduct, with power to transfer inmates from grade to grade according to the occurrence of vacancies and to actual behaviour within the institution.

(v) *The Infirm and Permanently Incapacitated under Pension Age.*

We pass now to what is perhaps the most difficult of all the problems presented by the non-able-bodied poor, the provision to be made for those who, being under the age at which either the national superannuation allowance or the local pension can begin, are nevertheless so infirm or so injured in mind or body as to be incapable of earning their maintenance in competitive industry.* These persons may be of either sex; of any age between childhood and pension time; deserving or undeserving; well-conducted or vicious; helpless or fully able to manage for themselves; with friends or without. Their one common characteristic —and this suffices for their classification—is that, whereas they are at a time of life at which they are expected to maintain themselves, such independent maintenance, in the world of competitive industry, is really and permanently beyond their power. One large section of this class—a section which includes a considerable proportion of the present Workhouse population—has already been dealt with. Should the proposals of the Royal Commission on the Feeble-minded be adopted, those whose incapacity is due to "feeble-mindedness" will be removed altogether from the category of the destitute, and dealt with, along with lunatics and idiots, by the committees of the County and County Borough Councils charged with the care of all the Mentally Defective. But for all the others some appropriate provision has to be found. There is the common case of the man or woman seriously crippled from birth, or maimed by some accident or disease. There is the case of the man or woman disabled by rheumatism or arthritis. There are those partially disabled by hemiplegia in its early stages, or by epilepsy unaccompanied by lunacy. There are the blind † and the deaf and dumb.‡

For all these infirm and permanently incapacitated under pension age there is at present no other provision than the General Mixed Workhouse or the unconditional dole of Outdoor Relief. Apart from other disadvantages of their presence in these unspecialised institutions, where no proper provision can be made for them, it has been brought to our notice that, owing to the absence of specialised consideration of each case by a medical man, there is, in the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales, and Ireland, and in the precisely similar Poorhouses of Scotland, no small amount of malingering among those classed as infirm or incapacitated. It is, in the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales, and Ireland, or in the gigantic Poorhouses now characteristic of the great towns of Scotland, with their insufficient medical staff, the business of no particular person to see that they get well; it is nobody's business to consider whether, by some

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 257, 14106, 28163–28301, 44976 (Par. 13), etc.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 28164–28301, 44976 (Par. 13), and Appendices Nos. LXIII. (Par. 14), CXLXV. (Par. 13) to Vol. IV.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 25781 (Par. 18), 44976 (Par. 13).

special treatment or operation, or by the aid of special surgical appliances, they could not be made fit for work; it is nobody's business to take care that they do not deliberately keep their sores open or their shrunken limbs weak. We do not feel sure that all the men whom we have seen in idleness because they have hernia or varicose veins are incurable. We shall recur to this point when, in Part II. of this Report, we come to deal with the Able-bodied. We shall see that, if there is to be any genuine enforcement on the able-bodied of a proper task of work, experience shows it to be imperative that the able-bodied should be by themselves alone. But the present intermixture in the Workhouse of able-bodied men with men in various stages of defectiveness, whilst it destroys all chance of proper treatment of the able-bodied, is disastrous to the man who is really infirm or incapacitated.* In the General Mixed Workhouse of to-day, no real attempt can be made to sort out the different individuals according to their particular defects; to give to each of them the regimen that he needs; to promote, if not their cure, at any rate whatever amelioration of their several states may be possible; to provide them all with such industrial and other training as they are proved capable of; and at any rate to set them all to work at appropriate tasks, so that not only may the ratepayers' pockets be spared, but the inmates themselves may have the advantage and happiness of doing something towards their maintenance. On the other hand, to turn these blind or crippled, epileptic or paralysed men and women out into the streets on an unconditional dole of Outdoor Relief is, in many cases, to condemn them to much suffering, to a life of demoralising mendicity, if not of vice, and to conditions of squalor and disease which are not in the public interest.

We may mention here a matter which has been brought to our notice in connection with the Workmen's Compensation Act. A certain proportion of the present destitution of the infirm and incapacitated has been caused by industrial accidents, for which, in the past, little or no compensation has been paid. This, it was hoped, would be obviated, as regards accidents occurring after 1897, by the obligation then placed upon the employer of paying lifelong compensation for permanent incapacity equal to half the wages previously earned.† Unfortunately, as it seems to us, it is provided that this weekly payment, like the compensation payable to the widow and children when the accident is fatal, may be commuted for a lump sum, without any guarantee being taken that the money will not be squandered and dissipated or, through some misfortune, lost. There are, accordingly, already many cases in which persons, permanently incapacitated by industrial accidents since 1897, or the widows or children of persons killed by such accidents, have, notwithstanding the payment of full compensation, subsequently become destitute, and are now a burden upon the Poor Rates. In these cases an onerous obligation has been imposed by law upon the employer, and through him, on the consumers, without the community being protected from having, in effect, to pay over again for the results of the accident. This defect in the law, which will become year after year of ever-increasing gravity until it is remedied, appears to us to arise from the habit of regarding the compensation for an accident as a debt due from the employer to the injured man, or to his widow and orphaned children. It ought rather to be regarded, even in those cases in which it may be provided by individual insurance, as a provision which the State requires to be made for the future maintenance of those from whom the accident has withdrawn the breadwinning capacity. Here, as elsewhere, we object to relief being given to a sufferer, by means of a compulsory levy—even if the levy be on an individual employer—without the community taking steps to ensure that the provision thus made is applied in a manner to attain the social object aimed at. We think that the law should be promptly amended so as to provide that, whether by agreement or in the course of legal proceedings, no commutation of the weekly compensation payments should be permitted, and no lump sums paid in respect of fatal accidents, otherwise than through the County Court, or the special tribunal of Public Assistance that we shall hereafter describe, and that such sums should in all cases be invested in trust for the maintenance of those from whom the accident has withdrawn the means of support. If this were done, not only would some temptation be removed from the workman to whom an accident may at present be a source of profit, and much of the compensation money be saved from dissipation; but also there would at least be some security to the community that it would be protected from having the very considerable army of maimed, widowed and orphaned paupers still annually recruited in consequence of the industrial accidents assumed to be compensated for.

* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 13876.

† Workmen's Compensation Acts, 1897 and 1906. We shall deal in Part II. of this Report with the suggestion that these Acts, by discouraging the employment of any men not of normal capacity, have increased the amount of unemployment.

But whether or not the victims of industrial accidents can ever all be suitably provided for by compensation there must always be many cases in which the infirmity or incapacity has no connection with industrial accident. What has to be done is to provide for these incapables conditions of existence more suitable to their needs than the competitive world. There are cases in which, under careful medical supervision, it may be desirable, so to speak, to " board out " the cripple or the blind man among friends or relations.* For the most part, however, some sort of institutional provision seems preferable. This can often be best secured by making use of existing special institutions under voluntary management. All these need, however, to be regularly inspected.† We do not feel able to say how far it would be possible or desirable to group together in a single institution the infirm and physically defective of different kinds. There seems much to be said for combined Farm Colonies where the lame could help the blind, and the epileptic be attended to by the crippled. But there would probably have to be a certain amount of classification by physical condition as well as by sex and by conduct. But whether in one institution or in several, in town or in country, in so far as voluntary benevolence has not provided suitable accommodation, there must be for all these persons, as it seems to us, appropriate residential institutions maintained from public funds. In view of the medical superintendence that is involved, of the constant need for medical and surgical attendance and nursing, of the importance of securing, wherever possible, a curative or ameliorative treatment, and of the necessity of taking appropriate measures to detect and to extrude malingerers, we consider that the maintenance of the infirm and incapacitated, whether on home aliment or in special institutions, voluntary or municipal, ought to form part of the duty of the Public Health Authority.

(E) Conclusions.

We have therefore to report : –

1. That the inclusion, under the Poor Law, in one and the same category, of the congeries of different classes known as " the aged and infirm," is fundamentally inconsistent with any effective administration.

2. That the majority of Destitution Authorities of England, Wales and Ireland make no other provision for this aggregate of diverse individuals, of all ages and of different mental and physical characteristics, than the General Mixed Workhouse on the one hand and indiscriminate, inadequate and unconditional Out-Relief on the other – forms of Relief cruel to the deserving, and demoralisingly attractive to those who are depraved.

3. That some of the Parish Councils of Scotland and a few Boards of Guardians in England have honourably distinguished themselves by providing, for aged persons of deserving conduct, either comfortable quarters or pensions in their own homes ; though in the English Unions this provision has been unduly restricted by irrelevant conditions as to prolonged residence in one district, or as to the existence of relations not legally liable to contribute.

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* The Old-Age Pensions Law of the Commonwealth of Australia (No. 17 of 1908) contains additional provisions (which are not to come into operation until some later date, to be fixed by Proclamation), conferring " Invalid Pensions " upon persons over sixteen years of age, who are permanently incapacitated for work by reason of accident, or of " being an invalid." The amount of the pensions is to be fixed in each case, having regard to the means of the invalid, and to the contributions made by his relations (Secs. 19–23). If these provisions are ever put in operation, they will furnish interesting experience. We are, however, unable to recommend the adoption of a system of Invalidity Pensions. Apart from the very great expense involved, we doubt the wisdom of deliberately granting, to persons in no respect aged or superannuated, fixed incomes which they can enjoy as of right, without obligation either to work or to live as may be medically most expedient for them. Those who would be certified as " permanently incapacitated " for earning a livelihood in the world of competitive industry, are often not incapable of doing some useful work ; they can, in the course of years, usually be improved in health and capacity (and can sometimes be even cured) by adopting an appropriate regimen ; they are always liable to mental and physical deterioration under a lax and self-indulgent regimen ; and they may easily become the worst of parasites, capable of much mischief. For all these reasons we think that (whilst in many cases domiciliary treatment with adequate home aliment may be allowed, under medical advice and supervision, subject to the fulfilment of appropriate conditions) the provision for most of the prematurely incapacitated must—partly for the sake of the proper organisation of such productive work as can be obtained from them—take the form, not of pensions, which the recipients would be free to consume in idleness, but of maintenance in a highly differentiated series of Farm Colonies, or similar institutions, under medical superintendence.

† Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. CXXIII. (Par. 13) to Vol. IV.

4. That no corresponding classification has been made among persons permanently, though prematurely, incapacitated, so that even the most deserving of these are very harshly dealt with.

5. That it is a necessary preliminary of any effective reform to break up the present unscientific category of " the Aged and Infirm," and to deal separately with distinct classes according to the age and the mental and physical characteristics of the individuals concerned.

6. That we concur with the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded that all persons, whatever their age, who are certified to belong to one or other grades of the Mentally Defective—including not only the lunatics and idiots, but also the feeble-minded and those suffering from senile dementia—should be entirely removed from contact with any form of Poor Law and should be placed wholly in charge of the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective.

7. That the establishment by Parliament in 1908 of a National Pension Scheme affords the proper provision for the aged who satisfy the necessary conditions in respect to income, residence in the United Kingdom, and conduct; but that it will be requisite at the earliest possible date to lower the pensionable age to sixty-five, if not to sixty; and that it is neither practicable nor desirable to make the previous receipt of any form of public assistance a ground for disqualification.

8. That, as there must always be a certain proportion of persons technically disqualified for a National Pension, for whom public provision must be made, and for whom institutional provision is neither necessary nor desirable, the Pension Committees of the Local Authorities should be empowered to grant out of the Rates, according to conditions settled by their Councils and approved by the Central Authority, pensions to persons of decent life, not being less than sixty years of age, who are not eligible for a National Pension.

9. That, whilst we anticipate considerable growth of voluntary agencies for securing, by insurance, supplementary pensions and provision for premature invalidity, we cannot recommend that the State should enter into competition for the workers' weekly pence with the Friendly Societies and Trade Unions, by any scheme of compulsory insurance; which would, we think, provoke the strenuous opposition of these societies, if they were left outside the scheme; and which must inevitably entail a national guarantee of their solvency, and Governmental control, if they were to be made part of the compulsory scheme.

10. That the responsibility for making suitable provision, domiciliary or institutional, for the prematurely incapacitated, and the helpless aged, together with the necessary institutional provision for the aged to whom pensions are refused, should be entrusted to the Local Health Authority.

11. That the Local Health Authority should be granted compulsory powers of removal and detention similar to those which it now possesses in respect to certain infectious diseases, with regard to all aged and infirm persons who are found to be endangering their own lives, or becoming, through mental or physical incapacity to take care of themselves, a nuisance to the public.

12. That, whilst all the obligations to support aged and infirm relations that are imposed by law should be strictly enforced by the appointed officers, where there is proof of ability to pay, no attempt should be made by any public authority to extract contributions from persons not legally liable, by subjecting aged or infirm persons, or threatening to subject them, to any treatment other than that deemed most suitable to their state.

CHAPTER VIII.

Charge and Recovery by Local Authorities.

All the public bodies making provision for the non-able-bodied poor—the Destitution Authority, the Public Health Authority, the Education Authority and the Police Authority—now possess definite legal powers of charging the cost upon the individual benefited or the persons liable to maintain him. These powers differ from service to service and from Authority to Authority, alike in the amount or proportion of the expense that is chargeable, in the discretion allowed to the Authority to charge or not to charge as it sees fit, in the conditions attached to the charge or exemption from payment, in the degree of poverty entitling to exemption, in the degree of relationship entailing payment for dependents, and in the process of recovery and its effectiveness. This chaotic agglomeration of legal powers, conferred on different Authorities at different dates, for different purposes, but all alike entailing on the individual citizen definite financial responsibilities, proceed upon no common principle. Moreover, the practice of the innumerable Authorities concerned is even more wanting in principle than the law; varying, indeed, from systematic omission to charge or recover anything, up to attempts to exact from the individual an entirely prohibitive payment for the service nominally offered. And this jungle of personal liabilities and what are in fiscal science technically called "special assessments" is practically unexplored. In no branch of our subject have we found it so difficult to ascertain the exact facts: in no part of the problem of the provision for the non-able-bodied poor have we found an extensive alteration in both law and administration so urgently needed and so little worked out in detail by the advocates of reform.

(A) Charge and Recovery by the Destitution Authority.

The Boards of Guardians in England and Wales have at present two separate and distinct powers of charge and recovery of the expenditure that they incur in the relief of particular persons, namely, against the particular person relieved, and against other persons liable for his maintenance.

(i) *Contributions by Relations.*

Under the Elizabethan Poor Law there seems to have been no question of recovering the cost of relief from the person relieved.* The very condition of the relief was destitution, and the system of free relief at the expense of the Poor Rate was but the successor of a system of free alms which had existed from time immemorial. But the free relief from the Poor Rate enjoyed by the destitute person did not release from their obligation those who were required to maintain him. This obligation of the relations was specifically enacted by the Elizabethan statesmen. Under the Poor Relief Act of 1601 (43 Eliz. c. 4, sec. 7) "the father and grandfather, and the mother and grandmother, and the children of every poor, old, blind, lame and impotent person, or other poor person not being able to work, being of a sufficient ability, shall at their own charges, relieve and maintain every such poor person in that manner and according to that rate as by the justices . . . shall be assessed." Thus, this legal liability to maintain others applies only to certain specified cases of blood-relationship—to grandparents, for instance, though not to grandchildren; and to grandparents even though the parents are alive, and themselves able to maintain their children.† It applies, moreover, only to the non-able-bodied—a qualification which, as we have found, is not always remembered by Poor Law officials.‡ It is curious that in the Elizabethan Statute there is no mention of the liability of husbands to maintain their wives, any more than that of wives to maintain their husbands. The omission has been rectified by subsequent legislation, under which a husband can be compelled to contribute

* It was scarcely a deduction from this principle that, as was subsequently made clear, any property found in the pauper's possession, or discovered to be due to him, might, irrespective of any Statute, have been appropriated by the Relieving Authority. (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 110 and the cases there cited; *see also* Poor Law Amendment Act, 1849, Sec. 16.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 106; R. *v.* Cornish, 2 Barnewall and Adolphus, 498. Married daughters were not liable, even if they had separate property. In the latter case only, they are now made liable (by 8 Edw. VII., c. 27).

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 19993–20002, 20112.

to the cost of relief given to his wife, and a wife having a separate estate can, in England and Wales, be compelled to contribute to the cost of relief given to her husband.* But for this last change, and for the fact that in Ireland grandparents are not liable for their grandchildren, the area of liability seems to be the same throughout the United Kingdom.

The process of recovering contributions from relations is partly in the hands of an administrative body, the Destitution Authority; and partly in those of a judicial body, the local magistracy. It is entirely within the discretion of the Destitution Authority whether or not it will ask for any contributions from any of the relations legally liable, and, if so, how much, and from which relations. If the relations do not comply with the demand of the Destitution Authority, it is open to that body, if it chooses, to apply to a Court of Summary Jurisdiction—in England and Wales, the Justices in Petty Sessions—for an order charging the relation who is liable with the payment of a definite amount per week for so long as the person remains chargeable. The Court has to satisfy itself that the relation whom it is sought to charge is legally liable and of ability to pay, and has to determine at what rate, not exceeding the whole cost of the relief, the relation shall be ordered to contribute. When the order has been made, it is again within the discretion of the Destitution Authority, in the case of non-payment, whether or not to take steps to enforce the order. It can summon for arrears and get an order of the Court for their payment, and eventually a distress warrant. If there are no goods on which to distrain, another summons is necessary, calling on the defendant to show cause why he should not be committed to prison for Contempt of Court. Upon the defendant appearing, the Destitution Authority has to prove that he has the means of paying what is due before an order for committal to prison will be granted.† In short, though enforceable in a Court of Summary Jurisdiction instead of merely in the County Court, the contributions due from relations are, in law, merely civil debts; and are not (as are payments on orders made under the Bastardy Acts and the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts, the latter now re-enacted in the Children's Act, 1908) payments enforceable as if they were fines or penalties by committal to prison, without evidence of means.

The special assessments levied on the relations of paupers, or on the paupers themselves, under this law and by this procedure, in the guise of repayments of the relief afforded, yield, in the aggregate, a large and steadily increasing revenue, having more than doubled in the last twenty years.‡ In 1888–9, for England and Wales alone, it was £211,061, or about 2½ per cent. of the expenditure, and in 1906–7 no less than £442,355, or 3 per cent. of the expenditure. Unfortunately, none of the statistics of the Local Government Board enable us to discover in what proportion this amount is made up of certain very different constituent items. More than one-half, we know, comes in the form of charges made upon the relations of persons certified to be of unsound mind, and maintained in the asylums of the Lunacy Authority. The balance is nearly wholly made up of two distinct items, namely, the contributions obtained from the relations of persons admitted to the Poor Law infirmaries, and the contributions obtained from sons towards the Outdoor Relief afforded to their aged parents.

The contributions recovered towards the cost of maintenance of persons of unsound mind constitute the greater part of these recoupments of the Destitution Authority. In this class of case, by a peculiar anomaly of the law, pauperism is, as we have already described, virtually enforced upon the patient, and upon his relations legally liable to support him. Thus, the pauper patients in the lunatic asylum really include a large number of persons from families who are in no sense destitute; many of them, in fact, belonging to the skilled artisan or the lower middle class. The Board of Guardians, having to pay the Lunacy Authority something like 12s. per week for every person in the asylum who belongs to the Union, and who does not enter voluntarily as a paying patient, naturally seeks to recover this sum in as many cases as possible. The Government grant provides 4s. per head per week. The balance of about 8s. per week, if not obtainable

* *Ibid.*, Q. 105; Married Women's Property Act, 1882, Sec. 20. Mention may also be made of two minor instances of charge and recovery. Relief to the wife or child or step-child of a merchant seaman during his absence is recoverable up to half (or, in certain cases, two-thirds) of his wages, by notice to the shipowner. (Merchant Shipping Act, 1894, Secs. 182, 183.) And the cost of relieving destitute Lascars or other natives of India may be recovered from the Secretary of State for India in Council. (*Ibid.*, Sec. 185).

† Evidence before the Commission, Q. 36693 (Par. 14).

‡ *Ibid.*, Q. 7619. The statistics given in the Annual Reports of the Local Government Board are as follows: 1888–9, £211,061; 1893–4, £241,904; 1890–9, £295,034; 1902–3, £370,087; 1906–7, £442,355.

from the property of the patient himself,* is claimed from the husbands, parents, grandparents or children of the patients. As so large a proportion of the cases are from families by no means destitute, the amount thus recovered is considerable, in many cases covering the whole cost of the patient. It is to be noted that, even if the whole cost be repaid to the Board of Guardians, the patient remains a pauper and he is included as such in the statistics of pauperism. We have had it brought to our notice by the London County Council that, as the collectors of the Boards of Guardians are paid by commission, it is not only to their pecuniary interest to have as many persons as possible certified as of unsound mind, but also to have them entered and retained as pauper lunatics, even if their relatives are paying the entire cost of their maintenance; rather than have them entered as private patients, when the payments would be made direct to the Lunacy Authority. Moreover, the mere maintenance of a dependent in an asylum as a pauper lunatic, even if a contribution is made towards the cost, is, in strict law, deemed to be parochial relief to the person on whom he is dependent. When, in the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908 it was desired to prevent the mere admission of a dependent to a lunatic asylum disqualifying for a pension as being parochial relief, this needed express enactment. Yet, as has been forcibly observed, by the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded :—

> " In the case of so-called pauper patients in idiot asylums, many of them have never been in a Workhouse, and some of them cost the local rates nothing at all. Many of them are children of small farmers, tradesmen in a small way of business, clerks, artisans, and others, who, unable to pay the full charge, are yet able to contribute 5s. or 6s. per week, or even more, for the maintenance and training of their children. In order to make up the full charge of from 10s. 6d. to 14s. per week, the parents pay their contributions to the Board of Guardians who receive the 4s. grant [from the Exchequer], add to it the parents' contributions, and thus, in some instances, make up the required amount. This pauperises the parent, though it does not do so in the case of children sent to blind or deaf and dumb institutions, or educated at the Public Elementary Schools, where the schooling is paid for out of the rates, or even in the case of criminal or neglected children sent to Reformatory or Industrial Schools.†

The amount charged upon " relations " for the treatment in Poor Law Infirmaries of patients in whom they are interested is large, and rapidly increasing. We were, for instance, informed that the three Boards of Guardians of Liverpool recover over £4,000 a year from their patients, whilst the general hospitals of that great city do not receive from their patients more than £400 a year.‡ We notice, in the evidence by the Medical Superintendent of one of these Poor Law Infirmaries, that the fiction that these repayments come from the relations of the " destitute " persons whom the Guardians are maintaining, is quietly abandoned. It is taken as a matter of course that the maintenance and medical treatment which is being afforded by the Destitution Authority to its patients, is, as a matter of fact, being paid for, to a considerable extent, by these " destitute " persons themselves. The fact, which is not peculiar to Liverpool, that the Poor Law Infirmaries are receiving no small number of " paying patients," is an interesting corollary of the gradual transformation that we have already described of some of the institutions of the Destitution Authority into public establishments, made use of indiscriminately by the wage-earning and lower middle classes. " We have thus," as it has been pointed out to us, " the administrative paradox that an institution intended by statute for the 'friendless impotent poor,' has evolved into a 'pay' hospital for poor persons that may be paid for by their friends." § But this unperceived change results in curious anomalies. A person who is paying for his treatment in the Liverpool hospital as the Mill Road Infirmary, however much he pays, becomes a pauper; is known included in the statistics of pauperism published by the Local Government Board; cannot, in law, vote at the election of the West Derby Board of Guardians; and will be excluded or not from the register of Parliamentary electors according to the varying interpretations which the officers may put on the phrase " medical relief." The same

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* " In the case of lunatics it is often from the individuals themselves ; they may have an estate, such as money in the Post Office Savings Bank, . . or be possessed of house property." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 15788.) Where a lunatic is entitled to a weekly allowance from a friendly society, but has a wife and children who would, but for this allowance, be destitute, the Central Authority practically directed the Guardians, in 1876, not to seek to recover the cost of his relief, but to leave the wife and children in the enjoyment of the allowance. (*Selections from the Correspondence of the Local Government Board*, Vol. I., 1880, p. 15.) This was made law in Scotland by Sec. 4 of the Poor Law Loans and Relief (Scotland) Act, 1886.

† Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, Vol. VIII., p. 56 ; *see also* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 19228.

‡ *Ibid.*, 37927 (par. 25).

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 56605 (par. 88).

person, treated absolutely free of charge in the Liverpool Royal Infirmary, or in the hospitals of the Liverpool Town Council, is not a pauper. This anomaly becomes the more remarkable when a Board of Guardians (as at Dewsbury), with the cordial sanction of the Local Government Board, deliberately elects to limit its own provision for sick paupers to such as suffices for the easier cases, whilst sending all that are difficult to the voluntary hospitals of neighbouring towns, to which it makes contributions from the poor rates.* Under these arrangements, which are becoming common in all but the largest towns, the sick persons become paupers or not, and their relations become liable to contribute to their maintenance or not, according to quite irrelevant accidents. Those retained in the institutions of the Destitution Authority are chargeable to their relations and are legally paupers, however much their relations may pay. Those who are sent for the more specialised treatment of the voluntary hospitals, which are partly maintained out of the poor rate, are not paupers, and their relations cannot be required to contribute to their maintenance—unless, indeed, as is sometimes the case, the subvention of the Board of Guardians to the hospital takes the form not of an annual subscription but of the payment of so much per patient per week. In the latter case the sum so paid is, by direction of the Local Government Board, entered in the books as Outdoor Relief; the person in respect of whom it is paid is included in the statistics of pauperism as in receipt of Outdoor Relief; and his relations become liable to repay the amount.† The net result of these anomalies is that those patients for whose maintenance and treatment full payment is being made, by themselves or their relations, are all certainly paupers; those who are being treated entirely gratuitously stand a good chance of retaining the status of independent citizenship.

We come now to the charges made upon sons by way of contributions towards the Outdoor Relief that their aged parents are receiving. The Board of Guardians finds an aged person destitute, grants Outdoor Relief, and proceeds, under the Elizabethan Statute, to make a claim upon the sons. It has, however, been brought to our notice that the procedure has, in some Unions, been so extended as to have become merely the means of "putting people on the relief list with the object of settling a family dispute." ‡ "In a large number of cases," deposed one witness, "the children are colliers earning very good wages, but owing to family disagreements between themselves they quarrel as to how much each son should contribute. One son has a wife and several children, he thinks he ought to contribute a less sum than the son who is unmarried and is earning good wages, and so on. They cannot agree amongst themselves. Over and over again they come to the relieving officer, and the old woman or the father is granted 3s. 6d. or 4s., and then the sons are summoned." § In these cases, "relief is granted where it is not needed, with the sole object of getting it repaid from the sons and daughters," This is said to be "a common occurrence" both in London and in the North of England,|| the whole of the Outdoor Relief given to the aged person being "in a large number of cases" thus recovered.¶ But even if the whole amount is repaid, the aged persons are legally paupers;** they are included in the official statistics as paupers; and the family becomes entangled in, and acquires a demoralising familiarity with, the machinery of the Destitution Authority. To remedy this anomaly, many Guardians and Poor Law officers have recommended that the law should enable aged persons themselves to take proceedings against their children who are legally liable to support them, and that a Court of Summary Jurisdiction should be empowered to make an order for the payment of a weekly sum by the

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 25233–25238, 57483–9, 56685–7, 60159–81.

† If the arrangement between the Board of Guardians and the voluntary hospital is changed in form (as from payment per patient to an annual subvention), the pauperism of the patients, and their chargeability to relations, ceases from the date of the change. This inequality of treatment of the sick is much resented. It has been urged upon us that "since payment is not asked for in the infirmaries or in fever hospitals, why should it be required in Poor Law hospitals? Is it reasonable that, whereas the victim of typhus fever, a tumour, or appendicitis is taken possession of by free-from-payment institutions, the poor wretch with phthisis, chronic rheumatism, heart disease, or ulcers is made a pauper, with the added injury that he or his relatives have to contribute to his maintenance?" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 60151, Par. 18.)

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 16177.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 48393–48398.

|| *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 7316, 7317, 19557, 19558, 36842.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 48397.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 19687.

son direct to the parent, without the case coming in any way under the purview of the Destitution Authority.* We cannot endorse this recommendation. To give to every aged parent who was without means the right at any time to apply to the Justices for a legal order peremptorily requiring his or her sons to make weekly payments for his or her support would not, we think, promote either filial affection or family harmony; and might, it has been suggested, open up a field for disreputable extortion, at the instigation of unscrupulous persons.† Even more important is the objection that such a power in the hands of the aged could not be made dependent on their personal conduct. There are, unfortunately, among the aged, not a few persons of disreputable life, who spend every available penny in drink. We should wholly disapprove of Outdoor Relief being granted to such persons unconditionally, and without supervision. We equally object to empowering disreputable old men and women, who are unwilling, and perhaps unable, to lead decent lives, to exact contributions from their sons, over the spending of which the sons would have no control. Such aged persons, if allowed to live outside an institution at all, ought, at any rate, to feel that their maintenance is dependent on reputable conduct. This can be to some extent secured at present, by the supervision and control exercised over those to whom Outdoor Relief is granted. What needs to be got rid of is not the supervision and control, which we regard as essential for all whose maintenance is provided for them otherwise than by their own exertions, but the association with pauperism and the Destitution Authority. This can be secured, as we shall see later, in quite another way.‡

The needless "stigma of pauperism," inflicted alike on the "paying patients" of the Poor Law Infirmary, and on the aged persons on Outdoor Relief who are really being supported by their children, and the unreal exaggeration of the pauper statistics that this causes, are not, in our opinion, the most serious defects of the present system of levying special assessments on the relations of persons in receipt of public assistance. What is more important in its evil consequence—if only because it affects every case—is the arbitrariness, and even the partiality, with which these "special assessments" are made. It is axiomatic that whenever, by the authority of the Government, a pecuniary contribution is levied upon individuals, this contribution should be levied equally, impartially and universally upon every person coming within the category of those legally liable to the imposition. In the whole range of the Poor Law, in this matter of contributions from relations, equality, impartiality, and universality are conspicuous by their absence. We find in practice a total lack of uniformity as to whether the relations of a sick pauper shall or shall not be asked to contribute to his maintenance, and upon what scale. One Union will, in this respect, differ entirely from its next-door neighbour. In the Fulham Union for instance, maintenance from every discoverable relation legally liable is rigorously exacted in every case. In the Chelsea Union, institutional treatment and maintenance seem to be granted free of charge to all sick persons unable to gain admission to the voluntary hospitals of the neighbourhood, without their relations being even asked to contribute. The same sort of contrast appears to be exhibited in the practice of the Lambeth§ and Camberwell Boards of Guardians. In some provincial Unions—notably some in South Wales‖—especially where there are no endowed or voluntary hospitals, Boards of Guardians evidently lay themselves out on a considerable scale for "paying patients"; they have separate Committees on "Ability of Relatives,"¶ staffs of collectors,** and large receipts. In most of the rural Unions, on the other hand, where medical treatment has not risen above the Workhouse ward, Guardians seldom think of expecting any repayment of the cost of indoor relief or of making any charge for Workhouse treatment.††

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 19686, 19687.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 22903.

‡ The alternative suggestion made to us (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 20103), that some public authority should be empowered to take proceedings, when it is found that an aged person is not being properly supported by those who are liable to maintain him, quite irrespective of whether he has actually become a burden on the rates, appears to us much more worthy of support. But it would clearly be undesirable that this should be done by the present Destitution Authority.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 15089–15091, 15784–15792.

‖ *Ibid.*, Appendices Nos. I. (F), XXV., LIV., to Vol. V.

¶ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LIV. (Par. 3) to Vol. V.

** *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXV. (Par. 35) to Vol. V.

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 3001.

This inequality between Union and Union in the practice with regard to these special assessments is even more glaring when the expenditure in respect of which the charge is made takes the form of Outdoor Relief. We find, in fact, the utmost diversity, not merely between Union and Union, but between case and case. A few Boards of Guardians pursue a systematic policy. In so-called "strict" Unions, such as Atcham, Bradfield and St. George's-in-the-East, every discoverable relation who is legally liable, and who is earning as much as the regular wages of a mere labourer, is* definitely charged something, and as far as practicable compelled to contribute. In the Unions of East Anglia, on the other hand, we found it taken for granted that the ordinary agricultural labourer, even when unmarried and in full work, could not be expected to contribute anything towards the maintenance of his aged parents—some of the farmers frankly admitting that this practice had been adopted from their fear that attempts to charge even a shilling a week would help to drive the labourers into the towns. "I have been present at a Board meeting," deposed a Local Government Board Inspector, "when a Guardian employing two single labourers at full wages has protested against their being required to pay a shilling a week towards the support of their father, as the effect might be to drive them out of the Union where labour was badly wanted. They were excused." † Occasionally there are regular scales, showing what contributions are to be expected from sons in different circumstances. ‡ "Some Guardians," reports our own Investigator, "take into consideration the entire earnings going into the house, others consider what sons and daughters give. Others, again, consider the individual earnings (of the relations liable) only." § But in most Unions, every case is "considered on its merits." ‖ What this means in practice is that it depends on the mood of the Guardians, or even on which Guardians happen to be present, whether, in any particular case, much or little or nothing at all is demanded from relations known to be legally liable. ¶ "There is," said a witness, "no standard. I have known a man earning 23s. per week be asked to pay 9s. weekly towards the keep of his wife in the Infirmary, and the following week a single man getting 24s. per week asked to pay 2s. 6d. towards the maintenance of his parent. The single man was young, the married man greyheaded and homeless, living in lodgings at 4s. 6d. per week. This is termed judging each case on its merits." ** In a large Midland town, where, on the Board of Guardians, "the public-house interest is far too numerously represented, (*i.e.*, by seven or eight members)," †† an experienced witness informed us that he did not "know of a single case in which there is any repayment to the Guardians from children. If the Guardians give Out-relief there is no real effort to make the grown-up sons and daughters, who might be able to pay, pay something back." ‡‡ "In one

* This course is apparently without legal justification. A doubt has long been felt whether the ordinary wages of a mere labourer amounted, in the phrase of the Act of 1601, to "sufficient ability" on which to base liability to contribute. (Stone's *Justices' Manual*, editions of 1881 and 1902.) A case was taken to the High Court of Justice in 1902, when the Lord Chief Justice expressed some agreement with the view that such ordinary wages did not, in themselves, necessarily amount to "sufficient ability." The appeal was, however, dismissed on other grounds, and the point cannot be said to have been decided. (R. *v.* Moore and others, *ex parte* Saunby.) *See* the paper on "Contributions by Relatives towards Persons in Receipt of Parochial Relief," by W. B. Harris (*Poor Law Conferences*, 1903–1904, pp. 489–507).

† Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. VIII. (A) to Vol. I., note to Par. 25; also *Q.* 6176; *see also* p. 63, Report on the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages . . . in England, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. T. Jones.

‡ Thus the Aylesbury Board of Guardians directs "that a son, living with his mother, earning from 10s. to 12s. per week, be considered to allow her 1s. weekly; from 12s. to 15s., 1s. 6d. weekly; and from 15s. to £1, 2s. weekly; and that a woman keeping a son's house, and able to wash for him, be allowed no Relief." (Annual Report of Aylesbury Board of Guardians, March, 1905.) A similar scale, but beginning at as low a wage as 8s. per week, is supposed to prevail at Banbury. (Year Book of Banbury Board of Guardians, 1905–1906.) In the North Bierley Union the same rule is applied to daughters: "That in the cases of widows living with one unmarried daughter, all earnings of the daughter above 10s. per week be reckoned towards the support of the mother." (Year Book of North Bierley Board of Guardians, 1906–1907.)

§ Report on the Effect of Out-relief on Wages . . . in England, by Miss C. Williams and Mr. T. Jones (p. 7.)

‖ Rules of Glanford Brigg Board of Guardians.

¶ "One or two cases came up," noted one of our committees, "in which sons appealed against an order to contribute towards the cost of their parents which had been made at the previous week's meeting, and in one case at least *the previous decision was overturned.*" (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 15, p. 29.)

** Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 45786 (par. 10).

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 47015 (par. 4).

‡‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 47024.

Union," reports an Inspector, "an instance came under my notice where a widow had three sons, *one of whom was a Guardian*, but none of these were asked to contribute. The total out-relief was over £3,000. The amount collected from relations was £33 3s. 6d., but deducting collections on account of lunatics and deaf and dumb, the total recovered in one year was £6 11s. 3d. It is not surprising that the relief in this Union is amongst the highest in my district."* But the abandonment of the practice of making a charge may be due to real differences of opinion as to policy, quite apart from anything like corrupt motives. "The friendly societies," declared their representative on a North country Board of Guardians, "are totally opposed to the practice of the Guardians of compelling a working-man (who has a wife and three or four little children and whose income is not more than 26s. per week) to pay towards the maintenance of his father or mother who may have become recipients of Poor Law relief. This practice they consider perpetuates pauperism."† Nor is this evil consequence to the next generation without confirmation. "In many cases," deposed a Poor Law Guardian, "the maintenance of the old parent works to the detriment of the children's children."‡ On the other hand, some Guardians, not content with the power to charge conferred by the Elizabethan statute, actually try to go beyond the law, and to compel grown-up sons to contribute towards the support of their brothers and sisters, on the disingenuous legal fiction—which, however, fails to support the proposal—that relief afforded to children is deemed to be relief to their parent.§

Even this diversity of practice of the Boards of Guardians does not exhaust the measure of the inequality and partiality with which these special assessments are levied. When the Guardians have arrived at a decision as to what they will charge, they may or may not attempt to get their decision embodied in a magistrate's order, without which it is of no legal authority.¶ Some Boards take this step, but the majority do not. "The applications for a magistrate's order," we were informed. "are comparatively few."‖ The person sought to be charged may appear before the magistrate, and show cause against the making of an order. No definite ruling has been given as to what constitutes "sufficient ability." Hence, to use the words of an Inspector, "the enforcement by Boards of Guardians of their decisions, depends a good deal upon the caprice of individual magistrates."** This introduces a second element of inequality and uncertainty. Finally, when the order is obtained, it depends on the mood of the Board of Guardians, or on the caprice of its clerk—perhaps, also, on the method of remuneration of its collector—whether or not the order will be enforced by distraint or by proceedings for committal to prison. The extent of the real hardship on the relations against whom such orders are made may be gauged by the fact that the number of those annually committed to prison for default can in the whole of England and Wales hardly fail to reach several hundreds. But in the majority of cases, the proceedings are not pushed to such an extremity. Those who have undertaken

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* Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1898–1899, Appendix B., p. 108 (Mr. Bagenal's Report).

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 41761 (Par. 30). "Some limit," suggested another witness, "should be placed on a man's income before he is compelled to contribute towards the maintenance of parents chargeable." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. CLIII. (Par. 13 (c)) to Vol. IV.)

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 43299. "In the majority of the cases," declared another witness, this insistence on sons contributing to their parents' maintenance "is infinitely hard." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 46346.)

§ In one case heard by one of our Committees, it was sought to make two sons contribute to the cost of relief given to their mother in respect of other children. "It was suggested . . that these two sons should contribute. A Guardian said that the relief was given to the children, and that the Guardians could not make them pay towards their brothers' and sisters' maintenance. Another Guardian suggested that they should relieve the mother too, and then make two sons repay. After a time the clerk said that relief given to the children was relief given to the mother. It was moved that the sons repay 1s. each. This suggestion seemed to meet with the approval of the Board, when up jumped one of the Guardians and proposed that the question be voted on, and the votes recorded. His proposal at once so influenced the members that only four voted for the proposal to make the sons repay, while eight voted against it" (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 47, p. 118). Even if so gross a perversion of the Elizabethan Statute as to compel a man to repay the relief afforded in respect of his brothers and sisters were held to be technically legal, the course proposed was wholly unwarranted, as the mother was, on the Guardians' own showing, an able-bodied woman, towards whose support the sons were accordingly not legally liable to contribute.

‖ It has been brought to our notice that the Guardians cannot legally recover anything in respect of relief given prior to such a Justice's order (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 50096, Par. 13 (xix); nor can they obtain such an order after the person has ceased to be chargeable. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1433, 1434.)

¶ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 11135.

** *Ibid.*, *Q.* 13768.

to pay presently fall into arrears, and the Board of Guardians "wipes off the debt." * In fact, those who pay are the honest and the simple. The man who knows how to take advantage of the Guardians' difficulties, and is obstinate in refusing to pay, usually escapes scot free. "There are," we were told by the Clerk to a Board of Guardians, "many of those cases." † This tends to bring the whole system into contempt.

We desire to refer here once more to the practice of some Boards of Guardians of attempting to exact repayment of the cost of maintenance of paupers from relations who are under no legal liability to contribute to their support. We find that it is a common practice of some Unions to make inquisitorial investigations into the economic circumstances of persons who have been discovered to be relations of applicants of relief—though relatives not legally liable to contribute—with a view to ascertaining whether, according to the judgment of the Board of Guardians, they ought to be supporting the relations who have fallen into destitution, and whether the Board of Guardians should not apply for a contribution towards their maintenance. We think this practice open to grave objection; and we are glad to find, among experienced Poor Law officers, a certain hesitation in undertaking investigations of this kind, for which there seems no lawful warrant. "I dare say they may not make perhaps the same inquiries," said a Guardian, with regard to the Relieving Officers' investigations of the means of relations not legally liable, "indeed they would not, into the particulars of such a case, as they would where there was a legal liability. Perhaps for instance, they might not apply to the employers to ascertain the wages of the son-in-law. I do not know that they have any right to make such inquiries." ‡ But the process of seeking to exact contributions from persons who are not legally liable to make them does not stop at these inquisitorial inquiries, objectionable as these may be. When the Relieving Officer has ascertained that the uncle or the nephew, the son-in-law or the cousin, has an income which, in the opinion of the Board of Guardians, suffices to permit him to undertake a liability which the law does not place upon him, there begins, in some Unions, a systematic policy of pressure upon his will to induce him—possibly to the detriment of his own children—to shoulder the burden of the ratepayer. Beyond an application or two, the pressure on him is not direct, for the Board of Guardians is powerless to alter his position. But the Guardians calculate that they can apply some pressure on his will indirectly, by deliberately making things unpleasant for the unfortunate pauper who has come under their control. He may be stinted in his Outdoor Relief, by a deduction equal to what the Guardians are pleased to think that his relations ought to allow him weekly. He may even be refused Outdoor Relief altogether, though Outdoor Relief would admittedly be appropriate to his case, and compelled to come into the General Mixed Workhouse. § We can see no justification for a Destitution Authority to exercise its discretion as to the relief that it will grant, or the kind of that relief, on any other consideration than that of what is the treatment most appropriate to the destitute person himself. For the Destitution Authority to use the discretion with which Parliament has entrusted it, as a means of deliberately seeking to enlarge the circle of liability to support relations which Parliament has established, appears to us wholly unwarranted. We have already expressed our objection to this policy from the standpoint of its effect on the destitute person himself. Here we wish to emphasise the objection to it from the standpoint of the relation who is under no legal liability in the matter. We have ourselves found cases in which such an illegitimate use of the Guardians' powers has worked with partiality and injustice. A kindly and

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* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 12465.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 36872.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 15284, 15285, 15289.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 12420–12426. It has been urged upon us that the area of liability for relations should be widened, so as to include, on the one hand, sons-in-law for their parents-in-law, and grandchildren for their grandparents; and, on the other, illegitimate children for their mothers—we do not know whether this would extend also to liability to maintain their putative fathers! We doubt the wisdom, the advantage, and the practicability of any attempt to widen the area of liability imposed in 1601. The vast majority of the persons concerned are found to have very small means, and in many cases there is no public advantage in diverting these means from the proper maintenance of their own children. Moreover, it would certainly be necessary, in connection with any proposal to impose new liabilities, to give a clear definition of "sufficient ability." It would be against public policy to attempt to enforce payment on anyone whose income was not more than sufficient to bring up properly his own children. Moreover, there is no ground, in equity or commonsense, for making any person liable for that over which he has had no control. What a person should be held responsible for is his own action. There is thus more to be said for limiting the liability to that of parents for children; and then really enforcing it.

With regard to the proposal to put illegitimate children, in respect of liabllity, upon much the same footing as legitimate children, we do not think that this could be done without at the same time giving them the rights of legitimate children with regard to inheritance, etc.

humane man, with means no greater than suffice for his own household, may find himself driven to undertake onerous responsibilities, which the law has not intended for him, in order to save a brother, a father-in-law or an uncle from being left to linger on with admittedly inadequate Outdoor Relief, or forced into the General Mixed Workhouse, or even, as we have occasionally found, denied admission to the Poor Law Infirmary. The careless or inhumane man laughs at the efforts of the Boards of Guardians to extract money from him by threatening to oppress, or even actually oppressing, destitute relations for whom he is not legally liable; and, leaving these to the fate decreed for them, he escapes scot free. A special defence of this practice of throwing the burden of the destitute upon individuals not liable for their support is made when the applicant for relief actually resides with non-liable relations, and the aggregate income of the household is, in the eyes of the Board of Guardians, sufficient for its complete support. In such cases many Boards of Guardians refuse all relief.* The effect of this policy is to prevent persons offering lodging and personal attendance to their aged relations, unless they can also find them in food and clothing without stinting their own families.† It adds to the hardship of the situation that the same Boards of Guardians will refuse Outdoor Relief to the old person if he tries to live alone, on the plea that he has no one to look after him. It is urged in defence of the policy of reckoning the whole income of the household as communistically available for the support of all its members, including a mere lodger if in any way related to the others, that any other course would involve the grant of relief where there was no actual destitution. We do not see that this follows. It is for the Destitution Authority to ascertain in each case whether or not the applicant is, as a matter of fact, suffering from insufficient food, clothing, warmth and shelter. "The party's wants," said one of our witnesses, "would be the primary consideration in the case." ‡ If he has, in fact, nourishment insufficient for health, inadequate clothing and warmth, or a lodging that is not sanitary, and if he has himself no means of providing these, it is the legal duty of the Destitution Authority to grant relief, even if some other persons in the household, not legally liable for his maintenance, have means that might, as an act of charity, be given to him for this purpose.§ There is, in law, no justification for a Destitution Authority denying relief to a person legally eligible for it, merely as a means of inducing some other person, out of charity or kindly feeling, to give alms. Thus, the fact that the aggregate income of the household would, if communistically dealt with, suffice to feed all its members, is, in itself, no evidence that the lodger—or, for that matter, the child found unfed at school—is not destitute. It may well be that the Relieving Officer of a Board of Guardians is not qualified to investigate and to judge whether destitution, in the sense of insufficiency of nourishment, clothing, warmth or shelter, from the standpoint of physiological efficiency or health, does or does not exist, and that such a Destitution Officer can get no nearer than an arithmetical computation of weekly income per head, to whomsoever the income belongs. But this is only to say that a mere Destitution Authority, with merely Destitution Officers, is not well-adapted to deal with what is essentially a Public Health problem. It is significant that, in Scotland, the opinion of the Medical Officer would be taken in every such case, at any rate so far as adult male applicants were concerned.

(ii.) *The Device of Relief on Loan.*

We have already noted that under the Elizabethan Poor Law, the Overseer's dole was a free gift for the relief of the destitute. Under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, the obligation to grant relief as a free gift to destitute applicants was in no way abrogated. But a clause of that Act established a new and additional kind of relief previously quite unknown to the Poor Law, namely, that of a loan. It was enacted that any relief that the Central Authority might declare or direct to be by way of loan should be legally recoverable by the Board of Guardians as a debt due by the person relieved, even by attachment of wages.‖ The Central Authority promptly directed, by its Orders, that the Boards of Guardians might, at their discretion, declare any lawful relief to adult persons to be made by way of loan. This practice has continued in some Unions, and under certain circumstances, down to the present day. But it is one thing to declare that your assistance of a destitute person is by way of loan, and quite another thing to get the money back. The process of recovery of relief made by way of loan is even more difficult than in the case of contributions from

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 8635–8639, 16426–16428.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 36263 (Par. 10).

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 16178.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 12806–12808, 16164–16178, 36328–36334.

‖ Secs. 58 and 59 of Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834. Relief on Loan is unknown in Scotland.

relatives. The loan is a civil debt, for which the Board of Guardians can sue in the County Court; and on getting judgment, can proceed by way of distraint upon goods; or, upon proof of means, can obtain an order for committal of the defendant to prison for Contempt of Court. Or, when the person relieved by way of loan has got into wage-earning employment, the Board of Guardians may apply to a magistrate for an order requiring the employer to pay over to the Guardians, in repayment of the loan, such part of the wages as the magistrate, taking into consideration the circumstances of the man and his family, sees fit to direct.*

We have been unable to discover exactly what Parliament intended to effect by its establishment of Relief on Loan. Three distinct uses of this device have been suggested to us; and the Legislature may have intended any one of them. There is, first, the use of the device of Relief on Loan as a way of giving assistance to a destitute person supplementary to the mere relief of destitution, for the purpose of enabling him to better his position: as when he is provided with an outfit of tools or stock for trading—the kind of "relief" which could not be given to everybody, but which, as the experience of voluntary benevolent societies shows, may be advantageously afforded to selected persons, likely to repay the sum advanced. A second and quite different use of the device of granting relief by way of loan is to strengthen the legal position of the Destitution Authority with regard to recovering the amount of the relief, in the event of the person relieved (though momentarily destitute of food or lodging) having property that could presently be converted into money, or coming, at some future time, into possession of property or an income enabling him to repay the debt. The third use of the device of Relief on Loan is as a deterrent accompaniment of the ordinary relief of destitution, in order, by holding over him the threat of exacting repayment at some future time, to deter a destitute person from accepting, or even applying for, such relief. These three distinct uses of the device of Relief on Loan—as Supplementary Assistance to persons to enable them to better their condition, as a Method of Recoupment from the property of the persons relieved, and as a Deterrent Clog on ordinary relief—have all been advocated before us.

The use of the device of Relief on Loan as a means of affording Supplementary Assistance to necessitous persons, in order to enable them to better their condition, is seen at its best in the work of the admirable Voluntary Institution in London and Manchester, known as the Jewish Board of Guardians.† This body does not confine itself to relieving the momentary destitution of its clients, but habitually makes small advances to many of them, in order to enable them to change their occupations, to obtain tools, or stock, or even industrial training, so that they may be enabled to better their condition. During the first few years of the New Poor Law, some of the Boards of Guardians seem to have assumed that this was the use of Relief on Loan that Parliament had intended; and they made certain attempts to give this kind of Supplementary Assistance.‡ The Poor Law Commissioners imagined, at any rate, that nothing would be granted by way of loan, except with the real intention of the loan being repaid.§ Presently, however, the Poor Law Board intervened, and prohibited any such use of the device of Relief on Loan. It was held, in effect, that Relief on Loan was not a new or additional relief, but only another form in which the ordinary relief of actual destitution might be given. What could not lawfully be given was not to be lent.|| Accompanying this prohibition of Relief on Loan as Supplementary Assistance to enable people to better their condition, the Poor Law Commissioners suggested what we have termed the second use of the device, namely, as a Method of Recoupment from the property of the person relieved or from that of those liable to maintain him. As an example of occasions suitable for Relief on Loan, the Poor Law Commissioners adduced, not, be it noted, any case of Medical

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 9497; Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 17533, 18067, 18072, 21460, 30175–30587; and Appendix No. XLI. to Vol. IV.

‡ We find, for instance, the following rule adopted by the Atcham Board of Guardians in 1837: "Resolved that no sum of money under 10s., nor above 30s., be advanced by way of loan, and that repayment of the sums advanced be, in every instance, strictly enforced." (MS. Minutes, Atcham Board of Guardians, June 19th, 1837.) Various of our witnesses have advocated the adoption by Boards of Guardians of this use of Relief on Loan, more especially in starting afresh deserving men who have been for some time unemployed through sickness; *see*, for instance, evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 50024, 50025, 50993.

§ *See* their instructions in *Official Circular*, No. 23, p. 47 (February, 1843).

|| Circular of July, 1850, in *Official Circular*, No. 39, N.S., 1850, p. 108; Outdoor Relief Regulation Order, August 25th, 1852, and December 14th, 1852; Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority, 1834 to 1907, p. 72.

Relief, but the destitution of a mentally defective person enjoying a regular and sufficient income, but nevertheless, from incapacity to manage his property, sometimes without food. Other examples given were those of the wives or children of persons having means, who were found apart from their husbands or fathers in a state of destitution. A further instance supplied was that of the mother of an illegitimate child, who had the right to receive periodical payments from the putative father.* This use of the device of Relief on Loan seems, however, never to have prevailed to any considerable extent, and it was, perhaps, presently rendered unnecessary by amendments in the law, which made clear the legal right of the Destitution Authority to recoup itself by appropriating any property or valuable securities found in the pauper's possession, or after his death ; † to recover, as an ordinary civil debt, the cost of any Poor Law relief afforded to lunatics ; ‡ to claim from the husband the cost of any relief afforded to his wife ; § and to proceed against a wife having separate estate for relief afforded to her husband. || Nevertheless we find, to-day, one or two Boards of Guardians—perhaps as the result of some unfortunate legal experience—formally declaring, with regard to all the relief that they grant, indoor as well as outdoor, whatever may be the circumstances of the recipient, that it is " on loan " ; these words being printed as a matter of course on all the orders for relief of any kind, on the supposition that they would, in some way, strengthen a possible future claim to recover the cost of the relief in case any pauper eventually became entitled to a legacy, or otherwise came into a fortune.¶

The third use of the device of Relief on Loan—that of making it a Deterrent Clog on the grant of relief—was, we gather, introduced by the able Inspectorate of the Local Government Board between 1871 and 1890, as a part of their campaign against Outdoor Relief of any kind.** By affixing this Deterrent Clog to relief, or to some particular kinds of relief, these Inspectors hoped to prevent many persons from applying to the Destitution Authority, or to prevent them from accepting the relief when offered. It was suggested, in particular, that the device might advantageously be used with regard to Medical Relief, on the ground that this was often the " first step to pauperism," among a class " not wholly destitute of means." ††

We have sought to discover what exactly is the legal position of the Destitution Authority in making this use of the device of Relief on Loan. A Board of Guardians has clearly the power, under the Statutes and the Orders, to declare any lawful relief that it offers to be granted by way of loan. But it is equally clear that a destitute person is under no legal obligation to accept the relief in that form or subject to any condition of future repayment. It was, for instance, definitely laid down by the Local Government Board in 1880 that " the Relieving Officer has no power to compel any applicant to accept relief on loan."‡‡ Moreover, in order to incur legal liability to repay, it must definitely

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* Circular of May 25th, 1849, in *Official Circular*, No. 25, N.S., 1849, p. 70 ; Circular of September, 1850, in *Official Circular*, No. 41, N.S., 1850, p. 131 ; Outdoor Relief Regulation Order of August 25th, 1852, and December 14th, 1852 ; Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 73.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 110 ; Poor Law Amendment Act, 1849, Sec. 10.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 345 ; Lunacy Act, 1890, Secs. 296–300, and 314.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 103 ; Poor Law Amendment Act, 1850, Sec. 5 ; ditto, 1868, Sec. 33.

|| Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 105 ; Married Women's Property Act, 1882, Sec. 20.

¶ Regulations of Bristol Board of Guardians.

** Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 125.

†† So far as we have ascertained, it was in Mr. Corbett's Report of 1871 that was revived the suggestion thrown out in 1840 that Medical Relief in particular might be given on loan ; and even that it should be " generally granted by way of loan " (Third Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1873–1874), without regard, it would seem, to the probability of its being recovered. This opinion of the inspectorate, though constantly pressed on Boards of Guardians, did not, in 1877, receive the explicit endorsement of the Central Authority. An influential proposal to make all relief (and especially all Medical Relief) recoverable as if given on loan was definitely negatived. " The policy of the existing law," it was declared, " is that the question whether or not relief shall be granted on loan, or in other words, whether it shall be recoverable at a future time, is to be determined by a consideration of the actual circumstances existing at the time the relief is granted." (Local Government Board to Chairman of Central Poor Law Conference, May 12th, 1877 ; Seventh Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1877–1878, p. 54.)

‡‡ *Selections from the Correspondence of the Local Government Board*, Vol. II., 1883, pp. 70, 110. Nevertheless, various Unions have rules requiring the Relieving Officer to make all " sudden or urgent necessity " relief by way of loan. (Rules of the Chard, Leominster, Hemel Hempsted, and Stockport Boards of Guardians.)

be made known to the person to be relieved, at the time of making the relief, that it is by way of loan; the person relieved must presumably be in a position to accept the relief as a loan; and he must, by implication at least, by himself or by someone having authority to pledge his credit, consent to receive the relief as a loan. Thus, relief cannot be given to a lunatic by way of loan in such a way as to render the amount recoverable from him if he became sane.*. Similarly, we were authoritatively advised that relief could not be given, as by way of loan, to a person suffering from *delirium tremens*, unless, indeed, he had a lucid interval.† Nor can the grant of an order of admission to the Workhouse to a man so drunk as to be incapable of understanding be made by way of loan.‡ And if a destitute person refuses to consent to receive the relief as on loan, or is not in a state in which he can consent, the Destitution Authority is nevertheless under a legal obligation to give him the relief that his necessities require.§ Thus, if all destitute applicants were made aware of the actual state of the law, this use of the device of Relief on Loan, so ingeniously invented by the Inspectorate of 1871–1890, would become impossible. Moreover, it is not easy to see how the legal position of the Guardians in the way of recovering the cost of the relief if the recipient should afterwards prove to have means, is, at the present day, in any way strengthened by the relief having been given by way of loan. Thus, whether or not the relief has been granted by way of loan, where a pauper has in his possession any money or valuable security for money, or is found at his death to have had such, the Board of Guardians may recoup itself from such property to the extent of twelve months' relief.|| Further, the Guardians have a right to recover, as ordinary creditors, for six years' maintenance of a pauper lunatic to whom any legacy or other debt becomes payable.** Army and Navy pensions accruing to paupers can be attached and appropriated to the cost of their relief.¶

We have to report that, notwithstanding the uncertainty as to the legal position, the device of Relief on Loan, as a Deterrent Clog on relief, or "as a form of test,"†† is still employed by various Boards of Guardians—more especially in the rural Unions—to a not inconsiderable extent. According to the published rules of a dozen or more Unions, relief is, with the avowed object of deterring applicants, to be granted only by way of loan to all men, whatever their likelihood of ever being able to repay the amount, who are disabled "by accident" or by "temporary illness"; and in midwifery cases; and for funeral expenses; and to all single men and women under sixty.‡‡ We have it in evidence that the Bradfield Board of Guardians, by making all its Medical Relief by way of Loan, and by charging as much as 6s. for the service of the District Medical Officer, reduced the number of its Medical Orders from 700 a year to 47.§§ A similar practice prevails at St. Neot's.|||| There is evidence that in the case of Medical Relief, the practice of giving it only on loan has, especially when first established and with regard to any but the most serious ailments, a very deterrent effect on applicants. "It has," even in the Metropolis, "a certain effect in preventing persons applying who would otherwise have applied."¶¶ Hence, some of the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, who still aim at restricting as much as possible the services of the Poor Law, continue to recommend

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* Though if he is entitled to a weekly allowance or has any property, this can be made available to repay the relief. (*Selections from the Correspondence of the Local Government Board*, Vol. I., 1880, p. 184.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 755, 1083, 1084, 2480–2484. Notwithstanding this absence of power to consent, the Hampstead Board of Guardians insists "that all relief given to persons suffering from delirium tremens be by way of loan, and that all applicants for such relief be so informed (!) by the officer giving the Order for the admission," a provision of very doubtful legality. (MS. Minutes, Hampstead Board of Guardians, May 19th, 1904.)

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 17087–17089.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 2482.

|| *Ibid.*, *Q.* 110; Poor Law Amendment Act, 1849, Sec. 10.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 110; and the case there cited. The position is different in Scotland, where the Parish Council has no recourse against a pauper for recovery of the relief granted, even if the pauper has come into a legacy. The relation of debtor and creditor never obtains. (Kilmartin *v.* Macfarlane, 1885, 12. R. 713; P.L.M. 1885, 244).

** Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 111; Pensions Act, 1839.

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 7826.

‡‡ Rules of the Monmouth, Pontypridd, Williton, Hardingstone, Blandford, Whitchurch, St. Neot's, Chard, Long Ashton, Horncastle and Glanford Brigg Boards of Guardians.

§§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 9499, 19781, and Appendix No. CCXI. (A) to Vol. VII.

|||| *Ibid.*, *Q.* 6255.

¶¶ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 23077.

this use of the device of Relief on Loan.* But the more usual opinion, alike of Clerks to Boards of Guardians and Local Government Board Inspectors, is that Relief on Loan "appears to be almost an empty threat," † any deterrent effect being found to "gradually pass away." ‡ It is, in fact, quickly discovered that there is very little practical power of recovering the loan by legal proceedings. Those to whom the so-called loans are made are seldom in a position to repay them, and the Board of Guardians does not find it profitable to take legal proceedings to recover its debt. § The amount voluntarily repaid is "comparatively trivial," and "more trouble than it is worth," even when collectors are spurred to activity by a 20 per cent. commission. || The process of obtaining a magistrate's order for the attachment of wages has gone entirely out of use.¶ If the Board of Guardians goes to the trouble and expense of proceedings in the County Court, it may get judgment, but it will probably find no goods worth distraining on, even if it deemed it good policy to strip the miserable apology for a home of those whose destitution it would then have again to relieve. If an order for committal to prison is applied, proof of means must be given; and, as a Guardian of a large Metropolitan Union deposed, "we have never yet, although we have tried several times, been able to get a case in which we could give . . . clear evidence that the man could pay," without which the proceedings were "merely a costly process with no result." **

But apart from the difficulty of recovering the loans, the whole policy of using the device of Relief on Loan as a Deterrent Clog has fallen into disrepute. Even those Poor Law administrators who still believe in the desirability of "deterring" destitute persons from applying for relief recognise that it is demoralising to pretend that a liability exists which can be denied, which will be ignored by the practised pauper, and which will bear hardly only on the really deserving, guileless applicant. "It would be rather absurd," said the present Chief Inspector of the Local Government Board, "to give a man relief on loan when it is perfectly obvious that he cannot repay it." †† The practice may, moreover, work in a direction exactly opposite to that intended by its advocates. Those who watch it in operation have misgivings as to whether it does not lead to a more lax and less discriminating grant of Outdoor Relief than would be the case if there were no pretence that the money was going to be repaid.‡‡ It may even induce people to apply who would otherwise have abstained. "My experience," said the Clerk of a Metropolitan Board of Guardians, "is that it is unworkable and in many cases undesirable, and my reason is that the pauper gets to regard it as a sort of loan society, and thinks that he does not get [Poor Law] relief. He comes and says, 'I require a certain thing, an order for my wife, and I am going to pay you back,' and he never does pay it back. . . . The amount recovered was so infinitesimal and so much labour was attached to getting anything, that we have practically discontinued it." §§ If a charge is made for the services of the District Medical Officer, and this relief is granted "on loan," and actually repaid, it has been suggested to us, on high authority, that the Board of Guardians runs a risk of competing with Medical Clubs and other forms of medical insurance.|||| Relief on Loan is objectionable, says another witness, because "in the first place it is a very serious deterrent. In the next place, the Guardians get very little repaid, so it is of very little good. And in the third place, it impoverishes the family just at the time when they

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 9503, 22618, 22702.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 23079.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 4296, 7827, 8215, 18699, 19203, 19889, 23087, 31748, 44372, 44478, 50425–50429, 52196.

|| *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 4296, 7827, 18698, 19881, 23087, 20780–20783, 44372, 44478, 44479, 50489, 52196.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 9497, 9498.

** *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 17092, 19688–19690.

†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 2739.

‡‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 2739.

§§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 19201, 19203. In Manchester, the amount recovered, out of relief on loan, varies from £2 to £9 per annum, out of £12 to £34 so granted, only one order for payment being obtained from the County Court in the course of six years. (Report of Superintendent of Relief to Manchester Board of Guardians, for 1903–5, p. 22.)

|||| *Ibid.*, *Q.* 2738. To make any substantial charge for Medical Relief is, in the case of destitute persons, an absurdity; whilst the making of a nominal charge was objected to by an experienced Poor Law Official as being actually "an inducement for persons to apply for Medical Relief, if they found they could get it so cheaply." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 20271–20275.)

want more money, when there is illness in the house—which costs a great deal of money, as we all know. That is just the time when you should not burden the family. Then it is demoralising in most cases, because the man does not pay it back and in many cases he cannot, and there is the debt hanging on his back. Altogether making relief a loan is usually a very bad thing."* Finally, even in the case where a deserving man has accepted, with the utmost integrity, the relief as a loan, it is seldom desirable that he should have to repay the amount. "It would be at variance with" a proper Poor Law policy, declared the Local Government Board itself in 1877, "if every recipient of relief were to feel that, after he had again succeeded in obtaining employment, any savings he might be able to put by would be liable for the repayment of the relief which he might have received."† "The loan system," declared a medical witness, "should be abolished, as it is calculated to increase pauperism , . . . and discourage thrift."‡ In fact, a Relieving Officer informed us that, in his opinion, "there is nothing more absurd than relief on loan of any kind." §

(B) Charge and Recovery by the Public Health Authority.

Individual chargeability is not confined to the realm of the Poor Law. The Local Health Authority may, in England and Wales only, under the Public Health Acts and Isolation Hospitals Acts, make a definite charge for maintenance in its hospitals, for which it can sue the patient. But it is a personal charge only; the relations of the patient come under no liability.‖ If the patient is a minor it does not appear that any such charge is legally recoverable; and if the patient dies it seems doubtful whether the charge could, in the absence of any agreement, be enforced against his estate. Under these provisions of the Public Health Acts and the Isolation Hospitals Acts, all sorts of arrangements are made by different authorities for the recovery from the patients of a part or the whole of the cost of their maintenance and medical treatment. In a few towns, in the cases of some or all of the patients, the patient himself, or the father or other responsible person, is invited to enter into an agreement for the payment of various sums, any such specia contract being in all cases only voluntary. In some towns the patient, without a contract, is charged according to his ability to pay, the rough test being the rateable value of his domicile; under £25 a year free, or a nominal sum; £25 to £50 a year a substantial contribution; over £50 a year the whole cost. This scale is, however, criticised as logically inequitable, those patients who are large ratepayers already contributing in larger proportion to the municipal expenditure than those who pay less in rates. Hence some Local Health Authorities prefer to take income as the test of ability to pay, admitting, for instance, ratepayers earning less than £1 a week free of charge; those earning between 20s. and 30s., at half-a-crown a week; those between 30s. and 40s., at 5s. a week; those between 40s. and 50s., at 7s. 6d. a week; those between 50s. and 60s., at 10s. a week; those between 60s. and 80s., at 15s. a week; whilst those over 80s. are charged £1 a week. Others, again, make a discrimination between local ratepayers and strangers or "visitors"; the latter, as at Romney Marsh, "being asked to pay the entire cost of their maintenance and treatment"; or, as at Bridlington, being charged from 10s. to 40s. according to circumstances, as may be decided by the committee.¶ In another town it is usual to make no charge to local residents having incomes under £2 per week. In the great majority of instances, however, no charge whatever is made, either for medical treatment or for maintenance, in the general wards of the municipal hospitals. Experience soon showed that if it was desired to get these hospitals generally used—and this was most keenly desired in the case of small-pox and other demonstrably dangerous diseases—it was necessary to make them absolutely free. Accordingly, with the approval of the Local Government Board, all attempt to make a charge has been generally abandoned.**

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* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 25553.

† Local Government Board to the Chairman of the Central Poor Law Conference, May 12th, 1877; Seventh Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1877–1878, p. 54; Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 125.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 44421, par. 4.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 68091 (par. 10), 68142–68149.

‖ It has been definitely held that the patient alone was chargeable; a parent is not even chargeable for his child. (*Selections from the Correspondence of the Local Government Board*, Vol. I., 1880, p. 18.)

¶ Scale of charges of Municipal Sanatorium at Bridlington (Yorkshire), 1905.

** Thus, in the municipal hospital of Newcastle, out of 502 patients admitted, 501 came in free, whilst one only was paid for, and that not by himself, but by a private guarantor. (Report on the Health of Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1905, by Medical Officer of Health.) "There was," it is given in evidence, "in Huddersfield an attempt at one time to recover the cost, or to make the people pay. I was always personally strongly against it. My reason was that if people were segregated for the benefit of the community, the community ought to pay for it. It was tried for a short time and given up at last." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 41526.) In Scotland no charge is made, or would be lawful.

"The more enlightened sanitary authorities," says a Local Government Board Inspector, "make no charge for patients in the isolation hospitals, and this is the proper line to take. The cases are not removed as a matter of relief, but for the protection of the public health. All classes of the community are made to contribute to the support of the hospitals, and all classes are entitled to the benefits they confer. Directly a payment is imposed an influence adverse to the use of the hospital is introduced. The great object in view is to do everything possible to get all the cases which cannot be effectively isolated at home into hospital at the earliest possible date. It is by this means that the patients stand the best chance of favourable treatment, and that the spread of disease is stopped at once."* Parliament has expressly sanctioned this view, so far as the Metropolis is concerned, first by a provision in the Diseases Prevention (London) Act of 1883,† and then, in 1891, by omitting from the Public Health (London) Act of that year, ‡ all provisions as to making a charge or recovering any contribution.

On the other hand, a few Town Councils make charges for the use of their Municipal Hospitals at such prohibitive rates as to cause them to remain practically empty. Thus, at Shrewsbury, the Town Council admits persons suffering from infectious disease to its Isolation Hospital, the only one in the whole county, upon terms of their finding their own doctor and nurse, providing their own food and other necessaries, and paying, in addition, 20s. per week during their stay by way of rent. The result is that the Hospital usually stands empty; and cases of scarlet fever and enteric fever, like diphtheria and measles, have to be treated at home, however little possibility of isolation there may be. Even the local Board of Guardians (that of Atcham) has to treat paupers suffering from infectious disease in the General Mixed Workhouse, "in the midst of a community of four or five hundred, many of whom are children," § rather than comply with the prohibitive terms by which the Shrewsbury Town Council chooses to nullify the intention of the statute. This would be incomprehensible in Scotland.

The more usual adoption of the principle of gratuitous admission to the Municipal Hospitals does not mean that none of the inmates contribute to their maintenance. At the Brighton Town Council's Sanatorium for Consumption, there are among the patients some paying as much as 30s. a week. These are allowed private bedrooms. In other cases even more may be charged, in return for particular privileges, such as a special nurse. The Town Council of Eastbourne reserves four of the pavilions of its hospital for the Eastbourne schoolmasters' and schoolmistresses' associations, for the admission of the pupils of their expensive private boarding schools, in return for retaining fees of £150 and £180 per annum respectively.|| What is most remarkable is that the Town Council often obtains payment for the admission to its hospitals of precisely the very poorest class of patients. The Local Government Board has decided that the Public Health Authority is under no obligation to provide hospital accommodation for the not inconsiderable proportion of the inhabitants of its district who happen to be destitute. For these persons, whether already in receipt of Poor Relief or not, it is the duty of the Board of Guardians to provide what is necessary, even in cases of infectious disease.¶ Accordingly, some Public Health Authorities refuse to admit to their hospitals Workhouse

* Thirty-third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1903–1904, Appendix B., p. 179, Mr. Fleming's Report.

† 46 and 47 Vict., c. 35.

‡ 54 and 55 Vict., c. 76. By a curious anomaly, the cost of each patient, although not a pauper, is still charged to and paid by the Board of Guardians of the Union in which he resides; and the amount is then repaid to the Board of Guardians from the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund. (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 21315 (par. 17), 24223.)

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 70186 (Par. 3), 70193–70201.

|| Report on the Health of Eastbourne, 1905, by Medical Officer of Health, pp. 3, 10.

¶ "When a person suffering from illness, including infectious disease, is destitute, it is the duty of the Guardians, or, in the interval between their meetings, of the Relieving Officer, to give such relief as the case may require, and if necessary to give an Order for the admission of the patient to a hospital in which he can be properly treated. . . . The test of the Guardians' duty in the matter is the destitution of the patient, and this will not necessarily depend upon his being in the actual receipt of poor relief, but may consist in his being unable to obtain at his own cost the requisite medical attendance, nursing and accommodation. Where it devolves upon the Guardians to deal with cases of infectious disease which require hospital accommodation, they are not restricted to providing for the treatment of such cases in the Workhouse. On the contrary, the Board consider it very desirable that the Guardians should arrange with the Sanitary Authority for the reception into their hospital, when necessary, of any destitute persons suffering from infectious disease upon such terms as may be mutually agreed upon between the Guardians and the Authority, and that this arrangement should include cases occurring among the inmates of the workhouse." (Local Government Board to Holbeach Board of Guardians, March 15th, 1905.)

inmates (including occupants of the casual ward) suffering from infectious disease. In other cases they have agreed to receive such patients only on payment by the Board of Guardians. The status of the patient so admitted, his liability to refund the cost of his maintenance, and the obligation of his relations to contribute in default, as we have already mentioned, all depend, in law and in practice, on the particular character of the voluntary arrangement entered into between the Poor Law and Public Health Authorities. In those Unions in which the Board of Guardians prefer to pay a fixed annual sum, which ranges in fact from £2 (as at Yeovil) to £300 (as at Bristol)—as also in those Unions in which the Public Health Authority admits the Poor Law patients, like others, free of charge—the pauper admitted to the Municipal Hospital thereupon instantly ceases to be a pauper; and neither he nor his relations are liable for any part of his cost, or subject to any stigma or disqualification. On the other hand, in those Unions in which the Board of Guardians pays at a rate per head—sometimes as much as 7s. per diem—the pauper patient, lying in the general ward among non-pauper patients who are admitted free, remains a pauper; he is liable to repay the full cost of his maintenance; he is disqualified for the franchise; and his relations are liable to contribute. Thus, we have the paradox that under the present conflicting jurisdictions of the Poor Law and Public Health Authorities, it is in respect of the most destitute of its patients that the Public Health Authority recovers the most; whilst when such most destitute patients or their relations contribute —being perhaps the only patients who contribute at all—they nevertheless remain paupers, subject to a stigma and to disqualifications from which those patients who are maintained and treated wholly free of charge are entirely exempt.

(c) Charge and Recovery for the Maintenance of Children by the Education Authority and the Police Authority.

With the almost universal abolition of fees in the Public Elementary Schools, the Education Authority has given up the bulk of the charges that it formally made on parents for the education of their children. In the rapidly extending field of Secondary and University Education, so far as the institutions are maintained by the Local Education Authorities, the charging of substantial fees (which do not, however, cover more than a fraction of the cost) is almost universal. This is mitigated by an abundance of Scholarships, usually carrying whole or partial maintenance, as well as free schooling, by means of which somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 of the poorer children, including a few who are or have lately been in receipt of Poor Relief, are now being educated. What is more nearly akin to the practice of the Destitution and Public Health Authorities is the provision of maintenance in residential schools, and the charges made for it.

So far as the residential institutions of the Education Authorities of Secondary or University grade are concerned (boarding schools, pupil-teacher centres or training colleges), admission is purely a matter of voluntary agreement, the fees charged are usually received in advance, and, if not paid, they are recovered only as civil debts. But, for the most part, the pupils at these institutions are maintained and educated free of charge, as a method of training teachers.

In London and some other large towns where there are residential schools for mentally or physically defective children, the parents are required by the Council to pay 1s., 2s. or 3s. per week towards their maintenance, which charges are in practice agreed to by the parents, and are then recoverable as civil debts. Where the parents are really unable to pay (and this is, in London, the case only in about one-eighth of the families) no charge is made. There are even some scores of blind or deaf children "boarded-out" by the London Education Authority, so that they may reside near schools suitable to their needs; and in these cases the parents are charged a weekly sum. Taking the whole of the defective children thus provided for by the London Education Authority, paying and not paying, a sum of 11d. per week for each child was, in 1906–7, actually collected from the parents.* In the day schools for blind, deaf or crippled children in London, which contain nearly 3,000 boys and girls, meals are provided for all the pupils, towards which the parents are required to make a weekly contribution for the cost of the food; and an average of 1d. per day per child is thus collected.

On the other hand, for the 100,000 children who, as we have seen, were supplied with meals last winter under the auspices and largely at the expense of the Education Authorities,

* Report of the London County Council (Education Committee) . . . dealing with schools for blind, deaf, etc., children, for 1906–1907 (No. 1183 of 1908).

practically nothing is charged to or recovered from the parents. In a large number of cases—in London alone about 1,600—the families are simultaneously in receipt of Outdoor Relief from the Destitution Authority; in a small number they are being relieved of the maintenance of one or more children by the Industrial Schools of the Education Authority or the Reformatory Schools. There is no co-ordination, or even mutual knowledge of these various activities; and if the Education Authority were seriously to attempt to recover the cost of the meals, we should have the curious anomaly of three different authorities endeavouring to collect charges from the same family.

For the 30,000 children maintained in the schools under the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts, by County and County Borough Councils and by voluntary Committees under the supervision of the Home Office, the parents are required, by magistrate's order, in about 40 per cent. of the cases, to make some weekly payment, usually of 1s., 2s. or 3s. each, according to their means. The practice is to leave a definite sum per head, over and above the rent, for the family maintenance, and to limit the order to such payment as can then be afforded out of the wages. In about 30 per cent. of the cases, mostly those in which there are no discoverable parents, or the parents are absolutely destitute, no order for payment is made. The payments are generally collected by the police, acting as the agents of the Home Office, and are paid in to the Exchequer.* Failure to pay can be followed by an order by the magistrate committing the defaulting parent to prison for a short term—not, as in the case of the Board of Guardians' recovery of Relief on Loan, on proof of means, for Contempt of Court—but in mere consequence of the failure to pay, without evidence of means, as if the amount due had been a fine or penalty.

We have had suggested to us that Destitution Authorities should be given the same powers of collecting their personal assessments, by putting summarily into prison, without any evidence of means, those who fail to keep up their weekly payments, as is used by the Home Office in the case of payments for children in Reformatory and Industrial Schools. It must be remembered, however, that in the latter cases, the charge itself is made by a judicial authority, after inquiry into means, not by a mere resolution of an administrative body; and that it is to some extent in the nature of a penalty upon the parent for allowing his child to become liable to be detained in a Reformatory or Industrial School. Moreover, we gravely doubt the advantage of putting a man in prison merely because he does not pay his debts. We have ourselves come across cases—though we believe that the Home Office endeavours in all such instances to excuse payment—in which, whilst the agents of the Home Office were exacting a weekly payment from the father, the local Board of Guardians was having to relieve him and his family as destitute—was, in fact, partly supplying, week by week, from the Poor Rate, the money which was being collected from him for the Exchequer. In other cases we have found the family reduced to pauperism, because the father had been committed to prison for non-payment of such a contribution for a child in an Industrial School.†

(D) The Need for Uniformity of Principle and Judicial Adjudication in Personal Assessments.

The foregoing survey of the process of charge on and recovery from individuals of the cost of maintenance, by all the various Local Authorities concerned, reveals a lack of principle and uniformity, and a chaos of careless laxity and arbitrary oppression, which are demoralising alike to the Authorities themselves, to their officers, and to the persons upon whom these special assessments are levied or not levied. The first need appears to be the adoption by the Legislature of some definite principle according to which these special assessments should be made, and its uniform application, by express enactment,

* In London, Bristol, Salford, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee and Aberdeen, the Home Office has special agents, and does not use the police.

† Of the cases heard by one of our Committees at a single meeting of a Board of Guardians, "two were cases of parents having been sent to prison for the non-payment of the maintenance of their children in an Industrial School. In one case the father was actually in receipt of relief when committed to prison, and during his imprisonment the whole charge for the maintenance of his family fell upon the Guardians." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 3, p. 112.) In another Union, our Committee reported the case of an "outdoor labourer, earning about 12s. a week, with wife and three children at home," who "had been sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment at the instance of the Police Authorities because he had neglected to contribute to the maintenance of his eldest two boys, aged respectively seventeen and fifteen, who are in a reformatory, to which they had been committed after conviction for theft. This seemed to us to be a particularly hard case. The ages of the boys are such that they should be earning their livelihood (or at least part of it), but instead of this being so, their father was suffering imprisonment on their account, and the Guardians were having to keep the wife and three children. [The father] was said to be a most respectable, quiet living man." (*Ibid.*, No. 51 B., p. 105.)

to all the various kinds of services. At present, there is no common or consistent principle discoverable in the medley of clauses in the different statutes of the past three centuries, defining the pecuniary obligations of individual citizens for services rendered by the Local Authorities to themselves or their relations. We do not mean merely that some of these public services are, by law, made gratuitous, like elementary schooling and ordinary sanitation, whilst others, such as compulsory residence in a lunatic asylum, or the treatment of illness in a Poor Law Infirmary, are made the subject of personal assessments on the patients themselves and even on their relations. Some such differentiation among services, so that some are gratuitous and others charged for, is plainly only reasonable; though here, we think, it would be well for the Legislature to reconsider the anomalies into which it has been led. What, however, is urgent is the adoption of some uniform principle, with regard to charging or not charging, throughout the whole of each service, whether it is administered by one Local Authority or by another. Thus, in the maintenance and treatment of sick persons in the Isolation Hospitals maintained out of the Poor Rate, the Metropolitan Asylums Board cannot charge even the patients themselves, however rich they may be; outside London, the Public Health Authority may treat any disease, and insist on payment from the patients in its hospitals, however poor they may be, but cannot make a charge on any of their relations—not even upon fathers for their dependent children; whilst the Destitution Authority may recover the cost of those sick persons whom it treats, whether they are suffering from infectious disease or not, not merely from the patients themselves, but from their relations—even from a grandfather for a grandson whom he has never seen. A similar diversity prevails in the liability of parents to contribute towards the support of their young children, according to whether the children fall into the hands of the Poor Law Authority, the Education Authority, or the Police Authority under the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Acts; the legal powers of recovery being far more drastic in the last case than in the first. Moreover there have crept into the law certain anomalous procedures which require to be considered. One of these is the device of Relief on Loan, established under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, and, strangely enough, limited to the Authority which can lawfully deal only with persons who are destitute, and therefore the very last to whom credit should be given. This legalised procedure of empty threats, and deterrent clogs on the performance of the service, appears to us wholly injurious, and ought to be at once abolished.

The inconsistencies of the law with regard to these personal assessments are, however, less important in their demoralising partiality than the chaos of arbitrary inequalities that prevails in the administration. This chaos results from leaving the decision, as to whether or not these personal assessments should be made, to the unguided discretion of innumerable administrative bodies, occupied with heterogeneous services, with different views as to policy, and having shifting memberships.

There is, first of all, the absence of co-ordination among the different Local Authorities with regard to their decisions as to personal assessments. It is nothing short of scandalous that the Education Committee of the Town Council should be putting a father in prison for not contributing to the maintenance of one of his children in an Industrial School, at the very moment that the Board of Guardians is granting him Outdoor Relief to maintain his other children.* It is equally absurd for a Board of Guardians to be levying a contribution on a man for the maintenance of his aged father, whilst the Education Committee is exempting him, on the ground of poverty, from paying for the meals supplied at school to his hungry children. It does not seem reasonable that the Medical Officer of Health should be supplying an infant with milk and medical advice absolutely free of charge, whilst the Asylums Committee is insisting on being paid by the father for the maintenance of the mother as a person temporarily insane. Still more objectionable is it that the practised and unscrupulous "cadger" can get help free of charge from all the different Authorities in the town—his children fed and medically attended to at the school, his wife gratuitously taken in for her confinements at the Workhouse, and his own ailments cured in the comfortable hospital of the Public Health

* In the Report of "the Lord Mayor's Unemployed Committee" at Liverpool, for 1905, we read that "a good deal of unnecessary suffering is caused by the action of the Education Committee in sending men to prison for arrears of Industrial School, and other dues. The Committee dealt with a considerable number of families who were left with no one to provide for them whilst the father was in gaol; in one case, we paid the arrears."

Committee—all without any of these public authorities necessarily having any knowledge of what the others are doing. It is imperative that there should be in each locality at least a common register of these different forms of public assistance of one and the same family.

But the existence of a common register of public assistance, to which all the Local Authorities of the area concerned had easy access, though it might prevent the overlapping due to ignorance of each other's activities, would not cure the inconsistencies of policy and inequalities of execution of the different Local Authorities, with regard to the personal assessments levied on the families with whom they dealt. In such a matter we do not think that the policy of charging or not charging ought to be left to be determined by the Local Authority at all. The charge is a compulsory levy, to be enforced by all the power of the law. These special assessments upon individuals in respect of particular services, as to the acceptance of which they have practically no option, amount, in reality, to taxation; and taxation is a matter upon which, if only for the sake of geographical uniformity, the decision of the Legislature should prevail. It is, for instance, inequitable that in one Welsh town the Public Health Authority should be maintaining a free hospital for the gratuitous treatment of all ailments whatsoever, whilst in an English town on the Welsh Border, the Public Health Authority levies a charge of almost prohibitive amount for the treatment even of scarlet fever cases. It is inequitable that in one Union a lax Board of Guardians should be allowing negligent parents to thrust their children into expensive Poor Law schools absolutely free of charge, whilst, in the very next Union, compulsory contributions are rigorously levied for all children in the Workhouse, even (in Great Britain, but not in Ireland) on grandfathers in the position of agricultural labourers.

The work of adjudicating upon particular cases—of assessing how much each person should pay, or whether he should be excused on the ground of poverty—appears to us no less unsuitable for a local administrative body than the general decision of whether or not the tax should be levied at all. Whether the policy to be pursued is determined by Parliament or by the Local Authority, its application to individual cases, according to the evidence adduced with regard to each, is work for which a many-headed tribunal, mutable in its membership, is inherently and inevitably wholly unfitted. We do not need to repeat what we have said on this point with regard to the decision whether or not a particular case comes within the rules entitling it to receive Outdoor Relief. The same considerations—the need for excluding neighbourly partiality, personal friendship, individual idiosyncracies or personal views as to policy, and for avoiding variations in decisions according to the presence or absence of this or that member—apply with doubled force when what is at issue is whether the case comes within the rules, not for the grant of money but for the levying of a tax. Nor are these arguments affected by the substitution of a nominated for an elected body. When the levying of taxes on individuals is at stake, a nominated committee is even less satisfactory than one resting upon the authority of popular election. But there is an additional argument, in this matter of charges or personal assessments, against the performance of the work by an administrative committee. With regard to Outdoor Relief at present, the same body that awards it orders its issue. With regard to the charges to be made on individuals, the administrative body which tells a man that he must pay cannot itself enforce the payment. For this purpose the Local Authority must have recourse to a judicial officer—it may be (as under the Elizabethan statute or under the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Act) for a magistrate's order charging a definite sum per week; it may be (as in the recovery of Poor Law relief from the recipient, and Relief on Loan) by way of civil suit in the County Court. The magistrate or County Court Judge before whom the case happens to be brought has to exercise his own discretion, and inevitably sometimes takes a different view from that of the administrative body, either as to the legal liability, or as to the policy of making a charge at all, or as to what constitutes means of repayment. This division of authority enables many to escape payment who expected to be made to pay; and this brings both the law and the Local Authority into contempt. Thus, it seems desirable that the Authority deciding, according to the law and policy otherwise determined, upon the charges to be made upon particular individuals, ought itself to have the power, by whatever means are lawfully appropriate, of actually enforcing the payment. It is clear that such powers of enforcing payment could not be granted to an administrative committee.

These arguments apply, it will be seen, equally to the charges or personal assessments made by the Local Education Authority and the Local Health Authority, as to those made by the Destitution Authority. Moreover, as all the Local Authorities may be

dealing with the same persons, or the same families, it seems essential that the work of adjudication, in this matter of personal assessments, should be performed for all of them by a common Authority—in fact, by one and the same officer, specially versed in the law, and acting in a judicial capacity. The same officer might appropriately be placed in charge of the common register, to which we have already referred, of all the public assistance, whatever its kind, afforded to the residents within his district.

(E) Conclusions.

We have therefore to report :—

1. That the existing provisions of the law for charging to, and recovering from, particular individuals, the cost of various forms of public assistance afforded to them, to their dependents or to other persons for whom they are legally liable to contribute, are confused and inconsistent with each other, and are based on no discoverable principle.

2. That the practice of the multifarious Local Authorities, with regard to charging or recovering the cost of public assistance, varies, for identical services rendered to persons in identical economic circumstances, from place to place, from case to case, and even from time to time in one and the same case, according to the idiosyncracies of the members who happen to be present at successive meetings.

3. That the confused and uncertain state of the law, and the haphazard conflict of practice, lead to hardship and oppression on the one hand, and to demoralising laxity on the other ; the net result being that a serious loss of revenue is incurred, the law-abiding citizen paying, and the habitual " cadger " escaping scot-free ; with the additional absurdity that the patient for whom the cost is repaid is often classed as a pauper, whilst other patients suffering from the same disease get wholly gratuitous treatment and retain their *status* of citizenship.

4. That we recommend that a Departmental Committee should be appointed to consider the whole question of what forms of public assistance can properly be made the subject of these " Special Assessments," and upon what persons these assessments should be made ; in order that the law may be amended on some definite principle, and consolidated by Parliament into a single statute.

5. That the duty of determining what Special Assessments are due according to the law, and from whom, together with the decision whether the person liable is of sufficient ability to pay, and the duty of enforcing payment by proper legal process, ought to be entirely separated from the work of administering the public assistance ; and it would be most suitably undertaken, for all the forms of public assistance afforded in a given district, by a salaried officer of adequate *status*, appointed by and acting under the County or County Borough Council, but unconnected with either the Health, Education, Mentally Defectives or Pension Committees.

6. That we wholly disapprove and condemn the practice of some Boards of Guardians in England of varying the treatment, or threatening to vary the treatment—offering the Workhouse, for instance, instead of Outdoor Relief—in respect of persons entitled to relief from them, with a view to extracting contributions from other persons, whether or not these are legally liable for the payment. We think that it should be definitely laid down that the kind and amount of relief or assistance granted in any case should be determined solely by a consideration of the circumstances of the applicant or patient himself, and ought never to be made dependent on whether somebody else fulfils, or does not fulfil, a legal or moral obligation.

CHAPTER IX.

Settlement and Removal.

Closely connected with the conception of Charge and Recovery of the cost of the relief or treatment afforded by Local Authorities is that of Settlement and Removal.

(a) The Game of "General Post."

As the law now stands, a Board of Guardians in England and Wales, whilst bound to afford relief in some form to every destitute person within the area of the Union of whose destitution it becomes aware, is empowered, under certain circumstances, to obtain from the Justices an order for the compulsory removal of the person relieved to his "parish of settlement," where the responsibility for his maintenance falls upon the Board of Guardians of the Union in which that parish is situated.* This legal provision for safeguarding Destitution Authorities against having to maintain paupers who do not "belong" to their districts, has, from 1795 down to 1900, been so far modified by successive statutes, and is now so far left unutilised by the increasing good sense and humanity of the Destitution Authorities, that the number of cases in which paupers are compulsorily removed is probably less than at any previous date.† Thus, a settlement in a parish in England and Wales is nowadays acquired, not only by birth there, but also by apprenticeship, the ownership of real estate, renting a tenement or paying rates there, or by being the child or becoming the wife of a person having a settlement there, and even by mere residence there for three years. Moreover, even if a settlement has not been acquired, whole classes of paupers cannot legally be removed. There can, of course, be no removal of a person whose settlement is unknown and cannot be ascertained. There is no power to remove mere Vagrants relieved as such. No person can be removed who has continuously resided for one year within the Union in which he applies for relief.‡ A widow cannot be removed for one year after her husband's death in the parish.§ Finally—most important exception of all—no warrant can be granted for the removal of any person relieved in respect of sickness or accident, not only unless the sufferer is fit to be moved, but also not unless it is expressly certified by the Justices that they are satisfied that the sickness or accident will produce permanent disability.‖ Hence, a very large proportion of the pauper population are, in practice, for one reason or another, outside the sphere of removal altogether. The result is that the expense now incurred in the administration of the law as to Settlement and Removal, and especially the cost of litigation among different Destitution Authorities as to which of them shall bear the expense of maintaining particular paupers has steadily decreased. Nevertheless, there are to this day, in England and Wales alone, upwards of 12,000 poor persons actually deported annually, under compulsory orders, and often against their will, from one Union to another—occasionally from one end of the Kingdom to the other; a form of "exile by administrative order" which in some cases causes great hardship. The various stages of this process of shifting citizens—not to the places in which they are wanted, or where they would be most useful, but simply to the

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 351–358.

† In Scotland, where the Law as to Settlement is more complicated than that of England, removals appear to be less frequent, in spite of the division of the country into no fewer than 874 separate settlements and rating areas, owing to a greater liberality in the grant of non-resident relief, and to the policy of the Local Government Board for Scotland in holding that such non-resident relief ought to be granted, instead of removing the pauper, whenever removal is not "reasonable and proper," and that in such decision the "wishes of the pauper himself to continue in the parish of residence" are not to be "lost sight of." (Rules, Instructions, etc., of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1907, p. 202.) No such consideration for the paupers' wishes has been officially enjoined in England. There is even (since 1898) an appeal by the pauper (and by the parish of settlement) to the Local Government Board for Scotland, against the projected removal; and there are one or two such appeals monthly. This appeal is available also in the case of projected removals from Scotland to England or Ireland; but there is no corresponding power of appeal in the converse case. (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 53068 (Pars. 143–182), 53510 (Pars. 93–103).) Ireland is unfortunately situated under the law. Any person of Irish birth, who has not acquired a settlement in Great Britain, and has not resided five years there, may, if he becomes chargeable to the poor rate, be compulsorily removed to the Irish Union to which he belongs. There is no corresponding power of removal to Great Britain of any person of English or Scottish birth who becomes chargeable in Ireland; and this inequality of treatment is naturally made matter for complaint. (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, Cd. 3202, 1906, p. 13.)

‡ 28 and 29 Vict., c. 79, sec. 2.

§ 9 and 10 Vict., c. 66, sec. 2.

‖ *Ibid.*, sec. 4.

parishes in which they are deemed to have their legal "settlement"—absorb, in every Union, a large amount of official time; and in some large Unions there are even officers wholly devoted to the service.* "A large amount of preliminary clerical work," we are told, "is involved in ascertaining the particulars of the chargeability of these cases; in eliminating those who cannot at the time be legally removed on account of their suffering from sickness of only a temporary character; and in making a separate oral examination as to the previous history of each case taken in hand. In addition to which there are numerous cases in which expert personal inquiry by the Settlement Officers in towns and villages in both near and distant parts of England are essential, in order to gather evidence on which to base applications to the Magistrates for the removal of paupers elsewhere."† The Manchester, Chorlton and Prestwich Unions have accordingly agreed, for the past twelve years, not to raise any question of settlement as among themselves. Nevertheless, the cases investigated in Manchester alone exceed 3,000 annually. In England and Wales the actual expense of removal and litigation alone, without official salaries, cost over £20,000 a year. In Scotland the controversies between the 874 parishes are incessant, and, in spite of arbitration by the Local Government Board for Scotland, there is still an absurd amount of costly litigation on the subject. We estimate that, in the whole United Kingdom, including the cost of the official staff engaged, there is an expense not far short of £100,000 a year still incurred, directly or indirectly, in this troublesome and, from a national standpoint, entirely useless game of "general post," in which each Union succeeds in getting rid of some paupers, at the cost of having others thrust upon it.‡

(B) The Proposal to abolish Settlement and Removal.

It is to be noted that this peculiar arrangement is characteristic of the Destitution Authorities alone, and those only of Great Britain. In Ireland under the Poor Law there is no Law of Settlement, and no power of Removal. Every destitute person is relieved where he happens to be. There is nowhere in the United Kingdom any protection analogous to the Law of Settlement in the case of the services of other Local Authorities, even when these are obligatory. The Local Health Authorities and the Local Education Authorities are under a statutory duty to provide their obligatory services for all local residents, however recent their migration or however transient their stay, without power either of ejecting them from the district or of recovering the cost of their treatment from any other district to which they may be assumed "to belong."

Notwithstanding these facts, if we were proposing the continuance of a general Destitution Authority, we should be in agreement with the majority of our colleagues in not recommending the abolition of the Law of Settlement, nor yet the total abrogation of the power of removal. The Parliamentary experience of the past three quarters of a century, during which innumerable proposals have been made for the abolition of the Law of Settlement, shows that any such proposal, though often popular at first sight, arouses after a short time considerable apprehension in many, if not in most, districts. The Metropolis becomes concerned about the possible attraction of poor persons from the country. The rural districts become alarmed at a possible "backwash" of worn-out persons from the towns. The seaports fear the influx of destitute seamen and travellers, who could not be passed on to their inland homes. The result has hitherto always been an irresistible opposition to the proposed reform.

We are even more impressed by the possible dangers of an abolition of the Law of Settlement, in its effect on the minds of local administrators. The gross evils, existing both in the institutional and in the domiciliary treatment of the poor, that we have described in the preceding chapters, make it imperative that great improvements should be effected in nearly all districts. Experience shows that it will be more difficult to induce Local Authorities to effect those improvements, especially in the cases of the aged, the sick, and the children, if it can be alleged in opposition that the expense to be thereby thrown on the local ratepayers will cause an influx of destitute persons from other districts to enjoy the new advantages. We think that it would prejudice the chances of securing the reforms which are, in our judgment, essential to the well-being of the community, if all barriers against such an influx were simultaneously to be removed. Thus, any con-

* In the three adjacent Unions of Birmingham, Aston, and King's Norton, as we were informed, no fewer than five officers are wholly occupied with the service of Settlement and Removal. (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 43877–43879.)

† Seventh Annual Report on the Work of the Relief Department (Manchester) for the year ending March 27th, 1897.

‡ "It is absurd," said the Chairman of a Board of Guardians, "to keep an expensive army of officials to move people from place to place throughout the Kingdom." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 43566 (Par. 9).)

tinuance of a general Destitution Authority makes it necessary to continue the Law of Settlement and Removal. Hence, whilst we cannot but feel that it is an immense advantage that, under the scheme of reform to which our conclusions in respect of each service in turn have irresistibly led us, the Law of Settlement and Removal, being exclusively a Poor Law provision, would automatically cease to exist, we have still to consider to what extent and in what way provisions analogous to those of the Law of Settlement and Removal need to be instituted to give the necessary safeguards to the administration of the several specialised services, under different Authorities, that we recommend as the successors of the Destitution Authorities.

(c) The Provisions necessary in the Reformed Administration.

We may note, in the first place, that the provision for the aged by a National Pension Scheme, especially if the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908 is amended as we propose, will, in itself, remove a large and constantly increasing proportion of the aged from any application of the Law of Settlement and Removal. As the provision for the aged pensioners comes out of national funds, no Local Authority will be affected by any migration of these old people. And we must here mention that, when in Part II. of this Report we deal with the different sections of the Ablebodied—the Vagrants, the adult male inmates of the ablebodied wards of the General Mixed Workhouses or Poorhouses, and the Unemployed—we shall have to recommend that the expense of providing for them should fall upon the National Exchequer. In their cases, too, we may assume generally that few questions as to Settlement will arise. Moreover, with the classes who will remain a local charge—the infants and children, the sick and mentally defective, the infirm and the aged unprovided for as National Pensioners—the substitution of the County or County Borough, for the Union or Parish, as the unit of administration and of rating, will, in itself, enormously diminish the number of cases in which any question of Settlement would need to occur, or in which any removal would take place. We find at present, for instance, that in the Metropolis nine-tenths of the Settlement cases occur between two Unions, and will not arise when the services pass to the County Authorities. Everywhere, we are informed, the great majority of the cases arise with closely adjacent Unions, most—though of course, not all—of which would, under the new organisation, form part of the same County Service.

(i.) *Safeguards for the Local Health Authority.*

It will be found that, under the scheme of breaking up the Poor Law that we propose, a majority of the persons at present maintained by the Destitution Authorities—the mothers in the lying-in wards, the infants under school age, the sick and the infirm of all kinds, and the institutionally-treated aged—will fall to the charge of the Local Health Authority. That Authority has at present nothing in the nature of a Law of Settlement. Whatever it provides in the way of sanitation and health visiting, milk dispensaries and hospital accommodation, it provides for all who happen to be residing within its district. Moreover, as we have seen, even under the Destitution Authorities, the Law of Settlement and Removal has practically no application for the sick, as distinguished from the permanently incapacitated.* It might accordingly well be argued that, even with the enlarged sphere of the Local Health Authority of the future, there would be, especially in a County Service, no need for any such safeguard of the local ratepayer.

We do not altogether share this view. We believe that in the vast majority of cases no question of eligibility will be raised; especially if, as we recommend, a substantial Grant-in-Aid from the National Exchequer is paid expressly in respect of the cost of the work of the Local Health Authority. Nevertheless, we are so much impressed with the importance of removing all possible hostility to the provision of suitable institutional treatment for the sick that we are inclined to propose that the Local Health Authority should be empowered, in respect of certain of its services, to confine its benefits (except on adequate payment), if it thinks fit, to those who have resided for not less than twelve months in the district. This proposal relates entirely to specialised institutional treatment. It is clear that, for a long time to come, some Local Health Authorities—notably those of London, Liverpool, and Manchester, and many other of the County Boroughs—may be expected to provide specialised hospitals and sanatoria which will be in advance of those of

* In Scotland, it has been made a condition of Medical Relief Grant-in-Aid, that "neither a participating parish nor the Medical Officer of that parish is entitled to recover from another participating parish the cost of medical attendance." Thus, the Law of Settlement and Removal has been virtually abrogated so far as the Outdoor sick are concerned, with general contentment. (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 53510 (Par. 93).)

the majority of the rural Counties. It will be possible, in a large town, to provide such specialised treatment for disease after disease. The necessary institutional provision for tuberculosis, for instance—with the vital importance of which we have been deeply impressed—is not likely, for many years to come, to be made everywhere to the same degree of adequacy. Even at present the Local Health Authority sometimes makes a special charge to persons not belonging to its district. The Brighton Town Council, for instance, does not necessarily admit to its Municipal Hospital for Tuberculosis, free of charge, patients coming into Brighton from the surrounding villages; in fact, it does not admit any patient who has not, immediately before admission, resided for two years within the Borough. Unless some corresponding provision is made with regard to all the various forms of specialised institutional treatment, it will, we fear, be difficult to persuade Local Health Authorities to make those progressive developments on which the health of the community depends. We propose, therefore, that whilst (following the precedent set by the conditions of the Scottish Medical Relief Grant) it should be made a condition of the Grant-in-Aid of the expenditure of the Local Health Authority that no question of past residence should be raised with regard to the domicillary treatment of the sick, or with regard to the admission of patients to the general infirmaries or similar institutions of its district, or to the admission of urgent cases anywhere, the Local Health Authority should not be legally bound to admit to any specialised institution that it may establish, except in cases where the refusal of admission would involve risk of death, any but persons who have resided there for not less than twelve months next previously to their application. For any other persons admitted, whether in cases of urgency or by agreement, there should, we think, be power to make a charge (or an extra charge over and above that made to local residents) equal to the net cost of the service, abstraction being made of any Grant-in-Aid. Power should be given to the Local Health Authority of the district to which the patient belongs to pay the charge thus made if it chooses to do so. In default of payment, the admission of the patient to the specialised institution might be refused, or if already admitted he might be removed, under much the same formalities and with much the same safeguards as under the present law, either to the local general infirmary, or to the specialised institution of the district to which he belonged. We think that the same law should apply to all parts of the United Kingdom.

(ii.) *Safeguards for the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective.*

With regard to the Mentally Defective of all grades, the case is more simple. We see no reason why the same condition of eligibility—one year's residence as applied to persons certified to be of unsound mind, and who are maintained in a County or Borough or District Board Asylum, should not be applicable, alike as to chargeability to other districts and as to removal, to all the patients placed under the care of the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective whether in England and Wales, Scotland, or Ireland. The adoption of the County or County Borough, instead of the Union or Parish, as the unit of residential eligibility and of rating, will, however, enormously reduce the number of cases in which any question will occur.

(iii.) *Safeguards for the Local Education Authority.*

At present the Local Education Authority in Great Britain provides for all the residents within its district, and nothing akin to the Law of Settlement has any application. It is, however, protected in England and Wales against having to provide schools for other than residents by the power to exclude those who live in one area and wish to go to school in another, unless the Local Education Authority concerned will contribute towards the cost. It is also protected against the deliberate invasion of its district by children sent by any Destitution Authority to be "boarded-out," by a statutory provision enabling a proportionate contribution to be made towards the cost of providing any additional school accommodation that the invasion may occasion.* In view of the importance of keeping open every possible opportunity of "boarding-out," we propose that this provision should be continued. With regard to the provision for the maintenance of necessitous children, we think it undesirable that any part of the existing Law of Settlement and Removal should be made applicable to the Local Education Authority. The very large Grants-in-Aid from the National Exchequer which that Authority receives in respect of each child may, we think, fairly be held to compensate for any temporary inequality of local burden, first here and then there, that may be caused by the migration of the necessitous child population;

* 63 and 64 Vict., c. 53, s. 2.

and again, following the precedent of the Medical Relief Grant in Scotland, we suggest that it should be made one of the conditions of these grants that (apart from the special provision as to school accommodation for " boarded-out " children) no question as to the admissibility or eligibility of children born elsewhere but actually resident in the district should be raised.

(D) CONCLUSIONS.

We have therefore to report :—

1. That the existing Law of Settlement and Removal, wasteful in its cost and occasionally the cause of hardship to the poor, will, under the scheme of reform which we are proposing, automatically cease to be applicable; and all the statutes bearing on the subject should be definitely repealed.

2. That the assumption of the greater part of the charge for the aged by the National Government, and the proposed transfer to a Government Department of the provision for all sections of the able-bodied, will, in a large proportion of cases, obviate the necessity for raising the question of eligibility of an applicant for public assistance in respect of his previous residence.

3. That the reorganisation of the various services now included in the Poor Law on the lines of a County or County Borough administration under the several committees concerned, with the County or County Borough as the unit for rating, will, in the great majority of cases, render it unnecessary to raise the question of past residence.

4. That with regard to services rendered by the Local Health Authority, it should be made a condition of the proposed Grant-in-Aid that no question of the past residence of any applicant should be raised, except only with regard to admission to any specialised institution; and in the latter case admission may, if thought fit, be confined, except on terms to be prescribed, to persons who have resided in the district for one year—any other persons being, if thought fit, refused admission (except when such refusal would involve danger to life,) and relegated to the General Infirmary, or removed, under proper conditions and safeguards, to the specialised institution of the County to which they belong.

5. That (beyond the retention of the power to contribute towards school accommodation for " boarded-out " children) there is no need for any question of past residence to be raised in connection with the work of the Local Education Committee; and this should be made a condition of the Government Grants.

6. That whatever provisions are made in this respect, there should be identical and reciprocal rights as between England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

CHAPTER X.

Grants-in-Aid.

When the various Local Authorities providing for the poor have recovered what they can from the persons benefited, and from those liable for their support, and when they have, as among themselves, adjusted the burden as far as is permitted by the Law of Settlement and analogous provisions, they are further aided by extensive subventions derived from the National Exchequer. These Grants-in-Aid have, on the various Local Authorities, a three-fold effect, differing according to the amount and the conditions of the subventions. In all cases they relieve the ratepayers in the particular localities of a portion of their burden. In most cases, by the mere selection of one particular service for subvention, and still more by the conditions attached to that subvention, they may specially encourage the increase and development of one kind of expenditure rather than another. Finally, if the grant is, by appropriate conditions, made to depend upon a certain prescribed efficiency, and on the sanction of the Central Authority, a greatly increased effectiveness may be given to the power of suggestion, criticism and control possessed by that Authority. The Grants-in-Aid of the Boards of Guardians and the various Local Authorities making provision for the poor differ greatly among themselves in all three respects; and we have received many suggestions for their improvement.*

So far as Great Britain is concerned, a special complication has been introduced by the changes made with regard to most of these Grants-in-Aid by the Local Government Act of 1888 (England and Wales),† and the Local Government Act of 1889 (Scotland), both of them modified by the Finance Acts of 1907–8 and 1908–9. The total effect of these successive changes has been, so far as the Exchequer is concerned, to substitute, for nearly all the Grants-in-Aid to different Local Authorities, definite lump sums or specific revenues assigned, in England and Wales, to the County and County Borough Councils, whilst requiring these bodies to distribute, on certain fixed principles, Grants-in-Aid to the minor Local Authorities, if any, within their areas. Thus, from the standpoint of the Treasury, the Grants-in-Aid of the Poor Law expenditure of English Boards of Guardians have ceased, being merged in larger payments to the County Councils, etc. So far as the Boards of Guardians are concerned, these Grants-in-Aid still continue, only they are received through the County or County Borough Council, instead of direct from the Treasury.‡ The change was, indeed, made the occasion of a new Grant-in-Aid to Boards of Guardians, both in London and the provinces; but while in the provinces the new grant was payable by the County or County Borough Council out of the lump sums received from the Exchequer, in London the grant (calculated on a different basis) was made payable out of the County Fund, the sums allocated to London being insufficient to meet it.§ And as the balances of these lump sums, if any, are retained by the County Councils for their own purposes, the final effect is that it is virtually on the funds of the County or County Borough Councils that the payment of these Grants-in-Aid now falls, though these funds are subsidised by the Central Government, which retains in its own hands the whole of the control over the service, giving none to the County Council, its intermediary. No such change has been made with regard to the Grants-in-Aid made to the Local Education Authority, to the Local Unemployment Authority, or to the Industrial and Reformatory Schools under the Home Office; nor yet with regard to any of the Grants-in-Aid made to Local Authorities in Ireland. All these continue to be made direct from National Funds, without (in the case of bodies other than Committees of the County Councils, etc.) the intervention of the County Councils, etc. In Scotland too, though definite sums or assigned revenues are paid to a Local Taxation Account, the subventions received by Burgh and Parish Councils, as well as by County Councils, are paid direct to these Authorities. It will, therefore, be convenient for the purposes of this Report, to

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 1239–1244, 1831, 2015, 2052, 2206, 2370–2372, 2449, 2995, 5508, 7642–7651, 7679, 8570, 9482–9494, 9564–9569, 10932, 10933, 11059–11070, 11421, 11422, 12485–12489, 14036, 14095, 14807–14814, 24741, 24930–24939, 24972, 25075–25077, 25245, 28796, 28960–28969, 40085 (Par. 38), 46956–46958, 49303, 49381, 50096, 50132, 52600–52703, and various Appendices to Vols. I., IV., V. and IX.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 305.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 9485, 14682–9.

look at the question from the standpoint of the Local Authorities receiving the Grants-in-Aid, irrespective of whether they are paid direct from the Exchequer, or paid by the County Council out of larger sums received from the Exchequer—thus ignoring all the "Exchequer Contribution Accounts" and "Local Taxation Accounts" and "assigned revenues," by which the whole subject of Local Government Finance has, since 1888, been needlessly mystified.

The Grants-in-Aid received by the Destitution Authorities amount, in the United Kingdom, to nearly three and a half millions sterling per annum, or between one-fifth and one-sixth of the total expenditure connected with the relief of the poor under the Poor Laws. But they differ so considerably in their amount, in their kind, and in their conditions, among the three parts of the United Kingdom, that we can only consider their effects by taking them separately.

(A) England and Wales outside the Metropolis.

The Grants-in-Aid receivable by the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales now amount to more than £2,600,000 sterling annually, payable in five separate grants.*

Grants-in-Aid Receivable by Boards of Guardians in England and Wales.

Grant.	Amount in 1907–8.
	£
Fixed Grant under Local Government Act, 1888 (Sec. 43 for London Unions, Sec. 26 for those elsewhere).	1,350,000
Fixed Grant under Agricultural Rates Act, 1896 - - - - - -	461,000
Four shillings per head per week for lunatics in asylums, etc. - -	800,000
Payments in respect of teachers in Poor Law schools - - - -	25,000
Repayment of school fees paid for children sent from Workhouses to public elementary schools.	2,000
£	2,638,000

In considering the effect of these Grants-in-Aid on the administration, we must omit, for the moment, the Boards of Guardians of the Metropolis, where the position is further complicated by an internal system of local equalisation of rates and the existence of a federal Poor Law Authority.

(i.) *The Relief to the Local Ratepayers.*

Taking first the relief afforded outside the Metropolis to the local ratepayer, we have to note that, owing to the arbitrary manner in which the two principal fixed Grants were allocated, and the changes that have taken place in the last two decades, the amount and the proportion of the relief varies enormously from Union to Union, and that it bears no relation whatever to the policy or to the relative efficiency and economy of the Boards of Guardians. The amount by which the rates are lowered owing to the whole of these Grants-in-Aid appears to be less than 1d. in the £ in the Fylde Union; less than 2d. in the £ in the Lancaster and Bootle Unions; and less than 3d. in the £ in some other Unions. On the other hand, owing to these same Grants-in-Aid, the ratepayers in the little Caxton and Arrington Union find their burdens lightened by nearly 1s. 6d. in the £; and those in Fordingbridge and Anglesea Unions by more than 1s. in the £. In the little Union of Longtown the total Grants-in-Aid now amount to over 58 per cent. of the expenditure of the Board of Guardians; in that of Belford they amount to over 50 per cent.; whilst in some other Unions they come to over 40 per cent. On the other hand, in the Bedwellty Union the whole of the Grants-in-Aid are less than 13 per cent. of the expenditure; in the King's Lynn Union they come to less than 15 per cent.; and in the Unions of Bury St. Edmunds and Great Yarmouth, to less than 18 per cent. The result is that the Poor Rates vary from less than 3d. in the £ in the Fylde and Garstang Unions, up to more

* *Ibid.*, Appendix No. III. to Vol. I.

than 2s. in the £ in the Mildenhall, King's Lynn, Risbridge and Carnarvon Unions.* Whatever may be thought of the policy of contributing a sum of £2,600,000 in relief of the payers of Poor Rate in England and Wales, we cannot conceive of any argument that would justify the continuance of such gross and entirely arbitrary inequalities between Union and Union, not in any way dependent on the conduct of the local administrators, as the present system involves.

(ii.) *Discrimination in favour of Desirable Expenditure.*

The second effect of Grants-in-Aid may be to encourage particular forms of expenditure as compared with others. Here we must ignore the two fixed Grants which are, in effect, made in aid of the Guardians' funds generally, however these are expended.† The three smaller Grants vary according to the amounts expended by the Boards of Guardians on particular services, and thus tend to encourage the growth of these services. One of these Grants, that for the payment of school fees, has with the almost universal adoption of free schools, become of trivial amount.‡ Another, that towards the salaries of teachers in Poor Law Schools, whilst still serving to encourage the Boards of Guardians to staff these schools with more qualified teachers, has, with the continuous tendency to cede the educational work connected with pauper children to the Local Education Authorities, become of little consequence,§ and may even tend to discourage the most approved methods of dealing with pauper children.‖ The other Grant, that of 4s. per head per week for every certified pauper lunatic placed in proper asylums under the care of the Lunacy Authority, still has important results.¶

By paying the grant only for such persons as have been transferred to lunatic asylums, etc., and withholding it in those cases in which the person of unsound mind is retained in the General Mixed Workhouse, Parliament and the Central Authority have striven to

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* *Ibid.*

† *Ibid; see also Qs.* 2449, 9485, 14684, etc. The grants under the Local Government Act, 1888 (Secs. 26 and 43), to the Metropolitan and extra-Metropolitan Unions respectively, purport to have relation to particular forms of expenditure. That for the Metropolitan Unions is professedly fixed as being 4d. per head per day for each indoor pauper (*Ibid., Qs.* 1254-5, 2449, 14684, 14691). But as the grant to each Union was definitely fixed, once for all, in 1888, as it has long ceased to be proportionate to the actual numbers of indoor paupers and as it does not vary with those numbers, it cannot be said to have any effect in encouraging one form of relief rather than another. Similarly, the grant to the extra-Metropolitan Unions was professedly fixed as being the sum paid in remuneration and superannuation allowances of the officers of Poor Law Unions (other than teachers), in the year 1887–8, together with the cost of drugs and medical appliances. (*Ibid., Qs.* 1288, 2010–2011, 2015, 2995.) But being a fixed grant, definitely allocated to each Union twenty years ago, it does not now bear any relation to the total of salaries, etc., and is not affected by any increase or decrease in that item. In fact, the assumed special appropriation of these fixed grants-in-aid of 1888 to particular parts of the Guardians' expenditure, rather than to others, was a mere sham, for which we can see no justification. The grant in respect of the deficiency arising from the provisions of the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, is made to Boards of Guardians as to other rating Authorities. It professes not to be a grant-in-aid of the expenditure of such Authorities, but merely a substitute for the revenue which, but for the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, they would have continued to receive in rates from the occupiers of agricultural land, whose payments were then greatly reduced. (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. III. to Vol. I.). But as it is a grant of fixed amount, which now bears no definite relation to the local assessments, and as the new basis of assessment has now become the customary and accepted one, the lump sum annually received by each rating Authority under this head has all the psychological and economic attributes of—and is, in fact—a grant-in-aid of the aggregate expenditure. *See*, to this effect, the weighty argument of Lord Balfour of Burleigh in Final Report (Ireland) of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation (Cd. 1068), 1902, p. 25.

‡ In 1905–6, it was only £585 for all England and Wales.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 4039.

‖ "Instituted in 1848, when all public education was in its infancy, the grant has continued without much alteration down to the present day, except that since 1888 it has been charged upon the County Exchequer Contribution Accounts instead of on Parliamentary Votes. The complete change of policy of the Central Government and the Local Authorities which has occurred in the meantime may be seen from the fact that whereas in 1883 more than two-thirds of the Boards of Guardians educated their children in special Poor Law schools, in 1898 four out of every five Boards sent their children to the ordinary elementary schools. The Local Government Board records with satisfaction every year in its Report the progressive diminution in the number of children in Poor Law schools, and the grant for teachers is also growing smaller. It can thus hardly be maintained that it has operated as an incentive towards the most modern form of administration, and it is now palpably unfair between districts, since those Unions which send their children to ordinary schools get their education paid for largely out of the Parliamentary Education Vote, while the special grant for Poor Law teachers remains a charge upon county revenues, and a charge which in the Metropolis is considerable in amount." (Final Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation (England and Wales), 1901, pp. 82, 83; Separate Recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.)

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 305, 1236, 2688, 2372, 3004, 7642, 7643, 7679, 7680, 9490, 11063–11070, 12485, 14036, 14096, 14621–14624, 14740, 24741, 25069–25077, 25245, 28796, 40085, 50096, 52700–52703.

encourage that elimination of lunatics from the Workhouse which is so desirable.* Under this encouragement, the number of paupers of unsound mind in the asylums of the County and Borough Councils has risen from 16,369 in 1859 to 85,990 in 1906. So far the Grant may be said to have attained its object. It has, however, as has been forcibly represented to us, three grave defects. It offers a standing inducement to Boards of Guardians to get people certified as persons of unsound mind who are not really lunatics or idiots, merely as a means of getting rid of them from the General Mixed Workhouse, and obtaining the Grant in respect of them. We have had it brought to our notice † that some Unions, particularly those in which additional Workhouse accommodation would otherwise have to be provided at great cost, make a practice of sending to the very costly "mental hospitals" of the County and Borough Councils a large number of aged men and women who are suffering only from the feeble-mindedness of senility, and who ought not properly to be certified to be of unsound mind.‡ This result is due, in great measure, to the arbitrary separation of some classes of mentally defective persons from others; to the putting of some under the Lunacy Authorities and leaving others to be dealt with only by the Destitution Authorities; and to the confining of the Grant-in-Aid to some only of these classes of the mentally defective whilst withholding it from others.§ On the other hand, where there is ample Workhouse accommodation, the sum of 4s. has proved insufficient to bribe the Boards of Guardians to remove even those who are really lunatics or idiots from the General Mixed Workhouse.‖ Especially in the country Workhouses, where the actual expenditure per head on food and clothing is only 4s. or 5s. per week, there is, even counting the 4s. grant, still a considerable additional expenditure to the Union involved in sending the lunatic or idiot to the County Asylum, where the charge made to the Board of Guardians is usually about 12s. per week. Hence, as we have ourselves seen in our visits, and as has been stated by many witnesses, many lunatics and idiots are still, out of motives of mere parsimony, kept in the General Mixed Workhouse, where they mix freely with the other inmates, even with the children, where they are often the cause of annoyance, sleeplessness and disgust to their associates, and where they themselves can neither be scientifically treated nor properly cared for. The number of certified lunatics and idiots in the General Mixed Workhouses has, in the last fifty years, even increased from 7,963 in 1859 to 11,151 in 1906. Owing to the insufficiency of the rate, this Grant of 4s. per head per week has therefore failed—and still fails—to get the ordinary Destitution Authority to see the necessity of doing anything more than "relieve the destitution" of the harmless lunatic or the village idiot, who accordingly remains in the General Mixed Workhouse, to his own hurt and the annoyance of the other inmates.

The third defect of the Lunacy Grant is of another character. By a condition, for which we do not see any reason at all, the grant of 4s. is only allowed in those cases in which the weekly cost of the lunatic's maintenance, *after deducting sums recovered from relations, or otherwise,* is not less than this sum.¶ The result is that if, as is usually the case, the asylum charge is 12s. a week, a Board of Guardians is under no inducement to get relations to contribute more than 8s. a week, as anything more than that will not benefit the Board of Guardians or the local ratepayer. Nay, more; if the relations pay a shilling or two per week more than will just leave 4s. to be borne by the Union, the

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 2367–2370, 14036.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 2372, 12485, 14036, 14095, 14857, 24741.

‡ "With regard to pauper lunatics the present grant has, no doubt, secured a great improvement, not only in the lot of this unfortunate class, but also in that of the other paupers from whose society they have been removed. On the other hand, by its action in offering inducements to Boards of Guardians to send to asylums as many paupers as possible, it is stated that many cases are now unnecessarily receiving asylum treatment." (Final Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation (England and Wales) 1901, p. 82; separate recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.) We cannot refrain from adding that the practice by which, in some places, certain of the officers of the Union obtain fees and emoluments from all the cases in which persons are certified to be of unsound mind, is open to the objection that it offers an improper inducement to those officers to get persons so certified. We consider that all such work should be covered by inclusive salaries.

§ The recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, advocating the total withdrawal from the Destitution Authority of all the mentally defective of every kind, include a proposal for the substitution, for the present 4s. grant for lunatics and idiots, of one applicable to all kinds of mentally defective or epileptic persons. (Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 337.)

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2370, 7643, 24741, 25077.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 305, 1236, 14621–14624, and Appendix No. XXVII. (Par. 4) of Vol. I.

Union will actually lose by their liberality, as it will have to bear the whole balance itself, and will not be able to draw the 4s. grant.* The result is that the relations' contribution tends to be restricted as a maximum to what will just leave a balance of 4s. to be borne by the public.† We have ourselves heard cases discussed by Boards of Guardians in which, for this very reason, the amount to be contributed by relations has been deliberately restricted. Incidentally, this course serves to maintain the stigma of pauperism in cases where the lunatic's estate or relations could furnish the entire cost of maintenance. It is not generally known that, if this were done, the patient would no longer be classed as a "pauper lunatic."

We see, therefore, that there is, on several grounds, the most urgent need for an alteration in the Lunacy Grant. And whilst the selection for a special Grant-in-Aid of the particular service of providing for certified lunatics and idiots has led to these equivocal results, no attempt has been made so to arrange the Grants-in-Aid as to encourage other developments which the Local Government Board has been, for several decades, pressing in vain on the Boards of Guardians. Whilst wishing devoutly to get the children out of the General Mixed Workhouses, the Local Government Board has (outside the Metropolis) made no suggestion that any Grant should be made dependent on the number of children more properly provided for. Whilst striving continuously to get the provision for the sick brought more up to the level of contemporary hospital administration, the Local Government Board has (outside the Metropolis) made none of the Grants bear any proportion to the expenditure on Poor Law infirmaries, or the maintenance of the sick poor, nor made any of them conditional on the local arrangements for medical attendance and nursing attaining what its Inspectors report to be an adequate standard. The result, as we have seen, is that a large proportion of Unions fall, in these respects, deplorably short of even a decent provision.

(iii.) *Giving Authority to Central Control.*

Finally, we have to consider these Grants-in-Aid to the English Boards of Guardians from the standpoint of their effect on the suggestions, criticisms and authoritative instructions by which the Central Authority seeks to secure greater efficiency and economy of administration. This, indeed, is by far the most important aspect of Grants-in-Aid. The verdict of administrative experience is that, properly devised, they afford a basis for the best of all relations between the National Government and the Local Authorities. A century of experience has demonstrated that it is undesirable for Local Authorities to be subject to no administrative control whatsoever from a Central Authority, for them to be left without independent inspection or audit, without access to centralised experience and specialist knowledge, without any enforcement of the minimum indispensably required for the common weal, and without mitigation of the stupendous inequality of local rates that complete autonomy involves. On the other hand, the grant to a Government Department of arbitrary powers to sanction or disallow, or peremptorily to order this or that, is felt, in this country, to be derogatory to the independence, the dignity and the spontaneous activity of freely elected representatives of local ratepayers, spending their own funds. Such mandatory instructions from a Government Office in Whitehall can be enforced only by cumbrous legal processes; and they have proved, in practice, to give the Government Department little real power over recalcitrant local bodies. It is in vain that Parliament endows the Local Government Board with ample statutory powers—on paper—to compel typhoid-smitten Little Pedlington to provide itself with a proper drainage system and water supply. Little Pedlington flatly refuses, or stubbornly neglects to do so. The Local Government Board, for all its paper powers of coercing Little Pedlington by Mandamus or by independent action in default, finds itself practically impotent; and hundreds of Little Pedlingtons retain to this day their primitive insanitation triumphantly. Very different has been the experience of the influence of a Central Authority wielding the instrument of a well-devised Grant-in-Aid. Between

* "Therefore, when maintenance is 11s. 4½d. per week, and the Guardians assess the contributions by relatives at 7s. 6d. per week, the grant is forfeited. If they make it 7s. 4½d., it is allowed." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXVII. (A), Par. 4, to Vol. I.)

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14621–14624, 14740. The imperfections of the Lunacy Grant are officially admitted. "I can only account," said Mr. Davy, "for the fact that the grant has been allowed to remain as it is by the fact that there are three bodies responsible for it; I mean to say the Home Office, the Lunacy Commissioners, and the Local Government Board. If the whole matter had been in the hands of one Department, I do not think that grant could have existed, because I think it can be demonstrated that it has resulted in a loss to the ratepayers." (Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 283; Statement by Mr. Davy, Chief General Inspector to the Local Government Board.)

1830 and 1856 there was felt to be urgent need of a well-organised constabulary force in the provincial boroughs and counties. By the Act of 1835 Parliament attempted to make it compulsory on the Municipal Boroughs to establish such a force. In the Counties the Justices were empowered to establish one. In both Boroughs and Counties the constabulary remained weak and inefficient. By an Act of 1856 the establishment of an efficient force was not only made everywhere obligatory, but what was far more important, the Government agreed to contribute one-fourth—after 1874, one-half—of whatever expense the locality incurred on its police force, provided that the Home Office was satisfied, after inspection, that the force was adequate and efficient. Under this combination of pressure and inducement, all the provincial police forces have steadily improved, rapidly rising, indeed, to a common level of adequacy and efficiency. At every inspection the defects have been pointed out in a way that could not be ignored. The mere intimation that, unless these shortcomings were, somehow or another, remedied before the next annual inspection came round, the Secretary of State might have to consider the propriety of withholding a portion of the grant (now the certificate without which the Exchequer Contribution cannot be paid), has usually sufficed to induce the Local Authority—not necessarily next month, but gradually, in due course—to effect more or less of the necessary improvements—not necessarily in exact compliance with any Government pattern, but with the fullest sense of local independence, exercising its own judgment in its own way, and often apparently on its own initiative. In the course of fifty years, though the official criticisms have been incessant, and though the Home Office has not been afraid, in, at any rate, one bad case of recent years, actually to withhold the Government contribution, it has seldom been necessary to take this course. Of legal proceedings, by Mandamus or otherwise, to compel a recalcitrant Local Authority to do what the statute required there has, in this matter of providing a constabulary force, been no question.

Let us now examine the Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure of the English Boards of Guardians from this point of view. What authority does this sum of two and a half millions annually give to the suggestions, criticisms and orders made for the promotion of efficiency and economy by the Local Government Board? We have to report that in practically the whole realm of Poor Law expenditure, no use is made of the Grants-in-Aid, as a means of affording the much-needed additional strength to the directions of the Central Authority. In this important respect the existing Grants-in-Aid are—with the partial exception of the small sum in respect of teachers' salaries—entirely useless. The two fixed Grants (amounting to £1,350,000), and even the 4s. a week for lunatics and the trifling recoupment of school fees, are made in no way dependent on the Boards of Guardians fulfilling, as a whole, even their statutory obligations, let alone attending to any criticisms of the Local Government Board.* A Board of Guardians may be flatly defying the Local Government Board—refusing to build a Poor Law Infirmary, when the mortality in the overcrowded insanitary Workhouse is excessive, retaining the children without segregation in the General Mixed Workhouse, giving or refusing Outdoor Relief against the whole spirit of the authoritative Orders, stinting the Medical Officer in salary and drugs, and appointing an altogether inadequate staff of nurses—and the Local Government Board has nevertheless unquestioningly to watch a huge Grant being paid over, amounting often to half the total expenditure which is being thus incurred in the locality in defiance of its authoritative criticism and advice. Thus, the present Grants-in-Aid of the Boards of Guardians stand, in this respect, wholly condemned. We can see no justification whatever for the community as a whole having to provide this large proportion of the expenditure of Local Authorities who, as many Boards of Guardians do, deliberately and persistently disobey the instructions, or flout the authoritative recommendations of the Central Authority which Parliament has established in order to get carried out the policy decided on by the community as a whole. It has become axiomatic that, to ensure progress, Grants-in-Aid should in all cases be made dependent on efficiency of administration.† A locality that, to the detriment of efficiency, rebelliously insists on its own autonomy, should, at least, be left to bear its own burdens.

(B) The Metropolis.

In the Metropolis, the arrangements with regard to the Grants-in-Aid receivable by the Boards of Guardians are even less satisfactory than elsewhere. In addition to the two fixed grants, and the 4s. grant for lunatics and the grant for teachers that we have described, the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians receive also what are, in effect, two

* Evidence before the ommission, *Qs.* 1831, 5508, 9486, 9564–9569, 11059, 11070, 11421, 11422, 14807–14814.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 5508, 9426, 9564–9569, 11059, 11070, 11421, 11422, 14807–14814.

additional Grants-in-Aid, by the operation of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund * and the existence of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. By the former arrangement, the cost of certain specified parts of Poor Law administration in each Metropolitan Union, (the salaries, etc., of officers, the net cost of lunatics in the county asylums, the maintenance of paupers other than children in the Workhouse or infirmary to the extent of 5d. per day, the maintenance of children in Poor Law schools or "boarded-out," the erection as well as the maintenance of the Casual Wards,† and the whole cost of medicines and surgical appliances) were made chargeable to a common fund, which was provided annually by equal assessment according to the rateable value of each Union. This has a two-fold effect. To every Union in the Metropolis, rich or poor, it amounts to the same thing as a Grant-in-Aid in respect of the particular services charged on the fund, each Board of Guardians being credited with more, if it develops those particular services rather than other services. But as the fund is raised by precepts on all the Unions according to rateable value, the two-thirds of the Unions that are relatively poor receive an actual subvention of some £400,000 a year in aid of their general funds and in relief of their local rates. The total amount charged on the Common Poor Fund now approaches one and three-quarter millions sterling annually, being one-third of the total expenditure in the Metropolis under the Poor Law. Much the same financial effect is produced by the existence of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, an independent Poor Law Authority which maintains, not only asylums for pauper idiots, and schools for pauper children suffering from ringworm, ophthalmia, etc., but also hospitals for infectious diseases, maintenance in which is now, by statute, not deemed Poor Law relief. As the expenditure of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, now exceeding a million a year, is now, in effect, all levied on the Unions in proportion to their rateable value, and not in proportion to the use that they severally make of its various institutions,‡ these institutions are, in effect, open to Boards of Guardians gratuitously; that is to say, no Union and no Board of Guardians pays more because it sends more cases. Thus, to the extent that they relieve each particular Board of Guardians of the cost of maintaining pauper idiots, pauper children, or patients in the infectious diseases hospitals who would otherwise be paupers, the existence of these virtually free institutions is equivalent to a Grant-in-Aid, though at the expense of the London ratepayers generally, to that Board of Guardians for these particular services.

The effect of these elaborate, complicated and very extensive Grants-in-Aid upon the finances of the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians can only be described as extraordinary. They amount, in the aggregate, to no less than 70 per cent. of the total Poor Law expenditure of the Metropolis.§

(i.) *The Relief to the Local Ratepayers.*

Taking the various Grants-in-Aid together,‖ the relief thereby afforded to the local ratepayer in the different Unions varied in 1907–8 from as much as 3s. 5d. in the £ in St. George's-in-the-East, 2s. 4d. in the £ in Bethnal Green, over 2s. in the £ in Stepney, and 1s. 9d. in the £ in Poplar, down to practically nothing in Wandsworth and Hammersmith. On the other hand, the Grants-in-Aid to half-a-dozen of the Metropolitan Unions, whilst financially assisting certain forms of relief as compared with others, resulted (owing to the "equalisation" provisions) in a positive increase of the Poor Rate, which involved an additional charge of a few pence in the pound, and in the City of London Union of as much as 7d. in the £. The Boards of Guardians of St. Saviour's, Southwark, St. Pancras, and Bethnal Green, find themselves bearing locally less than a quarter of what (apart from their fixed quota to the Common Poor Fund) they themselves spend in Poor Relief, whilst the Board of Guardians of the City of London Union bears a burden equal to the cost of all the Poor Relief that it dispenses. The Rate that has actually to be levied for the relief of the poor in the different unions (in addition to a uniform 9d. in the £ for the Common Poor Fund and 5d. in the £ for the Metropolitan Asylums Board) varies from less than 2d. in the £ in the Westminster Union and less than 4d. in the £ in the Paddington,

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 310–313, 3413, 3418, 4623, 14817–14880, and Appendices No. XXVII. (A), and XXVIII. to Vol. I.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 14817.

‡ We omit minor complications, of which there are many. Thus the Boards of Guardians are charged by the Metropolitan Asylums Board so much per patient belonging to the Union, and they actually pay these amounts. But as the amount so paid by each Union is charged to the Common Poor Fund the financial effect to each Union is (at the cost of much unnecessary book-keeping) precisely the same as if no charge were made. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14706–14711.)

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 14825, and Appendix No. XXVIII. (Par. 57) to Vol. I.

‖ Leaving aside the rate of between 5d. and 6d. in the £, levied practically on all Unions alike for the common charges of the Metropolitan Asylums Board.

St. Georges, Hanover Square, and Hampstead Unions, up to as much as 1s. 6d. in the £ in Hammersmith, 1s. 8d. in the £ in Mile End Old Town and St. George's-in-the-East, and to as much as 2s. 6d. in the £ in Poplar—even after Poplar has been aided to the extent of 1s. 9d. in the £.

(ii.) *Discrimination in Favour of Desirable Expenditure.*

Turning now to the influence exercised by these Grants in encouraging or discouraging particular services or forms of relief, we notice that the throwing upon the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund of the cost of all the Poor Law officers and fivepence per day per adult indoor pauper, including those in the Poor Law infirmaries, and the omission of any similar subvention to Outdoor Relief, affords a considerable encouragement to Indoor as compared with Outdoor Relief.* Whatever may be thought of this result in the abstract, we cannot avoid the conclusion that it is largely due to this peculiar arrangement of the Grants-in-Aid that the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians have been induced to incur enormous expenses for the erection and maintenance of gigantic Workhouses and Poor Law Infirmaries, and that the whole cost of Poor Relief in London, however computed—whether per pauper, per head of population or per £ of rateable value—is proportionately far in excess of that incurred in any other part of the Kingdom.† Similarly the placing upon the Fund of the whole cost of maintenance of the Poor Law Schools, and refusing all subvention to children in the Workhouse, whilst distinctly discouraging the retention of children in the General Mixed Workhouse, has greatly promoted the development in the Metropolitan Unions of the most costly of all the alternative methods of providing for the children, namely, the residential school.‡ It is a minor consequence of the arrangement of the Metropolitan Grants-in-Aid that they actually discourage the provision of proper accommodation for children who are sick. As the Poor Law infirmaries are technically Workhouses, the establishment in these institutions of the most ideal ward for sick children brings no Grant, whilst if the sick children are sent to, or retained in, the Poor Law residential schools, where they ought not to be, the whole of their cost is borne by the Common Fund.§ Finally, we may observe that the effect of the Grants-in-Aid in actually restricting the contributions of relatives, that we have already described outside the Metropolis in the case of the Lunacy Grant, *is seen in London to operate over the whole field of indoor pauperism.* Instead of allowing each Board of Guardians to retain, for the benefit of its own ratepayers, whatever sums could be recovered from relations of paupers in the Workhouse, Poor Law Infirmaries and residential schools—which would seem to be the course most calculated to encourage the exaction of such contributions—all such contributions have now to be credited to the Common Poor Fund, in which the pecuniary interest of any particular Union is small and scarcely noticeable. The result, we are told, is to check the efforts that the Boards of Guardians might otherwise make to exact contributions where these ought to be paid.|| The throwing upon the Fund of the whole expense of the Casual Wards and of the relief of Vagrants has the effect of discouraging any particular Board of Guardians from attempting, by the maintenance of a strict regimen, to deter persons from applying to its Casual Ward; and at the same time does nothing to discourage any Board from maintaining so lax a regimen as to attract to its Casual Ward as many Vagrants as it will hold. The arrangements for persons of unsound mind amount, in effect, to relieving each Board of Guardians of the whole cost of this class of paupers, and throwing the cost upon London as a whole, provided they are sent, either as lunatics to the asylums of the London County Council or, as imbeciles or idiots, to those of the Metropolitan Asylums Board. There is, accordingly, a great encouragement to get these paupers (and any others whom the doctors can be induced to certify as of unsound mind) out of the Workhouses,¶ but no encouragement to any proper discrimination between those who should be sent to the institutions of the London County Council and those who should be sent to the institutions of the Metropolitan Asylums Board; with the result that, whilst all Metropolitan Boards of Guardians get what seems to be an unduly large proportion

* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14674, 14794.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1572, 1573, and Appendix No. II. to Vol. I.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14671–14673.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14651, 14652, 14828, and Appendix No. XXVIII. (Par. 27) to Vol. I. It is one of the minor absurdities that those Unions which have combined to form "Sick Asylum Districts," maintaining a joint infirmary called a "sick asylum," can charge children in it to the Common Poor Fund, even though there is no separate children's ward, whereas those Unions which provide the best possible accommodation in a separate Infirmary cannot do so. (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 14828.)

|| *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14653–14658, 14763–14768, 14821–14825, and Appendix No. XXVII. (A), Par. 23, to Vol. I. The total amount recovered from relations, and from the property and repayments of the paupers themselves, for the whole Metropolis, was, in 1902–1903, only £22,083, or only slightly over 1d. for every £ expended.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14857–14861.

of their Workhouse inmates certified as persons of unsound mind,* some of them class these predominantly as lunatics and others predominantly as imbeciles or idiots.

(iii) *Giving Authority to Central Control.*

On the most important point of all, the extent to which the Grants-in-Aid enable due control to be exercised over the expenditure, the position in the Metropolis is, with regard to one of the Grants, a shade better than elsewhere. The fact that the approval of the Local Government Board is required to the charging of any item to the Common Poor Fund, would seem, in theory, to give that Department an opportunity for exercising a really effective control over all the branches of expenditure charged to the Fund. So far as the matter is not governed by statute, it would seem as if, by refusing to sanction the charging to the Fund of officers' salaries otherwise than according to the scale which it prescribed, or of the cost of any Casual Ward not maintained in exact accordance with its regulations, or of the five-pence per day each for indoor paupers in any workhouse that is overcrowded, the Local Government Board ought to be able, in the Metropolis, to attach a sanction to its instructions and suggestions that is elsewhere lacking. We cannot say that we are convinced that the Local Government Board has made the fullest use of the power which its control of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund affords.† However disobedient and recalcitrant during all these past forty years has been a Metropolitan Board of Guardians, however scandalously overcrowded and insanitary its Workhouse, however gross the scandal of its "barrack school," however harsh or however lavish its policy of Outdoor Relief, however lax its Casual Ward, however deficient its arrangements for the sick poor, *never once—as Sir Hugh Owen informed us—has the Local Government Board made use of the power entrusted to it by statute of declaring the Board of Guardians to be in default, and of withholding its share of the Common Poor Fund.*‡ Whether by reason of some defect in the regulations, or of some defect of organisation in the Local Government Board itself, it is clear that practically no use has been made of the potent instrument of Grants-in-Aid as a means of giving authority to the central control that, on paper, exists. On the other hand, the fact that so enormous a proportion of the expenditure of Metropolitan Boards of Guardians is borne otherwise than by the rates that they themselves impose, and that the conditions of most of the subventions received by them are so framed as to give no control to the Authority by which they are paid, will unquestionably have had an even greater effect in encouraging lavish expenditure than is elsewhere the case.§ On all counts, therefore, the present arrangements for the Grants-in-Aid of the Metropolitan Boards of Guardians—good as they were in their intention—must be condemned as nothing short of fantastic in their absurdities, and grossly inequitable in their results.

(c) Scotland.

The Grants in Aid of the Parish Councils in Scotland, which amount to £244,000 a year, or nearly one-fifth of the total expenditure connected with the Poor Law are, in many respects, analogous to those of Boards of Guardians in England and Wales.

Grants in Aid of the Expenditure of Parish Councils in Scotland.

Grant.	Amount in 1907–8.
	£
Fixed Grant to Parish Councils in respect of the deficiency in the Poor Rates arising from the operations of the Agricultural Rates (Scotland) Act, 1896.	58,500
Relief of Rates Grant (total fixed) - - - - - - - -	50,000
Poor Law Medical Relief Grant (total fixed)- - - - - -	20,000
Lunacy Grant (total fixed) - - - - - - - - - -	115,500
Total - - - - - - - - - - -	244,000

* We must note again here the undesirability of the existing arrangements under which Medical Officers have, in the fee which they receive for examining each case, a direct pecuniary interest in getting as many persons brought before them as possible as being presumably of unsound mind. We think that payment by inclusive salary should as soon as possible be substituted.

† *See*, for instance, *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14639–14643, 14712–14715, 14771–14776, 14779–14788.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 14818–14820.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 14791.

There is the same kind of fixed Grant in respect of the deficiency of revenue arising from the operation of the Agricultural Rates Act, a Grant which, as in England and Wales, is now essentially one in aid of the expenditure generally. There is a second Grant of £50,000 made in relief of the local rates, and distributed among the Parish Councils, and thereby differing from all the Grants in England, Wales and Ireland, partly in proportion to their valuation and partly in proportion to their population. This, too, so far as any relation to the Parish Council expenditure is concerned, is a fixed Grant. There are two other Grants, now received, like those of England and Wales, out of the Local Taxation Account, which, though fixed in total for Scotland as a whole, are allotted among the Parish Councils in proportion to their expenditure on particular services. Thus, the Poor Law Medical Relief Grant of £20,000 a year is annually distributed among such Parish Councils as have complied with the prescribed regulations, which include the appointment of legally qualified medical officers at fixed salaries, and the expenditure of at least a prescribed minimum amount on Medical Relief. The Grant is distributed in such a way as first to defray practically half the cost of the trained sick-nursing in Poor-houses, and then to be shared *pro rata* according to the total expenditure of the various parishes on Medical Relief. This comes, in effect, to a Grant to each Parish Council of about one quarter of its expenditure on that service. Similarly, the Lunacy Grant, fixed at £115,500, is shared among all the Parish Councils *pro rata*, according to the total net expenditure incurred on the maintenance of pauper lunatics, not exceeding 8s. per week. This comes, in effect, to a Grant to each Parish Council of about two-fifths of its expenditure on pauper lunatics.

We have now to consider what is the result of this system of Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure of the Scottish Parish Councils, in the three ways of reducing the burden on the ratepayer, encouraging one service rather than another, and strengthening the influence for efficiency of the Central Authority.

(i.) *The Relief to the Local Ratepayers.*

We note, to begin with, the same extraordinary diversity and inequality in the relief afforded to the local ratepayers as in England and Wales, but carried even to greater extremes, as Lord Balfour of Burleigh has pointed out. "One Scottish parish may by some fortunate circumstance have within its boundaries an amount of rateable property out of all proportion to its needs, while another may be composed of property which represents a taxable capacity inadequate for the barest needs of civilisation. For instance, the parish of Temple, in Midlothian, has a gross valuation of over £44 to each inhabitant, whilst Barvas, in Ross and Cromarty, has only 9s. per inhabitant, and 1d. rate will, therefore, produce nearly 100 times as much per inhabitant in Temple as in Barvas."* This inequality is frequently not mitigated, but actually increased, by the distribution of the subventions from the National Exchequer. To quote again Lord Balfour of Burleigh: "The parish of Ettrick, in Selkirk, which is almost wholly agricultural, has an assessable value of nearly £20 per inhabitant, and is, in this respect, one of the wealthiest parishes in Scotland. Its expenditure upon Poor Relief is equal to 9s. 4d. per inhabitant, an amount which is considerably above the average for the whole of Scotland, but which, owing to the high assessable value, would involve a rate of less than 6d. in the £, even if it received no assistance from central funds whatever. Notwithstanding these circumstances it receives grants (including those under the Agricultural Rates, &c., Act) from the Local Taxation Account, amounting in the aggregate to more than one-half of its expenditure, and representing 5s. 1d. per inhabitant—one of the largest amounts, if not the largest amount, throughout Scotland. Of the total it appears that about one-quarter, or 1s. 2d. per inhabitant, is derived from the 'grant in relief of parochial rates,' and with this and the other grants the Poor Rate is reduced to less than 3d. in the £.

"The parish of Old Monkland (Lanark), which is partly within the burgh of Coatbridge, has less than one-quarter of the assessable value per inhabitant possessed by Ettrick, and administers its Poor Relief much more economically, having an expenditure equal only to 4s. 2d. per inhabitant, or less than one half of the amount spent in Ettrick. But notwithstanding the more restricted resources and greater economy in Old Monkland, the parish only receives grants amounting to 8d. per inhabitant, a sum which is only just over one-half of the amount granted to Ettrick under the head of 'relief of rates' alone, and is left with a rate of 8¾d. in the £." †

* Final Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation (Scotland), 1902, p. 33. (Recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Lord Blair Balfour.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Since the date of Lord Balfour of Burleigh's Report, the inequalities seem to have become even more extreme. There are more than fifty parishes in Scotland to-day in which the result of the Government Grants, quite irrespective of parish property or "mortifications," church collections or voluntary contributions, is to relieve the local ratepayer of more than one-half of the burden of Poor Relief—in nearly a dozen cases going so far as to enable a Poor Rate on occupiers * to be entirely dispensed with. On the other hand the ratepayers of the little parish of Glendevon (Perthshire) only got, in 1906–7, £1 in Government Grants towards their expenditure of £32; those of Stranraer (Wigtonshire) only £126 towards an expenditure of £1,283; those of Blantyre (Lanarkshire) only £492 towards an expenditure of £4,720; whilst those of Glasgow, Leith and Aberdeen on the one hand, and Polwarth (Berwickshire), Dalziel (Lanarkshire) and Kirkintilloch (Dumbartonshire) on the other, found themselves relieved only to the extent of one-seventh or one-eighth of their respective burdens. As a consequence it may occasionally happen that, in a particular year, a fortunate Parish Council may need to levy no Poor Rates at all, either on owners or occupiers, as was actually the case with the Dunsyre (Lanarkshire) Parish Council, though without either "mortifications" or voluntary collections, in 1906–7, whilst nine other parishes had no rate on occupiers and only a fraction of a penny on owners; and whilst hundreds of other parishes found their Poor Rates reduced to only a few farthings or a few pence in the £, the Parish Council of Barra (Inverness-shire) had a Poor Rate of 9s. 6d. in the £, (4s. 2d. on owners and 5s. 4d. on occupiers); that of Lochs (Ross and Cromarty) one of 12s. 3d. in the £, (5s. 9d. on owners and 6s. 6d. on occupiers); that of Barvas in the same county one of 13s. 8d. in the £, (5s. 8d. on owners and 8s. on occupiers).† Such stupendous inequalities, dependent as they are on the assessable value of the parishes,‡ bear no relation to the relative population, area, or industrial character of the parish—still less, to the economy or efficiency of the Parish Council—and need only to be stated to be condemned.

(ii.) *Discrimination in Favour of Desirable Expenditure.*

With regard to the encouragement of particular services or particular forms of relief rather than others, we may note that, in Scotland, a much larger proportion of the total Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure of the Parish Councils is framed so as to achieve this end than is the case with the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales. Of the total sum of £244,000, more than half is accounted for by the Lunacy Grant of £115,500 and the Medical Relief Grant of £20,000. The Lunacy Grant, which began in 1875, is so framed as to encourage the certification of paupers as being of unsound mind, as the larger the proportion of lunatics among its paupers, the larger is the Grant-in-Aid that the Parish Council receives. It is not without significance that the lunatic poor, who, between 1868 and 1875, had remained nearly stationary at between 1·8 and 1·9 per 1,000 of the population, have, since the year in which the Lunacy Grant was first payable, increased by leaps and bounds, the proportion rising from 1·9 in 1875 to no fewer than 3·1 in 1907 per 1,000 of the population. Whereas, in 1875, only 64 out of every 1,000 paupers were certified as of unsound mind, there were, in 1907, no fewer than 139 out of every 1,000 so certified.§ This Lunacy Grant is not, as it is in England and Wales, payable only for such persons of unsound mind as are maintained in lunatic asylums; but is payable for all persons of unsound mind maintained by the Parish Councils, whether in asylums, in Poorhouses, or "boarded-out," with regard to whom the General Board of Lunacy are satisfied that proper care and treatment are afforded. Notwithstanding this payment of the Lunacy Grant for lunatics still retained in the General Mixed Poorhouse, to which there is so much objection, we must, in fairness, record that the General Board of Lunacy insists on there being separate "licensed wards," and that a much smaller proportion than in England and Wales of the pauper lunatics—in fact only 782 out of the 15,031—are so retained in Scotland, partly, perhaps, because 2,771 are "boarded-out." We may entirely accept the evidence that has been given

* In Scotland, one-half of the amount required is levied from owners, and the other half (less the amount of the Agricultural Rates Grant) is levied from occupiers. Owing principally to losses by empties and exemptions on the ground of poverty, the assessable valuation of occupiers is usually smaller than that of owners, and hence the rate in the pound often has to be higher.

† For all these statistics, *see* Thirteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland (Cd. 4142), 1907, pp. 153–193. The total rates of Barra in 1905–1906 went up to 17s. 11d. in the £; *see* Reports . . . on the Burden of the existing Rates and the . . . Position of the Outer Hebrides (Cd. 3014), 1906.

‡ "It is somewhat anomalous that at least three of the present grants are still distributed, wholly or in part, in direct proportion to valuation. *This system undoubtedly results in the granting of greater relief to wealthy districts than to poorer districts*, and we trust that it will not again be adopted in any amendment or extension of the grants." (Final Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation (Scotland), 1902, p. 43. Recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, etc.).

§ Thirteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland, 1907, p. xi.

that " the result of the Grant," under the watchful supervision and the incessant suggestions for amendment of the General Board of Lunacy, " has been a great improvement in the care of the insane." * But we think it objectionable that, owing to the selection of this one section of the pauper host for a heavy Grant-in-Aid, there should be so great a temptation offered to Parish Councils to get poor persons certified as of unsound mind.†

The Medical Relief Grant has less equivocal features. Here indeed, as in the English Police Grant, we have an example of a Grant in-Aid operating—because framed upon sensible lines—in such a way as enormously to increase the efficiency of the service selected for encouragement.‡ By means of the deliberately contrived scale of minimum expenditure on the medical service, as well as the requirement (which had not been embodied in any statute as to Poor Relief) that there should be a salaried doctor, which alone entitled a Parish Council to participate in the Grant, its distribution was prevented from being merely a dole to the ratepayer. By making the Grant to each Parish Council not in proportion to its population or valuation but directly proportionate to its own actual expenditure on Medical Relief, with an additional bonus for the provision of trained sick nursing in the Poorhouses, the Central Authority effected " an immediate and lasting improvement in the administration of Poor Law Medical Relief, outdoor and indoor," from one end of Scotland to another. " By means of the Grant, a system of trained sick nursing has been established in Poorhouses ; schools of training Poor Law nurses have come into existence ; and recently the system has culminated in State Certification of Poorhouse Nurses after three years' training and a high class examination. The whole system of Indoor Medical Relief has thus been greatly improved." It is interesting to find the Local Government Board for Scotland itself making it a matter for congratulation—very natural, if rather prematurely optimistic—" that the best Poorhouse sick wards are now as well staffed as the wards of any first-class general hospital." §

Unfortunately, the Medical Relief Grant has one accidental defect. In 1889, when this Grant was, with others, merged in the Local Taxation Account, it was provided ‖ that it should be distributed according to the scale and regulations then in force. This statutory enactment has had the unintended effect of stereotyping the regulations of twenty years ago, so that certain parishes are now unfairly excluded from participation in the Grant, and, moreover, it has not been possible to enlarge its scope so as to encourage such new developments as salaried nurses for the Outdoor poor and probationer nurses in the Poorhouses, or to amend certain technical defects which experience has revealed.¶ What is required is merely to enable the Local Government Board for Scotland to revise the scale and the regulations from time to time.**

It is to be regretted that in no other branch of the Scottish Poor Law than Lunacy and Medical Relief, have the Grants-in-Aid been made to work an equally beneficent improvement. Thus, there is no financial encouragement to the Scottish Parish Councils, as there is to the London Boards of Guardians, to provide for their pauper children otherwise than in the General Mixed Workhouse or Poorhouse. The result is that—

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* Memorandum . . . relating to Exchequer Contributions towards Expenditure on Poor Relief.

† Here, again, we must note that it is objectionable that the officers of the Parish Councils should find it a source of extra emolument to get a pauper certified as of unsound mind. In some parishes the Medical Officers get no fees for lunacy certificates ; in others they get half a guinea each ; in others, again, a guinea, but only in the cases of persons belonging to other parishes. (Report of Departmental Committee . . . on Poor Law Medical Relief (Scotland), Cd. 2022, 1904, Vol. II., *Qs.* 3430–3432, 4383–4399.)

‡ As to the Medical Relief Grant, *see* Report of the Departmental Committee . . . on Poor Law Medical Relief (Scotland) (Cd. 2022), 1904, Vols. I. and II. ; Memorandum . . . relating to Exchequer Contributions towards Expenditure on Poor Relief ; Report of Royal Commission on Local Taxation, 1899, Vol. III., p. 295 ; Final Report (Scotland), 1902, pp. 15–18.

§ Memorandum . . . relating to Exchequer Contributions towards Expenditure on Poor Relief.

‖ Local Government (Scotland) Act, 1889, Sec. 24.

¶ Report of Departmental Committee . . . on Poor Law Medical Relief (Scotland) (Cd. 2022), 1904, Vol. I., pp. 90–96.

** It may be noted that the effect of the ill-considered scheme of distribution of the other Grants in Aid is, to a small extent, actually to counteract the influence of the Medical Relief Grant. At least three of the Parish Councils which get more than half their expenditure from the Government Grants are excluded from participation in the Medical Relief Grant, because their medical service is not up to the minimum standard.

notwithstanding the prevalent belief that Scottish pauper children are nearly all "boarded-out"—there are to be found in the Poorhouses of Scotland at any time, a very large proportion of children under sixteen, numbering, indeed, on March 31st, 1906, no fewer than 1,845; * whilst in London, with a greater population and a greater amount of pauperism, but under the operation of financial encouragement of the removal of children from the Workhouse, there were on March 31st, 1906, only 174 children under sixteen in the Workhouses (other than sick), and only 965 in the sick wards of Workhouses, making only 1,139 in the General Mixed Workhouses altogether.

(iii.) *Giving Authority to Central Control.*

Passing now to the third effect of Grants-in-Aid, the extent to which they strengthen, in the interests of efficiency and economy, the influence of the Central Authority, we need add little to what we have already said. Half the total Grants are, as we have seen, flung out in such a way as to do nothing to improve the relationship of the Local Government Board for Scotland with the Parish Councils. The Lunacy Grant gives the General Board of Lunacy the power to see that the care and treatment of the pauper lunatics are up to a minimum standard, and thus lends a certain amount of weight to its criticisms and suggestions. The Medical Relief Grant has enabled the Local Government Board to get a salaried Medical Officer appointed to attend to the poor of nearly every parish, and to get trained nurses appointed in many Poorhouses, including all the larger ones, but the accidental stereotyping of the regulations of 1889 has prevented the making of further requirements. But, for the most part, the beneficent influence of these Grants has operated automatically from the conditions under which they are payable, rather than from any increased weight that they have given to the influence of the Central Authority.

(D) IRELAND.

The Grants in Aid of the expenditure of Boards of Guardians in Ireland, which amount to £528,000 a year, being no less than 40 per cent. of the total expenditure, offer few points of difference from those in England and Scotland.

GRANTS IN AID OF THE EXPENDITURE OF BOARDS OF GUARDIANS IN IRELAND.

Grant.	Amount in 1907–8.
	£
Fixed (Agriculture) Grant to Boards of Guardians in respect of the deficiency arising from the operation of Clause 48 of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898.	316,731
One-half of Estate Duty Grant (Sec. 3 of Probate Duties (Scotland and Ireland) Act, 1888); total not varying in any way dependent on Boards of Guardians, and allocation among Unions fixed on basis of 1886–1887.	126,055
Medical and Educational Salaries Grant - - - - - - -	85,996
Total - - - - - - - - - - -	528,782

There is the same kind of fixed Grant in respect of the deficiency caused by the relief afforded to the owner of agricultural land, a Grant, which, as in Great Britain, is now essentially one in aid of expenditure generally. There is a second Grant in aid of expenditure generally, varying in total amount according to the yield of the Estate Duties, but in no way dependent on any action of the Board of Guardians, and allocated among the various Unions in a ratio that was fixed, once for all, in 1886–7, and has now ceased to bear any relation to the relative expenditures. These two Grants, amounting to no less than £442,786, or 86 per cent. of all the Grants-in-Aid, have thus the effect of lump sum subventions in aid of the local expenditure, of which they amount, on an average, to as much

* Census of Paupers (Scotland). At one time or other during the year 1906–1907, no fewer than 5,677 children under fourteen were inmates of the Poorhouses of Scotland; nearly a thousand of them for the whole year. (House of Commons Return, No. 284 of 1908.)

as one-third. The third Grant, that in aid of medical and educational salaries, is now limited in total; but, as with the Medical and Lunacy Grants in Scotland, this fixed maximum sum is allocated among the Boards of Guardians in proportion, to some extent, dependent on their own expenditure. The Boards of Guardians may claim for recoupment one-half the duly approved salaries of their medical officers of Workhouses and dispensaries; one-half the cost of medicines and of medical and surgical appliances, obtained in accordance with the regulations; half the salary of one trained nurse in each Workhouse; one-half the remuneration of substitutes of doctors or nurses absent on vacation; and the whole of the duly approved salaries of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in Workhouses. But, by a provision of the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1902, the maximum sum to be received by any Board of Guardians under these heads was fixed at what it actually paid under these heads in 1901–2, so that an enterprising Board, which had then already attained the low minimum standard imposed, may presently find that it has little or no financial encouragement to effect further improvements. Moreover, under the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898, it was provided that if the total sum provided for this Grant proved insufficient to meet the claims, the Grants payable to each Union were to be proportionably abated. This, in fact, happens now every year, so that the amounts payable to each Union (like the Scotch Medical and Lunacy Grants) bear each year a smaller proportion to the Guardians' expenditure on the services which it was desired to encourage. It should be added that the maintenance of persons of unsound mind in lunatic asylums is, in Ireland, entirely divorced from the Poor Law and from pauperism. There is a Grant of £160,000 made direct to the County Councils in aid of this service at the rate of 4s. per week per lunatic, or one-half the net cost if this is a smaller amount.

(i.) *The Relief to the Local Ratepayers.*

Coming now to the results of these Grants in Aid of the expenditure of the Irish Boards of Guardians, we find them, in respect alike of the relief to the ratepayer, of the encouragement of particular services and of the strengthening of the influence for efficiency of the Central Authority, almost exactly parallel with what we have already described for England and Scotland. There are the same heedless inequalities in the extent of the relief afforded to the ratepayers of different Unions, entirely irrespective of their circumstances; whether the test be population, area, poverty, amount of pauperism, efficiency of service or economy of administration. These inequalities between the relief thus afforded to the Irish occupiers appear all the more inexcusable when we realise that it is the unfortunate districts of the West, where it may almost be said that chronic starvation prevails, which are most unfairly dealt with. Throughout the whole of Ireland the Government Grants are arranged almost as if it had been deliberately designed that those districts which needed help most should receive the least assistance, whilst those which required the least aid had this aid heaped upon them in profusion. We have worked out the figures for six of the richest and six of the poorest Unions in Ireland:—

Union.	County.	Death Duty Grant. 1906–7.	Medical and Teachers' Grant. 1906–7.	Agricultural Rates Grant. 1906–7.	Total Grants in Aid. 1906–7.	Population 1901.	Valuation 1906.	Valuation per head.	Grants per head.
		£.	£.	£.	£.		£.	£. s. d.	s. d.
Dunshaughlin-	Meath -	399	332	2,383	3,114	7,979	105,242	13 4 0	7 9
Trim - -	Meath -	485	408	3,568	4,461	13,973	109,054	7 16 0	6 4
Celbridge -	Kildare -	579	456	2,122	3,157	14,225	106,057	7 9 0	4 5
Delvin - -	Westmeath-	316	250	1,717	2,283	8,477	53,200	6 6 0	5 4
Croom - -	Limerick -	597	402	2,677	3,676	10,806	63,836	5 18 0	6 9
Killmallock -	Limerick -	1,477	757	6,104	8,338	25,551	140,273	5 10 0	6 1
Glenties -	Donegal -	669	539	1,059	2,267	33,191	22,314	13 0	1 4
Dunfanaghy -	Donegal -	364	194	392	850	15,781	12,036	15 0	1 0
Belmullet -	Mayo -	504	304	765	1,573	13,845	10,942	16 0	2 3
Oughterard -	Galway -	393	366	921	1,680	17,732	16,053	18 0	1 10
Swineford -	Mayo -	758	490	2,123	3,371	44,162	42,374	19 0	1 6
Clifden - -	Galway -	507	370	1,020	1,897	18,768	19,010	1 0 0	2 0

In the Dunshaughlin Union, amid the rich grazing lands of Meath, where the valuation amounts to no less than £13 4s. 0d. per head of population, the Government relieves the occupier from his burden of local expenditure to the extent of as much as 7s. 9d. per head. In the Dunfanaghy Union, amid the bare rocks of Donegal, the Government relieves the occupier of his local burden to the extent of no more than 1s. per head. There are unfortunate Unions in the West, in which the inhabitants are habitually unable to earn a living (such as Glenties, Swineford and Caherciveen) where the total of Government Grants in aid of the expenditure of the Board of Guardians on Poor Relief does not amount to a third of its cost—these Unions being aided no more than is flourishing Belfast. On the other hand, in some of the districts of Ireland where the valuation per head is highest (such as Dunshaughlin, Delvin, Croom and Celbridge), the fortunate Board of Guardians finds that it has to bear only one-fifth of the amount that it chooses to spend. Nor have these enormous inequalities any relation to the policy, to the efficiency or to the extravagance of the different Boards. Among the Unions where pauperism is relatively high, and the numbers on Outdoor Relief are most considerable, we find the names of those (such as Kilmallock, Navan and Croom) in which the Government Grant is relatively the largest. The result is that whereas some Unions, richly endowed by the Government Grant and spending in Poor Relief two or three times the average for the whole country, escape, whatever their extravagance, with a Poor Rate on occupiers of 6d. or 8d. in the £; others—by what seems almost like a bitter irony, those where the soil is poorest—have (like Belmullet and Dingle) to bear a burden, notwithstanding a starved administration costing only a third or a fourth as much per head as that of some other Unions, of between 3s. and 4s. in the £. We can find no excuse for the continuance of so anomalous and so unfair a distribution of the Government Grants, to which pointed attention was called in 1902 by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Sir E. W. Hamilton and Sir G. Murray,* without any reform being effected; and to which renewed attention has now been called by the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland.†

(ii.) *Discrimination in Favour of Desirable Expenditure.*

In the matter of the encouragement of particular services, the expansion of which is considered desirable, the Grants in Aid of the expenditure of the Irish Boards of Guardians are so arranged as to have the very minimum of effect. Four-fifths of the sum thus paid by the Government has no such discriminating effect at all. The remaining fifth—the Medical and Teachers Grant—had originally a considerable influence in the improvement of the Medical and Educational staffs of the Union. But owing to what seems to have been a wholly mischievous change in 1902, when the expenditure of that year was stereotyped as the limit of the Grant which no Union might hereafter exceed, however much it subsequently developed its medical and educational services, the beneficial effect of the Grant in this respect has diminished, though it still serves as a stimulus to prevent the most backward Unions from sinking below the minimum. There is no financial encouragement given to the Irish Boards of Guardians to provide for their pauper children otherwise than in the General Mixed Workhouse, where they are usually taught as well as boarded and lodged; there is, for instance, no Grant paid in respect of children boarded-out or placed in certified schools; there is no financial encouragement to them to provide more than the minimum of nursing in the Workhouse; there is no financial encouragement to them to give relief to the sick, the widows or the aged and infirm in one way rather than another.

(iii.) *Giving Authority to Central Control.*

On the last, and in some ways the most important feature of Grants-in-Aid, the extent to which they are arranged so as to strengthen the influence for efficiency of the Central

* Final Report (Ireland) of Royal Commission on Local Taxation (Cd. 1068), 1902, pp. 24–27.

† "A rate of 1d. in the £ of Poor Law valuation produces a sum of only £45 11s. 10d. in the altogether rural and very poor Union of Belmullet, County Mayo; a sum of £438 10s. 2d. in the altogether rural but highly valued Union of Dunshaughlin, County Meath; and a sum of £6,515 12s. 7d. in the Union of Belfast, which is mainly composed of the city and suburbs. For the year under consideration the amount necessary for all indoor maintenance, including lunatic asylums and county infirmaries and hospitals, required off non-agricultural hereditaments, a rate of 2s. 3d. in the £ in Belmullet Union, of 4½d. in Dunshaughlin Union, and of 10½d. in Belfast Union. In poor Unions such as Belmullet, the most rigid economy has to be observed; and a patient in the hospitals of such Unions cannot, owing to want of funds, be treated according to what would be regarded as a *minimum* standard in an ordinary well-managed hospital. The peasant in the hospitals of very poor rural Unions necessarily receives much inferior accommodation and diet, if not treatment, to what would be possible in the wealthier parts of the country." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 68.)

Authority, the Grants to the Irish Boards of Guardians are always wholly useless. Four-fifths of the Grants are made unconditionally in lump sums. Thus, an Irish Board of Guardians may go to the utmost limit of contumacy; it may violate in the spirit, if not actually in the letter, all the commands of the law, and all the injunctions of the Local Government Board for Ireland; it may be as extravagant in its expenditure and foolishly lavish in its Outdoor Relief as it chooses; it may set at naught all the advice of the Inspectors; its members may be grossly partial, politically biassed and virtually corrupt in their administration—nevertheless the Local Government Board for Ireland must, by law, unquestioningly hand out, year after year, the funds which provide one-third or one-half—sometimes even four-fifths—of what the Guardians are playing with. Such a position needs only to be stated to be condemned. Nor is the matter much better with regard to the remaining fifth of the total Grants, that in aid of the medical and educational salaries, etc. Here the conditions secure that the appointments and salaries shall have had the approval of the Local Government Board, and that the medicines, etc., shall have been procured in accordance with its regulations. But the Grant is not in any way dependent on the efficiency of either the medical service or the Workhouse school. The doctor may have got very old or taken to drink; the teacher in the Workhouse school may have got worn out in the service and be utterly incapable of keeping the school apace with educational progress—nevertheless the Local Government Board for Ireland must go on paying the Guardians the Grant towards the salaries of officers whom its Inspectors report to have become wholly inefficient.

(E) What should be the Terms of the National Subvention.

We attribute the present chaotic condition of the Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure of the Destitution Authorities mainly to the lack of consideration with which the several Grants have, from time to time, been made. The desire merely to relieve the local ratepayer, or to bring new sources of revenue to the aid of rates on occupiers, has sometimes obscured the object of effecting a greater geographical equalisation of burdens and the still greater importance, as it seems to us, of strengthening the control of the community as a whole over local parsimony or local extravagance. Moreover, it does not seem always to have been borne in mind that, apart from the particular monetary necessity which led to the concession, each Grant-in-Aid necessarily affected, by its amount, its geographical allocation and its conditions, the psychological and financial effects of all the Grants to the same Local Authority that were already in existence. But without dwelling further on these points, we have to observe that part of the evil appears to us to be inherent in the very nature of Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure of Local Authorities charged merely with the "relief of destitution." So long as it could be said that the business of Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, and of Parish Councils in Scotland, was merely to relieve "destitution," it followed that the policy of the Central Authority tended to be one of seeking to diminish their total expenditure; the "best" Local Authority was the one which contrived to spend the least; and any Grant-in-Aid was apt to be looked upon as mischievous encouragement of the unnecessary and positively harmful expenditure that resulted from lax administration.* It is, therefore, natural that, the Grant being regarded as wholly evil in its tendency, no consideration should be given by the Department concerned to the conditions of its distribution. Where the Grant-in-Aid is made to Local Authorities charged with the performance of a specific service, which it is wished to encourage, as is the case with the Education Grant and the Police Grant, in England and Wales, and the Poor Law Medical Grants in Scotland and Ireland, we see the Departments concerned framing elaborate regulations for making the Grant not merely relieve the ratepayer, but also promote the efficiency of the service. We doubt whether it is possible to frame similar conditions for a Grant-in-Aid of the expenditure of a Destitution Authority generally, which would be really effective in promoting efficiency and discouraging a lax administration of Poor Relief. If, therefore, Destitution Authorities continue to exist, there is much to be said for the view that all general Grants-in-Aid of their expenditure ought, as tending, in their hands, merely to local extravagance and inefficiency, to be withdrawn, or, as we should rather say, diverted to other Local Authorities administering services, the development of which it is desired to encourage.

But the very great variations in the weight of the rate-burden imposed upon localities by their administration of the service of Poor Relief, which was declared by the Royal

* *See* the evidence of Mr. J. S. Davy, C.B., Assistant Secretary and Chief Inspector of the Local Government Board, Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 1831, 2206, 2221, 2449, 2691.

Commission on Local Taxation to be predominantly national in character, render it absolutely necessary that Parliament should speedily make provision for the re-arrangement of the incidence of this burden. Such a re-arrangement involves the existence of some central or national fund; and it is not, therefore, practicable to dissociate the present expenditure of Destitution Authorities (to whomsoever it may be transferred) from any scheme of Imperial subventions in aid of local expenditure. In any case those evils of distribution which, so far from mitigating, even increase the burdens of poor districts, should promptly be reformed.

We have, however, already seen that the administration of the Poor Law is becoming more and more differentiated into its constituent services, such as the education of the children and the curative treatment of the sick. We have seen, moreover, that, even within the range of the Poor Law, it is the Grants-in-Aid of specific services, such as the Lunacy Grant and the Medical Grant, which have had the most satisfactory results. We think it is clear that, whatever subventions from national revenues may from time to time be accorded in relief of the local ratepayers, these should always take the form, not of general grants, but of Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure on particular services, or particular methods of administration that it is considered desirable to encourage, relatively to other services or other methods of administration.

(i.) *It should be a Grant, not merely an Assignment of Revenue.*

We have carefully weighed the relative advantages of Grants-in-Aid, as compared with the assignment to the Local Authorities of specific branches of revenue, or the proceeds of particular taxes. For reasons which will have become sufficiently clear in our preceding analysis of the existing subventions received by the Destitution Authorities we object altogether to the latter plan.* For Parliament to assign specific sources of revenue to the Local Authorities, or dedicate to their use the proceeds of particular taxes, is to deprive the community as a whole of part of its public resources without securing to the National Government, in return, any practical means of enforcing upon the Local Authorities that minimum of efficiency which the interests of the community require; and without giving to the National Government that effective backing of its supervision and control, and that effective strengthening of its counsel and advice, without which it is powerless to check local extravagance and local waste. The psychological effect upon the Local Authorities of assigned revenues instead of Grants-in-Aid, is, moreover, wholly to the bad. To a Local Authority, the proceeds of assigned revenues soon become regarded as its own property, which it ought to be able to spend at its will, as freely as the rates which it levies upon its constituents, or even more so, and yet without the check to extravagance that is supplied by the consciousness of having to face, at the elections, those from whom the money has been raised. In fact, as things are, "the Local Authorities enjoying the Grants are said to spend them without consideration, and with a recklessness which would be absent if they were dealing with moneys directly provided out of their own pockets. . . . Experience shows that Grants do not reduce the rates, these being, as a rule, as high now as before such Grants were in operation. Grants should be given for special purposes, and not in aid of rates generally. . . . At present they are too much given to regard these grants in the light of doles." † Whilst it is desirable, in our view, that considerable aid should be afforded to the local ratepayers, both for the sake of equalising local burdens, and for the sake of strengthening the influence for efficiency of the National Government, we regard it as of the highest importance, both as a check upon extravagance, and as a means of securing effective popular assent and control, that the Local Authorities, while receiving generous assistance from the Exchequer in respect of National burdens they cannot avoid, should feel that the results of their own actions seriously affect the amount of a definite local rate, varying from year to year. With regard to the aid that they get from the National Exchequer,

* One principal object of the change in 1888 from Grants-in-Aid to Assigned Revenues was a clear separation of Imperial and local finance. But "no separation of Imperial and local finance has, in fact, been accomplished, for it has been found necessary to include the Local Taxation moneys in nearly all statements concerning Imperial finance. Nor would such a separation be altogether desirable, it is contended, on the ground that, so long as a complete separation of the functions of the Imperial and Local Authorities is not possible, the duties of the former can be most effectually performed if accompanied by a system of Imperial grants." (Final Report of Royal Commission on Local Taxation (England and Wales), 1901, p. 70; Separate Recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, concurred in by Sir George Murray and the late Sir Edward Hamilton.)

† *Ibid.* (Scotland), 1899, Appendix XXX. to Vol. III., pp. 285, 286; Memorandum by Mr. Patten-Macdougall, Vice-President of the Local Government Board for Scotland.

it is desirable that they should feel that it comes as a recognition of the fact that the local service thus aided is one which is performed, not for the locality alone, but, in part at least, in furtherance of the interests of the community as a whole; and that accordingly the community as a whole has a right to satisfy itself, by the inspection of the expert officers of the central departments concerned, that the service is performed at least up to the extent, and with at least the degree of efficiency, that the community may, in its own interests, from time to time prescribe.*

We do not think that it is within our province to suggest what should be the total amount of the subventions to be made to the Local Authorities, or the proportion that they should bear to the local expenditure. It is only for the sake of convenience that we assume that, at any rate, the present annual subvention of between three and four millions sterling received by the Destitution Authorities will not be withdrawn from the ratepayers,† and that definite parts of it will continue to be allocated to England and Wales, to Scotland, and to Ireland respectively.‡ Before, however, we proceed to consider in what way, and upon what conditions some such amount should be issued to the Local Authorities, a question may arise whether the sum now payable to the Destitution Authorities, in respect of the deficiency arising under the Agricultural Rates Act—commonly called the Agricultural Rates Grant—can properly be included in the re-distribution. We are decidedly of opinion that it can and should be dealt with exactly like the other Grants-in-Aid. We are supported in this contention by the high authority of Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Sir George Murray, and the late Sir Edward Hamilton, whose lucid argument on the subject we now append. "The circumstances which we have thus briefly indicated," they state in their Minority Report (Ireland) of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, "point with irresistible force to the desirability of a re-distribution of the aid to Local Taxation given from the Imperial Exchequer. With regard to most of the existing Grants, such a proposal would meet, we believe, with ready concurrence. But the case of the Agricultural Grant, which is by far the largest item, may appear at first sight more doubtful, and needs careful consideration.

"In the provisions of the Irish Local Government Act, 1898, as to the Agricultural Grant, there is no limit of time, and consequently it might be supposed that any modification of the whole arrangement would be a sort of breach of faith. We think it is possible to draw some distinction.

"The feature of the Act, which was of the nature of a bargain, and which is irrevocable, was this: That, whereas landlords had hitherto paid half the Poor Rate, they should, in future, be relieved of that liability. . . . This relief was given for various reasons, but more especially in consideration of the risks which a more representative system of Local Government in Ireland would undoubtedly bring to them. Consequently, all rates in rural districts (as well as most urban rates) are to be henceforth paid by occupiers, and this arrangement is admittedly beyond alteration.

"At the same time it was provided by the Local Government Act that the rates in respect of agricultural land should be relieved to the extent of the Agricultural Grant. We do not consider that it is desirable or practicable to depart from the general policy of that Grant; but we do not think it can be assumed that the arrangements as to the aggregate, and especially the distribution of the Grant, are fixed to the last penny

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* "In the administration of national services it is of the utmost importance that the Central Authority should endeavour to secure uniformity, efficiency, and economy, and with this object I am of opinion it should be invested with extensive powers of control. Such powers may be most effectively exercised if accompanied by a system of Grants in Aid. Those in force before 1888 were, no doubt, a powerful lever in the hands of the Central Authority, and were, in most cases, devised with a view to guiding local administration in the desired direction, *e.g.*, in the case of police and sanitary officers. A system of assigned revenues distributed without regard to service rendered, is *prima facie* hardly compatible with such objects." (*Ibid.* (England and Wales), 1901, p. 82; Separate Recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.)

† "Effective control of Poor Relief administration is more easily secured by the Central Government, if accompanied by financial inducements; and we think it essential that the Grants should nowhere be reduced to such an extent as to weaken the control already exercised." (*Ibid.* (Scotland), 1902, p. 37; Recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, etc.)

‡ We note that the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation recognised the injustice of the present allocation between Great Britain and Ireland; and recommended an additional grant to Ireland of £150,000 (*Ibid.* (Ireland), Cd. 1068, 1902); a recommendation endorsed by the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland (Cd. 3202, 1906, pp. 71–72).

for all time. Indeed, demands have already been made for the increase of the Grant, in order to bring it up to date. And, while the distribution is not, in our opinion, satisfactory at present, it may, owing to various possible changes in local finance, become grossly absurd. For instance, if the valuation of any district was considerably increased or diminished—as it probably should be in some cases—the rate in the £ would be altered, and the Agricultural Grant, based on the standard year, 1896–7, might become very anomalous. A considerable increase of buildings or railways might have a similar effect, or such a result might follow from changes of administration. Thus, if a Union which has hitherto been very profuse in poor relief were to change its policy, it is not outside the bounds of practical possibility that the Agricultural Grant might be enough to cover more than the whole charge on the land. Or, if the other subventions in any district were varied, the rate would vary, and the Agricultural Grant would again become anomalous. Again, if it is held impossible to vary the distribution of the Agricultural Grant, it would seem equally impossible to alter the distribution of any other Grant, for the effect on the ratepayers would be just the same.

"Now, we are of opinion that, as between ratepayers, the relief afforded to the occupier of agricultural land by the Local Government Act was equitable, and should be continued, on the ground that the ability as measured by the occupation of the land is less than the ability represented by the occupation of other property of equal annual value. We, therefore, propose that henceforth, as at present, the rate on agricultural land should be in each area less than the rate on other property by half the standard rate. If the position of the agriculturist be thus safeguarded, we hope that this further proposition may be admitted, viz., that the Agricultural Grant ought not to be regarded as an inalienable endowment of particular districts and particular ratepayers, but that equitable revision from time to time, as fairness and administrative policy demand, is legitimate and necessary." *

Similar considerations, it is clear, apply with equal force to the Agricultural Rate Grants in England and Wales, and in Scotland. Whether or not it is just and proper to continue the beneficial arrangements as to the assessment of agricultural land at only half its value, or the payment by the occupier of only half rates upon it, whichever system is found most convenient, there is clearly no obligation on the part of Parliament to continue to pay, *in one way rather than in another*, the Grant which it made to Local Authorities in 1896–7 in respect of the deficiency thus arising.

(ii.) *It Should be Dependent on Local Efficiency.*

We think it essential, in the interests alike of economy and efficiency, that the present arrangement of making to the Destitution Authorities definitely fixed lump sum Grants, irrespective of the use that is being made of them, should be promptly and completely brought to an end.† Such an arrangement operates almost as an encouragement to extravagance and laxity of administration, and makes the National Government a helpless accomplice in the crime. Such a system has, to recommend it, only the advantage that it affords to the Chancellor of the Exchequer of knowing in advance exactly how much the total sum to be provided in aid of the Local Authorities will amount to. We recognise the advantage of thus separating the fluctuations of local expenditure from those of the National Exchequer. But this object can be completely attained, without sacrificing the other important advantages of making Grants-in-Aid vary according to efficiency of service. There is no objection to the aggregate total of the Grants-in-Aid being fixed in advance, for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively, either permanently

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* Final Report of Royal Commission on Local Taxation (Ireland), 1902, p. 25.

† "The largest of the Poor Law Grants, that corresponding to the expenditure on Union officers in 1887–1888, is fixed in amount, and has probably little effect on administrative policy, since the Guardians receive the payment, no matter whether they spend it upon Union Officers or not. That it has, in practice, failed as an inducement to the Guardians to appoint sufficient and sufficiently paid Relieving Officers in the more backward Unions, is evident from the Reports of Mr. Preston Thomas and other Inspectors of the Local Government Board. Moreover, the actual expenditure upon officers is not an efficient test of the real requirements of a Union, and consequently, as a matter of equity, the distribution of a grant upon this basis bears hardly on the backward districts, for, the grant being fixed, no action of theirs, not even the reform of their administration, will secure for them the full amount of the grant to which, under other circumstances, they might have been entitled." *(Ibid.* (England and Wales), 1901, p. 82; Separate Recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.)

or for a term of seven or ten years.* This total could then be distributed among the Local Authorities according to certain fixed principles, leaving the amount to be allotted to each to vary according to the amount or the efficiency of the service. Thus, the total amount of Grant receivable by the Scottish Parish Councils in respect of their expenditure on Lunatics is definitely fixed, but the proportion which each Parish Council receives varies according to the number of lunatics provided for to the satisfaction of the General Board of Lunacy for Scotland in each particular parish.

(iii.) *It Should be Applied to Definite Deliberately Selected Services.*

Of the several distinct services at present aggregated together under the Destitution Authorities, that of providing for the aged in their homes will henceforth be, to a large and, we may believe, an increasing extent, borne by the National Exchequer in the form of Old-Age Pensions. The provision to be made for the Able-bodied, including the Vagrants on the one hand, and the Unemployed on the other, must necessarily, as we shall show in Part II., be undertaken, at least in some of its forms, by the National Government. We do not think it desirable, therefore, that any part of the expenditure of the Local Authorities in providing for the maintenance of the Aged in their own homes or in providing any form of relief or maintenance for able-bodied men in health, should be aided by Government Grants. A third service, that of providing for the children of school age, including, when necessary, maintenance as well as schooling, should, we recommend, become part of the work of the Local Education Authority, which has its own elaborate system of Grants-in-Aid; and with this system, notwithstanding the enlargement of sphere of the Local Education Authority, we do not suggest any interference; unless, indeed, it should be thought desirable, in accordance with the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, to add a specific new Grant in respect of the maintenance of the children for whom more than schooling has to be provided.† A fourth service, that of provision for the Mentally Defective of all ages, kinds and grades, will, we may assume, in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, be undertaken, exclusively and entirely, by the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective, in succession to the present Local Lunacy Authority, which receives its own simple grant of so much per head per patient suitably provided for. We agree with the Royal Commission that this grant should become payable equally for all kinds or grades of the Mentally Defective. We think that it would be an advantage if it could be arranged on the same basis as the Grant to be made towards the cost of other inmates of institutions, whatever that basis may be, so as to avoid any financial encouragement to certify patients as mentally defective.

Thus, there remain for consideration, out of all the several services at present entrusted to the Destitution Authorities, only those that we propose should become part of the work of the Local Health Authority, namely, the provision for the sick poor of all ages, the provision for birth and infancy, the provision for the infirm under pensionable age, and the whole of the institutional provision for the aged. All this, as we have indicated, should become part of the ordinary work of the Local Health Authority, which, vital as it is to the community as a whole, receives, at present, the stimulus and assistance of practically no Grants-in-Aid,‡ and (we may almost say, consequently) no systematic inspection or supervision.

We recommend, therefore, that a sum equal to at least the whole amount now received in Grants-in-Aid by the Destitution Authorities (apart from what is now received in respect of lunatics) should be received in future by the Local Health Authorities; and that it

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* "I am strongly of opinion that the most important point is to see that the contribution given should bear some relation to the cost of national services, and should be dealt with in such a way as to afford a lever for improving local administration, both in regard to its efficiency and economy. Having regard, therefore, to all the considerations involved, I am of opinion that it will in the end be found more convenient and more economical to the State if the necessary relief be provided by a fixed sum payable from the Consolidated Fund to the Local Taxation Account, and revised from time to time as occasion requires." (*Ibid.* (England and Wales), 1901, p. 71; separate recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.)

† *Ibid.*, pp. 26–28.

‡ The only exception being less than £100,000 annually towards the salaries of Medical Officers of Health, Inspectors of Nuisances and Registrars of Births and Deaths, and the payments to Public Vaccinators.

should become available, under suitable conditions, not for specific items, but for the whole expenditure of these Authorities upon the services which include all those matters which we propose should be transferred to their jurisdiction.*

(iv.) *It should be Conditional.*

It follows from our whole argument that the Grants-in-Aid of specific services should be administered by the Departments of the National Government charged with the supervision of those services, and that, in order to emphasise, year by year, the conditional character of the Grants, they should be paid by, or on the instructions of, these Departments direct to the Local Authorities concerned.† The conditions on which the Grants are to be payable should not (as the examples of the English Poor Law Teachers Grant and the Scottish Medical Grant emphatically warn us), be stereotyped in a statutory enactment, but should be formulated and revised from time to time by the Department concerned.‡

It would, of course, be essential that the accounts of all Local Authorities receiving Grants-in-Aid should be duly audited by District Auditors, who should, in Scotland,§ as is already the case in England, Wales and Ireland, be officers specially appointed for the purpose, and giving their whole time to the work. We shall later draw attention to the importance of definite qualifications (as to age, experience, and competency in financial and administrative knowledge) being required from candidates for this important appointment, and to the desirability of the auditor's report (*though not his disallowances*) extending to more than the bare question of the legality of the expenditure.

No Grant should be payable unless a certificate is given by the Department concerned that the Local Authority is administering the service to be aided in general accordance with the law and with the authoritative regulations of the Department; that the service, alike in adequacy of supply and degree of efficiency—taking into account all the circumstances of the locality—reaches at least what may be considered the National Minimum; and that the Local Authority is applying itself to remedy any shortcomings according to its means. We recommend that immediately the Department has reason to anticipate, owing to a report from its Inspector or otherwise, that it may not be in a position at the proper time to give this certificate, it should send instant warning to the Local Authority concerned. Finally, where the certificate cannot be given, the Department concerned should be empowered to withhold, after due warning, either the whole Grant or any portion of it,‖ and, if thought necessary, to require that the deficiency should be made good by the levy of a special additional rate, before any future Grants will be paid.

(v.) *It should be based on a Scale of Distribution according to Need and Ability.*

We think it desirable, on the whole, that (assuming the requirement of general efficiency to be made) the Grants should not be allocated on any basis of the number of persons treated, or the number of officers engaged, at so much per head or at such a proportion of the salaries paid. The simplicity of calculation gained by any such arrangement is out-weighed, in our opinion, by the impossibility of doing justice to the special circumstances of particular

* "It appears to me that the system of direct payments from the Central Government to the responsible authorities in respect of definite services, and not for particular items of expenditure, affords by far the easiest basis for judicious participation in the solution of administrative problems." (*Ibid.* (England and Wales), 1901, p. 83; separate recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.)

† *Ibid.*

‡ "The stereotyping of the items towards which assistance is to be given may impede the Central Authority in its endeavour to secure the best forms of administration in the different districts and at different times." (*Ibid.*, p. 82.)

§ The Scottish Audit has been long felt to be defective. The Local Government Board for Scotland stated in 1899 that they had "done their utmost to make the audit under the Local Government Act of 1894 effective, and have issued several Circulars on the subject. They have also issued instructions to Parish Councils in regard to exemptions from taxation, which they had reason to believe were previously very loosely given. They feel satisfied that considerable savings would be effected by the introduction of an efficient system of Government audit for all local accounts, as suggested by some of the witnesses." (*Ibid.* (Scotland), 1899, Appendix XXX. to Vol. III., p. 286. Memorandum by Mr. Patten-Macdougall, Vice-President of the Local Government Board for Scotland.)

‖ "Regulations should continue to be framed by the Central Authority, which should be given the power of withholding the whole or any part of the grant, if not satisfied with the general efficiency of the service." *Ibid.* (England and Wales), 1901, p. 83; separate recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.)

localities, by the difficulty of securing any approach to an equalisation of local burdens, and by the danger of establishing a basis which becomes rapidly obsolete. The provision of a service adequate in extent to the local needs, and yet not unnecessarily expensive, can, we think, be better secured by appropriate regulations, compliance with which is enforced by a Grant, than by offering what comes to be a standing bonus on further extensions. Similarly, we think that a rising standard of efficiency, and the introduction of new improvements in service, can be better secured by advisory Circulars and a periodical revision of regulations, coupled with a Grant varying with the total amount of service, than by specific grants for teachers, nurses, drugs, etc., which can never be made to cover all the various improvements that are being made by one Local Authority or another.*

It is to be noted, moreover, that the adoption of the County and County Borough as the unit for administration, which (subject to due consideration of the position of, and possible sharing of services with, the Non-County Boroughs and populous Urban Districts of England, Wales and Ireland, and the smaller Burghs in Scotland) we have throughout assumed, will greatly facilitate both the complete re-modelling and the future administration of the Grants-in-Aid. Instead of having to deal with 1,679 separate Destitution Authorities, the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland will be dealing only with about 210 County and Borough Councils.

We recommend, after carefully considering all the alternatives, that, subject to a fixed aggregate total, the Grants for each service should be allocated among the Local Authorities concerned in amounts varying in proportion to the *total expenditure* † (apart from loans) of each such Authority upon the whole of the particular service. Thus, the Local Health Authorities would, subject to compliance with all the other conditions, share among themselves the aggregate Grant allotted to the Public Health service, in proportion to their several expenditures, on "maintenance" or "rate" account, on all the various branches of their work.

But, unless it is thought to be too complicated, we would go a step further. We feel that it is very desirable to afford some special encouragement to poor districts, and to make the Grant-in-Aid for each service to each Local Authority vary, not only in proportion to the expenditure of that Authority on the service, but *also in proportion to its poverty*, as measured by the assessable value of its area per head of population. We agree on this point with the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, though with a wider application of their words. "As matters now stand," they say, "it is, we think, impossible for counties with a low assessable value, and many claims on the County Rate, to make a provision that, in our opinion, is absolutely necessary in the interests of the community . . . . and the mere fact that the subsidy of the Exchequer is increased, even largely increased, will not, of itself, meet the difficulty. On the other hand, by the application of definite standards to administrative finance, the methods which we recommend would further economy." ‡ In fact, "so long as the burden of the necessary expenditure upon national services falls with greater severity upon one district than another, it is difficult to insist upon general administrative reforms." § That Commission accordingly recommended for adoption, with regard to the Grant for all the Mentally Defective, the plan submitted to the Royal Commission on Local Taxation by such high Authorities as Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Sir George Murray, and the late Sir Edward

* "To confine the grants to certain unvarying items of expenditure is apt to tie the hands of the Central Authority, and to prevent the necessary elasticity in administration which natural variations in the circumstances of different districts and periodical changes in public opinion demand. Nor is this the only objection which can be urged against such grants, for, in enforcing any improvements which involve expenditure, no matter how essential those improvements may be, the Central Authority is bound to meet with greater opposition in poor districts than in wealthier districts, and that opposition, although it may be reduced by *per capita* grants, or grants in proportion to expenditure, will not be entirely removed until both districts are placed upon an equal footing, and the burden of the expenditure is, so far as possible, equalised." (*Ibid.* (Scotland), 1902, p. 43; separate recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Lord Blair Balfour.)

† There is, we suggest, no reason why the receipts-in-aid, which the Local Authority recover from the patients or their relations, should be first deducted, as is at present the case. To do this is to discourage the recovery of these sums. To let the Local Authority enjoy the benefit of whatever it recovers is to encourage the recovery. But any receipts-in-aid, which are mere deductions from the nominal cost of the service, might properly first be deducted.

‡ Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, Cd. 4202, 1908, Vol. VIII., p. 285.

§ Final Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation (Scotland), 1902, p. 32; separate recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Lord Blair Balfour.

Hamilton.* This plan proceeds on the basis of fixing what we may call a "National Minimum" rate of expenditure per head of population—taking something like the minimum which experience shows to be anywhere necessary for efficiency—and a Standard Rate in the £—taking, we suggest, something like the average of the rates of the country as a whole. If the product of the Standard Rate does not produce, in the area of any Local Authority, the "National Minimum" of expenditure for its population, the deficiency might be made wholly good by what we should call the Primary Grant. The actual expenditure of the Local Authority would, however, practically always be in excess of the National Minimum rate of expenditure per head of population—this necessarily having to be at the lowest customary standard—and towards the excess the National Government should contribute, as the Secondary Grant, a moderate proportion only—an amount which we suggest should be whatever can be afforded from the balance of the fixed total aggregate Grant (after deducting the sum of all the Primary Grants), in exact proportion to the actual expenditures of the several Local Authorities over and above the standard expenditure per head of population. The amounts of the Primary and Secondary Grants to each Local Authority would be added together, and paid over as a single block Grant. It must, however, be borne in mind that any scheme of Grants-in-Aid depending wholly or partially upon the factor of rateable value can be fairly or properly administered only if steps are taken to bring to a common standard the various methods of assessment now prevailing in different parts of the country, otherwise equity in distribution will be impossible. The necessity of this reform as a condition precedent is insisted on by all the members of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation in their first Report on Valuation.

Another factor, too, requires more frequent revision in this connection than is possible under existing law, namely, the factor of population. A Census Bill will doubtless be passed through Parliament in the Session of 1909; and we suggest that (as repeatedly urged by the Royal Statistical Society, the Institute of Actuaries, the Society of Medical Officers of Health and the London County Council) the opportunity should be taken to provide for an enumeration of the population—a much less expensive business than the regular census—in 1916, and, thereafter, midway between the dates of the decennial censuses.

If the Grants-in-Aid to the Local Health Authorities and the Local Authorities for the Mentally Defective were made somewhat on this basis—the exact figures being worked out according to the circumstances of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively—the poorest and the most backward localities would—*provided that they brought their administration up to a reasonable standard of efficiency*—receive larger Grants in proportion to their assessable value, as well as a larger proportion of their expenditure, than the richer and more progressive districts. We do not object to this result. We agree with Lord Balfour of Burleigh that "so long as the poorer districts are not treated with greater liberality than the richer ones, it will be almost impossible to secure reforms in administration, which would entail an additional burden upon the rates, without constant appeals to the Central Government for assistance, such appeals mainly coming from the poorer districts in which the burden is already very high. If the rich and poor districts were once placed, so far as possible, upon the same footing . . . . these demands upon the State would be less frequent and persistent, and . . . . administrative reforms would be more easily effected." † It is, in fact, practically impossible to press upon a Local Authority the adoption of a higher standard of efficiency of service—essential as it may be in the interests of the community—if the improvement would, owing to the poverty of the district, involve a rate actually higher than that of the average of the country as a whole. It appears to us a most valuable feature of the plan of distribution advocated by Lord Balfour of Burleigh that it ensures, even to the poorest district of the United Kingdom, the ability to attain, at any rate, the "National Minimum" of efficiency in its local services, at no greater rate in the £ than that which is the average for the country as a whole. On the other hand, even the richest and most progressive Local Authorities, on whose continued experimenting in improved methods of treatment all further advance in efficiency of Local Administration will depend in the future, as it has depended in the past, will (whilst retaining full autonomy to make whatever experiments they choose) receive Grants which will, subject to the sanction of the Departments concerned, vary with the amount of their expenditure on the services of Public Health in which the community, as a whole, has so vital an interest.

* *Ibid.* (England and Wales), 1901; separate recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and Minority Report of Sir Edward Hamilton and Sir George Murray.

† *Ibid.*, p. 83; separate recommendations by Lord Balfour of Burleigh.

(F) Conclusions.

We have accordingly to report :—

1. That alike in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, the Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure of the Destitution Authorities are urgently in need of revision. In return for the sum of three-and-a-half millions annually, which is being contributed to Boards of Guardians and Parish Councils, the various Departments of the National Government, which are charged with the supervision and control of the Local Authorities, now obtain the very minimum of power to prevent either extravagance or inefficiency, or of influence towards a greater efficiency of service. The relief afforded to the local ratepayer is so unequal and so arbitrarily distributed as to amount to a gross injustice, which is all the more intolerable in that, especially in Ireland, the poorest districts and those most heavily burdened often obtain the least relief. And the conditions of the Grants, whilst seldom so framed as to cause a wise discrimination in favour of the more desirable methods of expenditure rather than others, sometimes result in positively encouraging extravagance, laxness and refusal to carry out the policy desired by the Legislature.

2. That, in our opinion, in view of the large share of the cost of providing for the aged in their homes now borne by the National Exchequer under the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908, and of the share which we think it necessary for the National Government to take in the administration of the provision for the Unemployed and Able-bodied, we consider that no Grant-in-Aid should be made to the Local Authorities in respect of these two services.

3. That when all grades of the mentally defective are placed in the hands of the proposed new Local Authorities for the Mentally Defective, a Grant should be made to those Authorities in respect of all the persons satisfactorily provided for by them. It would be desirable that this Grant should be made on the same basis as that to the Local Health Authorities.

4. That a Grant-in-Aid should be made to the Local Health Authorities in respect of all the work now done by them, or to be hereafter entrusted to them.

5. That it is essential that all Grants-in-Aid should be administered by the particular Government Departments concerned with the particular services to be aided; and paid direct to the Local Authorities.

6. That all Grants should take the form of Grants-in-Aid of local services; that they should be conditional on the efficient performance of the services; that they should be governed by detailed regulations, and accompanied by systematic inspection and audit; and that they should be withheld, wholly or in part, on failure to comply with the law and the regulations in force.

7. That they might, for the convenience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, be fixed in aggregate total, which might remain unchanged for a term of seven years; but that the allocation of the total among the several Local Authorities should be proportionate to their several expenditures from time to time on the services to be aided, subject to such expenditure being allowed by the Department to count for this purpose, as not being extravagant or improper. If not considered too complicated, the scale of distribution proposed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, determined jointly by expenditure and by the poverty of the district, might advantageously be adopted.

CHAPTER XI.

Supervision and Control by the National Government.

It was an essential feature of the recommendations of the Report of 1834 and of the Poor Law Amendment Act of that year, that there should be established a strong, well-informed and ably-administered Central Poor Law Department; and that this Department should, in the interests of National Uniformity and of a sound Poor Law policy, prescribe the general lines of administration of the Boards of Guardians, prohibit any misguided deviations from the policy so prescribed, and by means of Orders having the force of law and specific approvals of appointments and salaries, together with a system of inspection and audit, exercise a close supervision and control over every act of the local authorities.* This was the most novel feature of the new Poor Law, and it was the one on which the reformers placed the most reliance. When the Poor Law was extended to Ireland (1838), and remodelled in Scotland (1845), powers of central supervision and control, essentially on the English model, were expressly provided for, though in the case of Scotland with some significant and suggestive variations of detail.

The Local Government Board in each of the three countries has inherited all these powers of supervision and control of the administration of the Local Destitution Authorities; and has even acquired, by successive statutes, new and additional authority over these bodies. Nevertheless, as our survey has revealed, the minute supervision and authoritative control of the Local Government Board in England and Wales does not prevent, in one district or another, the most gross and persistent divergence from its declared policy, either on the side of laxness, or on that of harshness; it has failed completely to secure the National Uniformity that the reformers of 1834 thought of such importance; it does not, as we have seen, secure the proper treatment of any class of the poor; and it has not prevented either an almost unmeasured extravagance or, in a few bad cases, widespread and long continued corruption. In Scotland and Ireland the Local Government Boards seem more seldom to have initiated changes of policy—a fact which serves somewhat to conceal their lack of control over the vagaries of the Local Authorities. But, so far as we have been able to judge, the criticism that we have to make, with regard to the failure of the Local Government Board for England and Wales to secure a National Uniformity of policy, is applicable also to Poor Law administration in Scotland and Ireland.

(A) The Orders.

We take, as the chief exemplar, the Local Government Board for England and Wales, from which, as we have said, the corresponding Departments for Scotland and Ireland differ only in details. Here we have, as the principal foundation of its authority over the Boards of Guardians, a voluminous code of "Orders," which have the force of law, prescribing in minute detail how the Workhouses and other institutions shall be managed; what officers each Union shall have, at what salaries and under what conditions of appointment; and what classes of persons shall be alone eligible for this or that kind of relief, and under what conditions it shall be granted.† These Orders, some of them "General," or applicable to two or more Unions, whilst others are "Special," or applicable to a single Union only, but all alike having the force of law, exist in bewildering and literally uncounted numbers. They extend over the past seventy-five years; and they are nowhere collected or published in a complete series. The principal Orders alone are dealt with in the legal text-books which private enterprise has provided, some of which extend to over 1,000 pages. Many witnesses have complained to us of the impossibility under these circumstances of any Poor Law Guardian being able to find out what it was that the Local Government Board required him to do or not to do; and they have suggested to us that the Orders should be codified into a single new "General Consolidated Order," containing the whole law.‡ We are unable to concur in this suggestion. The three main Orders, upon which the whole fabric depends—the General Consolidated Order of 1847 as to Indoor Relief, the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order of 1844, and the Out-

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2027–2029.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 70–73. 164–175. 195–204. 232–246.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 10842, 12472, etc.

door Relief Regulation Order of 1852—are all of them more than half a century old. They were prepared for a state of things essentially unlike that of the present day. They embody a policy which has, for all the several classes of persons to be relieved, been virtually repudiated by Parliament in successive statutes.* So far as concerns the various classes of the non-able-bodied, they are diametrically at variance with the later policy of the Local Government Board itself, as expressed in its subsequent Orders and Circulars.† We gather from all official documents issued since 1890, and from the evidence given on behalf of the Department, that the Department, at any rate for the vast majority of the non-able-bodied poor, wholly disapproves of the General Mixed Workhouse, and of indiscriminate, unconditional and inadequate Outdoor Relief—a disapproval in which we concur. Yet when a zealous clerk or conscientious member of a Board of Guardians, anxious to carry out the policy of the contemporary Local Government Board, turns to the authoritative text-book supplied to him, he finds that the General Consolidated Order of 1847 actually prescribes the General Mixed Workhouse, with all its hideous detail of unspecialised management, uniformity of deterrent discipline for all classes, and, notwithstanding the nominal classification system, practical promiscuity of intercourse in work.‡ And if, seeking direction as to the Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied, he turns to the Outdoor Relief Orders, by one or other of which his Union must be regulated, he discovers, to his surprise, that they do not deal with the subject at all.§ Although all but an insignificant fraction of the three or four millions sterling of Outdoor Relief that is annually granted by the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales is distributed among the sick, the aged and infirm, the mentally defective, the widows, the deserted wives, the mothers of illegitimate babies, and the children of non-able-bodied fathers, there are no Orders of the Local Government Board stating whether Outdoor Relief should or should not be given to such persons, or if given under what conditions.‖

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* Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907.

† *Ibid.*

‡ As finally settled by the General Consolidated Order of 1847 (still in force), the classification prescribed is as follows :—" (i.) Men infirm through age or any other cause ; (ii.) able-bodied men and youths above the age of fifteen years ; (iii.) boys above the age of seven, and under that of fifteen ; (iv.) women infirm through age or any other cause ; (v.) able-bodied women and girls above the age of fifteen years ; (vi.) girls above the age of seven years, and under that of fifteen ; and (vii.) children under seven years of age." Explicit rules are made that each class is to remain in the separate apartments or buildings assigned to it, without communication with any other class. Thus, no segregation is required of the sick, or of particular diseases ; none of the lunatics, imbeciles, feeble-minded or epileptic (sane or insane) ; finally, no provision is made for segregation by past or present character or conduct. In all these respects, though the Local Government Board has repeatedly suggested the desirability of further classification, it has never made this obligatory, admittedly because the structure of the General Mixed Workhouse stands in the way, in many Unions, of any more minute classification than into the seven main divisions required by the General Consolidated Order. What is even more important, the very nature of the General Mixed Workhouse, as experience only too plainly proves, prevents any real and effective separation one from another, even of those seven main classes to which the Local Government Board, like all acquainted with workhouse administration, attach so much importance. From the very beginning of the General Mixed Workhouse, it was assumed and provided that all the Workhouse service was to be performed by the paupers themselves, and every pauper who was capable of work was to be incessantly occupied in that service. The able-bodied women who formed Class V. might be supervised by the aged and infirm women of Class IV. The children under seven who formed Class VII. might be supervised either by the able-bodied women of Class V. or by the aged and infirm women of Class IV., or by the girls of Class VI. The boys over seven who formed Class III. might be supervised by the aged and infirm men of Class I. The girls over seven who formed Class VI. might be supervised by the aged and infirm women of Class IV. These girls, so far from being confined to the premises assigned to their class, were to be employed in the able-bodied women's wards, in the wards for the children under seven, and in household work generally, provided only that they were somehow kept from communicating with able-bodied men or boys. The sick, whether male or female, whether of good character or of bad, have necessarily to be waited on, and even to this day the paupers assist the paid nurses. Consequently, the provision allowing all the sick wards to be attended by the able-bodied women, by the girls between seven and sixteen, by the aged women, or by any combination of these, that the master might direct, in itself necessarily destroys all real segregation. Since 1847, this permission has been so far restricted as to confine the attendance on the sick males to the aged and infirm men, and the aged and infirm women ; though such girls over seven, such able-bodied women, and such aged or infirm women as the master may deem fit may still be employed indiscriminately in the service of any of the wards except those for men and boys, and generally for household work throughout the Workhouse.

§ Appendices I. (C) and I. (D), to Vol. I.

‖ All the Unions in England and Wales are under one or other of two Orders, which regulate the grant of Outdoor Relief to the able-bodied, and do not apply to the non-able-bodied. But just as we have seen that the term "able-bodied" in the Workhouse is used in an ambiguous sense, so we find in the formal Orders about Outdoor Relief, an equally remarkable ambiguity in another direction. This ambiguity leaves in doubt whether, in the eyes of the Local Government Board, a woman without an able-bodied husband can, at any time, be regarded as able-bodied in the sense of being expected to earn her keep. The Out-relief Prohibitory

There is no prohibtion of relief to persons of disorderly lives, or living in insanitary conditions positively dangerous to the public health. There are no conditions prescribed as to the way the infants on Outdoor Relief shall be reared, or the children placed out in the world. Thus, whilst the Guardians find themselves unable to dismiss a porter, give a £5 rise of salary, or open a doorway between two rooms without the express consent of the Local Government Board, on the question of administration of Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied, the most difficult and dangerous of all their tasks, the whole of the tens of thousands of General and Special Orders from 1834 down to the present day are dumb.* And even where the Orders give precise instructions, our zealous Clerk or inquisitive Guardian will know that they are often neither observed nor capable of exact observance. With regard, for instance, to the structural accommodation required, it will suffice to say that, of all the Workhouses that we have inspected, we have never seen one in which all the requirements of the General Consolidated Order of 1847, devised as they were for Workhouses in the abstract, were fulfilled in every detail, or could possibly be fulfilled in the particular building which, with the approval of the Board itself, is being used as a Workhouse. When we come, in Part II. of this Report, to describe the relief of able-bodied men, as actually carried out by the Destitution Authorities, we shall show that, in direct disobedience to the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order and the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order, some Boards of Guardians give, continuously, week by week, Outdoor Relief to able-bodied men, without any labour test; some Boards carry on what are essentially Relief Works for the Unemployed; whilst others maintain town labourers on farms with the avowed object of training them to take up small agricultural holdings. In short, the three principal General Orders, though purporting to have actually the force of law, are, both in the letter and in the spirit, wholly out of date; and they are accordingly, to a large extent, ignored or evaded by all concerned. Any expenditure of money or time on their codification—a task of colossal magnitude—would, in our judgment, be wholly wasted.

Quite apart from their particular contents, however, the Orders of the Local Government Board appear to us unsuited for modern administration, owing to their failure to distinguish in form between peremptory laws which have to be applied judicially and inflexibly, and administrative injunctions serving as ideals and patterns which can only be carried out with such modifications as local circumstances require. We may illustrate this distinction by some examples. As an instance of the first type, we may cite the "rules" made by the Home Secretary under the Factories and Workshops Acts, which are in every detail as binding on every person concerned as the statutes themselves; which have to be strictly construed by the judiciary; and non-compliance with which is punishable by fine or imprisonment. In the realm of the present Poor Law there are subjects appropriate for Orders of this sort; such, for instance, as the definition of the classes of persons liable to contribute towards the maintenance of other persons, or the definition of the classes of persons to whom pensions are to be awarded, or even the conditions in the absence of which no allowance at all (other than on "sudden or urgent necessity") is to be granted to persons living in their own homes. Such Orders are useful instruments for formulating, in more minute detail than is possible in an Act of Parliament, those imperative commands which are to be enforced by judicial procedure of one kind or another; which must, therefore, be expressed with the same precision and

Order of 1844 definitely includes within its terms women in health, without able-bodied husbands, and unburdened with legitimate children. In the Unions to which this Order and this Order alone applies, such women are thus held to be "able-bodied," and cannot, with certain definite exceptions, lawfully receive Outdoor Relief. The other Order, the Out-relief Regulation Order of 1852, relates expressly only to the "male" able-bodied. In the Unions to which this Order applies, women, whether single or married, sick or in health, with an able-bodied husband, or without, with or without children, legitimate or illegitimate, may lawfully be relieved in their own homes, wholly at the discretion of the Guardians; and are thus classed with the non-able-bodied. If the woman has an able-bodied husband, she can—whatever her character or circumstances—in the Unions under the Out-relief Prohibitory Order only, be relieved only in the Workhouse. In the Unions under the Out-relief Regulation Order (or, where the Out-relief Prohibitory Order is combined either with a Labour Test Order or the Workhouse (Modified Test) Order), such a woman may be relieved in her own home if the able-bodied husband fulfils the conditions of work or residence. We have been unable to discover what is the explanation, or what is the justification, for these purely geographical discriminations as regards the Poor Law relief of women, which have now lasted for more than half a century. It may be noted that, in discriminating, in the Out-relief Prohibitory Order, against women with illegitimate children, the Central Authority deviated also from the recommendations of the 1834 Report deprecating relief according to the past conduct of the applicant; whilst in the variation between the two Orders, it deliberately departed from the principle of national uniformity so strongly advocated in that Report (Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907).

* Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907.

construed with the same continuous and consistent strictness as if they were statutes. To permit deviations from these formal Orders by private letters to particular Authorities, or by the oral sanction of an Inspector—still more, to advise, by published circular, wholesale evasions or violations of the spirit or the letter of these Orders—and this, as we shall presently describe, has been the practice of the Local Government Board—is to destroy the moral authority, and prevent the enforcement of the Orders themselves. On the other hand, the day by day administration of institutions, or the domiciliary treatment to be afforded to particular cases—and it is these things which make up the bulk of the existing Orders, and nine-tenths of the business of the Destitution Authorities—is not work which can properly be prescribed in detail by legally binding "Orders," any more than it can by Acts of Parliament. This administrative work does not consist of a series of judicial decisions as to whether a case falls within one category or another; and it is not to be accomplished by even the most minute and persistent torturing of the terms of a statute or mandatory Order. Administrators must be free to make the most of the actual material with which they have to deal and to act as seems best in all the complex circumstances of each case; whilst if there is to be any social progress they must be perpetually devising new ways, undreamt of before, of coping with the new needs that from time to time emerge. It is exactly this day by day administration of specialised institutions that is the sphere of the representative body—a sphere in which the "many-headed" and mutable membership of such a body is actually an advantage. To cope with all the varied difficulties, unthought of by the bureaucrat at his desk, which actual administration has to face, to meet the new issues that the changing environment is always producing, and to keep the whole Government in necessary touch with the public opinion of the moment, we need the representatives of every social grade, of every kind of training, and of every variety of opinion. Above all, what is essential to successful administration is the common consent of the community, which the local representative body brings from its dependence on popular election. To attempt, by peremptory Orders, meticulous in their detail, having the force of law, to convert the thousands of representatives of the ratepayers, in all this work of administration, into mere mechanical agents of a Central Government Department is, in our opinion, at once to court failure and to destroy Local Government.

It is highly significant that, in this criticism of the whole machinery of Orders, we are but expressing the present practice of the Local Government Board itself. The great General Orders of 1844–52 have had no successors. It has not even been thought worth while, obsolete as they have become in so many respects, systematically to revise them. The Special Orders, each equivalent in law to an amendment of the General Orders, by means of which the circumstances of particular Unions used to be met, have, for many years, become comparatively infrequent, and have ceased to be of significance. When new developments have had to be provided for, such as Poor Law Schools or Infirmaries, nursing or boarding-out, they have been dealt with by separate General Orders, which have silently thrown into the background (though without expressly repealing) large sections of the earlier code.* But even this has not sufficed to give to the clumsy machinery of mandatory Orders the elasticity necessary to any administrative work. In our investigation of the actual administration of the Destitution Authorities, we have been struck by the fact, in Union after Union, that things were being done in flagrant contravention of the General Orders that were supposed to be legally binding. We assumed, at first, that these experiments had been authorised by Special Orders of equal validity. But we discovered, in case after case, that no such legally authoritative instrument had been issued. What had happened was that the Board of Guardians, by persistently arguing the matter with the Local Government Board, had so far convinced that authority of the desirability of the experiment that—ignoring its illegality under the Orders—some sort of permission had been given for it to continue, in some cases orally by the Inspector,† but more usually by an official letter (not generally promulgated) from the Local Government Board itself.‡ And even when—often as the result of such illegal but privately permitted experiments of

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 174, 175.

† "Papers are frequently referred to the Inspector, with the direction: 'Settle this matter according to your own judgment.' . . . It would require sanction legally." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1771–1774.)

‡ We may cite as one instance the interesting experiment by which, with the written (but unpromulgated) permission of the Local Government Board, the Lambeth Board of Guardians is disobeying Article 153 of the General Consolidated Order of 1847, by combining the medical treatment of the indoor and outdoor poor under a single Medical Officer, having assistants under him. (Report . . . on the Medical Services of the Poor Law and Public Health Departments, p. 28 n.)

Boards of Guardians—it has been thought right by the Local Government Board to promulgate generally some new development of Poor Law policy, this new policy has often not been embodied in any new Order, nor in any amendment of the great General Orders of 1844–52, but has been pressed on the Boards of Guardians by way of Circular Letters,* which cannot of course, in law, supersede or vary the formal Orders, and have, indeed, no legally binding authority. This was the course adopted, for instance, between 1871 and 1879, when the Local Government Board was in favour of a general restriction of Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied. This, too, was the course adopted when, in 1886, 1892, 1895, and 1904, the Board instructed the Destitution Authorities to co-operate with the Municipalities in providing, for the able-bodied and unemployed workmen, the "work at wages" which had been, and continued to be, prohibited by the Orders. The same course was followed in 1895–1896 and 1900 when, with regard to the deserving aged, the Local Government Board reversed its policy of non-discrimination by past character in the relief of destitution; and, in flat contradiction of the General Consolidated Order of 1847, directed the provision of the special quarters for the deserving aged which had been aimed at by the Report of 1834.† This perpetual nibbling away of the General Orders by Special Orders, and of both kinds of Orders by oral or written "permits," and by official Circulars, makes both useless and impracticable any codification of the General Orders. It has, in fact, been found, by the Local Government Board itself, impossible to frame any code of legally binding Orders on all the manifold subjects of administrative business, which should permit the inevitable variety and the desirable elasticity of Local Government, whilst securing, by means of such Orders alone, the necessary central control. It is in the main because the existing Orders of the Local Government Board mix up, in one and the same instrument which purports to have the force of a statute, what are essentially mandatory commands or prohibitions, such as forbidding any expenditure on setting up destitute persons in trade, or granting Outdoor Relief to able-bodied men employed for wages, with what are essentially advisory injunctions, such as the method of allocating the different classes of inmates of an institution among the different rooms in the building, the selection of the classes to serve other classes, and the detailed specifications of the duties of minor officers, that the whole authority of the Orders has fallen into disrepute, and that they are neither respected as having the force of law, nor sympathetically received as advice to be acted on if possible.

The regulative instructions of the Local Government Board for Scotland, with regard to the whole realm of administration, as distinguished from judicial procedure under law, seem to us preferable in form to those of the Local Government Board for England and Wales. The Scotch Board has no power to issue Orders having the force of law. Each Parish Council having a Poorhouse is required by statute to frame rules and regulations for its management, which have to be approved by the Local Government Board. That body issues model rules, with such amendments from time to time as experience dictates. The Parish Councils adopt, as their own, these model rules, with whatever modifications are required by the size, situation or structure of their Poorhouse, the staff at their disposal, the numbers and distinct classes of poor to be provided for in each institution, the Council's own organisation for business, and any other local circumstances.‡ The rules so framed are, if considered suitable, approved by the Board. This procedure has the advantage of allowing variations from place to place, and from time to time, without the commission of any illegality. It leaves it open to the representative body which will have to obey the rules to suggest in what way they need to be varied from the general model. On the other hand, it enables the Central Authority to understand what exactly the local body is aiming at, and affords an opportunity for timely criticism and argument. In the last resource the Central Authority can refuse its sanction to any regulations which represent any falling below the National Minimum of efficiency of service, which has to be enforced from one end of the kingdom to the other, or to any regulations which are otherwise against public policy. If the Local Government Board for England and Wales had chosen, instead of prescribing by Mandatory Orders all the details of administration, to require all Boards of Guardians to submit for its approval suitable By-laws with regard to Outdoor Relief, it might have secured the essential "National Uniformity" which the Report of 1834 so

* Evidence before the Commission, Q. 2310.

† Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 116.

‡ This procedure is essentially that of the Home Office with regard to the general By-laws of Municipal Corporations, that of the Local Government Board for England and Wales with regard to the By-laws under the Public Health Acts, and that of the Board of Education with regard to the curricula of Public Elementary Schools, which have to be approved by an Inspector.

strongly advocated, whilst not resisting the variations and experiments required by local circumstances and local initiative. We should, at any rate, have been saved the "Babel of Principles" and the demoralising inequalities between Union and Union that we have described in our analysis of the local By-laws; where, to cite only one instance, one Board of Guardians prescribes what are virtually Old-Age and Invalidity Pensions of 5s. a week, and its next-door neighbour ordains that even the most deserving aged and infirm person shall be relieved only in the General Mixed Workhouse.

(B) AUDIT.

An essential auxiliary of any organisation of central control is an official audit of the accounts of the Local Authorities. The systematic audit of the accounts of the Boards of Guardians was one of the most important features of the new Poor Law.* It has since been greatly improved and extended not only to Scotland and Ireland, but also to other branches of Local Government.† This audit has a double object. It aims, on the one hand, at preventing and revealing all peculation, fraud or corruption in the dealings of the officers or members of the local body. On the other hand, by surcharging any expenditure not legally authorised, the audit seeks to prevent the local body not only from travelling outside its sphere, but also from disobeying the law or the mandatory instructions of the Central Authority.‡ We cannot say that the audit of the accounts of the Destitution Authorities, whether in England and Wales, Scotland or Ireland, appears to us to be completely successful in attaining either of its objects. Recent official investigations into certain Unions, and the criminal proceedings to which they have given rise, prove that, under the present audit, gross peculations by Relieving Officers and others, corrupt dealings in the matter of contracts, and fraudulent practices by individual members of the Local Destitution Authority may occur, and may remain undiscovered for years. How far this is due to imperfections in the audit itself, and how far to defects in the official regulations—especially in the General Order as to accounts which is more than forty years old §—we have not had time to determine. We cannot, for instance, see how any audit can prevent or discover frauds by Destitution Officers, so long as one and the same person, as is the practice in many districts, "controls the case from start to finish"—receives the application, visits the home, advises on the relief, communicates the decision and pays the money week after week to the helpless applicant—without at any stage being automatically checked by the intervention of some other officer, by any obligation to prove that the recipient is still living, or even by the necessity of obtaining a receipt or other documentary voucher.‖ Nor does the audit appear to us to be any more successful in preventing continued expenditure disapproved of by the Central Authority. The Board of Guardians of one London Union, for instance, has adopted a costly administrative policy with the repeated approval of its constituents, which, whether it was right or wrong, intended by Parliament or not intended, has at any rate been strongly condemned and objected to by the Local Government Board.¶ This policy has continued for years, to the knowledge of the Local Government Board, and is still being continued, notwithstanding the official inquiry, without being brought to an end by the official audit.** And when the disobedience of the Destitution Authority takes the form, not of expenditure considered improper, but of a refusal to incur expenditure considered imperative—when a Destitution Authority refuses for years to build a new Poor Law Infirmary or Poor Law School, and persists, notwithstanding injunctions from the Central Authority, in retaining the sick and the children in a General Mixed Workhouse which is overcrowded and insanitary, the audit, as a means of enforcing the control of the Central Authority, is powerless.††

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 87–91, 1037, 2090, and Appendix No. IX. to Vol. I. In Scotland the audit differs from that in England, Wales and Ireland. The auditor is not a Government officer, but (usually) an accountant appointed at a fee by the Parish Council. He has no power to disallow or surcharge, but merely the duty of reporting to the Local Government Board for Scotland any items which he thinks should be disallowed or surcharged; when that Board, if it thinks fit, may disallow or surcharge accordingly. We think that the audit system of the rest of the country should be extended to Scotland, where the Inspector of Poor usually combines the office of Collector of Rates, and collects for the School Board as well as for the Parish Council, without simultaneous audit of the two accounts.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 4180, 4257, 4669.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 88, 89, 2030–2032, 3025.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 87; General Order of January 14th, 1867.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2518, 2752–2755.

¶ Report on the Administration of the Poplar Union, by Mrs. Spencer, B.A., D.Sc.

** *See* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2120–2124 2137, 2138, 2184–2186.

†† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1704–1711.

We do not, however, under-value the importance of an efficient and authoritative audit of the accounts of Local Authorities. Though such an audit will not, in itself, either ensure honesty or give effective central control, experience has shown that it is both a valuable adjunct and ally of good administration. Though it cannot make good any deficiency in the regulations for the conduct of business or the absence of a technically qualified Inspectorate—still less the lack of a carefully thought-out and consistent policy of the Central Authority—such an independent and external audit may be of the highest value, not only by preventing and discovering fraud, but also by calling attention to administrative deficiencies and financial mistakes. For this purpose it is necessary that the Auditors should not be permitted to confine themselves to peremptory disallowances of payments that are actually contrary to law.* It is or should be their duty to call attention to any shortcomings in the regulations, or the system of business of the Local Authority whose accounts they are auditing—such, for instance, as the automatic checks on peculation or waste, or the procedure with regard to the acceptance of tenders for supplies—and also to report as to any grave errors in financial policy; not with any view of peremptory interference by the Central Authority in matters which must be left to the discretion of the representative body, but merely for the information of the Local Authority itself and, if necessary, of its constituents.† We cannot say that we are satisfied that the fullest advantage has yet been afforded to the Local Authorities and to the ratepayers by the Local Government Board's system of audit. Here, as in the analogous case of the Orders, there seems to have been no clear distinction drawn between the intervention in local administration which should be mandatory, and that which should be advisory only. A District Auditor, under the Public Health Act, 1875 (England and Wales) has power to disallow and surcharge any payment made by the Local Authority *ultra vires*, or any payment that is contrary to law; but he has no power to disallow and surcharge any payment that the Local Authority is legally authorised to make, however mistaken, or extravagant, or financially disastrous he may consider such payment, or the policy or administration of which it is a part. The District Auditor may also charge "*against any person accounting*" the amount of any deficiency or loss incurred by the negligence or misconduct of that person. This does not warrant him in individually charging any member of the Local Authority, *not himself individually being* "*a person accounting*," for any negligence or misconduct whatsoever, least of all for participation, merely as a member of the Local Authority, in any corporate act of that Authority or its committees which the District Auditor may think to amount to negligence or misconduct. In both these cases—that of extravagant or financially unwise policy within the powers of the Local Authority, and that of negligence or misconduct of members of the Local Authority in their corporate acts or of any person not being himself "a person accounting"—to which the District Auditor may quite properly take exception, his criticism must, under the law, be confined to reports for the information of the Local Authority, the Local Government Board and the ratepayers. Unfortunately, just as the Local Government Board includes much in its mandatory Orders which should be only matter of advice, so the District Auditor in his sphere has been tempted to stretch his legal powers, so as to disallow and surcharge in questions of policy and administration, when he ought only to report. Thus there have been cases in which District Auditors have disallowed and surcharged payments of Outdoor Relief, and many in which they have threatened to do so, because, as they alleged, the Guardians ought to have adopted more frequently the policy of "offering the House." There have been cases in which District Auditors have disallowed and surcharged relief granted to persons who have had relations, not legally liable to maintain them, but in a position to do so.‡ There have been cases in which District Auditors have, at any rate, threatened to disallow and surcharge the expenses incurred by Guardians in visiting pauper children in certified schools and homes, on the ground that no such inspection was necessary. There have even been cases in which District Auditors have surcharged members of Local Authorities because they have not accepted the lowest tenders for supplies, or because they have thought fit to pay

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 4227, 4245.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1019, 2197, 2210–2212.

‡ L.G B. to Ashby-de-la-Zouch Union, 21st June, 1907; *Poor Law Officers' Journal*, 20th November, 1908 (Auckland Union).

what the District Auditor thought unduly high rates of wages.* In all these cases it was open to the District Auditor, by way of report, to have called attention to what he considered financially unwise policy or administrative acts on the part of the Local Authority. Unfortunately, this part of the function of the Local Government Audit has been too much neglected. As a consequence of this neglect, the District Auditors have sometimes assumed to themselves an authority and a jurisdiction by way of disallowance and surcharge which has created resentment,† and really impaired the efficiency of their service. Fortunately, the Court of Appeal, in a recent case, has definitely laid it down that the District Auditor's power of disallowance and surcharge is confined to "a checking of accounts, not a checking of policy;" though his duty to report may be of much wider scope.‡ We think it indispensable, in view of our proposals for an extension of the work of the District Auditors that this limitation of their power of disallowance and surcharge, and this distinction between items which they may disallow, and items as to which they ought to report, should be authoritatively specified, and scrupulously observed.

We may add that we are not altogether satisfied with the qualifications of some of the District Auditors for their important task. We find that no limits of age§ and no

* In one recent case, which became the subject of legal decision, "the Auditor surcharged jointly and severally upon certain members of the Highways Committee of the Council several sums representing losses incurred by the Council in respect of contracts for horse forage, fine crushed ballast, carbolic acid, and boots, respectively, by reason, as the Auditor alleged, of the negligence or misconduct of such members in the selection of tenders for the articles in question. The certified amount of the surcharge for horse forage was £71 3s. 7d., and the reasons stated by the Auditor in his certificate for making this surcharge were because a deficiency or loss to the funds of the Council to at least the extent of the surcharge, had been incurred by the selection of a tender for the supply of horse forage to standard sample for the use of the Highways Department in the second half of the financial year, which exceeded the lowest quotations, and likewise the tenders of other single firms in every item, and was, in fact, the highest of the seven tenders received, and which, when worked out on the purchases of the half-year, showed an excess over the lowest quotations of £101 15s. 2d., and over the tender of another single firm of £7 13s. 7d., and because the members therein surcharged were jointly and severally responsible by their negligence or misconduct for the said deficiency or loss, in that they did, at a meeting held on July 19th, 1905, select this tender for recommendation to the Council, and did neglect the lower tenders referred to above, and had neither recorded any reason for doing so nor submitted any explanation in reply to the inquiries made at Audit" . . . "They were liable to surcharge in respect of the short delivery of ballast and in respect of the loss arising from undue or unexplained preference in the selection of tenders for the supply of the several articles already referred to." (Rex *v.* Roberts, 1 K.B., Law Reports, Part III., March, 1908.)

† "The legal position taken up by the Auditor is certainly a very remarkable one, and raises questions of great public importance. The reasons he gives for the surcharges show that he claims to have the right to call on any member or officer of the Corporation to account for any act done by him as such, and to find him guilty of 'negligence or misconduct' (without specifying which), and to amerce him in what he considers suitable sums, should he think that the Corporation would have benefited by some other course of action than that adopted. This is not confined to questions of account. It is applied to cases in which the members have given advice to the Corporation which he considers to have been undesirable, and to have led to increase of expenditure. . . . It is clear that persons answering to either of these descriptions must necessarily be persons who are before the auditor in his capacity as such, and must be persons who either have had money of the Corporation for which they must properly account, or have had control of funds of the Corporation which they have had authority to pay away, and for the proper expenditure of which they have, therefore, to account. . . . In all cases the Auditor is acting strictly as an Auditor and nothing more, and the subject-matter of his decisions is items which are, or ought to be, in the accounts before him. . . . His duty is to examine, correct, and pass such accounts, if any, as the assistant engineer has to bring before him, and that is all. He has no jurisdiction to pass judgment on the diligence or wisdom of an employee of the Council, any more than he has to pass judgment on his sobriety. . . . It is inconceivable to me that the Legislature should have intended to set up a general Court of Conduct with the widest jurisdiction and well-nigh unlimited powers by these simple, and I might almost say, meagre, provisions. . . . But if they are intended to institute a Court with power of inquiry not limited to examining and rectifying accounts brought before it, but possessing general powers to make charges of negligence or misconduct against any one connected with the Corporation either as corporator or employee (and the contention of the appellant must go so far as this), and to try these charges and assess damages in respect of them, they are wholly inadequate. . . . I wish to add that I do not agree with the view that a properly conducted independent Audit offers but slight protection to the ratepayers. It is unquestionably within the powers of an Auditor, and, indeed, it is his duty, should the occasion render it desirable, to report fully on any matters which, in his opinion, ought to be called to the attention of the Corporation, and if this duty is adequately performed, it offers a most efficient safeguard against improper practices. The responsibility of acting upon such report must, of course, remain with the Corporation; but the individuals forming it change from time to time, and we have no right to assume that, even if for a time there is a disposition to hush up derelictions of duty, such a state of things will continue, especially when the corporation is affected with formal notice of the circumstances by a report of a public Auditor." (Rex *v.* Roberts, Court of Appeal (Law Reports, March, 1908), Judgment of Fletcher Moulton, L.J.).

‡ *Ibid.*

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 1621, 4793-5, 4808, 4863, 4872, and Appendix No. IX. (A) Par. 22, to Vol. I.

technical qualifications are prescribed for the office. It is not necessary that a person, before being appointed a District Auditor, should have had any experience in administration or finance or should possess any economic knowledge, or should even have passed any examination in accountancy. Under these circumstances, as with the Relieving Officers, the absence of any prescribed qualifications inevitably leads sometimes to the appointment of persons on other grounds than that of fitness for the particular office. We recommend, therefore, that there should be prescribed some definite qualifications without which no person should be eligible for appointment as District Auditor.

(c) A Court of Appeal.

We find established in Scotland an interesting instrument of control over the Destitution Authorities, in the form of an appeal against their decisions. To this, in England and Wales, or in Ireland, there is scarcely anything corresponding.* In Scotland, a person totally refused relief has a right of summary appeal, without delay and without formality, to the Sheriff; and this right is exercised in hundreds of cases annually, especially by those who have been refused because they are deemed able-bodied. Moreover, if relief in any form has been given, the recipient has a right of appeal against the inadequacy of the relief to the Local Government Board for Scotland; and this right is exercised, on an average, in eight or nine cases every month.

We have taken much evidence as to the working and the results of this system of appeal. We find that the appeal to the Sheriff against a total refusal of relief has many unsatisfactory features. This officer, who, in Scotland, is a legal stipendiary, engaged in multifarious civil and criminal business, has usually no specialist experience or knowledge of Poor Law, Public Health or Education, either as to the law or as to the administrative practice. He has no officers at his command to investigate the physical state or the economic and domestic circumstances of the appellant. He receives no Report from the Public Health or Education Authorities, nor even from the Inspector of Poor. He hears, in fact, no other evidence than the quite informal uncorroborated statement of the appellant himself, which there is no opportunity of disproving. If the appellant has been refused relief on the ground that he is able-bodied, he often comes to the Sheriff armed with a certificate obtained from a "sixpenny doctor" that he is suffering from some ailment or another. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that most Sheriffs make it a practice to give the appellant the benefit of every doubt; and, in fact, to order "interim relief" in all but glaring cases of imposture. Once the Sheriff has given his decision, the Inspector of Poor must instantly give the "interim relief" ordered. He may then if he chooses, lodge with the Sheriff a written statement of the grounds of his original refusal of relief. The Sheriff then directs it to be answered, and appoints an agent to act on behalf of the appellant, when the case comes in due legal form before his Court for final judgment. But all this involves the Destitution Authority in expense, so that, as we are informed, "in very few cases is a formal deliverance given by the Sheriff. When the Inspector of the Poor finds that the Sheriff takes the view that the applicant has a *prima facie* claim, he usually acquiesces and grants relief." † The Inspector of Poor prefers to settle the matter, without lodging a statement, by withdrawing his refusal, and offering the appellant immediate admission to the poorhouse. He even tends to anticipate the Sheriff by giving relief in all cases in which he fears an appeal.

After carefully considering all the evidence, we have come to the conclusion that the right of appeal to the Sheriff has been, and still is, injurious to Poor Law administration in Scotland. Its only practical advantage is that it serves as one of the many methods by which the legal prohibition of relief to the able-bodied has had to be evaded. We can see

* It is usually stated, on the authority of Sect. 15 of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, that the Local Government Board for England and Wales is legally precluded from interfering with the decision of Boards of Guardians in the grant or refusal of relief to particular cases. But this must be taken subject to large exceptions and qualifications. For instance, under both the Orders relating to Outdoor Relief, the Guardians are authorised to grant relief, in contravention of the terms of the Order, to any cases in which they may deem it expedient, subject to the particulars of each such case being reported to the Local Government Board for its approval. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 196, 200.) The specific approval thus afforded to each of these cases may presumably be withheld; and it is not infrequent to find the formal approval coupled with an intimation that it will not be given again, so that a continuance of the relief in these particular cases is virtually prohibited under penalty of surcharge. There are other exceptions that might be quoted; for instance, the Board issues Special Orders allowing the expenses attending the emigration of particular persons at the expense of the Poor Rate, though this is, perhaps, not Poor Relief. (Special Order of February 23rd, 1897, to the Bethnal Green Union as to one William Green.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 53510, Par. 48.

no advantage in it over the English and Irish practice of offering admission to the Workhouse or Casual Ward in the first instance to anyone who persists in claiming relief and alleges that he is destitute.

There is, perhaps, more to be said for the right of any recipient of relief to appeal to the Local Government Board on the ground of its inadequacy. Such an appeal, which may be either as to the amount, the character, or the description of the relief ordered, has to be made on a prescribed form, through the local Inspector of Poor. The Board is bound, without delay, to investigate the nature and grounds of the complaint. If the complaint is found to be justified, and if the evil is not remedied by the Parish Council, the Board issues a minute declaring that the pauper has a just cause of action against the Parish Council, and such a minute enables the pauper to take legal proceedings to enforce his right to adequate relief. But the case hardly ever gets thus far. Out of an average during the past five years of 111 appeals per annum, half are summarily rejected as disclosing no valid ground of complaint, and half of the others are dismissed after a satisfactory explanation from the Parish Council. The remaining quarter drop owing to the ground of complaint having, in the meantime, been removed by the Local Authority.* In these latter cases, averaging two or three per month, the appeal must be considered as having resulted in improvement of the administration, and possibly in the removal of some real grievance. Only in two cases in the last five years has it been necessary for the Local Government Board to issue a Minute stating that the pauper has a just ground of complaint.† In the whole sixty-two years that the system has been in operation such a Minute has been issued in thirty-five cases only.‡

We see no objection, in principle, to this formal right of appeal to the Local Government Board virtually against what is alleged to be improper treatment of the poor by the local Destitution Authorities. We understand that, in its practical working, this form of the Scotch system of appeal amounts to little, if anything, more than actually prevails in the practice of the Local Government Boards for England and Wales and for Ireland, as indeed, in that of other public departments. If a letter is received from any person, pauper or otherwise, making specific allegations of improper treatment of any sort by any Local Authority, and disclosing in the allegations what would, if they were accurate, be a valid ground of complaint, the Department concerned does not refuse to make the matter the subject of inquiry, usually referring it for report to the Local Authority concerned. As in Scotland, the vast majority of such letters either disclose no real ground of complaint, or the complaint is found, on inquiry, to be unfounded. In nearly all the remaining cases, we trust that, as in Scotland, the Local Authorities, on their attention being drawn to the grievance, will have promptly removed any real ground for complaint. If this is not done, we think that in these cases of rare occurrence, the Central Authority, whether in England and Wales, Scotland or Ireland, after due inquiry by its own Inspectors, and after further consultation with the Local Authority, ought to have power, without any expensive legal proceedings, peremptorily to require the Local Authority to remedy what will have been proved to be a genuine grievance.

We may mention here another type of decision by the Central Authority, by which its view is made to prevail over that of the Destitution Authorities, namely, Arbitration between two such Authorities, in cases voluntarily submitted to it. This device has been made use of both in England and Wales and in Scotland, as a means of reducing the heavy expenses formerly incurred over disputes as to which particular Local Authority was liable to bear the burden of maintaining particular paupers. In England and Wales it has for more than half a century been open to any two Boards of Guardians to agree to refer any disputed "settlement" of a pauper to the Local Government Board, whose decision is, under such agreement, binding on the Unions concerned.§ There is a similar provision in Scotland, under which any two Parish Councils differing as to the settlement of any poor person, but agreed as to the facts, may refer the case to the Local Government Board for Scotland for determination. This provision is freely made use of, to the great saving of

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* Thirteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland (Cd. 4142), 1907, pp. xxii, xxiii.

† *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. xxii. For more than half a century no case had ever been taken into Court; but one is now actually before the Court of Session.

§ 14 and 15 Vict., c. 105 (Poor Law Amendment Act, 1851); Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 25136, 25139, 25264 (Par. 9), 36081–36084, 39826, 39827, 43825 (Par. 13), 74259–74265, 75202, 75345 (Par. 10), 77007 (Par. 9), 77605, and Appendix No. CIII. (Par. 13) to Vol. XIV.

litigation. In Scotland, other cases of dispute between Parish Councils are voluntarily submitted to and habitually decided by the Board. Moreover, a peculiar feature of the Scottish Law is the appeal of the pauper against removal to his parish of settlement. Under the Poor Law Act of 1898 any person who has continuously resided for one year in the parish from which he has to be removed, may appeal against being removed.* The Board decides, according to all the circumstances of the case, so as to avoid harshness or injury to the poor person. If the appeal is allowed the Board determines also which Parish Council shall be liable for the maintenance.†

We consider that all these experiments in the direction of using the Central Authority as an arbitrator in disputes between two Local Authorities have worked well, and have resulted in a great saving of time and expense. We agree with a large number of our witnesses in thinking that the practice should be extended to any case of disputed settlement on the application of any Local Authority concerned, whether or not both Local Authorities agree to such arbitration, and whether or not the facts are agreed.‡ We think that it would be an advantage if some similar arrangement could be made to settle by arbitration other disputes between Local Authorities in each country as to relief, and also disputes between such Authorities in the different parts of the United Kingdom.

(D) The Inspectorate.

The control exercised by a Government Department over Local Authorities, whether it be by regulative Orders or advisory Circulars, financial audit or jurisdiction in appeal, powers over the local officials or Grants-in-Aid conditional on compliance with central advice, depends always for its efficiency on the existence of a staff of peripatetic agents of the Department concerned, who can keep the local administration constantly under observation, help the Department to form its judgments, and convey to the Local Authorities the advice and instructions, in which the policy of the Department is from time to time embodied.§ This condition of successful central control was recognised by the reformers of 1834. For the first time in English administration there was established, as a link between the National Executive and Local Governing Bodies, an organised salaried staff—called at first Assistant Commissioners, and now General Inspectors—to serve as the eyes, hands, and voice of the Poor Law Department. The present General Inspectors of the Local Government Board have inherited, so far as the Destitution Authorities are concerned, a unique position and exceptional powers.‖ Unlike the Inspectors of other Government Departments, they are not only empowered to visit and inspect the work of the Local Authorities, but they are also authorised and required to attend the meetings of the Boards of Guardians whenever they think fit, and (without voting) to take part in the proceedings.¶ They are, in fact, so far as the Poor Law is concerned, not merely the Inspectors, but also the appointed Counsellors of the Local Authorities. This is true of Ireland as of England and Wales. In Scotland, the Inspectors—designated General Superintendents of the Poor—do not enjoy either the salary or the status of their English colleagues.

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* If the place of settlement is in England or Ireland, either the Guardians of the Union to which the removal is to take place, or the poor person himself, may appeal.

† During the nine years that this right of appeal has existed, 125 cases have arisen between Parish Councils in Scotland, 13 of which were summarily rejected as informal or incompetent, and 3 were dismissed. In 25 cases the order for removal was withdrawn, and in 20 the appeal was sustained. Ninety-nine cases have arisen between Parish Councils in Scotland and Boards of Guardians in England or Ireland, but of these 51 were summarily rejected as informal or incompetent, and 3 dropped, whilst 35 were dismissed. In 6 cases, the order for removal was withdrawn, and in 4 the appeal was sustained. (Thirteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Scotland (Cd. 4142), 1907, pp. xxiii, xxiv.)

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 25136–25139, 25264 (Par. 9), 36081–36084, 39826, 39827, 43825 (Par. 13), 74259–74265, 75202, 75345 (Par. 10), 77007 (Par. 9), 77605, and Appendix No. CIII. (Par. 13) to Vol. IV.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 1952.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1598–1613, 1741, 4576, 9560–2.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1758, 1968, 6054, 6338.

This Inspectorate has, in the past, achieved remarkable successes. In England and Wales, for instance, between 1834 and 1847, it was very largely due to the tact and ability, the knowledge and conviction of the Assistant Commissioners that the new Poor Law was brought successfully into operation all over the country. Between 1869 and 1885, again, the Inspectorate, as a means of counteracting an evil laxity which had become prevalent, created a new ideal of Poor Law administration, to which the progressive and enlightened Boards of Guardians tended everywhere to approximate.* But for the last twenty years, during which, as we have seen, the control of the Local Government Board in England and Wales has been very far from effective, the Inspectorate has lost much of its former influence over the Destitution Authorities. Regarded as an instrument of central control, it has, in fact, of late years, been wholly unsuccessful. It has failed to get carried out the older policy of the Central Authority, which is still embodied in the General Orders. It has not succeeded in formulating any systematic and consistent new policy in substitution for the old. It has failed to get adopted, with any thoroughness or uniformity, the authoritative views on the treatment of the sick, the children and the deserving aged, to which the Local Government Board has, since 1895, given repeated utterance. It has failed even to prevent the persistent defiance of the instructions of the Central Authority; a defiance resulting, on the one hand, in continued refusals to provide the new buildings deemed to be requisite, and, on the other, with a few urban Unions, in a rising tide of extravagance and corruption.

Meanwhile the Local Government Board, for what reason we do not understand, *has allowed to continue without any inspection at all* what amounts to one-third of the total Poor Law expenditure, and probably to more than one-third of the work of the Guardians, namely:—

(i.) The administration of Outdoor Relief in accordance with the Orders.

(ii.) The whole activities of the 3,700 officers of the Outdoor Medical Service.

(iii.) The Poor Law Dispensaries.

(iv.) The 6,000 children "boarded-out within the Union"; and

(v.) The 3,000 others placed, with the approval of the Local Government Board, in uncertified homes.

No part of this extensive range of Poor Law work, costing more than £4,000,000 annually, has, to this day, the advantage of any official inspection whatever.

We do not attribute the general failure of the Inspectorate during the past two decades to any shortcomings of the existing staff. There are among the Inspectors of to-day, as there have always been, men of great ability, belonging to the best type of English administrators, combining detailed knowledge of the technique they were appointed to control with wide views of policy, an understanding of general principles and considerable capacity for handling men. We attribute the present ineffectiveness of the Inspectorate, as an instrument of central control, to the fact that, almost without its being observed, the duties imposed upon it have been changed, Inspection, to be efficient, must always be performed by a person technically expert in that which he inspects. The Assistant Commissioners of 1834–47, and the Poor Law Inspectors of 1869–85, had a single function to supervise, and a single technique to invent or acquire, namely, the relief of destitution in such a way as to render the relief deterrent. Dispauperisation was, in fact, their sole aim. For this they devised and made themselves masters of an appropriate technique—the General Mixed Workhouse of the General Consolidated Order of 1847, and the penal task of the Outdoor Labour Test Order of 1852; the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, the grant of Medical Relief on Loan, and the application of the Workhouse Test to the Aged, that were characteristic of 1869–85—which they could press on Boards of Guardians with all the power that comes from knowledge and conviction. But this elaborate machinery of Clogs and Deterrents on relief, applied to all applicants alike, has, as we have seen, been swept out of the minds of the Guardians by the newer policy vaguely demanded by Parliament and public opinion and actually prescribed by the Local Government Board.† The more enlightened and the more progressive Guardians of to-day find themselves, not merely administering "relief" under deterrent conditions, but building and equipping hospitals for the sick, lying-in homes for young mothers, institutions for the epileptic, sanatoria for

* Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 75.

† *Ibid.*

the phthisical, comfortable almshouses for the aged, homes and schools for children, nurseries for infants, farm colonies for the able-bodied unemployed and what not. We have already drawn attention to what may be called the anarchic and uneven hypertrophy of the Destitution Authority—its virtual transformation from an *ad hoc* to a "mixed" Authority—as the fundamental cause of its failure. The same transformation has put it out of touch with the Destitution Inspector. The General Inspector of the Local Government Board—as the Poor Law Inspector is now designated—is, in fact, without fault of his own, in a hopeless position. The old technique, of which he was fully possessed, has been repudiated with regard to one class after another, by Parliament and public opinion, and even by the Presidential Circulars of his own Department. The task that he is now supposed to perform would demand a mastery, not of one technique, but of many techniques.* It would be impossible for any man, however versatile his natural talents, and however varied his professional training, to be an authority alike on the medical treatment of the sick, at home or in institutions; on the rearing of children whether by their own mothers or by others; on the education and starting in life of boys and girls; on the rescue of fallen women and the nurture of their infants; on the management of imbeciles and idiots; on the ameliorative treatment of the crippled; on the provision of almshouses for the aged—not to mention such nascent services as the training of the unemployed, and the penal detention of the wastrels. Every Board of Guardians embarking on one or other of these enterprises finds in the Inspector either amiable tolerance or silent disapproval, but never the guidance, the suggestiveness and the effective control that come only with superior knowledge. In short, with the transformation of the service the General Inspector of the relief of destitution—like the Destitution Officer, and the Destitution Authority itself—has become an anachronism.

The transformation of the duties of the Inspector has gone even further. With the designation "General Inspector" have come duties unconnected with the Poor Law, duties relating to Public Health Bylaws and hospitals and drains and sewage, for which he has no pretence of knowledge or qualification. Medical Officers of Health have remarked to us on what seemed to them the anomaly of their Annual Reports being referred to "General Inspectors" who were merely laymen. The very idea of having "General Inspectors" of Local Government in the abstract is, we need hardly say, diametrically at variance with the conception of an Inspectorate supplying to the Local Authorities the counsel and guidance, together with the supervision and control, that can come only with specialised expert knowledge.

The "mixed" character of the duties of the General Inspectors has had a subtle influence on the recruiting of the staff. As the work which the Inspector has now to supervise is so enormously varied that no man can be professionally qualified to discharge the duties, there is no prescribed qualification at all for the appointment.† Successive Presidents of the Local Government Boards, for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively, finding that no particular professional training could be said to be essential, and latterly, not even any particular conviction as to "Poor Law principles," have, not unnaturally, felt themselves free to appoint any person in whose integrity of character they placed reliance. We have already described how, on a lower plane, a similar absence of any definite professional requirements results in persons being appointed as Relieving Officers and Masters of Workhouses on other grounds than that of fitness for the office. We have referred to the same tendency in the case of the District Auditors. We cannot refrain from the inference that, in some cases, persons have been appointed as General Inspectors in England and Ireland, and as General Superintendents in Scotland, for reasons of personal favour or political service. This will, we fear, always be the case, with the highly paid Inspectors as with the lowly paid Relieving Officers or Workhouse Masters, so long as the duties of these important posts remain so "mixed" as to make it impossible to insist on any professional qualification.

It would be unfair not to record that these essential disadvantages of such a "mixed" office as that of General Inspector have already been noticed by the Local Government Board for England and Wales, and to a lesser extent by the Boards for Scotland and Ireland. It has been recognised, for instance, in England, that it was absurd to rely on the General Inspectors, who naturally can know nothing about educational technique, as the only

* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 7407.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1608–1609, 1764, 8027.

official source of information about the condition and progress of the Poor Law Schools and the Certified Schools. The duty of inspecting these schools, so far as their educational work is concerned, has accordingly been transferred to the Board of Education, to be carried out by its Educational Inspectors.* It was plainly impossible for the General Inspectors, if only because of their sex, properly to supervise the boarded-out children; and for this work the Local Government Boards for England and Ireland have now the advantage of lady Inspectors,† whose specialist knowledge and experience has kept this branch of Poor Law work, so far as their inspection has been allowed to extend, up to a high standard. The steady expansion of the "hospital branch" of the Poor Law has made necessary also the appointment, in England, of two Medical Inspectors of Poor Law infirmaries and Workhouse sick wards,‡—who, unfortunately, are not charged generally with the inspection of all treatment of the sick poor—to whose professional training and specialist knowledge we attribute the very marked improvement which has taken place in that part of the work of the Boards of Guardians that they have been permitted to supervise. It appears to us desirable that further developments should be made in this direction. It is, we believe, a necessary condition of any efficient administration that each kind of treatment, involving a separate technique, requires to be supervised, not by a General Inspector knowing none of the techniques, but by a professionally trained specialist.

(E) The Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board.

No mere perfecting of the instruments of central control can result in efficiency of local administration, unless the Department from which the control emanates is itself organised on such a basis of efficiency as will enable it to formulate a definite and consistent policy, and to apply it in its dealings with the Local Authorities, with the authority of wider experience and superior technical knowledge of the service concerned. In 1834, when there existed no Government Departments for the supervision and control of the Local Authorities, the authors of the New Poor Law, feeling it essential that there should be such Central Control, were necessarily driven to the establishment of a new Department, that of the Poor Law Commissioners, from which the existing "Poor Law Division" of the Local Government Board is the direct descendant. There was at that time no Local Education Authority, no Local Health Authority, no Local Unemployment Authority and no Local Pension Authority. All the forms of public assistance which then existed were necessarily grouped together under the new Local Authorities at that time established, the Boards of Guardians, and were covered by the single term of relief of destitution. The fact that the new Central Authority was also a "Destitution Authority" regarding all forms of public assistance as constituting essentially a single service—the relief of destitution—kept it in close touch with the Local Authorities of the time. The Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–47 had their own definite and consistent policy, for which, with the aid of the Assistant Commissioners, they developed their own specialist technique, and imposed it, with great success, upon the Boards of Guardians.

But, as we have abundantly shown, the administration of the Poor Law has, in the course of the last generation, ceased to constitute a single service, with a single technique. In place of the mere relief of destitution, with the constant aim at "dispauperisation," Parliament and public opinion—indeed, the very nature of the case—have compelled the Local Government Board to advocate, and have led the Boards of Guardians to start, nurseries and schools and hospitals and sanatoria and farm colonies and homes for the aged, each of them involving its own technique, demanding its own expert policy, and necessitating, in the Central Authority as in the Inspectorate, its own kind of specialised knowledge. We have already seen how inadequate the Destitution Authorities have proved, just because they are Destitution Authorities, successfully to discharge so many different kinds of duty. From the General Inspectors, just because these are "Destitution Inspectors," the Local Authorities can get neither helpful suggestiveness nor effective control in these heterogeneous services. Unfortunately the Central Authority has failed equally to keep pace with the growing diversification of the services actually undertaken by the Boards of Guardians. The treatment of the sick is not dealt with by one branch, the education of children by another, the provision for the able-bodied by a third, and the

* Report on the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, etc., by Mr. J. Tillard and Miss M. B. Synge (July, 1908). We refer later to the incompleteness with which this transfer of the duties of inspection has been made.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 1605, 1781, 1881, 3978, 9738–9745, 9884–9890, 9576, 10052–10069.

‡ *Ibid. Qs.* 1606, 1790, 1852, 10177, 10365, 10375, 10437, 10534–10573.

treatment of the aged by a fourth. The Local Government Board, so far as the supervision and control of the "relief of the poor" are concerned, has remained a single undivided unit. Its "Poor Law Division," to which comes all Poor Law business, and from which must emanate all Poor Law control, remains to-day, like the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–47, and the Poor Law Board of 1847–71, essentially a "Destitution Authority," grouping together all the varied activities of the Boards of Guardians as "relief of destitution," and regarding this still as having a single technique of its own, to be guided by one simple policy, which can only be of a negative and restrictive character. Thus, when the progressive Boards of Guardians of the present day strive to improve the education of the children committed to their care, or to make more efficient the hospital service which they maintain for the sick, their aspirations and proposals do not get the advantage of the specialist knowledge and professional criticism of the Board of Education or of a Public Health Department respectively. What happens is that they are dealt with exclusively by the "Poor Law Division," which, by its very nature, necessarily lives and moves and thinks in terms, not of education or of public health, but of the relief of destitution, just as it was started to do in 1834.

It follows, from this unfortunate failure of the Local Government Board to develop specialised departments for the different social services under its control, that the business heaped upon its "Poor Law Division" is of the most heterogeneous kind. The 30,000* letters which it has annually to dispose of deal not only with "the adminstration of Indoor and Outdoor relief," and "the appointment, qualifications, remuneration, duties and resignation or dismissal of all the more important officers of Boards of Guardians"; but also with the management of "schools and grouped or scattered homes for pauper children" and their "education and employment." It approves the plans of schools, and the equipment provided. It decides how many teachers shall be allowed in each school and what their qualifications shall be. It has to supervise the administration of "infirmaries" and "district sick asylums," and "the medical care and nursing of sick and mental patients," and the "practice as to surgical operations and midwifery." It approves the appointment of medical officers, and the arrangements for the supply of drugs. It has to settle the "tasks of work to be performed by vagrants and able-bodied paupers" and also decide on "emigration." It deals with the "reports of the Lunacy Commissioners" on the treatment of the insane. It advises when new infirmaries are required and approves the plans in accordance with the latest hospital science. It watches over the "boarding-out of pauper children." It supervises the small-pox and scarlet fever hospitals of the Metropolis, though these are non-pauper institutions; and it settles what staff of doctors and nurses shall be employed in each of them, and the salaries that these professional officers shall receive.†

We think it will be clear that no one officer and no one department can possibly be the possessor of expert knowledge, or the exponent of consistent policy—and, therefore, the source of successful central control—for such a hotch-potch of services. The head of the Poor Law Division, Mr. J. S. Davy, C.B., who is both Chief Inspector and Assistant Secretary, is an officer of great ability and wide experience. He is assisted by a staff which has acquired an efficiency of its own. But Mr. Davy would be the first to avow that, assuming it is desired that the schools and hospitals and other specialised services of the Boards of Guardians should each be as wisely economical as it is possible for schools and hospitals to be, and at the same time should be efficient in its own line, neither he nor anyone in his Division is qualified to judge or to advise what is the right policy or what are the right methods of attaining this end. He has himself explained to us how completely his Division has failed, notwithstanding its absolute power to refuse to sanction extravagant plans,‡ to prevent the most extraordinary variation of capital cost of schools and hospitals; and how, in consequence, the expenditure on many of these buildings has run up to an immense, and altogether disproportionate figure,§ without, as we have already mentioned, the buildings thus provided by Destitution Authorities, with the

* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 1597.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 94, 1596, 1597; Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834, Sec. 46. This distribution of business has not even the plausible advantage of concentrating in one branch all the work relating to one Local Authority Some of the duties of Boards of Guardians (*e.g.*, vaccination and valuation and assessment) are dealt with in other Divisions of the Local Government Board; and this is true also of many of the questions relating to their Poor Law functions (*e.g.*, loans, local Acts, audit, statistics, etc.). A Board of Guardians sometimes has before it at a single meeting a dozen different letters from the Local Government Board, emanating from three or four different Divisions of the office. Curiously enough, its work in inspecting baby farms is under the Home Office.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 1642, 1649, 1650.

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1633-1645.

approval of a Destitution Department, being at all well suited to their use as schools or hospitals. We attribute no blame for this failure either to Mr. Davy, or to the Poor Law Division. As he has explained, it is almost impossible for an unspecialised Department, having no continuous experience, and no expert knowledge of schools or hospitals, to cope successfully with the medical and architectural experts who are advising the Boards of Guardians.* When "the two architects and the Board of Guardians cannot agree . . . . the administrative part of the [Local Government] Board is," to use Mr. Davy's own words, "rather helpless." † We think it is clear that no mere General Department, attempting simultaneously to supervise and control such entirely distinct services as education and the treatment of the sick, the provision for the imbeciles and that for the able-bodied, the care of maternity hospitals and of asylums for the senile, can possibly acquire the technical experience or possess the specialised knowledge necessary either for the formulation and enforcement of a consistent policy, or for the exercise of any effective control over expenditure.

(f) The Need for Specialised Central Control.

We have accordingly to report that the existing organisation of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, the Central Authority in Poor Law administration, is, from the standpoint of efficiency of central control, wholly unsatisfactory. It is, in our opinion, a necessary preliminary to any improvement that the so-called "Poor Law Division," which professes to instruct and control the Local Authorities in such entirely different services as education and the cure of the sick, the relief of able-bodied workmen and the management of imbeciles, the provision for the aged and the care of newly-born infants, should be broken up, and its duties allocated to departments having knowledge and experience of the several services. It is significant that the need for some such specialisation of function has already been recognised by Parliament, by Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees and by the Local Government Board itself. The Poor Law Division, in fact, no longer deals either with all the work of the Boards of Guardians or with all the public provision for the destitute. When, under the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, a new service of public assistance for the Able-bodied was established, this was placed under the guidance and control of another division of the Local Government Board—leaving, however, the guidance and control of the relief of the other sections of the Able-bodied still with the Poor Law Division. When, in 1906, the provision made for another section of the Able-bodied—the Vagrants—was inquired into by a Departmental Committee, appointed by the President of the Local Government Board, and including two of the principal officers of that Department, the cardinal recommendation of that Committee was that the guidance and control of this service should be taken away from the Poor Law Division,‡ and transferred to a Department (the Home Office), which could specialise upon the able-bodied man "on tramp." The same tendency has manifested itself with regard to other classes of the poor. When, under the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908, a new service of public assistance for the Aged was established, this was placed, not under the guidance and control of its own new Division of the Local Government Board nor yet under that having the guidance and control of the provision for the rest of the Aged, but under the Division having to deal with Public Health By-laws, motor-cars and the Unemployed. With regard to the children the process of disintegration has gone on in several ways; not only has the Board of Education undertaken the guidance and control of the Local Authorities in the provision of medical inspection and treatment, and the feeding of destitute children at school; but also the Local Government Board itself has, in tardy accordance with the recommendation of the Departmental Committee on Metropolitan Poor Law Schools,§ voluntarily ceded to the Board of Education the duty of inspecting and reporting upon the education of pauper children. Finally, even whilst we were considering the subject, the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-Minded has recommended that the guidance and control of the Local Authorities in respect of the large proportion of the pauper population who are in any way mentally defective should be wholly transferred

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1642–1655, 1792.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 1795.

‡ Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy (Cd. 2852), 1906, Vol. I., Sec. 146.

§ Report of Departmental Committee on Metropolitan Poor Law Schools (Cd. 8027), 1896, Vol. I., p. 171.

from the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board, and placed under a separate specialised Department (the Board of Control).* In fact, as we have seen to be the case with regard to the Local Authorities, we have now, for each separate class of destitute persons, rival Central Departments promulgating conflicting policies and each purporting to exercise guidance and control—the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board still assuming to supervise all relief to the destitute, in respect to their destitution ; whilst other Departments or Divisions of Departments deal with the public provision made for the several classes in respect of the cause or character of their needs.

We think it is clear that there should be, for each class for which public provision is made, a single Central Department or Division, from which should emanate the policy to be recommended, and from which should be directed the necessary inspection and control of the Local Authorities concerned. Only in this way is it possible to secure for the Local Authorities the assistance of any consistent or helpful guidance in the development of their several services. Only in this way is it possible to secure such an administration of Grants-in-Aid of particular services as will promote good local administration and give the necessary strength to the Central Authority. Only in this way is it possible to exercise over local expenditure of the rates and taxes any effective supervision and control. With regard to the children of school age (not being actually sick or mentally defective) we consider it essential that the whole duty of supervision and control of the provision made by the Local Authorities for this class—whether for their schooling, or for their feeding—should be exercised by one Department, which cannot be other than the Board of Education. The present arrangement, under which the policy, the supervision and the control of children of school age for whom public provision is made are divided among three different Departments (the Board of Education, the Home Office, and the Local Government Board)—each having its own Grants-in-Aid, and its own staff of Inspectors, who in some cases visit the same institutions, without even conferring with each other—is hopelessly inefficient and extravagant. In particular, the peculiar arrangement by which the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board continues responsible for inspecting the board and lodging of the children in the Poor Law schools, whilst the Board of Education is responsible for inspecting the school-rooms and the instruction provided for these same children,† is one which cannot possibly be continued. This has been forcibly brought to our notice in the first General Report on the schools made by the Inspectors of the Board of Education.‡ Nor can it be justified that the Home Office, a Department having no other work connected with education,

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* Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded (Cd. 4202), 1908, Vol. VIII., pp. 338, etc.

† The present division of work between the Local Government Board and the Board of Education is, as we have already mentioned, even more illogical than is here stated. Although it has been understood that the Board of Education was to inspect the education of all Poor Law children, the Local Government Board has transferred to the Board of Education only the inspection of certain arbitrarily selected schools, namely, the residential schools maintained by Poor Law Authorities themselves, and twenty-three out of the 269 "certified" schools and homes; these twenty-three being Roman Catholic schools, and comprising only half the Roman Catholic schools, and only about a quarter of the certified institutions which themselves provide schooling. For all the rest, the Local Government Board continues to do the inspection; though its Inspectors are admittedly unqualified to inspect schools, and, as a matter of fact, are not instructed to report on the education, and do not regard it as part of their duty. We think that this anomalous position, which we imagine must have come about by inadvertence, should be promptly remedied, by the Board of Education assuming responsibility for inspecting all educational institutions whatsoever that receive any pupils from public authorities, or are in any way aided from public funds.

‡ "In regard to the part taken by the Board of Education Inspector in the Inspection of Poor Law schools, it has been borne in upon us in the course of our inquiry that the work in the schoolroom is, under any circumstances, so intimately related to the general conduct, discipline and life of the institution as a whole that it is very difficult for an Inspector to form an adequate judgment of what goes on on one side of the line, without a full knowledge of what is being done on the other side. The advantages of a single controlling authority in respect of such points as the school hours and time-table, the periods and character of recreation, the supervision of the children out of school, and the place of domestic and industrial work in the institution, as distinguished from the school, are obvious. . . . Dual control . . . produces special difficulty in cases where repairs or improvements to premises, additions to staff, or any matters entailing expenditure, are to be dealt with. . . . It seems fairly clear, however, that if the supervision and control of the educational work of the Poor Law schools by the Board of Education is to be really effective, the Board's influence cannot be confined strictly to what takes place in the schoolrooms and during the hours of the ordinary instruction, but some means must be found whereby the requisite improvements can be secured in regard to the general direction of the Institution of which the school is the most important part." (Report upon the Educational Work in Poor Law Schools, and in the twenty-three Schools, certified under the Poor Law (Certified Schools) Act, 1862, which are inspected by the Board of Education, by Mr. J. Tillard, His Majesty's Inspector, and Miss M. B. Synge, July 1st, 1908, pp. 6–7.)

should pay Grants to, and should keep an Inspector to visit, industrial schools which are sometimes provided by Local Education Authorities, contemporaneously in receipt of Grants from the Board of Education, and sometimes inspected also by the Inspectors of the Local Government Board, which certifies them as fit for use by the Destitution Authorities. The arguments for the transfer, from the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board and the Home Office to the Board of Education, of all matters relating to children of school age, whether such children are in schools of one designation or in schools of other designations, will become even more overwhelming in strength when, as we have recommended, the actual provision for all necessitous children in each locality, not being actually sick or mentally defective, including industrial and reformatory schools, and " boarding-out," is made by a single Local Authority (the Local Education Authority). We anticipate much advantage to the Board of Education itself, in this enlargement of its functions. It has been suggested to us that the Inspectors of the Board of Education, confined as they are at present to the scholastic instruction of the children, are apt to take too exclusively a literary view of education. We think that the widening of view which must come from having to deal, not merely with schooling, but with all the needs of the child, and the experience of those who in industrial and reformatory schools and in Poor Law schools have had always to consider the whole up-bringing of the children, their industrial training, and the actual starting them out in the world, will be of special value in correcting the " defects of the qualities " of a mere Education Department, apt to think only of what can be taught in class. We do not, of course, suggest that the same Inspector would deal with all the different aspects of the child's life and the child's needs. There will, it is clear, be a much greater differentiation and specialisation among the Inspectorate than has heretofore existed. In particular, the transfer to the Board of Education of the specialised Inspectors of boarded-out children, with their intimate knowledge of the interaction of the school and the home, would add a valuable element to the educational staff.

The same general arguments support the placing of the whole central control of the local medical services and of the public provision for the sick in the hands of a single specialised Department. We have seen how necessary it is that the present Poor Law Medical Service and the Public Health Service in the several localities should be merged in a unified Local Medical Service on Public Health lines. It is, in our judgment, equally essential that this unified Local Medical Service should have the guidance and control of a single Central Department, having the supervision of everything relating to the public health. We have even received representations in favour of the establishment of a separate Ministry of Public Health with a representative in the Cabinet. Leaving aside, however, this larger question, we were surprised to find that, notwithstanding the strong recommendation of the Sanitary Commission of 1869, there does not exist to-day even a self-contained Division of the Local Government Board dealing with the subject. The supervision and control of the public provision for the prevention and cure of disease—a service on which the nation is spending altogether many millions sterling annually—is scattered among no fewer than five Divisions or Departments of the Local Government Board, each having its own staff, its own experience of administration, its own expert consultants, its own views of policy, and its own permanent head responsible for advising the Permanent Secretary and the President of the Board. Thus, all questions relating to the Poor Law Infirmaries and the Isolation Hospitals of the Metropolis go to the Poor Law Division; and about these the Secretary and President are advised as to policy by Mr. J. S. Davy, C.B. The Isolation Hospitals everywhere else, and the vaccination business of the Boards of Guardians (though not their administration of the Infant Life Protection Act) are dealt with by quite another Division; and the Secretary and President are advised as to policy by Mr. J. Lithiby, C.B. But this Division, called the " Public Health, Local Finance and Local Acts Division " also deals with Public Libraries and Canal Boats, and is encumbered, curiously enough, with the entire subject of Local Finance, including rates, assessments, loans, and the accounts of Municipal Corporations. It is also responsible, moreover, for the supervision of water supply, rivers pollution and the purity of food and drugs. Nevertheless the whole activity of Local Authorities under the Public Health Acts and the Gas and Water Facilities Act is looked after by yet another Department, the " Sanitary Administration and Local Areas Division," which also deals with Housing, Drainage, Roads, and Burial; and on all these matters the Secretary and President are advised as to policy by Mr. N. T. Kershaw, C.B. On the other hand, the vital question of By-laws under the Public Health and other Acts, and of regulations as to water supply and milk, as well as those relating to motor-cars—together with the whole administration of the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, and, curiously enough, also of the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908—is

in the hands of yet another Division, under Mr. H. C. Monro, C.B., who has the responsibility of advising the Secretary and President as to the policy to be pursued with regard to these heterogeneous services. Apart from all these Divisions, with a department of a dozen or more doctors and inspectors, stands the Chief Medical Officer of the Board, Dr. A. Newsholme, who, as we have learned from the complaint of his distinguished predecessor, Sir John Simon, may or may not advise the President with regard to these health matters, according to whether or not the other Divisions, which are charged with one or other of the fragments of the Public Health service, send the papers to his department.

We are satisfied that there can be neither adequate control of expenditure nor efficiency of service, whether on the side of the Poor Law Medical Service or on that of the Public Health Medical Service, so long as this illogical and demoralising distribution of the central control among five rival divisions or departments of the Local Government Board continues to prevail. To-day, as it was authoritatively stated in 1869, "the causes of the present insufficiency of the central sanitary authority are obvious:—

> "(1.) The want of concentration . . . .
>
> "(2.) The want of central officers, there being, for instance, no staff whatever for constant, and a very small one for occasional, inspection.
>
> "(3.) The want of constant and official communication between central and local officers throughout the kingdom.

A new statute, therefore, should constitute and give adequate strength to one Central Authority . . . . not to centralise administration, but, on the contrary, to set local life in motion—a real motive power, and an Authority to be referred to for guidance and assistance by all the Sanitary Authorities for Local Government throughout the country."* In short, we cannot help attributing to the scattering of the knowledge, the power and the responsibility among five different heads of Departments, all offering advice to the Permanent Secretary and to the President of the Board, and all having other matters to attend to besides the Public Health, the lack of any strong and consistent policy with regard to the public provision for the prevention and treatment of disease, the disabling lack of co-ordination among the several parts of this service, the failure even to keep the work of the Local Authorities under supervision by any systematic medical inspection of the various public hospitals and infirmaries, the absence of medical statistics of their work, and the lack of guidance and control of the manifold activities and frequent omissions of the Local Authorities in the whole domain of Public Health, with which, as we have seen, the work of the Boards of Guardians is so closely connected.† We recommend that the responsibility for the supervision, guidance and control of the Local Authorities in all their action in the prevention and treatment of disease, including the administration of the Grants-in-Aid in respect of this service, should be placed upon a single Public Health Department, whether that Department be represented by a Minister of its own, or form one of several Divisions of the Local Government Board. To this Public Health Department—which should be self-contained and complete in itself, with its own specialised legal and architectural experts—there would naturally fall the supervision of all public hospitals and infirmaries, whether now administered by Boards of Guardians or by Town Councils, etc.; of all domiciliary medical inspection and treatment, whether by the District Medical Officers or the Medical Officers of Health; of all developments of vaccination and the use of anti-toxins; of all the provision made for infants under school age, including the administration of the Infant Life Protection Act, now re-enacted in the Children's Act, 1908; of all the institutional provision made for the aged; of the measures taken to secure the wholesomeness or purity of milk, meat, and other food, and of drugs; of the By-laws and regulations relating to matters of health; and of water supply, drainage and house sanitation. The Department would, of course, have its own staff of qualified Inspectors; among which there would, no doubt, be developed a Hospital Inspection

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* Report of the Royal Commission on Sanitation, 1869.

† Beyond sanctioning the loans for hospitals under the Public Health Acts, the Local Government Board has, we gather, no other official knowledge of the 700 municipal hospitals than it can glean from the Local Taxation Accounts, and from reading the Annual Reports of the 1,800 Medical Officers of Health, with which it is supplied, but which it does not, for publication, summarise or review statistically. We have found it impossible to ascertain exactly how many sanitary authorities, or what proportion of the whole, either maintain their own hospitals, or make arrangements to use other hospitals, or make no provision at all. It is indeed surprising how little is known at the Local Government Board of what the several Local Authorities are doing, or leaving undone, in the domain of public health. We have been unable to find any statistical or other information as to municipal hospitals, health visiting, the treatment of phthisis, the campaign against infantile mortality, the areas and the diseases with regard to which voluntary notification is in operation, and many other points.

Branch, dealing systematically with all the institutional provision for the sick, to which the present "Medical Inspectors for Poor Law Purposes" would bring their valuable experience. Such a Public Health Department would, of course, need more than one Assistant Secretary; would have, as its immediate permanent head, an officer combining administrative with Public Health experience, and would include among its administrative staff (and not merely as consultants) men of medical qualifications. We think, in fact, that the office of Chief Medical Officer should be combined, if not with that of the permanent head, at all times with that of one of the Assistant Secretaries (just as the office of Chief General Inspector is now combined with that of Assistant Secretary for the Poor Law Division), in order that—as is already the case in Scotland and Ireland, to the great advantage of the Public Health Service—the Chief Medical Officer may on the one hand be in direct communication with the Local Authorities, and on the other, be directly responsible for advising the Permanent Secretary and the President of the Local Government Board as to policy in all matters relating to Public Health.

We do not presume to suggest whether any of these Departments should be placed under Ministers of their own, by whom they would be directly represented in Parliament. But for such of them as remain associated together in the Local Government Board we recommend that a proper organisation for conference and co-ordination should be provided. We have been much impressed by the arrangements in this respect of the Local Government Boards for Scotland and Ireland.* These Boards are real boards of consultation, composed of the permanent heads of the several Divisions with the permanent head of the office as Vice-President. We may cite as other examples the Army Council at the War Office and the Board of Admiralty. We think that if the responsible permanent heads of Departments, each administering a single service, met weekly in formal conference with the Minister (or in his absence the permanent head of the office) in the Chair, it would secure, on the one hand, full opportunity for bringing to notice the urgent needs of each service, and on the other, that automatic co-ordination of policy which is as requisite for the wisest economy as for the fullest efficiency.

In the case of the large class of the mentally defective—whether lunatics, idiots, inebriates, epileptics or merely feeble-minded—we are relieved from the necessity of arguing in favour of the concentration in a single specialised Department of the whole of the central control, by the emphatic recommendations just made by the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded.† Whether that Department be designated the Board of Control, as recommended by the Commissioners, or whether it be given some more expressive title, we think it indispensable that it should be a self-contained Department, administering all the Grants-in-Aid of the service under its control, directly responsible to whichever Minister of the Crown may be entrusted with its supervision, and in direct

* The Local Government Board for Scotland, which is the Central Authority for Poor Law, Public Health Unemployment, Old-Age Pensions, and all the Local Authorities dealing with these subjects, is constituted as follows:—"The Board shall consist of a President, being the Secretary for Scotland, the Solicitor-General for Scotland, and the Under-Secretary for Scotland, together with three appointed members of whom one shall also be appointed Vice-President and Chairman of the Board in the absence of the President, the second shall be a member of the Faculty of Advocates, of not less than seven years standing, and the third shall be a registered medical practitioner, who is also registered on the medical register as the holder of a diploma in sanitary science, public health, or State medicine, under Sec. 21 of the Medical Act, 1886, or has been for a period of not less than five years Medical Officer of a County or Burgh. Such third appointed member shall not hold any other appointment, or engage in private practice or employment." The President of the Board is, as Secretary for Scotland, the Parliamentary head of the Board. He is, therefore, the ultimate source of executive power, both initiative and regulative. The constitutional position, as we understand it, is that he is the *ultima ratio*. He has the full power of veto on all that the Board does; he has the power to give instructions that any given order shall be carried out. If, therefore, any difference of opinion should exist between the other five members of the Board and the President, he, as responsible head, would prevail. This fundamental constitutional doctrine necessarily governs all the actions of the Board; but, in practice, we understand, it affects for the most part only questions involving policy, *e.g.*, the principle of the distribution of grants to unemployed, staff appointments, etc. All the ordinary routine work of administration—Poor Law, Public Health, etc.—necessarily falls to be carried out by the three appointed members, acting as the whole Board. No individual member acts as such. We gather that, theoretically, every member of the Board deals with all the Board's work and sees all papers; but, for convenience of practice, there is a certain amount of specialisation—legal questions falling to the legal member, medical questions to the medical member, and general questions to both—all passing to the Vice-President as to the Permanent Head of an English Department and, if necessary, to the Minister. In practice, the great mass of questions are settled after discussion by the Board members. At the meetings of the *whole* Board, all the appointed members take part in the discussion of every question submitted. Theoretically, the decisions are ultimately decisions by the Parliamentary head; but, practically, they are, for the most part, corporate decisions by a body of six men.

† Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. VIII.

communication with all the Local Authorities making provision for any class of the mentally defective. We think that this Department should have its own specialised legal and architectural advisers, as well as its own medical officers and inspectors.

The administration of the service of national pensions for the aged is so inchoate, and the character of the local organisation is as yet so vaguely determined, that, whilst it necessarily impinges upon our subject, we hesitate to make definite recommendations in the matter. The present situation is anomalous. The orders and regulations are made by the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively. The executive officers representing the Government in the different localities, and actually doing the bulk of the work of enquiry and determination, are not officers of these Departments, but of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, whose sphere extends to the whole of the United Kingdom. The Inspectors who are to see that these executive officers carry out the orders and regulations, not of their own department but of the three Local Government Boards, are at present responsible only to the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. The Pension Committees of the Local Authorities are in correspondence, not with the Commissioners of Inland Revenue, but with the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively, to which the appeals are to be made. These appeals will have to be determined severally by these three Local Government Boards; and there does not seem to be any provision for ensuring that the appeals from England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively will be decided on uniform principles. We presume that this curious arrangement is only a temporary one.

We regard it as essential that there should be a single, self-contained Central Department for this pension service, having its own executive staff and its own Inspectorate, supervising and controlling the Local Pension Authorities and determining all appeals from the local decisions. In view of the necessity of securing uniformity in the decisions on these appeals, and having regard to the fact that the whole of the funds are provided directly from the National Exchequer, we do not see how the Central Pensions Authority can be other than national in its scope, dealing directly with the whole of the United Kingdom. This consideration appears to exclude it from the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively, and to point to its administration as a subordinate Department of the Treasury.

There remains the class of the Able-bodied, for whom provision is now made as paupers or Vagrants by the Destitution Authorities, and as unemployed by the Distress Committees of the Town Councils, etc. The central control is exercised, so far as England and Wales are concerned, in part by the "Poor Law Division" of the Local Government Board under Mr. J. S. Davy, C.B., and in part by the "Legal and Order Division" of that Department, under Mr. H. C. Monro, C.B. A further disintegration of the central control with regard to the able-bodied has been recommended, as we have mentioned, by the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, in the transfer to the Home Office of all supervision of the action of the Local Authorities in regard to the Able-bodied who are relieved outside their own parishes. We shall deal with the whole subject of the provision for the Able-bodied in Part II. of the present Report. It suffices here to say that we regard it as absolutely essential to economy and efficiency that one Central Department, and one Central Department only, should be responsible for the supervision and control of the treatment of able-bodied persons in receipt of public assistance; and that this Central Department should be self-contained and distinct from those Departments of the National Government which have to lay down a policy, and to guide the Local Authorities, in the treatment of the various classes of the non-able-bodied.

(G) Conclusions.

We have therefore to report:—

1. That the Local Government Board for England and Wales—and in a lesser degree the Local Government Boards for Scotland and Ireland—have failed to secure the national uniformity of policy with regard to the relief of the poor, which was aimed at in the establishment of a Central Authority upon the Report of 1834.

2. That this failure has contributed to the extraordinary variations in Poor Law administration in different districts, and to the present demoralised state of the majority of the Destitution Authorities.

3. That we attribute the failure, not to any shortcomings in the persons concerned, but to the obsolete character of the administrative machinery with which they have had to work; and notably to their not having been able to keep pace with the virtual transformation of the Destitution Authorities, from bodies set to "relieve destitution" under a deterrent Poor Law, into Local Authorities which, in response to public criticism, have started to provide, for this or that class of their patients, not deterrent relief, but curative and restorative treatment.

4. That the "Poor Law Division," with its General Inspectors, adhering to the old technique of a deterrent "relief of destitution," is unqualified to secure the efficient and economical administration of the different kinds of nurseries, schools, hospitals, asylums, custodial homes, farm colonies, and what not, that are now being run by the hypertrophied Destitution Authorities.

5. That each of the separate services—such as education, public health and care of the insane—administered by the Local Authorities imperatively requires the supervision, guidance and control of a distinct and self-contained Department or Division of a Department, having its own regulative orders, its own technically qualified Inspectorate, and its consistent line of policy; and that just as the Local Destitution Authorities should be broken up and merged in the several Committees of the County or County Borough Council dealing with the several services, so the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board should be abolished, and its work distributed among the several Departments or Divisions of Departments to which may be entrusted the supervision and control over the Local Education Authorities, the Local Health Authorities, and the Local Authorities for the Mentally Defective, respectively.

6. That we cannot refrain from animadverting on the fact that, notwithstanding the enormous importance and steady expansion of the Public Health work of the Local Authorities, there exists, in England and Wales, no Department, and not even a distinct and self-contained Division of a Department, responsible for their supervision, guidance and control in this important service, and for maintaining in it a definite and consistent policy—the work of dealing with the questions as they arise being intermixed with the business of other services and scattered among five different Divisions of the Local Government Board; none of them having, under its control, any staff of inspectors for the systematic visitation of all the Local Health Authorities, or the administration of any Grant-in-Aid of the services of those Authorities; and none of them being charged with the duty of formulating and maintaining a consistent policy for the service as a whole.

CHAPTER XII.

The Scheme of Reform.

The state of anarchy and confusion, into which has fallen the whole realm of relief and assistance to the poor and to persons in distress, is so generally recognised that many plans of reform have been submitted to us, each representing a section of public opinion. In fact, throughout the three years of our investigations we have been living under a continuous pressure for a remodelling of the Poor Laws and the Unemployed Workmen Act, in one direction or another. We do not regret this peremptory and insistent demand for reform. The present position is, in our opinion, as grave as that of 1834, though in its own way. We have, on the one hand, in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike, the well-established Destitution Authorities, under ineffective central control, each pursuing its own policy in its own way; sometimes rigidly restricting its relief to persons actually destitute, and giving it in the most deterrent and humiliating forms; sometimes launching out into an indiscriminate and unconditional subsidising of mere poverty; sometimes developing costly and palatial institutions for the treatment, either gratuitously or for partial payment, of practically any applicant of the wage-earning or of the lower middle class. On the other hand, we see existing, equally ubiquitous with the Destitution Authorities, the newer specialised organs of Local Government—the Local Education Authority, the Local Health Authority, the Local Lunacy Authority, the Local Unemployment Authority, the Local Pension Authority—all attempting to provide for the needs of the poor, *according to the cause or character of their distress.* Every Parliamentary session adds to the powers of these specialised Local Authorities. Every Royal Commission or Departmental Committee recommends some fresh development of their activities. Thus, even while our Commission has been at work, a Departmental Committee has reported in favour of handing over the Vagrants and what used to be called the "Houseless Poor," to the Local Police Authority, as being interested in "Vagrancy as a whole," apart from the accident of a Vagrant being destitute. The Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded has recommended that all mentally defective persons now maintained by the Poor Law should be handed over to the Local Authority specially concerned with mental deficiency, whether in a destitute, or in a non-destitute person. The increasing activities of these specialised Local Authorities, being only half-consciously sanctioned by public opinion, and only imperfectly authorised by statute, are spasmodic and uneven. Whilst, for instance, the Local Education Authorities and the Local Health Authorities are providing, in some places, gratuitous maintenance and medical treatment, for one set of persons after another, similar Authorities elsewhere are rigidly confining themselves to a bare fulfilment of their statutory obligations of schooling and sanitation. Athwart the overlapping and rivalry of these half a dozen Local Authorities that may be all at work in a single district, we watch the growing stream of private charity and voluntary agencies—almshouses and pensions for the aged; hospitals and dispensaries, convalescent homes and "medical missions" for the sick; free dinners and free boots, country holidays and "happy evenings" for the children; free shelters and soup kitchens, "way tickets" and charitable jobs for the able-bodied, together with uncounted indiscriminate doles of every description—without systematic organisation and without any co-ordination with the multifarious forms of public activity. What the nation is confronted with to-day is, as it was in 1834, an ever-growing expenditure from public and private funds, which results, on the one hand, in a minimum of prevention and cure, and on the other in far-reaching demoralisation of character and the continuance of no small amount of unrelieved destitution.

(A) Schemes that we have rejected.

We may distinguish, amid the various proposals for reform that have been brought before us, three main policies to be carried out by new legislation in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland alike. These all contemplate the continuance, under one constitution or another, of an Authority specifically charged with the relief of destitute persons, and of destitute persons only. As each of these policies has received substantial support, we think it expedient to state briefly what they involve, and our reasons for not adopting them.

(i.) *The Continuance of a Denuded Destitution Authority alongside of other Local Authorities Providing for the Poor.*

The easiest policy to pursue, by way of bringing the chaos into some sort of order, would be to restrict the Destitution Authorities to a "deterrent" and "less eligible" relief of actual destitution, whilst giving free play to the other Local Authorities to develop assistance out of the rates and taxes on their own specialised lines of prevention and treatment. This policy has not been explicitly recommended to us as a definite scheme of reform. But it is implied in many of the fragmentary proposals that have been laid before us; as, indeed, it is in much of the legislation of the last few years. It was this policy which seems to have inspired the momentous Circular of 1886, by which Mr. Chamberlain, when President of the Local Government Board, inaugurated the Municipal Relief Works for the Unemployed, and the same policy is plainly embodied in the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905. "Any relaxation," said Mr. Chamberlain, of the ordinary deterrent tests in Poor Law Relief, "would be most disastrous."* But another form of public assistance of men who would otherwise have been relieved by the Poor Law was to be provided by another Local Authority. Similarly, as an explanation of the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, we were informed by Mr. Walter Long, that, in his view, "the object of the Poor Law," in respect of the able-bodied, was "to check" the manufacture of paupers "by imposing upon those who are thriftless, idle or intemperate the strictest possible regulations," in which he desired no relaxation whatsoever. But for "strong, healthy, industrious men," who are "by force of circumstances" in distress, "some fresh powers and new machinery are required.† The same idea lay at the root of the persistent advocacy, by Mr. Charles Booth, of a national scheme of pensions for the aged. A wise system of non-contributory pensions for the aged, together with municipal hospitals for the sick, would, he held, enable the Poor Law to be made wholly deterrent.‡ The same idea has been embodied in nearly all the legislation on these problems of the last few years; and it has inspired the recommendations of nearly all the Royal Commissions and Committees of Inquiry, in favour of providing, outside the Poor Law, milk depots and school dinners for the infants and children, municipal hospitals for all sorts of diseases, "custodial homes" for the feeble-minded, and pensions for the aged.

This policy offers to-day the attraction of requiring no reversal of recent legislation, and no discouragement of municipal efforts to raise the standard of life. It involves, however, the denudation of the English Boards of Guardians and the Scottish Parish Councils of all the forms of specialised provision for the children, the sick and the aged that we have described; and the rigid curtailment of the activities of these Destitution Authorities to the maintenance of a deterrent Workhouse. This means, in England and Wales, the abrogation of nearly all the Orders and Circulars of the Local Government Board since the date of the General Consolidated Order of 1847 and the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order of 1844. It would, by depriving the elected members and the officials of all the interest of managing educational, curative and philanthropic institutions, take the heart out of Poor Law administration; and make it more difficult than ever to induce men and women of zeal and integrity to devote themselves to what would be nothing but a hateful service. Moreover, experience with regard to vagrants and the "Ins-and-Outs" has shown that the most deterrent Workhouse does not prove continuously deterrent, unless its administrators can apply powers of compulsory detention. To grant such powers would be to make the Destitution Authorities very nearly akin to the Prison Authorities. It was on such grounds that the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy was constrained to recommend that the Vagrants should be taken out of the Poor Law, and entrusted to the Police Authorities, and that a penal colony for their detention should be provided by the Prison Department under the Home Office. Indeed, it is difficult to discover what class of destitute persons would, under this scheme, be found, in practice, to remain under the jurisdiction of the denuded Destitution Authority, after all those who required curative treatment, all those for whom honourable maintenance ought to be provided, and all those subjected to penal detention had been withdrawn. Meanwhile, the other Local Authorities, specialising on particular services, would be free to go ahead in their several ways, increasing the municipal debt in all directions, and relieving whole classes of persons and whole forms of destitution, without any check against overlapping, without any insistence on charge or recovery, without inquiry into economic circumstances before the grant of food or money in the

* Circular of March 15th, 1886; Sixteenth Annual Report of Local Government Board for England and Wales, 1886–1887, Appendix A., pp. 5, 6.

† Evidence before the Commission, Q. 78461 (Pars. 11, 12).

‡ *Pauperism and the Endowment of Old Age*, by the Rt. Hon. Charles Booth, 1892, pp. 208–210; *Old-Age Pensions and the Aged Poor*, by the same, 1899 (re-issued in 1906).

home, and without, in fact, any safeguards against developing afresh all the evils of an unregulated Poor Law. On the other hand, as rigid deterrence is found to leave much destitution unrelieved, and as the other Local Authorities would have no responsibility for preventing starvation, we should have, in some districts, practically the evil of there being no relief of distress; whilst nowhere would the Local Authorities be under any obligation to make whatever provision they chose to develop, in any one service, adequate to the needs of the poor.

(ii) *The Monopoly of Public Assistance by a Deterrent Destitution Authority.*

The idea of limiting all assistance out of rates and taxes to the operations of a Deterrent Poor Law was unreservedly advocated, with regard to the Able-bodied, by the Royal Commission of 1834, and put into practice by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834–1847. Some students of the 1834 Report consider that this policy was also intended to be applied to the non-able-bodied.* But the application of this policy to the "Disabled" was reserved for the talented Inspectorate of 1869–86. It was then argued that just as under the Act of 1834 the introduction of a Deterrent Poor Law had "obliged the Able-bodied to assume responsibility for the able-bodied period of life, an application of the principle to the other responsibilities would produce equally advantageous results." † To ensure the maximum of deterrence, it was suggested that the "Workhouse Test" should be universally applied, so that the only relief offered to any class, "the Disabled" as well as the Able-bodied, should be bare subsistence in a disciplinary Workhouse, combined with the humiliation and disgrace that—so it was argued—should be attached to "living upon funds that have been raised by compulsion." This policy, it was fervently believed by its advocates, would, by reason of its very harshness to the aged, to the sick and to the children, so stimulate private charity and voluntary agencies, and so encourage parental and filial, brotherly and cousinly feeling, that every aged person, every sick person and every child, who was at all "deserving," and many even of those who were not deserving, would be maintained without "pauperism," and without cost to public funds.

The uniform enforcement of this policy throughout the country has been advocated by many of our witnesses, including some having great experience of the actual administration of the Poor Law. The official representatives of the Poor Law Officers' Association, for instance, presented this policy to us as embodying "the fundamental principles of the English Poor Law." ‡ They laid it down that the principles upon which we ought to insist, with regard to all assistance from public funds, were that "the condition of the person relieved should not in any respect be better than that of the lowest class of independent labourer; and the next, that it is essential to associate with the receipt of relief such drawbacks as will induce the poor, so far as lies in their power, to make provision for the future." §

We find some difficulty in estimating the exact changes that would be required for universal adoption of this policy, owing to the fact that its advocates are not clear whether they really desire it to be applied to all classes of paupers. Mr. Crowder, for instance, whose long and devoted service as a Poor Law Guardian in St. George's-in-the-East is so well known, emphatically declared to us that all relief of distress from public funds should be through the Poor Law, ‖ and that all such relief should be "less eligible," should be

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 29405, 29406 (Bonar).

† *History of the English Poor Law*, by Sir G. Nicholls, Vol. III. (by T. Mackay), p. 154.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 28796 (Par. 2).

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 28938.

‖ "The business of the Poor Law is the relief of destitution as distinguished from poverty. The fundamental principle with respect to legal relief is that the condition of the pauper ought to be, on the whole, less eligible than that of the poorest class of independent labourer. That all distribution of relief, in money or in goods, to be spent or consumed by the pauper in his own home (*i.e.*, all outdoor relief), is inconsistent with the principle in question. Where cases of real hardship occur, the remedy must be applied by individual charity, a virtue for which no system of relief derived from a compulsory tax can or ought to be a substitute. That the bane of all pauper legislation has been the legislating for extreme cases, and that every violating of the general rule to meet a real case of unusual hardship, lets in a whole class of cases by which that rule must in time be destroyed." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 17387 (Par. 21).)

17676. Do you agree with the principle that all relief of distress from public funds should be through the Poor Law?—(*Mr. Crowder.*) Yes.

17677. Whether it is caused by unemployment, or sickness, or in any other way?—

17678. You believe that that would be healthy as a means of compelling people to husband their resources, and make provision for unemployment or sickness during the working period?—

17679. You approve also of attaching the stigma of pauperism practically to all recipients of relief?—I do.

17680. You would not hide the fact, in any case, that these people are receiving public funds?—No.

17681. Because of its weakening the character of the people and increasing the number relying on getting relief in a similar way?—Quite so.
(*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 17676–17681.)

[illegible] Majority Report.

"deterrent," and should be subject to "the stigma of pauperism." But it subsequently appeared that Mr. Crowder was unprepared to apply this policy to the not inconsiderable section of the paupers who are children, nor yet (except "to some extent") to the still larger number who are sick.* Some witnesses, however, were more consistent. Mr. T. Mackay, for instance, would have us boldly apply this historic policy to the aged and to the sick, as well as to the Able-bodied.† One important witness, the Rev. Canon Bury, who was so long mainly responsible for the Poor Law administration of Brixworth, frankly advocated the application of the same principles even to the children, for whom he recommended ‡ residence in the General Mixed Workhouse, as the only way of making their condition less eligible than that of the children of the lowest grade of independent labourer. "I think," said Canon Bury, "the child must bear, as it were, the sins of the father . . . and I should not like Poor Law relief to interfere with that." § Thus, we have maintenance in the Workhouse advocated as the sole form of public assistance to be afforded to any class. The only alternative appears to such reformers to be a grant of Outdoor Relief which cannot be made either adequate or conditional. For "it is evident," remarks one of the Inspectors, "that if out-relief were granted in sufficient amount to afford adequate relief (which may be defined as relief which would place the recipient in reasonable comfort) it would raise the pauper class to a better condition than the independent persons in a similar position of life (miserable as that position may be in the estimate of more favoured sections of society) and would offer a premium to dependence upon the rates. Besides, no out-relief can teach cleanliness and decency (again, according to a higher standard), or can prevent persons in great poverty from parting with any article they can turn into money."

The adoption of this policy would involve the repeal of the various Acts of recent years enabling the Local Education Authorities to feed necessitous children, and to provide medical treatment for those who need it. It would involve, not only the abandonment of all this activity by Local Education Authorities, but also their closing their residential schools for defective children, and their day industrial schools. The Local Health Authorities would have either to close their 700 hospitals, or else—what indeed, the Legislature seems originally to have intended—make such a substantial charge for admission to them as would automatically throw back on the Poor Law every destitute person stricken with fever. Similarly the most progressive of the Local Health Authorities would have either to close their Municipal Milk Depots, and dismiss their Health Visitors; or else make such charges for these services as would render them self-supporting, and, at the same time, leave to the Destitution Authority the monopoly of public assistance in the poorest districts. We should have to ignore the recommendations in favour of specialised provision for particular classes, which have emanated from every Royal Commission, every Select Committee of the House of Commons, and every Departmental Committee which has, during the last twenty years, been set to consider any one of these problems. We should, in particular, have to neglect the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy and those of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded. Finally, we should have to repeal the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 and the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908. The Destitution Authorities themselves would have to be revolutionised. The Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board would have to revert to the policy and the Poor Law technique of the Inspectorate of 1869–86; and this would involve the reversal of nearly all the official Orders and Circulars of the last sixty years with regard to the children; of all those of the last forty years with regard to the sick; and of all those of the last twenty years with regard to the aged. The Boards of Guardians of England and Wales would have to give up their Cottage Homes and Scattered Homes, their Infirmaries and Sanatoria. The Parish Councils of Scotland would have to give up their Parochial Homes and pensions for the aged, and their roll of widows with children on exceptional home aliment, far above what is enjoyed by the [illegible] ives of the lowest class of independent labourers. We do not think that any such [illegible] is possible or desirable.

[illegible] deed, has become apparent is that the condition of the lowest grade of in[illegible] ourers is unfortunately one of such inadequacy of food and clothing and [illegible] other necessaries of life that it has been found, in practice, impossible [illegible] litions of Poor Law relief "less eligible" without making them such as

[illegible] 17736.

[illegible] 885.

are demoralising to the children, physically injurious to the sick, and brutalising to the aged and infirm. Nor do private charity and Voluntary Agencies suffice as a substitute or as an alternative for the public provision for the destitute. It is not merely that private charity has at least as many evils of its own, and at least as many dangers, as the public provision has. What has been abundantly demonstrated is that, without State action, private charity and Voluntary Agencies nowhere fit the need—they are in most places and for most purposes lamentably insufficient, and in some places and for some purposes demoralisingly superabundant. Finally, they never rise above the individual hard case. With such problems as the excessive infantile mortality of a whole district, the wide prevalence of tuberculosis, or the preventable illnesses of school children, it never occurs to them to attempt to cope.

(iii.) *The Extension of Public Assistance by a Disguised and Swollen Poor Law.*

We pass now to the recommendations of the majority of our colleagues in respect of the functions and constitution of the bodies which they suggest should take the place of the Boards of Guardians in England and Wales. We confess to some difficulty in discovering or understanding what it is that they propose. They sweep away all existing Poor Law Authorities—doing, as it seems to us, grave injustice in the terms they apply to the existing Guardians *—but they recommend the creation of a new Poor Law Authority under another name. They are emphatic in laying down the principle that "the responsibility for due and effective relief of all necessitous persons at the public expense should be in the hands of one and only one Authority."† Moreover, they declare that they "do not recommend any alteration of the law which would extend the qualification for relief to individuals not now entitled to it, or which would bring within the operation of assistance from public funds classes not now legally within its operation."‡ So far we might be dealing with the plan of "a Monopoly of Public Assistance by a Deterrent Destitution Authority" that we have just described. But our colleagues reject that plan. They carefully avoid any recommendation in favour of a return to the "principles of 1834." These principles, hitherto acclaimed as the basis of any sound policy, are left aside as antiquated and inapplicable. "The administrators of the present Poor Law," we are told, "are, in fact, endeavouring to apply the rigid system of 1834 to a condition of affairs which it was never intended to meet. What is wanted is not to abolish the Poor Law, but to widen, strengthen and humanise the Poor Law." § The new Poor Law Authority is, therefore, no longer to be confined to dealing with "the destitute"; it is to provide for the much larger class of "the necessitous." || Its work is no longer to be "relief," but to be concentrated mainly on curative and restorative treatment of the most varied kind. This policy, it will be perceived, involves not only the continuance of the array of specialised institutions which a few Boards of Guardians in England have latterly established, but their multiplication in every district, and the development of new varieties. Besides the Poor Law residential Schools (or Cottage Homes, or Scattered Homes), there is to be established in every populous district a Poor Law day school, providing meals for the children of widows on Outdoor Relief, as well as an improved form of education, better adapted than that given in the Public Elementary Schools for the preparation of pauper children for industrial careers. There are to be also Poor Law almshouses or Cottage Homes for the deserving aged, and Poor Law Rescue Homes for destitute young women of immoral life.¶

What puzzles us is how the new Poor Law Authority can provide all these things for "the necessitous," without enormously increasing its present costly overlapping and rivalry with the Local Education Authority and the Local Health Authority. For the

* We wish, in particular, to dissociate ourselves from such a statement as the following: "The work is tending more and more to fall into the hands of persons who, caring more for their own interests than for those of the community, direct their administration more towards the attainment of popularity than towards the solution of the real problems of pauperism" (Par. 92 of Chapter II. of Part IV. of the Majority Report). We know of no branch of the public service in which there is a larger proportion of zealous and devoted men and women than among the 24,000 Poor Law Guardians, who suffer unmerited unpopularity and disrepute from having to work an antiquated and impracticable system, imposed on them by Parliament and the Local Government Board.

† Par. 609 of Chapter IV. of Part VI. of Majority Report.

‡ Par. 4 of Part IX. of Majority Report.

§ Par. 337 of Chapter I. of Part VI. of Majority Report.

|| "We prefer the term necessitous," for we believe that it more accurately describes those who are at present held to be qualified for relief. We recommend, therefore, that the term "necessitous" take the place of "destitute." (Par. 4 of Part IX. of Majority Report.)

¶ Par. 420 of Chapter VIII. of part IV.; Pars. 92, 99–100, and 148a of Part IX. of Majority Report.

very far from being true that, under the plan to which our colleagues have committed themselves, there would be "one and only one Authority" administering public assistance. Some classes which have lately been withdrawn from the Poor Law are, it is true to be thrust back. The respectable mechanic temporarily out of a job, who is now obtaining "Employment Relief" from the Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act, is again to come under the jurisdiction of the Poor Law Authority. The necessitous child now being fed at school, or medically treated under the newly constituted organisation of the Education Authority, is once again to depend on the Poor Law Authority, and on the Poor Law Authority alone. We gather that in England the phthisical patients who are now being treated in Municipal Hospitals are to be transferred to the Infirmaries of the Poor Law Authority. These changes will involve the repeal of the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, the Education (Provision of Meals) Act, 1906, and the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, 1906. On the other hand our colleagues concur with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded in advocating that all mentally defective persons, however destitute, shall cease to be paupers and be transferred to the Local Lunacy Authority.* They also repeat (though whether or not with approval we are unable to ascertain) the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy in favour of divorcing the whole provision for this section of the Able-bodied from the Destitution Authority, and of entrusting it to the Watch Committees of Borough Councils and (outside the Metropolitan area) to the Standing Joint Committees of County Councils.† With regard to these not inconsiderable portions of the destitute—amounting to at least one-fifth of the entire pauper host—our colleagues are proposing, to use their own condemnatory words, to break up into sections "the work previously performed" by the Boards of Guardians, and to transfer it to "existing committees of County and County Borough Councils."‡ We fail to understand the reasonableness of a change, involving great expense and disturbance, which withdraws the Vagrant, the Lunatic, the Epileptic, and the Feeble-minded person from the Poor Law and throws back into the hands of the Poor Law Authority the respectable artisan in want of work, the child found hungry at school, and the phthisical patient requiring isolation, who are now being dealt with by other Authorities. Nor do the recommendations of our colleagues even approach, still less attain, their own ideal of there being "one and only one Authority," dispensing Public Assistance. We should still have the overlapping between the hospital provision made by the 700 institutions of the Local Health Authorities in all diseases other than phthisis, and the sick wards and infirmaries of the Poor Law Authorities; between the residential schools, day feeding schools, and "boarding out" of the Local Education Authorities and the exactly similar schools and boarding out of the Poor Law Authorities.

But it is with regard to the Able-bodied that our colleagues depart most widely from their principle of having "one and only one Authority." Besides the vaguely suggested Local Police Authority, for relieving such of the Able-bodied as are vagrant, and the new Poor Law Authority for such of them as are stationary, there are to be, in every district, a Labour Exchange managed by the Board of Trade, providing Migration Relief in the form of railway tickets at the expense of the Treasury for such of the Able-bodied as are Unemployed; a Local Insurance Organisation, of uncertain constitution, dispensing Treasury subsidies as Unemployment Relief to insured workmen; and a Detention Colony giving "Continuous Treatment" at the expense of the Home Office to those "who will not work, or whose recent character and conduct are an insuperable bar to re-entering industrial life." The situation is to be further complicated by the nce of a ...i-statutory Voluntary Aid Committee, which is evidently intended t... t th... tions of all the other authorities; for, we are told, "a first application for assi... ...aturally be made to the Voluntary Aid Committee," § to be dealt with at its discre... ...f it decides to refuse its own aid, it is to be a principle that the Poor Relief afforded "s... all be in some way less agreeable than"‖ what the Voluntary Aid Committee would ha... ...e given. Thus, the Voluntary Aid Committee is to set the standard which the new Poor ... ...aw Authority is never to exceed. "In course of time," we are told, "the practice of the c... ...mmittees would be so well-known in the district that the applicants for assistance themse... ...es would know to which of the two committees they ought to

* All the references whi... the Majority Report makes to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the ...eeble-minded express concurrence; *see* par. 512 of Chapter IX. of Part IV.; pars. 153 and 167 of Chapter I...V. of Part VIII.; and Par. 151 of Part IX.

† Chapter V. of Part VIII. of Majority Report.

‡ Par. 12 of Part IX.

§ Par. 612 of Chapter IV. of Part VI. of Majority Report.

‖ Par. 623 of Chapter IV. of Part VI. of Majority Report.

apply." * But, so far as we have been able to follow the maze of Authorities to be set up, there will be, not two, but six different Authorities more or less supporting the Able-bodied of any one district. We fear that we must agree with our colleagues when, in another part of their Report, they say that "it is difficult to conceive any system in which different public Authorities have power simultaneously to administer relief to much the same class of applicant in the same locality which will not result in overlapping, confusion and divergence of treatment and practice." †

Our colleagues seem to us to be even less successful in carrying out, in their detailed recommendations, their axiom that they do not desire "to bring within the operation of assistance from public funds classes not now within its operation." We have already alluded to the proposed substitution for the classic, narrow category of "the destitute," of the far wider category of "the necessitous." The same desire, as they express it, "to widen, strengthen and humanise the Poor Law," is shown, we think, in an almost morbid wish to alter the names of things, in order to give a flavour of generosity, if not of laxness, to the new Poor Law. Their new Poor Law Authority is to be euphemistically designated the "Public Assistance Authority"; its Relief Committees are to be "Public Assistance Committees"; the Able-bodied Test Workhouse is to be known in future as the "Industrial Institution"; the Outdoor Labour Test is described under "Outdoor Relief"; and simple Outdoor Relief, far from being abolished, obtains consecration in the official phraseology of the future as "Home Assistance." The good old-fashioned term "detention" is deemed "infelicitous," and whenever the new Poor Law Authority wishes to detain a pauper against his will, the instrument will be disguised as an "Order for Continuous Treatment." ‡ But passing from these innocent devices of "illusory nomenclature," we find, in some of the proposals—not, as the "principles" would lead us to expect, a restriction of the area of pauperism, but actually an extension of its area, and an increase in its amenities. With regard to the sick in particular, the new Poor Law axiom is to be, "Investigation should follow upon Treatment." § Whether the medical treatment is to be peremptorily terminated whenever the enquiry discloses pecuniary resources, is not stated. But being necessitous is not always to be the condition of eligibility under the new Poor Law. It is expressly recommended that institutional treatment, including maintenance, should be provided by the Poor Law Authorities *without charge and without disfranchisement*, for all persons who are members of Provident Dispensaries and are recommended by their own doctors for such treatment, apparently in rivalry with the Local Health Authorities, and equally whether or not the patients have sufficient means to obtain such institutional treatment for themselves. ‖ This extension of entirely gratuitous treatment to persons who are not necessarily destitute, and from whom the cost of this treatment is not to be recovered, involves a serious extension of the area of Public Relief, and of the work of the new Poor Law Authority, and no inconsiderable increase of expenditure. What seems to us even more extraordinary is the proposal to grant to every destitute sick person the privilege of a free choice among the doctors of the town, exactly as if such sick persons had belonged all their lives to a well-organised Provident Dispensary. If it is desired to make relief less desirable than maintenance by individual exertion and foresight, we should have thought that "free choice of doctors" was exactly the privilege to be withheld from the person coming on the rates for treatment. The proposal seems to us all the more dangerous as it is plain that the poor patient will tend to choose the doctor who interferes least with his habits, and whom he finds most sympathetic in ordering "medical extras"; from which, it must be remembered, food and even alcoholic stimulants are not excluded. We cannot but agree with our colleague, Dr. Downes, who states in his Dissent that "the scheme . . . appears . . . to offer what amounts to a large measure of free medical relief without adequate safeguard either to the medical profession generally, or to the ratepayer." ¶

The promoters of this scheme seem not unnaturally to feel that the present Boards of Guardians in England and Ireland, and the present Parish Councils in Scotland, would not be equal to the administration of so multifarious an array of services, each having its own technique. The failure of the present Destitution Authorities to cope with the difficulties presented by the existing mixture of classes with which they have to deal makes it clear, in fact, that to administer the new congeries of functions would demand instruments of "high finish and fine temper," ** which cannot, it is contended, be ensured

* Part 613 of Chapter IV. of Part VI. of Majority Report.
† Par. 609 of Chapter IV. of Part VI. of Majority Report.
‡ Par. 150–3 of Part IX. of Majority Report.
§ Par. 232 of Chapter III. of Part V. of Majority Report.
‖ Par. 236 and Conclusions, Sec. 16 and 17 of Chapter III. of Part V. of Majority Report.
¶ Dissent signed by Dr. A. Downes.
** Par. 11 of Part IX. of Majority Report.

by popular election. Thus the new Poor Law Authority, though in form a Committee of the County or County Borough Council, is to have its own autonomy, even as to the rate to be levied or the capital outlay to be made; and is not to be subject to the control of the Council. Though Councillors will sit upon it, it is to consist largely of co-opted and nominated members, who are to be drawn from amongst men and women of greater experience, wisdom and local knowledge than popular election can supply. The powers and duties of the new Poor Law are not even entrusted to this packed Poor Law Committee disguised under a new name, but are to be distributed among a whole series of "Public Assistance Committees" and "Medical Committees," the bulk of the work devolving upon these nominated local committees, each with its own dilution of non-elected members—the Medical Committees largely composed of the doctors who are going to be selected by their pauper patients, and paid their fees out of the rates; and the Public Assistance Committees made up to a great extent of persons nominated by voluntary charitable agencies. But this is not all. What might seem the generous laxness of the whole terminology of the proposed new Poor Law, if not also of some of its provisions, is to be counteracted by statutory "Voluntary Aid Committees"; constituted on the lines of the Charity Organisation Society; eligible to receive grants from the Public Assistance Authority out of the County Rate; * but in no way under public control. *To these irresponsible Committees of benevolent amateurs all applicants will apply in the first instance*; † and in case of refusal of aid. the Public Assistance Committee is to be bound to assist the applicant, if at all, "in some way less agreeable" than the Voluntary Aid Committee would have done! ‡ We have found some difficulty in unravelling the complicated details of the constitution recommended in this scheme for the administration of an annual expenditure from the rates and taxes of, in England and Wales alone, at least £15,000,000 sterling. What is clear is that the unconcealed purpose of constructing this elaborate and mysterious framework.

> "With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
> Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb,"

is to withdraw the whole relief of distress from popular control.

But apart from this undemocratic constitution, which, in our judgment, makes the scheme politically quite impracticable, we consider the whole conception of a Swollen Poor Law, under whatever name disguised, unsound in principle. The experience of the past, as shown by the analysis contained in the preceding chapters of this Report, demonstrates, we think, beyond possibility of doubt that when a Destitution Authority departs from the simple function of providing bare maintenance under deterrent conditions, *it finds it quite impossible to mark off or delimit its services from those which are required by, and provided for, the population at large.* The function of preventing and treating disease among destitute persons cannot, in practice, be distinguished from the prevention and treatment of disease in other persons. The rearing of infants and the education of children whose parents are destitute does not differ from the rearing of infants and the education of children whose parents are not destitute. The liability of persons to be compulsorily removed from their homes, because they have become a public nuisance or a source of danger, must surely be the same whether or not they are technically "destitute." The exercise of the power of compulsorily adopting the children of parents who are leading a vicious life, or who are cruelly treating them, has no reference to the "destitution" of such parents. In short, if we are going to provide preventive and curative treatment—if the treatment of each class, and of each individual within that class, is to be governed not by the fact of their destitution but by the conditions surrounding the particular class and the particular individual of the class—the category of the destitute becomes an irrelevancy. *What is demanded by the conditions is not a division according to the presence or absence of destitution, but a division according to the services to be provided.*§ Each public service requires its own "machinery of approach" of the population at large, its own technical methods of treatment of the class entrusted to it, its own specialised staff, and its own supervising committee, bent upon the performance of the particular service. Those from whom the cost of their treatment ought to be recovered, can be effectively made to pay without vainly trying to separate the treatment of the destitute from the treatment of the poor. To seek to withdraw, from the elaborate specialised public services, already in existence for the population at large, the 5 or 10 per cent. of

* Par. 233 of Part VII. of Majority Report.

† Par. 612 of Chapter IV. of Part VI. of Majority Report.

‡ Par. 623 of Chapter IV. of Part VI. of Majority Report.

§ The disadvantages of continuing to fix our attention on the poor as a class have often been pointed out. As Mr. C. S. Loch has said, "The 'poor rate' as a poor rate keeps attention fixed *on the poor as a class*, from the point of view of the Poor Law and Official pauperism. It is suggestive of continuing dependence, and even an argument for a right to be dependent. It should be abolished." ("The Development of Charity Organisation," by C. S. Loch, in *Charity Organisation Review*. Vol. XV., N.S., February, 1904.)

each class who are technically "destitute," and to set up duplicate services for their separate treatment under the Poor Law, even if disguised under the name of Public Assistance, would be both injurious to themselves and unnecessarily costly to the public.*

(B) The Scheme we Recommend.

We have now to present the scheme of reform to which we ourselves have been driven by the facts of the situation. The dominant exigencies of which we have to take account are :—

(i.) The overlapping, confusion and waste that result from the provision for each separate class being undertaken, in one and the same district, by two, three, and sometimes even by four separate Local Authorities, as well as by voluntary agencies.

(ii.) The demoralisation of character and the slackening of personal effort that result from the unnecessary spreading of indiscriminate, unconditional and gratuitous provision, through this unco-ordinated rivalry.

(iii.) The paramount importance of subordinating mere relief to the specialised treatment of each separate class, with the object of preventing or curing its distress.

(iv.) The expediency of intimately associating this specialised treatment of each class with the standing machinery for enforcing, both before and after the period of distress, the fulfilment of personal and family obligations.

We have seen that it is not practicable to oust the various specialised Local Authorities that have grown up since the Boards of Guardians were established. There remains only the alternative—to which, indeed, the conclusions of each of our chapters seem to us to point—of completing the process of breaking up the Poor Law, which has been going on for the last three decades. The scheme of reform that we recommend involves :—

(i.) The final supersession of the Poor Law Authority by the newer specialised Authorities already at work.

(ii.) The appropriate distribution of the remaining functions of the Poor Law among those existing Authorities.

(iii.) The establishment of suitable machinery for registering and co-ordinating all the assistance afforded to any given person or family ; and

(iv.) The more systematic enforcement, by means of this co-ordinating machinery, of the obligation of able-bodied persons to support themselves and their families.

(i.) *The Supersession of the Destitution Authority.*

We think that the time has arrived for the abolition of the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland ; and, so far as any Poor Law duties are concerned, of the Parish Councils in Scotland. We come to this conclusion not from any lack of appreciation of the devoted public service gratuitously rendered on these Boards of Guardians and Parish Councils by tens of thousands of men and women of humanity, ability, and integrity, which, we feel, has never received adequate recognition. But it has become increasingly plain to us in the course of our inquiry—it is, in fact, recognised by many of the members of these bodies themselves—that the character of the functions entrusted to the Poor Law Authorities is such as to render their task, at best, nugatory ; and, at worst, seriously mischievous. The mere keeping of people from starving—which is essentially what the Poor Law sets out to do—may have been useful as averting social revolution : it cannot, in the twentieth century, be regarded as any adequate fulfilment of social duty. The very conception of relieving destitution starts the whole service on a demoralising tack. An Authority having for its function merely the provision of

* "It would be very undesirable," deposed one of our colleagues, before the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, "to set up two classes of Authorities, or more, to deal with the same class of infirmity. . . . It may happen, as it has happened in the past, that the pauper class would be better provided for than the class next above them. . . . *I think that if provision is made, it should be made in such a way that all classes of the community can be received.* . . . I think it is a principle which has a wide application. Take, for example, a case of phthisis. I should not like to see Poor Law sanatoria simply as Poor Law sanatoria." (Report of Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, 1908, Vol. I., *Q.* 1813 ; Evidence of Dr. Arthur Downes.)

maintenance for those who are starving is necessarily limited in its dealings to the brief periods in each person's life in which he is actually destitute; and has, therefore, even if it could go beyond the demoralising dole—too bad for the good, and too good for the bad—no opportunity of influencing that person's life, both before he becomes destitute, and after he has ceased to be destitute, in such a way as to stimulate personal effort, to strengthen character and capacity, to ward off dangers, and generally to keep the individual on his feet. As regards the effect on individual character and the result in enforcing personal and family responsibilities, of the activities of the Destitution Authority on the one hand, and those of the Local Education Authority and the Local Health Authority on the other—even where these latter give food as well as treatment—there is, as all our evidence shows, no possible doubt on which side the advantage lies. Yet if a Poor Law Authority attempts to do more than provide bare subsistence for those who are actually destitute, for the period in which they are destitute; if it sets itself to give the necessary specialised treatment required for birth and infancy; if it provides education for children, medical treatment for the sick, satisfactory provision for the aged, and specialised compulsion for the able-bodied, it ceases to be an "*ad hoc*" Authority, with a single tradition and a single purpose, and becomes a "mixed" Authority, without either the diversified professional staff, the variety of technical experience, or even a sufficiency and continuity of work in any one branch to enable it to cope with its multifarious problems. Moreover, as has been abundantly demonstrated by experience, every increase in the advantageousness of the "relief" afforded by the Destitution Authority, and every enlargement of its powers of compulsory removal and detention, brings it into new rivalry with the other Local Authorities, and drags into the net of pauperism those who might otherwise have been dealt with as self-supporting citizens. If, as it seems to us, it has become imperative to put an end to the present wasteful and demoralising overlapping between Local Authorities, it is plain that it is the Destitution Authority—already denuded of several of its functions—that must give way to its younger rivals.

Besides this paramount consideration, there are two incidental reasons which support our recommendation for the abolition of the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, and, so far at any rate as their Poor Law work is concerned, of the Parish Councils in Scotland. These are:—

(*a*) The grave economic and administrative inconveniences of the existing Poor Law areas; and

(*b*) The unnecessary multiplication of elected Local Authorities.

In the great majority of cases the population dealt with by the Destitution Authority is too small to permit either of economical administration or of proper provision being made in separate institutions for all the various classes of paupers. Out of the 1,679 districts into which the United Kingdom is divided for Poor Law purposes, four-fifths have populations which do not amount to 20,000 families each. Even in England and Wales more than two-thirds of the Unions include fewer than 10,000 families; and 81 of these Unions actually have populations of fewer than 2,000 families each. In Ireland, out of the 130 Unions, there are only 9 having as many as 10,000 families; and there are 12 having fewer than 2,000 families.* In Scotland where this *morcellement* is carried to an absurd extent, a population smaller than that of London is dealt with by 874 separate Poor Law

*An objection is sometimes raised to the adoption of the County, or of any area larger than that which happens to be the existing unit, that the classification of institutions, and their specialisation for particular classes, will involve hardship to the poor, as increasing the distance to which they and their friends will have to travel. We appreciate the fact that, however theoretical and even sentimental may be this particular objection, any change will cause temporary discontent, and possibly some hardship. The Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform had to face the same difficulty. They state that: "A more serious objection, and one deserving most attentive consideration is the opinion that aged and infirm people who have resided at a distance from the new central 'Almshouse' would feel exiled if they were obliged to leave the building in which they had been, and to go to a greater distance from their friends. We felt the force of such representations, and we therefore made special inquiries on the subject at many Workhouses, when we visited them. We found that, while the acutely sick were visited by their friends, the infirm and aged received very few visits from friends or relatives. This, we were informed, is because large numbers of these old people are among the last remaining survivors of their generation. In other cases, the old people are unmarried men and women in touch with few, if any, relatives. Again, some are fathers or mothers of children who have emigrated, but have not done well. Whatever may be the reason, the fact seems to be that there are very few visitors to the infirm and aged in rural Workhouses. We have learned the views of many of the old people, and in some cases they put forward their desire not to be taken away lest they should not be buried with their friends. If such representations were made to the governing body of the 'Almshouse' in any case, we think that they should be empowered to incur the necessary expenditure in having the remains of the person who had expressed such wish interred in the burial ground within their county where other members

Authorities, nearly three-eighths of which rule over fewer than 200 families each.* Any proper provision of specialised institutions for such small groups of people is absolutely impossible. In short, even apart from any other considerations, there are not more than about 100, out of all the 1,679 Poor Law districts of the United Kingdom, in which it would be possible to make decent provision for the many separate classes which have to be differentially dealt with. We have received a large amount of evidence demonstrating conclusively that, if any new area is adopted for administration and rating it cannot, on all sorts of grounds, practically be any other than that of the County and County Borough.† On this point, which we think needs no further argument, we are glad to find ourselves in agreement with the majority of our colleagues.

If the new area adopted be that of the County and County Borough, the Local Authority to be entrusted with the work cannot, we are assured by those best acquainted with local administration, be any other than the County Council and County Borough Council acting through its several committees. "You could not have two Authorities in the County area," declared to us a practical County administrator, "we should always be clashing." ‡ "It would have to be done by the County Council," Mr. Walter Long informed us.§ "Would you contemplate," he was asked, "setting up a new *ad hoc* Authority in the county area for any purpose whatsoever?" To this he replied emphatically "None." ‖ The same testimony was given by Lord Fitzmaurice, who has so long worked in County government, and who declared himself opposed to any new County Authority for Poor Law purposes only.¶ The setting up in London or in the County Boroughs, of any separately elected body, for the same area, and levying rates on the same occupiers, appears equally impracticable. We therefore come inevitably to the proposal to transfer the duties of the Boards of Guardians to the Councils of the Counties and County Boroughs.

In favour of this course there are many different arguments. We think that it will be generally recognised that the mere reduction in the number of separate Local Authorities, having separate powers of expenditure of the rates, and making separate demands on the

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of the family are buried." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., pp. 35–36.) We have satisfied ourselves that the reform we propose can be carried out in England and Wales with even less hardship than in Ireland. We do not contemplate that, for the Aged, the County Council will have only one institution. On the contrary, we deprecate a large institution, and we hope to see a number of smaller "Asylums for the Aged," each accommodating a few dozen or a few score of inmates, in different parts of the County. And, under the Paupers Conveyance (Expenses) Order, 1898, travelling expenses are already paid to enable paupers to visit their relations in other institutions. It is not as if the existing Poor Law districts were arranged with a view to the utmost facility of access to their institutions and administrative centres. They have, in many parts of the country, the fundamental drawback of having been arranged before the construction of the railway system; and their institutions are to-day sometimes many miles distant from any railway station, and even from a telegraph office. In about forty cases, the Workhouse is more than four miles from a railway station; in nine cases it is more than seven miles; in one (in England), it is ten, and in one (in Wales), thirteen and a half miles. In many cases institutions placed with proper regard to present-day means of communication would be absolutely more easily accessible to a larger district than the present institutions are to small districts.

* "In each parish there must be . . . a Parish Council elected every three years; an Inspector of Poor, who may or may not also be Clerk to the Parish; a Medical Officer, and a Collector of Rates, each of whom receives an official salary. But many of the parishes have a very small population. There are, for instance, no less than 114 parishes in Scotland out of 887, having less than 500 inhabitants. There are, further, 204 parishes having between 500 and 1,000 inhabitants, each with the Poor Law machinery above-mentioned. Statistics further show that there are four parishes in Scotland which had at the date of the last returns no poor, either indoor or outdoor, three of these being in Berwickshire, where the parishes are smaller than in any other county. Again, in seventeen small parishes, taken at random, there is a population of 4,346; there are sixty-six paupers; the total cost of their relief being £1,397, of which £356 is the cost of Poor Law management in the parish, exclusive of other local administrative expenditure. It would be a considerable saving to these parishes if they were to amalgamate." (Report of Royal Commission on Local Taxation (Scotland), 1899, Appendix XXX. to Vol. III., p. 286. Memorandum by Mr. Patten Macdougall.) The number of Poor Law parishes seems now to be 874.

† The adoption of the County and County Borough as the general unit of area for administration and rating does not, of course, preclude the possibility of two or more such units, where geographical and statistical reasons make this desirable, combining either for one purpose or for any purposes; nor does it prevent a sharing of certain functions between the area of the County and that of a smaller unit, such as the non-county borough or urban district, or the Metropolitan borough. To these points we shall recur.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 76600 (Mr. Willis-Bund).

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 78576.

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 78579.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 77000, 77001. *See* other evidence to the same effect by Sir A. Cripps, K.C., *Qs.* 76494, 76495.

time and service of the citizens willing to stand for election, is an advantage in itself. It fortunately happens that, at any rate in the County Boroughs of England and Wales, which comprise one-third of all the population of that country, the various rivals to the Poor Law—the Local Education Authority, the Local Health Authority, the Local Pension Authority, the Local Unemployment Authority, the Local Police Authority and the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective—have one and all become committees of the Town Council. In the Metropolis, and in the counties, the several Committees of the County Council already deal with the same services, though they may share their administration, so far as local duties are concerned, with corresponding committees of minor local authorities. The abolition of the Boards of Guardians, and the adoption of the area of the County and County Borough would, in England and Wales at any rate—with appropriate arrangements to meet the cases of the Metropolitan Boroughs in London and of the non-County Boroughs and Urban and Rural District Councils in the other Counties—enable a very desirable unification of Local Government to be carried out. In this proposal to make the County and County Borough Councils financially responsible for all the duties at present performed by the Boards of Guardians, we are glad to find ourselves in agreement with a majority of our colleagues. We differ from them in this matter in the extent to which they seek to withdraw the new services from the control of the County or County Borough Council itself, and in the way in which they attempt to determine by what machinery of committees and sub-committees the Councils shall carry out the work entrusted to them. We cannot help thinking that these are matters which, in practice, the Councils will decide for themselves. We doubt whether any provision of Parliament will prevent a Town or County Council exercising whatever measure of control it chooses over a service entrusted to one of its committees for which it has to find the money. And we cannot help thinking that in adopting as their own the proposal that the unit of area should henceforth be the County and County Borough, and that the supreme authority should be the County Council and County Borough Council, the majority of our colleagues have rendered inevitable the adoption of the principle of distributing the Poor Law services among the committees already concerned in those very services. We cannot imagine, for instance, the Education Committee of the Manchester Town Council handing over to the tender mercies of any new statutory Poor Law Committee, the residential schools for defective children, the Day Industrial Schools, or the provision of dinners for hungry children, in which the Councillors take so much pride ; or the Health Committee handing over to the new Poor Law Committee the exact contingent of the patients in its Isolation Hospitals and Phthisis Wards who are declared to be destitute. If the responsibility for the administration of the various services of the Poor Law is imposed on the Manchester Town Council at all—if it has to levy the Poor Rate to support the Poor Law Schools at Swinton and the Poor Law Infirmary at New Bridge Street—it may confidently be predicted that it will make its own Education Committee and its Director of Education answerable for the one, and its own Health Committee and Medical Officer of Health answerable for the other.

(ii.) *The Distribution of the Services of the Destitution Authority.*

We have satisfied ourselves that, in England and Wales at any rate, and we think also in Scotland—Ireland presenting a somewhat different problem—there would be no serious difficulty in all the various functions of the Poor Law being undertaken by the several committees of the existing Local Authorities. We prefer to reserve for subsequent examination, in Part II. of this Report, the whole class of the Able-bodied, whether Vagrants, Paupers or the Unemployed, for whom we shall propose a national organisation. If, however, it were decided to leave this class also to Local Authorities there would be no difficulty in entrusting this branch of the work to its own appropriate Committee of the County or County Borough Council, in which the existing Distress Committee under the Unemployed Workmen Act would be merged.

(a) *The Duties to be Transferred to the Local Education Authorities.*

With regard to the children of school age at present dealt with under the Poor Law, the course is easy. We believe that public opinion is wholly in favour of the transfer, in England and Wales, of the entire care of the pauper children of school age to the Local Education Authorities, under the supervision of the Board of Education. We need not recapitulate the manifold advantages of dissociating, once for all, the whole care of the children from any connection with pauperism. Up and down the country the Local Education Authorities, as we have seen, are already providing not only schooling but also maintenance for many thousands of children ; they have actually, in some cases, their own residential schools and their own arrangements for "boarding-out" ; they

have their own machinery for searching out cases where the children are being neglected, and for the systematic medical supervision of practically the whole child population. Already, throughout Great Britain, there has been transferred to the Local Education Authorities the whole schooling of nine-tenths of the children under the control of the Destitution Authorities, and to the Board of Education for England and Wales the inspection of the remaining Poor Law schools, etc., in that country. The Local Education Authorities already deal with so many children that the addition to their work involved by this transfer is proportionately small. The Education Committee of the Gloucestershire County Council, for instance, has about 50,000 children under instruction. The dozen or so of Boards of Guardians in the corresponding area of the County have among them all scarcely 1,000 children of school age in their charge, and of these only between one and two hundred receive institutional care. The thirty-one Boards of Guardians of the Metropolis have in their charge perhaps as many as 25,000 children of school age, of whom some 15,000 receive institutional treatment. The supervision of this number would make no great difference to the work of the Education Committee of the London County Council, which deals already with nearly 1,000,000 children. Where educational administration is shared between the County Education Committee and a Minor Authority —as, for instance, where the Council of a Non-County Borough or of an Urban District administers its own elementary day schools—the responsibility for the custody and care of the children at present under the Board of Guardians would naturally pass to the County Education Authority, which might use the day schools of the Minor Authority just as the Board of Guardians does.

(b) *The Duties to be Transferred to the Local Health Authorities.*

The duties to be transferred from the Board of Guardians to the Local Health Authorities—the provision for birth and infancy, the treatment of the sick and the incapacitated, and the institutional provision for the aged—cannot be disposed of so simply as those relating to children of school age. Let us begin with the case of the County Boroughs, which now include one-third of the whole population of England and Wales. Here there is already a Health Committee of the Town Council, which has its own Medical Officer of Health, its own staff of doctors and sanitary inspectors, often also of Health Visitors and nurses. It usually has its own hospital or hospitals, and sometimes its own sanatorium. If it were made responsible for all the treatment of the sick, domiciliary as well as institutional, the addition of the Poor Law Medical Officers to its staff, and of the care of the pauper sick to its work, would involve practically no difficulties. Similarly the provision for birth and infancy and for the institutional treatment of the aged could easily be added to the existing duties of the Health Committee.

Outside the County Boroughs the functions of the Local Health Authority are at present everywhere shared between the County Council, with its County Medical Officer, and a Minor Health Authority, which may be (in the Metropolis) a Metropolitan Borough Council or the Corporation of the City of London ; or (in other Counties) the Council of a Non-County Borough, or that of an Urban Sanitary District, or that of a Rural Sanitary District. We have received much evidence in favour of the abolition of the smaller Minor Health Authorities, and of the extension of the Public Health functions of the County Council. But assuming the existing organisation in this respect to remain undisturbed, at any rate so far as the larger Local Health Authorities are concerned, it would, we think, not be difficult to divide the duties now performed by the Boards of Guardians in respect of Birth and Infancy, the treatment of the sick and incapacitated, and the institutional treatment of the aged, appropriately between the County Health Authority and the Minor Health Authority. To the former would fall, along with the general supervision of the Public Health of the County as a whole, the administration of all the institutions transferred from the Boards of Guardians, or established in order to provide for the classes of patients hitherto dealt with by the Poor Law Authorities. The advantages of a unified and properly graded institutional organisation for the County as a whole, together with the financial saving of such an organisation to every part of the County, appear to us so great that this unified County service should, at all hazards, be insisted on. In the Non-County Boroughs having over 10,000 population, and in the Urban Districts having over 20,000 population, we should be inclined, with regard to the Outdoor Medical Service of the Poor Law, to follow the precedent set by the Education Act of 1902 with regard to elementary day schools, and to allow these Minor Health Authorities, if they so desired, to take over the present District Medical Officers, and to undertake, under the general supervision of the County Medical Officer, the domiciliary medical service for their respective districts—

provided always that they were prepared to organise, out of these officers and the present Public Health staff, a unified medical service under the direction of an adequately salaried, qualified Medical Officer devoting his whole time to the work. With regard to the Non-County Boroughs of less than 10,000 population, the Urban Districts of less than 20,000 population, and the Rural Sanitary Districts, whatever their size, we are satisfied that these Authorities have neither the means nor the official staff that are requisite for the performance of the duties already assumed by them under the Public Health Acts. For them to bring their sanitary services, and especially their drinking-water supply and their drainage systems, even up to the National Minimum, would involve, in many cases, a local rate of crushing weight. To expect them to equip their little districts adequately with hospital accommodation for scarlet fever, let alone for tuberculosis, is, for the most part, hopeless. We cannot recommend the transfer to such Authorities of any part of the work now done by the Boards of Guardians in this department. This work should, in respect of their districts, be wholly assumed by the Health Committee of the County Council, under the direction of the County Medical Officer. The small Non-County Boroughs and Urban Sanitary Districts should be encouraged (as the former have been in the matter of their autonomous police forces) to cede even their present Public Health services, in whole or in part, to the County Council, in order that they may be merged in the unified establishment under the County Medical Officer. They should, for instance, receive no part of the proposed new Grant-in-Aid of the expenditure of the Local Health Authorities, payable as this would be in order to enable the larger Health Authorities to undertake new services which will not devolve upon these smaller Health Authorities. The same lines should be followed with regard to the Rural District Councils; unless, indeed, these can be, on their ceasing to be also the Boards of Guardians, altogether abolished, and their duties with regard to road maintenance, sanitation, etc., shared between the County Council and the Parish Councils. In the Metropolis, pending a more complete re-organisation of Local Government, the transfer should proceed on analogous lines, all the Poor Law institutions, including the hospitals and special schools of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, passing to the Health Committee of the County Council; whilst the District Medical Officers in each Metropolitan Borough would become part of a unified medical service for street and house sanitation and domiciliary treatment, directly under a qualified Borough Medical Officer, and subject to the general supervision of the County Medical Officer.

(c) *The Duties to be Transferred to the Local Pension Committee.*

Even whilst we were considering the matter there has been established, by every County and County Borough Council under the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908, a Local Pension Committee, charged with the confirmation of the pensions to be granted to more than half the poor persons over seventy years of age. We propose that this Committee should deal also with those aged, who are for one reason or another not entitled to National Pensions, but for whom Local Pensions are recommended. The practical convenience of there being one and the same Committee to deal with both classes of aged—those whose pensions will be payable from the National Exchequer and those whose pensions will be payable from Local Funds—is so obvious that we do not think the point needs further discussion.

(d) *The Duties to be Transferred to the Local Committee for the Mentally Defective.*

The Report of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded makes it clear, we think, that there should be transferred to a new Local Committee for the Mentally Defective—virtually the existing Asylums Committee of the County or County Borough Council—the care of all persons legally certified to be of unsound mind, whatever their age or physical condition, whether these be lunatics, idiots, imbeciles, or epileptics; whether they be certified under the Inebriates Act; or whether they be registered as feeble-minded, or as morally defective, under the proposed extended classification. This conclusion, which we entirely accept, involves the transfer, to an enlarged Asylums Committee of the County or County Borough Council, of the institutions established by one or two such Councils under the Inebriates Act, of the special institutions here and there established for epileptics, of the special schools for mentally defective children, and of those inmates of Poor Law institutions—estimated, for England and Wales alone, at 43,000 in number—who may in due course be certified as feeble-minded. It involves also, in London, the transfer of the asylums for imbeciles, etc., of the Metropolitan Asylums Board to the new Mentally-Defectives Committee of the London County Council, in which its present Asylums Committee would be merged.

(iii.) *New Machinery for the Co-ordination of Public Assistance.*

At the present time, whilst much distress goes wholly untreated, some families are in receipt, at one and the same time, for one or other of their members, of regular Outdoor Relief from the Board of Guardians, school meals for the children from the Education Committee, milk below cost price, medical advice gratis, and maintenance in hospital from the Health Committee, and, in some towns, even gratuitous clothes from the police —besides a flow of doles from religious and charitable agencies. Whether or not any of the public assistance given to one family by the various agencies will be charged for, and whether or not the charge will be enforced, is, as we have seen, almost a matter of chance. One family may be getting everything free, even free of inquiry. Another family, in receipt of relief on account of its destitution, may find its head suddenly removed to gaol for not refunding the cost of the maintenance of his child in an industrial school. To abolish the Board of Guardians, and merge its duties in those Committees of the County or County Borough Council who are already dispensing their own forms of public assistance, will diminish the present overlapping but will not, of itself, end it. Some systematic co-ordination, within each local area, of all forms of public assistance and, if possible, of all assistance dispensed by Voluntary Agencies, is essential, if we are to put an end to the present demoralisation.

(a) *The Registrar of Public Assistance.*

The first condition of co-ordination is a centre of information about all the public assistance that is being dispensed in a given locality. We, therefore, recommend the appointment, by the County or County Borough Council, of one or more responsible officers, each having jurisdiction in a district of suitable area and population. For the less populous County Boroughs and the smaller Counties, one such officer, sitting on successive days in different parts of the district, would probably suffice. For the most extensive Counties, as for the Metropolis, there might have to be half a dozen, sitting weekly in as many as thirty different localities. We propose that these officers, who might be designated Registrars of Public Assistance, should have a threefold duty. They should be responsible for keeping a register, with "case papers" of the most approved pattern, of all persons receiving any form of public assistance within their districts, including treatment in any public institution. They should have the duty of assessing, in accordance with whatever may be the law, the charge to be made on individuals liable to pay any part of the cost of the service rendered to them or their dependents or other relations according to their means, and of recovering the amount thus due. Finally, we propose that these officers should have submitted to them any proposals by the several Committees of the Council for the payment of what is now called Outdoor Relief, but what should in future be termed Home Aliment, in connection with the domiciliary treatment of cases in which such treatment was deemed preferable to institutional treatment. The Registrar should also determine, in case of need, to which Committee of the Local Authority any neglected or "marginal" cases belonged for treatment.

(b) *The Public Register.*

To the first of these duties, the keeping of one common Register of all the various forms of assistance given in the locality, we attach great importance. This registration should be automatic and continuous, without regard to status or means, or the kind of treatment given. All public Authorities should be required to forward, daily or weekly, full particulars of every case in any way dealt with, whether it were that of a rich man admitted as a paying patient to the County Lunatic Asylum, or that of a poor man whose child was being fed at school, or whose wife was receiving milk at a nominal charge; whether it were a County Bursary to Oxford or compulsory admission to an industrial school. We should earnestly invite all voluntary hospitals, dispensaries, and other institutions regularly to send in similar information. In course of time, we should hope to get recorded in this Register the persons assisted by every public or private agency within its district. The Registrar would thus be able to see, at once, whether different members of the same family were receiving assistance without this being known, or whether different Authorities, in ignorance of each other's doings, were simultaneously aiding the same person. In this branch of his duty, he would confine himself to communicating the information to the various Local Authorities, to the Registrars of other districts where necessary, and to such voluntary organisations as had affiliated themselves.

(c) *Charge and Recovery.*

The second function of the Registrar would be to put on a systematic and impartial basis the recovery of the cost of the public assistance rendered, where any legal liability existed for its repayment, and where the recipients or other persons liable were really able to pay. We have already described the unutterable confusion that at present exists in this respect—a confusion in which the Local Health Authority and the Local Education Authority have their shares, no less than the Destitution Authority. We do not here discuss the question as to which public services should be charged for, to what extent relations of different degrees of kinship should be made to pay for those to whom they are akin, and what amount of earnings or income should be held to constitute ability to pay. These points must be determined by Parliament, in a consistent code. But, as we have seen, clearness and consistency of the law will not bring about impartiality and consistency in the practice, so long as the matter is left to the haphazard decisions of irresponsible committees of shifting membership. It is, we think, essential that the charge to be made in each case should be assessed, according to the exact terms of the law and the definite evidence as to means, after systematic inquiry, by a single officer dealing with the cases judicially. His decisions might, of course, be made subject to appeal.

We regard it as a special advantage of this proposal that, under it, the question of chargeability and recovery of cost is altogether removed from the consideration of the officers and Committees who are responsible for the decision of whether or not a case is in need of treatment, and of what kind of treatment. At present, some Local Authorities refuse to treat a person, who is admittedly in need of treatment, because they choose to think that he or his relations could pay for what he needs. The result is that, to the grave injury of the community, many cases remain untreated. Other Local Authorities go on the plan of treating all who need treatment, on the assumption that anyone found to be in actual need of treatment has not the pecuniary resources to enable him to get it at his own expense. The result is that many persons who might fairly pay something escape all contribution. If we desire that all those should be treated whom it is important, in the public interest, not to leave untreated, and that, in the interest of public economy and personal independence, all those should pay who can afford to do so, we must separate the two processes. If it is thought right to segregate all the different grades of the mentally defective, to leave no child uneducated, to prevent disease and restore as quickly as possible the sick to health, and to provide decent maintenance for the aged, we ought not to allow the Local Authorities responsible for the treatment to be hampered in their work by considerations as to whether or not the individual, or any of his relations, ought, according to the law of the land, to pay for what is required to be done; and whether or not he or they are of sufficient ability to do so. On the other hand, if we wish to put a check to the practice of getting gratuitously from the public what the individual is quite well able to pay for, and to restrict to the really necessitous cases the spread of gratuitous treatment by the Local Authority, we ought not to let those who are charged with the recovery of contributions be hampered by considerations of whether it will not be dangerous to let the case remain untreated, or by the natural desire of the managers of institutions to make them as widely useful as possible.

The Registrar of Public Assistance, having nothing to do with the treatment of the cases, would deal with them exclusively from the standpoint of legal liability to pay, and economic ability to do so. In whatever branches of public service Parliament decided that a charge should be made—for instance, maintenance in the County Lunatic Asylum—the Registrar would automatically investigate all cases reported to him; and would assess the charges on the patients' estates, or on their legally liable relations, exclusively according to the law and to the evidence of means, exactly as the Inland Revenue officers deal at present with the assessed taxes. For this purpose, the Registrar would be provided by the County or County Borough Council with a suitable staff of Enquiry and Recovery Officers, dealing impartially and on like principles with rich and poor. We feel no doubt that the additional revenue which would thus be obtained, from patients and from the relations legally liable for their maintenance—even after exempting all those who were not of sufficient ability to contribute—would be very large, and would more than cover the entire expense of the Registrar and his establishment.

The existence of such an officer would, if it were desired, enable effective measures to be taken to stop what is called "hospital abuse." It is complained that, among the crowds

of patients of the voluntary hospitals and dispensaries of the Metropolis, and of some other large towns, there are many persons well able to pay the whole or part of the cost of the treatment or maintenance that they are obtaining from the benefactions of the charitable. The hospitals, absorbed in the desire to treat cases, especially those that are instructive or interesting, and without any effective machinery for ascertaining the resources of their patients, have hitherto failed to cope with this problem. If the hospitals and dispensaries chose to make it a rule that the names and addresses of all persons whom they were benefiting should be forwarded daily to the Registrar of Public Assistance, he would be able, by means of his staff of Enquiry and Recovery Officers, to discover their economic circumstances. He might even, at the request of the hospital, be authorised to present a bill for the whole or part of the cost of the treatment, to such persons as might be found to be able to pay. Payment of this bill, under the present state of the law, would be optional; but we have been informed by trustworthy witnesses that in many cases such patients would willingly discharge their debt, if a bill were sent in. It might be a matter for further consideration by Parliament, whether the practice of charge and recovery for treatment in voluntary hospitals and dispensaries might not, with advantage, be put on the same legal footing as treatment in the hospitals and dispensaries of the Local Authority.

(d) *Sanction of Home Aliment.*

So far as institutional treatment is concerned, there would be no harm in letting all the various Authorities—for instance, the Health Committee, the Education Committee, and the Asylums (or Mentally-Defectives) Committee—admit, to the several institutions in their charge, all the persons whom they deemed in need of the particular treatment of these institutions, without any other co-ordinating machinery than that of the Public Register and the automatic recovery of the cost when legal liability and sufficient ability were found to exist. But in the great majority of cases—at present three out of every four—it is not necessary or desirable to incur the great expense of institutional treatment, especially as, in many instances, the cases can actually be more efficiently treated in their own homes. To permit the same freedom in the granting of Home Aliment to all the various committees of the County or County Borough Council, each one merely considering the needs of the particular member of the family—the child, the mother and infant, the sick father, the aged grandmother—might easily result, *as it frequently does at present*, in one family obtaining more than the current income of a respectable artisan. Nor will the establishment of a common register do more than mitigate this evil. What is required is that, before any (beyond temporary) public assistance is given in the home, there should be due consideration, not merely of the need, in respect of treatment, of any individual, but of the circumstances of the family as a whole. We cannot afford to have the Education Committee granting Home Aliment for the children of an admirable widow, who is living in an altogether insanitary home; or the Committee for the Mentally-Defectives deciding, for the sake of economy, to pay for the retention at home of a feeble-minded girl without regard to the consequences to the young children in that home. And it would never do to let all the several Committees be granting Home Aliment without a common standard of economic necessities, and due regard for the possible effect in subsidising wages. The only way to ensure that the family shall always be regarded as a unit, and that all the circumstances—educational, moral, sanitary, and economic—shall be taken in due proportion into account, is to make each Committee submit its proposals as to Home Aliment to an authority external to them all. For this purpose, the Registrar of Public Assistance, himself an officer of the County or County Borough Council, necessarily in constant communication with every department through his Public Register and his proceedings for charge and recovery, equipped with his own staff of income assessors, and able to hear evidence from the educational and sanitary officials of the various treating Committees, seems the ideal arbiter. We propose, therefore, that (apart from the provision for "sudden or urgent necessity") it should be necessary for any Committee thinking the domiciliary treatment of a case desirable, and proposing to grant Home Aliment, to submit the case for sanction to the Registrar of Public Assistance, who would be charged to satisfy himself that the circumstances of the family as a whole warranted the grant, and that the amount proposed was neither inadequate nor excessive. If the grant was sanctioned, we propose that the case should come up automatically before the Registrar for revision every three months, or even every month, whichever may be thought preferable. If sanction were withheld, it would still be open to the Committee to admit the patient to the appropriate institution; and where the need was urgent, it would be their duty to do so. But there should be an opportunity of appeal, *by the*

Committee responsible for treatment, against the decision of the Registrar; an appeal which, in view of the importance of securing uniformity of practice throughout the Kingdom with regard to Home Aliment, we think should lie, following the successful precedent of the present appeal to the Local Government Board for Scotland, to a Central Department; which (in order to keep it apart from Education, Public Health, etc.) might conveniently be that supervising Local Finance.

An incidental advantage of the distribution, among the various committees of the County and County Borough Council, of the different services now aggregated together under the Destitution Authorities, would be that it would thus enable us to bring uniformity and judicial impartiality into the grant of what is now called Outdoor Relief. As we have seen, it is impossible to expect to get either uniformity or impartiality in decisions on successive cases, if these decisions are arrived at, without automatic check or guidance, by such a many-headed tribunal, of such mutable membership, as is presented by a representative committee.* There is no reason to think that the several committees of the County or County Borough Councils, subject as they would be, though possibly to a lesser extent, to the same influences, would, if they had to perform exactly the same duties as a Board of Guardians, be able to arrive at much greater uniformity or impartiality between case and case, than the members of the Destitution Authority. Merely to transfer the work of the Board of Guardians to a single Poor Law Committee of the Town Council would, therefore, in this respect, produce no sufficient reform. Nor could the Outdoor Relief be withdrawn from their jurisdiction. So long as it can be assumed that all the members of the same family—the infant, the child of school age, the sick adult, and the helpless aged person—will all be treated by one and the same Committee, it will never be practicable to withdraw from that Committee the duty of considering all the economic and other circumstances of the family as a whole, and the right to decide according to its own view of what is desirable, how much Outdoor Relief should be granted. But when the services are divided among several committees the case is obviously altered. The Education Committee will admit that it is impossible to allow the Health Committee, the Mentally Defectives Committee and the Pension Committee—not to mention the possible Local Committee for Unemployment—all to be giving Home Aliment to the different members of one and the same family, without the proposals being made subject to some co-ordinating control. Thus, for the first time it will become possible, whilst leaving to representative committees, directly responsible to the ratepayers, the whole treatment of the cases, whether in the institutions or in the home, and even the full responsibility for proposing the grant of Home Aliment, to secure the advantage of a judicial consideration, case by case, of the economic and other circumstances involved.

(e) *The Registrar's Receiving House for Omitted Cases.*

Under the scheme we propose, each treating Committee would have its own arrangement (as, indeed, exists at present wherever the service is well-organised) of Receiving Homes, or Observation or Probation Wards, into which it would take its patients, on their way to one or other of its institutions. But there are "mixed" cases, in which several Committees may be concerned; there are the cases of persons without known abode, who have not been discovered by the searching officers; there are the cases of persons found "on the road" by the police, or reported by neighbours to be in distress without the nature of the distress being ascertained; there may even be cases in which treatment has been refused, and is alleged to have been wrongfully refused, by one or other of the Local Authorities. Moreover, if we are to distribute the various forms of public assistance among three or four specialised Committees, it will be necessary that there should be, in each district, one well-known public office where immediate relief can be obtained, in cases of sudden or urgent necessity, or when it is not known to which Department application for treatment should properly be made. We propose, therefore, that there should

* "The moral to be drawn from the story," sums up a representative of Poor Law administrators of the "strict" school, "appears to be that, as ever, Outdoor Relief is the crux; so capable of abuse, so difficult of regulation. The interests of so many are involved besides those of the actual recipient or possible recipient. The relatives, friends, neighbours, tradesmen, landlords, publicans, employers, all have indirect interests, apparently, or easily think they have, in the distribution of Outdoor Relief, while many of them do not consciously feel the burden. It cannot be abolished altogether, and there will always be as many hands stretched out for it as administrators choose to fill. And this distribution is, at present, entrusted to changing sets of individuals, elected chiefly by the foregoing persons (possibly, even, in part, composed of them), who are exposed to the risk of unpopularity and loss of office (with its opportunity of doing good) if they put their strength into resisting the natural temptation to be liberal at the expense of others." (Evidence to the Commission, of Mr. H. G. Willink, Bradfield Board of Guardians, Appendix No. CCXI. (Pars. 17, 18) to Vol. VII.)

be in each district, under the immediate direction of the Registrar, a small and strictly temporary Receiving House, which might often be combined with some other public office, and which should be always open.

The number and extent of such Receiving Houses would naturally differ from county to county. It should be rigidly insisted on that no person should be allowed to stay in them for more than the few days required for the adjudication of his case. In London and other populous places each Receiving House would have to be sufficient to accommodate all the cases coming in during, say, one week. In rural counties the number would be governed more by geographical considerations. But with a complete use of telegraph and telephone and a motor ambulance, it is suggested that very few Receiving Houses would be needed. With every police-station, every medical practitioner, and every county officer in telephonic communication—presently, we may assume, with every village post office on the telegraph, if not even on the telephone—and with a motor ambulance at call that would take a person 20 miles in an hour—the area that might be effectively served by a centrally-placed Receiving House in a rural district might be (even assuming only a 30 miles radius) as much as 2,800 square miles, which is much larger than most counties.* With the general specialising of institutions, it would be possible to set aside some of the smaller Workhouses as Receiving Houses.

It would be part of the function of the Registrar, on his daily or weekly visit to each part of his district, to "deliver" the local Receiving House of all the persons who had drifted in there since his last visit; allocating them, and directing their conveyance, to the Receiving Departments of the institutions appropriate to their state. It would be obligatory that the Registrar's instructions in this respect should be obeyed; but the Committees concerned would be free to bring the cases before him at a subsequent sitting and to show cause why they should be transferred to the care of some other Committee, or placed on Home Aliment, or summarily discharged as not needing treatment.

(f) *The Registrar as National Pension Officer.*

We think that the Registrar of Public Assistance—associated as he would be with all forms of public service, those enjoyed by persons in easy circumstances as well as those taken advantage of only by the poor—would be an ideal officer to adjudicate, on behalf of the National Government, on applications for Old-Age Pensions. He would have at his command his own permanent staff of Inquiry and Recovery Officers, who would possess an unrivalled knowledge of the economic circumstances of the great majority of the families of the district. After the first award of pensions has been made in 1909, the number of applications to be dealt with annually will be only about one-tenth of the numbers of that year; and, spread as they will be over the whole twelve months, will be insufficient to occupy the whole time of even one officer in each locality. Nevertheless, it would be very inconvenient to all concerned not to have Pension Officers available in each locality. We cannot help suggesting that there would be positive advantages in making the Registrar of Public Assistance act also as National Pension Officer; and in placing the Local Pension Committee—at any rate in respect of the Local Pensions which we propose that it should grant—in the same sort of relation to him as the Local Education Committee and the Local Health Committee will be when they propose to grant Home Aliment as an adjunct of their domiciliary treatment.

(g) *The Status of the Registrar.*

We propose that the Registrar of Public Assistance should be an officer of high *status* and practical permanence of tenure. We would leave the appointment freely in the hands of the County and County Borough Councils, relying on their choosing officers of tried experience in administration (especially in connection with the Poor Law), and preferably of some kind of legal training. As it is essential that the Registrar should be entirely independent of the committees concerned with the grant of Home Aliment, we propose that he and his staff, and his Receiving House, should be placed under the General Purposes Committee of the County or County Borough Council. If the Registrar were made use of, as we suggest, by the National Government, as the adjudicator of claims to Old-Age

* We are impressed by the extreme slowness and reluctance that has hitherto been displayed by Local Authorities in making use of the telegraph, the telephone and the motor-car. We believe that very great economy could be effected, much unnecessary building saved, and increased efficiency secured, if all institutions, public offices, and doctors', nurses' and policemen's residences were always connected by telephone; and if all institutions and all Inspectors and Public Medical Officers made full use of motor-cars.

Pensions, this would have the great advantage of enabling the Treasury to contribute a portion of the salary and expenses of his office; an arrangement which, whilst affording some financial relief to the County and County Borough Councils, would, of course, entail the concurrence of the Treasury in the appointment and dismissal, and thus secure, in the least invidious manner, that practical security of tenure which seems desirable.

(c) Conditions of Eligibility for Public Assistance.

In describing the overlapping and confusion of spheres between the Destitution Authority on the one hand, and the Local Health Authority, the Local Lunacy Authority, the Local Education Authority, the Local Police Authority, the Local Pension Authority, and the Local Unemployment Authority on the other, we found the position obscured by two rival and inconsistent conceptions—not explicitly stated or clearly realised—of what exactly constituted "destitution," or the condition in respect of which the public assistance was rendered. Under the Poor Law, whether in England or Wales, Scotland or Ireland, no one, it is asserted, can be relieved who is not in a state of destitution, and this term has a technical meaning. "Destitution," as we were authoritatively informed, "when used to describe the condition of a person as a subject for relief, implies that he is for the time being *without material resources* (1) directly available and (2) appropriate for satisfying his physical needs, (*a*) whether actually existing or (*b*) likely to arise immediately. By physical needs in this definition are meant such needs as must be satisfied (1) in order to maintain life or (2) in order to obviate, mitigate or remove causes endangering life, or likely to endanger life, or impair health, or bodily fitness for self-support."* It will be seen that, to the Destitution Authority, it is not the actual mental or physical condition of the patient, but the absence of material resources, that is the governing consideration. Thus, if a child is, in fact, suffering in health, or is even in danger of death, from lack of food, clothing or medical attendance, or from a total absence of home care, but the responsible parent, being present, has himself £2 a week coming in, and food actually in the house, the Destitution Authority cannot legally relieve the child. There is no lack of the necessary "material resources," and therefore in the Poor Law sense, the child is not destitute.† Similarly, the Destitution Authorities are advised that they can take no action in cases of disease, so long as the disease has not as yet interfered with a man's earning his livelihood, and so long, in fact, as he has money in the house. It is even doubtful whether a Board of Guardians can lawfully intervene when a miserly and half-imbecile old woman is lying alone in her cottage, in a state of filth, disease and neglect likely to lead to early death, and yet, to the knowledge of the Relieving Officer, has a bag of gold under her bed, and bread in the house.‡ There is no absence of material resources, and therefore, in the Poor Law sense, no destitution. And, as our analysis of the By-laws and practice of the Boards of Guardians shows, it is held not to be necessary that these economic resources should belong to the applicant, if he has, in fact, access to them. "Destitution," states the Clerk of Dudley Union, "is always a question of fact, and the Guardians are bound to take into consideration *all* sources of income or assistance which affect the applicant."§

There are two remarkable statutory exceptions, which, by their very existence, confirm this accepted interpretation of "destitution" under the Poor Law. In the case of the lunatic, the Relieving Officer intervenes whether or not there are material resources. But this action of the Poor Law Authorities required special legislation. Similarly, when it was thought expedient to give Poor Relief to members of Friendly Societies, in spite of the fact that they possessed definite incomes, it required an Act of Parliament. Thus, in the absence of special legislation, the view taken is that Poor Relief is only for those who are *pecuniarily* destitute. This view it is, whether or not legally correct, which has dominated the Destitution Authorities, and coloured all their activities.

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 973 (Mr. Adrian).

† This is found to be the case in practice, as it is also in law. "The position of the Guardians," explained Sir Charles Elliott, "is different from that of the School Authorities. They [the Guardians] look for destitution, the Relief Committee [of the Education Authority] look for insufficient feeding. Hence it may often happen that Guardians or Relief Committees may differ as to whether a case of want is genuine." (Report of House of Commons Committee on Education (Provision of Meals) Bill, 1906, *Q.* 194.)

‡ "I believe," deposed a witness, "it is really correct, as quoted by Mr. Mackenzie in his 'Poor Law Guardian' that, as the law lays down, an applicant must be really destitute of means from his own resources to obtain food, raiment, and shelter [and] in want of all three for his immediate necessities; and that unless he is so destitute, the Authorities cannot interfere." (Report of Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, *Q.* 5788.)

§ "Principles which should govern the Granting of Out-relief," by G. W. Coster, 1904.

Very different is the standpoint of the other Authorities. Under the various statutes which the Local Education Authority, the Local Health Authority, and even the Local Unemployment Authority carry out, the condition which sets them in motion is not destitution in the sense of the absence of *material* resources, but the existence in the person dealt with of conditions which, without the intervention of the public Authority, would produce consequences inimical to the common weal. This we must designate, for lack of a better term, "personal destitution" or "physiological destitution." The necessary conditions may or may not co-exist with the presence of material resources—a consideration which may affect the pecuniary charge to be made in return for the services of the public Authority, but not the rendering of the services themselves. Thus, in the case of a child found destitute of education, of a person suffering from smallpox destitute of proper treatment and facilities for isolation, of a boy running wild in low company, destitute of proper parental control, *the presence or absence of material resources is wholly irrelevant to the rendering of the appropriate service.* Moreover, these specialised Local Authorities are not required to wait, and do not, in practice, wait until the injury to the community has actually begun. Thus, the School Attendance Officer registers the child long before it actually attains school age, and advises the mother which school it should presently attend, so that there may never be any "personal destitution" in respect of this service. The Health Visitor counsels the mother, and even tenders municipal milk, before the infant is ill, deliberately in order that it may not become ill. The Medical Officer isolates "contacts," though they are not ill, and though there is no known contagion, merely out of precaution. But Boards of Guardians in England, Ireland and Wales, and Parish Councils in Scotland, take the view that they have no power to intervene until the state of destitution—however broadly they may choose to interpret this term—*has been actually entered upon.* "It is certainly not the duty of the Guardians to anticipate it."*

This contradiction between the two versions of the conditions of eligibility for Public Assistance has a large share in producing the confusion and overlapping that we have described. Moreover, a lack of appreciation of the exact contrast has, we think, on both sides, stood in the way of a proper exercise of the powers of Charge and Recovery. We think it important that this confusion of thought should be cleared up. It is essential for the attainment of the very objects for which the several "treating" Authorities are constituted, that they should continue to adopt, so far as their treatment is concerned, the definition that we have designated "personal" or "physiological" destitution. These Authorities must, in order to prevent injury to the community, take action whether or not there are material resources. We propose that they shall act on the same principles in the enlarged sphere that we assign to them. We consider that it is the maintenance of the contrary view by the Destitution Authorities—the insistence on pecuniary destitution—which has excluded them from the whole domain of preventive work, and has given to their operations, humane and philanthropic though they are, their characteristic barrenness. On the other hand, *after the appropriate service has been rendered to the person in need of it,* the question may quite properly be raised whether a Special Assessment ought not to be made upon him in repayment of the cost. At this point what is relevant is not whether he needs the service ("personal" or "physiological" destitution); but whether he or any one responsible for him has sufficient means to warrant a charge being made upon him. In our chapter on "Charge and Recovery" we have described the chaos into which this realm has fallen. It is one of the advantages of the Scheme of Reform that we advocate that, under it, the "treating" Authority—acting on what we have called "personal" or "physiological" destitution—is entirely divorced from the official machinery for Charge and Recovery, the Registrar of Public Assistance acting according to "pecuniary destitution," at whatever level of means Parliament may decide.†

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* "Principles which should govern the Granting of Out-relief," by G. W. Coster, 1904.

† This discrimination between the two senses of destitution, or need for public assistance, solves various problems which the Destitution Authorities find difficult. A person having no pecuniary resources whatever is living in a family—perhaps with a son-in-law or a brother, having no legal liability to maintain him—the income of which, taken as a whole, is sufficient to maintain the whole household: is he, or is he not, a fit subject for Outdoor Relief? Many Boards of Guardians refuse relief, or, at any rate, refuse Outdoor Relief. We think, that, in such a case, the question is whether, as a matter of fact, the applicant is actually in lack of food, clothing, warmth, medical attendance, or lodging. If not, there is no ground for public assistance. If he is actually suffering from want of the necessaries of life, according to the normal standard of the time, or in imminent danger of so suffering, the Local Authority concerned must intervene and relieve him in the most suitable manner. This would plainly not be to grant home aliment, in a household where, though material resources had been ample, the applicant had been allowed to suffer. The applicant must be rescued from

We pass now to the question of the degree of need—that is, of "personal" or "physiological" destitution—which should set the several "treating" Authorities in motion. The Legal Adviser of the Local Government Board informed us that a person was entitled to have satisfi d, at the expense of the Poor Rate, if he was without the means of satisfying them, "such needs as must be satisfied (i.) in order to maintain life or (ii.) in order to obviate, mitigate or remove causes endangering life or likely to endanger life or impair health or bodily fitness for self-support." ‡ This would seem to entitle an artisan or small shopkeeper, able to maintain himself and his family, but needing, to save his life, an expensive surgical operation, not merely to have this performed at the expense of the Poor Law, but even to have provided for him whatever was necessary—expensive treatment, mechanical appliances, and maintenance in convalescence—to restore his "bodily fitness for self-support." It is clear that the Local Government Board's definition would involve a great increase in Poor Law expenditure in respect of specialised hospitals, convalescent homes and "medical extras." We are disinclined to go as far in the provision of Public Assistance as is involved in Mr. Adrian's words. We accept as a better working definition of the conditions under which Public Assistance should be granted that given by the Royal Commissioners on the Aged Poor, when they said that "Destitution might be taken in practice to mean a want of the reasonable necessaries of life, such as food, lodging, warmth, clothing, and medical attendance according to the normal standard of the times." § The "normal standard of the times" implies a changing standard, increasing with the customary expenditure of the ordinary man. This is a less alarming proposition, and one well within our means. As a matter of fact, we do not find that the expenditure on sanitation, education, etc., even keeps pace with the rise in personal incomes; still less does the total of all forms of Public Assistance keep pace with the growth of the public revenue of the country. Our whole expenditure on the poor, great as it is, bears a much smaller proportion to the aggregate revenue of the nation than it did a century ago.

(D) Disfranchisement.

It is, we think, one of the advantages of our Scheme of Reform that, with the break-up of the Poor Law and the abolition of Poor Relief, the whole apparatus of electoral disfranchisement,‖ of persons who have the residential qualifications for the franchise, will fall to the ground. We can see no practical advantage in disfranchising a person because he has received the treatment which Parliament has provided for his case. The evidence goes to show that, so far as disfranchisement has any effect at all, it is a "Test" of the very worst kind; deterring the good and self-respecting, and in no way influencing the willing parasite. Moreover, the present position is so illogical that it could not, in our opinion, anyhow, have been maintained. There is no disfranchisement for the person convicted of crime, even of the most shameful kind. There is even, contrary to the common opinion, nothing to prevent a pauper voting if he is on the electoral register; and many of them actually do vote. Moreover, although the Statute does forbid paupers

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such inhuman surroundings, and either placed in a suitable institution, or "boarded-out" with other friends. The case would be different if the son-in-law or brother, not having enough to support the applicant, had come forward in the first instance, explaining his pecuniary position, and offering to afford lodging, etc., if home aliment were allowed. The Registrar of Public Assistance would then have to satisfy himself: (*a*) That there was no liability to maintain the applicant that he could enforce against any relation; and (*b*) that the proposed home was a suitable one. On the latter point he would need to be satisfied, not that the family income was small enough to warrant home aliment, for if there is no liability to maintain, the resources of other people do not concern him; but that the family income was large enough to ensure that the home aliment will not be diverted from the person to whom it was granted.

Similar discrimination between the two meanings of destitution clears up the problem of whether the child found hungry at school should be fed, if the parents have means; or whether the sick man, who could afford to pay, should be admitted to a public hospital, or provided with domiciliary medical treatment, if this is the best way of curing him. The "treating" Authority has to consider only whether the treatment is necessary. It will be for the Registrar of Public Assistance to consider whether the pecuniary resources disclosed do not warrant charge and recovery of some, or the whole of the cost.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 973.

§ Report of the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor, 1895, p. xlvi.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2448, 2863–6, 3224, 6962, 14015, 18581–4, 24760 (Par. 9), 25226–8, 25476–8, 25880, 27306, 27840, 29542–6, 29843 (Par. 22), 29898–900, 30033–4, 34162–3, 37352, 40085 (Par. 39), 40310 (Par. 50), 41761 (Par. 36), 41864–5, 41862, 42781 (Par. 14), 42929, 44516 (Par. 21), 50973, 51098, 52840 (Par. 24), 68238 (Par. 8), 69925 (Par. 23), 70035–6, 71172 (Par. 15), 71281, 73580–2, 77468 (Par. 3). and Appendices Nos. LVIII., XC., CV., CXIII., CXX., CXXIV., and CXLIX. to Vol. IV.

in England and Wales to vote at an election of Guardians, no means are usually taken to prevent those paupers who happen to be on the electoral register from exercising their franchise at an election of Guardians; and there is nothing on the face of the register to hinder their votes being received. What does happen is that, once a year, when the register is being revised, those persons (usually men only) whom the Clerk to the Guardians reports as having received Poor Relief (other than Medical Relief) at any time during the preceding twelve months are struck off, whatever may have been the cause or occasion, or the momentary character of the destitution to which they were reduced. This does not prevent them from voting, although they are paupers, during the two or three months that the old register remains in force; and it does prevent them from voting, even if they have long since ceased to be paupers, during the ensuing twelve months that the new register will be in force. In strict law the disqualification is absolute, even if the whole cost of the relief be immediately repaid; and even if the pauperism be actually forced on the elector by law, as when a dependent is, by magistrate's orders, compulsorily removed to the County Lunatic Asylum. On the other hand, Medical Relief only does not disqualify, and Revising Barristers differ from place to place, how far treatment and maintenance in the sick ward of the Workhouse, or the Poor Law Infirmary, is merely Medical Relief. Where the patient is sent by the Board of Guardians to the Municipal Hospital, or to a voluntary institution, he may or may not find his name struck off the register according to the *form* in which the Board of Guardians takes the cost of his treatment out of the Poor Rate. If he is paid for at so much per case per week, he will lose his vote, because this is (by Local Government Board instructions) entered as Outdoor Relief! If (as is more usual) he is paid for in a lump sum, he will not lose his vote. Nor will he be disqualified (even for voting for the Home Secretary who has let him out of gaol!) if he has been maintained in prison at His Majesty's expense; and if he is a freeholder or a University graduate, he will not even lose his qualification for next year's register by his enforced residence in prison. Nor will he be disqualified (even for voting for the Town Council which provides his relief) if he is admitted to the Municipal Hospital by the Medical Officer of Health, or given relief under the Unemployed Workmen Act; or if his eldest son is maintained in a Reformatory School, his younger son in an Industrial School, and his feeble-minded daughter in a Custodial Home, or if his infant gets milk at the Municipal Milk Dispensary, or if his other children are medically treated and provided with spectacles out of the Education Rate; or even if they are regularly fed at school. The absurdities of the present position are, indeed, so gross that no Minister of the Crown would think of proposing, and no House of Commons would dream of entertaining their explicit re-enactment.

(E) The Sphere of Voluntary Agencies.

It is one of the advantages of the proposed distribution of the various services at present aggregated together under the name of Poor Law that it affords the opportunity for initiating a really systematic use of voluntary agencies and personal service, to give to the public assistance that touch of friendly sympathy which may be more helpful than mere maintenance at the public expense, and to deal with cases in which voluntary administration may result in more effective treatment than can be given by public authorities exclusively. It is a drawback of the Destitution Authority, which increases with its hypertrophy, that it is constantly becoming the rival of these voluntary agencies. Relief Committees have never known how to use volunteer helpers, and they seem even to look upon philanthropic institutions as interlopers, because they are not managed by the Board of Guardians itself.*

We think that it should be a cardinal principle of public administration that the utmost use should, under proper conditions, be made of voluntary agencies and of the

* This disinclination is, to a large extent, due to the feeling—under the circumstances not altogether unjustifiable—that the members of the Destitution Authority and the Destitution Officers have not, and cannot have, any adequate means of forming a right opinion of the quality of such specialised institutions as schools, maternity hospitals and Rescue Homes. The General Inspectors of the Local Government Board naturally feel the same doubt as to their qualifications to judge of the value of the education or medical treatment afforded. These disabilities would not be felt by specialised committees, dealing day by day with particular services and advised by technical officers. The Local Education Committee of a County Council has no difficulty in pronouncing on schools, or the Public Health Committee of a Town Council on the infantile mortality rate of a maternity hospital.

personal service of both men and women of good will. But it is, in our opinion, essential that the proper sphere of this voluntary effort should be clearly understood. In the delimitation of this sphere, a great distinction is to be drawn between the use of voluntary agencies in the visitation of the homes of the poor, and the use of these agencies in the establishment and management of institutions. In the one case there should be absolutely no finding of money. In the other case, the more private money the better.

With regard to the whole range of charitable work in connection with the home life of the poor, there is, in our judgment, nothing more disastrous, alike to the character of the poor and to the efficiency of the service of public assistance which is at their disposal, than the alms dispensed by well-meaning persons in the mere relief of distress. This distribution of indiscriminate, unconditional and inadequate doles is none the less harmful when it is an adjunct of quite kindly meant "district visiting," the official ministrations of religion or the treatment meted out by a "medical mission." Even when such gifts are discreetly dispensed by the most careful visitor, they have the drawback of being given without knowledge of what the other resources of the family may be, without communication to other agencies which may be simultaneously at work, and without power to insist on proper conditions. We are definitely of opinion that no encouragement whatever should be given to any distribution of money, food or clothing, in the homes of the poor by any private persons or charitable societies whatsoever. The only exception to this rule should be a regular pension to a particular person; and this ought, in all cases, to be notified to the Registrar of Public Assistance. It is not that we undervalue the utility of the personal visits of sympathetic and helpful men or women. On the contrary, we wish to see much more use made of this devoted service, which could, we think, be greatly augmented, if it were called for by public authorities. But this service of visitation, to be effective, must be definitely organised, under skilled direction, in association with a special branch of public administration.* Such specialisation of home visitation is the only means of keeping at bay the mere irresponsible amateur, and of ensuring that the volunteer has been sufficiently in earnest to undergo some sort of technical training. The utility of such a service of specialised visitation has already been demonstrated in many directions. Thus, there are now a thousand or two of unpaid Health Visitors, acting under the direction of the Medical Officers of Health. Another example is afforded by the members of the Children's Care Committees, established in connection with the public elementary schools, and the analogous committees of the special schools of the London County Council. We see no reason why some such voluntary assistance should not be organised in connection with the Local Health Authority and the Local Education Authority in every district. We think, too, that similar voluntary assistance could be usefully employed in connection with the work of the Local Pension Authority and the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective. Such a band of volunteer helpers, acting within the frame-work of a specific municipal service, forms, in the densely populated districts of the great towns, an almost indispensable supplement to official activity. Such volunteers, able to devote to each case as much time as it requires, and bringing to bear a wider experience of everyday life than the specially trained and hard-worked official can do, may not only "search out" those who need public assistance, but may keep them constantly under observation before and after the treatment afforded at the cost of the rates, and may ensure that nothing is overlooked by which they may effectively be helped, and that, when restored to self-support, no relapse occurs without its being noted. It is, however, we repeat, essential that such domiciliary visitors should not have the distribution of money or relief in the homes, whether this be from public or private funds, their own or other people's.

On the other hand, there is still enormous scope for beneficent gifts of money, to be administered under voluntary management. There are many kinds of institutional treatment which the various public Authorities are not likely themselves to initiate;

* The need for organisation of the voluntary help will not be disputed by any person of experience. "*Voluntary associations, if they are to be permanent and to do the greatest good, require official help.* As soldiers volunteers are useful on the lines of communication, but regulars are required for the fighting; and similarly in this social warfare it will be necessary to employ trained Health Visitors. This will be essential to the success of any scheme that may be adopted, for it must not be forgotten that once a beginning has been made, it will be necessary to continue the work day after day without intermission, and no matter what the conditions of the weather. Indeed, very frequently in cold, inclement seasons, when the volunteer worker might not feel called on to risk her health for the sake of others, conditions will be discovered probably with respect to the care of the infant which might pass unnoticed in fine weather." (Report on the Prevention of Infantile Mortality, by Alfred E. Harris (Medical Officer of Health, Islington), 1907, p. 33.)

and there are others that they are almost debarred from conducting. There is room for many pioneer experiments in the treatment of every type of distressed person. The whole tendency of modern applied science is to subdivision and the breaking-up of old categories into newer specialisations. We cannot expect our County and County Borough Councillors to launch out into experiments of this kind. Such private experiments in Industrial and Reformatory Schools, Technical Institutes, Farm Colonies, Inebriate Retreats, Rescue Homes, and what not, have already greatly advanced the technique of these services. In this field of initiating and developing new institutional treatment —whether it be the provision of perfect almshouses for the aged, or the establishment of vacation schools or open-air schools for the children; whether it be the enveloping of the morally infirm, or of those who have fallen, in a regenerating atmosphere of religion and love, or some subtle combination of physical regimen and mental stimulus for the town-bred "hooligan"—very large sums of money can be advantageously used, and are, in fact, urgently needed. And not the financing alone, but also the management of such institutions affords a sphere for unofficial work. Just as no public Authority can hazard the ratepayers' money in these experimental institutions, so no public Authority can assume responsibility for the desirable unconventionality of their daily administration. We should wish to see the several Committees of the County and County Borough Councils make full use of these voluntary institutions, entrusting to their care the special types of cases for which they afford appropriate treatment. But in this use there should be invariably two conditions. Any voluntary institution receiving patients from the Local Authority must place itself under the regular inspection both of that Local Authority and of the National Department having the supervision of the particular service. And if payment for the treatment is required, even without other subsidy, the Local Authority must be given the opportunity of placing its own representatives on the actual governing body of the institution.

(f) The Practical Application of the Scheme.

It is, of course, more easy to devise a scheme of reform on paper, than to be sure that it can be applied in practice. We have, therefore, individually taken means, not only by special investigation, but also by specific personal inquiry of Poor Law Guardians and County and County Borough Councillors, of still more experienced Clerks to Boards of Guardians, Masters of Workhouses, and Relieving Officers, and of various officers of County and County Borough Councils, to satisfy ourselves that what we are proposing could actually be put into operation, without serious difficulty. Those practically concerned in the working of the existing machine, whom we have consulted on this point, have given us very favourable opinions. We are accordingly convinced that what we are proposing is practicable as well as desirable. It is, in fact, a great advantage of the scheme that it does not involve the creation of any novel area, or the establishment of any new Authority. In fact, in all the County Boroughs it amounts only to the transfer of all the powers of the Boards of Guardians to the Town Council; though, instead of handing them over *en bloc*, it provides for their distribution among the Education, Health, Asylums, Pension and General Purposes Committees of that body, thereby greatly lightening the additional burden of work to be imposed on the Councillors, whose numbers might, of course, be increased if desired. As with the duties of education and lunacy at present, we propose that all business relating to the several duties should automatically "stand referred" to the appropriate Committees for consideration and report, the Councils being left free to give to their Committees as much or as little delegated authority as they choose (except as to actually levying the rate or raising money on loan), and subject to such conditions as they think fit. The troublesome re-adjustment of areas, too, would be reduced to a minimum. The merging in the County or County Borough, of all the Unions wholly within each of them, would involve the minimum of readjustment of property and liabilities. The only alterations of area required would be in those cases in which Unions at present cut County or County Borough boundaries. These, which in England and Wales are 197 in number, would be required in any adoption of the County as the new area.

Moreover, the scheme involves the minimum of expense for compensation of dispossessed officers. It would, of course, be necessary to give to all officers whose posts were abolished, the usual generous treatment that Parliament in such cases accords. But many of the Clerks to Boards of Guardians would make admirable Registrars of Public Assistance, and could be offered these appointments. The best of the Masters of Workhouses could be found places in the various specialised institutions (including the Receiving

Houses). Most of the Relieving Officers would become the Enquiry and Recovery Officers of the Registrars of Public Assistance. The District Medical Officers would be simply made part of the unified Medical Service under the Local Health Committee, at their existing emoluments, etc. The existing Workhouses, Casual Wards, Poor Law schools, etc., would, of course, be utilised for the various specialised institutions that would be required, being divided up among the various committees as might be found most convenient.

The scheme could be applied gradually. England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland could be separately dealt with. There would be no great difficulty in the transfer of the administration from the Boards of Guardians to the County and County Borough Councils taking place in one locality after another, on "appointed days" to be fixed as the arrangements made by the Executive Commission (which would in any case have to be appointed) were completed for the particular localities. We can even imagine the scheme being applied to one service after another; the functions of the Boards of Guardians with regard to the children or the sick or the mentally defective being successively dealt with, and the final abolition of the Destitution Authority being deferred until the last remnant of its duties could be handed over.

(i.) *The Rural Counties.*

In the application of the scheme to the counties of England and Wales, the only serious difficulty appears to be the division of the medical service between the County Council and the existing minor sanitary authorities (the Councils of Non-County Boroughs, Urban Districts and Rural Districts); and for this we have offered specific suggestions. The establishment of the Registrar of Public Assistance, visiting once a week or so every part of the County—which should, we suggest, be divided into districts at least as small as the present Unions—would go far to relieve the members of the County Council of the most burdensome part of the work. There could, of course, be local visiting committees of volunteers chosen from among the local residents attached to the several institutions.*

(ii.) *The Metropolis.*

In the application of the scheme to London, a similar division of the medical service would be necessary between the Health Committee of the London County Council and the Health Committees of the Corporation of the City of London and the Metropolitan Boroughs. The asylums for imbeciles and idiots of the Metropolitan Asylums Board would naturally pass to the new Committee for the Mentally Defective (virtually the present Asylums Committee of the London County Council) and the isolation hospitals to the Health Committee of that body. If there were appointed, say, half a dozen Registrars of Public Assistance for the whole of the Administrative County, they would be able to sit for an entire day in each week in districts somewhat smaller than the present thirty-one Unions. But an even prompter "delivery" of the Receiving Houses could easily be arranged if required. In London, too, there could easily be special local visiting committees for the several institutions. The scheme is not dependent on any general reform of London Local Government, or on any enlargement of the Administrative County, though it would fit in easily with either of these proposals.

(iii.) *Scotland.*

In the application of the scheme to Scotland, we speak with less assurance. We do not feel that our knowledge of Scottish Local Government warrants us in doing more than suggest that, so far as we can learn, the same principles of reform are applicable. The enlargement of the unit of area is—with 874 separate Parish Councils distributing relief—even more urgently necessary than in England. The new area can hardly be any other than that of the County and perhaps those of the larger Burghs. There are the same advantages to be gained by the distribution, among the existing specialised committees, of the various services now aggregated together in the Poor Law. With regard to the provision for all grades of persons of unsound mind, we can accept the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, which adopt and continue the existing Lunacy Authorities; or, on the other hand, these might be simply re-constituted as Committees of County and Burgh Councils. In the one-third of Scotland which is in the large towns, the care of the children would naturally pass to the School Boards. We assume that the other services would pass to the County and principal Town Councils, with a division of the medical service between the District (Health) Committee of the County Council and the Health Committees of the smaller Burghs within the County similar to that suggested for the English Counties. This District (Health)

* With any such joint arrangements as the union of Lancashire County and its County Boroughs in the Lancashire Lunacy Board there need, of course, be no interference.

Committee, or perhaps the County Committee of a District constituted under the Education Act of 1908 might take over the care of the children. Whether it would be desirable to continue in existence the Parish Council in Scotland, any more than the Rural District Council in England and Wales, once all the Poor Law functions had been assumed by other Authorities, we do not venture to decide.

(iv.) *Ireland.*

In the application of the scheme to Ireland, we wish to speak even more tentatively than with regard to Scotland. Yet Ireland has already progressed further in the direction of breaking up the Poor Law, and distributing its services among the other Authorities than either England or Scotland. The whole provision for persons of unsound mind, for instance, even for those who are destitute, is already entirely outside the Poor Law, and in the hands of the County Councils. The medical service of the public dispensaries, too, is not deemed to be Poor Law relief, and could apparently easily be re-organised as a County Medical Service on Public Health lines. The provision of a complete system of hospitals by the County Councils, admitting all patients requiring hospital treatment, whatever their diseases, is one of the recommendations of the recent Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland. And, though that Commission did not recommend the abolition of the Boards of Guardians, we feel that our own scheme proceeds almost entirely on the same lines as their proposals, and that the establishment of the Registrar of Public Assistance would probably make it easy to adopt our recommendations almost in their entirety. The one exception lies in the case of the children. Ireland has, at present, no Local Education Authority to which the care of the children could be transferred. We agree with the Vice-Regal Commission in recommending that the children for whom the community has to find maintenance should, wherever possible, attend the existing day schools under the National Elementary Education Board. We suggest that their further care should be entrusted to new "Boarding-Out Committees" of the County and County Borough Councils, on which women members should be co-opted, charged to find suitable homes for these children, either in the duly inspected cottages of foster-parents, or in institutions under voluntary management, properly certified by the Local Government Board for Ireland. The two existing Poor Law schools could probably be most advantageously utilised as schools for some special kinds of children who cannot be suitably dealt with by boarding-out.

(v.) *The Departments of the National Government.*

Whilst the scheme relates mainly to local administration, no reform of the Poor Law can be effected without, in England and Wales at any rate, considerable changes in the central departments. We have already described how important it is, for efficiency and economy alike, that the Local Authorities should have the assistance, in each of the various services they undertake, of the supervision of a Department of the National Government *charged solely with that service.* We feel that the confusion and inefficiency into which so much of Local Government has fallen is to be ascribed in some degree to the absence of this specialised central supervision and control. Incredible as it seems, forty years after the Report of the Royal Commission on Sanitation in 1869, there is to-day no Department, and no Division of a Department, charged solely with Public Health as such. Even the Education Departments of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, find, at present, a great deal of the public provision for children of school age outside their control. With the abolition of the Destitution Authorities, the existing "Poor Law Division" of the Local Government Board would, of course, come to an end; and a redistribution of functions and officers would be necessary. We do not presume to make any recommendations as to how the duties of the several Departments should be allocated among the Ministers who would be responsible to Parliament for their policy and administration. Nor need we consider which of the Divisions (each being self-contained and complete in itself) can conveniently be grouped together, under the name of the Local Government Board or otherwise, with the Permanent Heads of the Divisions (as in Scotland and Ireland) sitting at a Board or Council under the presidency of the responsible Minister. We are, however, convinced that it is of the highest importance that there should be separately organised and completely self-contained Departments—each having the supervision and control of all the local services falling within its subject-matter—not only for Education, but also for Public Health (including all the services entrusted to the Local Health Authorities); for all the provision for the Mentally Defective (including the feeble-minded and the inebriates, as well as the lunatics and idiots); for the National Pensions for the Aged; and (as we may here add) for the whole provision for the Able-bodied, the Vagrants, and the Unemployed. Each of these five separate Departments or Divisions of Departments should issue its own regulative orders, and have the administration of all the Grants-in-

Aid that may be made in respect of the services with the supervision of which it is charged; and all such Grants-in-Aid should be conditional on proper efficiency in local administration, and proportionate partly to the local expenditure and partly to the local poverty, according to some such scale as we have suggested. Each such Department or Division of a Department would, of course, have its own specialist Inspectors, who should be chosen, in the first instance, from the technically qualified members of the present staffs. The existing General Inspectors of the Local Government Board would, we suggest, form a suitable nucleus for the new Inspectorate that will be required by any Department dealing with the Able-bodied Unemployed—a service in which no *technique* has yet been worked out, and in which the General Inspectors would start with greater knowledge than anyone else possesses. Alongside these five separate Departments or Divisions of Departments, there must, we think, be another, distinct and apart from them all, charged with the supervision of the audit, the sanctioning of loans, and local finance generally, and to this might be entrusted also the supervision of the Home Aliment sanctioned by the Registrars of Public Assistance.

In Scotland and Ireland, whilst the same principles are applicable, the local circumstances will require some modifications of these proposals. Where England and Wales need separate Departments, Scotland and Ireland may be able to do with separate Divisions of one Department, especially if, as we think advisable, the Permanent Heads of the several Divisions sit in a Board or Council under the presidency of the responsible Minister.

It may, in conclusion, be noted that any scheme of reform will involve the appointment of an Executive Commission to adjust areas and boundaries, and assets and liabilities, and to allocate buildings and officers according to the new organisation.

(G) Some Theoretical Objections Answered.

We have, of course, not failed to weigh carefully the various objections that have been made to our proposals. These objections, it need hardly be said, are theoretical. There is the objection that the breaking up of the Poor Law involves the breaking up of the family. There is the objection that the proposed scheme would lead to the harassing of the poor in their homes by a multiplicity of officers, each bent on enforcing his own conditions. There is the objection that the transfer to specialised committees of the Local Authority of the obligation to relieve the destitute may lead to an extravagant extension of gratuitous treatment at the cost of the rates. Finally, there is the objection, in exact contradiction to this fear of increased collective provision, that the abolition of the Destitution Authority may, somehow or other, abrogate the existing statutory right to relief.

(i.) *The Integrity of the Family.*

There are conditions under which the transfer of the functions of the Board of Guardians to the County or County Borough Council will undoubtedly cause more separation of the members of families than prevails at present. In our chapter on "The General Mixed Workhouse of To-day" we have described how all the members of a destitute family are now usually admitted simultaneously, by one gate, into one institution. These "mixed" institutions have undoubtedly the advantage—if it be an advantage—of keeping all the members of a family under the same roof, and even of permitting, especially in the smaller and less rigidly administered Unions, continued intercourse between husband and wife, and parent and child. In visiting some of the Workhouses in the wilds of Ireland, we have been struck by the homeliness of the arrangement, by which a whole family, rendered destitute by an eviction, will be found crouching round the peat fire of the one common day-room; the able-bodied father smoking his pipe, the mother suckling her infant, the children playing around, and an aged grandparent dosing in the one armchair. When this domestic interior is supervised by a group of kindly nuns, visited by the parish priest, and illuminated by the dignity of agrarian martyrdom, the public assistance afforded has doubtless a charm of its own; though we may question, not only its deterrent, but also its curative and restorative effects. But in the well-regulated English Workhouse—still more, in the mammoth Poor Law establishments which now characterise the great towns of England, Scotland and Ireland—the inclusion under one roof, or within one curtilage, of a whole family—the able-bodied man, the ailing woman and infant, the children of school age, the feeble-minded girl and the aged grandparent—means a promiscuous intercouse, not between the members of that family alone, but between all ages and different sexes, which is anything but edifying. It certainly does not conduce to the integrity of family relationships. And when the Destitution Authority, responding at last to the constant pressure of the Local Government Board, consents so far to "break up the family" as to treat the different members of it in different institutions—as the 1834 Report so strongly advised—it often

nullifies the very improvement at which the reform has aimed. In a desire, we suppose, to treat the family as a unit, at any rate at the moment of admission and the moment of discharge, the Guardians at present summon the wife and her infant from the Infirmary, the children from the Cottage Homes in the country, and the feeble-minded daughter from the laundry, to meet, at the lodge of the Able-bodied Workhouse, the husband and father who has claimed his discharge because he is tired of test work. It is this insistence on dealing with the family as a unit which gives the gravest aspect to the terrible problem of the "Ins-and-Outs." Let the man determine to take his discharge—however evil his character, however notoriously vicious his habit of life, however homeless he may be—all his dependents are at present summoned, from the specialised institutions at which they are being treated at great expense, as if to his death-bed! The children are brought in by an officer from the country boarding school, clean and even smart in their neat clothes and handed over to him at the Workhouse lodge, with the almost certain prospect that "the family," after unspeakable experiences, will be readmitted within a few days, in a state of filth and demoralisation.

In common with every experienced Poor Law administrator we accept the responsibility of so far "breaking up the family" as to insist (with the authors of the Report of 1834) that, if there is to be institutional treatment at all, it shall be treatment of the different members of a family, according to age, sex and physical state, *in separate specialised institutions under distinct management and supervision.* We do not see any reason for imagining any greater dissolution of the family when these institutions are administered by different committees of a Town Council than when they are administered by different committees of a Board of Guardians. But we go further. In common with, we think, the majority of experienced Poor Law administrators, we recommend that no sick dependent should be discharged from the Infirmary, and that no child should be brought back from the school to be handed over to its father, unless and until some reasonable assurance can be given that there is a home for them to go to, offering, at any rate, minimum conditions of decency and safety. It is one of the advantages of our scheme that the Education Committee and the Health Committee, under the advice of their own officers, will certainly wish to satisfy themselves on this point before they forcibly eject any child or sick person committed to their charge. In our proposal of a Registrar of Public Assistance specially charged with the duty of proceeding against defaulting heads of families, we provide a far more effective means of enforcing parental responsiblity than the present remarkable practice of casting out the wife and child whenever the man chooses to leave.

A curious question has, in this connection, been asked of us. How, it is said, are the various members of a family, once sorted out into different institutions, under different committees of the Town Council, ever to get together again? What seems to puzzle some naïve objectors is the vision of the Health Committee's ambulance carrying off to its hospital the mother with puerperal fever, the Education Committee's officer conducting the children found wandering in the streets to the Industrial Schools, the Asylums Committee taking charge of the imbecile girl, the Unemployment Authority giving the man his railway ticket to the Farm Colony, whilst the police "run in" the hooligan son for commitment to a Reformatory School. The answer to this enquiry is that this very process is taking place daily under our eyes in any large city, without the difficulty arising. The existence of a Destitution Authority over and above all the existing specialised committees does nothing to bring these scattered members of the family together.* In practice, they find each other without difficulty when they emerge from their several institutions, just as they would if they had gone at their own cost to school, to search for work, or to get medical treatment. But in so far as any difficulty may arise—as, for instance, with the feeble-minded or with truant children, or with parents wishing to evade their responsibilities—our scheme provides, for the first time, effective machinery for "re-uniting" the family, either voluntarily or compulsorily. The Registrar of Public Assistance, advised daily of all admissions and discharges in every public institution, with an office at the Local Receiving House always open to applicants, and with his Inquiry and Recovery Officers instantly in pursuit of husbands and fathers who have run away from their responsibilities, will, in fact, make it very difficult for families not to re-unite.

There is, however, a far more insidious "breaking up of the family" constantly going on to-day, than any that could possibly be caused, whenever institutional treatment

* It has even been contended, on similar grounds, that it is absolutely necessary, at the present time, to admit all children to the Workhouse, so that there may be a record of the complete family lest any of the children should be "lost" when they are sent, as they may be, to different schools. It is said that otherwise on discharge a child might be "forgotten" and not sent for, as a parent might claim to have fewer children than he was really responsible for. These difficulties may be overcome by proper registration of every case.

becomes necessary, by there being separate institutions for each sex, age-period and physical condition. Owing to the unfortunate limitation of the action of the Board of Guardians to the period of actual destitution, thousands of families are disintegrating to-day under our eyes, from lack of the timely strengthening which might have prevented their becoming destitute. But when the cost and trouble of providing for the several members of the family when destitute fall upon committees which have, as part of their ordinary duty and machinery, the periodical visitation of the home, irrespective of destitution, these committees will have the families continuously under observation. Is the child unfed at school? A member of the Children's Care Committee calls to ascertain the cause. At every birth, at every death, at every occurrence of notifiable disease, the officer of the Health Committee becomes acquainted with the circumstances of the household. Thus, the several Committees of the Town Council, as a mere measure of economy, so as not eventually to incur the cost of institutional treatment, with its concomitant of "breaking up the family," will be perpetually doing whatever may be necessary to maintain the family intact, to encourage those members of it who are striving to keep the home together, and forcibly to restrain any member whose conduct is threatening it with ruin.

(ii.) *The Withdrawal of the Destitution Officer.*

The suggestion that the great expense to the ratepayer, and the "break up of the family," involved in the institutional treatment of the present Poor Law, can, in many cases, be obviated by friendly supervision and well-informed advice before and after the crisis of destitution, rouses another set of theoretical objections. Under the scheme of reform now proposed, it is objected that there would be a great increase in the number of salaried officials, all "harassing" poor families with inquisitorial enquiries and officious advice. This, however, is an error. As a matter of fact there would, under the reform proposed, be actually fewer officials on the salary list, and each of them would ask fewer questions than is at present the case in any well-administered district. An efficient Town Council has already its staff of Sanitary Inspectors and Health Visitors, of School Attendance Officers and School Managers or members of Children's Care Committees. These domiciliary agents at present investigate, not only questions of sanitation and the hygienic condition of the family, school attendance and the care of the children, but also—now that school meals, medical treatment, milk for the infant and so on, are being provided—find themselves compelled to inquire, however imperfectly, into the economic circumstances of the household. Meanwhile, the family, in many cases, is obtaining, or asking for, Poor Law Relief. The well-administered Board of Guardians accordingly sends to the house, one after another, in order to make successive enquiries, the Relieving Officer, the Cross Visitor, the Collector and Removal Officer, and, if the case presents any difficulty, also the Superintendent Relieving Officer. All the latter Destitution Officers inquire into exactly the same facts as have been inquired into by the officers of the Local Health Authority and the Local Education Authority. It is true that their primary investigation is into the pecuniary resources of the family, but the Guardians expect them to report also on the sanitary state of the home, the health of all the members of the family, the attendance of the children at school, and even whether the mother can or will suckle her infant. On these points the Destitution Officers, whether one, two, three or four in number, are unqualified to judge—a fact which does not make their inquiries less annoying. Incredible as it may seem to those unacquainted with the working of the conflict in Local Government to-day, this curious multiplicity of domiciliary visitors, all going, one after another to the same house, unaware of each other's visits, and all inquiring indifferently into subjects in which they may be assumed to possess some professional competence, and into those about which they frankly know nothing, is actually the present practice of town after town. It may be seen, for instance, in Edinburgh or Paddington, Glasgow or Bradford.

With the remodelling of the Poor Law that we are recommending, this overlapping and confusion will cease. The Sanitary Inspector or Health Visitor, the School Attendance Officer or the member of the Children's Care Committee, will still be found visiting the homes; but their hygienic or educational inquiries and advice, like their information as to the available public assistance appropriate to the case, will no longer be hampered by vague questioning as to the total earnings coming into the home, or about the existence of relatives able to contribute. The three or four Destitution Officers, with their unsavoury hotch-potch of inquiries into all sorts of subjects, will be replaced, in each locality, by the one Inquiry and Recovery Officer of the Registrar of Public Assistance. His business will be limited strictly to the ascertainment of the pecuniary resources of the family—not with any view of *preventing* the requisite treatment being afforded, for that will already have begun—but in order to ascertain what charge, if any, should be made for it, and upon whom it should be made. He, having no concern with the health or morals of the family, will have no more right than the agent of an insurance company

or the Assessor of Income-Tax to do what in the Relieving Officer excites such resentment, namely, pry into the bedroom, cross-examine the woman as to her relation with the male lodger, or comment on the cough and expectoration of the delicate daughter—all in order to find a reason for refusing Outdoor Relief and offering the Workhouse instead. Finally, this agent of the Registrar of Public Assistance will be in no sense a Destitution Officer. His visits will imply no pauperism. They will be paid alike to the family requiring Home Aliment for its bread-winner, and to the family regularly paying the full charge for the maintenance of a member in the Tuberculosis Sanitorium; to the old woman claiming a National Pension, and to the household which has distinguished itself by the gaining of a County Scholarship; to the husband of the woman using the Maternity Hospital, as well as to the propertied lady who is paying for her husband's detention in the most luxurious villa of the County Lunatic Asylum. In fact, therefore, the proposed "sorting-out" of the present multiplicity of officers, and the restriction of each to his own sphere, will positively diminish both their numbers and the multifariousness of their questions. And with the final abolition of the Destitution Officer, and his hateful combination of functions, any prejudice that the poor may have against domiciliary visitation as such will, we anticipate, disappear.

(iii.) *The Economy of Efficient Administration.*

We pass now to what appears to us the most genuine of the objections made to our proposals, namely, that they will involve :—

(*a*) A large increase of expense to the ratepayers; and

(*b*) An unnecessary multiplication of those for whom gratuitous service is provided.

Our answer is that whilst our proposals involve increased expense in some directions, they bring great saving in others. What is even more important is that the increases in expenditure will tend to be temporary only, whilst the saving is calculated to be permanent and cumulative.

To begin with the 234,000 infants and children on Outdoor Relief,* we accept the responsibility (in common, we think, with a majority of Poor Law administrators) of proposing increased expenditure on those among them who—to use the words of our own Children's Investigator—are now suffering, definitely, and seriously, from the circumstances of their lives. We do not think that it is possible, under any scheme, to continue to pretend to maintain children on a shilling or eighteenpence a week each. The chronic under-feeding, stunted growth, and premature death, to which we are at present condemning many tens of thousands of Outdoor Relief children—children for whom the community has, by enrolling them in the register of paupers, definitely assumed responsibility—is surely the most wasteful and extravagant arrangement that could be devised. We admit that when the responsibility for these children passes into the hands of the Local Health Authority and the Local Education Authority, the reports from the Health Visitors and the Medical Officers, the mere sight of their condition in the school, and the reports as to their home circumstances by the members of the Children's Care Committees, will compel the proposal to the Registrar of Public Assistance, where the mothers are to be trusted, of Home Aliment much more adequate than a shilling a week, the provision of day industrial schools for many thousands more, and the adoption, and removal from their parents, of those found to be living in actually vicious homes. On the other hand we may anticipate that the enormous capital outlay, and the high charge for maintenance, now incurred by some Boards of Guardians, for every child in their Cottage Homes, owing to their inexperience of the real requirements of efficient school buildings, will not continue under Local Authorities who are perpetually erecting such buildings for children at large, on more economical principles. We may, however, frankly admit that the net result of a transfer of destitute children from the present Poor Law to the Local Education Authorities—in common, we think, with all serious proposals for reform in this department—will be, during the next few years, an increase in the total spent on the children. But as it is exactly these children, brought up on insufficient food or in undesirable homes, who presently recruit the great army of pauperism, we think that it will be agreed that the expenditure is a good investment. Meanwhile, the Registrar of Public Assistance will be at work, enforcing payment from parents whose ill-treatment of their children proceeds not from lack of income, but from self-indulgence in drink, etc., or from mere inhumanity. It may well prove that whilst there will be more spent on the children who are really destitute, the number of claimants for school dinners or spasmodic relief, or of those who shovel their children into costly Poor Law schools, will, under the steady and impartial pressure of the new system of Charge and Recovery, actually be diminished.

* In England and Wales, 178,730; in Scotland, 36,808; and in Ireland, 19,020.

Much the same argument applies to the sick. We accept the responsibility of recommending the adoption of the Public Health principle of searching out disease in its incipient stages, in place of the Poor Law attitude of waiting until the disease has gone so far as, on the one hand, to produce destitution, and, on the other, to render the belated but costly treatment of no avail. This will mean, in the first years, an increased expenditure on domiciliary treatment, and, where really required, on the provision of hospitals. But seeing that no less than half of the present pauperism—that is to say, £9,000,000 a year out of the present Poor Law expenditure of £18,000,000—is directly caused by the diseases of early or adult life, and that most of these are known to be "preventable," we regard this expenditure also as a good investment. Let us assume, for a moment, that the United Kingdom and all its inhabitants formed the property of a great slave-owning company, much as whole districts in Russia used to belong to a great proprietor. With the modern knowledge of preventive medicine, it is clear that it would "pay" the slave-owner, not only to provide for his "hands" or his "souls" good sanitation and a supply of pure water, but also to train them in hygienic habits of life, and to take care that no incipient disease among them, more especially contagious or infectious disease, remained untreated. It is surely the worst of all forms of national waste to allow the ravages of preventable sickness to progress unchecked; and this not merely because it kills off thousands of producers prematurely (burdening us, by the way, with the widow and the orphan), but because sickness levies a toll on the living, and leaves even those who survive crippled, debilitated, and less efficient than they would otherwise have been. There is even, by the taking of timely measures, an eventual decrease in the expenditure required to cope with a disease. To put up an Isolation Hospital is at first costly; but when (as has been repeatedly found to be the case with smallpox) the disease has been stamped out, the hospital stands empty, and is available for other public use. And the treatment need not be gratuitous. As we have seen, there is at present great diversity of practice as to which diseases shall be treated gratuitously, and which shall be charged for. The tendency, under the present system, is to increase the range of gratuitous treatment; and it is significant that even whilst we were enquiring into the matter, the responsibility for the gratuitous treatment of phthisis (including maintenance in hospital when required) has been formally and explicitly assumed by the Local Health Authorities of Scotland, under the authority of Parliament and the Local Government Board. The whole question of the pecuniary basis of the public treatment of disease seems to us to need further consideration, with the object of securing the maximum result from whatever expenditure the nation decides to afford. But when charges are decided on by Parliament they ought to be impartially enforced; and for this no adequate provision at present exists or has been included in any other proposals. We rely for this purpose on the establishment in every district of a Registrar of Public Assistance, unconnected with the medical service and bent on really enforcing whatever charges may be legally imposed on those for whom hospital maintenance is provided. This may well lead to an actual decrease in the area of gratuitous treatment, which, under the present system, is shovelled out, with the very minimum of inquiry, to all who ask for it.

(iv.) *The Right to Relief.*

It is curious to notice that our insistence on treatment rather than relief, and the importance that we attach to enforcing payment from those who are legally liable and of sufficient ability to pay for what they receive, has raised an objection quite the opposite of that with which we have just dealt. It is feared by some that in the supersession of the Destitution Authority by the more specialised organs of Local Government the poor will lose their present statutory right to relief. Our answer is that whilst we recommend the repeal of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which created the Boards of Guardians, we do not advocate the repeal of the Statute of the 43rd of Elizabeth. We propose that there should be no less legal obligation on the Local Authority, than there is at present, to provide the necessities of life to all those who are without them. Just as the Local Education Authority is under statutory obligation to provide schooling for all children within its district who are without schooling, so we propose that it should assume the statutory obligation (now imposed upon the Board of Guardians) of providing, for those children who are destitute, whatever other things are required. Just as the Local Health Authority is under statutory obligation to make certain sanitary provisions for its district, so we propose that it should assume the statutory obligation (now imposed upon the Board of Guardians) of providing, for those of the sick who are destitute, whatever their necessities require. And similarly for the other sections of the present pauper host. The obligations which the Poor Relief Act of 43 Elizabeth, c. 2, embodied in our Statute law can be simply transferred from the Board of Guardians to the County or County Borough Council.

There remains to be noticed what may be considered the present safeguard of the poor in the liability of the Relieving Officers to criminal prosecution, even for manslaughter, if any person is injured owing to their failure to afford relief when relief is required. This liability has the special characteristic of not being affected by any orders of the Destitution Authority under whom the Relieving Officer has been placed. Moreover, if a destitute person refuses the particular form of relief offered, the Relieving Officer still continues liable in case of any harm occurring, and is compelled therefore to provide relief in some other form. The majority of our colleagues propose to abolish all this criminal liability of the Relieving Officer. We do not think that this is either necessary or desirable. There is, we think, an advantage, in so important a matter as preserving human life, in there being, in each district, an officer who is definitely responsible, whatever other Authorities may be prescribing, for preventing deaths from starvation or neglect. We recommend that the present responsibility of the Relieving Officer should be transferred to the Registrar of Public Assistance and the keeper of the local Receiving House, together with some person in each parish or other convenient area whom the Registrar may appoint for this purpose and for the giving of relief in kind in cases of sudden or urgent necessity. Every such case would be automatically reported to the Registrar, who would place the case in charge of the officers of one or other of the committees concerned, or arrange for removal to the Local Receiving House pending his decision. If the relief was refused, we recommend that the Local Health Authority should be empowered, in any case in which, through inanition or neglect, life might be endangered, or a public nuisance caused, to obtain a magistrate's order (to be granted only under careful safeguards) for the compulsory removal of the person concerned to the appropriate institution. We think that, in cases of urgency, the Registrar of Public Assistance might be given power to make a similar order. In short, what our scheme of reform ensures is that, whilst the Right to Relief is fully maintained, the obligation to accept relief in its most appropriate form is, under penalty of compulsory removal in extreme cases, practically insisted on.

(H) Summary of Proposals.

Deferring our proposals with regard to the whole of the Able-bodied until Part II. of the present Report, we recommend:—

1. That, except the 43 Elizabeth, c. 2, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 for England and Wales, and the various Acts for the relief of the poor and the corresponding legislation for Scotland and Ireland, so far as they relate exclusively to Poor Relief, and including the Law of Settlement, should be repealed.

2. That the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, and (at any rate as far as Poor Law functions are concerned) the Parish Councils in Scotland, together with all combinations of these bodies, should be abolished.

3. That the property and liabilities, powers and duties of these Destitution Authorities should be transferred (subject to the necessary adjustments) to the County and County Borough Councils, strengthened in numbers as may be deemed necessary for their enlarged duties; with suitable modifications to provide for the special circumstances of Scotland and Ireland, and for the cases of the Metropolitan Boroughs, the Non-County Boroughs over 10,000 in population, and the Urban Districts over 20,000 in population, on the plan that we have sketched out.

4. That the provision for the various classes of the Non-Able-bodied should be wholly separated from that to be made for the Able-bodied, whether these be unemployed workmen, vagrants or able-bodied persons now in receipt of Poor Relief.

5. That the services at present administered by the Destitution Authorities (other than those connected with vagrants or the able-bodied)—that is to say, the provision for:—

(i.) Children of school age;

(ii.) The sick and the permanently incapacitated, the infants under school age, and the aged needing institutional care;

(iii.) The mentally defective of all grades and all ages; and

(iv.) The aged to whom pensions are awarded—

should be assumed, under the directions of the County and County Borough Councils, by:—

(i.) The Education Committee;

(ii.) The Health Committee;

(iii.) The Asylums Committee; and

(iv.) The Pension Committee respectively.

6. That the several committees concerned should be authorised and required, under the directions of their Councils, to provide, under suitable conditions and safeguards to be embodied in Statutes and regulative Orders, for the several classes of persons committed to their charge, whatever treatment they may deem most appropriate to their condition; being either institutional treatment, in the various specialised schools, hospitals, asylums, etc., under their charge; or, whenever judged preferable, domiciliary treatment, conjoined with the grant of Home Aliment where this is indispensably required.

7. That the law with regard to liability to pay for relief or treatment received, or to contribute towards the maintenance of dependents and other relations, should be embodied in a definite and consistent code, on the basis, in those services for which a charge should be made, of recovering the cost from all those who are really able to pay, and of exempting those who cannot properly do so.

8. That there should be established in each County and County Borough one or more officers, to be designated Registrars of Public Assistance, to be appointed by the County and County Borough Council, and to be charged with the threefold duty of:—

(i.) Keeping a Public Register of all cases in receipt of public assistance;

(ii.) Assessing and recovering, according to the law of the land and the evidence as to sufficiency of ability to pay, whatever charges Parliament may decide to make for particular kinds of relief or treatment; and

(iii.) Sanctioning the grants of Home Aliment proposed by the Committees concerned with the treatment of the case.

9. That the Registrar of Public Assistance should have under his direction (and under the control of the General Purposes Committee of the County or County Borough Council) the necessary staff of Inquiry and Recovery Officers, and a local Receiving House for the strictly temporary accommodation of non-able-bodied persons found in need, and not as yet dealt with by the Committees concerned.

10. That the present national subventions in aid of the Destitution Authorities should be replaced by Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure on the whole of the services to be administered by the Health Committees of the County and County Borough Councils, subject to the administration of these services up to, at any rate, a National Minimum of Efficiency; the aggregate amount of such Grants-in-Aid for the United Kingdom and their allocation as between England (including Wales), Scotland and Ireland being fixed, and subject to revision only every seven years; but the distribution of this total among the several County and County Borough Councils being made, according to the plan we have specified, in proportion to their several gross expenditures on these services, and at the same time in such a proportion to the poverty of their districts as will enable the National Minimum of Efficiency to be everywhere attained without anywhere exceeding the Standard Average Rate.

11. That the Local Authorities in England and Wales, in respect of the services administered by each Committee, be placed under the supervision of a single Department or Division of a Department of the National Government, which shall itself administer the Grants-in-Aid of its particular services, issue its own regulative Orders, and have its own technically qualified Inspectors; the Education Committees in England and Wales being thus responsible, for the efficiency of all their services, to the Board of Education; the Mentally Defectives (or Asylums) Committees to the proposed Board of Control, in succession to the Lunacy Commissioners; the Pension Committees to whatever Department is deputed to take charge of the administration of the Old-age Pensions Act of 1908; and the Health Committees, with regard to all their enlarged range of functions, to a separately organised and self-contained Public Health Department, whether this is organised as a separate Division of the Local Government Board or made a distinct Department. The determination of appeals from the decisions of the Registrar of Public Assistance, and whatever national supervision may be exercised over the grant of Home Aliment to the Non-Able-Bodied, should, we suggest, be entrusted to another separately organised and self-contained Department or Division of a Department which, if it can be dissociated from the Local Government Board, might, with advantage, be placed, along with the Department or Division dealing with Audit, Loans and Local Finance generally, in close connection with the Treasury.

12. That a temporary Executive Commission be appointed to adjust areas, boundaries, assets and liabilities; and to allocate buildings and officers among the future Local Authorities.

PART II.

THE DESTITUTION OF THE ABLE-BODIED.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

PART II.—THE DESTITUTION OF THE ABLE-BODIED - - - - - - - - - - - 1035

CHAPTER I.—The Able-bodied under the Poor Law - - - - - - - - - - 1036

(A) The Persistence of Outdoor Relief—(i.) Sudden or Urgent Necessity—(ii.) Reported Exceptions—(iii.) Going out to look for Work—(iv.) Are Women Able-bodied?—(B) The Outdoor Labour Test—(C) The General Mixed Workhouse as an Asylum for Able bodied Men—(D) The Able-bodied Test Workhouse—(i.) Poplar—(ii.) Kensington—(iii.) Birmingham—(iv.) Manchester and Chorlton—(v.) Sheffield—(vi.) Compulsory Detention—(vii.) Summary of Objections to the Maintenance of a Penal Establishment by a Destitution Authority—(E) The Casual Ward—(i.) The Casual's Free Hotel—(ii.) The Casual's Prison—(iii.) The Unwarded Vagrant—(iv.) Who are the Casuals?—(v.) The Dilemma of the Casual Ward—(vi.) The Need for more Prolonged and more Specialised Treatment—(F) The Able-bodied in the Scottish Poorhouses.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1093

CHAPTER II.—The Able-bodied under Voluntary Agencies - - - - - - - - 1095

(A) Emergency Funds—(B) Voluntary Relief Works—(C) Shelters and Labour Homes—(D) The Undermining of a Penal Poor Law by Voluntary Agencies.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1101

CHAPTER III.—The Able-bodied under the Unemployed Workmen Act - - - - - 1102

(A) The Provision of Work at Wages by the Municipal Authorities, 1886–1905—(B) The Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905—(C) The Distress Committees—(D) Rural Colonies—(E) The Labour Exchange—(F) Paying the Cost of Removal—(G)—The Inadequacy of the Unemployed Workmen Act.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1129

CHAPTER IV.—The Distress from Unemployment as it Exists To-day - - - - - - 1131

(A) Class I.—The Men from Permanent Situations—(B) Class II.—The Men of Discontinuous Employment—(i.) The Operatives of the Building Trades—(ii.) The Public Works Men—(iii.) Existing Agencies dealing with the Men of Discontinuous Employment—(C) Class III.—The Under-Employed—(i.) The Casual Labourer—(ii.) The Fringe of Casuals about the Skilled Trades—(iii.) The Under-Employment of Declining Trades—(iv.) The Social Evil of Under-Employment—(v.) The Swamping of the Distress Committees by the Under-Employed—(vi.) Under-Employment the Main Cause of Pauperism—(vii.) The Cause of the Constant Existence of an Under-Employed Class—(viii.) Existing Agencies dealing with the Under-Employed—(D) Are Women Unemployed?—(E) Class IV.)—The Unemployable—(i.) The Daily Manufacture of the Unemployable—(ii.) The Wife and Mother as Breadwinner—(iii.) The Misuse of Boy Labour—(iv.) The Alleged Exclusion of the Elderly—(v.) Raising the Standard of Efficiency—(vi.) Existing Agencies dealing with the Unemployable—(F) Character and Unemployment—(G) The Need for a National Authority for all sections of the Unemployed.

Conclusions - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1177

CHAPTER V.—Proposals for Reform - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 1179

(A) The National Labour Exchange—(i.) The Experience of Germany—(ii.) The Experience of London—(iii.) The Experience of the Seamen's Labour Exchange—(iv.) The Functions of the Labour Exchange—(*a*) The Labour Exchange and the Men from Permanent Situations—(*b*) The Labour Exchange and the Men of Discontinuous Employment—(*c*) The Labour Exchange and the Seasonal Trades—(*d*) The Labour Exchange and the Under-employed—(*e*) The Labour Exchange and the Suppression of Vagrancy—(*f*) The Labour Exchange as a Method of enforcing Personal Responsibility—(B) The Absorption of the Surplus—(i.) The Halving of Boy and Girl Labour—(ii.) The Reduction of the Hours of Labour of Railway and Tramway Servants—(iii.) The Withdrawal from Industrial Wage-earning of the Mothers of Young Children—(C) The Regularisation of the National Demand for Labour—(D) The Provision for the Unemployed—(i.) Trade Union Insurance—(ii.) Maintenance under Training—(E) The Ministry of Labour—(i.) The Minister for Labour—(ii.) The National Labour Exchange—(iii.) The Trade Insurance Division—(iv.) The Industrial Regulation Division—(v.) The Emigration and Immigration Division—(vi.) The Statistical Division—(vii.) The Maintenance and Training Division—(F) "Utopian?"

Summary of Proposals - - - - - - - - - - - 1215

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations of Part I. and Part II. - - - 1218

PART II.

THE DESTITUTION OF THE ABLE-BODIED.

There are to-day, as there were prior to 1834, two separate and distinct Local Authorities providing maintenance for able-bodied destitute persons. Under the Elizabethan Poor Law, down to 1834, the Parish Officers were legally required to find work or maintenance for every Able-bodied person without the necessaries of life, who was residing in their parish. On the other hand, all wayfaring or vagrant persons were dealt with under the Criminal Law by the Justices and their underlings, the Parish Constables; and the maintenance afforded to them was assumed to be accompanied by some measure of punishment—the stocks, the whipping post, or commitment to the House of Correction. To-day there are again two Local Authorities providing maintenance for able-bodied destitute persons, but with a difference. Whereas, in the eighteenth century, the relief afforded by the Destitution Authorities was considered to be too good for the Vagrant, in the twentieth century it is considered too bad for the Unemployed. The Boards of Guardians are required to find maintenance, not only for all destitute able-bodied persons resident in their Unions, but also for every Vagrant claiming their hospitality. Alongside them there is, since 1905, in every important town, a second authority at work, the Distress Committee administering the Unemployed Workmen Act. These Committees were intended to provide only for the *bona fide* Unemployed, that is to say, for men and women who, having been in full work at full wages, find themselves without employment through no fault of their own. But, as a matter of fact, as we shall see, the Distress Committees are providing spasmodic maintenance, not only for the Unemployed in this sense, but also for many of the Under-employed and for some of the Unemployables. What they cannot lawfully do is to give any assistance to Vagrants until these have settled down for a year, or to Sweated Workers, so long as these remain in constant employment. Athwart the operations of both these Authorities come all the voluntary charitable agencies, from the spasmodic "Mayor's Funds" and newspaper funds of times of trade depression up to the permanent Shelters, Labour Homes and Working Colonies of bodies like the Church Army and the Salvation Army.

CHAPTER I.

The Able-Bodied under the Poor Law.

The reader of the Report of 1834 is struck by the narrow limits which the members of that celebrated Royal Commission set to their work. It is not merely that they practically left out of sight all the various classes of non-able-bodied pauperism, about which, as we have seen, they hardly at all concerned themselves. What is more remarkable is that neither in their Report, nor in the bulky volumes of their evidence, do we find any notice of Able-bodied Destitution, as distinguished from Able-bodied Pauperism. There might, in fact, so far as their proceedings were concerned, have been in 1834 no Able-bodied Destitution except such as was being dealt with by the Poor Law. If this had been true, it would have been a remarkable testimony to the efficacy, in one respect, of the old Poor Law. Unfortunately it was not true. We know from contemporary evidence that between 1815 and 1834 * there were whole sections of the population who—to use the modern terminology—were Unemployed or Under-employed, Sweated or Vagrant, existing in a state of chronic destitution, and dragging on some sort of a living on intermittent small earnings of their own, or of other people's, or on the alms of the charitable—handloom-weavers and framework-knitters displaced by machinery; millwrights and shipwrights thrown out by the violent fluctuations in the volume of machine-making and shipbuilding; "frozen out" gardeners and riverside workers rendered idle every winter, and masses of labourers stagnating at the ports or wandering aimlessly up and down the roads in search of work. With all this Able-bodied Destitution, not only spasmodically subsidised by public subscriptions, but also perpetually importuning both the town Overseer and the rural Constable for assistance from the rates, the Royal Commission of 1832–4 chose not to concern itself. We find in its voluminous proceedings no statistics of Unemployment, no statement as to fluctuations of trade, no account of the destitution produced by the new machines, no estimate of the swarms of Vagrants, who were being "passed" by the Justices, at the expense of the rates, from North to South, from East to West, and back again. The Commissioners concentrated their whole attention on one plague spot—the demoralisation of character and waste of wealth produced in the agricultural districts by an hypertrophied Poor Law. Over a large part of the country and in the greatest of all the nation's industries, practically all the labourers were, in the period of healthy manhood, chronically underpaid and under-employed—a state of things which had existed for half a century. To meet this evil the Justices of the Peace had, at the end of the eighteenth century, devised the famous "Allowance System," by which the weekly earnings of every adult labourer were automatically made up, out of the Poor Rate, to a low subsistence level for himself and his family. This device, which, it is interesting to note, was resorted to as an alternative to the enforcement of a legal minimum wage,† gradually dragged

* *See*, for instance: "An Exposition of one Principal Cause of the National Distress, particularly in Manufacturing Districts, 1817"; "Speech of Henry Brougham . . . on the present Distressed State of the Manufacturing and Commercial Interests, 1817"; "An Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the Framework Knitters Fund," by Rev. Robert Hall, 1819; "A Letter to the Carpet Manufacturers of Kidderminster," by Rev. H. Price, 1828; "Report of the Committee appointed at a Public Meeting at the City of London Tavern to Relieve the Manufacturers, 1829"; "Report of the Select Committee on Fluctuations of Employment, 1830"; Report of D. Mackay to the Poor Law Commissioners on the Distress of 1825–37 among Handloom Weavers and other Manufacturers, 1837"; "Report of the Royal Commission on the Handloom Weavers, etc."

† The occasion of the adoption of the allowance system was the "double panic of famine and revolution" ("Dispauperisation," by J. R. Pretyman, 1878, p. 27), due to the rise in the price of food which marked the closing decade of the eighteenth century, and the consequent distress of practically the whole of the rural labourers. This might have been met by a corresponding rise in the labourer's remuneration; but the farmers and landowners stoutly resisted any increase of wages, on the ground that "it would be difficult to reduce them when the cause for it had ceased." (First Report of Poor Law Inquiry Commissioners, Appendix A., Villiers' Report, p. 14.) This desire to stave off a rise of wages is expressly assigned as the motive for the Justices' scales of Speenhamland (1796), and Warwickshire (1797), for those fixed in Sussex and Essex in 1800 and 1810 (*Ibid.*, Majendie's Report, p. 167), and for that in Suffolk, after the Peace of 1815 (*Ibid.*, Henry Stuart's Report, p. 349). In the latter case, as in 1796–7, it appeared to the magistrates as the only practicable alternative to enforcing by law a definite minimum wage. "When that state of affairs arose," writes even one of the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners in 1833, "which drove nearly the whole of the labouring population to seek food and protection from them (the magistrates), being without the power of prescribing the rate of wages, there was no alternative left to them but to save the people from starvation" (*Ibid.*, p. 351). On the other hand, it was feared by many that if the distress of the labourers became too acute, it would

the whole population of the agricultural districts into the meshes of the Poor Law. The farmers, secure of a constant supply of labour, lowered wages. The labourers, secure of subsistence, progressively lowered the quantity and quality of their effort. The degradation of character and the destruction of all healthy relationship between employer and employed, entailed by this fatal mixing of Poor Relief and wages, had disheartened a whole generation of Poor Law administrators. What was more keenly realised by the Parliament of 1832 was that the rates levied for this service were absorbing a large portion of the rental value of the landlords' estates and were beginning to threaten the profits of the capitalists. In short, it was a particularly demoralising kind of Able-bodied Pauperism, and not the existence of Able-bodied Destitution, that led the Ministry of 1832 to appoint a Poor Law Commission.

The Commissioners of 1832–4 made short work of this swollen Poor Law. In agreement with much of the economic opinion of the time they would perhaps have liked to have abolished all forms of gratuitous Public Assistance. This being impracticable, they sought to restrict it to the "relief" of actual "destitution." But what they were most intent on was putting an end to the parasitic condition into which agricultural labour had fallen throughout the South of England. By one and the same device they proposed to cut off from the farmer all labour that he did not wholly pay for, and to deprive the labourer of all income that he did not wholly earn.

It was to attain this double end that they recommended that no relief should be given to able-bodied persons except in a well-regulated Workhouse; by which they meant a place that would be less agreeable than the home of an independent labourer who was working for his livelihood. This deterrent relief, they argued, would, whilst preventing any risk of starvation, induce the labourer to work in order to keep his employment, and would compel the farmer, without any legal fixing of wages, to pay enough for the labourer and his family to live on. Unfortunately for their reputation, the Commissioners did not limit their ingenious prescription to the one form of Able-bodied Pauperism that they had studied. They proposed that the "Workhouse Test" should be applied on all occasions, in all districts, to all able-bodied applicants for public assistance; whether these had been thrown out of work in crowds by fluctuations of trade, or definitely displaced by new machinery and new methods of working it. Finally, for some undisclosed reason, the Commissioners prescribed the same treatment for the Vagrant, a person into whose peculiarities they had certainly not inquired. They recommended that this most sturdy and recalcitrant of all the sub-classes of Able-bodied Paupers should be altogether delivered from the hands of the County Magistrates and the Constables, by whom they had hitherto

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lead to an outbreak of the revolutionary spirit then devastating France. In this dilemma, the Justices turned first to one expedient, and then to another. At the beginning of 1795, a widespread movement took place among philanthropic landlords, in favour of reviving the old practice of fixing wages by law, in proportion to the average price of wheat; and Whitbread introduced a Bill for the purpose. This policy was supported in several counties by resolution of the Justices. (Annals of Agriculture, Vol. XXV., p. 316 (1795), with Arthur Young's dissenting comments. The same proposal was made in 1805 in the "General View of the Agriculture of the County of Hereford," by John Duncan, 1805, p. 155.) The Hampshire Justices made an able and elaborate Report to Quarter Sessions. They point out that the labourer must be supplied with the necessaries of life, defined as everything that is "requisite to support his frame for its longest continuance and its best use." But they hesitate to recommend the fixing by law of a minimum wage. They admonish the farmers to give better wages; and they recommend their brother Justices, where the farmers are obdurate, to order the Overseers to make up the deficiency. (Hampshire Quarter Sessions, 1795.) The decisive action was taken by the Berkshire Justices, in a district in which the distress happened to be exceptionally severe. In May, 1795, the Justices of the County "and other discreet persons" met at Speenhamland, near Newbury, to consider the proposal referred to them at the last Quarter Sessions, to fix agricultural wages by law. They decided unanimously that the labouring poor needed further assistance in their distress, but that it was inexpedient to revive the fixing of wages by law. As in Hampshire, they "earnestly recommend the farmers to raise wages." And they conclude with the decision that was destined to exercise so widespread an influence, in favour of the systematic "rate in aid of wages." The magistrates present resolved: "That they will, in their several divisions make the following calculations and allowances for the relief of all poor and industrious men and their families who, to the satisfaction of the Justices of their parish, shall endeavour as far as they can for their own support and maintenance, that is to say: When the gallon loaf of second flour weighing 8 lbs. 11 ozs. shall cost 1s., then every poor and industrious man shall have for his own support 3s. weekly, either produced by his own or his family's labour, or an allowance from the poor rates, and for the support of his wife and every other of his family 1s. 6d. When the gallon loaf shall cost 1s. 4d. then every poor and industrious man shall have 4s. weekly for his own, and 1s. 10d. for the support of every other of his family. And so on in proportion as the price of bread rises or falls (that is to say), 3d. to the man and 1d. to every other of his family on every 1d. which the loaf rises above 1s.'" (*Reading Mercury*, May 11th, 1795; Eden's "State of the Poor," 1797, Vol. I., pp. 575–7; Nicholls' "History of the English Poor Law," Vol. II., p. 131; "Pauperism and Poor Law," by Robert Pashley, p. 258; Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 18–34, pp. 121–7 of reprint of 1905.)

been provided for, and that they should be thrown simply on the Poor Law, to be offered, like all other able-bodied persons, the open door of a disciplinary Workhouse.

Thus, there was to be, as soon as was practicable, one Local Authority, and one only, applying, to all the various sub-classes of the destitute Able-bodied applying for relief in any part of England, one uniform method, namely, their admission to a residential institution, where they could, as a matter of deterrent discipline rather than with any idea of profit, be set to hard work, under disciplinary conditions and upon plain diet. The wives and children of such able-bodied persons were also to be relieved only in institutions. But the Commissioners had been so much impressed with the evils inherent in General Mixed Workhouses that they elaborately specified, over and over again, that the Workhouses for the Able-bodied were to be entirely distinct from the buildings in which the infirm aged and the children were accommodated; that they were to be under separate officers and separate management; and that they were expressly not to form part of one great establishment containing other classes of paupers.* To the policy thus propounded for dealing with all the sub-classes of the destitute Able-bodied together with their dependents, Parliament impliedly gave its general approval by the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834.†

The Poor Law Commissioners of 1835–47 promptly embodied the recommendations of the Commission of 1834 in a series of special Orders issued to Unions up and down the country, which culminated in the general Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order of 1844. The new policy achieved one great success. Within a few years, in the rural parishes of Southern England, the resolute offer of the Workhouse brought to an end—so far as Able-bodied men were concerned—the demoralising chronic Poor Law relief of the Under-paid and the Under-employed. Speaking broadly, all the Able-bodied farm labourers who had remained in the villages and were in employment at all were maintained without the aid of the rates, with the result that their wages had somewhat risen and the wage-earning had become somewhat less intermittent. How far this policy had succeeded at the cost of driving surplus labourers into the towns, and thereby increasing the mass of Able-bodied Destitution there, remains uncertain.

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* Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1834, pp. 306–7, of reprint of 1905.

† Under the English Poor Law, there is no clear and consistent definition of this class. Thus, on January 1st, 1908, as the Local Government Board for England and Wales informs us, there were 120,062 "Able-bodied" persons in receipt of Poor Relief. But we find that these so-called "Able-bodied" persons include some members of all the adult sections of the pauper host—men and women of all degrees of intelligence, and all physical states; the halt, the lame and the blind; the chronically and the acutely sick; and even the man without arms or without legs. The only adults of whom none are included are the lunatics, however able in body, and the sturdy vagrants who are set to work in the Casual Ward. This misuse of language and confusion of thought have continued since 1834. From the first tentative Orders of the Poor Law Commissioners down to the latest Report of the Local Government Board, the term "Able-bodied" has always been used in varying and conflicting senses, none of which seem to us appropriate either to a scientific analysis of the facts, or to any practical proposals for reform. Under the Orders regulating Outdoor Relief, for instance, and in the statistics of Outdoor Pauperism, the class of "Able-bodied" includes the head of the family seeking relief, however aged and however sick he may be, provided that he is "normally" capable of earning his living by labour, together with all his dependents under sixteen, of either sex and of any condition. Thus, we have the paradox that a majority of the "Able-bodied" Outdoor Paupers are women nursing babies or sick persons. Under the General Consolidated Order of 1847 and in the statistics of Indoor Pauperism, quite a different set of persons are included in the class of "Able-bodied," namely, according to the views taken by many Workhouse Masters, persons over sixteen, whether feeble-minded or of normal intelligence, sound of body or maimed and crippled, deaf, dumb or blind, *who are on the ordinary diet of the establishment;* that is to say, all those who have not been declared to be entitled by age or physical weakness or actual sickness to the special luxuries of the non-able-bodied regimen. "There is no rule of law," said the Local Government Board, "nor any regulation of the Board which prescribes the age at which a person is or is not to be deemed able-bodied. The question whether a person is able-bodied or not appears to the Board to be one which should be determined by the physical condition of the individual, not by the circumstances that his years are within or without a stated limit of age." (Local Government Board to York Board of Guardians, March 9th, 1905; MS. records, York Board of Guardians). Until recent years, indeed, the term "Able-bodied" included children and babies in arms; *see*, for instance, the Returns "showing the number of Able-bodied who have received Outdoor Relief," in Ninth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1843, pp. 435–9. Hence the total of "Able-bodied paupers," including as it does fragments of very different classes, is a meaningless figure. Under the Scotch law the case is little better. There is, it is true, no class of "Able-bodied" paupers, for these are not entitled to Poor Relief. But with the able-bodied man, in the plain sense, there are excluded from relief, as being his dependents, his lawful wife, however sick, and his legitimate children, however young and feeble. Such definitions of the term "Able-bodied" have no relation to the class of persons with whom we have, in this part of our Report, to deal. We shall use the term "Able-bodied" (destitute person) in its ordinary sense, that is to say, as denoting an adult person of either sex, of less than the pensionable age, not at the time falling below what is considered as normal in respect of health, in respect of limbs and faculties, and in respect of intelligence, who is without some of the necessaries of life according to the accepted standard of the time.

In London, and in the manufacturing towns and the seaports, where quite a different kind of Able-bodied Destitution existed, the new policy proved less practicable. The Poor Law Commissioners themselves came to recognise that, even where the Local Authorities offered no objection, it was undesirable to apply the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order in places where fluctuations in the volume of employment were violent and periodic and manifestly beyond the control of either employers or wage-earners. An Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order, they observed, would in such places necessarily have to be suspended in times of depression of trade, "and," to quote the words of the Local Government Board's letter of May 12th, 1877, "there is nothing more calculated to weaken the force of the regulations of the Board than to be obliged to abrogate them whenever a period of pressure arises." In the large centres of population, accordingly, the attempt to prohibit Outdoor Relief was avowedly abandoned,* and it is significant that—at the instance of the Central Authority itself—the area and population placed under the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order exclusively have since steadily diminished.†

The alternative device for carrying out the "Principles" of the 1834 Report, of which the Poor Law Commissioners urged the adoption upon the Boards of Guardians of the Metropolis and the manufacturing districts, was that of the Labour Yard, or Outdoor Relief in return for a test of work by the able-bodied man. Either under the Labour Test Order or under the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order, the opening of a Labour Yard, and the refusal of any Outdoor Relief to able-bodied men except through the Labour Yard, was, by the Poor Law Inspectors and by official Circulars, persistently pressed on the Boards of Guardians of London and the great towns for which the Central Authority had abandoned the policy of the Prohibitory Order, as the proper way of treating the Destitute Able-bodied who applied for relief—irrespective of whether they were Unemployed, Under-employed, Sweated or Unemployable. This was to abandon, as impracticable, the confident hopes of the 1834 Commissioners, that Outdoor Relief to the Able-bodied could be made to cease out of the land.‡ The number of men (with their dependents) thus given relief in return for a task of work rose, in times of bad trade, to a great height. Thus in the Lady-day Quarter, 1843, nearly 40,000 healthy able-bodied men, representing a population of 165,000, were being employed in the Poor Law Labour Yards, on account of their want of work or their insufficient earnings when at work—the Unemployed and the Under-employed thus relieved by the Poor Law comprising large numbers of men thrown out of employment in Lancashire and the West Riding by depression of trade.§ A member of the Bradford Board of Guardians in 1842 estimated that "nearly two-thirds of the relief is given to Able-bodied paupers." || At the East End of London, the number of men unemployed in 1848 was so great that the Poplar Guardians seriously complained of the strain imposed upon them. The Guardians, viewing the pressure of "applications by able-bodied men for relief, and which the Board truly believes arises from various causes of temporary cessation of work in the docks and large manufactories, are of opinion that it is expedient that such relief should be administered more extensively than is usually considered admissable by the late Poor Law Commissioners or the Poor Law Board to that class of person; the Guardians at

* In the Unions to which the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order was issued the Central Authority had become convinced, to use its own words, that it was *not expedient to prohibit Out-relief to any class of paupers.* (Circular of Poor Law Board, August 25th, 1852.)

† In 1847 the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order was in force alone (*i.e.*, unaccompanied by the Labour Test Order) in no fewer than 391 Unions. In 1871 this number had shrunk to 299. By 1907, though the total number of Unions under Orders had risen to over 600, the number under the Prohibitory Order alone had further shrunk to 276, nearly all being Unions of sparse and stationary, or actually declining, population. (Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, pp. 46, 47, and Appendix pp. 133–145.)

‡ "The main object of the Poor Law Amendment Act," as it was "the first recommendation of the Commissioners of Poor Law Inquiry," was recognised to be the cessation of all Outdoor Relief to the Able-bodied. (Second Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1836, pp. 6, 7.)

§ Tenth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1844, pp. 467–70.

|| MS. Minutes, Board of Guardians, Bradford, October 31st, 1842. In 1848 the Bradford Guardians wanted to abandon the test work. "Experience having proved that the test work of the Bradford Union, as at present conducted, occasions a largely increased expense to the ratepayers, unnecessarily harasses the unfortunate operatives who are in a state of destitution from causes over which they have no control, and seriously endangers the peace of the country; therefore, it is expedient that this Board endeavour to emancipat itself from so serious a grievance, and for that purpose it is advisable respectfully to memorialise the Lord-Lieutenant of the Riding, stating to him the serious and dangerous grievance complained of, and beg that he will transmit the same to the Home Secretary." (MS. Minutes, Board of Guardians, Bradford, April 14th, 1848.)

the same time ordering the employment of stone-breaking to the fullest extent to be continued." * In 1847, even in many rural Unions, "the workhouses. . . became full during the winter," and special permission had to be given for Outdoor Relief to the able-bodied. "In Caxton and Arrington, and Newmarket, the necessity for Out-relief recurs every winter. In Hinckley the difficulty was only partial, owing to a dispute between the stocking weavers and masters about wages. In Clifton and Chipping Sodbury the Workhouse was crowded through the want of employment of the hatters"; † and these Unemployed men had to be given Outdoor Relief. Nor were these merely isolated and exceptional cases. From that time down to 1886 the Central Authority found no better suggestion to make to Boards of Guardians with regard to the Able-bodied men thrown out of work by depression of trade or seasonal cessation of employment—failing appropriate Workhouse accommodation—than the grant of Outdoor Relief in return for labour. The "opening of the Labour Yard" became a periodical occurrence at every period of stress.

There was, however, another disappointment to those who hoped that the "Principles of 1834" would get rid, at any rate, of Able-bodied Pauperism. The professional Vagrant was quick to perceive the advantages of dealing with an Authority limited to merely relieving destitution at the crisis of destitution. It was soon found that, as the Guardians of Lambeth and Colchester declared in 1841, the "trampers" made the "Union house a lodging-house," and that, in fact, "the distribution of Workhouses at short distances over the whole country, and the regular enforcement of the right of strangers and wayfarers to relief" had actually encouraged what the Poor Law Commissioners of 1846 euphemistically termed "wandering habits among the poor." ‡ The increase in the number of Vagrants thus making use of the Workhouse was so great that the Central Authority had to retrace its steps, and, after many shifts and changes of policy, strive to insist on the exclusion of Vagrants from the General Mixed Workhouse, and to urge the provision—which practically never was made—of a "separate building devoted exclusively to the reception of this class of poor." § What was eventually established, throughout England and Wales, was the Casual Ward as a part of the Workhouse, usually under the same roof or within the same curtilage, and under the same Master.

Meanwhile, the "offer of the House" was failing as a test in a way that the authors of the Report of 1834 could not have foreseen, and for which they were certainly not responsible. What they recommended was a series of separate institutions for the several classes of paupers, under entirely separate management. What the Poor Law Commissioners of 1835–47 insisted on establishing was the General Mixed Workhouse, against which the Report of 1834 had protested. In due course the General Mixed Workhouse, including, under one roof and one management, the young and the old, the sick and the healthy, the Able-bodied and the non-Able-bodied, proved, by its very promiscuity and uniformity of regimen, actually attractive to certain types of Able-bodied paupers. It may indeed be said that this was an inevitable result of placing all the different classes under one Destitution Authority. To a Board of Guardians burdened with having to provide for the sick, the orphans and the aged (of whom there were always hundreds in chronic pauperism), the very ideal of the 1834 Report as regards the Able-bodied—an institution standing always ready, swept and garnished but normally empty—a form of relief to be always on offer but seldom accepted—seemed a fantastic extravagance. It appeared obviously more reasonable to admit the few Able-bodied paupers of good times to the General Mixed Workhouse as exceptions; with the inevitable result that they found themselves in conditions that were certainly more agreeable, if not more "eligible," to the apathetic loafer than working continuously for long hours at the low wages of the

* MS. Minutes, Board of Guardians, Poplar, November 16th, 1848.

† Official Circular, No. 5, N.S., May, 1847, p. 67.

‡ Twelfth Annual Report of Poor Law Commissioners, 1846, p. 19.

§ *Ibid.* It is to be noted that, in 1843, maintenance in the Casual Ward, not being maintenance in a Workhouse, had actually to be entered as Outdoor Relief! (Poor Law Commissioners, December 11th, 1843; in MS. records of Board of Guardians, Newcastle-on-Tyne.) But so strong has been the influence of the "mixed" Authority that the Casual Ward, except in half a dozen quite special cases, never has become a separate institution under its own separate officer. It has remained a mere appendage of the General Mixed Workhouse, under the "mixed" master and matron. It was largely because it has proved impossible under the "mixed" Authority to get the Casual Ward made an institution really separate from the Workhouse that the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy of 1906 was driven to recommend the removal of all provision for vagrants out of the Poor Law, and the withdrawal of this function from the Destitution Authorities.

unskilled labourer. And to him, as to the professional Vagrant, it was an additional attraction that the Poor Law was strictly limited to relieving him at the crisis of his destitution, leaving him free to come and go as he chose, and to live as he pleased, without even the curb of official cognisance and observation of his doings, whenever he was not actually in receipt of relief.

This unexpected outcome of the "Workhouse Test" began to be noticed in 1868. The pressure on the accommodation of the Metropolitan Workhouses, and the mixing together of so many different classes of inmates, made it impossible, as the Inspector, Mr. Corbett, pointed out, "to apply the Workhouse as a test of destitution to single Able-bodied men." * "In urging upon Boards of Guardians in the Metropolis," repeated his successor, Mr. Longley, "as I have lately had occasion to do almost daily, the application of the Workhouse Test, I have not infrequently been met by the startling admission that the Workhouse is attractive to paupers; that there are many persons in the Workhouse furnishes no test of destitution. All arguments in support of the Workhouse Test which assume the existence of a well-regulated Workhouse (to use the language of the Poor Law Commissioners of Inquiry, 1833) must fail at once when addressed to Guardians whose Workhouse offers attractions to the indolent. And I have reason to think that the aversion to the proper and free use of the Workhouse which distinguishes many Metropolitan Boards of Guardians, is in some measure due to the failure of the Workhouses, as at present administered, to satisfy the essential conditions of their establishment." † Mr. Longley definitely ascribed the inconvenient laxity which had come over Workhouse administration, not to any shortcomings of the Boards of Guardians, but to the very nature of the General Mixed Workhouse for all classes, which the Central Authority had substituted for the series of specialised institutions recommended in the Report of 1834. "The presence in a Workhouse," he said, "of the sick, or of any class in whose favour the ordinary discipline must be relaxed and who receive special indulgences, has an almost inevitable tendency to impair the general discipline of the establishment." ‡ "*The Orders*," he expressly added, "*are in some way responsible*." The General Consolidated Order of 1847, which had, in 1871, already remained for twenty-four years without revision, had been framed with "primary reference . . . to the . . . smaller Mixed Workhouses which are, *at present at least*, a necessity in rural districts; and they fail in many particulars to satisfy the special conditions of Indoor Relief in London." § The very improvement in the Workhouses, which, under the Central Authority's own pressure, was taking place between 1866 and 1875, had, in fact, brought to light the inherent drawback of the General Mixed Workhouse which the Poor Law Commissioners of 1835–47 had imposed on England and Wales; which their influence in 1845 imposed on Ireland; and which the example of England and Ireland has since induced Scotland to imitate.

To remedy this unexpected form of Able-bodied Pauperism, the able Inspectorate of 1869–86 proposed to reverse the calamitous policy insisted on by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1835–47, prescribed as to General Mixed Workhouses by the General Consolidated Order of 1847, and to carry out the proposal of the 1834 Report by establishing separate institutions for the Able-bodied, expressly devised for deterring them from applying for or accepting relief. Hence the Able-bodied, like the children and the sick, were now to be accommodated by themselves. Thus, we find, from 1871 onwards, the idea of the "Test Workhouse," an institution set apart exclusively for the Able-bodied, where they could be subjected (to use Mr. Longley's words) to "such a system of labour, discipline and restraint as shall be sufficient to outweigh," in the estimation of the inmates, "the advantages" which they enjoy. Mr. Longley declared that the main object of the

* Mr. Corbett's Report of January 4th, 1868, in Twentieth Annual Report of Poor Law Board, 1867–8, p. 126; repeated in his Report of August 10th, 1871; Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 80.

† Office Minute by Mr. Longley, 1873. Much the same words occur in his Annual Report. The "lax discipline of the Workhouse" in London is described as tending "to deprive it of its function as a test." (Mr. Longley's Report in Third Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1873–4, p. 166.) In his elaborate Report on Indoor Relief in the Metropolis he expressed his emphatic opinion that "the deterrent discipline . . fails at present to be duly enforced in London Workhouses almost without exception. . . . The general tone of their administration is that of the *almshouse* rather than of the *workhouse* system." (Mr. Longley's Report on Indoor Relief in the Metropolis, in Fourth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1874-5, p. 59.)

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867 had been, not exclusively, or even principally, the better accommodation of the sick, but the introduction of *classification by institutions*, with the double object of, on the one hand, an improved treatment of the sick, and, on the other, "the establishment of a stricter and more deterrent discipline in Workhouses." Circumstances, he said, had delayed the accomplishment of the latter purpose, but it was now time for the Central Authority to "urge upon Guardians the establishment in Workhouses of a more distinctly deterrent system of discipline and diet than has hitherto been secured, involving a reconsideration of the conditions of pauper labour and service in Workhouses." * Such "Able-bodied Test Workhouses" were established, at first at Poplar, and then in a few other Unions. In them, as in the Casual Wards, we watch the Destitution Authority presently seeking to depart from the principle of merely relieving destitution, at the crisis of destitution, and asking Parliament to give powers of compulsory detention.

Thus, we find to-day, in the treatment of Able-bodied Pauperism by one Union or another, not the simple and uniform method recommended by the 1834 Report, namely the offer of maintenance in a deterrent Workhouse, with freedom to come and go at their will, but many different forms both of institutional and of domiciliary relief, one or other of which is granted, not according to the character of the case—whether, for instance, the applicant belongs to the class of Unemployed, Under-employed, Sweated or Vagrant—but according to the varying policy of particular Boards of Guardians at particular times. We have the persistence, in the great majority of Unions in England and Wales, and in all the Irish Unions, of admission to a General Mixed Workhouse, as the ordinary plan of dealing with the Able-bodied male applicants; and for Able-bodied women, of the grant of unconditional and inadequate Outdoor Relief to eke out their scanty earnings. On the other hand, we see in use, recommended and even prescribed by the Local Government Board, at least three distinct forms of specialised treatment of the Able-bodied applicant for relief. In some places he gets Outdoor Relief in return for work. Under other circumstances he is offered nothing but maintenance in a severe "Test Workhouse." Elsewhere he finds himself, even if a resident, referred only to the Casual Ward.

(A) The Persistence of Outdoor Relief.

Speaking broadly, it may be said that the seventy-five years' efforts of the Central Authority and its Inspectorate have succeeded, so far as concerns able-bodied men who are themselves in health, and whose dependents are in health, in getting rid of the grant of Outdoor Relief, as an ordinary or systematic method of continuous provision under the Poor Law. This result has, however, been achieved only at the cost, first, of resorting at intervals to the very unsatisfactory Outdoor Labour Test, which we shall presently describe, and, secondly, of leaving certain loopholes in the nominally impenetrable wall of prohibition, through which, in seasons of severe stress, and for exceptional cases at all times, the Guardians can allow individuals to pass. As these loopholes have of late years shown a dangerous tendency to enlargement, it is necessary to consider them in some detail.

(i.) *Sudden or Urgent Necessity.*

We have first to notice that, in every populous Union, there will be, on an average, one or two cases every day—*in some Unions half a dozen cases every day*—in which able-bodied men will be given food by the Relieving Officer on account of "sudden or urgent necessity." These cases, *which must represent at least* 10,000 *different men in the course of a year*, and possibly a much larger number, have more than doubled in number during

* *Ibid.*, p. 47. This had been expressly suggested in 1868 by Mr. Corbett. "I am more than ever convinced," he says, "that one of the great wants of the Metropolis is the establishment of new, or the appropriation of existing Workhouses for the able-bodied classes of *groups* of Unions, in each of which one sex only should be received; a far more complete system of classification maintained than has hitherto been attempted at least in Metropolitan Workhouses; and strict discipline enforced under proper regulations and superintendence." (Mr. Corbett's Report of January 4th, 1868, in Twentieth Annual Report of Poor Law Board, 1867–8, p. 126.) Whether or not this was exactly in the mind of the Legislature or of the Central Authority in 1867, it seems true, as Mr. Longley pointed out, that the provisions of the Metropolitan Poor Act were extensive enough to cover, "whether directly or indirectly, not merely an improvement in Workhouse sick wards, but the reception in distinct buildings of separate classes of paupers or . . . classification, not in a Workhouse but by Workhouses." (Mr. Longley's Report on Indoor Relief in the Metropolis, in Fourth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1874–5, p. 42.)

the past decade.* Unfortunately, no statistics are available of the total number so relieved, the duration of the relief, the frequency of individual recurrence, or even its total cost. We cannot regard it as satisfactory that every year there should be, without the prior knowledge of any public authority, as many as 10,000 men arriving at such a crisis of destitution as to be entitled to instant food; or that they should receive public assistance in this form without, in many if not most of the cases anything more effective being done to render them self-supporting citizens. We see here the characteristic defect of the Destitution Authority, that it has no means of knowing anything of these 10,000 men prior to the crisis of their destitution, when a helping hand would have been more useful than at the crisis itself, and no machinery for keeping them in view after the crisis. Out of the darkness these starving men apply to the Relieving Officer; he visits their miserable abodes and leaves with them their loaves of bread; then—unless they choose to attend the next Relief Committee of the Board of Guardians—into the darkness they disappear again, until their next application. If the Board of Guardians chooses not to "offer the house" to such as apply for further relief, or if these persons refuse to accept an order for admission, they may continue in "urgent necessity," when the Relieving Officer has no alternative but to go on supplying just enough food to keep them from starvation. Cases occasionally go on in this way from fortnight to fortnight, until something happens —it may be eviction from the lodging, it may be an attack of sickness which compels entrance to the Poor Law Infirmary, it may be death from lack of other things than the bread that the Relieving Officer doles out. What does not happen is any effective public assistance in securing employment at wages, or in providing such physically or mentally restorative treatment as would fit the men for employment.

(ii.) *Reported Exceptions.*

But there is another loophole through which the Guardians grant Outdoor Relief to able-bodied men, even without the Outdoor Labour Test. Under both the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order and the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order, the Guardians are allowed to grant Outdoor Relief in contravention of the other provisions of the Order, provided that they report the particulars to the Local Government Board, which, in each case, formally sanctions the grant. When carefully employed for selected cases this loophole is found of great use by experienced Poor Law administrators.† It is, in fact, frequently employed by most Boards of Guardians in Urban Unions to tide respectable families over short periods of unemployment, when the Labour Yard is not open.‡ We understand that the grants, when reported, are almost invariably sanctioned, though with adverse comment and warning when this is thought necessary; and that when the cases from any one Union become numerous, the Guardians are pressed to "open the Labour Yard," and set the men to work. Unfortunately, the Local Government Board does not publish any particulars of the reports which it is thus receiving every fortnight from nearly all the great Urban Unions, nor even a statement of the total number of grants sanctioned each year. All the information that we have been able to obtain on the point is the number of able-bodied men granted Outdoor Relief on one

* The only information available is the number of able-bodied men so relieved on one day in the year. On January 1st in 1897, it was 131; in 1902, 145; in 1904, 258; in 1905, 371; and in 1907, 293. At Bermondsey, Camberwell and Poplar alone, the Relieving Officers succoured in this way, during one half-year, no fewer than 2,000 separate men (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 19788–928, 20319–28, and Appendix VII. (Q.). to Vol. I.). Relief on account of sudden or urgent necessity is given, of course, also to women and children, and to the aged and the sick, but we deal here only with that granted to healthy able-bodied men. In Manchester, the value of this relief in kind, on account of sudden or urgent necessity, has risen, from £78 in 1897, to £256 in 1904, and £483 in 1905. (Report of Superintendent of Relief to the Manchester Board of Guardians for 1903–5, p. 14.)

† A Poor Law Guardian described to us a successful use of this method of provision, as an alternative to the Outdoor Labour Test: "In connection with the unemployed during the great frost of 1895 . . . in the district of St. George the Martyr, the unemployed—after a case-paper had been filled, a visit paid to the home and one reference verified—were divided into four classes. To Class A adequate relief was given in a man's own home without any further test. To Class B work was given on three days in the week at current rates of pay. Class C was provided with oakum-picking in a warehouse hired for the purpose, the work being supervised by officers provided by the Guardians. Class D was offered the Workhouse. The plan worked without a hitch, the frost lasting, if I remember right, for eight weeks. We were particularly struck by the satisfactory results obtained in Class A. The men were most surprised and grateful for what was done, and all returned, so far as we could learn, to their own work when the roads and river were again open." (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 32267, Par. 7.)

‡ In 1895 we notice that the Manchester Board of Guardians was thus granting Outdoor Relief to eighty or ninety cases weekly; whereupon the Inspector appeared at its meeting and pressed for adoption of the Outdoor Labour Test. (MS. Minutes, Manchester Board of Guardians, January 23rd, 1895.)

day "on account of want of work, or other causes," without its being usually specified in how many cases the men were put on the Outdoor Labour Test. What is disquieting is that these numbers show an increase from 789 on January 1st, 1897, and 581 in 1902, to 1,585 on January 1st, 1904, to no fewer than 7,872 in 1905, and to 2,235 in 1907. And we learn that, of the 7,872 who were being so relieved in one day in 1905, no fewer than 4,632 were not "under a labour test in labour yards."* These men are seldom allowed to have Outdoor Relief for many weeks together, so that we fear it must be inferred that, if the Local Government Board would publish particulars of the cases that it formally sanctions during each year, we should find that, in addition to the ten thousand or so relieved on account of sudden or urgent necessity, at least *ten or twenty thousand more able-bodied men are, in the course of the year, thus temporarily in receipt of Outdoor Relief without any task of work*, and—what we regard as far more serious—without anything effective being done to improve them, either physically or mentally, or to get them into wage-earning employment again.

(iii) *Going out to Look for Work.*

A third loophole, of a somewhat different kind, by which relief is granted without the man residing in the Workhouse, is that afforded by the opportunity which some Boards of Guardians give to selected inmates to go out in order to look for work, whilst leaving wife and children inside the institution. This is against all the precepts of 1834. But the various Boards of Guardians realised a few years ago that to insist on a man when he left the Workhouse necessarily taking with him his wife and children, was virtually to condemn the man to remain in the Workhouse for the rest of his life. "It is impossible," said a Lambeth Guardian, "whatever the man's wishes may be, for a man to go out of the Workhouse with a wife and three or four children, obtain a room, and obtain work in one day; no human being could do it; and the result is that he would keep in the Workhouse, because he would not make the attempt. It is an impossible thing to do." Some Boards of Guardians took thought how they could help such men to regain their independence. "If," continued our informant, "it was a man who seemed able-bodied with a wife and family, we might execute our discretionary power, and say to him, if he had got a fairly good character: 'We will allow you to go out for a fortnight without your wife and children with a view of obtaining work.' We should mark on that paper that he should reappear in a fortnight's time. As a matter of fact, I may say that discretionary power of allowing a man out without his wife and children has worked very efficiently, and in a great many cases they have ultimately taken their discharge. . . . We use our discretion. . . . If a man is not in very good health, possibly he has been in the infirmary first and has then been removed to the Workhouse, we should say the man looks as if he requires a rest, and the Medical Officer gives his view of the man's condition, and whether he requires it. He might say he should have six weeks' or a month's rest. We should mark that on the paper, and in eight weeks' time he would come before us. No case is lost sight of." † But so great is the fear that men will leave their wives and families on the hands of the Guardians that any such humane consideration is contrary to the General Consolidated Order; and it has been strongly objected to by other Guardians. It is in vain that it is pointed out that, in practice, it is just as easy for a man to desert his wife and family when they have all gone out together, as when he has gone out alone. In fact, father and mother together may rid themselves of their children at any time by the simple expedient of sending them back alone to the Workhouse gate (where they have to be taken in), the parents disappearing into the darkness. There is, in all these cases, the same nominal liability to, and (owing to lack of organised pursuit) the same chance of practical immunity from, criminal prosecution and punishment. The humane consideration of the Boards of Guardians in letting the man go off by himself to look for work—sometimes man and wife without the children—has been amply justified by the results. At Lambeth, in forty-four cases during 1904–6, the man, after more or less interval, found his feet, and took his wife and children off the Guardians' hands. Sometimes it took three or four weeks, sometimes as much as nine months before the man could build up a home. In some cases the men failed the first time, and had to return. In one case, even after a successful start had been made, the family had to be re-admitted; and yet on a subsequent attempt the man found his feet and managed to keep his family.

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* Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1904–5, p. lxiii.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 14943, 18607 (Par. 7), 18840, 23945 (Par. 10), 23982–5, 24073, 78744 78991.

(iv.) *Are Women Able-Bodied?*

But though as many as 30,000, 40,000 or even 50,000 healthy and Able-bodied men may now receive Outdoor Relief, in the course of each year, without any task of work, in one or other of the ways just described, nineteen-twentieths of the Outdoor Relief granted to physically competent persons is given to women. So far as we can discover from the official statistics, there were in England and Wales alone, on January 1st, 1907, 62,240 healthy Able-bodied adult persons (other than the occupants of the Casual Ward) simultaneously in receipt of Outdoor Relief on that day.* Of these only 2,528 were men, and no fewer than 59,712 women.†

In a small number of cases—we doubt whether they come to 5 per cent. of the 59,712—these persons are single women, without children, not aged, and not distinctly ill or crippled, who nevertheless find themselves unable, perhaps from physical or mental debility, to earn the few shillings a week upon which such women will manage to exist. In about 276 of the Unions of England and Wales,‡ selected we know not why, the Local Government Board regards such women as "Able-bodied" persons; and absolutely prohibits their Outdoor Relief. In about 374 other Unions,§ scattered indiscriminately among the rest, the Local Government Board does not regard such women as Able-bodied persons; and their Outdoor Relief, without any conditions, has remained for more than half a century lawful. We do not understand the ground of this distinction,‖ and we think that the Boards of Guardians might reasonably have looked for a more definite declaration of policy with regard to this class. We see no reason why such able-bodied women, potentially competent to engage in industrial occupations, should not have made for them exactly the same provision that is desirable for men of like capacity.

But the case of the Able-bodied single woman or unencumbered widow, unable, though without children, to earn her extremely small maintenance, is rare. The vast majority of the 60,000 Able-bodied women on Outdoor Relief in England and Wales are not free to engage in industrial employment, because they are occupied by the care of young children dependent upon them. To rank these in any sense with the Able-bodied is only to obscure the problem. The Scottish Poor Law, more logical than the English classification, whilst prohibiting any form of relief to the Able-bodied, does not include as Able-bodied any women, however physically and mentally competent, who have young children dependent on them. In practice, the English Boards of Guardians make much the same distinction, granting Outdoor Relief pretty freely to widows, to the destitute wives of absentee husbands, and even to unmarried mothers, provided that such women have young children on their hands. In all these cases, in fact, it is recognised as misleading to proceed on the assumption that the refusal of relief will compel the women to be self-supporting. We have chosen so to organise the industrial world that the wife and children are normally supported by the industrial earnings of the husband and father, with the result that when women engage in industries their wages are habitually fixed at rates calculated to support themselves alone, without a family of children. If, by some mischance, the husband and father is withdrawn from the family group, the wife and mother is, with regard to self-support, under a double impossibility. She cannot, consistently with her legal obligation to rear her children properly, give her time and strength to wage-earning to the extent that modern competitive industry demands; and even if she could do so, she finds the woman's remuneration fixed on the basis of supporting one person, and not several. Hence it becomes practically indispensable, as it is only equitable, that there should be afforded to the mother bereft of the man upon whom she had been encouraged to depend suitable public assistance, not so much for herself, as to enable her to bring up the children whom the community, though the breadwinner is withdrawn, still expects her to rear.

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* Apart from able-bodied heads of families constructively in receipt of relief in respect of some sick dependent.

† Namely, 33,664 widows, 7,354 wives of absentee husbands, or single women, or mothers of illegitimate children, and 18,694 able-bodied wives of husbands who were themselves either able-bodied or non-able-bodied. (Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, 1906–7, pp. cxv., cxvi.)

‡ Those to which the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order applies.

§ Those to which the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order applies.

‖ Report on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, p. 126.

Unfortunately, though English Boards of Guardians recognise the necessity of coming to the aid of widows with young children, they do not—largely, we think, because they are Destitution Authorities, relieving all sections indiscriminately—face the problem with any clearness of thought. We have been unable, in Union after Union, to make out whether these dispensers of public assistance regarded themselves as helping the Able-bodied woman, or as providing for the upbringing of the orphan children. The Central Authority in its Orders and Circulars—equally because it has to do with all the different sections—has oscillated from one conception to the other.* The result is that, as we have seen in our chapter on "The Outdoor Relief of To-day," there is the greatest possible diversity of practice. A few Boards restrict to the uttermost the grant of Outdoor Relief to widows with children; † many refuse it to the widow with only one child, or with only two children, however young these may be; others grant only the quite inadequate sum of 1s. or 1s. 6d. per week per child, and nothing for the mother. Very few Guardians face the problem of how the widows' children—for whom the Poor Law, by including them on the pauper roll, assumes definite responsibility—can, under these circumstances, be properly reared. As we have seen,‡ in at least 100,000 cases, these children are growing up stunted, under-nourished, and to a large extent neglected, because the mother is so hard driven that she cannot properly attend to them. The irony of the situation appears in the fact that if the mother thereupon dies, the children will probably be "boarded-out" with a foster-parent, at a payment of 4s. to 5s. per week each, or three or four times as much as the Guardians paid for them before, or else taken into the Poor Law School or Cottage Homes at a cost of 12s. to 21s. per week each.

We think that, in this matter, the practice of Scotland rather than that of England and Wales should be followed. Women having the care of children should, so long as such care is required from them, be wholly excluded from the category of the Able-bodied. The governing factor in such cases must be what the State considers best for the children. If the children are under school age, the case will be dealt with by the Local Health Authority. If any of them are of school age, the matter becomes one for the Local Education Authority. If the mother and her home are such as to offer a suitable environment for the children, Home Aliment really sufficient for their maintenance will be recommended by the Committees concerned and sanctioned by the Registrar of Public Assistance. If the mother, though not blameworthy, cannot be trusted to expend so much Aliment for the children's advantage, there is the alternative of sending them to the Day Industrial School, where they will be cared for from dawn till dark, the mother being thus set practically free to work, and dealt with as an unemployed Able-bodied person. Finally, if the mother, owing to her vicious habits or otherwise, does not provide a suitable environment for the children, there is no alternative but to remove them altogether from her care; when she will be set entirely free to work and to maintain herself as an Able-bodied person. In no case ought women burdened with the care of young children to be either regarded as Able-bodied, and refused adequate assistance for the children's upbringing, or relieved merely in respect of their own needs. Whenever the State decides to provide for the children's upbringing by leaving them in the mother's care, her services must be assumed (and required) to be devoted to them, and not to wage-earning. It is, in all these cases, the children who must be provided for, and (wherever this is not thought positively inexpedient) the mother must, by adequate Home Aliment, be enabled to look after them properly.§

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* Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, pp. 19–20, 51–52, 87–88.

† Some Boards of Guardians offer to take one or two children off the mother's hands, or all but one or two; and then expect her to keep the rest without help. Where this means the children entering the admittedly demoralising General Mixed Workhouse, it is, in our opinion, an absolutely inexcusable policy, and a cruel alternative to which to put any worthy mother. Where (as is usually the case) the children are sent to Cottage Homes or a Poor Law residential school, there is more to be said for it, so far as the children so taken are concerned. But what is to be said for a policy which condemns *the other children* to such a home as can be provided for them by a woman's industrial earnings, whether she has to be absent all day in a factory, or ruins the home-life by the ceaseless toil and grime of the sweated out-worker?

‡ Part I., Chapter II. of this Report p. 29.

§ It will, of course, be the duty of the Registrar of Public Assistance invariably to pursue husbands and fathers who desert their wives and children, and in all proper cases to exact adequate contribution towards their maintenance, whilst, in others, criminal proceedings should be taken for the punishment of the offenders. But it is senseless to do as is at present sometimes done by Boards of Guardians incapable of pursuing deserting husbands, namely, refuse to the children and their mother whatever provision is deemed best suited to their well-being. Deliberately to punish a deserted wife, and deliberately to injure deserted children, by compelling them to enter the admittedly demoralising General Mixed Workhouse, because we fail to apprehend the scoundrel himself, and because we do not know how to prevent collusion, is, in our opinion, wholly unjustifiable.

(B) The Outdoor Labour Test.

In the Outdoor Labour Test as practised by the Boards of Guardians, and as sanctioned by the Central Authority to-day, the Principle of National Uniformity in the relief of Able-bodied Destitution, on which the Reformers of 1834 laid so much stress, is certainly not observed. In the kind of work offered, and in the amount of relief given, Boards of Guardians differ one from another, as they have constantly differed, between the two extremes of a mere pretence at work, with a good meal, a bed in a common lodging-house and a few halfpence in money on the one hand, and on the other painful penal labour upon relief physiologically insufficient to make good the wear and tear involved.

The Report of 1834 laid down the principle "that all who receive relief from the parish shall work for the parish exclusively, as hard as, and for less wages than, independent labourers work for individual employers." How to fulfil these conditions of "less eligibility," and yet maintain the man and his family in a state of health, has always been the crux of the Outdoor Labour Test. With strict administrators of the old-fashioned type, the work provided has taken three or four forms only, such as oakum picking, wood chopping, corn grinding, and, most usual of all, the breaking of granite or limestone by the hammer for use on the roads. Such work can be performed in a shed within the curtilage of the Workhouse—called the "Labour Yard," or the "Stone Yard"—usually differentiated into stalls in which the men work apart from each other, and can be supervised by the Workhouse Master, or by a "Labour Master" serving under him. Moreover, it lends itself to the exaction of a definite task of work from every man who is certified by the Medical Officer as capable of performing it. Since the Local Government Board's Circular of 1886 there has, however, been a reaction in favour of less repulsive forms of employment, such as digging, quarrying and road-making, and even doing odd jobs of cleaning, painting and decorating inside the various Poor Law Institutions. Thus, the Manchester Board of Guardians in 1886–7, and again during 1895–1906, put men to excavate the land attached to its Workhouse at Crumpsall; the Chorlton Board of Guardians has men on Outdoor Relief working on its farm in all seasons of the year, the number rising in winter to several scores; the Leicester Board of Guardians puts hundreds of men to dig on its farm; the York Board of Guardians has, since 1886, set the able-bodied unemployed to bring into cultivation by spade labour the garden land adjoining the Workhouse; and the Bradford Board of Guardians employs the able-bodied men on Outdoor Relief in levelling and preparing for building the land adjacent to its institutions two miles from the centre of the town.* Some Boards of Guardians have, despite the legally authoritative Orders of the Local Government Board, actually provided, for men rendered destitute by lack of employment, the very "work at wages" which has been so much deprecated. In January, 1908, the Local Government Board discovered that, for twenty-nine years, the Guardians of the Ecclesall Bierlow Union, comprising a part of the Borough of Sheffield, had carried on a regular system of offering to every able-bodied man who applied for relief, not the Workhouse, but paid employment at piecework rates. The work was always hard and badly remunerated, and the amount of work limited, a single man being able to earn only 5s. 9d. in a week, the whole six days' attendance being exacted from him, whilst a man with a family was permitted to earn as much as 15s. 4d. in a week, though all were paid at the same piecework rate. No food was supplied to the men. They went out, like other workmen, at midday, to get their own meals, and at 5 p.m. they were paid their earnings for the day. These earnings were not entered as relief, but as wages to "journeymen woodcutters," or "journeymen stonecutters." The men were not entered as paupers or subject to disfranchisement. This system of "setting the poor to work," witnessed by the inspectors at every visit, went on from 1879 to 1908 without official objection, but was, in the latter year, peremptorily stopped by the Local Government Board.†

Notwithstanding this reaction in favour of excavating or digging, or even gardening, on the part of some Boards of Guardians, or even the provision of employment at wages, the old-fashioned Labour Yard, "Stone Yard," or "Test Yard," with its sheds and stalls,

* Many other Unions have done the same in a small way. "We did not have a Labour Yard in the ordinary sense," deposed a witness from Woolwich. . . . "We had about 30 acres of land at Goldie Leigh. . . . Instead of giving them stones to break, we put them on at garden work. We paid them only the relief scale." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 19128.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 41105–41220; MS. Minutes, Ecclesall Bierlow Board of Guardians, February and March, 1908.

ts stone-breaking and oakum-picking, its corn-grinding and wood-chopping, is still the typical form of the Outdoor Labour Test.*

The amount of effort demanded from each individual differs from Union to Union even more widely than the character of the work. Where the work is most repulsive in character and the relief given is smallest, the task exacted is usually the most severe—thereby intensifying the lack of uniformity in the treatment of Able-bodied Destitution. Thus, the Leicester Board of Guardians of to-day, who set the Able-bodied men to work on the land, and give as much as 14s. a week in relief for a family, appear unable to exact any definite task or real effort from these relatively fortunate paupers. The men, we are told by one of the Guardians, do practically what they like; and "in frosty, very wet or snowy weather . . . they sit in the shed around the fire smoking and talking, and further confirming the habits of laziness which many of them have already acquired."† On the other hand, the visitor to the severely managed Sheffield Labour Yard may watch each man at work at stone-breaking, strictly confined in a separate cell, receiving no money whatsoever, but merely his bare meals and a ticket for a common lodging-house, actually performing the specified task of making 10 cwt. of stone pass through a 2-inch mesh. In the neighbouring Unions of Holbeck and Hunslet the task for each man in the Labour Yard is as much as 20 cwt. of stone per day; at Cleobury Mortimer in 1890 it was 16 cwt.; at Dudley in 1904 and at Bradford in 1907 it was 15 cwt.; at King's Norton in 1894 it was 12 cwt., but in 1903 it was only 8 cwt.; at Wolstanton and Burslem in 1886 and 1893, and at Paddington in 1905, it was 10 cwt.; at Lewisham in 1888, at Wandsworth in 1892, and at Salford in 1907, it was 8 cwt.; at Ipswich we found it only 7 cwt., which was the amount at Brentford, 1886–1906, and at Stoke-upon-Trent in 1895; whilst at Hackney in 1895 it was only 5 cwt.‡ The task sanctioned for oakum-picking shows equal variations. Thus at West Bromwich in 1886, and at Stoke-upon-Trent in 1895, it was 2 lbs. per man; at West Bromwich it was in 1887 increased to 3 lbs., which was the amount sanctioned at Bradford since 1882, at Lewisham since 1888, and at Hackney in 1906. On the other hand the task sanctioned at Huddersfield in 1888 was 4 lbs., which was that at Leeds in 1907; whilst at the Wolstanton and Burslem Labour Yard no less than 6 lbs. had to be picked in the day.§ During the winter of 1878–9, when pauperism in the Northern counties suddenly increased by 31 per cent., and Labour Yards were opened in all directions, it was noted that the daily tasks prescribed for the 7,000 men at work (and approved, practically simultaneously, by the Local Government Board) varied from 5 to 20 cwt. of stone-breaking, and from 1 to 4 lbs. of oakum-picking.‖

It must, however, be added that, with the exception of a very few strictly superintended Labour Yards in Lancashire and Yorkshire,¶ the variations between the different tasks exacted have always been more nominal than real. We can find no evidence that the Central Authority or the Board of Guardians ever ascertain whether the task so solemnly prescribed is actually performed. As a matter of fact, the amount of work done is usually trivial. It is in vain that Boards of Guardians insist, as did that of Poplar in 1868, that the task of work should be "at least as arduous as that required of a labourer in ordinary employment."** It is in vain that the regulations specify, as do those of Edmonton Union,

* There have recently been some signs of a fresh reaction back to the more penal forms of labour. Thus the Chorlton Board of Guardians was anxious, in 1905, to close its farm, and send the men to test work at the Joint Workhouse at Tame Street, Manchester. (MS. Minutes, Manchester and Chorlton Joint Committee, March 10th, 1905.) And the Prestwich Board of Guardians in the same year started stone-breaking. (MS. Minutes, Prestwich Board of Guardians, March 23rd, 1905.) At Manchester, too, we understand that the farm is now regarded as a failure in the way of Outdoor Labour Test.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 47005.

‡ We have found no explanation of the reasons which induce the Local Government Board to sanction—and specific official sanction has to be given in each case—such diverse tasks. At first, we thought the variations in amount of the stone to be broken might have some relation to the character of the stone. To break 20 cwt. of limestone is deemed by the Sheffield Board of Guardians equivalent to breaking 13 cwt. of granite, and by the Bradford Board of Guardians to break 12 cwt. of limestone the equivalent of breaking 6 cwt. of granite. But the variations in the amount of the task (from 5 cwt. to 20 cwt.) do not appear always to bear relation to the character of the stone or the size of the grid. Moreover, as stated above, the task for oakum-picking varies from 2 lbs. per day up to as much as 6 lbs. per day. There are similar variations in that of wood-chopping. If a definite task is prescribed for all able-bodied men, with the sanction of official approval, it surely ought to be determined upon some rational physiological basis, uniform thoughout the country.

§ At Huddersfield in 1888, 9 cwt. of wood had to be sawn; at Cannock in 1893, only 4 cwt.

‖ "Poor Relief during the Depression of Trade in the Winter of 1878–9," by J. Macdonald; in Annual Report of Poor Law Conferences, 1879, p. 131.

¶ For instance, we have been told by an Inspector that Liverpool "cleared" its Labour Yard in 1891, after six years of laxness, by putting on a practical stonemason as labour master, who saw to it that the prescribed task was executed. It soon became possible to close the Labour Yard for lack of applicants. It is, however, to be noted that trade had become very good.

** MS. Minutes, Board of Guardians, Poplar, September 22nd, 1868.

that each man is to break 10 cwt. of granite sufficiently small to pass through a 1½-inch grid or mesh; or to make up and tie 200 bundles of firewood; or to grind 120 lbs. of maize or 8 pecks of wheat or barley.* The curious investigator into Labour Yards to-day, who insists on examining the Labour Master's private memoranda of the amount of work done by each man, invariably finds that nothing like the specified task is accomplished. Unfortunately the actual amount of stone broken, or of the other work done, is seldom officially reported or recorded.† At Poplar in 1895 it was found that only 1,345 tons were broken in 13,428 days' labour; that is to say, not the 10 cwt. expected at Edmonton, but just over 2 cwt. per man per day.‡ The average in the Wandsworth Labour Yard in 1896 had never exceeded from 2 cwt. to 3 cwt. per man per day.§ The only practicable remedy of the Guardians is to prosecute a man for refusing to work; but this extreme step is resorted to only in cases of flagrant disobedience or recalcitrance. Under these circumstances, no amount of supervision can ensure continuous work. "Recently," said the Superintendent of the Leeds Labour Yard, "I have had to attend to the stone carts coming to the Yard, and some of the men . . . are ever ready to take advantage of my temporary absence. I have notice that, when I am called away, nearly every man ceases work until my return, and time after time I have looked from the Test Yard door and seen them gossiping in groups of four or five, some smoking pipes or cigarettes, others sitting on the barrows; one acts as a 'crow' to warn the Yard when I return."‖ The magistrates will not convict a man who docilely continues to raise his hammer whenever the Labour Master's eye is upon him, however slow and ineffective may be the stroke. The result is that the so-called test of work in the Labour Yard invariably fosters a habit of dull, lethargic loafing. It requires "no mental effort, and no sense of responsibility; it is a mechanical process." The men so employed "seem," said the Clerk to a Metropolitan Board of Guardians, "to suffer from overwhelming inertia."¶

Even in the hours of labour required, or perhaps we should say the hours of attendance, which have equally to be sanctioned by the Central Authority, we find a similar variation from Labour Yard to Labour Yard. It must, however, be said that the length of the prescribed working day is so small that the range of possible variations is less than in the case of the amount of task. We find Labour Yards requiring only five hours' attendance for a day's work, whilst a few exact as many as eight hours. The working week is usually only from thirty-six to forty-two hours,** as compared with the sixty, seventy

* Annual Report of Edmonton Board of Guardians, 1904–5. It may be pointed out that, eight years previously, it had been said that: "It is not now customary for the [Local Government] Board to sanction a task of corn-grinding by quantity; a time-limit should be stated for this particular work." (Local Government Board, January 9th, 1896; in MS. records of Bradford Board of Guardians.)

† The MS. Reports which the Superintendent of the Test Yard at Leeds made to his Board of Guardians in 1905 specified the amount of stone broken by each man at work, and the cost of breaking per ton according to the "pay" (or Outdoor Relief) given to each man. Some men broke as much as 5 cwt. per day; others did little more than 2 cwt. The stone broken by some men worked out at 13s. 6d. per ton; that broken by others came to only 6s. 6d. per ton. The results of the oakum-picking were even more inadequate. The task set was 4 lbs. per day for each man, but eleven men are recorded to have picked only 3¼ lbs. among them all, whilst five men picked 1¾ lbs., the total working out at a few ounces a day for each man. (MS. Reports of Superintendent of Labour Yard to Leeds Board of Guardians, April 8th, 1905, and February 17th, 1907.)

‡ Report of Outdoor Labour Yards Committee to Poplar Board of Guardians, June 5th, 1895. At the Salford Labour Yard in 1908, where the task is 8 cwt., we learn that the average amount done would certainly not exceed 3 cwt. per man per day.

§ Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1896, p. 6.

‖ MS. Report of Superintendent of Labour Yard to Leeds Board of Guardians, April 21st, 1906.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 18918.

**At the Wandsworth and Clapham Union in 1886 the hours at the Labour Yard were from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. daily. (House of Commons Return, No. 69 of 1886, on Pauperism and Distress, p. 34). In 1888, the Local Government Board Inspector for the Metropolis gave the usual hours as from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. (Report of House of Lords Committee on Poor Law, 1888, *Q.* 794.) These were the hours of the three Poplar Labour Yards in 1895 (Report of Outdoor Labour Yards Committee to Poplar Board of Guardians, June 5th, 1895). The working day of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily (forty-eight hours per week), fixed by the Bradford Board of Guardians in 1882, is unusually long. In 1907 the working day fixed by the same Board was from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 12.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.; Saturdays, 9 a.m to 12 noon only (thirty-three hours per week). The working week in 1904 at Prestwich contained only thirty-one hours, viz., Mondays and Tuesdays, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; three other days 8 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; and Saturdays 8 a.m. to 12 noon. (MS. Minutes, Prestwich Board of Guardians, August 8th, 1904.) The shortest working week in a Labour Yard that we have found is that solemnly fixed at a joint conference of the Manchester, Chorlton and Prestwich Boards in the same year, with the Lord Mayor of Manchester in the chair. The week's "Outdoor Labour Test" for this great urban agglomeration was set at twenty-six hours, viz., Mondays 11 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 10 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. For this a man with wife and four children received 10s., and, in addition, his own dinner daily. (MS. Minutes, Manchester Board of Guardians, November 8th, 1905.)

or even eighty hours of work per week required of the labourer in such typical occupations as agriculture, transport by road and rail, and iron and steel works.* And with the short hours of attendance goes a low rate of pay. But the scale of Outdoor Relief thus afforded varies as widely as the task or the hours. A single man without children may get as little as sevenpence (half in bread) in return for his day.† Elsewhere, as at Poplar in 1895, he gets for his day four times that amount.‡ For a man and wife the Bedwellty Board of Guardians, in the Labour Yard in which from 300 to 600 men worked during the whole winter of 1892–3, on the shutting down of the Tredegar Steel Works, allowed 1s. per day (half in kind),§ whilst at Poplar in 1870 a childless couple got only 5d. in money and 4 lbs. of bread.|| The corresponding amount allowed to a man with wife and three or four children varies from nine shillings to more than fourteen.¶ On the other hand, at the Salford Labour Yard in February, 1907, a man could get only 6s. per week for himself and wife, and 1s. for each child—making no more than 10s. per week for a family of six—and that only provided that he worked for the full thirty-eight and a half hours in the week, and actually accomplished the task of breaking 8 cwt. of stone per day, a proportionate deduction being made for any deficiency in the quantity broken. This arrangement comes very near to employment at piecework rates of wages, differing according to the size of the family.**

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* As pointed out in *The Times* in 1888: "In respect of the length of time worked, the outdoor pauper has a distinct advantage over the ordinary workman. In no trade in London does a week's work consist of less than fifty-two and a half hours' work. In no Stoneyard does it imply more than forty-five; in the majority only forty-two; in several it is thirty-six; in one Union last winter it was actually thirty-two. Moreover, carpenters or engineers have to be at work by seven o'clock even in the coldest weather; the Stoneyard never opens its gates till 8 a.m., and 8.30 a.m. or 9 a.m. is a still commoner hour; one Union last winter only commenced operations at 10 a.m.; the theory was excellent, namely that the men would have had time to go round and seek employment before coming in; in practice, however, it was found a considerable convenience by the class of applicants who preferred to be in bed till their wives had got their breakfast ready." (*The Times*, 1888; quoted in Evidence before the House of Lords Committee on Poor Law Relief, 1888, *Q.* 5327.)

† This was the scale in force at St. Pancras, in 1888. (Report of House of Lords Committee on Poor Law Relief, 1888, *Q.* 3088.) At Holbeck, since 1880, despite the extreme task of 20 cwt., the single man has got only 8d. per day for five days in the week. (Rules for Relief, Holbeck Union, January 19th, 1880); at Hunslet, since 1891, 9d. per day. (Rules for Relief, Hunslet Union, May 13th, 1891.) The Bedwellty Board of Guardians, which has had several thousands of men at work in its Labour Yards, has always allowed a single man 8d. per day only.

‡ Namely, 1s. 6d. in money and 1s. 3d. in food, for each day of six hours. (Report of Outdoor Labour Yards Committee to Poplar Board of Guardians, June 5th, 1895.) At Edmonton, in 1904–5, it was 1s. in money and 1s. 6d. in food. (Annual Report of Edmonton Board of Guardians, 1904–5.)

§ The same scale was maintained in the summer of 1898, when no fewer that eight separate Labour Yards had to be opened for five months, to relieve the distress caused by the coal strike, and several thousands of men were set to work, at a total cost of £11,765. The scale has been again adhered to in the present Labour Yards, which have now been open continuously for over four years. It is significant that some Boards order "a widower with children to have the same allowance as if he had a wife." (By-laws, Board of Guardians, Richmond, Surrey, July, 1895; also in MS. Minutes, Poplar Board of Guardians, August 12th, 1870.) Sometimes a dinner is provided for the men at work. The giving of boots (to enable the men to go out and find employment) is a frequent incident. At Preston, in 1858, the men on Outdoor Relief who were at work on the land were granted clogs at one-third the cost price, but not more than one pair every six months. (MS. Minutes, Board of Guardians, Preston, January 12th, 1858.)

|| MS. Minutes, Poplar Board of Guardians, August 12th, 1870.

¶ In St. Pancras, in 1888, only 9s. (half in bread). In Holborn, in 1886, such a man got 7s. a week and 36 lbs. of bread, which might be taken at 4s. 6d. (House of Commons Return on Pauperism and Distress, No. 69 of 1886, p. 42.) At Poplar, in 1895, the married man with three children got as much as 1s. 9d. in money and 1s. 9d. in food for a day of six hours. (Report of Outdoor Labour Yards Committee to Poplar Board of Guardians, June 5th, 1895.) Another form of scale is that of Chorlton Union in 1905, which gave 3s. per week for man and wife, with 1s. extra for each dependent child. (Report of Board of Guardians, Chorlton Union, 1905.) At Ipswich, in 1908, as much as 9s. a week was being given to a man with a wife only, whilst the total allowance for a man with wife and five children was as much as 14s. a week. The full amount has to be paid whether or not the work is done. "I am to state that it appears to the Board that in directing a reduction of the amount of relief to be made in cases in which the allotted task of work is not completed, the Guardians are not acting in strict accordance with the principles of the Poor Law. It is the duty of the Guardians to relieve destitution, and the relief given by them should be in proportion to the necessities of the applicant, and should not take the form of wages or payment for work done, the task prescribed being designed solely as a test of destitution. If a pauper, not being physically incapacitated, does not complete his task of work, it is competent to the Guardians to take proceedings against him as an idle and disorderly person." (MS. Minutes, West Ham Board of Guardians, June 9th, 1887. Letter from Local Government Board.) The Master reported that: "Certain men employed in the Labour Yard did not perform the task of work prescribed by the Guardians, and that in some cases no attempt was made to do so," and he was directed in all cases of wilful neglect to take the offenders before the Justices. (MS. Minutes, West Ham Board of Guardians, February 9th, 1888.)

**MS. Minutes, Salford Board of Guardians, February 1st, 1907.

It is a further element of variety that the men are sometimes allowed (and even required) to come regularly to the Labour Yard continuously day by day; whilst elsewhere they are only permitted to work (and to draw the relief) for three, or even for two, days in the week. At Poplar in 1895, where relatively high rates per day were allowed, each ticket was available only for two days, and 1,939 separate men got, on an average, only seven days' work each in the Labour Yards in the whole six weeks that they were open.* At Edmonton in 1904 the plan was adopted of allowing to every man in the Labour Yard the same daily amount of Outdoor Relief, viz., 2s. 6d. (three-fifths in kind), but permitting him to come to work, and to receive the relief, only two, three or four days a week, according to the size of his family and to whether he was over or under sixty years of age.† Presumably the assumption is that, on the days on which the man is excluded from the Labour Yard, he will be able to get casual employment elsewhere.‡ We can find no attempt by the Central Authority to require, as recommended by Mr. Davy and Mr. Crowder, that men receiving Outdoor Relief should be kept continuously at work for a specified period of one week, or several weeks, and should thus be, for that period, entirely removed from the labour market. "In certain well-known cases," says Mr. Crowder, "men have been allowed to come in and out very much as they like, to get a day's work, then the next day come to the Labour Yard, then go out again, and so forth."§

The Labour Yard is exclusively for men.‖ Usually, as at Leeds at present, admission is restricted to married men, and sometimes married men with families, all Outdoor Relief being refused to single men—unless, say the Edmonton Board of Guardians, they are over sixty ¶—and sometimes to married men without children, or even with one child.** On the other hand, in the Sheffield Union no order for the Labour Yard is given to any but single men. Usually the order for the Labour Yard is regarded as a privilege which is refused (as at Manchester) to "men of improvident, drunken or immoral habits," or to "Able-bodied men with families residing in furnished lodgings"; †† or (as at Dudley) to "persons living in common lodging houses," or who have not "resided in the Union for at least six months"; ‡‡ or (as at Edmonton) to those who cannot prove residence for a twelvemonth.§§ The actual character of the men found in a Labour Yard varies considerably, according to the strictness of the regulations and to the state of trade. When the Labour Yard is open in the winter, it is resorted to (as at Leeds) by building trade labourers and others thrown out of employment by seasonal depression of trade.‖‖ There is, however, a concensus of opinion that the men at work in a Labour Yard are, for the most part, of an undeserving class; to a large extent habitual dependents on the Labour Yard, recurring whenever it is open, sometimes (as at West Ham) for as many as ten years in succession; and extending from father to son and even to grandson,¶¶

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* Report of Outdoor Labour Yards Committee to Poplar Board of Guardians, June 5th, 1895.

† Thus a man over sixty with a dependent wife was allowed three days a week; a man under sixty with three children was also allowed three days a week; but a man under sixty with only one dependent child could come only two days a week; and so on. (Annual Report of the Board of Guardians, Edmonton, 1904–5.)

‡ In the Barton-upon-Irwell Union, where men in the Labour Yard are allowed 2s. per week "for the applicant and his wife" and 1s. for each child under sixteen, the rules require the relief to be paid daily, and *all earnings of the family to be first deducted* from the scale. (Rules of the Barton-upon-Irwell Union, adopted February 12th, 1890.)

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2443, 17671.

‖ The Orders of the Local Government Board require the task of work only from men; and women are seldom put on Outdoor Labour Test. Some Boards of Guardians, like that of Manchester, will, however, sometimes couple their grant of Outdoor Relief to single or widowed able-bodied women with the requirement of attending at the Workhouse for so many hours' cleaning or washing. In 1870, there were "needle-rooms" for women in one or two London Unions; and the Shoreditch Guardians set some of the able-bodied women on Outdoor Relief to bristle-sorting. (Twenty-third Annual Report of Poor Law Board, 1870–1; Mr. Wolehouse's Report, pp. 33–4.) And in 1888 the Huddersfield Board of Guardians set the women either to work at washing for six and a half hours or to pick 3 lbs. of oakum.

¶ Annual Report of Edmonton Board of Guardians, 1904–5.

** Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 40033–6.

†† Supplemental Regulations relating to the Relief of Able-bodied Men (Manchester), adopted July 14th, 1887.

‡‡ Regulations as to Labour Relief (Dudley) adopted November, 1904.

§§ Annual Report of Edmonton Board of Guardians, 1904–5.

‖‖ Evidence of Mr. Page, Superintendent of Leeds Labour Yard, before the Commission, Appendix No. XCII. to Vol. IV., Par. 1.

¶¶ Of 1,200 men relieved in the Labour Yard at West Ham "during the first three months of 1895, 244 had resorted to the stone-yard for a consecutive number of years, as follows: For ten years, 4; for nine years, 53; for eight years, 21; for seven years, 25; for six years, 15; for five years, 37; for four years, 45; for three years, 27; and for two years, 7. In more than one instance, three generations, father, son, and grandson, were simultaneously receiving relief in that form." (Twenty-fifth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1895–6; Mr. Lockwood's Report, p. 166.) It has even been alleged that men (at Northampton) have given up private employment in order to be taken on at the Labour Yard. (Evidence of Mr. Court, Local Government Board Inspector, before the Commission, *Qs.* 6309–10.)

often of the lowest or semi-criminal class.* "Fifty per cent. of the men admitted" to a Labour Yard, said one Clerk to a Board of Guardians, "are street corner men, who rarely ever work beyond doing odd jobs for a few coppers."

With the rise to power of the New School of Poor Law Orthodoxy between 1869 and 1886, there was a sustained, but apparently unsuccessful, effort on the part of the Inspectorate to check the extension of the Outdoor Labour Test. What seems most to have struck Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Longley was not so much that the conditions of the Labour Yards were so diverse, and that their influence was so demoralising, but the fact that the test of work failed, in many cases, to deter Able-bodied applicants from coming for relief. There was much less reluctance for the man to go to work in the Labour Yard than for the whole family to enter the Workhouse. A great many of the Unemployed applicants for relief were, in fact, in no way scared off by a test of work, even when that work was stone-breaking, and the reward only a certain number of pounds of bread, with ninepence or a shilling a day in money. There were, in fact, men who found no better alternative for years at a stretch. It was found that men resorted to the Labour Yard every winter; and even, if it was open throughout the year, worked there continuously, as if the Board of Guardians were a capitalist employer. We are told in 1871 that "some men now in the Labour Yard have been working there for five years, and in some cases have not been absent for an entire week during the whole of that period." † At St. Pancras it has been found that "there were men willing enough to work in the Labour Yard for the merest existence, rather than to take the trouble and responsibility of looking after themselves, and finding a home and the rest of it." ‡ The Superintendent of the Leeds Labour Yard reports that "these men would be on test labour the whole year round if allowed to do so." § What is even more invariable is the recurrence to the Labour Yard at each successive period of Unemployment or Underemployment. "It is," said Mr. Davy in 1888, "an inseparable accident of the system of Labour Yards that it attracts a certain number of men back to them; for my experience is that a certain proportion of mankind would rather have an assured subsistence, though it is a very small one, than have to work in the open market for their living. . . . My experience is that those men will come back to any particular town when Outdoor Relief is given in the form of a Labour Test; and that has a tendency to make the Labour Yard chronic instead of exceptional, and a sort of caste of men out of employment is created. I have seen it frequently. I have known men stay fourteen or fifteen years working for a bare subsistence in a Labour Yard when they ought to have gone away and earned their living." ||

In spite of this condemnation, the Labour Yard remains the only official remedy under the Poor Law for periods of exceptional distress. ¶ As a matter of fact, a repeal

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* "I have seen cases," says the Superintendent of the Labour Yard at Leeds, "where apparently respectable, deserving men, above the ordinary type of labourer, have been granted test, and seldom have they stayed more than one or two days. I remember a case where a man left the yard immediately he saw the class of men he probably would have to work with." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XCII. to Vol. IV., Par. 15.) "The application and report books of the Relieving Officers show that men convicted of assault, stealing, and desertion were granted relief on the Labour Test. There are also entries in these books that men have appeared before the Guardians the worse for drink, and yet have been granted relief on the Labour Test. The Labour Yard offered to too many who were devoid of energy a constant source of employment. In February, 1906, one Relieving Officer had on his books 105 who were working in the Labour Yard; of these, thirty-three had been on the Labour Test for one year, seven for two years, and one for three years." (Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1906–7, p. 322; Mr. Walsh's Report.)

† First Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1871–2 (Mr. Wodehouse's Report), p. 91; for other cases, *see* Third Annual Report, 1873–4, p. 176.

‡ Evidence of Mr. Millward, Clerk to St. Pancras Board of Guardians, before the Commission, *Q.* 18749.

§ Evidence of Mr. Page before the Commission, Appendix No. XCII. to Vol. IV., Par. 2.

|| Evidence of Mr. J. S. Davy, Local Government Board Inspector, before House of Lords Committee on Poor Law, 1888, *Q.* 854.

¶ No list of Unions which maintain Labour Yards, or of the years in which such Yards have been opened, is published; nor are there any official statistics as to the nature of the work, the amount of the task, the hours of attendance, the scale of relief, or the number of applicants. In 1895, a House of Commons Return (No. 321 of 1895), gave the numbers of men relieved on a Labour Test in 1894, and during the first two months of 1895, but in eight counties only. In the 185 Unions of those counties (including the Metropolis, Yorkshire, Warwickshire, Lancashire and Durham), 5,498 men had been so relieved in 1894, and 14,832 in January and February, 1895. An incomplete Return furnished to the Commission shows that, between 1886 and 1907, twelve of the Metropolitan Unions opened Labour Yards for periods of from two to twenty-nine weeks, one every winter, others in a few of the worst years only, and others about every other year, and that several thousands of men are simultaneously thus sent to work in London alone. In the West Ham and Croydon Unions, and in scores

of the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 would leave the Labour Yard in all the great centres of population as the only practicable provision for the thousands of men rendered destitute by the winter's frost or by stagnation of trade.* The question is whether the objections to it can be overcome, as Mr. Davy and Mr. Crowder suggest, by strict supervision,† and continuous employment.

To us it seems clearly proved, by more than half a century of experience, that no such system as the Labour Yard—however wisely devised, or however well administered—can possibly be made a satisfactory treatment of Able-bodied Destitution. Any system of Outdoor Relief to able-bodied men against a test of work inevitably lands the administrator in insoluble dilemmas. There is first the initial dilemma that the work must either be really wanted and genuinely productive, in which case its performance in the Labour Yard instead of in the open market at wages seems to be positively creating Unemployment and Pauperism; or else it is useless and unproductive, and thus an expensive and repellent sham. But apart from this fundamental dilemma of all relief works, there is the special difficulty of fixing the task. If no task is specified, or if the nature of the work is such that it cannot accurately be measured otherwise than by time, the nominal day's labour becomes, however diligent the supervision, a mere pretence, demoralising to the character of the men thus taught to loaf and loiter. If the honest man at first finds himself doing more work than the habitual pauper, he rapidly learns to adjust himself to his deteriorating surroundings. If a definite task has to be prescribed, it makes inadmissible most kinds of work, owing to the impossibility of accurately measuring the individual effort, and confines the choice to coarse, mechanical drudgery, not unsuited to the unskilled labourer, but apt to impair the dexterity of the skilled mechanic. When the amount of the task has to be quantitively fixed, it becomes quite impossible to adjust it to fit the varying strength and dexterity of the men. What to the strong man—still more to the habitual attendant at a Labour Yard—is mere child's play,‡ may be cruel torture to the delicate, half-starved clerk or weaver who undertakes it for the first time. Hence the invariable practice, whatever the nominal task, of getting out of each man just whatever proportion of it the vigilance and persuasion of the Labour Master can exact. This inevitably means, in practice, as we have seen, the ignoring of any specific task, and a perpetual struggle between the loafers and the Labour Master, in which the latter, having no power of dismissal, is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, completely worsted.

Another series of dilemmas confronts the administrator with regard to the hours of labour and to continuity of employment. If, in order to make the lot of the pauper in the Labour Yard less eligible than that of the independent labourer, the hours of work in the Labour Yard are fixed at sixty or seventy per week, and the man is required to attend regularly day by day, he has practically no chance of ever securing private employment. If, on the other hand, the Labour Yard is not opened until 9 a.m. or 10 a.m., or the hours of attendance are otherwise shortened, in order to permit the men to look for

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of others up and down the country, a similar method of relief has been adopted, sometimes for many years continuously. The Census taken by the Commission shows that on March 31st, 1906, notwithstanding the competition of a hundred distress committees, there were 3,283 able-bodied men in receipt on that day of Outdoor Relief on account of want of work, or causes other than sickness of themselves, or their families, or "sudden or urgent necessity." The end of March, it may be observed, is exactly the time of year when the winter users of the Labour Yard are usually abandoning it for the odd jobs and casual employments of the spring. The numbers would have been found far greater a few weeks earlier.

* At Edmonton, the Labour Yard was continued winter after winter until the Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act got to work, when the Board of Guardians decided that it was no longer required. The number of Outdoor paupers went down, and that of applicants to the Distress Committee went up. (Evidence of Rev. C. J. Sharp before the Commission, *Qs.* 17140–61.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 2443, 17442.

‡ "The ordinary Labour Test, which is stone-breaking and oakum-picking, is, to my mind, a most objectionable form of labour, for this reason, that both stone-breaking and oakum-picking are highly skilled labour, and a man who has been in every gaol and workhouse in the country, who has served a long apprenticeship to the game, can do it quite easily and well, whereas the man whom you do not want to punish cannot break stones, and cannot pick oakum. A really skilled tramp, a real expert at it, breaks stones like a conjuring trick, and knows every dodge; he is up to the dodges of the fiddle and the hot-water pipe, and the finger and nail for picking his oakum, and does it easily; and that is why the ordinary Labour Tests are, to my mind, unfair." (Evidence of Mr. J. S. Davy, Local Government Board Inspector, before the House of Lords Committee on Poor Law Relief, 1888, *Q.* 880.) "Stone-breaking is not only very destructive to boots, but after a day's work a novice would have his hands badly blistered." (Report of North District Visiting Committee to Kensington Board of Guardians, March 15th, 1905.)

work, it is impossible to prevent the man who does not want work from idling away the time; and the short working day of the Labour Yard becomes a distinct attraction. If, in order to make the men seek work, they are only allowed to work in the Labour Yard for two or three days at a time, or if they are permitted to absent themselves for one or two days and then resume attendance, encouragement and facilities are being afforded to the most demoralising form of casual labour and Under-employment, without any prospect of improvement.* But if, as Mr. Crowder advises, any men getting relief in a Labour Yard were required to remain there for several weeks, they would during that period presumably miss many chances of employment, and acquire the habit of working at the Labour Yard, as at a specially demoralising form of "relief works" for the Unemployed.

Nor is it easier to fix the rate of Outdoor Relief, or payment to be given for the work done. It is a fundamental condition of the Outdoor Labour Test that what should be given must be relief, not wages, and must, therefore, be what is required, and no more than is required, for bare subsistence. This necessarily varies, not acording to the work done, but according to the needs of the family group represented by the worker. Thus a strong, energetic and conscientious single man receives less than the weakest, slackest and most dishonourable man who happens to have a wife and children dependent on him. No amount of good conduct or diligence in labour produces any reward. On the other hand, as there is no possibility of dismissal, no amount of idleness or misconduct—short of a positive refusal to work at all, for which a man may be criminally prosecuted—entails any punishment. And the conditions of employment in a strictly regulated Labour Yard are necessarily so unpleasant that a short sojourn in the modern County Goal, with its short hours of work, its warm and comfortable quarters, and food at least as good as that of the pauper, offers no terrors to the habitual inmate of a Labour Yard. Hence, for the worker in the Labour Yard, there is neither hope nor fear. For him, whatever his past character or present conduct, there is, in the strictly administered Labour Yard, nothing but a dead level of repellent work at hardly a bare subsistence.

The administrator of the Labour Yard, so far as the amount of relief, or payment, is concerned, is once more between the horns of a dilemma. If anything resembling the customary rate of pay of the unskilled labourer is allowed for the work done, the certainty of the employment and the inevitable slackness of the work—if not also the shortness of the working day—make the Labour Yard, far from being deterrent, highly advantageous and positively attractive to the whole army of casual labourers, who promptly present themselves in large and rapidly increasing numbers.† If, on the other hand, the scale is fixed distinctly below the ordinary unskilled labourer's earnings, it is physiologically insufficient for the support of the man and his family; with the result that, whilst the idle rogues who can find other means of subsistence take themselves off, the really destitute man, who is there because he cannot possibly get work or wages elsewhere, finds himself forced to remain under semi-starvation, and, therefore, actual physical and mental deterioration for himself and his family. This indeed is the universal paradox relating to every aspect of the so-called Outdoor Labour Test. Where the conditions are lenient or lax, the work relatively easy and the scale of relief liberal, an analysis of the men at work in the Labour Yard reveals a large percentage of habitual loafers and men of the most irregular habits, who could otherwise maintain themselves if they chose, but whom the somnolent inertia of the Labour Yard attracts in preference. When the conditions are at

* To the zealous labour master either horn of the dilemma seems disastrous. Thus, the Superintendent of the Leeds Labour Yard in 1905 objected equally to the men who asked permission to leave the yard in search of work, and to those who did not do so. "I am strongly of opinion," he said, "that no more than five out of every twenty men who leave this Yard under the pretence of seeing Mr. So-and-So who, they have heard, is about to start some men, ever go in search of work. It is simply an excuse to get out and away from the work here." Presently he reports upon two men who have settled down to the Test Labour business "and regard it as a permanency. Neither of them have ever asked permission to leave the Yard in search of work, or anything else . . . they seldom miss a day, and for what work they do they might as well stay at home." (MS. Reports, Superintendent of Labour Yard, Leeds, to Leeds Board of Guardians, January 9th, February 20th, and March 6th, 1905.)

† The most striking case is that of St. Olave's Union (now Bermondsey) in the acute distress of 1895, where a Labour Yard was opened in a hurry, and relief given at the rate of 6d. for an hour's work (and 3s. 6d. for a day), half in kind, to practically any man who gave an address within the Union, even at a common lodging-house. The numbers went up in a week to 671, in a month to 2,548, and, notwithstanding more rigorous inquiry, within two months, to no fewer than 3,703 men simultaneously at work breaking stones, at a total cost to the Board of Guardians of £17,000, with nothing to show for it except 2,500 tons of broken stone, which had thus cost over £7 per ton, as compared with 5s. per ton, the usual price. For this case, *see* the Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1894–5, pp. 162–165 (Mr. Lockwood's Report).

their strictest, the work most repellent, prolonged and severe, and the scale of relief at its lowest, these men take themselves off, and the Labour Yard will be resorted to exclusively by men whom physical defects or evil fortune have brought so low that they have really no alternative—men who cannot possibly support themselves and their families by any other means, and who therefore are honestly entitled to humane and certainly not deteriorating relief. Meanwhile, so evil is the reputation of the Labour Yard, with its useless and painful task, with its sullen shirking of work, with its total absence of either hope or fear that, in times of great distress, when honest, self-respecting artisans or operatives and their families are really perishing from continued inanition, we are told that men "would rather starve" than enter the Labour Yard.* In short, whether as regards those whom it includes or those whom it excludes from relief, the Outdoor Labour Test, in the forms in which it is almost universally practised, appears to us, regarded as a deliberate mode of treatment of Able-bodied Destitution, as a hopeless failure.

What is even more serious is that, far from doing anything to prevent or diminish Able-bodied Destitution, the very existence of the Outdoor Labour Test in any town positively facilitates and encourages the worst kind of Under-employment, namely, the unorganised, intermittent casual jobs of the unskilled labourer. The very limitation of the "Order for the Labour Yard" to two days at a time; or the closing of the Labour Yard on the one or two days in the week when casual employment is supposed to be most frequent; † the granting of admission to the Labour Yard only for a week at a time,‡ and encouraging men to go off for work whenever they can—even the opening of a Labour Yard only for a few weeks in the dull season—defeats the object of the Outdoor Labour Test of keeping the paupers, in any real sense, off the labour market, and positively helps to make it possible for employers to avoid maintaining a regular staff, and for men to feel free to throw up their jobs after a day or two. "In one Liverpool Union," it was said in 1888, "if a man finds work at the dock, he works there and gets his wage; if he does not, he goes straight to the Relieving Officer and gets an order for the Stone Yard, and works there." § "I asked," continues the Inspector, "an applicant for relief how he got his living during the summer, to which he replied that he worked for Mr. , naming a farmer in the neighbourhood. I then inquired how he lived during the winter, to which he answered, 'I work for the Guardians here in Gravesend.'" || Of the men in the Leeds Labour Yard, the Superintendent reports, in 1907, that some "do a little haymaking or potato picking during the season, others follow race meetings or act as "crow" for a street book-maker in some low class district, or odd jobs here and there occasionally. They have no desire for regular employment." ¶ "You may take it," said an experienced Inspector in 1907, that "it is not an uncommon thing at all for a man to be in receipt of relief (in a Labour Yard) . . . for a certain period, and then go off relief, be employed, and then be relieved again." ** "If," said Mr. Crowder of the Outdoor Labour Test generally, "you let men come on, as they have been accustomed to do at Labour Yards, for one day, or even half a day, and then not apply the next morning, but get a job outside; and then come back again . . . *that is ruination.*" †† It is, in fact, at last realised that the device which the Poor Law Commissioners and the Poor Law Board had so persistently pressed on Boards of Guardians, and which the Local Government Board still maintains in force—especially when it is worked, as it usually is, in such a way as actually to encourage men to go off under pretext of looking for private employ-

* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 50627.

† The Lewisham Labour Yard in 1888 was closed each week on Mondays and Thursdays. At Prestwich the men on Outdoor Relief working on the farm were allowed to absent themselves regularly on Mondays and Tuesdays. (MS. Minutes, Prestwich Board of Guardians, February 11th and 25th, 1904.)

‡ "That all orders to Able-bodied men for relief in the Labour Yard should only be given from week to week." (MS. Minutes, Bradford Board of Guardians, March 5th, 1872.) At the Leeds Union, such orders may not be for more than two weeks. (Rules of Leeds Board of Guardians, 1906–7.)

§ Evidence of Mr. J. S. Davy, Local Government Board Inspector, before House of Lords Committee on Poor Law Relief, 1888, *Q.* 901.

|| *Ibid.*

¶ Evidence of Mr. W. Page, Superintendent of Leeds Labour Yard, before the Commission, Appendix No. XCII. to Vol. IV., Par. 2.

** Evidence of Mr. Lockwood before the Commission, Q. 13325.

†† Evidence of Mr. Crowder before the Commission, Q. 17142.

ment—is, in itself, a bad example of Under-employment and Under-payment, * viciously dove-tailing into and thereby upholding private systems of Under-employment and Under-payment and thus actually tending to foster and increase the Able-bodied Destitution which it purports to relieve.

(c) The General Mixed Workhouse as an Asylum for Able-Bodied Men.

The constantly repeated argument against Outdoor Relief and the failure of the Outdoor Labour Test have induced many Boards of Guardians to fall back simply on the "offer of the House" to Able-bodied male † applicants for relief. It is one of the most disquieting features of the last few years that this "offer of the House" is being increasingly accepted, sometimes sullenly, by respectable men unable to find any alternative, but, more frequently, with cynical alacrity, by a certain type of "work-shy" or "Unemployable," who finds the gamble of picking up a living without persistent toil going against him.‡ We do not need to repeat the emphatic condemnation by Mr. Corbett and Mr. Longley of the use of the General Mixed Workhouse of 1869–75. It is even more justified with regard to the gigantic, and sometimes palatial establishments which are the pride of the Destitution Authorities of to-day, not only in the Metropolis, but also in many a large town. The testimony given to us on this point is conclusive. "Every workhouse . . . visited," reported our Special Investigator, "contained a number of men in every way as well developed physically as the average of the general population." § "The association in large numbers in the Able-bodied blocks becomes," we are told, positively "an attraction," ‖ so that literally hundreds of men are content to take up their residence permanently in the Workhouse. "The fact that there are men in the Gordon Road Workhouse to-day," reported the Master in 1908 to the Camberwell Board of Guardians, "that were here five, ten, fifteen, and I think I may safely say twenty years ago, and have been chargeable more or less ever since, and many are . . . still Able-bodied, is in itself sufficient evidence that there is something lacking in the administration." ¶ In short, said the representative of a Metropolitan Board of Guardians, "having got a man into the Workhouse, we have no sufficient test . . . to prevent him stopping there." ** It is only since 1891–2 that the statistics of the Local Government Board for England and Wales inform us how many Able-bodied men in health were in the Work-

* The very "object of the Labour Test," said Mr. Davy in 1888, "is to prevent a man from getting relief and . . . wages from any other source at the same time." (Evidence of Mr. Davy, Local Government Board Inspector, before House of Lords Committee on Poor Law Relief, 1888, *Q.* 877.) That is to say, to prevent the "rate in aid of wages." What is not realised is that Poor Relief may subsidise wages without the recipient being, for any particular hour, or for any particular day, in receipt of both relief and wages. Occasionally, we have even the worst incidents of the old "rate in aid of wages." "If," say the Richmond Guardians, "the wife or any member of the family earns anything, relief to be diminished accordingly." (By-laws of Board of Guardians, Richmond (Surrey), July, 189 .)

† There is everywhere a marked absence in the Workhouse of able-bodied women, other than the wives of male inmates, and the mothers of young children. Such able-bodied and unencumbered women as come in seldom stay long; so that there are often not enough women to do the domestic work of the establishment.

‡ The "offer of the House" to able-bodied men is sometimes supposed to have been facilitated by the Workhouse (Modified Test) Order, which permitted the grant of Outdoor Relief to the wife and family of an able-bodied man, provided that, instead of performing a task of work, he himself entered the Workhouse. This Order was issued to the Whitechapel Union on April 18th, 1887, as a temporary expedient for twelve months. But it was never put into operation. (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 13424–6, 13570–4; Report of House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Relief, 1888, *Qs.* 4451–3.) As a matter of fact, the practice has been repeatedly adopted, with the sanction of the Central Authority, without any Order. (*See*, for instance, the cases cited in 1837, 1838 and 1841, Third, Fourth and Seventh Annual Reports of the Poor Law Commissioners, 1837, p. 148, 1838, p. 34, and 1841, pp. 2, 192, 220.) To the Holborn Union the Local Government Board, in 1895, gave permission by letter to use this device notwithstanding that it was in contravention of the Orders legally in force. (First Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895, p. 60.) The Order, we were told, was subsequently issued to Islington, Wandsworth, Kensington and Hampstead, but was in no single case put in force there. (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 13570.) At last, a real use was found for it in the Poplar Union, to which it was issued on May 23rd, 1905, as a means of legalising the grant of Outdoor Relief to the wives and families of the able-bodied men sent to the Farm Colony at Laindon, which the Local Government Board chose to regard as a workhouse for this purpose. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 13570, 13572, 77137.) It was issued in 1908 to the Unions of Fulham, Kensington, Wandsworth, West Ham and Woolwich, but has been little used. On October 14th, 1908, a new Order was issued to Poplar greatly limiting the use of this device.

§ Report on the Physical Condition of . . . the Able-bodied Male Inmates, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, 1908, p. 13.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 13685–7.

¶ Camberwell Board of Guardians, Master's Report, May, 1903.

** Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 17020.

houses; but the rise in these sixteen years from 5,070 in 1891–2 to 9,164 in 1907–8 * is full of significance. So far as we can make out, *there are, this winter, heaped up in the General Mixed Workhouses of England and Wales, certainly more than* 10,000 *men, classed as healthy and Able-bodied.* In London alone the number must amount to something like 5,000—a phenomenon quite new, and unprecedented, we believe, during at least half a century. The Poor Law Officers' Association pressed this evil on our notice. "If," said their representative, "you get a bulk of able-bodied people into your House, the whole tone of your House ultimately must deteriorate. . . . The effect of Indoor Relief, as it stands to-day, on the able-bodied class, in my estimation, undoubtedly is that it deteriorates. . . . We are not staffed, and we have not the appliances to deal with a large body of Able-bodied, and that is why we have urged so strongly, all the way through this evidence, that the Able-bodied should be removed from us, primarily for their own sakes and also for the sakes of the other inmates."†

The regimen of the General Mixed Workhouse, including as it does, under one roof, and under one Master, the infants, the sick, the infirm and the aged, cannot be made suitable for hundreds of healthy able-bodied men.

> "It is impossible," said Mr. Lockwood, so long Inspector for the Metropolitan District, "to prevent the able-bodied class sharing in the comfort, and, I may say, the luxuries, of the older ones. The Dietary Order provides the old people with a better class of diet, and so on, and the able-bodied should be on a restricted diet; there should be nothing attractive about it, and the conditions of the life in the Workhouse should be distinct for them, and such as to provide an incentive to them to earn their living outside. I say you cannot prevent that class finding the condition of life in a Mixed Workhouse such as, as a matter of fact, they are not entitled to, and which they ought not to share in."‡

The Local Government Board has always attached "much importance to uniformity in the matter of the hours to be observed by inmates of Workhouses, for getting up, meals, work, etc." § Hence, even for the healthy male adults, from ten to eleven hours out of the twenty-four are, according to the terms of the General Consolidated Order, which has remained unrevised since 1847, allowed for sleep, or at least for untrammelled intercourse in the large dormitories.|| Conversation in the dormitories is nominally forbidden, but, as it has been authoritatively stated, "it is utterly impossible with such a staff as the Master of a Workhouse has, to avoid a large amount of conversation going on. It need not be loud to be very general and very productive of evil; because classification, however you may attempt it, cannot be successfully carried on as long as you have the large dormitory system." ¶ The hours of work, which must have in each case the express approval of the Local Government Board, are usually fixed at no more than forty-seven to fifty per week, which is to be compared with the sixty, seventy or even eighty hours per week frequently exacted from the general labourer, porter, horsekeeper or carman. As a matter of fact, in the Workhouse, "most of the men are finished their day's work by about two o'clock; from two to half-past."** After this, they can spend their time together as they please, in the yard or in the day-room, with games and gossip.†† They

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* Analysis of Statistics of Pauperism (not yet in volume form). The change in the character of the workhouse inmates—the steady aggregation of really able-bodied men—is, we think, still seldom realised. In 1905, a Local Government Board Inspector obtained a Return from the Unions in his mainly rural district of men under sixty who were "bodily and mentally capable of earning their living." He found, to his surprise, fifty-four such in one Workhouse, more than a score in each of three others, and 216 altogether in all the Unions. (Thirty-fifth Report of the Local Government Board, 1905–6, pp. 479, 480; Mr. Wethered's Report.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 26937.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 13874.

§ Circular, January 29th, 1895, in Twenty-fifth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1895–6, p. 111.

|| "In the summer, the usual hours are from eight o'clock in the evening until a quarter to six in the morning, and during the winter from eight o'clock in the evening to a quarter to seven in the morning. *The difficulty is to find occupation for the people without sending them to bed.*" (Report of House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Relief, 1888, *Q.* 2466.)

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 2467, 2468. In another great urban Workhouse with hundreds of able-bodied inmates, one of our Committees noted that "according to the punishment book, no punishments were administered by the master or matron, about three cases a month being taken before the magistrates." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 1, p. 3.)

** Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 46934.

†† In one large urban Workhouse, one of our Committees noted that "both smoking and card-playing were going on." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 24 D., p. 65.)

regard the General Mixed Workhouse, as one Master declared, "as a kind of club-house in which they put up with a certain amount of inconvenience, but have very pleasant evenings." * There is even, it appears, the possibility of pleasant excursions.

> "On March 6th, 1906, three able-bodied male inmates were captured by the police whilst netting rabbits in Windsor Park. These men left the Workhouse after the officers had gone to bed, and it was their intention, after disposing of the result of their labours, to return to the Workhouse before the officers were up."†

During the long hours of Sunday there is, of course, no work; and in many Workhouses of the large towns all attempt to compel men to attend the religious service has, from a respect for freedom of conscience, been given up. The majority of the men simply "idle" the day away in gossip. The result, we need hardly say, is deplorable. Of all the spectacles of human demoralisation now existing in these islands, there can scarcely be anything worse than the scene presented by the men's day ward of a large Urban Workhouse during the long hours of leisure on week-days, or the whole of the Sundays. Through the clouds of tobacco smoke that fill the long low room, the visitor gradually becomes aware of the presence of one or two hundred wholly unoccupied males of every age between fifteen and ninety—strong and vicious men; men in all stages of recovery from debauch; weedy youths of weak intellect: old men too dirty or disreputable to be given special privileges, and sometimes, when there are no such privileges, even worthy old men; men subject to fits; occasional monstrosities or dwarfs; the feeble-minded of every kind; the respectable labourer prematurely invalided; the hardened, sodden loafer, and the temporarily unemployed man who has found no better refuge. These agglomerations are sometimes of huge size. In one Workhouse in England and in another in Ireland, we found actually several hundreds of such men, of all ages between fifteen and ninety, herded together day and night, in a series of communicating yards and sheds and common dormitories, all free to associate with each other, and to communicate to each other, in long hours of idleness, all the contents of their minds. *In such places, as we have said, there are aggregated, this winter, certainly more than* 10,000 *healthy able-bodied men.*

It is a special evil that these Able-bodied inmates of the General Mixed Workhouse contribute a large proportion to the demoralising class of "Ins-and-Outs."

> "In one (Workhouse) which I have in mind," observes Mr. Lockwood, "the ordinary admissions and discharges average 450 per week, or 23,400 per annum. Every individual admitted goes through a course entailing the removal, cleansing, and storing of his own clothes, and any small possessions he may have about him. He is then bathed, and a Workhouse suit provided him. Every inmate taking his discharge goes through the same process reversed, with the exception of the bath. In the large Workhouse referred to, there is a leave day every week for men and women alternately. The average weekly number of men allowed out is 360, of women, 280. Not a few of both sexes return in a condition indicating that they have had more to drink than was altogether good for them. The scrutiny, however, is not very inquisitorial; in fact, the passing-in is largely a question of gait and temper. If the individual is not noisy, quarrelsome, or abusive, he is allowed to proceed to his particular ward, and so, in due course, to bed. Bad cases are reported to the Guardians, and, as a punishment, the leave stopped for a time."‡

"At the Bath Workhouse," says another Inspector, "during the past twelve months, out of 286 paupers, 82 have been in and out from ten to seventy-four times. Of these, 24 generally return the worse for drink. Many go out for begging purposes, bringing back with them tea, sugar, tobacco, matches, pipes, etc. The most troublesome in this way, I am informed, are Able-bodied men and immoral women." § "I am unable," said an Inspector of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, "to avoid regarding it as somewhat of a reflection on this Board, and the Guardians of London, that hitherto this troublesome class has been dealt with in this shiftless inadequate manner, and that no well thought-out scheme has been adopted in its place." ‖

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 16686.

† Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1906–7, p.330; Mr. Herbert's Report.

‡ Thirty-third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1903–4, Appendix B., p. 153; Mr. Lockwood's Report.

§ Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1898–9, Appendix B., p. 141; Mr. Wethered's Report. The Relieving Officer of the St. Pancras Board of Guardians brought to our notice a dozen cases of men and women "in-and-out" from twenty to as many as fifty-two times within two years. (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 19466, Par. 24.)

‖ Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1906–7, p. 284; Mr. Lockwood's Report

As a remedy for these disastrous effects of the General Mixed Workhouse as an Asylum for the Able-bodied we find the leading members of the Inspectorate of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, from 1871 right down to the present day, continuously advocating, as the "orthodox" Poor Law policy, the elimination of the Able-bodied from the General Mixed Workhouse,* and the establishment, in every populous Union, or for every group of Unions, of (to use Mr. Lockwood's own words to us) a "properly equipped *separate* Workhouse specially designed to deal with the class of persons who otherwise might be found in the Labour Yards," † where such were opened, or in the Able-bodied Wards of the General Mixed Workhouse. This Able-bodied Test Workhouse has, in the course of the last thirty years, been tried in various Unions. No general description of these experiments and no report of their results appear ever to have been made. Nor did it come within the scope of any of the Investigators whom we appointed. Notwithstanding this absence of information, we found the project of an Able-bodied Test Workhouse, as the only really successful method of dealing with the Able-bodied applicant for relief, strongly pressed upon us. One of our members thought it desirable, therefore, to investigate the records of the Poplar, Kensington, Manchester, Birmingham and Sheffield Unions, where the project has been tried, and we have, one or other of us, personally visited all the places in which the experiment is, with more or less modification, still being continued.

(D) The Able-Bodied Test Workhouse.

(i.) *Poplar.*

The first experiment of an Able-bodied Test Workhouse was tried in 1871 by the Poplar Board of Guardians, at that time apparently the strictest Poor Law administrators in the Metropolis. At the instance of the Local Government Board Inspectors, and with the cordial approval of the Local Government Board itself, arrangements were made in combination with the Stepney Union under which the sick were placed in a separate Infirmary, the children in a separate Poor Law school, and all the aged and infirm in the Stepney Workhouse at Bromley; leaving the Poplar Workhouse to "be used for the receipt of such poor persons only as are Able-bodied." ‡ Here, at last, was the series of distinct institutions, and the complete segregation of the Able-bodied in a Workhouse by themselves, which had been advocated in the 1834 Report. Presently the arrangement was extended so as to enable other Metropolitan Unions to send their Able-bodied paupers to the Poplar Workhouse,§ which thus became the specialised Able-bodied institution for nearly the whole of London.

Here the regimen was of the sternest. "It was," said Mr. Corbett, the Local Government Board Inspector, "essentially a House of Industry." ‖ "The women," reported a St. Pancras Relieving Officer to his Board, "were all put to work at oakum picking. The task was very severe, and they were all compelled to perform the task of work allotted to each daily, or in default taken before the magistrate the following day. . . . Several had been sent to prison by the Poplar Guardians." ¶ The severity of the task may be seen from the fact that the amount of oakum to be picked in the day was, for men, no less than 10 lbs. of beaten or 5 lbs. of unbeaten, and for women, 6 lbs. of beaten or 3 lbs. of unbeaten; whilst the amount of granite to be broken was, at the Master's discretion, at first, five to seven bushels, and latterly, seven to ten bushels.** Accordingly, Poplar quickly became a word of terror to the Metropolitan pauper. The unfortunate man or woman, whom the Relieving Officer at the other end of London deemed to be Able-bodied, was, in many

* Thus, for every class, without exception, the infants, the children, the sick, the mentally defective, the infirm, the aged, and now the able-bodied, the General Mixed Workhouse is found to be unfit!

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 13254.

‡ Special Order, Poplar and Stepney Unions, October 19th, 1871; MS. Minutes, Poplar Board of Guardians, September 15th, and October 20th, 1871; First Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1871–2, p. xxiv.

§ Special Order to Poplar, March 6th, 1872; Second Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1872-3, p. xxvi.

‖ Report of Conference of Guardians, 1872; Second Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1872–3, p. 9.

¶ *Charity Organisation Reporter*, July 15th, 1874, p. 289.

** MS. Minutes, Poplar Board of Guardians, December 20th, 1872, and June 5th, 1874.

cases, refused even admission to the local Workhouse, and given merely "an Order for Poplar"—to which place of rigour, sometimes miles away, he or she, whatever the hour or the weather, was directed to walk. That this procedure was effective in staving off relief became quickly evident; and the Local Government Board was delighted. "The appropriation of one Workhouse," it reported, "solely to the relief of Able-bodied paupers, where they are placed under strict management and discipline, and set to suitable tasks of work of various kinds, has enabled the Workhouse Test to be systematically applied, not only in the Poplar Union, but in all the Unions which have contracted for the reception of Able-bodied paupers into that Workhouse; and the result appears to have been satisfactory. The Guardians . . . have been enabled, instead of orders for the Labour Yards, to give to the Able-bodied applicants for relief, orders of admission to the Poplar Workhouse; and, notwithstanding the considerable number of Unions which have availed themselves of this privilege, the number . . . who have accepted the relief, or having accepted it, have remained in the Workhouse, has been so small that, although the Workhouse will contain 788 persons, there were in it, at the close of last year, only 166 inmates. Great credit appears to be due to the Guardians of the Poplar Union for the firm and judicious manner in which they have conducted this, the first experiment of the kind; and we shall watch the progress of this endeavour to apply the Workhouse Test to the Able-bodied poor of the Metropolis with great care and interest." * For the next few years we see thousands of "Orders for Poplar" given by the twenty-five Unions in the combination; and from six to thirty persons nightly made the long tramp, presented themselves, and were duly admitted. That even these few, who presumably could think of no other means of subsistence, found Poplar unendurable, is shown by the statistics. Though the total number present at any one time seldom exceeded 200, more than that number were often received and discharged each week.† The total number of admissions during 1877 was 3,745, but the number present at any one time did not exceed 200, so that the average stay of them all was under three weeks; most of them indeed, as the Local Government Board triumphantly remarked, "have almost immediately taken their discharge." ‡

It is, however, to be noted that even the rigours of Poplar did nothing to prevent recurrence of cases, or what is known as "Ins-and-Outs." We have taken the trouble to analyse all the admissions for the years 1877 and 1880, with the result of finding that, in each of these years, no fewer than one-third of the persons admitted had been previously admitted—many cases repeatedly, 145 over five times, and some even thirty or forty times, within a single year.§ It is clear, in fact, that, much as Poplar was disliked, a large proportion of those who came to it could not possibly find any way of living outside, and, when they tried, were quickly driven in again.‖

* Second Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1872–3, p. xxvii.

† MS. Minutes, Poplar Board of Guardians, January 16th, 1874.

‡ First Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1871–2, p. 24.

§ The men admitted in 1880 gave their occupations as under:—Out of 1,284 separate individuals, there were 886 labourers (70 per cent.), 77 sailors (6 per cent.), 29 painters (2 per cent.), 28 clerks (2 per cent.), 26 tailors (2 per cent.), 24 shoemakers (2 per cent.), and 214 of other occupations. Of the 935 separate women admitted in that year, 241 (25 per cent.) stated themselves to be charwomen, 184 (19 per cent.) domestic servants, 150 (16 per cent.) as needlewomen, 128 (14 per cent.) as laundry-women, 45 (4 per cent.) as factory workers, 157 (17 per cent.) as without an occupation, and 30 (3 per cent.) of miscellaneous trades.

‖ The following tables have been compiled from the MS. admission books:—

NUMBERS OF INMATES RECURRENT AND NON-RECURRENT, POPLAR WORKHOUSE, 1877 AND 1880.

—	Number Recurrent under 5 times.	5 times and under 10.	10 times and under 15.	15 times and under 20.	20 and over.	Total.	Maximum number* of times case recurred.
1877.							
Recurrents, Male	231	56	24	12	9	332	30
" Female	211	36	4	2	2	255	40
Non-Recurrents, Male	–	–	–	–	–	654	–
" Female	–	–	–	–	–	545	–
1880.							
Recurrents, Male	340	117	30	11	29	527	41
" Female	261	47	20	4	12	344	30
Non-Recurrents, Male	–	–	–	–	–	757	–
" Female	–	–	–	–	–	591	–

* In 1877 one man was re-admitted 30 times during that year, and one woman 40 times; in 1880 one man was re-admitted 41 times, and one woman 30 times.

The inmates, however, do not appear to have given the Master an easy time. From an analysis of the punishment book for nine years it appears that, every three weeks or so, one or more of the inmates would be charged before the Police Magistrate and sentenced to from seven days' to twelve months' imprisonment, whilst practically every other day some one was punished by solitary confinement in the "Refractory Ward" or by restriction of diet—a fate which few seem altogether to have escaped, as the numbers so treated

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|| *Continued from previous page.*

DATES OF ADMISSION, BY MONTHS, TO POPLAR WORKHOUSE, FOR THE YEARS 1879 AND 1880.

—	January	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total
1877.													
Recurrents, Male	182	168	193	138	113	92	90	92	68	159	159	212	1,666
,, Female	73	88	84	68	58	54	70	82	62	90	85	66	880
Non Recurrents, Male	98	66	50	47	37	48	41	32	28	46	81	80	654
,, Female	51	47	39	43	36	30	46	45	33	60	51	64	545
Recurrents & Non-Recurrents,													
Male	280	234	243	185	150	140	131	124	96	205	240	292	2,320
Female	124	135	123	111	94	84	116	127	95	150	136	130	1,425
Grand Total—Both Sexes	404	369	366	296	244	224	247	251	191	355	376	422	3,745
1880.													
Recurrents, Male	205	145	200	259	274	258	254	289	283	299	256	184	2,906
,, Female	124	102	119	138	120	126	157	138	151	167	143	93	1,578
Non-Recurrents, Male	103	68	62	69	35	41	47	58	69	84	61	60	757
,, Female	57	44	57	35	31	40	55	44	57	57	50	64	591
Recurrents & Non-Recurrents,													
Male	308	213	262	328	309	299	301	347	352	383	317	244	3,663
Female	181	146	176	173	151	166	212	182	208	224	193	157	2,169
Grand Total—Both Sexes	489	359	438	501	460	465	513	529	560	607	510	401	5,832

Recurrent=Those whose names occur more than once during the year.
Non-Recurrent=Those whose names occur only once during the year.

AGES OF INMATES AT POPLAR WORKHOUSE FOR THE YEARS 1877 AND 1880.

—	20 and under.	21 to 30.	31 to 40.	41 to 50.	51 to 60	Over 60.	Total.
1877.							
Recurrents, Male	21	71	63	68	62	47	332
,, Female	28	51	52	54	45	25	255
Non-Recurrents, Male	64	122	126	113	118	111	654
,, Female	63	140	103	100	89	50	—
Recurrents & Non-Recurrents,							
Male	85	193	189	181	180	158	986
Female	91	191	155	154	134	75	800
Grand Total—Both Sexes	176	384	344	335	314	233	1,783
1880.							
Recurrents, Male	55	81	90	105	107	89	527
,, Female	34	65	68	62	62	53	344
Non-Recurrents, Male	77	125	110	146	153	146	757
,, Female	64	167	84	101	78	97	591
Recurrents & Non-Recurrents,							
Male	132	206	200	251	260	235	1,284
Female	98	232	152	163	140	150	935
Grand Total—Both Sexes	230	438	352	414	400	385	2,219

during the year exceed, between 1877 and 1880, the average number of inmates.* These frequent prosecutions of merely destitute, unconvicted persons, for resistance to penal tasks, at length attracted the attention of the Police Magistrate. In 1877 he refused to convict a man who had rebelled against his task of stone-breaking, because, although the Poor Law Medical Officer had certified him to be Able-bodied, the Magistrate, on the advice of the Police Medical Officer, was not satisfied that he was fit for such work.† In the following year the Magistrate discharged a woman who had refused to perform her task of picking oakum, and stated publicly as his reason that "it was not fit work for women." ‡ In 1879 a woman who had three times refused to do her oakum-picking was brought up for punishment, but the Magistrate refused to convict, "and the consequence of her being discharged," notes the Master, "is that it has a very bad effect on the other inmates, as she persuades them not to work either." § In this dilemma the Master apparently falls back on his own arbitrary powers of confining the paupers in the Refractory Ward on bread and water only, for we see that the numbers so punished rose from 44 in 1875, and 105 in 1876, to 244 in 1877, and to an average of nearly 200 per annum for the four years, 1877–1880.‖

Meanwhile, the Poplar Board of Guardians appeals for help to the Local Government Board. "The Master of the Workhouse," it is plaintively remarked, "has a very considerable amount of trouble in getting any work done now by the inmates; and when Mr. Saunders' [the Police Magistrate's] sentiments become known, the Guardians think that the trouble and difficulty will be much increased. If oakum picking is not to form a part of the task work, the Guardians are at a loss to know what substitute to provide for it without interfering with the labour market."¶ But the Local Government Board had no help to give. The Poplar Guardians were informed in reply that the Board fully recognised the difficulty in which the Guardians would be placed if the Magistrates "refrain from assisting the Guardians in their efforts to deal with that particular class for whom the Poplar Workhouse is specially set apart, viz., the Able-bodied Paupers of a large number of Metropolitan Unions who, as a rule, can only be managed by the exercise of strict discipline, and by being kept employed. The Board cannot but suppose that when Mr. Saunders becomes fully acquainted with the obligations imposed upon the Guardians and the necessity and difficulty of finding work for the Able-bodied inmates of the Workhouse, he will be prepared to deal with future cases in such a manner as will enable the Guardians to maintain the requisite discipline in that establishment."**

The difficulties of the Poplar Board of Guardians were increased by the fact that the Metropolitan Unions found the offer of an "Order for Poplar" so efficacious in staving off applications for relief that they often adopted this device for "testing," as they called it, any pauper whom they wished to get rid of. To these "mixed" authorities there

* Analysis of the punishments recorded as inflicted in the Poplar Workhouse, 1873–1881 :—

Year.	Sentenced to Imprisonment.			Confined in Refractory Ward.		
	M.	F.	Total.	M.	F.	Total.
1873	4	9	13	2	?	?
1874	14	10	24	14	16	30
1875	7	17	24	16	28	44
1876	4	6	10	51	54	105
1877	14	15	29	133	111	244
1878	12	3	15	124	38	162
1879	14	4	18	116	39	155
1880	8	1	9	175	39	214
1881	10	2	12	65	62	127
Total - -	87	67	154	694	387	1,081
Average -	9·6	7·3	17	86·7	48·3	135

† MS. Punishment Book, Poplar Board of Guardans, 1877.

‡ *Ibid.*, 1878; Poplar Board of Guardians to Local Government Board, November 4th 1878.

§ Master's MS. Journal, Poplar Board of Guardians, 1879.

‖ MS. Punishment Book, Poplar Board of Guardians.

¶ Poplar Board of Guardians to Local Government Board, November 4th, 1878.

** Local Government Board to Poplar Board of Guardians, December 19th, 1878.

presented themselves, not the Able-bodied only, but also the Aged and the physically defective. Many of these, if offered nothing but an "Order for Poplar," might get supported by their relations or by charity. Accordingly we see these Orders given to all to whom the Guardians deemed it desirable (to use the phrase of the Hampstead Board) "to apply the test of destitution," * even to men and women of advanced age, some of whom had no alternative but acceptance. Already in 1873 we find the Medical Officer complaining of the numbers who were found to be not able-bodied.† In 1880, out of 1,284 separate men admitted to this so-called Able-bodied Test Workhouse, no fewer than 235 were over sixty years of age; and even of the 810 separate women, seventy-five were over sixty. The practice of sending physically defective persons was so frequent that the Poplar Board of Guardians had to insist, in 1876, upon receiving a definite medical certificate along with each case.‡

These various difficulties and inconveniences failed in any way to shake the confidence of the Local Government Board and its zealous Inspectorate in the Able-bodied Test Workhouse. Down to the last, the Poplar Workhouse had their approval,§ and was upheld as a model. What brought it to an end was—significantly enough—the fact that it was not administered by an authority dealing only with the Able-bodied, but by one having to accommodate all classes of paupers. Gradually the numbers of the sick and infirm to be provided for in Poplar forced the Guardians to the alternative of either building new institutions, or utilising the partly vacant space at the PoplarWorkhouse. They naturally chose the latter course. In 1881 the Local Government Board note that it may be necessary, owing to "the need of accommodation of other classes," to let in other than the able-bodied.‖ In February, 1882, the Poplar Guardians insist that, as the wards for the old and infirm are full to overflowing, with every sign of increasing numbers, they should not enter into fresh agreements with other Unions. Upon this, the Local Government Board reluctantly agreed that, having regard to the increased number of indoor poor to be accommodated, the Poplar Workhouse must cease to receive able-bodied paupers from other Unions; ¶ whereupon it reverted once more to being a General Mixed Workhouse of the ordinary type.

(ii) *Kensington.*

The Local Government Board were not daunted by the failure of the Poplar Board of Guardians to persist in the maintenance of an institution exclusively devoted to the Able-bodied. The Metropolitan Inspectors could do nothing better than look for a Board of Guardians willing to take up the task that Poplar had abandoned. It happened that, at the moment, the Kensington Union had vacant, at Mary Place, at a conveniently great distance from its General Mixed Workhouse, a building erected for the accommodation of Vagrants and Men on Outdoor Labour Test, but now disused. The Kensington Guardians proposed to fill it with their aged and infirm. To this the Local Government Board demurred, suggesting as an alternative that "the building might prove a valuable substitute for the Workhouse of Poplar Union. which is no longer available in respect

* Hampstead Board of Guardians to Poplar Board of Guardians, January 23rd, 1873.

† MS. Minutes, Poplar Board of Guardians, April 25th, 1873.

‡ "That the Guardians of Unions sending able-bodied paupers to the Poplar Workhouse be requested in future to cause the paupers so sent to be seen by a Medical Officer, and to forward a certificate stating that in the opinion of the Medical Officer they are able-bodied, and capable of performing task work." (MS. Minutes, Poplar Board of Guardians, January 14th, 1876.) In 1881 the Holborn Board of Guardians asks: "If this Board would consent to admit to the Poplar Workhouse without a medical certificate, able-bodied men who had been certified the same day or the day previous by the Medical Officer, and who, for the purpose of evading admission to the Poplar Workhouse, either destroy the Order given them, or present themselves for admission at the Holborn Workhouse late at night, when they were aware that it would be very difficult for a medical certificate to be given." But the Poplar Guardians resolved: "That the Holborn Guardians be informed that this Board regrets that it is unable to assist them in the difficulty mentioned in their letter, but remembering the inconvenience which was experienced before the medical certificate was required with the order of admission, and which occasioned the rigorous adoption of the rule, the Guardians of this Union are unwilling in any way to modify the existing arrangements." (*Ibid.*, July 22nd, 1881.)

§ "Although the Workhouse is certified to accommodate 768 paupers, it is worthy of note that it contained only 225 inmates at the commencement of the present year." (Seventh Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1877–8, p. 32.)

‖ Tenth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1880–1, p. 32.

¶ Local Government Board to Poplar Board of Guardians, February 21st, 1882.

of paupers belonging to other Unions." * Under the influence of the Inspector, the Kensington Board of Guardians agreed to adopt this suggestion, with regard to men only. In making choice, as a successor to the Poplar Board of Guardians, of that of Kensington, the Local Government Board were doubtless influenced by the reputation of the latter for the quality of the members of the Board, and for the integrity and capacity of its officials.

For twenty-two years this model Board of Guardians maintained the Able-bodied Test Workhouse for the Metropolis—a thoroughly well-regulated, clean establishment, where able-bodied men, on very plain fare,† were kept to stone-breaking, corn-grinding and oakum-picking for fifty-five or sixty hours per week. It was, at first, proposed that they should work sixty-six hours per week, the projected task being, during the summer half-year, to break 11 cwt. of granite, or to work at corn-grinding from 6 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., and, during the winter six months, to break 7 cwt. of granite between 7.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m., and pick 1 lb. of unbeaten oakum between 5 and 7 p.m., or work at corn-grinding from 7.30 a.m. to 7 p.m.‡ Thus, when it was too dark for stone-breaking, the men were not to be allowed leisure, but were to be put on to oakum-picking or corn-grinding to make out the full time.§ To this, however, the Local Government Board demurred, observing that the hours of labour prescribed in the General Consolidated Order for 1847 were sufficiently long.‖ In reply the Guardians quite naturally retorted that "the General Consolidated Order of 1847 was framed for Workhouses in which all classes of inmates were concerned, and doubtless prescribed sufficiently long hours for the women, boys and girls, to whom it applied equally with the men. In a Workhouse in which only able-bodied paupers are maintained the Guardians bear in mind that the position of the able-bodied male pauper should not be made more eligible than that of the independent labourer." The Local Government Board then sanctioned sixty hours per week for work.¶ Long hours of penal toil were, however, not the only deterrent applied to the inmates of the Mary Place Able-bodied Workhouse. The only period of leisure, that between the last meal and bedtime, was found to be so mis-spent, "in almost entire idleness," that a committee recommended that the men be sent to bed at 8 p.m., summer and winter.** A more ingenious device was, however, found, namely, that of occupying this only hour of leisure by the "lectures" of a "Mental Instructor," at which attendance was obligatory;†† whilst any smoking on the premises by any inmate whatsoever was sternly prohibited.‡‡ No inmate was ever allowed to go out, even on Sunday.§§ The diet was as coarse and monotonous as could be devised, and there was

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* Local Government Board to Kensington Board of Guardians, May 26th, 1882; MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, June 1st, 1882.

† It is typical of the rigour of the rule that, on the motion of a lady Guardian, no extra fare was allowed them at Christmas. (*Ibid.*, November 30th, 1882.) But twelve years later "the usual Christmas dinner" was allowed. (*Ibid.*, December 12th, 1894.)

‡ MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, November 2nd, 1882. The amounts of 11 and 7 cwt. were reduced to 8 and 5 cwt. respectively, on the substitution of a 1½ for a 2-inch mesh. (*Ibid.*, February 3rd, 1887.) Ten years later, the task was made 9 cwt. with a 1½ inch mesh, all the year round. (*Ibid.*, April 29th, 1897.)

§ "It is your duty," the master was instructed, "to see that every man is employed during the whole of the hours fixed for work; when, therefore, a man has completed his task of stone-breaking he has no right to idle about, but you may and ought to set him to oakum-picking, to cleaning up the yard, to scrubbing wards, or such other work as you may require to be done." (MS. Instructions, December 16th, 1882.)

‖ Local Government Board to Kensington Board of Guardians, December 13th, 1882.

¶ MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, December 28th, 1882; February 8th, 1883. The actual time-table of the daily life prescribed for these men is worth quoting in full. They were to rise in summer at 5.45 a.m.; to breakfast from 6.30 to 7 a.m.; to work from 7 a.m. to 12 noon; to dine from 12 to 1 p.m.; to work from 1 to 6 p.m., thus making sixty hours' work per week; to sup from 6 to 7; to have lectures from 7 to 8 p.m.; and to go to bed at 8.30 p.m. In winter, breakfast was half-an-hour later; the morning work half-an-hour less; but this was made up by lengthening the afternoon work, and docking the interval for supper. (*Ibid.*, March 23rd, 1893.)

** *Ibid.* October 2nd, 1884.

†† *Ibid.* March 26th and May 21st, 1891; December 15th, 1892; March 23rd, 1893.

‡‡ *Ibid.* July 22nd, 1886.

§§ This had to be relaxed for Roman Catholics who were allowed out from 8 to 10.30 a.m. on Sunday to attend Mass. (*Ibid.* December 14th, 1882.) As at Poplar, such men did not always return at the proper time, when they were put on bread and water diet, and eventually were refused permission to go out for two Sundays. This led to complaint to the Local Government Board. (*Ibid.* June 11th, 1896.) "Many men of no definite religious creed profess themselves to be Roman Catholics in order to be able to go out on Sunday." It was decided to pay for a Roman Catholic priest to celebrate Mass on the premises. (*Ibid.* November 26th, 1896.)

even an absence of anything beyond the necessary warmth. An application from the forty unhappy inmates in December, 1884, for more food and for more firing in the day-room, coupled with a complaint of the severity of the task of work, was sternly refused.* In short, the Kensington Guardians deliberately set themselves to carry out the recommendations of the 1834 Report; to maintain, that is to say, a distinct institution for the Able-bodied; to have it for men only; and thus to be free to make the conditions really less eligible than those of the lowest class of independent labourers.

There can be no doubt as to the effect of this experiment in practically abolishing Able-bodied Male Pauperism, alike in Kensington itself,† and in the other Unions so far as they chose to avail themselves of their power of issuing orders of admission to the Mary Place Workhouse. "I have recently had a personal conversation," reported the Clerk to the Kensington Board of Guardians in 1884, "with two of the Workhouse Masters, who were emphatically of opinion that the power to send their able-bodied men to a Test Workhouse had been of immense advantage; both were of opinion that not more than 20 per cent. of those to whom orders were given found their way to Mary Place Workhouse; and as those who returned again received an order for that Workhouse, the result was that the Parish got rid of the man. One of these Masters informed me that whereas last year there were over a hundred able-bodied men in his Workhouse, there were at the corresponding time this year only forty; and these were men who for different reasons could not be certified as able-bodied within the requirements laid down for Mary Place Workhouse. The working of the previous year had shown the Able-bodied loafer what he has to expect in Kensington, and that therefore, practically only those able-bodied men now apply to this parish for relief who are absolutely destitute." ‡ In spite of the many thousands of orders of admission that were issued, the numbers of men actually admitted seldom averaged more than five or six per day. Out of the aggregate of between one and three thousand admitted during the year, hardly any stayed more than a few days, so that the total accommodation of ninety was never exceeded; and the usual number of inmates was only a few dozen. "In our experience," writes the Clerk to the Kensington Board of Guardians in 1887, "of the men who are sent off from the other Parishes with orders for Mary Place . . . not 50 per cent. present themselves for admission, and very few remain more than two or three days." §

In this admirably conducted and—within its inherent limitations—entirely successful experiment, the Kensington Guardians were brought face to face with all the dilemmas of the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, dilemmas which become all the more significant when we find them perplexing so excellent a Board of Guardians, served by such competent officials. There was, for instance, the usual difficulty, in the absence of any graduation of conditions, of making the men perform the nominal task. In 1889, for instance, "the Master presented a Return from which it appeared that scarcely any of the class of men certified for oakum-picking had performed anything approaching his full task, and he further reported that, in his opinion, there was a combination amongst this class against their work. He submitted the Punishment Book, from which it appeared that a number of men had been punished for neglecting and refusing to perform their work." ‖ It was in vain that he multiplied the punishments, and prosecuted the worst offenders before the Police Magistrate. The sullen inertia of the men who had no hope, and who found the well-warmed cells and easy toil of a short spell of gaol almost a relief, could not be overcome. If this was true of the hours of toil, it was still more apparent in the time to be devoted to mental improvement. As we were informed by the Master, the men during this hour either went to sleep or interrupted in such a way

* *Ibid.* December 11th, 1884. Another complaint as to the diet, in 1891, gained only a recommendation from the Committee to add treacle to the suet pudding once a week; but even this was refused by the full Board. (*Ibid.* February 26th, 1891.) It was eventually allowed on its being explained that it was only a transfer of the treacle from the porridge to the suet pudding. (*Ibid.* March 12th, 1891.)

† "Pauperism in Kensington Past and Present," by Sir W. Chance, in *Charity Organisation Review* May, 1900, pp. 243–258.

‡ MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, November 3rd, 1884.

§ Kensington Board of Guardians to St. George's, Hanover Square Board of Guardians, October 15th, 1887.

‖ MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, January 17th, 1889. The refractory men were confined to solitary cells for twenty-four hours, with nothing but bread and water, and nevertheless required to perform the daily task of work. (*Ibid.*, February 8th, 1883.)

as to cause trouble. Ultimately the experiment of a Mental Instructor had to be abandoned.*

Another difficulty was the impossibility of getting the Relieving Officers of the other Unions to confine their Orders for Mary Place to men who were physically fit for stone-breaking or for corn-grinding. As we have seen at Poplar, it was too tempting to "test" men † of doubtful character by offering them what it was believed they would not accept, to make the other Unions sufficiently careful about the physical condition of the men they sent. Already in 1883 the other Parishes and Unions had to be expressly told to send no men who were ruptured, or who had any hidden ailment which they could plead in defence if they were prosecuted for not performing their task.‡ So difficult was it to prevent such men being sent in order merely to "test their destitution," that the Kensington Guardians, in 1903, had to discharge no fewer than 192 men as wholly unfit for any of the tasks of an Able-bodied Test Workhouse.§ So frequent did this become, and so much did it interfere with the discipline of the establishment, that the Kensington Guardians were driven to appoint a special Medical Officer for the few dozen inmates of the Mary Place Workhouse, whose duty it was to attend daily and thoroughly examine every one of the men admitted, deciding whether each was fit for stone-breaking or for corn-grinding or for neither.‖ After various remonstrances the Kensington Guardians found themselves driven to refuse from other Unions or Parishes all persons who were physically unfit for anything but the lighter work ; ¶ and eventually to refuse all who were not actually fit for stone-breaking.** This attained the end of restricting admission to the sturdy rogues of other Parishes, because, when the other Unions found it impossible to use the offer of an order for Mary Place as a means for "testing" every ordinarily Able-bodied man, they tended to use it chiefly to rid themselves of such of the known habitual paupers as were physically fit. Thus, though the Mary Place Workhouse maintained its deterrent character, it ceased, in practice, to be used by other Unions, except (as the Bermondsey Guardians frankly said) as a "useful method of dealing with refractory and worthless paupers, and such as, preferring to throw themselves on the rates, refuse to earn their own livelihood."†† This is expressly given by Mr. Lockwood as the cause of the failure of the Mary Place Test House. "It failed in its object," he told us, "because . . . in a large number of the cases that the Guardians wished to send there the Medical Officer would not certify the men to be physically fit for the task of work imposed."‡‡

The specialisation of the Mary Place Workhouse as an establishment for the refractory and worthless paupers of nearly the whole Metropolis left the Kensington Guardians between the horns of a dilemma. Either they had to give up using the Mary Place Workhouse as a test of destitution of the respectable able-bodied men of their own Parish, who had committed no other crime than inability to find employment, or they had to subject such of this class as demonstrated their genuine destitution by passing the test to hard penal labour, under extremely rigorous and depressing conditions, in association with the scum of all the other Parishes and Unions. Already in 1882 the Kensington Guardians were prepared to "recognise the fact that among the able-bodied men who seek Poor Law relief, many have become destitute through misfortune, etc., . . . and for such class the Guardians hope shortly to be able to provide work, such as mat-making, carpentering, etc., of a more suitable character than stone-breaking, corn-grinding, or oakum-picking." §§ What was even more objectionable from the standpoint of the

* In spite of all prohibitions and punishments, the men somehow got tobacco and smoked; and the Vestry had to be asked to prevent its carters giving tobacco. (Kensington Board of Guardians to Kensington Vestry, April 10th, 1890.)

† And even youths. It was found necessary to insist that no one under eighteen should be sent. (MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, September 2nd, 1886.)

‡ Kensington Board of Guardians to other Boards, June 25th, 1883.

§ MS. Records, Mary Place Workhouse, 1903–4.

‖ It should be noted that in 1888 a third class of able-bodied began to be sent to Mary Place, viz., those who, whilst unfit for stone-breaking or corn-grinding, could be certified as fit to pick 4 lbs. of unbeaten oakum per day. (MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, October 11th and November 8th, 1888.)

¶ *Ibid.* July 17th, 1890.

** *Ibid.* November 11th, 1897.

†† Resolution of Bermondsey Board of Guardians, 1905.

‡‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 13239.

§§ MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, December 28th, 1882.

Kensington resident was the concentration in the neighbourhood of the worst types of "Ins and Outs." For the Mary Place Workhouse exhibited once more the characteristic paradox of the Workhouse Test. The worse the conditions were made, the more "recurrent" became the applicants for admission.* The "work-shy," the mentally defective and the sturdy rogues, who tramped to Mary Place from all parts of London bearing the necessary Order of admission, quickly took their discharge, and drifted into the common lodging-houses of the immediate neighbourhood for as long as they could support themselves by mendicity and odd jobs. Becoming again destitute, they applied for relief from Kensington addresses and were sent once more to the Mary Place Workhouse, whilst their settlements were being inquired into; often beginning again the same round of In and Out before the case could be settled. Hence there was a steady pressure on the Guardians from the local residents, who objected to attracting to the Parish the undesirables of the whole Metropolis.

These drawbacks to the success of the Mary Place Workhouse as a device for reducing Able-bodied Pauperism did not, for a couple of decades, suffice to bring the experiment to a close. The end came as it had come to Poplar, from the very nature of the "mixed" authority under which the Able-bodied Workhouse was placed. From the very beginning of the experiment there were members of the Kensington Board of Guardians who failed to understand why that Board should be at the expense of maintaining a separate Workhouse at Mary Place, which was always half empty, for only a few dozen inmates, when there was plenty of room in their own great Marloes Road Workhouse, with all its different classes of paupers. Already in 1883 it was proposed "That having regard to the small number of Able-bodied Paupers who have been received into the Mary Place Workhouse since it has been opened for their reception, and the large expenditure incurred in the maintenance of a competent staff to superintend the management of the same, it is now deemed expedient to abandon Mary Place as an Able-bodied Workhouse." † And though this resolution was defeated, we see similar resolutions brought forward again and again. The unnecessary cost of a separate establishment furnishes constant ground of complaint. In 1890 it was actually decided to abandon the experiment; and it needed all the private influence of the Local Government Board on the Kensington Guardians to get this decision reversed.‡ Later on we see developed another line of attack. As the accommodation

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ACTUAL NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL CASES ADMITTED INTO THE MARY PLACE WORKHOUSE DURING ONE YEAR—OCTOBER 4TH, 1903, TO OCTOBER 1ST, 1904—THE LAST COMPLETE YEAR WHEN "FOREIGN" PAUPERS WERE MAINTAINED.

Union or Parish.	Number of Individuals.	Number of Inmates on October 3rd, 1903.	Number of Admissions during the year.	Number of Discharges and Transfers.	Number Remaining on October 1st, 1904.
Kensington	278	17	850	830	37
Chelsea	29	1	54	55	–
Camberwell	18	2	111	109	4
Fulham	24	1	38	39	–
Hackney	31	1	97	97	1
Hammersmith	35	1	53	53	1
Islington	198	16	932	937	11
Lambeth	33	2	110	110	2
Mile End Old Town	5	–	8	6	2
Paddington	28	3	47	49	1
St. George (Hanover Square)	33	–	102	101	1
Marylebone	30	2	131	133	–
Bermondsey	11	–	12	9	3
Wandsworth	40	1	67	67	1
Southwark	66	–	86	81	5
Hampstead	3	1	9	10	–
Willesden	2	–	3	3	–
Bloomsbury	8	–	11	10	1
Holborn	3	–	3	3	–
Westminster	3	–	3	3	–
Stepney	14	–	14	10	4
Total	892	48	2,741	2,715	74

† MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, October 4th, 1883. (Lost by eight to three.)

‡ "Your Committee fully recognise that the existence of a separate Workhouse for able-bodied men, at which the strictest discipline is maintained and the severest tests of work are applied, acts as a valuable deterrent, and they believe that the opening of the Workhouse at Mary Place undoubtedly materially decreased the then number of able-bodied men who had accumulated in the Marloes Road Workhouse under the milder *regime* there in force, and has since had the effect of materially keeping down the number of able-bodied male paupers of the parish, while the testimony of the other Metropolitan parishes and unions who make use of

of the Mary Place Workhouse was never fully utilised by the really Able-bodied, it became more and more the custom of the Kensington Board to transfer thither other classes of men, in order to relieve the pressure at the Marloes Road Workhouse. For the Kensington men, at any rate, the tasks at the Mary Place Workhouse became more varied. We hear of selected inmates doing most of the work of building and decorating certain additions to the premises.* Wood-chopping was added to the regular tasks, and men, not certified for stone-breaking but able to do this work, began to be increasingly transferred.† We hear of the "partially Able-bodied men" sent from the Marloes Road Workhouse to that at Mary Place, for whom suitable employment has to be found; we find a large proportion actually sent to the infirmary; we have special mention of the "men over sixty." "In addition to employing this class in the wood shed," reports the Master in 1904, "I have utilised them in place of Able-bodied men in domestic work, painting and whitewashing the Workhouse and Relief Office premises, small repairs to the building, mending boots and clothing, and such like work suitable to their capacity." ‡ On this the Local Government Board drew attention to the long hours of work at Mary Place and withdrew its former approval of them, "now that it is used as a branch Workhouse for Kensington paupers." § The hours of work were then altered to make them no longer than those usual in ordinary General Mixed Workhouses under the General Consolidated Order of 1847. Finally, in March, 1905, seeing that the Mary Place Workhouse had already become merely a branch Workhouse of the Kensington Union, and that all the available accommodation was likely to be required for Kensington Paupers of one class or another, the Guardians decided to bring to an end the experiment begun with such high hopes twenty-two years before, and definitely to refuse "to continue to take in Able-bodied men from other Metropolitan Parishes and Unions." ‖ With the withdrawal of the Able-bodied of other Unions and Parishes, concurrently with the transfer of the semi-Able-bodied and of persons over sixty from the Marloes Road Workhouse, the whole character of the Mary Place Workhouse became gradually transformed. The mixture in a single institution of the Able-bodied and the physically disabled, of men in the prime of life and men of 65, 70 or 75 years of age, led to the invariable relaxation of discipline characteristic of the General Mixed Workhouse. It was, for instance, found impracticable, as the Master informed us, to prevent anybody from smoking in a place where the inmates over 60 were allowed to smoke, and those over 65 were actually supplied with tobacco.¶ It is significant that criticism of the conditions of this Workhouse from 1904 onwards all take the form of objections to its severity. "Day room accommodation," says the Inspector in 1906, "is very badly needed at the Mary Place Workhouse. At present there is only one room (60 feet by 15 feet) available for purposes of dining-room, day-room, and holding divine service. On Sunday in cold weather some ninety men are practically confined to this one room for the whole day; they sit there hour after hour, closely packed on forms before meals, through meals, and after meals. The physical and mental discomfort must be very great. The Guardians are considering the question of providing additional day-room accommodation, but even at the best this must take some time, and, in the meantime, I think the Guardians might well consider whether they should not send there only (1) the young able-bodied, and (2) refractory or less deserving semi-able-bodied, aged or infirm. The more aged and deserving poor should not, if possible, be relieved

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the Workhouse as a test, also shows that it has been of considerable service to them in the same direction. Your Committee, however, think there can be no doubt as to the greater expense involved in the maintenance of a distinct establishment for so small a number of paupers, than for the same number of paupers in the large General Workhouse. There appears to them no reason why the able-bodied should not be kept strictly in a place set apart for them in Marloes Road with the same diet and same hours and tasks of labour as are now in force at Mary Place; and why it should not be equally deterrent, and there are many advantages in having the whole administration under one firm and capable head." (*Ibid.*, June 4th, 1890.) The resolution passed on this Report was, however, rescinded. (*Ibid.*, November 6th, 1890; Local Government Board to Kensington Board of Guardians January 29th, 1891.)

* MS. Minutes, Kensington Board of Guardians, December 4th, 1902.

† *Ibid.* January 6th, 1904.

‡ *Ibid.* June 2nd, 1904.

§ *Ibid.* February 8th, 1904.

‖ *Ibid.* March 23rd, 1904.

¶ *Ibid.*, November 28th, 1907.

under conditions of extreme discomfort which involves their being penned up for many hours in close contact with undesirable and possibly demoralising characters." *

Undismayed by successive failures, the Local Government Board has, even whilst we were considering the question, started another Able-bodied Test Workhouse for the Metropolis, by an Order, dated September 8th, 1908, setting aside the Belmont Road Workhouse, Fulham, for "adult male persons who are not infirm through sickness," from any Union of the Metropolis.

(iii) *Birmingham.*

Meanwhile Midland and Northern Unions were experimenting with other forms of the Able-bodied Test Workhouse. In Birmingham, a stoneyard had been opened in the winters of 1878–9 and 1879–80, to serve as a Labour Test to men on Outdoor Relief. But as we read, the :—

> "Test proved a delusion. There were a few honest industrious men who scrupulously performed their tasks. But in the majority of cases the *quasi* stone-breakers stood round large fires during the greater part of the day, and in the evening received their relief for the mere shadow of labour. . . . The able-bodied poor of the neighbouring districts were attracted to Birmingham, and the ratepayers of the parish soon found themselves supporting large numbers of men who were justly chargeable to neighbouring Unions."†

> "Outdoor Relief men were daily increasing. . . . Many of the latter were mere youths who never really worked, and who earned nothing, even when set to work by the Guardians. . . . These were of a type that required careful and patient dealing, that their apparent insubordination might not break out into something worse."‡

At the suggestion of Mr. Henley, the Local Government Board Inspector, the Birmingham Guardians "borrowed from the Corporation a large disused factory, and fitted it up rapidly as a branch Workhouse, and offered the test to all the single able-bodied men. It was so very successful that they determined next summer to build this test house. They do things rapidly in Birmingham. They built a three-storied building of brick and slate in six weeks, and it was then opened." § Great was the initial success :—

> "During the ten days the Test House had been in operation," we read, "the number discharged from the Workhouse to go to the Test House was 70, of these only 53 went. The number of orders given by Relieving Officers was 32, 28 of these went. Of these 81 who went to the Test House, 8 were sent back to the Workhouse by the Medical Officer, 15 discharged themselves, 3 were sent to prison for refusing to do their tasks, 1 absconded and was afterwards sent to prison." ‖

Mr. Henley reports a Return by the Clerk to the Guardians for three months showing the "number of orders given by relieving officers, 276; number of such orders used, 274; sent direct from Birmingham Workhouse or West Bromwich Workhouse, 110. Total admitted, 384; discharged, 340; remaining on February 26th, 1881, 44; average length of stay in the test-house, about one week. Strict discipline has been maintained, all refractory paupers being taken before the magistrates and summarily dealt with. The test house has had an immensely deterrent effect upon idle, dissolute, and worthless fellows. Its success is far beyond the most sanguine expectations of the Guardians. During the week ended January 1st, 1881, no persons were set to work in the stoneyard under the provisions of the outdoor labour test order, whereas in the corresponding week of 1880 the number of cases so relieved was 706." ¶ A year later a local newspaper states that :—

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* Local Government Board to Kensington Board of Guardians, March 6th, 1908; Minutes, March 22nd, 1906. In several of the Metropolitan Unions, and one or two elsewhere, there is an imperfect segregation of the Able-bodied. There being two or three Workhouses in the Union, one is set aside for adult males not being sick. This, therefore, receives all sections of males from sixteen to ninety, and men of all mental and physical capacities, provided only that they are not actually sick. In these so-called Able-bodied Workhouses, a considerable amount of varied work is done, including corn-grinding, wood-bundling, baking, mat-making, tin-work, picking coir fibre, boot-making, tailoring, brush-making, bag-making, etc. But the tasks are light, the hours short, and many of the inmates practically permanent. (*See* the interesting Report to the Camberwell Board of Guardians by the Master of the Gordon Road Workhouse, May, 1908.) In one of the best administered of these "able-bodied Workhouses," we found, by our own analysis of the books, that, out of 1,912 admissions of men during 1907, no fewer than 1,564 recurred twice or more often *during the same year*; 320 of them five times or more, and 1 of them twenty-five times. Of 925 admissions of women, no fewer than 766 recurred twice or more often during the same year; 157 of them five times or more, and 1 of them twenty-six times. Thus, good administration certainly does not stop recurrency.

† *Birmingham Daily Post*, February 1st, 1886. (We quote from Reports of meetings of the Board of Guardians.)

‡ *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, January 30th, 1879.

§ Report of House of Lords Committee on Poor Relief, 1888, *Q.* 352.

‖ *Birmingham Daily Post*, November 27th, 1880.

¶ Report of House of Lords Committee on Poor Relief, 1888, *Q.* 355.

"The Test House had had the effect of relieving persons who were really destitute, and of preventing persons who had other means of living from coming on the Guardians. It was also a relief to the Workhouse of a class that interfered to a great extent with the due discipline of the workhouse."*

For some years the Guardians remained fully satisfied with this easy system of reducing Able-bodied Pauperism. There continued to be, as we read, "a strong dislike amongst the inmates to going to Floodgate Street, some of them preferring to leave the house. . . . Out of ten inmates sent to Floodgate Street, only one had arrived."† Those who unwarily entered its portals frequently preferred to get sent to prison. In 1886, "a Return recently presented to the Board of Guardians states that forty-one prosecutions took place last year for neglect to perform tasks at the Test House, and that in each case convictions took place." ‡ Sometimes, however, neither the zeal of the Master nor the acquiescence of the men served to induce the magistrates to let them go to prison. The Guardians found themselves driven to resolve that "no prosecutions should be instituted against any inmate of the Test House or Workhouse until the complaint or charge against such inmate shall have been investigated by at least one member of the Revision Committee."§ It was found that there had been prosecutions for non-fulfilment of tasks in which convictions had not been secured.

So far as we can ascertain, the *regimen* at the Birmingham Test House was as severe as—perhaps even more severe than—that at Poplar or Kensington. Instead of any kind of bed, the men had to lie together on a continuous sloping shelf‖ similar to that which used to be provided in the worst of the "Associated Wards" set aside for Vagrants. The task of oakum-picking for prisoners sentenced to hard labour was 3½ lb. for a man, and 2 lb. for a woman; but the unconvicted destitute men and women at the Test House had to do 4 lb. and 3 lb. respectively.¶

The selection of persons to whom to "apply the Test" seems to have been lacking in consistency. "When a single able-bodied man applies for relief," we read, "he is at once given an order for the Test House. . . . In a week or two the case comes up for revision. But in the majority of cases the pauper has taken his or her discharge. . . . If the pauper's conduct and further investigation show that the case is one of genuine poverty . . . after a term of probation in the Test House" he is transferred to the General Mixed Workhouse.** On the other hand, the married man had the privilege of beginning his career as a pauper in the General Mixed Workhouse. We read that "a married man gets an order for himself and family to enter the Workhouse. The same course is pursued with regard to women. Every Tuesday a small committee—the Revision Committee—sits at the Workhouse and reviews the list of inmates. . . . If the pauper prove to be a man or woman of bad character, or a gaol bird, or a confirmed loafer, an order for the Test House is given." †† This association of all the single men (and, therefore, the younger men), even of the best character, with those married men of notoriously bad character, seems to us a peculiar arrangement. It was said that "the majority of them [the inmates of the Test House], by all accounts, are not the sort of people with whom respectable working people, driven to the Workhouse by stress of poverty, old age, or weakness, ought to be compelled to mix." ‡‡ Presently, when a time of stress came, we find it noted that "the Guardians . . . have for some time steadily refused to open their stoneyard to able-bodied men applying for relief, but have dealt with all such cases by giving an order for the Workhouse, with the result of a steady diminution of pauperism." §§

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* *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, March 23rd, 1882. It had been resolved by the Guardians that the "Test should be adapted for accommodation of able-bodied women." (*Birmingham Daily Post*, May 14th, 1881.)

† *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, May 31st, 1880.

‡ *Birmingham Daily Post*, February 1st, 1886.

§ *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, March 18th, 1886.

‖ *Birmingham Daily Post*, November 3rd, 1880.

¶ *Ibid.* December 2nd, 1885.

** *Ibid.* February 1st, 1886.

†† *Ibid.* February 1st, 1886.

‡‡ *Ibid.* February 1st. 1886.

§§ *Ibid.* October 22nd, 1886.

The end of the story was the same at Birmingham as it was at Poplar and Kensington. At the very time that Mr. Henley was explaining to the Select Committee of the House of Lords how Birmingham had solved the problem of Able-bodied Pauperism, the Guardians were beginning to abandon the experiment. Just as at Poplar and Kensington, it proved impossible for a "mixed" Authority, having under its care, not the able-bodied alone, but also the children and the sick, the infirm and the aged—supervised by a Poor Law Division which was itself responsible for all these varied classes—to keep its institutions really separate and distinct. Already in 1885 we notice the letter from the Local Government Board—exactly the same letter that we found at Poplar and Kensington—assenting to the transfer, from the General Mixed Workhouse, which had become overcrowded, to the Test House, which was (as it was intended to be) nearly empty, of some of the men over sixty years of age.* Within a few months—just as at Kensington—we see the *regimen* at the Test House become less severe. In September, 1886, "arrangements were being made to introduce wood-chopping as a Labour Test at the Test House. . . . The intention of the Committee was to put oakum-picking only on those people who came to the Guardians because they would not work outside."† Presently the Guardians made up their minds to build a new Infirmary, which relieved the pressure on the accommodation, and it seemed to be unnecessary to maintain what had (as at Kensington) become only a branch Workhouse.

> "At a meeting of the Workhouse Management Committee," we read in 1889, "the Test House Sub-committee reported that, owing to the very small number of inmates of the Test House, and owing to the fact that many inmates of the Workhouse are being transferred to the Infirmary (recently opened), they were of opinion that the Test House should be closed, and that the paupers there should be sent to the Workhouse."‡

Notwithstanding this experience of 1880–9, in striking accord with that at Poplar and Kensington, we see the Local Government Board in 1906 once more falling back on the suggestion that the Destitution Authority, with all its mixture of paupers of all ages and classes to maintain, should set up a separate institution for the Able-bodied. On December 20th, 1906, the Board thought it right :—

> "To draw the Guardians' attention to the great increase which has taken place during the past few years in the number of adult male indoor poor." It does not "appear that the great increase in the number of male inmates is accounted for by depression in trade, as notwithstanding the improvement in trade which took place during the year 1905, the number of male inmates increased during that year from 1,573 to 1,679. . . . The Board would recommend the Guardians to consider the advisability of providing separate accommodation available for able-bodied men only, in which strict discipline could be maintained, so as to secure results similar to those which were experienced in connection with the separate block provided by the Guardians for that purpose in 1880, and closed shortly afterwards for lack of inmates." . . . It appears that "considerably more than half of the applications for relief are from persons frequenting common lodging-houses and from persons lodging in small tenements, and it is possible that persons are attracted to the parish by the conditions prevailing in the Workhouse."§

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* Local Government Board to Birmingham Board of Guardians, January 27th, 1885. The numbers in the Test House had sometimes sunk as low as nine or ten. In some weeks in the summer there had been more officers than inmates.

† *Birmingham Daily Post*, September 16th, 1886.

‡ *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, March 16th, 1889.

§ Local Government Board to Birmingham Board of Guardians, December 20th, 1906 ; *see* Thirty-sixth Annual Report of Local Government Board, 1906–7, p. 326 (Mr. Herbert's Report). In 1886, Mr. Henley induced the West Derby Union to provide an Able-bodied Test Workhouse, combined with extensive Casual Wards, and the Liverpool Union entered into a contract also to make use of them for the next fifteen years. The most significant comment on the "Belmont Road" Able-bodied Test Workhouse thus hopefully established is that it was given up at the end of the first term of years. The same inherent difficulties that always beset an Authority responsible for all classes of paupers, whenever it attemps to run an institution for the able-bodied alone, became as apparent in Liverpool and West Derby as they had been in Poplar and Kensington. The Liverpool Guardians were always seeking to get rid of the undesirable "In-and-Out," whether he was aged, feeble-minded, or crippled, by giving him an "order for Belmont Road." When the order was accepted, the intrusion of this non-able-bodied element inevitably softened the discipline, so that it was presently discovered that the Able-bodied "corner-boys" who were being "tested" no longer took their discharge with any promptitude. Meanwhile, the West Derby Guardians were finding themselves pressed to accommodate more aged and infirm, more sick and feeble-minded, more mothers with infants and more children than could be conveniently stowed away in their other institutions. When the fifteen years were up both Unions were disinclined to renew the agreement. Hence, when we visited Belmont Road in 1907, we found a General Mixed Workhouse of the ordinary type with 1,500 inhabitants, of all sorts and conditions, whilst, within the curtilage of the workhouse, separated from the other blocks by a wall, were Children's Homes and even a School for Remand Children and the children of vagrants and Ins-and-Outs. In the monstrous Workhouse at Brownlow Hill, the Liverpool Guardians were maintaining a popu'ation of 2,500 souls, the aged and infirm, the sick, and the mothers and infants being distributed in the upper regions, whilst the basement was devoted to the maintenance, without work, and with the very minimum of discipline, of 600 able-bodied men and youths of all ages, of all degrees of good conduct or depravity, and of all grades of physical and mental competence to earn a living, lounging about in promiscuous intercourse in a series of intercommunicating yards and dayrooms.

In April, 1908, such a Test House was again started at Birmingham, exactly as was done eighteen years ago.

(iv.) *Manchester and Chorlton.*

We were glad to be told by the Chief Inspector of the Local Government Board, at the outset of the investigation that we are describing, that we should "find a model House of that description in Manchester," actually in working order, which we were advised to examine.* The Tame Street Workhouse, opened in 1897, and managed by a Joint Committee of the Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians, is a small institution, accommodating about 250 men and 50 women.† But it is attached to one of the largest Casual Wards in the United Kingdom—built to accommodate many hundred persons, the whole institution being under one Master and Matron. When we visited the institution we were struck with the absolute silence preserved by the men at meal times and with the military discipline with which they were marched to and from their work. The diet is of the plainest, and there is no tea or tobacco to compensate for what seems to us positive deficiency of nourishment.‡

The procedure is as follows. During the winter months the men are kept at work cleansing the huge Vagrant Wards, owing to the absence of women, but directly the spring comes and the Master, from his knowledge of the labour market, decides that the men could get employment, a process of "testing out" begins. The men are put, one by one, to do stone-pounding, in cubicles in an enclosed building. Unlike the Managers of most Able-bodied Test Workhouses, the Master of that at Tame Street seldom prosecutes; he had not, in fact, taken an inmate to the Police Court for two years. He relies for the maintenance of discipline on the facilities offered by the proximity, under his management, of the Casual Ward. Every inmate is obliged to perform the task that is given to him, in whatever place the Master chooses. If a man is recalcitrant, he is put, day after day, into one of the solitary cells built for the temporary sojourn of the Vagrants. Here he is given a definite taste of stone-breaking, or sometimes he is merely told "to count the bricks." But to this solitary confinement in idleness, which is not counted as punishment at all, and which may be without limit so long as the man is brought back each night to the dormitory, the Master may add, "with or without the direction of the Joint Committee," forty-eight hours' bread and water diet. We are not surprised that this particular form of the "relief of destitution" is found so far effectual in checking "pauperism" that Tame Street Workhouse, even during the winter months, is never full; and that, by June in each year, it stands almost empty, with a score or so of feeble inmates allowed to remain in order to do the cleaning. "I am of opinion," states the Clerk of the Manchester Union, "that the fact of there being a fully-equipped Test House to which Able-bodied men can be sent has resulted in both of these Unions (Chorlton and Manchester) being relieved of the cost of maintaining a number of idle men who would have been content to remain in an ordinary Workhouse, where the strict discipline which is necessary in dealing with this class of paupers cannot be effectively applied."§

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 2365.

† The Women's Department is insignificant, there being only about thirty admissions annually; owing it is said, to the fact that the masters of the Workhouses prefer to keep the able-bodied women to do the work of these institutions. (MS. Minutes, Manchester and Chorlton Joint Committee, May 19th, 1905.)

‡ We append the dietary table :—

CHORLTON AND MANCHESTER JOINT WORKHOUSE.

Test-House Dietary Table, as fixed by the Local Government Board's Order dated 20th March, 1897.

—	Breakfast.			Dinner.						Supper.		
	Bread.	Porridge.	Milk.	Cooked Meat without bone.	Potatoes or other Vegetables.	Bread.	Soup.	Potato Hash.	Bacon.	Bread.	Cheese.	Porridge.
	ozs.	pts.	pts.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	pts.	pts.	ozs.	ozs.	ozs.	pt.
Sunday, Men	6	1½	1/3	-	12	4	—	—	4	7	-	1½
Monday „	6	1½	1/3	4	12	4	—	—	-	7	-	1½
Tuesday „	6	1½	1/3	-	—	6	1½	—	-	5	2	1
Wednesday, Men	6	1½	1/3	-	—	4	—	1½	-	7	-	1½
Thursday „	6	1½	1/3	4	12	4		—	-	7	-	1½
Friday „	6	1½	1/3	-	—	6	1½	—	-	5	2	1
Saturday „	6	1½	1/3	-	—	4		1½	-	7	1	1½

§ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix XLV. to Vol. IV., Par. 3.

It is interesting to notice in the Minutes of the Manchester and Chorlton Joint Committee all the old difficulties arising. Even the regimen of Tame Street does not prevent recurrence, seventeen men being admitted, during 1907, at least five times and two of them nine or ten times. There are repeated complaints from the Medical Officer of the Test Workhouse "that a number of men sent . . . from the Crumpsall Workhouse for the purpose of being put on Test Work were not fit for anything approaching Test Work." * We find the Manchester Guardians asking the Local Government Board *to sanction infirm men being transferred to Tame Street,* "as Crumpsall is overcrowded." † We have even a communication from the Manchester Board of Guardians to the Joint Committee stating "that their Workhouse is very much overcrowded" and anxiously inquiring whether they might not send to Tame Street a limited number of men, who "though not fit for stone-breaking," are nevertheless suitable for some form of Test Work; a request which the Joint Committee refused.‡ But apparently the Joint Committee relented. During 1907, at any rate, out of 480 men admitted in the first months, no fewer than 106 were between fifty-five and sixty-seven, whilst 194 were over fifty, and 340 were over forty. The Medical Officer's Register for 1907 tells an even more pathetic tale. Out of the 749 male inmates actually subjected to the gaol-like discipline of this establishment, *twenty-seven were entered as suffering from phthisis,* 124 from bronchitis and bronchial catarrh, twenty-nine from rheumatism, twenty-three from skin eruption, nineteen from cardiac disease, seventeen from varicose veins, seventeen from rupture, nine from mental debility, and 107 from physical debility (either alone or with some other disease)—only 293 having nothing the matter with them.§ We cannot feel that either the diet or the regimen of the Tame Street Workhouse affords the proper treatment for men suffering from phthisis, to say nothing of the other ailments.

(v.) *Sheffield.*

The Sheffield Union, noted in the north country for its rigid administration, has invented an even more ingenious device for reducing its able-bodied pauperism. Hidden away among the huge blocks which make up its pauper establishment "there is a Test House of thirty beds. . . . If a man is passed by the doctor as Able-bodied he is placed there and has a task each day which he has to complete or be prosecuted. He is worked, fed and sleeps there, and does not enter the House proper in any way." ‖ Here, as we learn, "the Able-bodied and partly Able-bodied are kept fully employed and treated on the lines of the Local Government Board Order that all who are able to work shall not be *allowed to be idle at any time.*" The character and amount of the work exacted from these merely destitute persons which we append in a note will, we think, surprise some prison administrators. The task has to be accomplished by 5.30 or "the man is prosecuted," *but if he has finished before* 5.30 *he is given more work to do.* "Since this small Test House has been in force" states the Master, "we have got rid of a lot of them and our numbers stand at from a hundred to a hundred and fifty less this year than last, and last year was lower than 1905." ¶ But the Master has had his discouragements.

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* MS. Minutes, Manchester and Salford Joint Committee, September 9th, 1898, and December 20th, 1901.

† MS. Minutes, Manchester Board of Guardians, December 2nd, 1896.

‡ *Ibid.* February 28th, 1902.

§ MS. Register of Medical Officer, 1907, Tame Street Workhouse.

‖ "Indoor Administration and the Employment of Inmates," by Ernest Burgess (the Master of the Sheffield Workhouse), in Reports of Poor Law Conferences, 1907; Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. II., p. 90.

¶ "Indoor Administration and the Employment of Lunatics," by Ernest Burgess, in Reports of Poor Law Conferences, 1907. "The Guardians of the Poor of the Sheffield Union have prescribed the following tasks of work for able-bodied Male Inmates of the Union Workhouse, viz.:—

1. To grind 120 lbs. corn into meal (minimum task).
1*a*. To grind 180 lbs. corn into meal (maximum task).
2. To break 13 cwt. granite to pass 2 inch grid.
3. To break 20 cwt. limestone to pass 2 inch grid.
4. To pick 4 lbs. unbeaten oakum.
5. To saw eleven sleepers 9 feet by 11 inches into 6-inch lengths.
6. To saw sixteen pit props 7 feet by 10 inches into 6-inch lengths.
7. To saw eighteen pit props 7 feet by 9 inches into 6-inch lengths.
8. To saw twenty pit props 7 feet by 7 inches into 6-inch lengths.
9. To saw twenty-two pit props 7 feet by 6 inches into 6-inch lengths.

(5–9: Any of these cross-cut tasks to be given to two men.)

Any of these tasks to be given at the discretion of the Master of the Workhouse, by Order of the Board of Guardians."

The ordinary Medical Officer of the Workhouse and Infirmary was perpetually refusing to certify men as fit to undergo this regimen, and an outside medical man with a different view of physical fitness had to be found. Moreover, the Governor of the Wakefield Gaol gave the men a better time, so that recalcitrant paupers were apt to be indifferent to threats of prosecution, and some gladly went to short sentences of imprisonment, rather than remain in such a Workhouse. "The marvel is," sums up our Committee, after inspecting one of these Test Departments, "that anybody should face it, and the assumption is that none but men too indolent to look for other work will take it. . . . The question which suggests itself seems to be this: if the problem of 'Ins and Outs' is so universally acknowledged, and if the legality of setting them to such severe task work is indisputable, and if such work is so easily provided as here, why is it not universally adopted?" * It does not, however, succeed in preventing recurrence. There remain some who apparently have a prejudice against prison, or perhaps have not tried it, and yet are unable to earn their livelihood outside of both institutions, so that they turn up time after time. Thus, out of the 623 men who underwent the Test between January, 1907, and January, 1908, there were nine who came in and out at least six times, and three of them, indeed, seventeen or eighteen times, and one of them as many as twenty-two times. These persons, at any rate, must be admitted to have demonstrated the extremity of their destitution. The question then arises whether the "Test Department" of the Sheffield Union, however admirable its severity may be for the punishment of persons convicted of some definite offence, after judicial trial, constitutes a lawful method of relieving destitution under the Statute of 39 Eliz., c. 2. If the present Poor Law is continued, we recommend that the opinion of the Law Officers should be taken on this point.†

(vi) *Compulsory Detention.*

The severity of these different processes for "testing out" Workhouse inmates who, as the Guardians (or, in practice, the Master) may choose to consider, might be able to earn a livelihood outside, has been greatly increased by the intrusion into Poor Law administration of the principle of compulsory detention. To the reformers of 1834 the notion of detaining, in a Poor Law institution, any person who was willing to take his discharge, would have seemed preposterous. The whole case for a deterrent Workhouse was based on the freedom of the pauper to leave it as soon as he realised that its conditions were "less eligible" than life outside. This principle is still authoritatively asserted to be essential to the system of Poor Law relief. In the recent Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy—which included the head of the Poor Law Division and the Senior Medical Officer for Poor Law purposes of the Local Government Board—it is laid down that "the purely voluntary nature of the present system of admission into and discharge from the Workhouse is a cardinal principle of the Poor Law; and to give magistrates the power to order the detention of adult persons in a Workhouse might have an effect on the whole system of relief altogether out of proportion to the advantages which might be derived from it." ‡ But Parliament has already conferred this power of compulsory detention without a magistrate's order. In 1871 the Guardians—in effect the Masters of Workhouses—were empowered to detain any pauper after he had applied for his discharge, for twenty-four, for forty-eight, and, under certain circumstances, for seventy-two hours.§ In 1899 this power of compulsory detention was extended, in the cases of those who had "discharged themselves frequently without sufficient reason," to 168 hours, or a whole week, with no more formality than an entry in the Minutes.‖ The intention of Parliament was clearly to put a stop to the practice of using the General Mixed Workhouse, with its ample food and easy hours of work, as

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* Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 14, p. 27.

† We may here note that the Bolton Union has a somewhat similar "Test Department," and that Huddersfield is taking steps in the same direction (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 40640). Within the Metropolis, the Guardians of the Bethnal Green Union seem to have constructed in their "Reception Ward," where able-bodied men are set to work *in isolation* from other inmates, which makes the men quickly take their discharge, something analogous to the "Test Department" of Sheffield. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 24017–27, 24059–62, and Appendix No. XV. (A) to Vol. II.)

‡ Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, p. 106.

§ 34 & 35 Vict., c. 108, s. 4 (Pauper Inmates Discharge and Regulation Act, 1871).

‖ 62 & 63 Vict., c. 37, s. 4 (Poor Law Act, 1899).

a convenient place of temporary resort.* When applied to the "Ins-and-Outs" of the General Mixed Workhouse, this detention for a week at a time may cause little hardship; though the only result in practice is that the experienced pauper gives notice immediately on re-entering, and thus takes his day out regularly once a week, instead of at irregular intervals. But when this power of compulsory detention is used in such a "testing" establishment as that at Tame Street, Manchester, or that at Sheffield, it seems to us that it amounts to a week's imprisonment with hard labour, under conditions actually more severe than those of the gaol. Hence we find, as a matter of fact, the disreputable men gladly accompanying the Master to the police-court, actually preferring the Magistrate's sentence of imprisonment to the arbitrary punishments of the Workhouse. Only those who have some remnant of respectability prefer, under such conditions, to endure the tender mercies of the Poor Law. It is, in fact, part of the terror of Tame Street that the Master does not take the men to the police-court, finding his own *regimen* more effective; thereby dispensing, moreover, with the formality of a trial! We do not think that Parliament can have been aware of this strange combination of a severely deterrent Workhouse with an arbitrary power of compulsory detention without trial.

(vii.) *Summary of Objections to the Maintenance of a Penal Establishment by a Destitution Authority.*

We have felt it necessary to go at some length into the actual experience of these Able-bodied Test Workhouses, because practically no information on the subject will be found in the Commission's proceedings, or has been published by the Local Government Board. And yet the "Able-bodied Workhouse" is, without reference to the actual experience of such institutions, still confidently put forward as the proper method of relieving Able-bodied Destitution. Mr. J. S. Davy, C.B., for instance, the head of the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board, informs us that he "most strongly advocates a Test House," for the Able-bodied applicants for relief in the County of London, and "in all large urban communities." † Mr. Lockwood, the late Inspector for the Metropolis, has persistently urged, as a necessary part of the machinery of the Poor Law, the establishment of "suitably equipped institutions to which you would send the so-called Able-bodied," for continuous work under "disciplinary treatment . . . impossible in a large Mixed Workhouse." ‡ We feel constrained to point out that, if the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 were repealed, and if the Able-bodied were thus again thrust back into the Poor Law, the Able-bodied Test Workhouse would, as a matter of fact, be the only alternative that the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board would have, in time of normal trade, to offer to the methods of relief now provided by the Distress Committees. We gather, moreover, that, under the name of "Industrial Institution," it is upon the Able-bodied Test Workhouse that the majority of our colleagues recommend Parliament to rely, as the principal and the normal method of relieving Able-bodied Destitution by the new Destitution Authority that they propose. Hence, we think it worth while to summarise our objections to the provision of any such institution by a Poor Law Authority responsible alike for the Children, the Sick, the Mentally Defective and the Able-bodied however that Authority may be constituted.

Before stating our objections in detail, however, we must call warning attention to the enormous plausibility given to the Able-bodied Test Workhouse by the fact that, wherever it has been tried, and for as long as its principles have been strictly carried out, it has been strikingly and almost instantly successful in its primary object of ridding

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* "The Guardians," it was urged by a Local Government Board Inspector, "are very much troubled with men who come in and are constantly going in and out. . . . They come in, fifty, sixty, seventy and eighty a day; they will leave the Workhouse after due notice; they will go, many of them, that very day, straight to the Relieving Officer, and will ask for an order of re-admission; many of them will come back on the same night. That gives a vast amount of trouble. They have to be bathed, they have to be inspected by the Medical Officers, they have to be re-clothed, their own clothes have to be taken into store; and I think it is an abuse of the Poor Law altogether. If men of that class knew that they could not get out under a week, I think it would check the practice very much." (Report of House of Lords Select Committee on Poor Law Relief, 1888, *Q.* 661.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 3170–1, 2365–6.

‡ *Ibid. Qs.* 4142, 13238, 13876, and 14142–3. For other advocacy of the same panacea, *see Qs.* 15604–6, 15705–7, 15755–6, 18752, 23945 (Par. 28), 23948–50, 26408 (Par. 29), 26496, 27061 (Par. 60), 43889 (Par. 23–24), 71172 (Par. 15 (*h*)), and Appendices Nos. XXVII. (Par. 15), and LXIV. (Par. 11), to Vol. V.

the Destitution Authority of the able-bodied pauper. For those who can see no further end than this, it will continue to be the one infallible and sufficient solution of the problem of the Able-bodied poor; and its "successes" will be brought up again and again to justify demands for new Test Workhouses, and for legislative measures to prevent their relapse into General Mixed Workhouses. What its advocates do not see is that to rid the Guardians of a nuisance is not to rid society of it. If the Test Workhouse abolished the Able-bodied loafer, there would be a better case for it. But if it merely keeps him out of the Workhouse it may be as mischievous as a plan for emptying our prisons by simultaneously increasing their rigour and opening their doors. Whilst an able-bodied man remains a loafer and a wastrel, it is urgently desirable that he should be in hand and under observation, rather than lost in the crowd. The Destitution Authority must not reduce its expenses by shirking its duties. Such economy is delusive: it may produce a saving on the local rate, but not on the national balance-sheet. The Able-bodied who shun the Test Workhouse are supposed to be face to face with the alternative of either working or starving. As a matter of fact our social organisation is still far too loose to narrow their choice to any such extent. They can beg; they can steal; they can sponge; they can practise or exploit prostitution; they can combine the predatory life with the parasitic by shifts of all sorts; and the taxpayer has to pay for policemen and prisons what he has saved on Workhouses and Relieving Officers, besides supporting the loafer, directly or indirectly, just as much as he did before. A room cannot be cleaned by simply sweeping the dirt under the sofa; and the burden of destitution cannot be lightened by simply sweeping the pauper out of the Workhouse into the street. That process does not reduce his weight by a single ounce; and unless he immediately becomes a productive worker, somebody has to bear it. Driving him from pillar to post is a needless labour and expense if he has to be fed at the private post or the prison post after taking himself away from the Workhouse pillar. As far as it has been possible to follow him up, there is no evidence that he costs less, or does more, out of the Test Workhouse than in it.

And there is the further flaw in the case for the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, that in establishing a worse state of things for its inmates than is provided by the least eligible employment outside, it is not only guilty of deliberate cruelty and degradation, thereby manufacturing and hardening the very class it seeks to exterminate, but it protects and, so to speak, standardizes the worst conditions of commercial employment. It is neither desirable morally nor economical financially to drive men and women to accept "the least eligible" outside employment. It is these very "least eligible" employments that have created, and are still creating, a huge residuum of feeble-bodied people who cannot work and able-bodied people who regard work as the worst of evils. Before condemning a man for being "work-shy," we should enquire what are the conditions of the work he has learnt to be shy of. It may be that in depriving some of the least eligible employments of their workers, even at the cost of maintaining these workers in idleness, the more indulgent or extravagant Destitution Authorities have been unwittingly doing public service in compelling the employers to raise the standard of eligibility somewhat. The truth is that nobody who is acquainted with ordinary industrial employment at its worst in the unregulated trades dare propose, explicitly, that any public institution, even for criminals, should underbid it in disregard of the health, comfort and character of its employees. But such underbidding is the very keystone of the theory on which the Able-bodied Test Workhouse is founded. In rejecting it as impracticable, and indeed as monstrous, we are forced to turn our backs on the whole system which it holds together, and to seek deliverance in another direction.

Let us now take the objections to the Able-bodied Test Workhouse in detail as they arise in practice. The first is that the policy of the Able-bodied Test Workhouse will not, as a matter of fact, be carried out for any length of time by an Authority dealing with all classes of destitute persons. The investigations that we have made into practically every case in which such an establishment has been started prove, we think, conclusively that the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, when it is managed by a Destitution Authority, sooner or later crumbles back into the General Mixed Workhouse. The reason for this is obvious. An Authority charged with the maintenance of all classes of destitute persons finds it difficult enough, in its laudable desire to economise in officials, in sites, and in bricks and mortar, to keep entirely separate and distinct institutions even for children, for sick

persons, for the mentally defective, and for the aged and infirm. In fact, as we have already demonstrated in Part I. of our Report, the Destitution Authorities of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland have, in spite of constant pressure from the Central Authority, failed to provide such separate and distinct institutions for the bulk of the Non-able-bodied classes. What is difficult in the case of the Non-able-bodied is impracticable in the case of the Able-bodied. A Board of Guardians has permanently on its hands a certain number—generally an increasing number—of sick persons, of children, of the aged and infirm. Once an infirmary or a school, an asylum or an almshouse is built and placed under separate management it is highly improbable that it will ever stand empty. But the whole object of an Able-bodied Test Workhouse is to "test out" Able-bodied persons who have settled down to the comforts of the General Mixed establishment. In other words, the ideal Able-bodied Test Workhouse would, in normal times, stand empty. If such an institution were run by an Authority exclusively concerned with the suppression of Able-bodied Pauperism, the emptiness of its establishment would be a standing proof of its efficiency. But when the Authority managing such an institution is under perpetual pressure to provide additional accommodation for other classes, the sight of an empty building with unoccupied officials, at a heavy ground rent, seems, both to the administrator and his constituents, a proof of incompetence. Hence, the success of the establishment as a "test," its very prevention of Able-bodied Pauperism, eventually leads to its disestablishment.

The crumbling back of the Able-bodied Test Workhouse into the General Mixed Workhouse is accelerated by the indefiniteness of the class for whom it is provided. It is easy to pick out from a crowd the children, the aged and infirm persons and even those who are sick. But to discriminate the able-bodied from the semi-able-bodied is a task which can never be perfectly performed and about which there will be perpetual difference of opinion. When an Authority, having to maintain semi-able-bodied persons, has free access to an institution intended to "test out" able-bodied persons, it will, as is, we think, proved by the foregoing analysis of the history of the Able-bodied Test Workhouses, be perpetually attempting to make use of the "test" as—to use the candid words to us of the Clerk of a Metropolitan Union—"an easy and ready method of getting rid of very troublesome cases." * Now, "as every Workhouse Master and every Guardian knows, it is by no means the actual able-bodied man who is most troublesome; it is the man who has just enough amiss with him to prevent the doctor certifying that he is able to do hard work." † At first the Medical Officer of the Test House, assuming he is a conscientious official, will send back to the mixed establishment the dirty or dissolute man, or the refractory and disorderly inmate, who happens to be suffering from incipient phthisis, from chronic rheumatism, or from bad varicose veins, or disabling rupture. But if he is the servant of the very Authority that *wants* these cases "tested out" of their establishments, he will, sooner or later, either relax his standard of able-bodiedness,‡ or he will be replaced by a more accommodating medical official. To put it paradoxically, the only chance of separating the Able-bodied from those who are so deficient in physical health or mental capacity as to be non-able-bodied, is to have three separate and distinct Authorities—an Authority dealing with able-bodied persons, an Authority dealing with physically sick persons, and an Authority dealing with mentally-defective persons. These separate Authorities will each of them quickly discover if an inmate belongs by right to either of the others, and will see that he is transferred to the proper institution. If, on the other hand, all the classes are under one and the same Authority, there is no inducement to eliminate cases from the particular institution into which they have been improperly admitted—it is, in fact, easier to keep them all together under one roof in a "mixed" institution, where the classification avowedly permits of each grade "shading off" by imperceptible degrees into the other grades. Any such "mixed" establishment is inevitably, so far as its regimen is concerned, first influenced in favour of uniformity, and then dominated by the "marginal case." Any effectively specialised treatment, such as would be really appropriate to the Able-bodied, the Mentally-Defective, and the Physically Infirm respectively, becomes impracticable. In

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* *Ibid.* Q. 18752 (Mr. Millward).

† *Ibid.* Q. 13876 (Mr. Lockwood.)

‡ We must here recall the significant fact that, according to the Medical Officer's own register, no fewer than 456 out of the 749 passed for admission to the penal labour, severe regimen and exiguous diet of the Tame Street Test House in 1907, were suffering from definite ailments (*see* Sect. IV. of the present chapter).

short, as the authors of the 1834 Report themselves foresaw,* the very indefiniteness of the line of cleavage between those who are able-bodied and those who are slightly sick or slightly defective, inevitably tends in practice, under a "mixed" Authority, to reinstate and to maintain the lax and unspecialised treatment, unsuited to any class whatsoever, that is characteristic of the General Mixed Workhouse.

These administrative obstacles to the continued maintenance of an Able-bodied Test Workhouse by a Destitution Authority are, however, of no account compared to our radical objection to the maintenance, at any time, of a penal establishment by such an Authority. A Destitution Authority may, or may not, have the machinery for discovering whether a person is destitute. It certainly has no machinery for discovering whether or not a person ought to be subject to penal tasks and penal discipline. It seems to us an extraordinary perversion of the law that a Relief Committee, the Master of a General Mixed Workhouse, or the Superintendent of a Test Department, should presume, without legal training, without hearing evidence in open Court, without any proper defence of the person arraigned, to impose on a destitute person what is admittedly worse than a sentence of hard labour merely *as a way of relieving his destitution.* Equally unsatisfactory is the provision made inside the Able-bodied Test Workhouse for the wise treatment of such persons, even assuming that they are in some way or other worthy of punishment. No one acquainted with the administration of prisons, or reformatories, or foreign Penal Colonies, will under-rate the difficulty of securing for such institutions officers with the requisite characteristics for making discipline curative and reformatory. The whole technique of dealing with adults who are criminal, disorderly, or merely "work-shy," is yet in the making. Boards of Guardians and their officials are not only deficient in this technique; they have not the remotest idea that any such special qualification or training is necessary. Any man or woman, if a disciplinarian, is good enough as Labour Master or Labour Mistress. Any Superintendent who "tests men out" is considered a success. Hence, the note of brutality and arbitrariness which is so noticeable in these institutions. It is not that the Superintendent or Labour Master is by nature brutal or even unkind. But the constant association with disorderly and defective characters, with no kind of training either in the science or art of dealing with them, forces him to rely exclusively on a rigorous and unbending discipline.

The tragedy of the whole business is that many of the inmates of an Able-bodied Test Workhouse are neither criminal, nor even "work-shy." The "won't works" may come in and out of a General Mixed Workhouse, but they discharge themselves at once from the Test House and seldom turn up again. The residuum that is left behind by this process of "testing" consists (as in fact, it should do according to the very idea of the institution) of those whose destitution, and whose lack of any possible alternative, are real, absolute and extreme. This is admitted by Poor Law administrators who are constantly advocating the Able-bodied Test Workhouse as a method of testing, not a man's criminality, nor yet his disinclination to work, but his destitution. To discover destitution is, in fact, the only business of a Destitution Authority. Having discovered that a man is really destitute, what right has the Destitution Authority to punish him?

We come here to the root of the matter. There is a fatal ambiguity about the axiom that the condition of the pauper is to be less eligible than the condition of the lowest class of independent labourers. Are the conditions of existence in the Workhouse to be less eligible than those of a man who is in employment, or less eligible than those of a man who is out of work and cannot get into employment? If they are merely to be less eligible than the condition of the man who is in full work at sufficient wages, they will do very little to check able-bodied pauperism. The great mass of men who, in London and the other great cities of the United Kingdom, come in and out of the Workhouse, according to whether the discipline is lax or stern, are not men who have the alternative of holding any situation at wages. This may be due either to their own fault or to circumstances over which they have no control. But that does not alter the fact. What makes impossible, as a method of dealing with Able-bodied Destitution, the policy of offering an Able-bodied Test Workhouse, with conditions of existence less eligible

* Speaking of the largest and best administered Workhouses, the Report records that, "it is found almost impracticable to subject all the various classes within the same house to an appropriate treatment. *One part of a class of adults often so closely resembles a part of another class as to make any distinction in treatment appear arbitrary and capricious to those who are placed in the inferior class, and to create discontents.*" (Report of Poor Law Commissioners, 1834, p. 306, of reprint.)

than those of the lowest grade of independent labourers, is the existence, in all large urban centres, of a numerous class of men who never do hold situations at wages, but who are chronically "under-employed," as casual labourers, or not employed at all. Owing to the social and economic circumstances that we have chosen to create in our great cities, such of these men as are of a definitely parasitic type make shift on a very low level of existence by sponging on other people's earnings, by stray jobs, by charity, and by what may accurately be described as "pickings." What an Able-bodied Test Workhouse does is to keep these wastrels and "cadgers" off the rates—at the cost of leaving them to roam about at large and indulge in their expensive and demoralising parasitism, a danger to property and the public, and a perpetual trouble to the police. The persons who are actually subjected to the stern regimen of the Able-bodied Test Workhouse are not these men at all, for they never stay and never re-enter; but the broken-down and debilitated weakling, the man absolutely without an alternative, the genuinely destitute man, who is forced in by starvation, finds the conditions unendurable and takes his discharge, only to be again and again driven in by dire necessity. To put it shortly, our examination of these institutions demonstrates that the "Ins-and-Outs" of the General Mixed Workhouse are nearly always disreputable; the Ins-and-Outs of the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, who alone are subject to penal discipline, are a depressed and feeble, but on the whole a docile and decent, set of men, who need, if they are to be kept off the rates, not penal tasks and penal discipline on an insufficiently nourishing diet, but a course of strict but restorative physical and mental training, on adequate food, and a patient appeal to their courage and their better instincts.

This consideration brings us to the absurdity of the panacea of placing increased powers of compulsory detention in the hands of the Destitution Authority. We regret to report that the desire to have these powers is almost universal. We have a solemn conference of Metropolitan Guardians resolving, in 1905, "that in view of the fact that the absence of a suitable institution in which refractory and worthless paupers and such as prefer to throw themselves upon the rates and refuse to earn their own livelihood can be dealt with, checks any progress in the work of classification, this Conference is of opinion that it is advisable that the general powers of Guardians who deal with Able-bodied paupers, especially with refractory and disorderly paupers, should be extended, especially in regard to their period of detention." * We were given to understand that the Destitution Authorities would presently "seek and press for additional powers of detention on a graduated basis, to the extent of three, six, or twelve months, or even longer." † But if this power was obtained by a Destitution Authority, what likelihood is there that refractory, disorderly, and work-shy persons would accept its hospitality? If such persons desire maintenance coupled with detention, His Majesty's prisons are open to them without very great exertion on their part. But, as a matter of fact, prisons are not filled by persons who voluntarily resort to them in order to get a livelihood. Those whom they maintain are persons carefully picked out of the general population by an Authority whose special business it is to apprehend refractory and disorderly persons. In a word, it is useless for the Destitution Authority to run a penal establishment for the refractory and "sturdy rogue" unless it also has the power of taking persons up and putting them there. But why, unless we can invent something better than a mere Destitution Authority, should we take this function out of the hands of the Police and Prison Authorities?

(E) The Casual Ward.

The alarming increase in the number of Vagrants seeking relief from the Poor Law Authorities—an increase which has since become ever greater—led, in 1904, to the appointment of a strong Departmental Committee (including the head of the Poor Law Division, and the Senior Medical Officer for Poor Law Purposes of the Local Government Board) to report upon the whole question. Though we received some evidence on the subject,‡ we have felt justified in making use of the valuable information obtained by

* Report of Committee appointed by the Conference of Metropolitan Guardians on Able-bodied Paupers (certain classes of), 1905, p. 1; *see also* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 5778–80, 11557, 14076–82, 26408 (Par. 29), 27061 (Par. 60), 50096 (Par. 13 (XXV.)), and Appendices XV. (A), ar. 79 to Vol. I., XXXVII. (Par. 21) and XLV. (Par. 8 (*a*)) to Vol. IV., and LVII. (Par. 16 (c)) to Vol. VII.

† Report of Committee appointed by the Conference of Metropolitan Guardians on Able-bodied Paupers (certain classes of), 1905, p. 2.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 17097 (Pars. 16, 17), 17646–50, 22136 (Pars. 8, 9), 22172–80, 22229–39, 22436–52, 22508–30, 23065, 23986, 26408 (Pars. 48–50), 26787–854, 28796 (Pars. 14. 15), 28949–55, 29012–28, etc.

this Committee,* as if tendered to us, and were thereby enabled to dispense with much investigation of our own.

The Casual Ward in England and Wales is, in all but about a score of Unions, attached to the General Mixed Workhouse. But the closeness of the Ward to the Workhouse, and the character of the accommodation, ranges from an outhouse and yard behind the porter's lodge, typical of the rural Union,† to the entirely separate building, with its own entrance gate, containing row after row, and tier upon tier, of self-contained brick cells for sleeping and working, characteristic of the better administered of the populous urban Unions. "Ever since the year 1871," state the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, "the Local Government Board have put steady pressure upon Boards of Guardians to provide wards on the cellular system, on the ground that cells, while being deterrent to the habitual Vagrant, relieve the *bona fide* wayfarer of the necessity of associating with him. In 434 Unions, Wards under this system have been built, while in 204 Unions there are no separate cells."‡ A desire to separate the administration of the Casual Ward from that of the General Mixed Workhouse has led, in some Metropolitan and one or two provincial Unions, to the erection of a Casual Ward apart from the Workhouse, on its own site, and under its own Superintendent. In Ireland there is no Casual Ward, but there are many "night lodgers," who are generally accommodated in sheds or outhouses attached to the Workhouse, and sometimes in the Workhouse itself. §

To these 638 Casual Wards, placed all over the country at intervals of a few miles, there resort nightly from 7,000 to 17,000 persons, according to the season, the weather, and the badness of trade. These represent an army "on tramp" estimated to vary, according to the same influences, from 30,000 to as many as 80,000 separate individuals, who resort to the Casual Wards from time to time. Four-fifths of them are men, who are sometimes accompanied by women, and occasionally also by young children.‖ The number of single women in the Casual Wards is infinitesimal. In practice, any person, claiming to be destitute, and not recognised as a local resident, can obtain accommodation. Nominally the applicant ought to seek out the Relieving Officer,¶ and get an order for admission. But in London and in some other towns this is disregarded in practice. In the Metropolis "the casual never goes to the Relieving Officer; his case is always regarded as one of sudden and urgent necessity, and he is admitted by the Superintendent. . . . For the ordinary applicant for relief," stated an experienced Poor Law official, "the Relieving Officer is outside the door, but for the 'casual' he is inside the door." **

> "The hours of admission vary to some extent. Generally speaking, a Vagrant is not admitted before 4 p.m. in the winter or 6 p.m. in the summer, nor after 9 p.m., but Vagrants who go to the Workhouse after that time are generally admitted, as, if illness occurred, the Master might be held responsible for his refusal to admit. The regulations contained in the Order of the Local Government Board dated December 18th, 1882, require that on admission the Vagrant shall be searched, and in almost every case this is done, though not always very carefully. If any money is found, it should, in strictness, be paid to the Treasurer of the Union, but as a rule a Vagrant is allowed to keep any small sum he may have on him. Very frequently the tramp brings in broken food; in some cases this is returned to him on his discharge, and in others he is allowed to eat it in the Ward. Pipes, tobacco, and other small articles are returned to the Vagrant on his discharge. . . . In most of the

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* Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vols. I to III. (Cd. 2892). We also made use of the Report and Evidence of the Scottish Departmental Committee on Habitual Offenders, Vagrants, etc., 1895, Vols. I., II. (7753); the Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906; and of the Annual Reports of the Prison Commissioners.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 28953–55.

‡ Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. I., p. 27.

§ Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Ireland, 1907; Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906. Swarms of such Vagrants oscillate up and down Ireland. "The admissions to the Probationary or Vagrant Ward of a particular Workhouse for the night are far more numerous on the eve or on the night of general popular assemblages, whether cattle-fair, market, races, or athletic sports, etc." (*Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 54.)

‖ Of the applicants for admission to the Casual Wards about 9 per cent. are women and 2 per cent. children. (Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, pp. 111, 113.) But there is evidence that this does not represent the actual proportion of women and children "on the road." Sometimes the man alone goes to the Casual Ward, the woman and children finding accommodation in a common lodging-house.

¶ The experiment has repeatedly been tried, as was recommended by the Poor Law Board's Circular of 1866, of practically putting the matter into the hands of the police, by appointing them Assistant Relieving Officers for this purpose, and making applicants for admission to the Casual Ward apply to the Police Station. (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 48349 (Par. 17), 50713, 50716.) This, whilst deterrent to the respectable man, is found to have no effect on the professional tramp, who knows that he has committed no offence against the criminal law. The bias of the police is, in fact, in favour of every houseless person being ensured lodging, and of every hungry person being fed, in order to obviate the petty thefts to which dire necessity leads.

** Report of Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society on the Homeless Poor of London, 1891, p. 11, and *Q.* 897.

more recent Wards the sleeping accommodation consists of a hammock or a wire bed with a mattress, together with a sufficient amount of rugs; the cells are, as a rule, warmed with hot water pipes. The regulations provide that there shall be a bell in each cell. In the poorer Unions, where the separate cell system has not been adopted, Vagrants sleep in associated wards, either in hammocks, on straw mattresses or, in some cases, plank beds. The Local Government Board discourage plank beds, and they are now somewhat rare. Whether they are a hardship or not depends upon the sufficiency of the rugs provided, a matter which is very much in the hands of the Superintendent."*

What, however, interests the ordinary inmate far more than any details of accommodation, are the conditions imposed on him during his sojourn with regard to detention, labour and food. In these respects the Departmental Committee found that "diversity of practice in the different Unions is the most striking characteristic of the present system." † The Local Government Board for England and Wales constantly advises the Boards of Guardians to detain the Vagrant for two nights, and to exact from him in the intervening day a severe task of work.‡ If he re-appears at the same Casual Ward for a second time within a month, he should be detained for four nights; but this regulation is, outside the Metropolis, seldom enforced:—

"It is, of course, much easier," as the Departmental Committee remark, "for a Workhouse Master or the Superintendent of a Casual Ward to allow Vagrants to discharge themselves on the morning after admission without labour, than to detain them and insist upon their doing the regulation task of work; and the discretion which is left to the officers with respect to the discharge of certain classes of Vagrants results in a complete variety of practice."§

Even in the Metropolis, which is,

"Under the Order of 1882, considered as one Union, so far as the relief of casual paupers is concerned . . . there is no real uniformity . . . some Guardians do not detain, some give one task, some another, and some practically none at all. . . . Each Board of Guardians has a different opinion upon some point or another. Some Boards of Guardians say the casuals are working-men honestly looking for work, and there is no doubt they are, but they know where they are going to get it. When they leave they know to what Casual Ward they are going, and whether they are going to break stones or pick oakum. The consequence is that the London Vagrants flock to Poplar, Thavies Inn, and the other Wards where detention and work are not enforced, or where only a light task is given."||

"Where a Union carries out the regulations as to detention and task of work, there is always a reduction in the number of admissions to their Casual Wards, but the evidence before us shows that severity of discipline in one Union may merely cause the Vagrants to frequent other Unions."¶

The food given varies almost as much as does the task exacted, and seems to have no relation to it; in fact, the Unions which exact least work have the most generous dietary.

"On the evening of admission the Vagrant receives his supper, which, under the Order, is to consist of 8 ounces of bread, or 6 ounces of bread and 1 pint of gruel or broth; the same ration is provided for breakfast and supper on the next day, and for breakfast on the morning of his leaving

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* Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. I., pp. 27, 28.

† *Ibid.*, p. 27.

‡ "Where the regulations are carried out the casual pauper is, as a general rule, detained two nights. On the day after his admission he has to do a task of work which has been sanctioned by the Local Government Board. The tasks are extremely diverse, the most usual being stone-breaking, wood-sawing, wood-chopping, flint-pounding, corn-grinding, pumping and digging, and oakum-picking. The task is supposed to represent nine hours' work. The Local Government Board have made considerable efforts to ensure that the task is fair to the Vagrant, and sufficiently hard to be deterrent, but the evidence seems to show that they have not been successful in attaining this object. The object of the task was in the first instance not only to deter the Vagrant, but to obtain some return from him for the cost of his food and lodging. The cost of the Vagrant's food is so small, probably not exceeding 4d. for each person detained for two nights, that in many cases where the tramp is put to a useful task he more than repays the cost. The inherent difficulty of arranging tasks fairly is that most of the work is necessarily, to some extent, skilled labour. For instance, a task of stone-breaking or oakum-picking which would be impossible for the beginner is mere child's play to the sturdy Vagrant who has served a long apprenticeship in gaols and Workhouses." (*Ibid.*, p. 28.) "Sunday, we may observe, is a blank day in the Casual Wards. The occupants are, of course, given no work to do; and they are often not admitted to the religious service in the adjacent Workhouse, for fear of their introducing some infectious disease. Thus, they have to remain all day idle in their quarters." (*Ibid.*, Vol. II., p. 23.)

§ *Ibid.*, Vol. I., pp. 32, 33.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 30. In the Metropolis there "has been, since 1871, a staff of visiting officers, appointed by the Local Government Board. These officers regularly inspect the Wards and identify the Vagrants who are liable to detention. There were 17,801 identifications in 1904, and 16,060 cases were detained for four nights." In all the rest of England and Wales such detentions number only about 3,000 annually. In London, "some Vagrants are detained many times in the same year. Not all the Vagrants who are identified are detained, for the Superintendent, acting under the direction or influence of the Guardians or on his own discretion, exercises a power of discharge." (*Ibid.*).

¶ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

the Wards. His mid-day meal on the day after admission consists of 8 ounces of bread and 1½ ounces of cheese, or 6 ounces of bread and 1 pint of soup. . . . In 374 Unions, he gets nothing but bread for breakfast and supper, and in 240 gruel or broth is given with bread. For the mid-day meal, 474 Unions give only bread and cheese, while 115 give soup or broth. The regulations, therefore, do not secure uniformity in so simple a matter as feeding the Vagrant, and, in many cases, it appears that Guardians give a dietary not authorised by the regulations. Any improvement in the diet of a particular Ward invariably attracts tramps at once, and the habituals well know where to go for the best meals."*

Our own investigations fully confirm the Report of the Departmental Committee in respect of the extraordinary diversity of treatment thus meted out by the Destitution Authorities to the "houseless poor" and destitute "wayfarers."

(i.) *The Casual's Free Hotel.*

We have visited Casual Wards having well-warmed and well-lit cubicles furnished with comfortable beds, and an ample supply of rugs, to which the "occasional poor" are ushered after a really hot bath; and in which they are supplied with an ample meal of hot broth and bread—accommodation at least as eligible as that afforded by the better type of common lodging-house. These Casual Wards are very naturally appreciated by the professional tramp. To quote the words of a frequent customer, a London "Sandwich man," "I have got a nice hot supper, a nice hot bath, a nice clean bunk to sleep in, and a clean shirt to put on, and when I come in here I know what I bring in, and I know what I am going to take out." † Accordingly, as we are told:—

"At the popular London Wards, the Vagrants begin to assemble quite early in the day, and hang about until the Wards are open. They are then selected by the Superintendent in various ways; sometimes he takes the first comer, sometimes he takes, say, every third man. Owing to complaints by the neighbours, in some cases the Guardians have had to establish a waiting shed outside the Wards."‡ . . . "The Local Government Board publish annually a table, in which is set out the number of refusals to admit on account of want of room at the various Casual Wards in London. In 1904, there were 21,367 refusals altogether, and two-thirds of these were in five Wards. These Wards were Thavies Inn (City of London Union) which is an association Ward; Marylebone, which Mr. Simmons describes as 'a nice easy place, only a little oakum to pick; you pick as much as you like'; Poplar, where there is 'no work at all'; Whitechapel, where there is an association Ward, and the work is only oakum-picking; and Hackney, where at that time the accommodation was obviously insufficient. On the other hand, at Chelsea and St. Pancras, where the detention and task are rigidly enforced, there have been no refusals from want of accommodation for the last seven years. No stronger illustration," sums up the Departmental Committee, "could be provided of the encouragement to tramps which lax administration affords."§

But these official statistics as to the number of refusals are illusory. The Superintendents do not, as a matter of fact, take the trouble to note down exactly how many have applied in vain.

(ii.) *The Casual's Prison.*

There is, however, another side to the picture, which seems to have escaped the observation of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy. We have ourselves visited Casual Wards in which the premises, the sleeping accommodation, the food and the amount of work exacted, taken together, constitute a treatment more penal and more brutalising than that of any gaol in England. We do not here refer to the dark and squalid out-houses, with the low plank shelving, shared by all the men in common, as the only bed—the old-fashioned Casual Ward of the little Urban District—which is, under the pressure of the Inspectorate, fast disappearing.‖ What has surprised us is to find rising up in the great midland and northern cities, great and costly cellular prisons, erected with the sanction of the Local Government Board, as the only provision for the destitute wayfarer and houseless poor. Here the cells are dark and cold; the bare stone floor, with one rug, is the only sleeping place. During the day the men are locked in solitary pens and kept for nine hours at stone-pounding, the hardest and most

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* *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 29.

† *Ibid.*, p. 31.

‡ *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 31.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 30. In London, "the present Casual Ward accommodation appears to be more than sufficient. . . . When there were only twenty-four Wards, the refusals were less than they are now." It is said that no case is known "where a Vagrant who has been refused admission to the Casual Wards has been obliged to sleep out. They either make their way to another Ward, or pay for a lodging." (*Ibid.*, p. 31.)

‖ But even in the country, the Casual Ward is sometimes like a prison. In one Union of the West Country our Committee found that "the Vagrant Wards were a solid block of buildings, totally enclosed and from which there was no possibility of escape. Little daylight could penetrate, and the place was, to all intents, a prison on a small scale. Stone-breaking was provided for the strong, and wood-chopping for the weaker.' (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 54, p. 108.

monotonous toil that has been devised. The Superintendents of these Casual Wards pride themselves on having always vacant cells. Every man, in return for the shilling's worth of food and establishment charges, is detained for the full period of about thirty-six hours; and if he is rash enough to come twice in a month, he is detained for four days and five nights, which is nearly the equivalent of what the prison authorities construe as a sentence of a week's imprisonment. But the habitual inmate of a Casual Ward prefers a sentence of imprisonment to the severity of the more rigorous Casual Wards. The statistics prove, to use the words of the Departmental Committee, "that certain men deliberately commit offences in order to be sent to prison. To many of these men prison seems to afford a desirable change to the Casual Ward." * Armed thus with the weapon of a Casual Ward more deterrent than a gaol—coupled, we fear, with what has been described to us as "brutality" in the administration †—Boards of Guardians achieve the most amazing reductions in the number of casual paupers—with the result that the local police find themselves confronted with an equally remarkable increase in the number of unwarded Vagrants.

(iii.) *The Unwarded Vagrant.*

The result of the deterrent administration of the Casual Ward is that the Vagrants remain outside. The country then becomes infested with persons "sleeping out," who manage, by begging and other devices, to pick up a living. In response to complaints, the local police become more frequent in their arrests for the usual offences of Vagrancy; the magistrates, if they consent to convict at all, will only impose short sentences of seven and fourteen days' imprisonment; and the prisons—much more comfortable than the deterrent Casual Wards—become filled with Vagrants. Between 1902 and 1905 there was an increase of several thousands in the number of persons committed to prison in the year for these offences:—

> "The Governor of Gloucester Prison reports that of 1,184 prisoners received on conviction during the year, 593, or one-half, were committed for Workhouse offences, sleeping-out, and begging, the sentences being invariably for seven or fourteen days. The Governor says that 'such sentences can have no terrors for confirmed Vagrants.' The Chaplain of Northallerton Prison reports that 'the professional tramp is the most hopeless class of prisoner met with. He looks upon His Majesty's prison as a house of rest and refreshment, and uses it freely for such purposes, deliberately committing offences in order that he may be sent there.' Prison discipline offers no terror for such men. Some other method must be devised for dealing with them, or they will be an increasing quantity."‡

The police and the Prison Commissioners then complain of the action of the Poor Law Authorities in nullifying the intention of the Legislature by leaving the Vagrants unwarded.

A typical example of this ostrich-like attitude of the Destitution Authorities, in dealing with the problem of the "houseless poor," is afforded by the recent controversy between the Manchester Town Council and the Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians with regard to "sleeping out." § These Boards of Guardians had set themselves seriously to cope with the problem of "vagrancy" on the lines approved by the Local Government Board. They combined in 1897 to open a gigantic Casual Ward, erected at an expense of £41,000,‖ on the newest deterrent model, to accommodate, at a pinch, up to a thousand inmates. The use of this remarkable prison-like structure brought down the admissions of "casual paupers" from 52,872 in 1896 to 23,684 in 1897; and great were the congratulations of the Local Government Board Inspectors. But what was the consequence? The first reaction was the opening, by a philanthropic agency, of an extensive "Free Shelter," to provide for the crowds of homeless men who were found in the streets. This not only completed the emptying of the Casual Ward, but also depleted the common lodging-houses. Incidentally it also attracted fresh hordes of Vagrants from the neighbouring towns, so that the Shelter became overcrowded, and even the Casual Ward began again to be resorted to. This result led to such an expression of public opinion that the philanthropists closed their Shelter; and the "strict administrators" once more rejoiced at the "suppression of vagrancy." Presently, however, in spite of the ever open door of the Casual Ward, the people of Manchester found literally hundreds of homeless persons "sleeping out" in the brickfields and other

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* Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. I., p. 31.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 84453–5.

‡ Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prisons, 1904–5, p. 13.

§ For this remarkable episode, *see* the Report to the Manchester Town Council of its Special Committee on Sleeping-out, September 30th, 1903; the Memorandum of the Chief Constable, in Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. III., Appendix No. XXXII.; and the evidence before that Committee, *Qs.* 7758–8007 (in Vol. II.).

‖ No less than £148 per cell. (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, *Q.* 9917.)

sheltered places, causing nuisance and damage to property. In 1902 the police reported "that there was a larger proportion than hitherto of men who, they had reason to believe, were working men out of employment, willing and anxious to work if they could obtain employment."* At first the police arrested the men for the offence of "sleeping out." But the magistrates as often as not dismissed the charge, on the ground "that their position as sleepers out was due to circumstances over which they had no control, and for which they were not responsible." The Chief Constable then inquired of other large towns, and found that the number of "sleepers out" was proportionately far less than in Manchester. The Manchester Town Councillors thereupon set themselves to find what was wrong in their town. They went late one night to the Casual Ward at Tame Street which they found only one-third full. They then sought a conference with the Joint Committee of the Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians to discuss the problem. What the Town Councillors and the Chief Constable urged was that, while there were several hundreds of men nightly "sleeping out" in Manchester, the Casual Ward could not be said to be fulfilling its function; and they urged the relaxation of the rules which had made it so deterrent. "We want," they said, "to do away with a serious evil—a great danger to the public health . . . damage to people's property. . . . These men, living and sleeping here under such insanitary conditions, . . . move about . . . carrying contamination round about wherever they go. . . . Such a thing ought not to be." The question as it seemed to these Town Councillors was how to get the vagrants warded, not how to keep them out of the Casual Ward.† The Guardians, on the other hand, held that they had no sort of responsibility for the men who did not apply to them; and that it was positively their duty to try to deter people from applying for a night's lodging. "It is not for us," they said, "to go to the brickfields and invite them to come here. . . . We endeavour here to show them that work must be done. . . . If they go to the brickfields there is nothing to improve them in any way. Here we do endeavour to improve them." To this it was replied that the men simply would not come. The Chief Constable insisted that "the question is how to house these persons? Where should these 300 men go to sleep? What can you do to get the 300 in here, that is really the point?" To this, however, the Guardians were obdurate, and whilst promising to consider again the rules of the Casual Ward, refused to entertain the idea that they had any responsibility for the homeless. We find, however, that after the complaint of the Town Council there was some relaxation of the conditions; houseless men were taken in at any hour of the night; and the number of admissions to the Casual Ward steadily rose from under one hundred per night in 1903 to nearly two hundred per night in 1907—the latter figure being actually greater than the admissions of 1896, which led to the erection of the Tame Street building. Thus, after a ten years' cycle, and the expenditure of nearly £50,000, Manchester has as many casual paupers as before.‡ Meanwhile, as if to show how completely the existing arrangements fail to cope with the problem, the Manchester Justices have again had to complain of the number of men "sleeping out" in the brickcrofts; and have actually urged the Guardians to open another Casual Ward, to serve as a Free Shelter in a more convenient neighbourhood than Tame Street, in order that these Vagrants may be warded.§

What has happened at Manchester is but typical of the history of the last three quarters of a century, in regard to the provision made by the Destitution Authority for the wayfarer and the houseless poor. The student of the records, both of the Central Authority and of the Boards of Guardians, finds a perpetual oscillation of policy. The number of so-called "Vagrants" rises. Presently an official inquiry is held, a new Circular is issued by the Local Government Board, up and down the country Local Authorities make their Casual Wards more deterrent, more repulsive and more brutalising. The number of applicants for admission falls off, and great are the mutual congratulations. A year or two later it is discovered that men are "sleeping out," philanthropists are driven to make other provision, the police complain of the nuisance of the "unwarded Vagrant," the Guardians themselves shrink back in compunction at the more than prison-like severity that they are inflicting; and the conditions of the Casual Ward become less deterrent. Then the number of applicants for admission again rises; and—this being quite erroneously regarded as an increase in "vagrancy"

* Memorandum of Chief Constable of Manchester in Appendix No. XXXII. of Vol. III. of Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906.

† *Ibid.*, Vol. II., *Q.* 7992.

‡ The numbers admitted to the Casual Ward at Tame Street rose, in the winter of 1907–8, to more than 200 a night.

§ MS. Minutes, Manchester City Justices Annual Meeting, January, 1907; *Ibid.*, Joint Committee of Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians, January 11th, 1907.

—the same old remedies are once more re-discovered and the see-saw begins again. Half a dozen times, at least, in the past three quarters of a century, this oscillation is to be traced,* different Unions standing at any one time at different points in the see-saw. Finally, the Departmental Committee of 1904–1906, finding the existing administration, alike in its severity and in its laxness, a complete failure,† felt compelled to recommend the withdrawal of the whole class of Vagrants from the Destitution Authorities—Authorities who, as they sagely remark, are only interested in the Vagrant when he resorts, in a destitute condition, to the Casual Ward—and the transference of the class to the Police Authorities—Authorities interested in "Vagrancy as a Whole," and having in their daily "patrolling of the roads" the means of watching the "general movements of Vagrants" in all the phases of their tramping life.‡.

(iv.) *Who are the "Casuals"?*

The recommendation made by the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy appeals to us, as coinciding with the scheme of "breaking up the Poor Law," and distributing its several services among the committees of the County and County Borough Councils, to which our consideration of the other sections of the pauper army has led us. It would, indeed, give symmetry and completeness to our scheme of Reform to bring in the Watch Committee of the Town Council and the Standing Joint Committee of the County Council as the Authorities for dealing with Able-bodied Destitution, just as the Education Committee will deal with children who are destitute, the Health Committee with the sick, and the Asylums Committee, under its extended reference, with all the Mentally Defective. But further consideration compels us to reject the proposal of the Departmental Committee.

We have, first of all, the fact that a very large proportion of the men who resort to the Casual Ward are not, in the ordinary sense, "tramps" or wayfarers at all, but practically permanent denizens of their particular locality. There is, in this respect, a marked difference between the Casual Wards of such great urban aggregations as the Metropolis, the Manchester district, Birmingham and the "Black Country," and the West Riding, on the one hand, and those of the rural or small town Union on the other. In the Casual Wards of the great urban centres the bulk of the men do not even profess to be on their way to any place whatsoever. They are in no sense "tramps" or wayfarers. They remain, for the most part, in or about their own great aggregation, oscillating from one Casual Ward to another, within or not far distant from their own town; and alternating their patronage of these "King's Mansions" by occasionally "sleeping out," taking advantage of any philanthropic or religious "Shelters" that exist, or resorting to a common lodging-house when they have a few pence to spare for a bed.§ In fact, to use the descriptive phrase of the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834—1847, they are, in these great cities, simply the "houseless poor." ‖

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* Report . . . on the Policy of the Central Authority from 1834 to 1907, pp. 18–19, 48–51, 85–86.

† "It is clear to us that the present system neither repels nor reforms the Vagrant. It is agreed that the essential condition of success is uniformity of administration, but the evidence is overwhelming to the effect that this object is not attained. In most cases the Orders of the Local Government Board are evaded, and in many absolutely disregarded. Mr. Curtis, Clerk to the King's Norton Guardians, says: 'In my judgment the present measures have totally failed to achieve their object. . . . My experience leads me to the conclusion that in a number of Unions the administration of the Casual Poor Acts and Regulations is practically a dead letter.'" (Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. I., p. 32.)

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

§ With regard to the Metropolis, which includes at least 10 per cent. of the whole aggregate, the evidence is overwhelming. "The London vagrant is in most cases a loafer who simply migrates from one Ward to another. He is in Whitechapel to-night and in St. George's-in-the-East to-morrow night, and he will go across to Kensington the next night, but he does not leave London. If he gets a copper or two in his pocket he may go to the Salvation Army for preference; he may ring the changes; he has a happy-go-lucky sort of life." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 9381.) "They have," says another witness, "their time for excursions, when they go either to the sea-side, or hop-picking or fruit-picking, and so on, but for the greater part of the year, I am inclined to think, they are in London, and they circulate round about the Casual Wards." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 10464.) "If a tramp likes the ward he is there again within the month, perhaps in a fortnight." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 3389.) "I will guarantee to say, if you were to post up a notice in any Casual Ward you like to-day—this is Thursday—that the Casual Wards would be closed on Saturday, there would not be an applicant for admission on that day; it circulates like electricity almost; you may hardly believe it possible." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 3348.) "The way-ticket system, in my judgment, would be of no use at all in London." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 9832.)

‖ In 1901, the Clerk drew the attention of the Joint Committee of the Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians to the fact that during the year over 4,000 persons had been admitted into the Casual Wards who were not vagrants. The master was ordered to refer to the Workhouse applicants who had slept the preceding night within the area of the two Unions, but nevertheless to use his discretion, and not refuse urgent cases, old people or women with children, late at night. (MS. Minutes, Joint Committee, October 11th, 1901.) We ascertained that the bulk of the inmates of the Casual Ward to-day are believed to have resided in or

Whatever argument may be derived from the opportunities that the Police Authorities possess, in their constant patrolling of the roads, for keeping the wayfarers under observation clearly does not apply to the inmates of the Casual Wards of the great urban centres who, whatever they are, for the most part are not wayfarers at all. Moreover, it is clear from the evidence that the vast majority of these men are habitual, we may even say professional, "casuals," who live permanently, and almost entirely, on this and other forms of public assistance, or private charity. With regard to as many as 98 per cent. of them in London, it can be said that "year after year they are there, and there they stick. They are casuals, and casuals they will remain till they go into the infirmary and die. . . . They are not working men. If you give them a job for a day or two days perhaps, they might do that, but you must not expect them to work longer; they do not like working longer than a day or two. . . . A lot of them are young fellows. If you could get hold of them when first they come into the casual ward and get them away, something might be done."* As it is, they are "the despair of Poor Law administrators." † But this is not on account of their disorderliness; it is not because they refuse to do the task or conform to the discipline of the establishment. It is not for these men that the aid of the Police and the Magistrate is invoked. Professional Vagrants, whether they are of the stationary or of the mobile type, "give," we learn, "no trouble whatever. Accustomed as they are to the Casual Ward they know the routine and the amount of work that can be demanded from them. . . . They are able to crack the stones allotted, very rarely breaking a hammer-stick." ‡ All they do is to come again!

Very different is the state of things in the Casual Ward of the rural Union or small town. Here practically all the inmates are—whatever may be their characters or their motives—really travellers on the move, wayfarers from place to place. Opinions differ as to what proportion of them are habitual or professional "casuals," living on this form of public assistance and moving merely from one Casual Ward to another. It is, however, clear that, in marked contrast with the inmates of the London Wards, a very large proportion of them—one Workhouse Master said as many as two-thirds—are really labouring men, moving from job to job, or genuinely in search of work. That the majority are not habitual or professional tramps is shown by the careful statistical estimates framed by the Departmental Committee.§ In their opinion the total number of Vagrants throughout Great Britain rises, in the winters of the worst years of trade depression, to as many as seventy or eighty thousand. In years of brisk trade, in summer, the total probably falls to thirty or forty thousand. The Committee put the total number of the permanent tramp class (including those of London and the other great towns) at about twenty to thirty thousand, the bulk of them oscillating in and closely around their several urban centres. Thus, quite apart from the habitual or professional, there are officially estimated to be, at all times, from ten to fifty thousand persons more or less resorting to the Casual Wards, who, whatever their moral or industrial characters, are not permanent tramps. Hence we may infer that, in good times, nearly one-third, and in bad times as many as two-thirds of all the Vagrants on the road are, at any rate, not professionals. And the proportion in the rural Unions lying on the great routes must

about Manchester for years. So in the "Black Country." At Birmingham, a Guardian declared in 1893 that nearly one-third of the inmates of the Casual Ward belonged to Birmingham itself. (*Birmingham Daily Post*, March 1st, 1899.) This was found on inquiry to be true. (*Ibid.*, November 7th, 1901.) The Central Authority thought it necessary to draw attention to the fact that "the Casual Wards are not for the settled poor of the parish." (Local Government Board to Birmingham Board of Guardians, February 26th, 1902.) The Aston Board of Guardians found the same state of things. "Residents within the Union make use of the Wards." (*Birmingham Daily Post*, November 27th, 1905.) "The very high totals were found to contain a number of men who had legally no business to be there receiving casual relief, being settled poor of that area, and attention was drawn to that point." (Thirty-first Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1901–2, p. 72; Mr. Steven's Report.)

* Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, *Qs.* 3281, 3347, 3358–9.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 10466. The fallacy of treating the inmates of the Metropolitan Casual Wards as Vagrants or wayfarers, is strongly brought out. "The frequenter of the London Casual Wards seems to be a class by himself. He has a higher standard of comfort than the country Vagrant, and looks down on the man who frequents Shelters. Attracted, perhaps, by the comparative comfort and cleanliness of the Wards, he apparently seldom or never sleeps out, or goes to a Shelter. Once in London he finds it so comfortable that he remains there, except, perhaps, for an occasional expedition into the country for hop-picking. If he is not in a Casual Ward he is in prison, and detention which acts as a strong deterrent in the country appears to be ineffective in London, even where the detention is extended to four nights. The reason for this may be that the Wards are better in London than in the country, and *that the Vagrant in the country generally has some objective*, but in London he simply goes round and round from Ward to Ward. A list was given to us of 950 habitual tramps who practically live in the London Casual Wards." (*Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 32.)

‡ Report of Workhouse Master to the Plympton Board of Guardians, for 1905.

§ Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. I., p. 22.

be even greater. We have, therefore, been much interested in the careful descriptive records of all his "casuals" during the three years 1905–1907, kept by the Master of one rural Workhouse on the route between Plymouth and London. We append some of the statistics from these records.* The Master is convinced that more than two-thirds of the men had not been there previously; that one-third of them were "navvies," and about 2 per cent. seamen, merely passing from job to job, and using the Casual Ward in their accustomed fashion as a gratuitous wayside inn; that the bulk of the men were mechanics and labourers wandering somewhat aimlessly about in search of work, owing to "depression of trade"; that the painters were, as usual, without employment in the winter, very few indeed of them appearing in the summer; and that, although one-third of the total were admitted more than once within the year, those known to him to be "professional" or "habitual" tramps did not amount to more than 5 per cent.†

* Occupations of Casuals in the Ward of a Rural Union.

—	1905.	1906.	1907.
Navvies	552	772	618
General Labourers	404	485	489
Painters	62	56	61
Carpenters	42	6	37
Masons	38	42	48
Grooms	37	40	60
Seamen	34	28	48
Fitters	24	—	20
Shoemakers	23	24	36
Firemen	15	21	31
Tailors	13	16	11
Gardeners	12	12	8
Miners	12	—	—
Bakers	4	13	13
Clerks	11	8	38
Ironmoulders	11	5	16
Blacksmiths	9	—	13
Other occupations	142	57	69
Professional tramps	70	25	66
Total	1,512	1,610	1,673
Of these, there had served in the Army	343	396	462
" " " Navy	54	45	75

Ages of Casuals in 1907.

—	Males.	Females.
Between 16 and 24	72	4
" 24 " 40	725	30
" 40 " 55	461	26
" 55 " 65	427	20
Over 65	188	13

The age distribution in the two previous years is very similar.

Recurrents in 1907.

—	Men.	Women.
Number admitted once during the year	1,409	77
" " twice "	201	12
" " 3 times "	30	2
" " 4 " "	12	1
" " 5 " "	8	–
" " 6 " "	6	–
" " 8 " "	4	–
" " 9 " "	2	1
" " 12 " "	1	–
	1,673	93

† It is interesting to notice that the number of grooms nearly doubled within three years, owing (as many of them declared) to their employers having taken to motor-cars. We may cite, in general confirmation, another table of occupations of casuals on a high road :—

"Occupations as stated by themselves :—

(i.) Of men admitted to Hitchin Workhouse Casual Wards during twelve months ended on September 29th, 1906.

(ii.) Of men admitted to Brixworth Workhouse Casual Wards during twelve months ended on March 25th, 1906; and]

Whether or not the Police have facilities, in patrolling the roads, for keeping under observation that section of the professional Vagrants who go from town to town, we fail to see the superiority of the Watch Committee and the Chief Constable, over the Board of Guardians and the Labour Master, for the essential business of assisting those men who are really looking for work (who clearly are those whom we ought to keep in view) to find permanent situations.

(v) *The Dilemma of the Casual Ward.*

The administrators of the Casual Ward, whether they be Poor Law or Police Authorities, will, in fact, like the administrators of the Able-bodied Test Workhouses, find themselves perpetually on the horns of a dilemma. If, in their Casual Wards, they offer anything like decent accommodation, even if this is distinctly less eligible than the lodging and supper of the lowest grade of independent labourers *who are in employment*, they will find their Casual Wards, however numerous and gigantic these are made, overcrowded, not merely, or even mainly, by the habitual Vagrants, but by the limitless mass of Unemployed or Under-employed, including the semi-able-bodied. and the Unemployables of all kinds. This mass, always large, contracts in times of prosperity, and swells portentously in bad years, without seeming—to the Superintendent who watches it stream through his Casual Ward—to differ in composition, in spite of the fact that the proportion of habituals varies from 33 to as much as 70 per cent. If, in order to reduce this casual pauperism, the offer of the night's lodging is accompanied by penal conditions, the professional Vagrant stays away, and leaves the penal discipline to harden and brutalise the respectable man in search of work.*

(vi) *The need for more prolonged and more specialised Treatment.*

It does not, we think, need more than the two or three centuries of recorded experiences to prove that no alteration in the way that we treat the Vagrant—so long as we persist in confining our treatment of him to his periods of vagrancy—will cause him to cease out of the land. As the Departmental Committee aptly indicates, the cause of the failure has been that the Authorities have hitherto only been interested in the Vagrant *at those moments in his life when he applies for admission to the Casual Ward.* It is, indeed, the inherent defect of the Destitution Authority that it is absolutely precluded from any cognisance of the men before they become destitute, or after they

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† *Continued from previous page.*

(iii.) Of men and women admitted to Casual Wards at St. Albans, Hatfield, Hertford, Hitchin, Watford and Welwyn during week ended on September 29th, 1906, and at Royston during last three days of that week.

Hitchin (12 months).		Brixworth (12 months).		7 Wards (one week).	
Labourers	3,830	Labourers	222	Labourers	492
Painters	226	Painters	14	Painters	25
Grooms	157	Shoemakers	13	Grooms and Stablemen	24
Bricklayers	144	Grooms	12	Bricklayers	17
Shoemakers	133	Bricklayers	12	Fitters	14
Fitters, riveters and boiler makers	123	Fitters	9	Shoemakers	14
Tailors	108	Carpenters	9	Printers and compositors	14
Carpenters and joiners	106	Tailors	5	Tailors	13
Others	1,815	Others	96	Others	214
Total	6,642	Total	392	Total	827

(Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1906–7, pp. 292–3, Mr. Court's Report.)

* "Even if the Casual Wards cannot be expected to improve morally, physically, or financially, those who resort to them, *the effect should not be to drive such persons further down*, and to make it more difficult for them to find employment afterwards. It is probable that the moral effect of associated Casual Wards is no worse than that of the common lodging-houses, but the effect of a few days of stone-breaking on boots and clothes is certainly disastrous in many cases. For this reason, among others, I consider stone-pounding or oakum-picking a decidedly superior task to stone-breaking, though none of these are ideal occupations." (Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1904–5, Appendix B., p. 185; Mr. E. D. Court's Report.)

cease to be destitute. The Police Authority in charge of the Casual Ward would be in no better case. What is necessary, it seems clear to us, is that, if a man is found wandering and houseless, either about our great cities or on the high road, something more is required in the interests of the community than the mere relief of his momentary necessities, with or without punishment. What is required is to take hold of a larger section * of that man's life, in order to find out the cause and character of his distress, and to bring him under influences which may set him on his feet. In many cases—on the statistics we make bold to say from one-third to two-thirds of the cases, according as we draw the net in years of good trade or years of depression—what is needed is the opportunity of regular employment in a situation of some stability; and it must be the business of some Public Authority to see, in the manner that we shall presently indicate, that this is not lacking to any able-bodied man. This, however, is clearly not work for either the Destitution Authority or the Police Authority. Where the destitute houseless man turns out to be a professional tramp, or an habitual loafer or wastrel, as he apparently is in between one-third and two-thirds of the cases, there must be a proper machinery for his trial for the offence of taking to this state of life, and for his judicial commitment, not to prison in the ordinary sense, but to a Reformatory Colony for a term of compulsory detention. This Reformatory Colony—which would, we presume, serve the whole kingdom—cannot, certainly, be placed under the administration of any of the Destitution Authorities. Nor can we see that the Watch Committees of the Boroughs, or the Standing Joint Committees of the Counties of England and Wales—which have, at present, no institutions to manage more complicated than the "lock-up"—are likely to be any more competent to administer a national Reformatory Colony than the Boards of Guardians. What is clear is that, when we have an Employment Authority, charged with ascertaining exactly what situations are vacant, and a national Reformatory Colony to which can be judicially committed the wastrels and "won't-works," there will be no place for what we now call the Casual Ward. Of all the ways of dealing with the Vagrants or "houseless poor," the stationary or the mobile alike, the genuinely unemployed workmen or the "professionals," the very worst is, whether under brutalising conditions or under demoralising laxness, to relieve them and let them go.

(f) The Able-bodied in the Scottish Poorhouses.

Under the law of Scotland, dating from at least 1579, as definitely interpreted in 1864 by the final Court of Appeal, it is absolutely illegal for the Destitution Authority to give relief in any form to the able-bodied, or even to admit them to the Poorhouse.† This prohibition applies not only to residents, but also to Vagrants, for whom no exception is made. Every applicant for relief, whether locally resident or a wayfarer, has, according to the regulations, to be examined by the Parish Doctor, who certifies "on soul and conscience" whether or not he is able-bodied.‡ Only those men (and those single women unencumbered with children) who are thus certified to be suffering from some ailment are admitted into the Poorhouse. We, therefore, supposed that we should find in Scotland at any rate no able-bodied men being supported under the Poor Law. We quickly perceived, however, that the occupants of the Scottish Poorhouses in the large towns in no way differed in appearance from those of the English General Mixed Workhouses; and it was officially admitted in evidence that this was often the case.§ It is

* "If," says Mr. Lockwood, "it were a condition of his relief that he submit, not to punishment, but to, say, a week's discipline and work, *opportunities for inquiry, help and improvement would be afforded which are obviously impossible under the present system, which is essentially casual in its working and application.*" (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, *Q* 10466.) This does not mean stone-breaking in a prison cell. "To put a man behind a grating and say to him that he has to break so many stones and throw them through that grating is to make him feel that work is a hateful thing." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 5942; Rev. Canon Barnett.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 53068 (Pars. 85–92), 61371 (Par. 22); Isdale *v.* Jack, 1864, 4 M. (H.L.), p. 1; McWilliam *v.* Adams, 1852, 1 Macq. 120; Lindsay *v.* McTear, 1852, 1 Macq. 155; Petrie *v.* Meek, 1859, 21 D. 614; Jack *v.* Thom, 1860, 23 D. 173. With the able-bodied man is included his dependents, however sick or disabled they may be (Mackay *v.* Bailie, 1853, 15 D. 971). And the prohibition is not confined to men. "An able-bodied woman without children is no more entitled to relief than an able-bodied man," even if she is absolutely without food. (Scott *v.* Beattie, 1880, 7 R. 1047.) "I saw a case yesterday, a case of an able-bodied woman that was refused, and I said to the Inspector, 'That means prostitution,' and he said: 'I suppose so.'" (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 64312.)

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 56259–60.

§ "In some city poorhouses," said the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, "I have frequently been unable to distinguish the inmates from the able-bodied inmates of an English Workhouse." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 56605, Par. 29.) "The difference in the two countries," said an experienced parish doctor, "probably amounts to nothing. I expect the English pauper, admitted without medical certificate, suffers from exactly the same conditions and affections which qualify the Scottish pauper for admission to the poorhouse." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 65247, Par. 8.) *See also Qs.* 56596, 56597, and 55124, 55125.

officially admitted that it has been found, in practice, necessary to evade the law by one subterfuge or another,* in order, on the one hand, to prevent intolerable hardship to able-bodied men who were absolutely destitute, and to their wives and children, and on the other, to obviate the dangers attendant on leaving hungry men at large without relief. These subterfuges take various forms. The Central Authority itself officially advised the Parish Councils in 1878 that, "in the case of a person really destitute the Inspector [of the Poor] should not carry the letter of the law to an extreme. . . . It is obvious that if a person is really destitute, no long period would elapse before he also became disabled from want of food." † This hint, we are officially told, makes it possible for the certifying medical officer to interpret "disablement" or "health" in the most liberal manner. He may, for instance, take into account not only the applicant's physiological fitness to maintain himself, but also "the mental distress caused by the destitution of his dependents. . . . In actual administration the medical officer, relying on the principle of the Board's deliverance, usually accepts a very slight ailment as sufficient to justify a certificate of disablement" ‡—an ailment, for instance, as one doctor told us, "such as he will get from lying in a stair . . . general pains that you cannot call rheumatism. . . . I might put in 'destitution and debility.'" § We have, in fact, ourselves witnessed such certificates given on the applicant's mere assertion that he had sciatica! If the Parish Doctor certifies a man as able-bodied, the latter may at once summarily appeal to the Sheriff, who may disregard the Parish Doctor's certificate —perhaps on faith of another produced by the applicant—and on the applicant's mere statement give a peremptory order for interim relief. Many Sheriffs give the applicant the "benefit of the doubt." "It would probably be a safe rule of practice," the Central Authority advises, not to refuse relief "if the Inspector is of opinion that the Sheriff on appeal would order it." ||

> "Thus the whole responsibility for passing or rejecting applicants, according to whether or not they are suffering from any complaint or infirmity disabling them from work, rests upon the Medical Officer, who certifies the cases sent to him by the assistant inspector. The Medical Officer sits in an empty room, to which enters in succession a stream of applicants, all of whom have been already passed as being actually destitute, that is to say, without the means of subsistence. It is for the doctor to reject them (from every kind of relief. be it remembered), if, on his soul and conscience, he is able to assert that they are free from any complaint or infirmity that would unfit them to obtain a situation. His examination consists, in practice, of asking questions. If the applicant asserts that he has some complaint (such as sciatica, neuralgia, or rheumatism) that cannot be tested by the stethoscope or similar instrument, the doctor certifies him at once. If he complains of a sore foot the doctor looks at it, and decides whether it is sore enough! It is only the unfortunate novice, who is blunderingly honest enough to protest that he would willingly work if he could get employment, who gets rejected, and turned out into the streets (in a destitute condition, and without even the resource of the Casual Ward). Naturally the Medical Officer, on such a perfunctory examination, cannot take the responsibility of rejection. I watched the process for two hours, and saw many persons whom an English Relieving Officer would have unhesitatingly termed able-bodied passed as eligible for the relief that the assistant inspector had decreed. In fact, in the whole two hours there was only one case rejected. It is part of the irony of the situation that this case, that of a tired elderly man who protested that he could work if only he could get to Glasgow, where he believed he could get employed, seemed to be one of the most worthy that I witnessed. I must add that the kindly Medical Officer did his utmost to persuade him to admit some ailment. As he was too innocent to 'play up' the doctor reluctantly sent him empty away."¶

But apart from the Parish Doctor's unwillingness to take the responsibility of making it impossible to give any kind of Poor Relief to a man who declares that he is destitute, the law has to be even more directly disobeyed in the case of Vagrants. These wander up and down the country, apparently in at least as great numbers as in England; and there are no Casual Wards. The result is that, in order to prevent their sleeping out,

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 53156–8.

† Minute of Board of Supervision of 1878 (Rules of Poorhouses, p. 94); *see* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 53156–8, 56605 (Par. 22), 60632 (Par. 10), and 60658–60, 65278–85.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 56605 (Par. 23), 56459, 56588–90, 56626, 56627.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 65255.

|| Minute of Board of Supervision, 1878. "The fear of the appeal to the Sheriff," we were told, "contributes still to the filling o poorhouses." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 60685.) A widower with young children, and unable to look after them, often gets relief under one pretext or another. (*Qs.* 66432 (Par.8), 66578, 66579.) "To put it plainly, these certificates are a regular method of evading the law." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 57428.)

¶ Visits of Commissioners, Scotland (not yet in volume form).

they are frequently given orders for common lodging-houses,* sometimes even small sums of money—"a shilling or two to pass them on the road"—on the excuse that they have sores, or "bad toes," or that they are suffering (as tired wayfarers often are) from "sore feet," or even from "debility"; or even without any excuse at all. † There is actually special accommodation provided for this most sturdy of all the sections of the pauper host, under the euphemism of "Casual Sick Houses," which date from 1848, and are supposed to be for Vagrants who fall ill on the road, ‡ but which are, in fact, often used for accommodating those Vagrants and their dependents whom the Parish Doctor will even certify to have "sore feet," rather than refuse them lodging on a wet night.§ The result is that, so far as we were able to form an estimate, the proportion to population of Able-bodied men actually in receipt of Poor Relief in Scotland—in spite of all the relief afforded by the Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, and of the upgrowth in some towns of even a third Relieving Authority in the police ‖—does not fall far short of the number in England. The principal result of the law—apart from the demoralisation which its flagrant evasion must cause, and the hardship inflicted when it is not evaded—is to prevent any suitable treatment being meted out to the Able-bodied when they *are* relieved.

As this result did not appear to be commonly realised or believed in Scotland,¶ we thought it desirable to have the inmates of some typical Scottish Poorhouses accurately compared with those of particular English Workhouses, in order to ascertain what propor-

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 56057, 56116–8, 61186–8, 62676 (Par. 5), 62718–24, 64575–87.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 55557–9, 57178–87, 57308 (Par. 58), 61140, 62681, 63954–8, 65100–6, 66474, 67234–7, 94974–5. So frequent were these gifts of money, that the Local Government Board for Scotland had, in 1893, to issue a stringent rule against it; "but that rule is broken even yet." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 57179.)

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q* 53510 (Par. 71.)

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 53721, 53722, 55878, 57334–41, 60679–99, 62578, 62719–21, 67237, 67238, 95022. "As one of the Outdoor Medical Officers said to me, if a man comes in cold and wet or says he has had nothing to eat all day, he cannot be certified as able-bodied, he is temporarily disabled. In practice, the able-bodied man, who honestly states there is nothing the matter with him except want of work is likely to be refused relief, whereas if he complains of a pain in the side or back he will probably get it, for the absence of physical signs is no proof that the man is not suffering pain, and the possible consequences of refusing the man relief are so serious that he must be given the benefit of the doubt. These cases are, therefore, diagnosed rheumatism or lumbago, or simply muscular pain, and sent to the Poorhouse on such diagnosis. The applicant for relief naturally soon learns that he is expected to complain of illness before relief will be given him." (Report on the Physical Condition of . . . Able-bodied Male Inmates, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, p. 11.) "I have known, said an experienced witness, "a man with an ulcerated leg travel *for years* with a wife and family from one poorhouse and Casual Sick House to another. He would not wait long enough in any House for his leg to be healed. It was his 'stock-in-trade,' and qualification for parochial relief and idleness." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 55856 (Par. 94).) "According to the law of Scotland," deposed the General Superintendent of the Poor, an able-bodied man who is destitute and starving "is not entitled to relief. . . . If he is footsore or something of that kind, he is sent to the Medical Officer. Very few Medical Officers will take the responsibility on themselves of saying, in cold weather: 'You are able-bodied; you are not entitled to relief.' They find out some ailment, and admit him," either to the poorhouse or to the "Casual Sick House," usually a cottage provided expressly for the admission of such persons by direction of the Local Government Board for Scotland. "Persons are admitted to these places for a night. In other places, in villages or towns, there are common lodging-houses, where they are charged 4d. a night, and they are sent with a ticket"—which is paid for from the poor rate—"to these houses." (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. II., *Q.* 6404.)

‖ In the absence of any avowed provision for homeless able-bodied men in good health, the Police Authority often finds them sleeping places, sometimes in the common lodging-houses, at the expense of the Destitution Authority (Evidence before the Commission. *Qs.* 64575–87, 89012), sometimes by admitting them to the vacant cells at the police station (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 53968–70, 88974–89023, 94821). The Police will even take more extensive action. At Falkirk. in 1904–5, the Chief Constable, being more than usually pestered by such applicants, borrowed an empty building, and fitted it up as a free shelter, which accommodated as many as 169 people in a night. Simple food was provided free, and the women were given beds at common lodging-houses. The cost was raised by voluntary subscriptions, the view being that to relieve the necessities of these homeless men greatly diminished crime. A similar Free Shelter is being provided by the Chief Constable during the present year. (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 88903 (Pars. 10, 11), 88921–7, 88958–62.) It has even been recommended that this action of the Scottsh Police should be definitely legalised. The Scottish Departmental Committee on Habitual Offenders (1895) recommended that "the Police Authorities should be empowered to grant temporary relief to the extent of a night's lodging and food to the necessitous, homeless. and travelling poor, where they think it expedient to do so, and that they should also have power to exact, if they think right, a labour equivalent from those that are able to work." (Report of Departmental Committee on Habitual Offenders, etc. (Scotland), 1895, p. xxxvi). *See* Report of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Vol. I., p. 35.

¶ In face of all the facts, many of the Scottish witnesses protested against any alteration of the law which is supposed to prohibit relief to the able-bodied; *see*, for instance, in the Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 53068, 53290, 53984, 56418, 58815, 60394, 60632, 61009, 64690, 61269, 61832, 64141, 64921, 65285, 67139.

tion of men were really Able-bodied—"sound, healthy and Able-bodied men capable of doing a full day's ordinary labouring work," being classed as A 1, and others who, whilst not so strong and robust as these, belonged to occupations of a character not requiring much strength and were "capable of doing a full day's work at such occupations," being classed as A 2. The result was remarkable.

"As my investigation proceeded," reports our Investigator, a medical man of considerable Poor Law experience, "I found myself gradually coming to the conclusion that the male population of the ordinary Scottish Poorhouse was very similar to that of the ordinary English Workhouse, and that the members of the "turn-out" class in Scotland were practically identical, physically, mentally, and morally, with the members of the 'Able-bodied' class in England. A careful study of the physical measurements and other details I have collected confirms me in this opinion. The age distribution of the population of the two classes of institution is very similar. In Scotland, 49 per cent. of the inmates of the Poorhouses visited were over sixty. Of the men actually examined, 27·7 per cent. were between seventeen and forty, and 72·3 per cent. between forty and sixty. In England, 45 per cent. of the inmates of the Workhouses visited were over sixty, and of those examined, 23·6 per cent. were between seventeen and forty, and 76·4 per cent. between forty and sixty. In every Scotch Poorhouse I found a certain number of inmates whom I could classify into one of the A classes. These inmates were in every respect similar to those I placed in the same classes in English Workhouses." * In one large Poorhouse at a Scottish port, out of 264 male adults under sixty, 115 were examined; and of these no fewer than forty-four were found to be "A 1," "strong, healthy and Able-bodied men capable of doing a full day's ordinary labouring work"; whilst eleven more were A 2, "capable of doing a full day's work at their ordinary occupations."† In short, both in England and Scotland, "every Workhouse and every Poorhouse visited contained a number of men in every way as well developed physically as the average of the general population." ‡ The final conclusion is that "the population of the ordinary Scottish Poorhouse is in all respects exactly similar to the population of the ordinary English Workhouse. The class known as 'turn-outs' or 'tests' in the Scottish Poorhouses is exactly similar to the Able-bodied class in English Workhouses."§

What appears to us most grave is that, so long as the law prohibits any relief to the Able-bodied, this large and, as we believe, increasing number of healthy Able-bodied men are necessarily accommodated in institutions organised only for the sick and infirm, where no appropriate disciplinary treatment can be enforced.|| It is the problem of the General Mixed Workhouse of England in an aggravated form. "In Scotland," notes our Special Investigator, "since there are, theoretically, no Able-bodied inmates in the Poorhouse, the work allotted to the inmates is less laborious, the hours of labour are fewer, and refusal to work cannot apparently be punished. I found that in England the hours of work varied from nine hours at Tame Street to nine and three-quarters at Fulham in the summer, the limits in the winter being eight hours and eight and three-quarter hours. *In Scotland, the hours varied from six and-a-half at Kirkcaldy to eight at Barnhill.* Out of the 423 inmates examined in English Workhouses, ninety-six were employed in oakum-picking, corn-grinding, or stone-breaking; in the Scottish Poorhouses, out of the 407 inmates examined, only seven were so employed, the usual test work consisting in bundling 250 to 350 bundles of wood."¶ Sometimes, as we have ourselves witnessed, the "test work" is nothing more severe than picking the grass from between the stones with which the yard is paved.** It is needless to say that, under the circumstances, there is developing, in Scotland, a considerable class of "Ins-and-Outs"†† —indeed, a special variety of "week-enders" who habitually resort to the Poorhouse

* Report on the Physical Condition of . . . Able-bodied Male Inmates, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, p. 10.

† *Ibid.*, p. 21.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

|| Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 67171–3, 65465–72.

¶ Report on the Physical Condition of . . . Able-bodied Male Inmates, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, p. 9.

** Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 65269–70.

†† "Falkirk Parish," we were told, "is a favourite resort of habitual tramps who wander over the country during the summer and endeavour to spend the winter in a poorhouse. *Of the* 1,350 *applications for relief made in* 1896, *about* 900 *were by persons supposed to belong to that class.*" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 61069, Par. 31.)

to recover from their periodical debauches.* It is significant that of the fifty-four men of A.1 class whom our Special Investigator found in one Poorhouse in 1908, no fewer than twenty-three had been in that Poorhouse more than twice during 1907, and one man had been in and out twenty-three times during the year.† It is accordingly not surprising to learn that "the greater part of the increase of pauperism during the last decade is due to the chargeability of men." ‡

(G) Conclusions.

We have therefore to report:—

1. That instead of the National Uniformity of policy in dealing with the Able-bodied, upon which the Report of 1834 laid so much stress, we find at the present time, among the different Destitution Authorities of England and Wales, five different methods of treatment being simultaneously applied.

2. That two of these methods—that of maintenance in a General Mixed Workhouse, and that of unconditional and inadequate Outdoor Relief—in spite of almost universal condemnation from 1834 down to the present day, a condemnation in which we concur, are still extensively persisted in; with the effect of perpetually increasing the area and the demoralisation of Able-bodied Pauperism.

3. That we have been surprised to discover that the number of Able-bodied men in health who, in England and Wales, in the course of each year, receive temporary Outdoor Relief, *without even any task of work*, is very large—numbering apparently between 30,000 and 40,000; some of this relief being given on account of "sudden or urgent necessity," but most of it being given as exceptions to the Orders and merely reported week by week to the Local Government Board for its approval.

4. That the number of *Able-bodied men in health* now in the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland is large—probably considerably in excess of 10,000—and that there are ominous signs that, in the large towns, the number of sturdy Able-bodied men subjected to these demoralising conditions is steadily increasing.

5. That we have definitely ascertained that—contrary to the common opinion, and even in violation of the law—the huge Poorhouses of the populous towns of Scotland also contain large, and apparently increasing, numbers of Able-bodied men in health, of exactly the same type as the inmates of the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland.

6. That the three specialised Poor Law methods of dealing with the Able-bodied—the Outdoor Labour Test, the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, and the Casual Ward—all, in our opinion, fail to provide treatment appropriate to any section of the Able-bodied, and are inherently incapable of being made to do so. If these institutions are lax (as is usually the case), they become the resort of wastrels and "cadgers," of the "work-shy" and the dissolute, to whom their demoralising slackness and promiscuity is positively an attraction. To plunge a respectable able-bodied man or woman, in the crisis of utter destitution, into the midst of such persons is, at once, a torture and an almost inevitable degradation. If, on the other hand, the Outdoor Labour Test, the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, and the Casual Ward are made strict in their discipline and prison-like in their regimen, they are shunned by the vagabond and worthless class of "the occasional poor," who thereupon contrive, to the great annoyance, cost and danger of the public, to exist outside them. Their penal severity then falls only on such comparatively decent men as have become too debilitated and too incompetent to gain even the barest living outside; and these, though finding the regimen unendurable, are driven in again and again by sheer starvation To subject such men to a brutalising regimen and penal severities is useless and inhuman; and it ought to be (if it is not already) contrary to law.

7. That by its provision of mere subsistence, available just when demanded, the Poor Law treatment of the Able-bodied, by any of the five methods at present in use,

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* *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 67139 (Par. 5), 67154.

† Report on the Physical Condition of . . Able-bodied Male Inmates, by Dr. C. T. Parsons, p 20.

‡ Report on Methods of Administering Poor Relief in . . . Scotland, 1905, p. xxv.

actually facilitates parasitic methods of existence, intermittent and irregular effort, and casual employment. In our opinion, this evil influence of the Destitution Authorities in the Metropolis and all the great ports—to some extent, indeed, in all the towns—is to-day spreading demoralisation and manufacturing pauperism on a large scale.

8. That it appears to us open to grave objection that the Destitution Authorities should have been allowed to exercise powers of compulsory detention and of penal discipline, such as those now enforced in the Able-bodied Test Workhouse and the Casual Ward. For the exercise of such powers, we do not think that either the members of a Board of Guardians or its officers, without legal training, without any prescribed procedure, without appeal and without even a hearing of the person accused, are at all fitted. Nor do we consider that a Destitution Authority, or any staff that it is likely to engage, has the requisite knowledge or the requisite experience to enable it properly to administer penal discipline to those who might, in due form, have been sentenced to submit to it. The very use of compulsory detention and penal discipline by a Destitution Authority tends to defeat itself, as those for whom the rigorous measures were intended will, however destitute, certainly avoid applying for admission. On all these grounds, we must unreservedly condemn the proposal that extended powers of compulsory detention of adult Able-bodied persons should be granted to any Poor Law Authority, however constituted. Any such proposal would, in our opinion, arouse the strongest resentment, and would meet with determined opposition in the House of Commons.

9. That any attempt, by a repeal of the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, to force back into the Poor Law those sections of the Able-bodied who are now relieved by the Distress Committees, would be socially disastrous and politically impracticable. On the contrary, it is, in our judgment, of the highest importance to complete without delay the process begun under that Act, and to remove the remaining sections of the Able-bodied, once for all, from any connection with the Local Authorities dealing with the Children, the Sick, the Mentally Defective, and the Aged and Infirm. It is, in our opinion, essential that whatever provision the community may decide to make for Able-bodied persons in distress should be administered by an Authority having to deal with all the Able-bodied and with the Able-bodied alone, and dealing with them, not merely at the crisis of destitution, but in relation to the cause and character of their distress, and the means to be taken for its cure. For all sections of the Able-bodied, the Poor Law, alike in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, is, in our judgment, intellectually bankrupt.

CHAPTER II.

The Able-Bodied and Voluntary Agencies.

At no time has the relief of Able-bodied Destitution been left exclusively to the Poor Law. Into individual charity, whether among the poor themselves, or by those who are richer, we have been unable to inquire. But any consideration of the subject would be seriously incomplete without a brief survey of those organised charitable agencies established for the purpose of relieving the Able-bodied, which are specially characteristic of the past century; and which, as we gather, have latterly increased in specialisation, if not in volume. Throughout the whole of the nineteenth century, every industrial or commercial crisis, involving a temporary contraction of the volume of employment, has witnessed the distribution of large amounts of food and money to the workless poor. In times of prolonged distress, voluntary relief funds have frequently enabled the Local Authorities to put the Unemployed to work at wages on the roads or sewers. Permanent agencies have been established in many large towns for affording, either gratuitously or at nominal rates, temporary lodging and food. To these "Shelters" for the "houseless poor," have been added, during the last two decades, various "Labour Homes" or "Working Colonies" in town or country, where attempts are made to redeem or reform the more dilapidated of the Destitute Able-bodied on the one hand; and, on the other, to select and train for emigration the most promising from among their number.

(A) Emergency Funds.

"The old system," we are told, "was to ask the Mayor to open a fund whenever there was an outcry as to unemployment. He issued an appeal in the Press or by letter, the response to which in the form of donations was of course very uncertain, varying with his personal popularity as well as with the general opinion of the wealthier classes as to the existence of exceptional distress." * Emergency Funds of this sort, varying in amount from a few hundred pounds to nearly a quarter of a million sterling, † are to be found, in the records of the past century, literally by the hundred. The great distributions in London in 1861-2 (at the East End Police Courts), and in 1886 (the notorious Mansion House Fund) are well known. In 1878-80 such Emergency Funds were started in nearly all the large towns. In Sunderland, for instance, "in the early eighties there was great depression, and the grass was growing in practically every shipyard on the river. Men, women and children were literally starving. Private and sporadic efforts proved utterly inadequate to meet the requirements of the situation. At length the Mayor of the day set on foot an organisation to cover the whole borough. So widespread and acute was the excessive poverty that the numbers relieved by this Distress Committee reached on one occasion the huge total of over 17,000 individuals." ‡ At Newcastle-upon-Tyne, we were told, "whenever serious distress has arisen here, say by severe winters, etc., public sympathy has always been evoked. Voluntary distress committees have been formed, money has flown in plentifully, and district or ward sub-committees have administered the necessary relief after investigation into the cases. Even then there has been a considerable amount of malingering, and caution has had to be exercised." § "The general experience was, however, that distress had become very acute before these funds had started and before any organisation could be formed and shaped untold miseries were endured by the sufferers. In the majority of cases these committees and officials were new to the work on each separate occasion and had not the data and experience of previous efforts to guide them. The great part of the work of investigation and distribution had to be carried on at such times as could be spared to the work and could not, from the very nature of the circumstances, be very thorough and complete. The test of willingness to work was not applied, could not, indeed, be applied, and the funds were distributed in money or kind, really as charities. The result of all these circumstances was that a very great amount of imposition was practised by thoroughly unworthy persons, in many instances the same persons over and over again, and the worthy and deserving generally kept themselves in the background and were overlooked." ‖ "It was found,"

* Report . . . on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 88.

† Report of the Committee appointed at a Public Meeting at the "City of London Tavern," May 2nd, 1826, to relieve the Manufacturers, by W. H. Hyett (London, 1829), when £232,000 was raised.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 52708, Par. 1.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 91141, Par. 11.

‖ Report of South Shields Distress Committee, 1907.

for instance, at Coventry, "that there were a good many applications for relief from persons who gave false addresses and who could not be found when inquiry was made, and of those who applied others were not in need of or deserving of help; whilst others in deep need were unwilling to apply, and their almost starving condition was only made known by friends and neighbours." * At Birmingham, "some of the local committees in 1905 adopted the system of giving one week's relief to the unsuitable cases rather than incur the odium of an entire refusal. In five districts, dealing with 2,060 cases, 775 were discontinued at the end of one week. . . The bulk of the one week cases may be taken to have been undesirables." † Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that these Emergency Funds found many thousands of genuine cases in urgent need of relief. "The reports of the investigators," says a Chatham Report, "are pathetic documents, containing as they do tales of fearful want and of heroic efforts to avoid the Workhouse. There is no doubt that the regular help of this fund has already kept many from the fate they so much dread, thus preserving their sense of comparative independence and relieving the ratepayers of a serious burden."‡ Experience indicates, too, that in the absence of any adequate public provision such Emergency Funds will never be wanting in any season of distress. During the past decade various popular newspapers have rushed in, perhaps from somewhat mixed motives; and have raised tens of thousands of pounds for distribution in particular localities with hardly a pretence of investigation.§

The student of the reports of these Emergency Funds, in all parts of England and Wales, in all decades, will be struck by the sameness of the procedure and of the results. Those concerned in the administration of the money exhibit to an almost ludicrous extent in their doles to the Able-bodied the characteristics of unconditionality, inadequacy and indiscriminateness that we have seen to mark the practice of the Poor Law Authorities in the grant of Outdoor Relief to the Non-Able-bodied. They add to this an extraordinary element of capriciousness. It depends upon accident or whim, upon the popularity of a Mayor or the circulation of a newspaper, whether a fund will be raised at all, and of what amount. It depends on what particular set of volunteer workers gets hold of the administration whether there will be any care or no care taken to see that the distribution of doles of money or food does not do more harm than good. Moreover, at the crisis of starvation, when these Emergency Funds usually come in, there cannot practically be much room for investigation or discrimination It is, or at any rate seems to be, a case of giving food upon "urgent necessity," actually to prevent death. The question cannot fail to arise: Why is relief in such an elementary form not afforded by the appointed Guardians of the Poor out of the funds designated for this very purpose under the Statute of Elizabeth?

(B) Voluntary Relief Works.

Some of the more responsible of the administrators of these Emergency Funds were always trying to use them to start or to subsidise Relief Works, either carried on by the Local Authorities out of charitable donations, or by various groups of philanthropists. Thus, at Nottingham, in 1837, arrangements were secretly made with the Town Council to put selected men of the Unemployed class upon sewer construction; the difference in cost being made up from the charitable funds. "If . . . a man with a large family applies for relief, whom Mr. B. [the Relieving Officer] knows to be industrious, who is not of pauper habits, but by the depression of trade is thrown out of employ, and obliged to seek temporary assistance . . . he gives him an order to the foreman of the work in hand, who sets him on by task work."‖ In other cases, direct employment was afforded by philanthropy. We find the "National Philanthropic Association" (founded in 1842), employing, winter by winter, 50 or 100 men in cleaning the streets, "so that able-bodied men may be prevented from burdening the parish rates, and preserved independent of Workhouse alms and degradation. . . . At one time upwards of 100 of these orderlies were employed at a weekly payment of 12s. each, under inspectors."¶ "During the year 1846–47 . . . the Association has employed, at its own cost, 546 street orderlies."**

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* The Mayor's Relief Fund, 1885–6 Nottingham Reports, p. 15.

† "Three Birmingham Relief Funds," by F. Tillyard, in *Economic Journal*, December, 1905.

‡ Report of Chatham, Rochester and Gillingham Unemployed Relief Committee, 1905.

§ The recent newspaper funds were described in Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 20415–21048 78638–702, 85623–99.

‖ Mr. Gulson's Report to Poor Law Commissioners, April 23rd, 1837, p. 8.

¶ "The Charities of London," by Sampson Low, 1850, pp. 149–150.

** Report of Progress in the Employment of the Poor (National Philanthropic Association), 1853. See also *Times*, December 26th, 1845 and June 6th, 1849 and "A Plea for the Very Poor" (London, 1850).

Innumerable examples of Relief Works of this kind are reported in the local newspapers of 1820–1880, at every period of depression. We notice invariably three characteristics. The work is supposed to be restricted to sober and industrious men, not habitual paupers, thrown out of employment through no fault of their own. Married men with families are preferred. The amount earned is practically never more than a bare pittance, the work being paid for at low rates, and only provided for a few hours a day or a few days a week. The plan, in short, is always one of distributing small doles of "Employment Relief" to selected individuals. In 1878, an attempt by Mr. Francis Peek to systematise and develop this plan of endeavouring "to find partially remunerative employment for the Able-bodied," under a central committee for London as a whole,* led to an answer from Sir Charles Trevelyan in which the economic objections to this course were set forth. "Labour," he said, "is an excellent thing. . . . But . . . it must be labour subjected to the true conditions of labour, the full market rate of wages on one side and severe privation on the other. Charity is also an excellent thing, but . . . when . . . labour and charity are mixed up together, great abuse and demoralisation are always engendered. . . . It was so in the Irish famine. It was so in the cotton famine. It was so, to come nearer to the point, in the workrooms for women at the East end of London. . . . This should be left to the Guardians to do who have the law at their backs, and are fortified and guided by detailed instructions from the Local Government Board."† It was, perhaps a growing conviction of the undesirability of this mixture of private charity and the employment of labour that led to Mr. Chamberlain's Circular of 1886, and, from that time forth, to the Relief Works being mainly undertaken, as we shall describe in the next chapter, by the Municipal Authorities themselves.‡

(c) Shelters and Labour Homes.

The large numbers of "houseless poor, in London and other cities, have led, for nearly a century, to the establishment for them of "Shelters, § either free or at a trifling charge, which afford a night's lodging and the necessary simple food. One such Shelter appears to have been started in London in 1822,‖ and from that date Shelters have always been available for the houseless; at first only in the winter months, but soon all the year round. On the establishment of the Casual Wards, between 1864 and 1866, there were no fewer than seven such Shelters in existence in London. It was then urged and assumed that these philanthropic institutions should restrict themselves to providing for a class above that of the "casuals." They ought, it was said, "no longer to admit all indiscriminately, but [to] endeavour to exclude everyone belonging to the vagrant and professional tramp class; [to] keep them carefully out; and [to] admit only the better class of the houseless poor." ¶In pursuance of this policy, the older philanthropic Shelters gradually shrank up, and ceased to be available for the ordinary man in distress, leaving the field to the Casual Wards; themselves lingering on in a small way as institutions for doing for the relatively few selected cases that they admitted, something more than merely the provision of a night's lodging.

We come now to what may almost be called a parting of the ways in organised philanthropy for the Able-bodied. Down to about 1887 it seems to have been habitually taken for granted that the efforts of the charitable ought properly to be directed to helping and relieving the distressed persons of good character, whose record would bear investigation, who had not drunk or stolen or gambled, and whom misfortune had brought low through

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* *Times*, December 24th, 1878.

† *Ibid.*, December 25th, 1878.

‡ It should, however, be noted that private Relief Works of this kind still continue. The Liverpool Central Relief and Charity Organisation Society, among others, still maintains workshops for the Unemployed, where respectable able-bodied men are enabled "to tide over a period of temporary lack of work." They are employed at wood-chopping, bundling chips and making fire-lighters; and "by making a proper effort, a man may receive from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. daily," on a scale of piece-work rates, with a bonus. (Manual of Instructions . . . of the Liverpool Central Relief and Charity Organisation Society, 1906, pp. 19, 20.)

§ "Charities of London," by Sampson Low, 1850; Report of Conference on Night Refuges, June 8th, 1870 (Charity Organisation Society); Sir C. E. Trevelyan, in *Times*, June 2nd, 1890; "Charity Organisation," by E. L. O'Malley, in "Transactions of National Association for Social Science," 1873, p. 599; "Unemployed London," by A. H. Hill, in *Ibid*, 1875, p. 668; "Labour Homes in connection with the Poor Law," by Noel Buxton (Report of Poor Law Conferences for 1899–1900); Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 36756–63, 37480–2, 37509–85, 42049–141.

‖ One was started in Manchester in 1838. (*Manchester Times*, 15th Feb., 1840).

¶ Report of Conference on Night Refuges, June 8th, 1870 (Charity Organisation Society), Appendix, pp. 20–1.

no fault of their own.* Those who could not stand these tests—classed as the unworthy and undeserving poor—were to be left to the Poor Law. Meanwhile, however, the treatment of the Able-bodied under the Poor Law, what with Able-bodied Test Workhouses, and the penal task and enforced detention of the Casual Wards, whilst in no way calculated to restore men to self-supporting activity, had been becoming more generally strict and rigorous. The result, as we have explained, was that, from 1871 onwards, the Able-bodied resorted less and less to the Poor Law, and the official statisticians pointed with satisfaction to the diminution of Able-bodied Pauperism—until, in 1887, comfortable London was momentarily impressed by the news that hundreds, if not thousands, of persons were always found "sleeping-out" in Trafalgar Square, along the Thames Embankment and in every sheltered corner.† To the fervent Christian there came the impulse to succour not the well-conducted and respectable alone, but even the undeserving, the weak, the outcast, the fallen. For years the Salvation Army had been at work among such men. "But," as General Booth declared, "What is the use of preaching the Gospel to men whose whole attention is concentrated upon a mad, desperate struggle to keep themselves alive? You might as well give a tract to a shipwrecked sailor who is battling with the surf. . . . The first thing to do is to get him at least a footing on firm ground, and to give him room to live. Then you may have a chance. At present you have none."‡ General Booth accordingly opened, in 1887, the first of his "Food and Shelter Depots," where food was sold in cheap farthingworths, and lodging supplied for 4d. a night, both being frequently given gratuitously to the penniless. "We have provided accommodation now," he wrote in 1890, "for several thousand of the most hopelessly broken-down men in London, criminals many of them, mendicants, tramps, those who are among the filth and off-scouring of all things."§

About the same time a similar impulse was taking form in another organisation. "In 1889, St. Mary's Hall, in Crawford Street, formed a centre for Church Army Mission work, and with the approach of winter the problem of the outcast and destitute forced itself on the attention of those in charge. Every evening the captain was distressed by the numbers of shivering, half-starved wretches, who crept into the evangelistic meetings for the sake of warmth and rest. Cold and hungry, they roamed the streets, turning in here for a brief respite from their misery. These nightly scenes acted as the spark to a train of ideas that had been with Mr. Carlile for some time, and he was now fired with the determination to see what could be done for the reclamation of tramps and ex-criminals." || The result was the starting in 1889 of the first of the "Labour Homes" of the Church Army, of which there are now, throughout the country, nearly fifty in existence, deliberately relieving, not the selected cases, of proved good character and unimpeachable record, but all and sundry in distress. "These weak brethren," says a Church Army pamphlet, "come to our Labour Homes by many roads. Some come straight from prison. Some are tramps and loafers, who have never known what it is to do an honest day's work in their lives. Some we take out of Workhouses, or from Casual Wards. Some have been brought low by pure misfortune—many of this class being old soldiers, who have served their country well, but who know no trade. Drink, gambling, and kindred vices gather in their hundreds. Many come through no special wickedness, but from simple lack of power of self-help. These are perhaps the least hopeful of all. It is very difficult to help the well-meaning, shiftless fellow who is destitute of will-power and cannot keep a situation if he gets one. Most of them have sunk very low in the social scale before they come to us. Hungry and in rags they come, with no possession in the world save that last one—hope. They come to the Labour Home dirty, slouching, weak in will and body."¶

We have accordingly, at the present day, in London and most of the large towns, in rivalry with the Poor Law, a whole series of organised philanthropic agencies providing for the destitute Able-bodied. The simplest and most rudimentary is the Free Shelter, with more or less distribution of gratuitous food, and accepting all applicants indiscriminately, which has been revived in various large towns. Two of the best known are those

* This is still the policy of some institutions. "A large proportion of the cases brought to the notice of the Society are persons who, through sickness, want of work, or unavoidable misfortune, are in distress, and whose record is such that it would be undesirable to allow them to receive public relief from the rates." (Forty-third Annual Report of the Liverpool Central Relief and Charity Organisation Society, 1905–6, p. 5.)

† This "sleeping-out" still continues. On the night of February 8th, 1907, the Inspectors of the London County Council found 1,998 men, 402 women, and 4 children homeless in the streets. (Report of Public Health Committee of London County Council for 1907.)

‡ "In Darkest England," by General W. Booth, 1890, p. 45.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

|| "Wilson Carlile and the Church Army," by Edgar Rowan, 1907, p. 74.

¶ "The Last Hope" (Church Army Pamphlet).

conducted under the Congregational Union at Medland Hall, Stepney; * and by a religious Mission at Wood Street, Manchester, where a night's lodging, of an uninviting kind, is gratuitously provided for necessitous houseless men, without inquiry or the exaction of any work. These institutions, which are much objected to by nearly everyone experienced in charitable work, urge, as their justification, that the houseless poor cannot be left in the streets; and that the administration of the Casual Wards and Workhouses is so deterrent that thousands of persons refuse to resort to them.

A development out of the Free Shelter is the "Elevator" of the Salvation Army, and the "Labour Home" of the Church Army, where men are received and maintained and kept at such productive work as they are capable of, whether paper-sorting or wood-chopping, at which they are able to earn nearly the cost of the small subsistence of a single man. This "Employment Relief" suffers from the drawbacks and difficulties common to all Relief Works. In so far as the work done has any commercial value at all, it results in depriving other workers, employed in the ordinary way, of their means of livelihood. If the destitute men happen to be nominally artisans of skilled trades, they cannot be put to work at them at anything less than the customary Standard Rate, however unsatisfactory may be their work, without incurring the additional reproach of "sweating." On both these points complaints have been made to us. Convincing testimony was given on behalf of the Firewood Trade Association that the adoption of wood-chopping as the task at the Labour Homes of the Church Army, as well as in many Workhouses, had definitely resulted in ruining independent wood-chopping firms, in throwing many men out of employment, and in reducing some actually to pauperism.† The experiment of the Salvation Army, in setting to work at carpentering and cabinet making, such of the inmates of their establishments as have any capacity for such work—at remuneration far below any Trade Union rate—has provoked embittered complaints at the Trade Union Congress. These difficulties and drawbacks of Employment Relief are experienced, as we shall see in the next chapter, equally when the "Relief Works" are conducted by the Municipal Authority.

The third stage is that of the Rural Colony, such as Hadleigh, near Southend, run by the Salvation Army; Lingfield (Surrey), run by the Christian Social Service Union; Hempstead (Essex), run by the Church Army; and the German Industrial Farm Colony at Libury Hall, near Ware; where men taken off the streets, selected from the "Elevators" or "Labour Homes," or sometimes consigned on payment by the Boards of Guardians, are trained to agricultural or other work amid healthy country surroundings; placed under reformatory influences; and assisted to emigrate or to return to self-supporting employment.

(D) The Undermining of a penal Poor Law by Voluntary Agencies.

We are not in a position to give any statistics of the aggregate number of Able-bodied men who are, at any one time, being maintained in one or other of these ways by the organised philanthropic agencies, of which we have cited only the most extensive and the best known. It is clear that the number thus relieved in the course of the year is very large, and sufficient to destroy any satisfaction that might be felt at the success of this or that Poor Law Authority in "deterring," by rigorous administration, the destitute from applying to the Workhouse or the Casual Ward. For it is plain that, whatever may be the harmful influence of a lax system of Poor Relief to the Able-bodied, there is the same harm in a lax system of charitable aid to the same class. "Apart altogether from the sick and the aged," reports the Metropolitan Inspector of the Local Government Board, "there is now a large class in London, to be numbered by thousands . . . [which] consists almost entirely of single men, often in the prime of life, but men to whom nobody could think of giving regular employment. They are devoid of energy and ambition; content to live for each day as it passes with the aid of odd jobs, cheap or free shelters, and cheap or free meals. I believe this class exists in all large towns, but it can, I think, luxuriate nowhere as it does in London, for nowhere else, to the extent prevalent in London, is such a class catered for and encouraged by religious associations and charitable persons, who might almost be supposed to hold it a pious duty to ensure, by creating a constant supply of destitution, that the poor shall be always with us."‡

* "Medland Hall continues to act as the rendezvous of the worthless and Unemployable, the Mecca of degraded and frayed-out humanity, and as an important feeder to the Guardians' establishments. At the commencement of autumn of each year, and throughout the winter months, there is a steady march on London from the provinces of ne'er-do-wells, corner boys, criminals and other ill-organised beings whose stock-in-trade is their rags and dirt. These are ever ready to prey on others, ready to take advantage of any well-meant scheme to relieve the want and misery of the deserving poor, ready at the shortest notice to 'demonstrate,' ready at all times to do anything but work" (Report of the Guardians, Stepney Union, for 1906–7, p. 29).

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 91804–56, 93611–94038; Appendix No. LVIII. (Pars. 28–34) to Vol. IX.

‡ Thirty-fifth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1905–6, p. 444 (Mr. Lockwood's Report).

This class, it is believed by Poor Law administrators, is increased and attracted to London and other large towns by these very philanthropic agencies. "London," report the Stepney Guardians, "with its many attractions for the ne'er-do-well, its many ways of helping a man *down* by its thoughtless almsgiving, its 'spasmodic outbreaks of eleemosynary charity' of the soup and blanket order, its dangerous sentimentalism that cannot distinguish the whine of the beggar from the cry of honest poverty, proves irresistible to the born-tireds, who are ever ready to receive something for nothing. The village rough, the provincial blackguard, discredited in his own village or town, turns his face Londonwards. . . . It may be that many of these 'degenerates' set forth honest in their intention to seek work, and have become demoralised and unemployable by repeated failure and disappointment, and by consequent privation."*

The great development, during the past twenty years, of these philanthropic agencies for the Able-bodied, and their deliberate desire to succour the men of even the worst character, nullifies, in fact, every attempt to deal with the problem on the lines of a penal Poor Law. It is of no use, as we have seen, for the Manchester and Chorlton Boards of Guardians to "deter" the houseless poor from relying on the Tame Street Casual Ward, if a religious Mission takes them in without conditions at the Wood Street Free Shelter. Immediately opposite the Stepney Casual Ward and Workhouse, which the Guardians have been trying to administer on "strict" lines, stands Medland Hall, which is nightly open to the destitute. Thus it is that the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy was driven to the despairing recommendation that "the public distribution of free food should be subject to control by the Local Authority of the district. Their consent should be required to the use of any building for the purpose; and it should be open to them to withdraw their consent if at any time this seemed necessary in the interests of the community. . . . Further, we submit that Charitable Shelters do in fact require a more effective control than . . . common lodging-houses. We think . . . that an annual licence should be required from the Sanitary Authority in all cases; and that before a Shelter or similar institution is opened, the Authority should be satisfied that it is necessary and is not likely to cause harm."†

Any such legal or administrative prohibition of the charitable provision of food for the hungry and lodging for the homeless is, in our opinion, neither practicable nor desirable. So long as there exist homeless and starving persons in the streets, there will always be benevolent people to relieve their obvious necessities. This, in fact, is the Nemesis of any system of administration of the public provision for the destitute, which is based on mere deterrence; which does not welcome the entrance of a destitute person as gladly as an Isolation Hospital welcomes a small-pox patient; which does not, in fact, "search out" destitution as the Local Health Authority "searches out" infectious disease. We cannot approve all the methods by which the philanthropic agencies succour the destitute; but we cannot condemn those who employ these methods. So long as the legally appointed system attempts to penalise the destitution of the Able-bodied in such a way that men are found to prefer exposure and semi-starvation outside, it is inevitable—it is indeed desirable in the interests of civilisation—that the starving should be fed and the homeless lodged. It is for the State, not to lay its heavy hand on the efforts of the charitable, misdirected as these may be, but to find a more excellent way.

Moreover, it is unfair to the philanthropic agencies, not to recognise that the community is indebted to them for valuable experiments in the treatment of the Able-bodied, from which, in our opinion, there is much to be learnt by the new Public Authority which will have to deal with the problem. In two directions, in particular, the philanthropic agencies have advanced some distance further than any Poor Law Authority in the development of the requisite *technique*. In studying the administration of such a Rural Colony as Hadleigh, we were impressed with the relative success, upon extremely poor material, of the whole apparatus for developing personal character, for stimulating the will, for re-awakening ambition, for exciting emulation, for securing order and discipline without coercion, and industry without the money wage that the almost worthless labour cannot produce. We cannot help recognising the disinterestedness, the moral refinement and the unsparing personal devotion that have created at Hadleigh a little world in which the inhabitants enjoy a stimulating sense of co-operative production and organised recreation in common; and are able to rise, grade by grade, according to personal merit. What is unfortunately lacking to the complete success of this experiment is, on the one hand, some other Colony to which persons requiring, in the public interest, to be compulsorily detained, could be judicially committed; and, on the other some organisation for placing out, in self-supporting industrial employment those who have been regenerated by their training.

The latter requirement—some definite outlet for those who have proved themselves fit for independent life—has, to some extent, been provided by the elaborate system of

* Report of the Guardians, Stepney Union, for 1905–6, pp. 22–23

† Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, pp. 96, 98.

carefully supervised emigration to Canada, that the Salvation Army and various other philanthropic agencies have developed. In the absence of any assistance from the Government of this country, these philanthropic agencies have successfully organised an extensive system, not only of helping selected cases, but of personally conducting large parties of emigrants across the ocean, securing them situations on arrival, and in many instances continuing a watchful supervision over them for years. As in the administration of Rural Colonies, so in the organisation and supervision of the emigration of those who wish to make a fresh start in a new country, we think that the future Public Authority dealing with the Able-bodied will be able, not only to make use of the existing organisations, but also to learn much of value from the experience of the philanthropic agencies that we have described.

What comes out clearly is that, however successful these Voluntary Agencies have proved, in one form or another, at specific pieces of administration, whether managing institutions or organising emigration, they cannot do the whole work, and it is not desirable that they should "keep the gate." As we shall describe in Chapter IV. of this Part of our Report, the Able-bodied in distress are of the most varied kinds. No Voluntary Agency can provide efficiently for more than the particular speciality to which it devotes itself. But the applicants that throng its doorsteps are of all sorts; and, without some widespread receiving and sorting agency, exterior to itself, it never succeeds in filling its institution with exactly its own special type of cases, and no others. If Voluntary Agencies are to continue to provide for the Able-bodied, there needs to be, accordingly, some organisation of national scope, by which all applicants can be dealt with in the first instance, and then assigned to such voluntary institutions as may be able best to deal with the particular cases. In such a framework of public authority, we think that Voluntary Agencies for the Able-bodied may play as important a part as voluntary hospitals do in connection with the work of the Local Health Authority, or as the Reformatory Schools in connection with the work of the Local Education Authority. And there is a second requirement which only Government can supply. At present, the Voluntary Agencies for the Able-bodied are largely at the mercy of the confirmed wastrel and loafer, who goes in and out, from one to another, taking what he can get from each, and perpetually returning on their hands. There is a consensus of opinion that, for the protection of all varieties of philanthropic activity, there needs to be some kind of Detention Colony to which the most depraved and worthless persons may be judicially committed, and in which they can be compulsorily detained, at any rate for long terms. For these reasons, it was forcibly urged upon us by General Booth that it was essential to any successful dealing with the Able-bodied, that there should be "a Central Authority analogous to the Prison or Lunacy Commissioners." *

(E) Conclusions.

We have, therefore, to report:—

1. That, apart from other considerations, the maintenance of a penal Poor Law for the Able-bodied has, in the large towns, been rendered impossible by the development of extensive Voluntary Agencies which refuse to allow the destitute to starve, or the homeless to remain at night without shelter.

2. That so long as the public organisation for dealing with the Able-bodied in distress is so directed as to result in large numbers of persons remaining in want of the actual necessaries of life, on whatever excuse, it is neither practicable nor desirable to prevent Voluntary Agencies from relieving such persons.

3. That the relief thus given by means of Shelters and the distribution of food—whilst it can hardly be made the subject of blame or reproach, so long as people are starving and homeless—is almost wholly useless for permanently benefiting the persons relieved; and has, moreover, many objectionable characteristics.

4. That whilst some of the Labour Homes and Rural Colonies present good features, and attain a certain measure of success, they are, in the absence of any Detention Colony for the "work-shy," and of any adequate outlet for those who have been regenerated, unable to deal with more than a tiny fraction of the problem.

5. That the co-existence, in the great centres of population, of a penal Poor Law for the Able-bodied, with extensive indiscriminate, unconditional and inadequate relief by Voluntary Agencies, produces so much undeserved suffering, on the one hand, and so much degradation of character and general demoralisation on the other, as to make it urgently necessary for the whole problem of Able-bodied Destitution to be systematically dealt with by the National Government.

* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LVIII. (Par. 48), to Vol. IX.

CHAPTER III.

The Able-bodied under the Unemployed Workmen Act.

It was Mr. Chamberlain who, first among statesmen, realised the bankruptcy of the Poor Law and the utter inadequacy of Voluntary Agencies, as methods of relieving Able-bodied Destitution. At the beginning of 1885 practically all the trades of Birmingham were in a state of extreme depression. "Hundreds of jewellers, silversmiths and electro-plate workers," we read, "had been out of employment for months, if not years."* The result was the starting of a "Mayor's Fund" for the relief of the Unemployed, with the usual unsatisfactory features; and an attempt by the Town Council to "make work" for as many men as possible. These resources were, however, limited, and the Birmingham Town Council implored the Guardians in June, 1885, at least to confer as to the measures called for by the continued distress. The Guardians were "of opinion that no practical or useful result would be likely to follow," and declined to confer, "as they felt that the ordinary Poor Law is capable of dealing with the matter." The reluctance of the respectable craftsman of Birmingham to condemn himself, his wife and his children to the evil promiscuity of the General Mixed Workhouse, or, if he was unmarried, to subject himself to the penal conditions of the Able-bodied Test Workhouse that we have just described,† was well known to Mr. Chamberlain. To the citizen of Birmingham, with its active political life, the disfranchisement entailed by Poor Relief may also have been specially deterrent.‡ In October, 1885, Mr. Chamberlain himself appealed to the Guardians to reconsider their attitude. He explained in an able letter the objections to the raising of special relief funds. He pointed out that the Mayor had declared that "it was not possible for the Corporation to find work for any considerable number *without displacing workmen already employed.*" He urged upon the Guardians that "none but the appointed Guardians of the Poor" were in a position to discharge the duty of meeting the distress. And he concluded with the pregnant observation that "the law exists for securing the assistance of the community at large in aid of their destitute members; and where the necessity has arisen from no fault of the persons concerned, there ought to be no idea of degradation connected with such assistance. Those compelled to apply have probably paid rates and taxes in past time. This payment is, in part, an insurance against misfortune." But the Birmingham Guardians remained obdurate, refusing even to give Outdoor Relief in return for work in the Labour Yard. Soon after this definite refusal of the Poor Law Authorities to assume any responsibility for the relief of distress from Unemployment Mr. Chamberlain was again in office. In the early months of 1886 it was forced upon his attention, as President of the Local Government Board, that, up and down the country, there continued to be exceptional distress among "large numbers of persons usually in regular employment."§ The fact that this distress had not manifested itself in the statistics of pauperism did not surprise him. In the well-known Circular of 15th March, 1886, the President of the Local Government Board recited as axiomatic that it was "not desirable that the working-classes should be familiarised with Poor Law Relief. . . The spirit of independence which leads so many of the working-classes to make great personal sacrifices rather than incur the stigma of pauperism is one which deserves the greatest sympathy and respect, and which it is the duty and interest of the community to maintain by all the means at its disposal."

In Mr. Chamberlain's view, the "Ins-and-Outs" and the Vagrants should be left to the Poor Law; but for the person normally in regular employment there was, in future,

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* *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, September 30th, 1885. For the whole of this episode, *see* MS. Minutes, Birmingham Board of Guardians, 1885; Minutes of Birmingham Town Council, 1885–6 (especially February 2nd., 1886); "Three Birmingham Relief Funds," by F. Tillyard, in *Economic Journal*, December, 1905; Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, 1907, Appendix R; and especially the Interim Report of Special Committee of the Birmingham Board of Guardians appointed to investigate the whole system of administering . . . Relief, October 21st, 1908.

† *See* Chapter I. of Part II., pp. 345–347.

‡ "The receipt of relief," as Mr. Chamberlain expressly noted, "although accompanied by a task of work, entails the disqualification which by statute attaches to pauperism." (Local Government Board Circular, March 15th, 1886, in Sixteenth Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1886–7), p. 3.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

to be quite another provision, namely, work at wages under the Town Council. "His hope and belief was," he told the House of Commons, "that the ultimate remedy for exceptional distress of the kind they had to deal with was to be found in the increasing activity of Local Authorities, which he believed had already been very considerably stimulated, and which he hoped to further stimulate."* This municipal work at wages was to be given under two conditions; first, "that the men employed should be engaged on the recommendation of the Guardians as persons whom, owing to previous condition and circumstances, it is undesirable to send to the Workhouse, or to treat as subjects for pauper relief"; and secondly, "that the wages paid should be something less than the wages ordinarily paid for similar work, in order to prevent imposture, and to leave the strongest temptations to those who avail themselves of this opportunity to return as soon as possible to their previous occupations."† Mr. Chamberlain did not remain in office long enough to carry out the incipient policy of classification of the Able-bodied thus formulated; but successive Presidents adhered to his views, and re-issued his Circular, whenever distress from Unemployment became troublesome.‡ Unfortunately, the results of the experiments thus set in motion do not seem to have been ascertained or recorded by the Local Government Board; and we do not gather that any deliberate judgment was arrived at as to the success or otherwise of this momentous departure from the Poor Law of 1834. At any rate, when Mr. Walter Long tackled the question in 1904, there does not seem to have been available for his guidance§ any statistical or descriptive summary of the preceding eighteen years' policy of spasmodically stimulating Local Authorities to provide, for the Unemployed of their districts, municipal work at wages.‖

(A) The Provision of Work at Wages by the Municipal Authorities, 1886-1905.

We have been unable to obtain any accurate statistics of the amount of work annually provided for the Unemployed by the Municipal Authorities in response to the Circulars of the Local Government Board between 1886 and 1905.¶ We gather that for the first decade there was a general disinclination among Municipal Authorities to undertake this provision, and those who did regarded it as merely an occasional expedient for tiding over particularly bad times. But with the recurrent issue of the Circular in 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893 and 1895, and especially after the endorsement of the principle of Municipal

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* *Hansard*, March 12th, 1886, Vol. CCCIII. p. 356. For this proposal Mr. Chamberlain might have quoted an interesting authority. *The Economist* declared, in an article during the commercial depression of 1857, that "it is clear that the Poor Law does not apply, cannot apply, and ought not to apply, any sufficient remedy to the kind of distress now spreading extensively in our large centres of trade and manufacture. The Poor Law is for the relief of a class who are unable to work; not for the relief of men eager for work, and delighting in the sense of independence, but from some occasional cause unable to find the means of work. There would be nothing more fatal to the moral feeling of our working men than to reduce them in large numbers to a sense of pauperism and dependence at every temporary season of commercial distress. . . . This is a case where an economic law should yield to a social law; and all the labour that can be employed, though it be without profit, or even at a prudent loss, ought to be employed, to avert, as far as possible, the terrible strain on one class of the community." (*The Economist*, December 5th, 1857, pp. 1343–4.)

† Local Government Board Circular, March 15th, 1886.

‡ It was re-issued in 1887, 1891, 1892, 1893 and 1895 (First Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895, *Q.* 175.)

§ In 1893, the Board of Trade had issued a valuable Report on Methods and Agencies for Dealing with the Unemployed (Cd. 7182), which shows how little information was available as to these works. "During the winter of 1902–3," Mr. Long complained, "when many of the Borough Councils in London were employing crowds of so-called unemployed, there was no record kept of the additional cost to the rates involved in so doing." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 78461, Par. 9.)

‖ The provision of work for the unemployed by Municipal Authorities was, of course, not confined to the period 1886–1904. At every previous depression of trade for more than a century, similar action is traced. As long ago as 1766 the Liverpool Town Council constructed the St. James's Walk, partly to relieve the unemployed. In 1848, the Town Trustees of Halifax set the unemployed to work at digging a new reservoir (*Halifax Guardian*, January 8th, 1848). In the distress of 1878–9, many towns (among them being Sheffield, Manchester, Leicester, Barrow, Bury, Bradford, Rotherham and Guisborough) put the unemployed on public works of one kind or another. ("Poor Relief during Depression of Trade," by . Macdonald, in Report of Poor Law Conferences, 1879.) At Nottingham, in 1884–5, when it was said that over 9,000 lace makers were out of work, the Town Council employed 1,200 men on relief works at 12s. per week. (*Labour News*, December, 1884, and January, 1885.)

¶ There will be found in the Appendix to the Report . . . on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed since 1886 (pp. 202–289) by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, and the Board of Trade Report on Agencies and Methods of Dealing with the Unemployed, 1893 (Cd. 7182), all the statistical information that we have been able to discover.

work for the Unemployed by the House of Commons Select Committee of 1896,* many Local Authorities felt compelled to take action, whilst others, responding to the perpetual pleadings and threatenings of deputations of unemployed workmen, availed themselves freely of this opportunity for demonstrating their usefulness to distressed citizens. The new activity took many forms. In times of local trade depression or exceptionally severe weather, the heads of all the Municipal Departments were instructed to engage additional men, and sometimes to choose these from the persons claiming to be unemployed, for cleaning the streets, for removing snow, for repairing the roads, for sewer construction, and, indeed, for every variety of Municipal work. Perhaps the most picturesque example is afforded by the Paddington Borough Council, which, in 1904, gave "instructions to the Borough Surveyor to discontinue for the present the use of the Scarifier attached to the Council's Steam-roller, and to carry out any necessary road-picking work by manual labour,"† expressly in order to employ as many as possible of the Unemployed. In populous and wealthy cities a "Mayor's Fund" would be raised by subscription, and used as a sort of "grant-in-aid" of Municipal works expedited or invented for the purpose of employing the Unemployed. In some other districts, such as West Ham, funds were raised by appeals started by particular newspapers. On the other hand, in other districts, having fewer wealthy residents, but dominated by men of popular sympathies, the Local Authority launched out into costly street improvements, into open spaces, and sometimes even into new buildings, all undertaken to provide work for distressed residents at the cost of the local ratepayers.‡ But whatever the kind or the amount of the work, or the incidence of the cost, we note, between 1886 and 1905, certain developments common to the whole country, which gave to this method of providing for Able-bodied Destitution its peculiar characteristics and its distinctive results.

The first development was the gradual discarding of Mr. Chamberlain's condition that "the wages paid should be something less than the wages ordinarily paid for similar work." Some Local Authorities began by offering a low wage—2d. or 3d. an hour or 2s. or 2s. 6d. a day—but this led to riots and disturbances.§ It was, in fact, hardly practicable to carry out this recommendation. If the Unemployed were merely added to the general staff, any attempt to discriminate against them in the matter of wage produced feelings of disgust and jealousy and led to persistent shirking of the work. If it was attempted to remedy this by paying the men piece-work at such an occupation as stone-breaking, or wheeling barrows of earth, it was quickly found that some of the most respectable, hard-working, and skilled men were unable to earn as much as the habitual tramp or dissolute navvy.‖ Moreover, it was quickly found impracticable to employ the Unemployed at their own trades, the only work that the Local Authorities could offer to a heterogeneous body of applicants being that of unskilled labour. The normal wage for this work was so low that any lower wage would be insufficient for subsistence. But even if there had been no practical objection it would have been politically impracticable to undercut the current rate in the district. The Trade Unions, and indeed the whole opinion of the working-class, would have vehemently objected to any attempt on the part of the Municipal Authority to lower the current rate of wages and the standard of life of the wage-earner, by taking advantage of his necessities as an Unemployed person. Hence it came to be a matter of course that the current rate for unskilled labour should be paid, and that whenever the Local Authority employed men for skilled work the Trade Union rate should be paid. Thus, the Southwark Vestry in 1895 resolved—

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* The Committee reported that they were "unable to see any valid objection to the policy advocated in the Circulars referred to." (Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1896, p. ix.).

† Minutes of Paddington Borough Council, March 14th, 1904. (Report of Works Committee.)

‡ Thus, at Sunderland in 1886–7, the Roker Promenade was constructed (Report of Engineer to Town Council of Sunderland, 1887); at Great Yarmouth, a quay wall was built at a cost of £25,000; at Blackburn, in 1903, a large extension of sewage works was undertaken (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXV. to Vol. VIII., Par. 6); and the Poplar Borough Council executed, in 1903–4, £65,000 worth of repaving the streets (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 80579–613).

§ At Great Yarmouth, in 1886, the Town Council issued a handbill in the following terms: "To the unemployed.—The Corporation are prepared to provide work for those needing it in levelling a portion of the South Denes and other works. Hours of work, 6.30 a.m. to 8.30 a.m.; 9 a.m. to 12 noon; 2 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. Wages, 2s. per day. Application to be made at my office, Town Hall, between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m.—J. W. Cockrill, Borough Surveyor." (House of Commons Return on Pauperism and Distress, No. 69, 1886, p. 95.)

‖ Thus, in the Minutes of the Paddington Vestry for December 19th, 1893, we read that: "Eight out of every ten of the class of men who apply are naturally unsuitable for this description of work. They worked about seven hours daily, and many of them could earn 10½d. to 1s. during that time, others about 2s. 6d. In two instances, the rate ranged to 4s. 9d. and 5s. 4d., but these were *accomplished* stone-breakers, and had they been allowed could have earned even more than this amount per day."

"That all men provided with temporary employment be paid the wage now paid to the workmen of the Vestry, on the particular work upon which they may be engaged."*

At Bradford, as was given in evidence before us by the Deputy City Surveyor:—

"The men engaged on the work provided for the unemployed, consisted, as a rule, of machine wool-combers, dyers' labourers, and others employed in the textile factories of this district. They were paid the standard rate of wages usually paid to outside labourers, of 6d. per hour, *which was, in many cases, more than they were receiving when they followed their regular employment.* They were treated with kindness and firmness, and if they showed willingness to work they received every encouragement, and very little trouble arose in the management of the men, but they were unable to do the amount of work that the ordinary labourer would have done, and, in my opinion, the works carried out by the Corporation cost more than they would have done had the usual kind of labour been employed."†

This process was accelerated by the fact that, as we gather, the Local Government Board omitted Mr. Chamberlain's condition of lower wages when they reissued the Circular in 1895, and that the principle of current wages seemed to be affirmed by the somewhat ambiguous recommendation of the Select Committee in 1896:—

"Your Committee can see no sufficient reason why a person employed upon Relief Works should not receive the rate of wages current in the district, if he is able to earn the same."‡

The second condition laid down by Mr. Chamberlain, that Municipal Employment should be given on the recommendation of the Board of Guardians, was gradually discarded by the more progressive Municipalities. "The recommendation was not adopted for obvious reasons," writes a well-informed correspondent in *The Times*, "had it been adopted the men would have been brought into contact with the Poor Law, and this was precisely what the promoters of Vestry employment wished to avoid." § The Borough Surveyor, who had to use the men, naturally preferred to make his own selection according to his opinion of their relative fitness for a particular job he had in hand instead of according to the Relieving Officer's opinion as to their past respectability, the number of their children, and the extremity of their destitution. But the Local Authorities had no machinery to make investigations either into the man's past or into the reality or cause of his unemployment. The easiest way was to open a register and to allow all who claimed to be Unemployed, and who could prove continuous residence in the district for six or twelve months,‖ to enter their names for a share of the municipal work. From this register, men were drawn as required, sometimes in rotation, those who described themselves as married and as having dependent children being often preferred. Thus, at Bradford, the Report states that:—

"The registry was opened on December 14th, 1903, and had to be closed on February 3rd following, as the works in hand were approaching completion, and no further relief works were available. During that period 2,130 names were registered, and 874 men were notified to commence work, none being set to work except married men who had families dependent on them, and who were ratepayers, or had been resident in the city for six months. The men were employed in four-hour shifts, at 6d. per hour, the hours being limited in order to avoid attracting men from other employment."¶

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* Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix N., p. 165. At Great Yarmouth, the rate of pay was raised from 3d. per hour to the current local rate of 4d. per hour. In London, the rates paid in 1892–3 were most various. "At Chelsea, St. Saviour's (Southwark), Bethnal Green and Poplar, 6d. an hour was paid; at St. George's, Hanover Square, 5d; at Hampstead, 5d. up to 2s. 8d. per day; at St. Pancras, 3s. 6d. a day; at Clerkenwell, 3s. 8d.; at Vauxhall, Lambeth, Brixton, and Newington, 4s. a day. At Camberwell and Dulwich, Trade Union rates were paid, and the unskilled received 4s. 3d. a day. At Hackney, about fifty carpenters went on strike the first day, and did not resume work till they had obtained 9d. instead of 8d. an hour." ("The State and the Unemployed," *Times*, October 30th, November 1st and 6th, 1893; reprinted in *Charity Organisation Review*, December, 1893.)

† Evidence before the Commission, Appendix XC. to Vol. IX., Pars. 6, 7.

‡ Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1896, p. xi.

§ "The State and the Unemployed," *Times*, October 30th, November 1st and 6th, 1893; reprinted in *Charity Organisation Review*, December, 1893, p. 441.

‖ The Stepney Borough Council in 1902 limited their work to men who had resided in the Borough for three years. (Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix N., p. 172.)

¶ Report of the Committee on the Unemployed to the Bradford Town Council, October 25th, 1904. In London, the plan was sometimes adopted of sending a postcard to the men who had registered whenever there was any work to offer them. "The experience gained by the postcard system," reports the Borough Surveyor in one case, "leads me to the conclusion that very many of the men who 'registered' did so more as a kind of insurance to secure work should the time come when they required it, and not because they were in actual need at the time of registering. About 30 per cent. of those to whom postcards were sent did not respond, and upon the inquiry officer visiting their homes to find out the reason, it was found that they had work elsewhere, and their names were then removed from the register. The number registered was 1,296 (463 of whom registered last year)." (Annual Report, Vestry of Bethnal Green, 1893–4; Surveyor's Report).

The practical result of the adoption by the Municipal Authorities of the current rate of wages, together with the large number of applications brought about by the open register at the office of the Local Authority, was the grant of only a short period of employment to each man. This system of short periods appeared to have a theoretical and a practical justification. It seemed the only method of making Municipal employment less eligible than the employment obtained by a man's own exertions. "The necessary incentive to men employed upon relief works to quit those works," the Select Committee of 1896 had reported, "may best be secured by an arrangement under which the hours of labour on Relief Works would be considerably shorter than the ordinary working hours."* But short hours were inconvenient to dovetail into the ordinary work of the Municipality; it was more practicable to let each man work the full hours for one, two or three days in the week, and it was urged that this would enable him to search for more continuous or more lucrative service on the other days. Thus, the St. Pancras Borough Council in 1903 took on its extra hands "at three days a week, so as to diffuse the benefit as widely as possible, and to enable some of the workers to get employment on the other three days elsewhere, either in permanent, or in more continuous, or in more lucrative service." † The Paddington Borough Council in 1905 authorised its Surveyor "to employ an average of twenty men per week, week on and week off. This method would enable about forty men to be employed, instead of twenty being engaged continuously; and it is hoped that, during the alternate week . . . the men would endeavour to find permanent employment elsewhere." ‡ These reasons for discontinuous employment chimed in with the very natural desire of the Local Authority to relieve as many of the Unemployed as they could from a given expenditure out of the rates. It coincided also with the constant demand by deputations of Unemployed persons that there should be no favouritism on the part of the Foreman, and that they should all share alike. § The usual procedure was, in fact, as we were informed by a witness before the Commission, "unemployed men were allowed to register their names at the various depots of the Borough Council; each man then received two day's work in rotation." ‖ "The conditions of employment," state our Investigators with regard to one Borough, "were laid down on the same lines as in the previous year; the length of time that each man was to be employed was left to the discretion of the Borough Engineer. It was subsequently fixed at two or three days, with the chance of another two days when the whole list of applicants had been exhausted." ¶ At Bethnal Green the Surveyor reports that:—

> "Complaint was made that by giving three days a week to each man employed, those who had registered their names recently would be a long while before obtaining employment, so the time was altered to two days each man, and finally the system of one day was adopted. I have no hesitation in saying that the one day system was the most satisfactory, as by it, whatever casual labour the Vestry had to distribute was equally distributed amongst all who applied."**

The Chelsea Borough Council went so far in 1903 as to direct the Surveyor to engage even the watchmen only for three days per week per man, so that a larger number might be employed, at the same time raising the rate from 3s. 6d. to 4s. per night.†† At Sunderland, three gangs of men, at first engaged for three days a week, were presently reduced to three days a fortnight.‡‡

The twenty years' experience of Municipal Employment gradually revealed to all concerned some disquieting characteristics of this method of providing for able-bodied men in distress through lack of work. The first objection—one which appealed most strongly to the members of the Municipal Authority—was the excessive cost of these additional works even if they were assumed to be necessary or of real utility to the community. This excessive cost was most marked when the system of rotation of employment

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* Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1896, p. xi.

† Report of Department of Works to St. Pancras Borough Council, 1903.

‡ Report of Works Committee to the Paddington Borough Council, November 7th, 1905. The Finance Committee at the same time reported as follows: "We do not believe that 'the hope that during the alternate weeks when the men would be standing off they would endeavour to find permanent employment elsewhere' would ever be realised, but we believe the contrary would be the case, the proposed action being a strong inducement for men to remain in the Borough, and not to seek work elsewhere." But the recommendations of the Works Committee were approved.

§ Thus, it was part of the request of a deputation of the unemployed to the Bethnal Green Vestry in 1894, "to employ more men, to distribute the work equally between all applicants." (Annual Report and Vestry Minutes, Bethnal Green, January 4th, 1894.)

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 82377, Par. 4A.

¶ Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix N., p. 173.

** Annual Report of Bethnal Green Vestry, 1893–4.

†† Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix N., p. 141.

‡‡ Report of Borough Engineer to Sunderland Town Council, 1886–7.

was adhered to. "I should say," we were told by the Borough Surveyor of Poplar, that "under the three days' system the labour cost 100 per cent. more than it should have done, whereas I estimate that in work [for the Unemployed] extending over two or three months, the manual labour did not cost above 15 per cent. in excess." * "Large bodies of men were employed . . . in reconstructing roads," we were informed by the Borough Surveyor of Bermondsey, "for a term of three days apiece. The result of this was that the work came out very expensive, owing to the fact that the men were not used to the class of work and, when the third day had arrived, they were stopped to make room for the fresh men, which was just about the time they had become acquainted with the use of the tools." † The works done by the Unemployed for the Poplar Borough Council in 1903–4—3,300 men being given one "three day turn" in the course of the winter, 1,323 of them getting also a second "three day turn," and only 296 more than two turns —cost 52 per cent. more than if done in the ordinary way, the extra expense thus incurred being £1,200, a result reported to be "entirely due to the men being unused to the work, and in many cases physically unfit." ‡ But even where the men were engaged continuously it was the experience of many places that the work undertaken by the Unemployed, "has cost more than double what similar work done under the same conditions and the same supervision cost the year before." § "On the new road at Mousehold," which the Norwich Town Council got executed by the Unemployed, "where the work could be correctly checked, it has been found to cost in some cases as much as six times what it ought." ‖ "The class of work undertaken in 1903," reported the Superintendent of Parks under the Glasgow Town Council, "was what was most readily available, viz., double digging or trenching ground. While this may appear a simple and easy job, it demands a certain amount of skill, which skill was not possessed by 90 per cent. of the men, consequently the work done was costly, so far as ordinary market value goes. In 1904, along with the aforesaid trenching work, squads were employed in the formation of a pond which entailed excavator work, in which the use of the pick was necessary. This work also requires a certain amount of skill, combined with bodily strength, a quality

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 80722.

† *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXXVIII. to Vol. IX., Par. 2.

‡ Report of Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society on the Relief of Distress due to Want of Employment, 1904, p. 320. "The average loss on employing the men was 15 per cent., but sometimes it was much larger. Thus, on one job, which should have taken ten weeks, after eight weeks little more than a third was done, and the whole of the estimated charge for labour had been expended. 'The employing of unemployed labour of this kind is a very expensive thing.'" (*Ibid.*).

§ Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix R., p. 360. The following detailed statement as to certain works at Glasgow is of interest :—

"STATEMENT SHOWING COST OF FORMING ROADS AND RAILWAY AT ROBROYSTON BY UNEMPLOYED LABOUR, WITH PROPORTION THEREOF PAYABLE BY COMMON GOOD" [*i.e.*, THE FUNDS OF THE GLASGOW TOWN COUNCIL AVAILABLE FOR ANY PUBLIC PURPOSE].

Forming Roads.

Cost by Unemployed Labour :—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Wages	373	7	10			
Railway tickets	43	11	9			
Tools and materials	22	13	8			
Blaes (*i.e.*, brick refuse)	16	17	0			
Horses and carts—hire	63	8	4			
				519	18	7
Valuation of road as formed				277	13	0
Leaving balance, payable by common good, of				242	5	7

Forming Railway.

Cost by Unemployed Labour :—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Wages	119	5	5			
Railway tickets	11	12	8			
Tools and materials	6	9	10			
				137	7	11
Cost if made by day's wage men				88	12	3
Leaving balance, payable by common good, of				48	15	8
Total sum payable from common good				291	1	3

(Report by the Superintendent of Cleansing on Relief Work Provided for Unemployed Workmen on Robroyston (Glasgow) Estate, 1904.)

‖ Report of Joint Committee, Norwich Town Council, 1904–5, p. 8.

which too many of the men lacked. Wheeling the material excavated, while not requiring much skill, demands also fair bodily strength, and therefore, owing to the want of physical vigour, many of the men did not do anything like a fair day's work." *

To the practical administrator it became also apparent that, when the practice of expediting work became chronic, it would lead to financial embarrassment. "These were works of necessity and cannot be repeated every winter," reports the Public Works Committee of the Vestry of St. Pancras.† "We would impress upon the Council," urged the Finance Committee of Paddington in deprecating the provision of Relief Works in the month of July, "that we are now in the time of the year when work is most abundant."‡

It was not as if this excess of expenditure all went in wages to the Unemployed. To a large extent it was wasted by an uneconomic use of plant and material, and in the excessive supervision required. "No one having a piece of work 'in hand,'" remarked the General Purposes Committee of the Birmingham Town Council, "would willingly employ workmen who are unaccustomed to the particular work; and here one of the great difficulties of charitable employment arises. The Unemployed, as statistics will show, are usually men of the most varied occupations; and it may fairly be presumed that some of them are not the most thrifty, thoughtful workmen, or men particularly handy at their respective trades. To put a number of ill-assorted workmen of this kind upon any public work would be fatal to its proper execution. In many cases the men would be physically unequal to the task, and in all they would require *an amount of supervision quite incommensurate with any advantage that might be obtained from lower wages.*"§ It is often forgotten that, in all constructional works, a large outlay has to be made for materials and plant. "*For every day's wages paid to the workmen, twice as much has to be expended in the hire of carts and horses.*"‖ In certain works of wood-paving executed by the Islington Borough Council, several years before they were likely to be required in the ordinary way, the total cost was estimated at £11,389, out of which only £2,479 was to be paid in wages for the labour of the Unemployed.¶ "In order to provide employment," as the Finance Committee warned the Paddington Borough Council, "large sums have to be expended on materials, so that of the large expenditure rendered necessary, only a relatively small proportion reaches the men themselves by way of wages. *It would really be cheaper to the ratepayers who have to find the money in any case, if relief were given to the men themselves direct.*" **

And the advantage to the workmen themselves, of using the available funds to set going municipal works, instead of giving it straight to the Unemployed in some other form, became gradually more than doubtful. To the Borough Councillors who were interested in Labour it became increasingly apparent that these doles of work from Municipal Authorities were being, to a large extent, extracted out of the employment and the wages which would otherwise have been afforded to an enlarged permanent staff, or, in some cases, to the usual employees of the Corporation. "The season when want of employment is most felt," observed the General Purposes Committee of the Birmingham Town Council, "is generally the winter; and what is to become of the regular Corporation workmen if numbers of the unemployed are taken on during precisely that season of the year when the least amount of outdoor work can be done?"†† By "additional works in the way of street-paving," reported the Master of the Works to the Glasgow Town Council, "employment could be given to a hundred or so;" but this simply means that "Contractors would dismiss their employees."‡‡ Nor was this objection founded merely on theory. "The effect" of the Municipal Relief Works at Bradford, deposed to us the Deputy City Surveyor, "was to reduce the amount of work which would have been done by the labourers usually employed by the corporation, and as a matter of fact some of the regular cor-

* Memorandum by Superintendent of Parks *re* Unemployed, Glasgow, 1904.

† Vestry of St. Pancras, Report of Highways, Sewers and Public Works Committee, February 22nd.

‡ Council Minutes, Paddington, July 11th, 1905, Report of Finance Committee.

§ Report of General Purposes Committee to Birmingham Town Council, July 25th, 1893.

‖ *Ibid.*

¶ Minutes of the London County Council, November 17th, 1908 (Report of Finance Committee, p. 8.)

** Report of Finance Committee to the Paddington Borough Council, July 11th, 1905.

†† Report of General Purposes Committee to Birmingham Town Council, July 25th, 1893. "To ask the Municipality to provide work," deposed one witness of experience in Municipal Government, "*can be no remedy*—it is hardly a palliative—on the other hand is more likely to accentuate the evil. If special work, is to be *created this* year, the work will not be required *next*, and another danger is, that the provident and regular workman will be ousted by such provision. After mature consideration I have come to the conclusion that Municipal provision of work will intensify the evil, and, in the end, increase the number of the unemployed." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 91141, Par. 14.)

‡‡ Report of Master of the Works to the Special Committee on Relief Employment, Glasgow Town Council, 1904.

poration labourers were walking about the streets of Bradford, out of work, at the time when these works were in progress, as they declined to register their names at the labour bureau." *

Thus, the relief of the Unemployed by means of Municipal Works was proved to be, to no small extent at any rate, merely an arrangement by which some men were deprived of their regular employment, in order that other men might be given, in rotation, a "three day's turn"! The Unemployed thus taken on were certainly no better than those whom they displaced. As was sometimes naively admitted, those to whom this preferential position was given were, almost inevitably, less efficient workmen. "A representation having been made by the Board of Guardians," we read in the Report of the Poplar Board of Works, "that, in the struggle to obtain employment the weakest probably went to the wall, an arrangement was made by which men, to whom letters of recommendation were given by the Relieving Officers, secured priority when Labour was engaged." † "There are many old men and weakly young men, and others not used to hard manual labour," we are told, "who seek employment at such times." ‡ "The greater number of the men recommended were physically unfit, some being exceptionally unfit, and others being weak through want of food. One-fifth to one-third of the men were equal to the Council's regular employees." § The Camberwell Surveyor stated that, in the case of some excavating work, "on account of the want of stamina of the Unemployed" the Vestry's workmen were taken from their scavenging and were put on to harder work, thus making room for the Unemployed.‖ What is more serious is that by this costly system of giving preference to the unfit, work could not fail to fall, to some extent, into the hands of ill-conducted as well as unfit persons. "Among those employed," states the Borough Engineer of West Ham in 1894, "were occasionally some loafers and idlers, rather more 'hard up' than usual."¶ Even when these refused to stand four successive days' work, and were dismissed for misconduct, or for failure to keep time, they had enjoyed the benefit of the day's wages, to the exclusion of others more deserving.**

Nor was the kind of work that was offered by the Municipal Authorities, whether to the skilled mechanic temporarily out of employment, to the clerk who had lost his place, or to the painter or building trades' labourer, such an occupation as improved him either mentally or morally. It was doubtless better for all these men to be at work at anything, even if only for a "three days' turn," rather than deteriorate by idleness. The worst kind of Municipal Employment was found to improve the man who had been a long time out of work. But compared with other occupations, or other training, the unskilled labouring, which alone could be provided for a heterogeneous body of applicants, was non-educational and depressing. "Road-picking," says a Borough Surveyor, "is trying for the unaccustomed . . . blistered hands tell against good averages where the

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* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XC. to Vol. IX., Par. 9. "The work was not created, but was anticipated; that is the work of the next year or so was forestalled, in order that it might be available for the unemployed. Under normal circumstances, men accustomed to navvying would have been employed on the sewering work, but, owing to the distress, that work was given to the unemployed; and, so far, local employment of that description was made less regular for those usually engaged on it." (Report of the Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society on the Relief of Distress due to Want of Employment, 1904, p. 27.) "At Preston, the work carried out by unemployed labour was necessary, and would have been done in any case. There was a real injustice to the men who would otherwise have got it. There are some thirty or forty men, who, though not permanent hands, are usually employed in Corporation works. As their jobs ended they were given the option of being taken on as 'unemployed' at the wage of 4½d. (instead of 5d.) an hour. They naturally refused to join the inferior class at less than their rightful pay, and were, therefore, thrown out of work." (Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, 1907, p. 118.)

† Report of Board of Works for Poplar District, 1894–5.

‡ Report as to the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix N., p. 179.

§ The Relief of Distress due to Want of Employment; Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society, November, 1904, p. 30.

‖ Report as to the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix N., p. 136.—"Men are selected from distress registers because of the size of their families, and not because they are efficient workmen, and by this means the men who from their industrial record are entitled to count on employment may be unfairly displaced. It has, for example, been stated that at the works on the Tooting lake, which were carried out by the unemployed, a number of good navvies who were unemployed, but had not registered, were to be seen standing round the works and seeing less efficient men employed." (*Ibid.*, p. 119.)

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 79408, Par. 20.

** Such defections increased the cost of the work. "There are special difficulties in connection with relief employment caused by the fact that when a gang has been composed of assorted men of various trades, some have turned up for the work and some have not, with the result that the time of those who attended could not be effectively utilised." (Report of Joint Committee, Norwich, 1904–5, p. 8.)

men are taken promiscuously."* "There was much talk," we were told by a witness, "of white-washing railway arches, laying out recreation grounds, painting town halls; but it was soon found that such work is subject to very narrow limitations, and the usual work was 'broom and shovel.'" † Even this work gave out, and municipal ingenuity—hampered by the inability to take land in private ownership, or to find room for much "ground work" in a crowded city, and still more, by the heavy cost involved for materials, supervision, etc.—could find no more tasks on which to put the Unemployed. Many Municipal Authorities were accordingly driven to fall back on stone-breaking for road metal. "The only arrangements we have in dealing with the Unemployed," reports a Local Government Board Inspector, "is by sending all able-bodied applicants to the Corporation stoneyard where stone-breaking is provided at 2s. 6d. per ton." ‡ "I have considered the question," reported the Master of Works at Glasgow, "so far as my department is concerned, and do not see that any great amount of employment can be provided through this department, unless it may be in the way of stonebreakng. If the committee should determine to go on with this class of work, it should be, I think, on the footing of payment for work done only, and the basis of payment should be at the rate paid to the regular stonebreakers. The Committee will also keep in view that, *if they go in for an extensive system of stone-breaking, the contractors from whom we purchase metal will pay off a number of their men,* seeing they will not be able to get a market for the sale of metal."§ Notwithstanding the plain warning conveyed in the latter sentence, the Glasgow Town Council "agreed to continue the relief work to a limited number of men at stone-breaking, to be paid by piece-work,"|| and the same plan was, in despair, adopted by various other Authorities.¶ This monotonous and toilsome work, uneducational and brutalising even to the unskilled labourer, was found to be seriously deteriorating to the unemployed clerk or skilled artisan, and was bitterly resented by them as degrading. But even in the most suitable of occupations, the atmosphere of Municipal Works, *whenever men are taken on because they are Unemployed,* and are not picked out and engaged at wages in the ordinary way because they are the best available men to execute a task that is required for its own sake, was invariably found to be enervating and demoralising. It is not in human nature to put forth one's full strength in work which is different from that to which one has been accustomed, and which is known to have been artificially created more as a means of occupying the men than for its urgency; in an employment, moreover, from which dismissal is practically impossible.** Those who attempted to work at their full strength and their full speed were dissuaded from doing so. "Decent men willing and wishful for work," it was reported, "are even intimidated and prevented from doing their best by those with whom they must work. Several cases came to our knowledge last year where men were threatened for doing more than the 'professional' Unemployed thought was sufficient."††

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* Report as to the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix N., p. 173.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 78704, Par. 2.

‡ Thirty-third Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1903–4, p. 228; Mr. Bagenal's Report (as to Sculcoates Union, Hull).

§ Report by the Master of Works to the Special Committee on Relief Employment, Glasgow, 1904.

|| Report of Executive Sub-Committee on Relief of Unemployed, Glasgow, March 22nd, 1904.

¶ At Southwark, "the Board of Guardians in 1902–3 had been permitted to send men to the Borough Council on the understanding that the Council would provide work for them. This greatly embarrassed the latter body, and it was decided in 1903–4 that the Guardians should send fewer and selected men. Thus, the Council provided work for 233 men between February and May, chiefly in stone-breaking. According to the number of their children the men had one, two or three days' work in the week. The orders given were for two weeks' work at 4s. a day. The orders were renewable, and some men had work practically throughout the winter." (Report of the Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society on the Relief of Distress due to Want of Employment, 1904, p. 28.)

** "The men generally will not put their best into the work," deposed one witness. "This is largely due to the knowledge that having been engaged, not because their services were required, but because they were out of work, they are not likely, therefore, to be discharged. (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LII. to Vol. VIII, par. 17 b)).

†† Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 131 (quoting Report of City Engineer of Newcastle, 1895). "In estimating the value of the work done by the unemployed, it cannot be rated much above 50 per cent. of that done by competent workmen. Some—unfortunately the smaller number—were willing and anxious to do their best but the majority, it was very apparent, went with the intention of doing as little as they possibly could, it being found that, directly the foreman's back was turned, they simply idled their time. Others who were willing enough to work were physically incapable, either through weakness or from having been all their life accustomed to indoor employment. A few turned out to be very good, steady workmen, and they have been employed regularly since. Taken all over, however, the average value of unemployed labour is, as I have said, little more than 50 per cent. that of regular workmen, the idleness of the loafers counterbalancing the work done by the more conscientious men." (Report by the Superintendent of Cleansing on Relief Work provided for Unemployed Workmen on Robroyston (Glasgow) Estate, 1904.)

In trying to utilise the labour of the Unemployed the Borough Surveyor, accustomed to deal with ordinary workmen on a purely business footing, finds himself turned into an instructor of the unskilled, and into a superintendent of a reformatory institution. "The fact has been forced on me," states the Newcastle Surveyor, "much against my will, that the providing of work for the Unemployed by the Corporation is a wasteful way of doing it. We have not an organisation that can cope with the 'professional' Relief-Labour man." * "Foremen or gangers," as was expressly pointed out to us by Mr. Walter Long, "whose business it was to superintend the work, while fully capable of getting full value out of able-bodied and capable workmen, had no experience of dealing with men who, through want or physical infirmity, were not able to give a full day's work in return for the wages paid." † And the foremen, conscious that the work had no commercial basis, were found sometimes to be themselves slack, and unwilling to bring their jobs to an end.

All these objections to the relief of the Unemployed by means of Municipal Employment—cumulative in their force—still leave unstated what seems to us the most fundamental of all. In the following chapter on "The Distress from Unemployment as it exists To-day" we shall show that the problem before the country is only in exceptional circumstances and only to a small extent that of providing for the man who has temporarily fallen out of continuous employment at weekly wages, and who has to be tided over the interval between one such regular situation and the next one. Such a man would present, as we shall see, comparatively little difficulty if he stood by himself. What is more formidable is the fact that large sections of the population in most of the big cities, are in a chronic state of under-employment, in which they get only a few days' work per week, and in bad times only a few days' work per month.

The provision of employment at irregular intervals and for irregular periods by Municipal Authorities, especially if it is arranged for times of more than usual Under-employment, tends to perpetuate this evil condition and to enlarge its area. This has been observed by one person after another. "The relief work with which they are provided," we are told in the Board of Trade Report of 1893, "is to many of them merely one out of the series of casual jobs by which they are accustomed to live, and when it is over they are in the same position as when it began. They have been supported for a few days, but they have not been set on their feet." ‡ "The worst of these relief works is," says Mr. C. S. Loch, "that after they are over, the family are just where they were; they get the employment for the winter, a few months, and then, unless they have it next winter and the winter after, they remain in the same position; but, on the other hand, one has done this injury, drawn a large number of comparatively young men on to a relief system. Now those men ought not to want to come, we ought to do our best to keep them from coming; but it was quite startling how many of them were quite young men; they did not belong to trade societies; they were labourers living in a happy-go-lucky sort of way, and sometimes they were married and had young children, and sometimes they had not a strong physique." § Summing up the results of fifteen years' more experience, our own Investigators report that "the best that the relief works have accomplished has been to provide another—generally inconsiderable—odd job to honest men who have to live by odd jobs, because of the irregularity of so much of our industry." ‖

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* Report as to the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix R., p. 360. Of a particularly well-organised experiment, it was said that "the men were unfamiliar with the work, and did it very slowly. But they seemed to do their best. There were comparatively few dismissed. The men were of all trades, 'not accustomed to using a pick and shovel and burrowing the earth. It was very hard work for them, and they did it very slowly.' *Employing them rather demoralised the regular men.* 'As a rule, if you have a gang of men, they all take the lead from the slowest men in the gang.' On every job there was one of the regular gangers of the Borough, and a foreman." (Report of the Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society on the Relief of Distress due to Want of Employment, 1904, p. 27.)

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 78461, par. 4.

‡ Report on the Methods and Agencies for dealing with the Unemployed, 1893, p. 409.

§ Report of House of Lords Committee on Poor Relief, 1888, *Q.* 4174.

‖ Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, 1907, p. 39. Such a plan, moreover encourages the loafer. "Schemes which merely provide a few days' work for a large number of men in successive relays are of all others the most likely to be abused. They offer work in the form which exactly suits those who are unwilling to submit to continuous exertion, while doing very little for those really in distress. The plan of employing men in two shifts—three days a week each—is recommended on the ground that it gives them a chance to look out for work during the rest of the week, but against this very real advantage must be set the encouragement to loafers by an arrangement which falls in with their habits."

And the Board of Trade in 1893 gave the warning that "against the advantages of all schemes for providing work for the Unemployed must be set the grave danger of their tendency to become chronic and to be looked forward to and counted on every winter." * It is needless to add that the anticipated result actually happened. "Before long," we were told by one of our witnesses, "'a day from the Vestry' came to be looked upon as a matter of right and its refusal as an injustice. Crowds gathered round the Vestry every winter waiting for work. . . . At a meeting of the Vestry in 1895 a young man complained that 'he had been up every day for ten weeks, but had not been taken on once,' and he was one of many. . . . A generation has grown up which has learnt to look upon these doles as a right." †

Looking back on the whole twenty years' experience of the provision of Municipal Employment, it is fundamentally to this existence of large sections of the working-class population at all times in a state of chronic Under-employment that must be attributed the failure of Mr. Chamberlain's suggestion of using Local Authorities to tide over periods of exceptional distress. If Able-bodied Destitution were limited to men, whether skilled or unskilled, who had lost definite situations, and might reasonably be expected to get into definite situations again when the emergency had passed away—whether their loss of employment was due to some such catastrophe as the bankruptcy of an employer or a fire, or to some dislocation through war or a commercial crisis—Municipal works would be a feasible way of getting over the difficulty. This course was successfully pursued in Lancashire at the time of the Cotton Famine. A few of the skilled cotton operatives could be employed at the current wages of unskilled men at public works without disinclining them to take up their old occupation as soon as the mills were re-opened. This outdoor work seems, in fact, to have served as a sort of physical training and to have actually benefited the health of many of those who were accustomed to the confinement of a mill. But even here, it was found necessary to supersede the ordinary machinery of the Local Authority by carefully-devised organisation under specialised management by which, at the cost of heavy loans charged upon the local rates, a limited number (never more than 4,000) of the unemployed cotton-spinners—not the labourers—were carefully combined with a large number of ordinary workmen, accustomed to the work of sewering, paving and street improvements, engaged in the ordinary way, and many of them brought from a distance. This Lancashire experiment, which is frequently cited in support of the Municipal Employment of the Unemployed, was, compared with the operations of the Municipal Authorities of the past twenty years, a relatively small affair. Its very success—so far as it can be considered a success—confirms the reason that we have assigned for the failure of Municipal Employment as a means of providing for the crowds that assail the Distress Committees of to-day. It was not the men living on casual employment in the Lancashire towns, it was not the general labourers, it was not even the labourers in the building trades for whom the Municipal Employment was found in 1863–6.§ For the distress into which tens of thousands of these men were thrown, their chronic condition of Under-employment being aggravated as an indirect result of the Cotton Famine, provision was made by huge charitable funds, by soup kitchens and by the Poor Law. It was exactly because the Municipal Works organised by Sir R. Rawlinson were carefully confined, so far as concerned the "Employment of the Unemployed," to the engagement of a limited number of cotton-spinners, for whom it was known that situations in the cotton mills would be available as soon as the importation of cotton was resumed, that this small and

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* Report on the Methods and Agencies for dealing with the Unemployed, 1893, p. 409.

† Evidence before the Commission, Q. 78704 (Par. 2).

‡ For this, the leading case in England of the aiding of Relief Works by the National Government, *see* Annual Reports of the Poor Law Board, 1862–3 to 1865–6 inclusive; Mr. (afterwards Sir) R. Rawlinson's Reports in Parliamentary Papers, 1866, Vol. LXI.; History of the English Poor Law, by T. Mackay, 1899, pp. 398–424; "The Facts of the Cotton Famine," by Dr. John Watts, 1866; "History of the Cotton Famine," by R. A. (afterwards Sir Arthur) Arnold, 1864; "Lancashire's Lesson," by W. T. McCullogh Torrens, 1864; "Public Works in Lancashire for the Relief of Distress," 1863–66, by Sir R. Rawlinson, 1898.

§ This was, indeed, tried, with disastrous results. "The gangs of labourers attempted to be organised in Lancashire before the introduction of the Public Works Act, as at Stockport, at Preston, and at some other places, proved utter failures. However little the men were paid, the work performed represented much less. Idleness soon verged into mischief, and mischief soon became actual riot." (Sir R. Rawlinson's Report, in Parliamentary Papers, 1866, Vol. LXI., No. 375, p. 3.)

costly experiment can be said to have been successful.* *If adequate provision were made in some other way for the casual labourers in chronic Under-employment,* it is conceivable that the Municipal Authorities might successfully find work for the limited number of men whom some industrial dislocation had temporarily deprived of regular situations, and who needed only to be tided over until they got into regular situations again. Even then, the question arises whether, if financial considerations alone were regarded, it would not be found to be cheaper to give the men their wages without allowing them to spoil the material, wastefully use the plant and necessitate the engagement of foremen and overlookers, for the execution of work, possibly not undesirable in itself, but of no real commercial value. In short, we are obliged to conclude, with the committee of the Norwich Town Council, that "the work on the whole has been unsatisfactory, and the payments in some cases are scarcely worth calling payments for work, but merely a mask for charity."†

(B) The Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905.

An appreciation of the gravity of the evil of this unco-ordinated and unregulated "employment relief" by Municipal Authorities—more especially the chronic "employment relief" of the Metropolitan Boroughs—led, in the autumn of 1903, a little group of experienced organisers and administrators of charitable funds to form a Committee and raise a Mansion House Fund in order to organise work on a better system for the destitute Unemployed of four East End Boroughs (Stepney, Poplar, Bethnal Green and Shoreditch).‡ This Committee proceeded on the lines of systematic investigation *into the industrial status* of each applicant, in order to select, not men of good character only, but those who were usually in settled employment in a definite situation and had a clear prospect of returning to it. It also started the colony system of combining employment with training which we shall presently describe. But the main effect of the Mansion House Fund in 1903–4 was "to demonstrate the magnitude of the problem to be solved." § The situation had become one of some gravity. As Mr. Walter Long, then President of the Local Government Board, informed us:—

> "There were crowds besieging the offices of the Relieving Officers and Boards of Guardians in London, in Leeds, in Liverpool, in Manchester, in Birmingham, and all our great cities where the unemployed difficulty arose in an acute form; the Boards of Guardians could hardly sit in some places without safeguarding their doors, which were besieged by a crowd of people demanding assistance. In the same way when it was found that the relief given by the Guardians brought in its train pauperism and deprivation of all civil rights, they turned their attention to the Municipalities and demanded that great works should be carried out by the Municipalities on which they should be employed."‖

Mr. Long dealt first with London. By his efforts an organisation to work on the lines laid down by the Mansion House Committee was, in the autumn of 1904, extended to every part of London. In each Metropolitan Borough a Joint Committee was formed, composed of representatives of the Borough Council and of the local Board of Guardians, in some cases with experienced charity workers, to undertake the local registration and inquiry. A Central Committee, composed partly of representatives of the Local Joint Committees and of the London County Council, and partly of persons nominated by the Local Government Board, was to administer whatever funds could be obtained, in carefully devised schemes for assistance.¶ This semi-official organisation, called into

* It is interesting to contrast, with this Lancashire experiment, the sort of problem that confronts the Local Authorities of to-day, in point of: (*a*) magnitude; (*b*) the kind of men to be provided for; and (*c*) the urgency of the need for relief. To take only a single parish in London, at Poplar in February, 1895, the offices of the Local Authority were suddenly besieged by crowds of casual dock and riverside labourers, thrown out of work by the frost, whose families were penniless and starving. The Local Authority felt driven to engage the men (at piece-work rates, yielding 4s. for a day's work) to remove the thick snow that covered the streets. Only local residents were employed, but more than 4,000 men in this one parish struggled to get this work, and 3,580 of them were actually employed within a fortnight, on an average for about one day each (wages £715). About 100 had to be put to stone-breaking. (Report of Board of Works for the Poplar District, 1894–5.)

† Report of Joint Committee, Norwich Town Council, 1904–5, p. 8.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 77832 (pars. 26–28), 78372 (par. 3), 78704 (par. 3). Particulars as to some previous experiments in 1893–4 on similar lines, by a Mansion House Committee of that date, will be found in the Third Report of the House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895, *Qs.* 11197, *et seq.*

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 77832 (par. 28).

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 78466.

¶ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 78372 (pars. 17–25), 787043; Report of Central Executive Committee of the London Unemployed Fund, 1904–5.

existence by the President of the Local Government Board without statutory authority, was definitely established under the name of "Distress Committee" for all the towns of the United Kingdom by the Unemployed Workmen Act, introduced in 1905 by Mr. Gerald Balfour, who had meanwhile succeeded Mr. Long at the Local Government Board.*

The Unemployed Workmen Act embodied the policy of Mr. Chamberlain's Circular of 1886—that respectable men, temporarily unemployed, should not be cast on the Poor Law, but should be assisted by the Municipal Authority of the district in which they were resident. The casual labourers were expressly excluded. "We proposed," said Mr. Gerald Balfour, "to deal with the *elite* of the Unemployed." † "The relief of recurrent distress," he stated in introducing the Bill, "was not contemplated. . . . The Unemployed for whom the Bill was intended were respectable workmen, settled in a locality, hitherto accustomed to regular work, but temporarily out of employment through circumstances beyond their control; capable workmen with hope of return to regular work after tiding over a period of temporary distress." ‡ By authoritative rules laid down by the Local Government Board, no man who had received Poor Relief during the preceding twelve months could be helped nor yet any one who had twice previously been helped by the new authorities. But there were other provisions and wider implications and larger aims embodied in Mr. Gerald Balfour's Act than might have been inferred from the precedents of 1886–1904. The Unemployed Workmen Act set up, for the first time, Public Authorities, able to draw on the rates for their expenses, expressly charged to deal with the social disease of Unemployment. The powers of these Distress Committees, which were to rise up in all large towns throughout the Kingdom, were not limited to the provision, out of voluntary funds, of work at wages for men temporarily out of employment. They were also empowered to pay the cost of the migration of men and their families to different parts of the United Kingdom, or their emigration; to establish Farm Colonies and to start an organised system of registration of employers wanting workers and workers wanting work within their districts. This last function of ascertaining the exact conditions of the Labour Market in every part of the Kingdom was especially insisted on. Whereas the establishment of a Distress Committee was to take place only in those towns in which it was deemed to be necessary, every County and County Borough Council in England and Wales was specifically required, if no Distress Committee was established, to appoint a Special Committee to ascertain, by means of continuous investigation, *and the working of Labour Exchanges*, what exactly were the openings for employment within their respective areas. "The object of the Act," Mr. Walter Long informed us, "was to provide machinery by which those who were able to work could get work by legitimate means." §

(c) The Distress Committees.

The new organisation got rapidly to work. Besides the Metropolis, where the voluntary machinery set up by Mr. Long was converted into the new statutory Authority with which we shall deal separately, nearly a hundred towns in the United Kingdom at once started Distress Committees, and began to register applicants for assistance.‖

In the Provincial Boroughs, with insignificant exceptions, the Distress Committees had no other idea than a continuance of the policy of Municipal employment, which, as we have described, had been spasmodically carried out, here and there, during the preceding twenty years. The "Labour Bureau" or "Labour Register" set up under the

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 77735—30 (Mr. Gerald Balfour); 5 Edw. VII. c. 18.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 77738.

‡ *Hansard*, June 20th, 1905; Regulations (Organisation for Unemployed), October 10th, 1905.

§ Evidence before the Commission, Q. 78469. This was left optional for the Scotch and Irish Counties and Boroughs.

‖ *See* the House of Commons Returns No. 392 of 1907, and No. 173 of 1908, as regards England and Wales. Distress Committees were at once set up, outside London, in seventy-five Boroughs, and fourteen other urban districts; and these registered, within three or four months, 71,107 applicants (representing a population in distress of 250,000), 56 per cent. of the men whose applications were entertained being under forty; 50 per cent. general or casual labourers, and 25 per cent. men in the building trades. In the following year, 57,433 applicants were registered, of practically the same ages and occupations. In Scotland, fourteen boroughs set up Distress Committees, and registered 8,695 applicants in 1905–6, and 8,576 in 1906–7. (Cd. 3431 of 1906 and Cd. 3830 of 1907.) No special Reports have been made for Ireland, but from the Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Ireland, it appears that only four Distress Committees were formed, and but little was done. (Annual Report of the Local Government Board for Ireland for 1907–8, p. xii.).

Act has been, in nearly every town outside the Metropolis, practically only a means of registering the applicants for the "Employment Relief" dispensed by the Distress Committee. Only the smallest use has, except in West Ham and two or three other places, been made in these towns of the powers of assisting migration or emigration.* What has happened is that the provision of doles of work by the Municipal Authorities has received a great extension, and has become chronic. The simple device of anticipating works of paving, sewering and road-making, so as to begin them in the winter, before they were required, has been adopted more widely than ever. A certain ingenuity has been shown in inventing special jobs on which to set the Unemployed at work—reclaiming part of Chat Moss,† planting trees in the water-catchment area at Leeds,‡ foreshore reclamation at Bristol, potato-growing at Oldham and Croydon, forming new recreation grounds or cleaning watercourses in many towns. Viewed as a whole, these provincial examples of Municipal Employment under the Distress Committees between 1905 and the present time present exactly the same characteristics as those which were undertaken in response to the successive Circulars of the Local Government Board between 1886 and 1905. We see the same provision of work at the ordinary rates of wages, not afforded continuously to any man, but only for a few days in the week, or a week or two in the course of the winter.§ We see the same swamping of the lists of applicants by men who are at no time more than intermittently employed, whether these are dock or wharf or general labourers, or painters and builders' labourers, and who are glad at any season to present themselves for odd days of work at current rates.‖ We see the same excessive cost of every work in which accurate comparison can be made—an excess due partly to the inevitable inefficiency of the Unemployed men at the work to which they were set, but chiefly to the difficulties inherent in working with heterogeneous gangs of men, few of whom were putting forth a full stroke, and some of whom were bent on doing only "as much as they were paid for." ¶ We see the same considerable expenditure, apart from the wages to the Unemployed, on the necessary materials, plant and supervision, so that it would often have been cheaper, financially, to have given the wages to the men merely as relief. Finally, we see the same inevitable tendency to a shrinkage of the ordinary staffs of the Municipal Departments, and to a throwing-out of employment of the regular

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* In 1906–7, from all the provincial towns of England and Wales, only 268 persons were assisted to migrate, and 437 men (with 1,232 dependents) to emigrate. (House of Commons Return, No. 173 of 1908, p. 8.) Two-thirds of these were sent out by West Ham, Bristol, Birmingham and Leicester. No other Distress Committees have done anything to speak of in this way. In Scotland only four Committees did anything at all. (Cd. 3431 of 1906.)

† "The most that can be said of the experiment is that it provided wages for 252 during a portion of the year. The work was, however, attended by great expense, owing to railway fares, provision of shelters, etc., whilst no remunerative return was secured by the Distress Committee as a set-off against the wages paid." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XCVIII. (A) to Vol. VIII., Par. 2; Report of Manchester Distress Committee, 1906–7.)

‡ Report of Leeds Distress Committee, 1906–7.

§ "It was decided to pay the workmen 4½d. per hour, and to employ them four days in succession, the time being nine hours per day." (Report of Distress Committee, Halifax, 1906.) "Two gangs have work each week, one on the first three days, and one on the last three days." (Report of Dudley Distress Committee, 1907.) At Ipswich, the Town Council refused to appoint a Distress Committee, preferring to let its Paving Committee execute extensive works of excavating and levelling on the Corporation land at piece-work rates, employing each man four days a week. (Minutes of Ipswich Town Council, November 9th, 1905.)

‖ We ourselves found the employment given by the Distress Committee actually made to fit in with casual employment. At Liverpool, as our Committee notes, "the men, some of them, get dock work, and then, on their off days, they are allowed to work for the Distress Committee." (Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 1, B., p. 4.)

¶ "On one occasion thirty men, of whom the majority were young men, were discharged for laziness." (Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and the Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix R., p. 363.) At Newcastle-on-Tyne, in 1905–6, "some site levelling, for which an item (£200) was on the city estimates, had been tendered for by contractors. The lowest tender was £130, but this was probably too low—a fair price would have been £170. It actually cost by unemployed labour £415 6s. 3d., of which the Corporation refunded £200. The great addition to the cost was due to the substitution, at first, of barrowing for carting, but this was given up after a short experience. The supervision was not strict enough, and the men got away to an unfortunately 'convenient' railway arch. Some road work which was on the estimates had been tendered for at £1,359 19s. 2d., but with unemployed labour cost £1,875 18s. 11d." (*Ibid.*, p. 129.) "Our estimate as to the result is that it cost the Corporation 40 per cent. more than if the work was done under contract." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXVI. to Vol. VIII., Par. 5.) At Croydon, it was reported "that digging upon some cemetery land—described as the easiest work at the time—cost £145 for 10½ acres. The surveyor estimates that similar work done with a plough would have cost about 25s. an acre." (Report on the Effects of the Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and the Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 827.) "We find, for example, that £3,866 was paid for the construction of cricket fields, the normal value being £675; £2,997 for levelling and excavating, instead of £1,440; 16s. 10d. per ton for breaking slag and stone, instead of 11s. 9d." (Report by Town Clerk to the Bath Town Council as to the experience of the Unemployed Workmen Act by forty-five Municipal Corporations, 1907.)

hands of the Municipal Contractors, because the "ground work" on which they would have been employed in the ordinary course had been given to the Distress Committee, to be distributed in doles of "Employment Relief" to those who had put down their names as unemployed.* The Local Authorities, indeed, have been suspected of deliberately throwing the cost of their own projected works on the grant from the Exchequer for the Unemployed. In short, we are, by this experience of the provincial towns, forced to agree with the conclusion of our Investigators. "Municipal Relief Works," they report, "have been in operation for twenty years, and must, we think, be pronounced a complete failure—a failure accentuated by the attempt to organise them by the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905. The evidence we have collected seems conclusive that relief works are economically useless. Either ordinary work is undertaken, in which case it is merely forestalled, and, later, throws out of employment the men who are in the more or less regular employ of the councils, or else it is sham work which we believe to be even more deteriorating than direct relief."†

So far as the mere provision of employment is concerned, we do not think that the three years' experience of the Metropolis under the Unemployed Workmen Act points to any different conclusion from that to which all those who have examined the working of Municipal Employment have been driven.‡ In London the work of inquiring into and sifting out the applicants seems to have been more systematically performed by the Distress Committees than in most provincial towns. Moreover the Central (Unemployed) Body, by which the selected men have been dealt with, set itself from the outset against the policy of sharing out the work in small doles, so that those men who have been employed at all have usually had work continuously for several weeks or even for several months at a time, the short week of forty-three hours at 6d. per hour being substituted for the device of a "three days' turn" which has elsewhere been so common.§ But the Central (Unemployed) Body, with its twenty-nine subordinate Distress Committees, has distinguished itself, not so much by the "Employment Relief" which it has organised,‖ for this has not differed essentially from what has been done elsewhere, and from what had been done spasmodically in London for the preceding twenty years, but for the energy and capacity with which it has developed the other ideas embodied in the Unemployed Workmen Act. It has been the three new functions of the Unemployed Workmen Act, the establishment of Rural Colonies, the organisation of Labour Exchanges, and the removal of workmen to places where their labour was required, which have proved the most valuable fruits of this development of Mr. Chamberlain's policy of withdrawing the Unemployed from the Poor Law.

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* "A few instances have been brought to our notice in which the regular staff of a Borough Council have been actually thrown out of work in the summer because the 'unemployed' have already done certain jobs in the winter. . . . In many places we have found undoubted evidence of work which would naturally have been done by navvies or other workmen in the ordinary way being taken from them by being given to the 'unemployed.' . . . We have found actual evidence in a few places of men being displaced by the employment of the 'unemployed' on relief works. In a Lancashire Borough, certain sewage works were in progress, and the Distress Committee offered to contribute £1,000 in wages if the 'unemployed' were taken on. It was, of course, found that the employment of a very large number of extra men expedited the work to such an extent that it was likely to be finished before the summer, and before the £1,000 was expended. Of the permanent men some twenty-five were accordingly discharged. They were naturally indignant at being displaced by less competent men, and when told they might register as unemployed, and come back for three half-days a week at 5d. an hour (instead of full time at 5½d. an hour) they very properly refused to register as 'distressed' workmen." (Report by Mr. Cyril Jackson and the Rev. J. C. Pringle, on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, pp. 67, 117.)

† *Ibid.*, p. 148.

‡ In 1905–6, there were 39,728 applicants registered by the twenty-nine Metropolitan Distress Committees, representing a population of about 150,000; and in 1906–7, 32,614 applicants, representing a population of about 120,000—56 per cent. of the applicants whose applications were entertained being men under forty, 51 per cent. general or casual labourers, and 22 per cent. belonging to the building trades (House of Commons Returns, No. 392 of 1907, and No. 173 of 1908); these proportions being almost identical with those among the applicants to the Distress Committees of other towns.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 77832, 78372, 78704; Preliminary Report upon the Work of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London, 1906; Second Report upon the Work of the Central Body, 1907; Report upon the Work and Procedure of the Distress Committees in London, 1907.

‖ In the year 1906–7, "2,510 men were employed for an average period of seven weeks, at a total cost of £19,224" (Second Report upon the Work of the Central (Unemployed) Body, 1908, p. 30); the actual value of the resulting improvements being estimated by the Office of Works, the London County Council, and the Camberwell Borough Council, for whom the various works were done, at no more than £3,271. (*Ibid.*, p. 111.) These valuations may, however, have been too rigidly limited.

(D) Rural Colonies.

"The main feature of the scheme of the Mansion House Committee" of 1903–4, a scheme inherited by the Central (Unemployed) Body for London, "was the provision of continuous work for male heads of families, the men being boarded and lodged and employed in Rural Colonies, while an allowance was paid to the families in London, on a scale based on the number of children, and averaging 14s. 6d. a week. The men were allowed to return home on furlough at regular intervals to visit their families and look for work." * This idea of Rural Colonies was, from the first, a leading feature of the work of the Central Executive Committee of the London Unemployed Fund, which Mr. Long had started, and it became, from the outset, the principal development in London under the Unemployed Workmen Act. Under this scheme several hundreds of men were sent each winter, for periods of from four to seventeen weeks, to execute works of land reclamation, digging and excavating and road-making, principally at Osea Island, Letchworth and Fambridge. At the outset, it was intended to limit engagements to men who had been in regular employment, and who hoped to get back to definite situations at weekly wages, to the exclusion of the mere day labourer. The idea of the Rural Colony seems to have been principally to afford an automatic "test," it being assumed that the removal from London, the separation from family and associates, and the monotony of daily work in the country, remote from congenial society, would stave off those who are attracted to Municipal Relief Works merely by the prospect of an easy job at regular if somewhat low remuneration. This, it will be observed, is, in one respect, a "test" of a different order from that of admission to the General Mixed Workhouse. The essential weakness of the "Workhouse Test," is that it deters by means of the very regimen to which the inmates of the institution are subjected; it therefore operates principally on those who have "passed the test," and have been admitted. Its efficacy is dependent on the deterrent regimen being continued. The Rural Colony, on the other hand, deters by means of the dislike which the undesirable man has to leaving the congenial surroundings to which he has grown accustomed; its operation is, therefore, only on those whom it excludes. In so far as the necessity of moving into the country proved to serve as an effective "test," it offered the advantage of allowing the regimen at the Rural Colony to be free from any features of humiliation, degradation or penal conditions. Those who "passed the test" could safely be treated in whatever manner was best for their well-being.

Apart from minor shortcomings, which were remedied by experience, the main bjection to these first experiments in Rural Colonies was their unexpected costliness. It had been assumed that these carefully selected men, put to work at useful tasks, would produce, at any rate, some considerable proportion of their maintenance. The result proved quite otherwise. The conduct of the men was, on the whole, good; and the majority of them seem honestly to have worked. But, including the allowances to their families in London, they cost, on an average, about 25s. per week each. The average output per man was not, as it could hardly have been expected to be, equal to that of the ordinary contractor's gang. The expense of supervision and skilled organisation and direction of their labour was necessarily heavy. The kind of work that could be undertaken in the winter months by heterogeneous gangs of unskilled labourers, aggregated in large numbers, and constantly coming and going, was not such as offered any profitable return, even if undertaken under the ordinary conditions. We need not debit the enterprise with the specially unfortunate result of the work at Fambridge where a speculative job in building a seawall, in order to reclaim some land which had been submerged by an inruption of the sea, proved financially disastrous, just as it might easily have done to a contractor.† In this case there was also the profit, which cannot be computed, of protecting other land from possible damage. The typical case is perhaps that of Osea Island, where a public-spirited landowner offered the use of land, buildings, materials and plant on advantageous terms, involving no capital outlay; and himself managed the housing and feeding of the men at an inclusive charge. The operations of seawall repairing, roadmaking and trenching at Osea Island cost £1,770, apart from the provision of buildings, materials and plant, "the value of the work done being estimated at £530" by the independent valuer, and the actual recoupment being only £265, the balance going to the owner of the land according to agreement, in part return for the buildings, materials and plant provided by him. Thus, 134 men, working on an average for nine weeks each, had received for themselves and their families the equivalent of about 25s. a week each, their gross product being only equal to about 8s. 2d. a week each, and this sum being more than

* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 78372, Par. 4.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 31683–4, 80744–84, 80807–31, 80857–951. It must, however, be remembered that losses of this sort inevitably occur when a number of jobs are taken; and it might, therefore, properly be included

absorbed by the cost of materials, plant and buildings and incidental expenses. It would have been almost exactly as cheap to the Central (Unemployed) Body to have paid the 134 men 25s. a week each for doing nothing in London.* The work at Letchworth resulted in somewhat better financial results. Its gross cost was £5,882, and £2,091 was actually received in return. The 422 men had, on an average, slightly over ten weeks' employment; and the gross product was 9s. 8d. per week, from which 2s. 4d. per week must be deducted for the expenses of supervision, plant, etc. The men earned, therefore, 7s. 4d. per week each towards their cost of about 25s. per week.† Other enterprises yielded essentially similar results. We may, perhaps, infer that the employment of a few hundred carefully selected men in Rural Colonies, when work can be found for them, has been proved to cost from 17s. to 25s. each per week, which can only be said to be less than the men and their families would have cost in the General Mixed Workhouse.‡

But the financial results are not, in themselves, decisive. The men and their families had to be maintained somehow; and whilst they cost less in the Rural Colonies than in the General Mixed Workhouse, there is universal testimony that the results were enormously superior. The Colony served, on the whole, as a "Test" of just the right sort. It did not dispense with the need for careful inquiry, and selection of men. But it choked off the drinker, the loafer, the "work-shy," and the semi-criminal "cadger"; whilst the honest and respectable man, though refusing to leave his home whilst he had any alternative, gladly accepted the offer, if he was in real distress, for the sake of the regular subsistence secured to his wife and family. And those men who "passed the Test" were benefited, not, as in the General Mixed Workhouse, deteriorated, by what was done for them. It was true that, mainly owing to the conditions under which it had been done, their work yielded little or nothing of money value. But they gained in health and strength by their stay in the country,§ with adequate food, regular hours and enforced abstinence from stimulants. They gained, too, usually, in character and, in the best instances, perhaps also in *morale* from the regular work, the sense of co-operation in enterprise, and the absence of degrading or humiliating accompaniments.‖ Many of

*See the figures given in the Report of the Central Executive Committee of the London Unemployed Fund, 1904–5; Preliminary Report upon the Work of the Central (Unemployed) Body, 1907, p. 38; Second Report of the Work of the Central (Unemployed) Body, 1908, pp. 38–9.

†*Ibid.*, pp. 39, 116.

‡We have already mentioned (Chapter II.) the utilisation, by Boards of Guardians and Unemployment Committees, of the Salvation Army Colony at Hadleigh, which was established as part of General Booth's "Darkest England" Scheme of 1890. Here, the work has been frankly one of reclamation of character, the employment and training being avowedly only means to that end. Particulars of the work done for the Able-bodied Unemployed at the instance of various Authorities will be found in "Hadleigh: the Story of a Great Endeavour"; "Labour Colonies," by Colonel D. C. Lamb; Third Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895; Report of the Mansion House Committee on the Unemployed, 1903–4; Report of Central Executive Committee of London Unemployed Fund, 1904–5; Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906; Annual Report of Holborn Board of Guardians, 1905; Annual Report of Stepney Board of Guardians, 1905–6; Report of Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, on the Effects of Assistance given to the Unemployed; Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 16223 (Pars. 55–57), 16583, 78905. Whilst every visitor to Hadleigh is much impressed by the zeal and devotion with which the Colony is managed, and by the skill and ingenuity put into all the details of organisation, the extent of the success of this work of reclamation of personal character is a matter of controversy. In any case, however, the Colony is devised for what we may call moral invalids; and it hardly affects the problem of the Able-bodied Unemployed. It suffers, however, equally with Hollesley Bay and other Rural Colonies, in being without the means of finding situations for the men whom it has restored to mental and physical health, and having no other outlet than emigration.

§ "The men sent to the Colonies benefited considerably morally and physically." (Report of Bermondsey Distress Committee, 1905–6.)

‖ We may trace in the official records the gradual realisation of the fact that it was in the training that they supplied, rather than in the pecuniary value of the product, that the Rural Colonies were justified. "Even in cases of personal weakness or failure," says the Report of 1904–5, "the efforts of the Unemployed organisation may not be wholly useless. In many cases such weakness is mainly the product of environment. A change to country life, the influence of new surroundings, friendly assistance and advice, or the inspiration of a new hope, may be the means of an effectual remedy. Such men, after a period of testing and training, may even prove capable of the efforts, and worthy of the independence, of a new life in a new country. In those cases where the weakness does not produce, except in bad times, actual unemployment, but only prevents, at all times, a life of health, steadiness and independence, the opportunities for personal influence or disciplinary pressure, afforded by the period of continuous assistance—the employment of a man on a resident Colony and the regular weekly payment of an allowance to a wife in her home—may provide the necessary means of effecting a permanent improvement. If there is some exceptional disability, the presence on the local committee of the representatives of charitable effort may furnish an opportunity of bringing some appropriate remedy to bear." (Report of the Central Executive Committee of the London Unemployed Fund, 1904–5.) It is interesting to see the same experience at Birmingham, where the intention had been solely to afford employmen. "The only men who were really benefited," deposed the Chairman of the Committee, "were about

them gained, also, even at the necessarily uneducational work to which they were put, something in the way of physical and mental training: * and it was along this last line that the experiment of Rural Colonies was further developed.

The other form taken by the Rural Colony was that of the Farm, or Agricultural Training Establishment. By the public-spirited action of Mr. Joseph Fels, the land and buildings at Hollesley Bay, which had been specially adapted and used as an Agricultural College, were secured for the public and placed at the disposal, first of the Central Committee for the experiments contemplated under Mr. Long's scheme, and then of the Central (Unemployed) Body. On the 1,300 acres of this estate, including not only arable land and pasture, but also extensive gardens, orchards, dairy and poultry farms, much heath for bringing into cultivation, and a brickfield, it was proposed to combine three different purposes, namely:—

(i.) "The provision of special work for periods of exceptional distress" the men being employed at improving the estate and "double-digging" for the planting of fruit trees;

(ii.) "The provision of more continuous work for men who . . . show a marked aptitude for country life," these selected men being trained "for permanent work in the country as gardeners or farm labourers;" and

(iii.) "The establishment of suitable men and families in agricultural or other rural industry," whether in farm or market-garden situations at wages, by the establishment of small holdings, or by emigration, for which special training was to be afforded.†

To the Farm Colony thus established with the approval of the Local Government Board of 1905, the twenty-nine Distress Committees in the Metropolitan Boroughs have been authorised to send, from among the local "Unemployed," selected married men of good character, choosing primarily those who expressed a desire to be trained for agriculture or to emigrate. The wives and families received the weekly allowance that we have already described, the men themselves getting at the Colony only their board and lodging and sixpence a week for pocket money. Every month they were allowed two days' furlough, their railway fares being paid, in order to visit their homes and look for work. They could, of course, leave the Colony at any moment, receiving their railway tickets to London, and the allowance to their families being stopped after the current week. In the course of the four years that this Farm Colony has been in operation, over 3,000 men have been admitted and discharged, the average stay being 11·5 weeks. Of this number about 174 (with 700 dependents) have been emigrated, along with their families; 42 (with 183 dependents) have been assisted to migrate to country situations elsewhere; and 495 have taken their discharge on having obtained work, these "known cases" being only a part of the total who have found work. The remainder of the men, comprising three-fourths of the whole, were either returned to London on the completion of the maximum

forty who were employed for nearly two months at some work in connection with the Sewage Farm. *These men were thoroughly trained and their physical powers well developed by work* and good food which they obtained. Investigations were made as to the condition of these men, several months after they had left the employment of the Distress Committee, and it was found that fifteen had obtained regular employment, which was an extremely satisfactory result of the training they had received" (Evidence before the Commission, App. No. VI. to Vol. VIII., Par. 6).

* "Though Colonies cannot effect social miracles, they may still do useful work of a less pretentious kind. They will be always there, in good years as in bad, to meet hard cases, and to give a breathing time to the unfortunate. . . . Different Colonies will have different aims. Among such aims may be placed the preservation or restoration of physical vigour, the increasing of general efficiency, schooling in good habits, industrial training, preparation for emigration. Up till now most Colonies have been most successful in achieving the first of these. They have been to the working man "out of sorts" what Marienbad or Karlsbad are to those at the other end of the social scale. Probably they would be yet more successful in this direction if simple gymnastics were made an element in their work" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 81760, Par. 24 (e)). On the other hand, it has been said that there was a certain amount of disadvantage in the men being "institutionalised." and having all the details of life arranged for them. "Where the element of training is strong. as at Hollesley Bay," deposed one witness, "this evil . . . may be counteracted" (*Ibid.*, *Q*, 77832, Par. 37). "Until they are made Schools of Industry they are not likely to do their inmates much real good" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 81760, Par. 24 (*e*)). Besides that at Hollesley Bay, Farm Colonies have been established by the Distress Committees of West Ham, Glasgow, and Edinburgh. But we think that Hollesley Bay may be taken as the best representative of the idea of a Training Establishment, the others being more of the nature of Relief Works.

† Report of the Central Executive Committee of the London Unemployed Fund, 1905; Preliminary Report upon the Work of the Central (Unemployed) Body, 1907; Second Report (upon the same), 1908; Particulars as to the Hollesley Bay Colony (Central Unemployed Body), 1908; The Unemployed: Hollesley Bay Farm Colony Experiment, by James Gunning, 1907; Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 31662–74.

stay allowed, or left prematurely on one ground or another, without anything being known of their having got into situations.

The actual cost of the experiment cannot easily be calculated, because it is impossible to decide by what amount the commercial value of the estate has been increased by the various works that have been executed, the large extensions of the market-garden and fruit orchards that have been made, and the other improvements that have been effected, all of which are of the nature of capital outlay. The actual amount by which the Central (Unemployed) Body, and its predecessor, the Central Executive Committee, are out of pocket down to September 30th, 1908, including the purchase of the estate and cottages (£33,000), and all the improvements, as well as the maintenance of the men and all expenses, has been (less recoupments from sales of produce, etc.) £111,573. Against this, there is to be set the undoubted great improvement of a freehold estate of 1,300 acres. What is more certain is that, including the family allowances, and between 5s. and 6s. per week for food, the men cost, on an average, with railway fares, supervision and incidental expenses, something like 25s. to 30s. a week each.

The Hollesley Bay Farm Colony, started with such wide and varied objects, has become the subject of some controversy. To us, surveying the whole course of the experiment, two factors seem to have militated against its complete success; namely, the mixture of aims with which the undertaking was started, and the peremptory extinction of the project which had afforded the stimulus of hope indispensable to the success of any social experiment. The mixture of aims interfered, from the outset, with the single-mindedness of the organisation. The Colony was devised primarily as a training establishment; but it was made to serve also as a place where hundreds of men could be provided merely with employment, which it was hoped would be productive of profit. To some members of the governing body, the main purpose of the Colony was the training afforded. To others, its chief value seemed the opportunity of finding productive employment for the Unemployed. To others, again, it seemed a stage towards the settlement upon the land of a selected number of men trained for the purpose. The Distress Committees, whilst selecting, on the whole, respectable men of decent conduct, failed to find enough men who wished to be trained for agriculture, or for emigration, and were tempted to fill up all the available places by dispatching the best of the men who, on finding no other alternative open to them, would consent to go. The idea of confining admission to the Rural Colony to men who had held regular situations, and might hope to regain such, was quickly abandoned, largely because the Distress Committees had little or nothing else to offer to the crowd of casual dock or general labourers and building trades' labourers, who made up three-fourths of the applicants. Thus, the bulk of the men sent to the Colony were men who did not want to be trained in agriculture, who resented the idea, and who looked upon their engagement merely as one of employment away from their homes in a remote country place, at the severe task of "double-digging" in cold weather, for wages which they described as "a penny a day." The unfortunate Superintendent of the Colony would find scores of such men arriving—sometimes as many as eighty in a single day—who were sore at what seemed to them unnecessary exile, who had no wish to be taught anything, and for whom, whatever the weather, work had to be found. We think that it is no little testimony to the advantageous circumstances of the Hollesley Bay Estate, to the patience, skill, and administrative capacity of the Superintendent, and to the practical wisdom with which, on the whole, the enterprise has been conducted, that, under all these disadvantages, the cost has been kept down to so low a figure, the men have gained so much advantage, and the discipline of the establishment has been so well maintained.* But from the standpoint of affording productive employment there can be little doubt that the Hollesley Bay experiment has been open to the criticisms that have been made on other forms of Municipal work for the Unemployed. Its sole merits, from this standpoint, are that, unlike Municipal Relief Works, it has served as the right sort of Test, and that it has provided those who passed the Test with healthy maintenance and a task of work in the open air of the country, without degrading accompaniments, instead of in a London Workhouse or Labour Yard.

From the standpoint of affording training to those men who wished to engage in agricultural pursuits, in England or the Colonies, the Hollesley Bay Colony must be counted a

* We have personally consulted the Chief Constable of Suffolk on the point; only to be informed that (whilst some apprehension had been felt by the neighbours at the outset), there had been absolutely no police charge against any of the men in the Colony.

success. The varied and practical character of the instruction provided appears to be just what is required for the would-be emigrant or small-holder; and, moreover, the training has, in fact, enabled a certain number of men to obtain permanent situations in this country. But the use of the Colony as a Training Establishment has been hampered in various ways. The men themselves seldom got quite free from the idea that they were there for productive employment, and some of them were, for this reason, indisposed to take the training seriously. The use of the Colony as a place upon which some hundreds of the Unemployed could be "dumped," merely in order to be set to work, necessarily absorbed much of the time and zeal of the administrative staff; and diverted the interest and attention of the minority of men who were there for training. Those who, for one reason or another, were not suitable emigrants, looked to finding situations in the country; but the failure to organise any complete system of Labour Exchanges in every County, to which we shall presently refer, made it almost impossible to discover the existence of suitable vacancies. Finally, there came the blow which destroyed the stimulus of hope under which the Colony had worked, in the decision of the Local Government Board in October, 1906, that the erection of cottages should be stopped, that no part of the 1,300 acres could be set aside for small holdings, and that, in spite of the terms of the Statute, no further expenditure was to be incurred by the Central (Unemployed) Body to assist even the selected men who—to use Mr. Walter Long's own words to us—had "taken advantage of the opportunity offered to them to really learn how to cultivate their land to a profit," and had been specially trained with this object, to get established, as intended, on the land, so that they "might become self-supporting citizens."*

Our impression of the success and failure of the Hollesley Bay Farm Colony has been confirmed by the results of an investigation, made by one of our number in the spring of 1908, into the after-careers of the 1,853 men who had, at that time, passed through the Colony. This inquiry, conducted by personal visitations of the homes in all the twenty-nine Boroughs of London, had the advantage of being undertaken some time after the earlier batches of men had returned home from the Colony; but this lapse of time, whilst it increased the value of the Report with regard to those men who were found, necessarily involved the loss from sight of a large proportion who were dead (10), not actually found (14), or who had removed without trace (740). Out of the 1,089 whose careers were more or less ascertained, 174 had emigrated and were mostly reported to be doing well, and between 40 and 50 had found situations in the country. But the great majority of the men, who were for the most part those sent to the Colony merely for employment, not for training, had had to return to London, and it is the after-careers of these men which are of the greatest significance. From the interesting statistics of the Report made on these cases, certain broad features stand out. In more than 90 per cent. of the cases the men had been physically benefited by the stay at the Colony. Health and strength, impaired by the privation and mental distress that goes with Unemployment, had usually been restored or improved.† In a little over 8 per cent. of the cases, it was declared that no such physical benefit had resulted, these being usually cases in which the man had been sent home through illness, or in which delicate men had been unable to stand the exposure. Nearly all the wives spoke highly of the Hollesley Bay Scheme, and found the weekly allowance sufficient to live upon, owing to its regularity. A great many of them said that they and the children were able to live in comfort; but after the man's return, and a few weeks of irregular work, the home had gone back to its normal destitute condition.‡ Only 9 per cent. of the wives found it impossible to keep their homes decently on the money allowed them. In one family only was there evidence of the absence of the man causing injury to the home, and in this case the wife ran away whilst her husband was at the Colony. In spite of the extreme poverty everywhere, 63·3 per cent. of the homes were reported on as being clean and well kept, 22·4 per cent. were fairly clean, and only 14·3 per cent. were dirty. Of the whole 908 men actually visited, 41·4 per cent. had not made any application to the Distress Committee or the Poor Law since their return from the Colony. Of the remaining 58·6 per cent. 33·5 per cent., had applied to the Distress Committee with no result, 13·7 per cent. had applied to the Distress Committee and had temporary work given to them, whilst 11·4 per cent. had applied to the Poor Law. It is from the industrial standpoint that the after-careers are least satisfactory. Only

* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 78461, pars. 5 and 10.

† "Great benefit to their health and physique had been received by such men, as well as agricultural training." (Report of Marylebone Distress Committee, 1906–7.)

‡ The wives of the men, it is reported, were found more enthusiastic about the Colony than the men themselves. In some cases where the husband has been flatly antagonistic to the Colony, the wife, without too obviously contradicting her husband, has made it clear that she thoroughly approved of it.

in about 10 per cent. of the cases had the man succeeded in getting into a regular situation of some permanence, though "fairly regular work" was reported of about 7 per cent. more. What appears to be a considerable proportion of those engaged in the Building Trades had obtained fairly continuous work at the usual busy season in the Spring; but found themselves unemployed again in the winter. In no fewer than 107 cases, out of 908 men actually visited, *skilled artisans and mechanics—carpenters, compositors, bootmakers, tailors, blacksmiths and engineers among them—had sunk to be general labourers.* Of the men who were simply returned to London, and whom the Central (Unemployed) Body had dropped there, to sink or swim, the great majority had, in fact, found themselves in no way permanently re-established, but once more in the same chronic state of "Under-employment," dividing their time between doing a little casual work, and tramping about in a hopeless search for a better job, and quickly becoming, for the most part, in as great need of help as they were a year or two before. In seven cases at least (besides many others among the 740 not traced), the home had been broken up, and the men and their families were in the Workhouse.*

* We give some of the results of this Inquiry.—

OCCUPATIONS OF MEN BEFORE GOING TO HOLLESLEY BAY, 1905–8.

Boroughs.	Casual Labourer.*	Labourer.	Carmen & Stablemen.	Building Trade.	Furniture and Wood.	Metal Work and Machinery.	Engineers.	Sundry Artizans.	Dress and Boots.	Food Preparation.	Printing Trade.	Railway Service.	Road Service.	Police, Army, Navy.	Shop Assistants.	Clerks, Agents.	Total.
Battersea	3	10	2	11	2	4	–	–	–	–	–	1	4	2	1	1	41
Bermondsey	13	18	5	8	–	–	–	4	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	51
Bethnal Green	2	8	2	3	10	2	2	4	8	2	1	–	–	–	–	1	45
Camberwell	2	11	–	5	–	4	–	1	–	1	–	2	2	–	–	1	29
Chelsea	2	11	4	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	1	–	–	23
City	–	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
Deptford	3	21	5	1	–	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	–	38
Finsbury	5	12	9	5	1	4	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	38
Fulham	2	21	5	6	1	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	1	38
Greenwich	1	12	–	–	–	4	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	19
Hackney	3	20	–	3	2	3	–	–	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	42
Hammersmith	2	17	2	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	2	–	–	26
Hampstead	–	5	1	6	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	1	–	–	15
Holborn	–	4	1	2	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	11
Islington	1	15	2	3	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	23
Kensington	–	29	–	4	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	35
Lambeth	6	25	6	9	5	2	–	4	–	–	2	–	1	–	–	2	60
Lewisham	–	13	4	3	–	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	27
Marylebone	3	7	–	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	12
Paddington	–	7	4	4	–	1	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	19
Poplar	9	17	9	9	6	2	1	–	1	2	1	–	–	–	–	–	57
St. Pancras	2	21	5	10	1	1	–	–	–	3	1	–	2	–	–	–	46
Shoreditch	6	5	1	1	2	2	–	2	3	1	–	1	–	–	1	–	25
Southwark	1	14	3	5	2	2	–	3	1	2	–	1	–	1	2	–	37
Stepney	8	14	8	6	2	6	–	2	1	–	3	–	2	1	1	1	55
Stoke Newington	1	1	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	3
Wandsworth	–	12	1	4	2	3	–	1	–	–	2	1	–	–	–	–	26
Westminster	2	9	3	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	16
Woolwich	–	21	2	–	3	18	–	1	1	1	–	1	–	–	–	1	49
TOTAL	77	380	92	113	42	65	8	26	26	17	10	9	15	9	10	9	908

* Casual Labour includes those who have never done anything but "odd jobs."

PERCENTAGES FOR LONDON OF MEN WHO HAVE BEEN AT THE HOLLESLEY BAY FARM COLONY AS TO THE SUBSEQUENT RESULTS.

Sunk from Skilled Trades into Unskilled Labour.	Employment since leaving Colony.				Subsequent Applications.				Opinions of Men.		Condition of Homes.			Benefit to Family.				Opinion of Wives.	
	More or less Regular.	More than half-time.	Less than half-time.	No work.	To Distress Committee; no result.	To Distress Committee; result.	To Poor Law.	No application.	Satisfied.	Dissatisfied.	Clean.	Fair.	Dirty.	Permanent.	Temporary.	No Benefit.	Injurious.	Money Sufficient.	Money Insufficient.
11·7	17	31·3	39	12·7	33·5	13·7	11·4	41·4	93·7	6·3	63·3	22·4	14·3	16·9	74·8	8·3	—	91	9

It is clear that, however superior may have been the stay at Hollesley Bay to residence in the Workhouse, or to work in the Labour Yard, the capital drawback has been that *the great bulk of the men have been allowed to return to the same demoralising morass of chronic Under-employment from which they were taken.* In these cases, no permanent good has been done. But the experiment has not been fully carried out as it was intended. What Mr. Walter Long thought that he had authorised were "experiments in regard to the deserving applicants with a view not only to giving them temporary employment, but also . . . to *securing their permanent re-establishment* so that they might become self-supporting citizens in future."* As a remedy for the distress due to Unemployment, the Rural Colony falls short, because, under the present policy of the Local Government Board, it stands alone. The Central (Unemployed) Body was definitely informed that the Act was "only intended for the provision of temporary relief."† But the Act itself said that the temporary work was to be such as the Local Authority thought "best calculated to put the man in a position to obtain regular work or other means of supporting himself." What is lacking is, as regards the trained and tested men, some appropriate machinery for securing, as was originally contemplated, "their permanent re-establishment."‡

(E) The Labour Exchange.

It would be unfair to Mr. Walter Long and Mr. Gerald Balfour not to record that they recognised the necessity for machinery in order to enable the new Employment Authorities that they were setting up to discover exactly where and how the applicants for relief could be permanently re-established in employment. It was part of the provision made by the Unemployed Workmen Act that there should be, in every County and County Borough, an official organisation for ascertaining the local conditions of employment, and this was to take the form of a universal network of Labour Exchanges covering the whole country, which would, when in full working order, show at once in what parts of the country there was any unsatisfied demand for labour. Where a Distress Committee was set up, the conduct of the Labour Exchange was entrusted to it. Wherever no Distress Committee was set up, there was to be a Special Committee appointed by the County or County Borough Council, and expressly directed to fulfil the same function.§ "The network of Labour Bureaus which the (Unemployed Workmen) Act *was intended to establish all over the country*"‖ was, in fact, as Mr. Gerald Balfour described it to us, an integral part of the general scheme.

Unfortunately, as it seems to us, this part of the scheme of the Unemployed Workmen Act has, outside the Metropolis, been left practically inoperative. In spite of the mandatory terms of the Act in this respect, we cannot find that these Special Committees were ever appointed in England and Wales, or (except in Lanarkshire, Hamilton and Motherwell) anywhere in Scotland or Ireland, or that any Labour Exchanges were, as the Act required, set up for the large proportion of the country not falling within the jurisdiction of any Distress Committee.¶ Thus, as the Act has actually been administered, Labour Exchanges have been established only in places where Unemployment was so great as to warrant the setting up of a Distress Committee; and where, consequently, they were foredoomed to find it impossible to discover situations for those who registered

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 78461, Par. 5.

† MS. Minutes, Working Colonies Committee, Central (Unemployed) Body, October 23rd, 1906.

‡ So long as "there is no apparent outlet for Colonists after their term of employment, the advantages seem to be confined to the physical and moral benefits to the men themselves while at the Colony, and the preserving of their homes. . . . It is a regrettable feature . . . that Colony life under present conditions affords no outlet to permanent settlement on the land. Hence many of the men come back to their former life without hope or prospect." (Report of Woolwich Distress Committee, 1906–7.)

§ Mr. Long had been struck by the fact that "there was no means by which it was possible to ascertain what the conditions of labour were in different parts of the country. In one part, labour might be, comparatively speaking, scarce, whereas in another there might, at the same time, be a redundancy; but there was no Central Body able to ascertain these facts, and place them at the disposal of the Unemployed. For these reasons, I thought that there ought to be a Central Body." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 78461, Par. 7.)

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q* 77737.

¶ We have been unable to ascertain that the Local Government Board for England and Wales has ever brought to the notice of the various County and County Borough Councils their failure to comply with the Act in this respect; or has ever inquired from them what reason they had for this failure.

themselves. In those places at which, in the judgment of the Local Government Board, there was no such pressure of the Unemployed, and where, accordingly, there may have been vacant situations to be filled, no Labour Exchanges have been established. Thus it was that it came about that when the Superintendent of the Hollesley Bay Farm Colony sought to discover vacant situations in country districts for the picked men whom he had trained to agricultural work, he found that the Labour Exchanges for the rural districts had not been established, and he had to make shift, just as if the Act had not been passed, with personal solicitation and private correspondence, and with costly advertisements in newspapers circulating in rural districts.

Apart from the failure to set up Labour Exchanges in the places in which no Distress Committees were established, the Act was itself in fault, as we can now see, in ever associating one of these organisations with the other. The fact that the Labour Exchange was established by, or in close connection with, a Distress Committee—as happened nearly everywhere outside the Metropolis*—not only tended to make it regarded merely as an adjunct of the Municipal Relief Works, but also prejudiced† it, from the start, in the minds of competent skilled workmen seeking new situations, and of employers desiring anything better than the crowd of casual labourers and men downtrodden by misfortune or misconduct who make up the bulk of the applicants for Employment Relief. Nor did the Distress Committees make any attempt to create a network. We do not find that the different Labour Exchanges that professed to register the local demand for and supply of labour opened up communications with each other, in order to make known the local position for each other's benefit. To do this effectively needed organisation from a national centre, to which each Labour Exchange might have daily reported—even if it could report only that there were no unsatisfied demands for labour of any kind, and that there were so many men, of such and such occupations, out of work. Even this negative result would have been of use in preventing the aimless wandering in search of employment that now goes on. It might have proved, too, the extent and ubiquity of Unemployment. We cannot but regret that, just as no steps were taken by the Local Government Board to get established the complete network of Labour Exchanges contemplated by the Act of 1905, so no steps have been taken to organise, by means of a Central Exchange, any means of inter-communication among such local Exchanges as are in operation.‡

In the Metropolis, however, the experiment of the Labour Exchange has been tried with some success. The Central (Unemployed) Body took the view, after some discussion, that the Labour Exchanges contemplated by the Act of 1905 § should have no connection with the temporary registers of applicants for Employment Relief that were opened each

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* Glasgow, Edinburgh, Croydon and Coventry seem to be the only exceptions. In these towns, the Labour Exchange has done good work in a limited sphere.

† "The fact that the Distress Committee register has been used for the purpose of an Employment register has been very much against any chance of achieving success in the way of putting employers and workmen in communication with each other. It appears to be quite evident that a Labour Bureau for this purpose must be worked separately from any register for the administration of relief in any form, as it is quite certain that a list of men whose principal qualifications for employment are their poverty, number of children, thrift, and length of residence in the district, will never appeal either to business men in search of competent workmen, or to the large body of self-respecting workmen who resent anything savouring of State Relief." (Report of Bournemouth Distress Committee, 1906–7.)

‡ It is fair to add that the Local Government Board for Scotland did go so far as to send out a special Circular on October 25th, 1906, drawing attention to the value of Labour Exchanges, and urging their establishment, apart from the registers of the Distress Committees.

§ Labour Exchanges had been started, here and there, quite irrespective of local distress from Unemployment. The first in this country appears to have been that established at Egham in Surrey, mainly by the efforts of Mr. Nathaniel Cohen, London County Council, in 1885; followed quickly by one at Ipswich by Mr. Tozer (Report of Royal Commission on Labour, 1894; Report on Agencies and Methods of dealing with the Unemployed, 1893, p. 100). Others were established by the Plymouth, Liverpool and Salford Town Councils by 1894, as well as by the Islington and St. Pancras Vestries. Within the next ten years, the number had grown to more than a score, the Metropolitan Borough Councils being specially authorised to maintain them by an Act of 1902 (the Labour Bureaux (London) Act). A "Central Employment Exchange," in communication with the various local Exchanges was established by the Central Executive Committee of the London Unemployed Fund in April, 1905. In March, 1906, the Central (Unemployed) Body took over all the existing Municipal Exchanges in the Metropolis, except that of the City of Westminster. (Report upon the Work of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London, 1906–7; Evidence before the Commission, *Qs*, 81259–69; Report on Labour Bureaux, by H. D. Lowry, 1906; "Unemployment: a Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge 1909).

winter by the Distress Committees; and that what was required, in good times and bad alike, was some permanent machinery for enabling employers and wage-earners to find out each other's whereabouts and each other's requirements more easily and more certainly and more quickly than would otherwise be possible. The Labour Exchanges which had been set on foot in various parts of London were formed into a single organisation, and after some careful experimenting as to what was and what was not practicable, the whole of the Metropolis was gradually covered by a network of public employment agencies, telephonically inter-connected, and reporting to a common centre. These are already being resorted to by employers of labour of every kind, skilled and unskilled, male and female, manual and clerical, the number of situations offered through their agency being at the end of the year 1908, at the rate of 33,000 per annum. They are also being increasingly applied to by wage-earners of every kind, not merely by those who are actually Unemployed, but by those who expect or desire to change their situations. It is interesting to find that the Trade Unions, at first suspicious, if not actually hostile, have become steadily more friendly to the institution, which they find of positive advantage, not only to their members, but also to their organisation. We are informed that, on December 31st, 1908, no fewer than thirty-two Trade Union Branches were already keeping their "vacant books" actually at the Labour Exchange itself. The number of situations of professedly permanent character filled by the Metropolitan Labour Exchanges at the end of 1908 was at the rate of more than 20,000 per annum.

The experience of the Labour Exchange in London indicates both its utility and its limitations. It does not increase the volume of demand for labour. It does not create work at wages where no employer offers it. But in all but the best organised trades it abridges the interval between one situation and another, during which no wages are earned. It greatly reduces the weary aimless tramp of the Unemployed workman all over London, from one firm to another, in the attempt to discover, by actual application to one after another, which of them wants another hand. It enables the workman to ascertain, by calling at one office in his own neighbourhood, what inquiries have been made for his own kind of labour all over London. To the employer it offers, similarly, the choice among the available workmen of the kind he requires. But the Labour Exchange affords a further contribution towards the solution of the problem of Unemployment. Experience proves that, even in London, at a time when thousands are unemployed, there are opportunities for the taking on of more hands which employers forego because they cannot, in the absence of machinery of this kind, discover quickly and without trouble exactly the kind of labour that they require. By enabling these opportunities to be taken, instead of being let slip, the Labour Exchange may, to some slight extent, and with regard to certain specialised kinds of skill, even increase the volume of employment. Finally, experience shows that the Labour Exchange offers the means of "decasualising" labour. Though one employer wants a man for Monday only, there are others who want men for Tuesday only, others for Wednesday only, and so on. In so far as such employers draw their casual labour from a common Exchange, it may cease to be casual so far as the labourers are concerned, one job being "dovetailed" with another so as to give each man practically continuous employment. To the possibility of developing this use of Labour Exchanges we shall recur in a subsequent chapter.

(f) Paying the Cost of Removal.

But the Unemployed Workmen Act did not merely aim at providing machinery for ascertaining what situations were vacant in any part of the United Kingdom, and for discovering where there was a local excess, and where a local deficiency of labour. It also enabled the Local Authorities to make it possible for the necessitous man, and his family, to move to the situation found for him, or to the place where labour was most in demand. This, too, was to be outside the Poor Law. Mr. Walter Long had realised that to permit any Destitution Authority to subsidise the removal of the Unemployed from one locality to another would ruin, in advance, this method of helpfulness.* For the first time for a whole generation the Act of 1905 enabled public funds to be used, apart from the Poor Law, for paying the expenses of the removal of men and their families from places in which they could get no employment, to other places in which there was

* "In regard to emigration, representations were made to me by people representing the Colonies that there was the greatest objection to emigrants being sent out by Boards of Guardians. Even though they might not be actually paupers it was considered by the Colonies that the fact that the Board of Guardians sent them out made it almost inevitable that they should be in some way affected by the taint of pauperism." (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 78461, par. 6).

an ascertained demand for labour. The Central (Unemployed) Body for London set itself diligently to utilise all the opportunities thus afforded.* The other parts of England and Wales were scrutinised to discover situations for which no local candidates were available, and, contrary to the common expectation, such were found. It was discovered that some men in distress had family connections in other places, by means of which they could get along and become self-supporting, if only they could come within their reach. Care was taken that no removal was sanctioned until satisfactory assurances were obtained that definite situations were available, that the employment offered was of a permanent character, and that arrangements had been made for providing suitable homes in the towns or villages to which the families were transferred.† In this way it was found possible to assist the removal of some scores of families, representing about 300 persons; one-half of them from Woolwich to South Wales and Lancashire, where there has been an actual demand for labour; and one-half, being men who have been trained at the Farm Colony, to various situations in the country.

Pending the development of better means of discovering unsatisfied demands for labour in other parts of this country, the chief work of transfer has necessarily taken the form of removal to other parts of the Empire in which there was proved to be a need for more workers. Where men have expressed a desire to emigrate, and have been found, after careful investigation, in every way suitable, they have been assisted to go to Canada, and, in a few cases, to New Zealand. In the first two years of its existence the Central (Unemployed) Body thus enabled no fewer than 8,000 persons thus to remove to new homes, in nearly all cases making arrangements which ensured the men employment immediately on arrival.‡

This policy of enabling selected men among the Unemployed to remove to new localities, whether merely from one county of England to another, or from one part of the Empire to another, is sometimes criticised as affording no real help. If, it is said, the men who wish to shift are strong and competent, the locality or country in which they are living cannot afford to lose their services; whilst if they are weak and incompetent, no other locality or country will wish to receive them, or will be able to provide a living for them. It was suggested, in short, that not only was there no unsatisfied demand for labour anywhere, but that, even if such an opening could be found, the best men would not need to go, and the worst men would not be allowed to come. This seems to have been the view taken by nearly all the provincial Distress Committees.§ But the Central (Unemployed) Body for London found that this summary way of disposing of the possibilities of migration and emigration did not exhaust the question. Investigation and experience proved that, whilst a change of locality was not available as a method of assisting the bulk of unemployed workmen, there were some men for whose distress it was a successful, and even the most appropriate remedy. At all times, and in all places, there are "industrial misfits"—men who have been thrown out of gear with their surroundings, it may be by the local stoppage of their industry, it may be by the loss of heart in themselves—who will never really be able to struggle to their feet in their old locality, but who, could they but get a new start, amid new circumstances, are likely to become permanently successful. To enable these men to change their environment may be, as the experience of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London has abundantly proved, the most really helpful, as well as the most permanently economical way of relieving their distress.

(G) The Inadequacy of the Unemployed Workmen Act.

But although the experience of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London proves the Unemployed Workmen Act to contain germs of very promising developments, the

* Not much use seems to have been made of this power by Distress Committees outside the Metropolis, though the Bootle Distress Committee describes its payment of removal expenses to two or three families for whom employment had been found in distant towns, as "perhaps, the most useful work" that it had done (Report of Bootle Distress Committee, 1906–7). The West Ham Distress Committee moved a score or two of persons (Report of West Ham Distress Committee, 1906–7). Through private interest, the Brighton Distress Committee got three families settled in a Yorkshire woollen mill (Report of Labour Bureau Sub-Committee, Brighton, 1906–7). In the absence of the network of Labour Exchanges covering the whole country, which they ought to have had at their disposal, most Distress Committees seem to have assumed that no openings existed anywhere.

† Second Report upon the Work of the Central (Unemployed) Body for London, 1908, p. 48.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

§ With the exception of that of West Ham, which, adjoining London, took, for this purpose, the London view.

provisions of the Act have been found, in nearly all great centres of population, quite inadequate to the needs. The Act was avowedly only experimental in character. It definitely established the public responsibility for dealing with Unemployment, and provided machinery for ascertaining the area and depth of the distress, without at the same time affording the Local Authorities any adequate means of coping with the distress that they had probed and tested. We have accordingly found an almost universal dissatisfaction with the Act, which sometimes takes the form, especially among those whose experience has been limited to the provision of Employment Relief, of declaring it to be of no utility whatever.

We may note, to begin with, the failure of practically every Local Authority to do anything at all even for a large proportion of those applicants whom they had found eligible for assistance under the Act and in every way worthy of it. Thus, it has been found that, in round numbers, out of every hundred applicants who have presented themselves, a third have been ineligible under the limiting conditions prescribed by the Local Government Board, and out of those whose claims have been entertained, at least half have had to be sent empty away, whilst those for whom anything could be done at all, have got help only after long delay, and then only in a manner hopelessly inadequate to their proved need.* It is difficult to realise the sickening despair which conscientious members of Distress Committees have felt in listening to the stories of applicant after applicant, whom they knew to be respectable hard-working men in distress through no fault of their own, whose distress it was generally understood that Parliament had directed to be relieved, and for whom it was nevertheless manifest that nothing was likely to be done.† Matters were much aggravated by the exceptionally prolonged depression in the London building trade. It must, we think, be a fundamental principle of any dealing with the subject of Unemployment at all, that the Public Authority charged with this service must be in a position to provide appropriate treatment, *in one way or another*, for every case of proved eligibility that comes before it.

The failure to do anything even for the most worthy applicants has been, to some extent, due to lack of funds. Though the Act set up public bodies to grapple with the distress, and allowed them to take out of the rates all the expenses of their organisation, it permitted no expenditure from the rates upon the very object of the organisation, namely the relief of the distress. In most places the donations of the charitable have proved quite inadequate. The special grants made by Parliament each year have been made so late, and have been clogged with so many conditions that many places have found it impracticable to obtain any advantage from them. "The Act," deposed one of our witnesses, "either went too far by being introduced at all, or not far enough, the former being my own opinion. Speaking generally, it is absolutely ridiculous to think that voluntary funds will be subscribed, when certain sums may be taken out of the rates in connection with the same objects. We have had the proper machinery in motion since the Act was put into force, but have had no funds whatever

* Thus, taking the whole of the Distress Committees in England and Wales, in 1905–6, out of 110,835 applicants, 73,817 were found to be eligible but only 41,321 were provided with any work at all throughout the whole winter. The amount of this Employment Relief was relatively small, averaging less than eight and a half days per man in the course of the three or four months; a large proportion of the whole getting only two or three days. The total amount of wages distributed by this Employment Relief among the 41,321 men throughout the whole winter does not appear to have averaged 30s. per man (House of Commons Return, No. 392 of 1907). In 1906–7, there was some improvement. Out of 90,057 applications, 54,613 were entertained; and 35,092 were provided with some Employment Relief, either by the Distress Committees or by the Municipal Authorities themselves. Though the great majority of these got only a few days' or a few weeks' work during the whole three or four months, the average period of employment of each man went up (House of Commons Return, No. 173 of 1908). In the autumn of 1908, in London, out of 40,000 men registered, the number on any kind of Employment Relief on December 8th, 1908 was only 3,447.

† At Bermondsey, "only about one in nine of the applicants obtained any work through the Committee." (Replies by Distress Committees to Questions . . . on . . . the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, p. 7). "As it is," reported the Bradford Distress Committee, "many weeks or months often elapse before work can be found, and this not only raises hopes in the minds of the Unemployed which cannot be fulfilled, but directly encourages the lazy and shiftless man to be content with having put his name on the register, and so long as he can live upon the earnings of his wife and children not trouble to look further for work. On the other hand, if work is promptly offered by the Committee it relieves the immediate necessities of the worthy applicant and at the same time applies a test to those shufflers who swell the number of the Unemployed" (*Ibid.*, pp. 39–40). At Middlesbrough, we were informed, "it raised hopes among many men that work was going to be provided for them as soon as they liked to apply; and the real powers of the Act are so small as to be little better than useless. In this town we have conscientiously tried our utmost to derive some good out of it for the benefit of *bona fide* working men, but have been able to do very little indeed for them. Gradually the men got tired of waiting and applying for work, and allowed their names to be struck off the list, recognising what was (and is) a fact—that we could do next to nothing for them." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXVI. to Vol. VIII., Par. 5.)

to work with so far as paying for work done, whether necessary and of a good and useful character or simply in the form of relief work. As I have said before, we tried to carry out the Act, but because we could not show a condition of affairs that was nearly impossible, we failed utterly in obtaining any portion of the grant made by Parliament, to the utter disgust of many of our members." *

The conditions of eligibility for assistance under the Act—imposed, it must be remembered, not by the Act itself, but by the Local Government Board—have been proved greatly to limit its utility.† The residential qualification, for instance, has been found to exclude some of the most worthy applicants, and to operate in some cases as a penalty for having really tried to find work in another district across the purely artificial borough boundary. As one Distress Committee points out:—

> "A man is for many years a ratepayer in one district and, to better his position, he removes to another district, and in, say, six months' time, through some cause or other, and very probably through no fault of his own, he loses the position and is out of work; he is not eligible to be registered under the Act in the district where he resides, and he is not eligible for the district which he has left, because in both cases he has not the necessary twelve months' residential qualification."‡

The exclusion from the benefits of the Act of men who had received Poor Relief, and of men who had been assisted under the Act at any time during two successive years, debarred from help many of the most pressing cases.§ Thus, at Southampton, "upwards of 200 deserving men with families have been prohibited from participating in the work at the disposal of the Distress Committee, for the reason that these men have on an average received 3s. or 4s. each in relief at the cost of the poor rate. These small sums have only been obtained by the men when their families have been absolutely in need of food."‖

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* *Ibid.*

† The regulations made by the Local Government Board for Scotland were more liberal than those prescribed for England. There were no exclusions of persons who had had Poor Law relief, a fact which has permitted the assistance of many men who have been temporarily in the Poorhouse. There was no limitation of the period of Employment Relief to sixteen weeks. There was nothing prescribing that the remuneration should be less than the current rate. The Local Authorities were left, in other respects, much more free than in England. (*Ibid.*, Q. 89049, Par. 14.)

‡ Replies by Distress Committees to Questions . . . on . . . the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, p. 82 (Grimsby). "While it is necessary to stipulate that applicants must have a residential qualification to be eligible for employment locally provided, and to prevent persons from being attracted from outside areas, the present minimum period, viz., twelve calendar months is too long, many persons do not reside in any one district for that period. By reducing the period necessary for qualification to six months, the interests of the resident Unemployed would be safeguarded, and a fuller index of the real extent of Unemployment obtained." (*Ibid.*, p. 86; Sunderland.)

§ The Local Government Board for England and Wales failed to make intelligible to the Distress Committees or the public (just as it had failed to do in its Conferences on the subject with the Local Government Board for Scotland) what was the object or the principle of these exclusions. Though the Act became law on August 11th, 1905, it was not until October 10th, 1905, that the "rules and regulations" for carrying it out were issued. "Among these was a provision that applicants were ineligible who in the twelve months immediately preceding their applications had been in receipt of Poor Relief other than Medical Relief. On December 6th, amending regulations were issued which modified this provision by permitting such cases to be dealt with after special resolution of the Committee. On January 15th, 1906, a further amending regulation modified this still further by enabling applicants to be dealt with who had received Poor Relief during the fifteen months preceding January 2nd, 1906. The result of these rapid changes was, of course, to cause considerable confusion, and practically little notice was taken by Committees as to the receipt of Poor Relief. Several Committees passed all their Poor Relief cases *en bloc* by special resolution. Others passed such resolutions whenever they wished to recommend particular cases. If the original intention of the regulation was to differentiate between cases to whom the Poor Law was no new thing, and those who might be saved from the pauperising contact of the Guardians, the date of Poor Relief was immaterial. Owing to the variations of regulations at different times, the returns on the subjects are probably quite unreliable. The record papers were not always so accurately filled that their dates were given, and the applicants would not always remember or be able to state dates of relief. In some Committees, if a man concealed relief, his paper was not sent to the Relieving Officer. One Committee informed us that they did not differentiate those who had received Poor Relief and those who had received Medical Relief in their Returns, and others, no doubt, followed the same course. Some Committees did not refer cases to the Relieving Officers at all, and consequently there was no check on the statements." (Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 76.)

‖ Replies by Distress Committees to Questions . . . on . . . the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, p. 47 (Southampton). The hardship is aggravated by the fact that the Distress Committees are not usually in operation for more than a part of the year. At Liverpool, for instance, "during six months of the year the Distress Committee did not provide work, and it has happened that men have been compelled to seek relief during these months, and by doing so have disqualified themselves for assistance by the Distress Committee." (*Ibid.*, p. 43.)

The regulations led, in fact, to the ludicrous position that, whilst the West Ham Distress Committee were providing for hundreds of men on their own Relief Works, the West Ham Guardians were driven themselves to "provide relief work on their land . . . for . . . men who have registered with the Distress Committee, and are considered suitable cases for assistance, but who are disqualified from receiving same owing to having received either similar assistance within the past two years or Poor Law Relief."* The result was that several hundreds of the Unemployed were employed on vacant land by the Distress Committee and, within a quarter of a mile of them, several hundreds more on other land by the Board of Guardians. It was, therefore, not surprising that Mr. Asquith, in November, 1908, announced that these exclusions would be abandoned.†

There was, in fact, no justification under the Statute, as the Local Government Boards for Scotland and Ireland rightly held, for excluding men who had, in the past, received Poor Relief. The Act was intended for the relief of a limited class of the Unemployed—those who, from no fault of their own, had fallen out of situations of assumed permanency, and were in distress. What this class was does not clearly appear in any of the conditions drafted by the Local Government Board. Conditions aiming at the exclusion of the Unemployable, of the chronically Under-employed, and of the Men of Discontinuous Employment—classes that we shall specifically describe in the following chapter—would have been in accordance with the intentions of the authors of the Statute. But to any such cleavage the fact of having in the past received Poor Relief, perhaps on account of some exceptional emergency, was quite irrelevant.

Finally, we may note that the form and substance of the inquiries into the applicants' conduct and past life prescribed by the Local Government Board, excited resentment, and greatly limited the benefits of the Act. "Some of the questions on the Record Paper are of such an inquisitorial character that the best class of Unemployed workmen, almost without exception, have refused to register, preferring to suffer in silence."‡ It was, in fact, never made clear with what objects, or on what principle, the inquiries were prescribed. The essential fact to be ascertained as a condition of the eligibility of an Able-bodied applicant for treatment by an Employment Authority—treatment, that is to say, *of some kind*—is, in our opinion, the existence of Unemployment. This, of itself, should be sufficient to entitle an applicant to assistance appropriate to his needs. We do not think that further inquiries would have been resented, if it had been made clear that they had been prescribed, not for the object of finding out whom to exclude, but merely for the purpose of considering *in what way* the applicant could most appropriately and helpfully be relieved. It is, in our opinion, only at this point and for this purpose—that is to say, as diagnosis for guidance in treatment—that inquiries as to character, past employment, sobriety and membership of societies are warranted or socially useful.

(H) Conclusions.

We have, therefore, to report:—

1. That as compared with the methods of relieving the Unemployed under the Poor Law, the experience of the policy—inaugurated by Mr. Chamberlain's Circular of 1886, and definitely confirmed by the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905—of withdrawing the Unemployed from the Poor Law, has proved full of valuable suggestion and promise.

2. That the precedent of the Lancashire Cotton Famine suggests that Public Works, carried on under specialised organisation for a limited period, with the object of employing particular classes of persons deprived of definite situations by some accidental or temporary cessation of their regular employment, and practically certain to resume their ordinary occupations, may prove the easiest method of relieving their transient destitution.

3. That twenty years' experience has proved that it is not practicable in ordinary times to disentangle these cases from those of respectable men who are chronically Unemployed or Under-employed; with the result that any work at wages afforded by Local Authorities as a method of providing for the Unemployed tends to become chronic, and instead of being confined to the men thrown out of definite situations by the accidental

* Public notice of the West Ham Board of Guardians, January 31st, 1908. The East Ham Distress Committee, included within the same Union, had reported in the previous November that, out of 745 applicants in distress, no fewer than 245 had been rejected as ineligible (26 for receipt of Poor Relief, and 219 for receipt of assistance from the Distress Committee within each of the two preceding years).

† New regulations were accordingly issued in November, 1908, simply abrogating the two exclusions connected with the previous receipt of Poor Relief and assistance under the Act.

‡ Replies by Distress Committees to Questions . . . on . . . the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, p. 73 (Kettering).

and temporary dislocation of industry, it is, in practice, participated in by those who are chronically Unemployed or Under-employed, to an even greater extent than by those for whom it was intended.

4. That whilst the Unemployed Workmen Act has enabled a certain number of respectable workmen to tide over temporary distress without recourse to the Poor Law, it has demonstrated that, as a method for providing for chronic Unemployment or Under-employment, the provision of work at wages by Local Authorities affords no remedy and tends even to intensify the evil.

5. That the work at wages provided by Local Authorities is, in practice, either diverted from the ordinary employees of the Local Authorities, or else abstracted from what would otherwise have gone to the regular employees of contractors for public works; with the result, in either case, of creating, sooner or later, as much Unemployment as it relieves, and of thus throwing the cost of relieving the distress upon other wage-earners.

6. That work at wages, given to the Unemployed by Local Authorities for a few days or a few weeks at a time, tends, like the opening of a Labour Yard by the Board of Guardians, actually to promote the disastrous Under-employment characteristic of some industries, and positively encourages employers and employed to acquiesce in intermittent employment and casual jobs, instead of regular work at definite weekly wages.

7. That the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, whilst not excluding temporary Relief Works, contemplated and provided also for other experiments in providing for the Unemployed, which have unfortunately not been adequately put into operation by the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively or by the Local Authorities.

8. That one of the most promising of these experiments—the provision of Rural Colonies where the Unemployed could be trained with a view to their permanent re-establishment as self-supporting citizens, whether on the land or otherwise, in England or elsewhere—has been tried at the Hollesley Bay Farm Colony, with a considerable measure of success. Unfortunately, as it seems to us, the Local Government Board for England and Wales now insists on regarding this Farm Colony only as a means of affording temporary *relief* and not as a means of training men for future self-support; and refuses to permit any further expenditure for the purpose of permanently establishing even those men who have been selected and trained.

9. That another valuable provision of the Unemployed Workmen Act was that requiring the establishment, quite apart from the existence of distress from Unemployment, of a complete network of Labour Exchanges, covering the whole of the United Kingdom. Wherever a Distress Committee was not established, the Act expressly required the Council of every County and County Borough to appoint a Special Committee to investigate the conditions of the labour market by means of Labour Exchanges, and to establish or assist such Exchanges within its area. Such a network of Labour Exchanges, covering the whole Kingdom, would have afforded, as the experience of the Metropolitan Exchanges now demonstrates, valuable information both to Unemployed workmen and to Local Authorities dealing with the problem. Unfortunately, this provision of the Act, though, as regards England and Wales, mandatory in its terms, appears to have been ignored by the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and has accordingly, with the exception of London and three places in Scotland, not been put in operation.

10. That in consequence of this failure to establish the complete network of Labour Exchanges contemplated by the Unemployed Workmen Act, Local Authorities have been greatly hampered in their attempts to put into operation the other provisions of the Act. Thus, the Hollesley Bay Farm Colony has remained isolated; and great difficulties have been experienced in discovering suitable situations in other parts of England for the men there trained for agricultural pursuits. Moreover, the provision enabling Local Authorities to pay the expenses of removing men to places where situations had been found for them, has, in the lack of machinery for discovering such situations within the United Kingdom, been almost exclusively used for the purpose of conveying them to Canada.

11. That notwithstanding this failure to put the Unemployed Workmen Act in operation in the way that was intended, and the manifold shortcomings of the Act itself, we are of opinion that (as compared with the alternative of throwing the Unemployed back into the Poor Law) it has proved of considerable value; and that it should certainly be continued in force until a more adequate scheme of dealing with the grave social problem of Unemployment, otherwise than under the Poor Law, has been placed upon the Statute Book.

CHAPTER I

The Distress from Unemployment as it Exists To-day.

We find in the United Kingdom, at all times, a considerable number of families in need of the necessaries of life, owing to the breadwinner being out of work. In the winter of every year, and throughout some years in every decade, the number of such cases doubles and quadruples; and many who were before merely in distress sink gradually into destitution, and in some cases into habitual pauperism. About these facts there is no dispute. There are differences of opinion as to the degree in which the Unemployment and the destitution may be attributable to personal shortcomings, of employers or of employed, or to the manner in which we have chosen to organise the nation's industry. But whatever the causes of the distress, its existence involves, on the one hand, great national waste of productive power, and, on the other, a vast amount of personal suffering and physical and mental degeneration.*

We have found ourselves unable to answer two elementary questions. There are no statistics available which enable us to compute, even within hundreds of thousands, how many persons are at any one time simultaneously in distress from Unemployment; or whether this number is or is not greater, relatively or absolutely, than the corresponding numbers for other countries at the present time, or for our own country at previous times.† But there exists in the "Vacant Books" of Trade Unions, in the registers of the Distress Committees, and in the case-papers of Boards of Guardians, as well as in the experience of hundreds of officials and multifarious philanthropic agencies, a mass of information, from which we have gathered a definite conception of the characteristics of this waxing and waning host—whether one or two hundred thousand, or three or four times that number—of necessitous unemployed men.

The persons in distress from want of employment have been classified in various ways—according to age, to locality, to trades or departments of trades, and even according to such vague characteristics as whether they are skilled or unskilled, of regular or irregular habits, of good character or bad. These systems of classification have their

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* Throughout its work the Commission has necessarily left on one side any inquiry into, or discussion of, the possibility of Pauperism or Unemployment being due to, or preventable by, such influences as the taxation (or the absence of taxation) of land values or particular commodities, the system of currency or the customs tariff, individual property in the means of production, or the growth of collective ownership, regulation, and administration. The investigations that we have made into the *manner* in which persons become Unemployed, and the results on these persons of such Unemployment, would necessarily form the starting point for any useful inquiry into more ultimate causes of social and industrial disorganisation.

† We were furnished by the Board of Trade with special Memoranda (printed in Vol. ix. of our evidence, Appendix No. XXI. (A) to (D); *see also Qs.* 98826–99144), containing all the official statistics that exist. The percentages of Trade Unionists unemployed, regularly published by the Board of Trade, relate only to about 600,000 men (out of about 2,000,000 Trade Unionists, and 12,000,000 adult wage-earners)—being those entitled to the ordinary "Out of Work Pay"—and there is reason to assume that this small sample includes an altogether exaggerated proportion of workmen (especially among the shipbuilding and engineering trades) liable to great fluctuations of employment. Among this small sample the percentage unemployed has varied, between 1897 and 1907, from 2·2 (April and November, 1899), to 7·6 (December, 1904). This "Out of Work Pay" was drawn, as was stated in 1895 (Third Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895, *Qs.* 4635–44), and as the Board of Trade has further ascertained for us, in certain large Unions, almost entirely by about 20 per cent. of the members in good years, and by about 40 per cent. of the members in bad years ("Unemployment: a Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909). Thus, among this relatively small group of highly organised Trade Unionists, in good years about four men out of five get almost constant employment; in bad years, about three men out of five are in the same state, whilst the minority who are unemployed at all, suffer severely, even to being out of work for many months at a time. The cyclical fluctuations appear to be in themselves less extensive than the seasonal, but they tend to intensify the latter. The years 1871–5, 1882–3, 1889–90, and 1899–1900 had exceptionally little Unemployment; 1879, 1884–7, 1893–4, 1904 and 1908 exceptionally much. There is no sign that the present depression is worse than, or even so bad as, that of some previous years—notably, 1879 and 1841. But all these merely general results, deduced from quite insufficient data, really tell us nothing as to the condition of the mass of the wage-earners. "My own opinion," deposed a representative of the Board of Trade, "is that we cannot get at the real facts until we *count* the Unemployed in some way or another" (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 98880).

several advantages, and we have made use of the results that they yield. But, from the standpoint of the Prevention of Unemployment and the Provision for Distress, we have found most practically useful an analysis of the Unemployed according to the nature of the industrial engagements by which they normally gain their livelihood. The persons in distress from Unemployment are found, in practice, to approximate to one or other of the following four types :—

(*a*) Those who have lately been in definite situations of presumed permanency; for instance, an engine-driver, a cotton-spinner, an agricultural labourer, a carman or a domestic servant.

(*b*) Those who normally, in their own trades, shift from job to job, and from one employer to another, with more or less interval between jobs, but each lasting for weeks, and perhaps for months; for example, the contractor's navvy, the bricklayer, the plumber, the plasterer and, indeed, all varieties of artisans and labourers of the building trades, etc.

(*c*) Those who normally earn a bare subsistence by casual jobs, lasting only a few hours each, or a day or two; for instance, the dock and wharf labourers, the market porters, and the "casual hands" forming a fringe round many industries.

(*d*) Those who have been ousted, or have wilfully withdrawn themselves from the ranks of the workers; for instance, the man broken down by some infirmity or by advancing age, the habitual inmate of philanthropic "shelters" and Casual Wards of the great cities, and the professional Vagrant.

In all these classes we find men of all grades of conduct—we might almost say of all kinds of skill. All the classes swell and contract in numbers, with bad trade and good respectively; all are affected by seasonal fluctuations. But, regarded from the standpoint of the Prevention of Unemployment and the Provision for Distress, each of the four classes—to be hereafter designated the Men from Permanent Situations, the Men of Discontinuous Employment, the Under-employed and the Unemployable—has its characteristic opportunities and peculiar needs.

(A) CLASS I.—THE MEN FROM PERMANENT SITUATIONS.

It is fortunate that the great majority of the twelve millions of adult wage-earning population are normally in situations of considerable permanency. They enjoy no permanence of tenure and are liable to be dismissed at short notice, but as a matter of fact they find themselves working, practically without intermission throughout the year and often for many years, for one and the same employer. This is the condition of the great majority (though not of all) of agricultural labourers, of railway servants, of miners, of compositors, of textile operatives, and, indeed, of the bulk of the factory workers, as it is of the majority of clerks, of teachers and of domestic servants. But even in the best of times men in the prime of life and of good character and ability lose permanent situations of this sort; it may be by the bankruptcy of their employer,* by a change in management, by the introduction of a new machine, a new process or even a new organi-

* Too little attention has been paid to the calamity that may thus overtake working-class households through no fault of their own, merely because (as an incident of "the competitive system") a very large proportion of those who start in business fail to make it pay, give up, or go bankrupt, and discharge their subordinates. Every Distress Committee finds such cases. Judging from particulars of 37,000 applicants as to whom we have collected this information, the proportion of men rendered necessitous from this case alone is about 3 per cent. One Distress Committee reports: "An illustration of the way in which regular workmen become casual may be found in the 104 cases which occur this year, of men who appear to have lost permanent work through their employers going bankrupt or giving up business. In a few instances this had occurred as long ago as 1897, though in most cases the bankruptcy or termination of the business was of more recent date. Over 70 per cent. of the men who lost their work in this way had failed to get back into regular employment; 63 of these men were still in the prime of life when they applied to the Distress Committee, and another 22 were between forty-five and fifty-four" (Report of Stepney Distress Committee, 1907). Of these 70 men, 2 obtained no other work at all, 38 became "casual workers" in other trades, 25 "casual workers" in their former trade, and 5 emigrated (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 82147, Par. 26). Thus, more than half the men thus displaced sunk to the level of "casual workers."

ation of the industry;* whilst there is also, taking the United Kingdom as a whole, a perpetual stream of discharges due to occasional misconduct, trade disputes, the arbitrariness of a foreman, and the hundred and one frictions of industrial life. When trade is bad, bankruptcies increase in number,† industries shift uneasily to cheaper districts, orders slacken, particular works are "shut down" or branches closed by concentration of business, personal quarrels and trade disputes become occasions for ridding the shop of surplus hands. This incessant dropping of individuals from permanent situations into the ranks of the Unemployed—characteristic of all times—becomes, in periods of depression, a serious recruitment, amounting, for the Kingdom as a whole, to many thousands in a week;‡ with the result that there are hundreds of applicants for each of the rare vacancies that occur. It was these men, who had newly dropped from regular situations of presumed permanency, and who found themselves, through no fault of their own, unable to regain such situations, whom Mr. Chamberlain had in view in 1886 when he issued his momentous Circular. It was for these men, "the *élite* of the Unemployed," § that Mr. Walter Long and Mr. Gerald Balfour designed the Unemployed Workmen Act.

The fate of these men, in bad times and good alike, seems in practice to depend on two circumstances; whether or not they have some specialised skill for which the demand will recur in such a way and at such a place that they can promptly ascertain the fact of its recurrence, and whether they are fortunate enough to be able to belong to a Trade Union of sufficiently high organisation. In times of good trade, the skilled operative assisted by the Trade Union organisation, which is aware of all vacancies, gets pushed into another situation, even if his previous dismissal had been his own fault. In times of bad trade, the unemployed Trade Unionist gets his regular weekly "Out of Work Pay," from the corporate savings of himself and his fellows: whilst having at his disposal (and even forced on his attention) the earliest information as to when and where the renewed demand for his particular handicraft is manifesting itself. So far as there exists in any occupation a well-organised Trade Union of national scope, giving "Out of Work Pay," we have, in its "Vacant Book" and its Unemployment Benefits, perhaps the most successful agency for dealing with the problem. Even here there are the cases of the man who has remained outside the Trade Union; of the man who has "fallen out of benefit" or been excluded from the Trade Union; and of the man who has had to give up his membership (perhaps on becoming a foreman). And there is one contingency against which even the most highly-organised Trade Union cannot insure its members, that is, a permanent, rapidly progressing diminution in the demand for the kind of skill that has been organised. No Trade Union could have provided for the hand-loom weavers displaced by the power-

* Such "permanent changes of industrial conditions," deposed Mr. W. H. Beveridge, "are of several types:—

"(*a*) The decay of a particular industry *e.g.*, sail-making, and now of many industries connected with horses (saddlery, harness-making, etc.).

"(*b*) The removal of an industry from one place to another, *e.g.*, of ship-building from London to the north.

"(*c*) Changes of method or organisation, *e.g.*, the introduction of new machines (boot-making, rope-spinning) or new forms of labour (aerated water).

"The common feature in all types is that for the individuals concerned they involve a permanent displacement from their chosen and familiar occupations, and the necessity of finding their way, perhaps at an advanced unadaptable age, into new occupations" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 77832, Par 10).

† In 1899, a year of good trade, there were in England and Wales, 7,085 bankruptcies and deeds of arrangement with creditors. In 1904, in the trough of the cyclical depression, the number was 8,631, or 22 per cent. more (Twenty-fifth Annual Report by the Board of Trade on Bankruptcies, House of Commons, No. 254 of 1908). If we assume that, on an average, only ten men lose their employment in each case, though the business does not always cease altogether, the statistics imply the loss of situations, through no fault of their own, by 70,000 men in a good year, and 86,000 men in a bad year. And many small concerns fail and cease without formal bankruptcy.

‡ Sometimes even many thousands in particular districts. The closing of the plate-glass works at Jarrow in 1895 threw 1,100 men suddenly out of fairly constant situations (Second Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895, p. 130). The operatives at Woolwich Arsenal had been gradually increased from 6,717 in 1884–5 to what seemed a normal level of a little over 15,000 during 1898 and 1899. During the stress of the South African War an abnormal increase was made of 5,000 more operatives, bringing the total in 1901 to 20,501. After the war this extra staff of 5,000 was discharged, the numbers of 1905 being down to the level of 1898–9. Since that date 4,000 more operatives have been discharged, the total numbers having been reduced, not only by 48 per cent. from the highest war total, but *even by 30 per cent. from the previous peace total*, there being now fewer operatives employed at Woolwich Arsenal than at any time since 1887–8 (War Office Return, January 20th, 1908).

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 77738.

loom, for the hand paper-makers displaccd by the machine, for the sail makers and the saddlers whose product is less and less required, for the crowds of workers now being superseded by the use of motor cars.* If the Trade Union in such a plight is powerful, it closes its ranks against new apprentices, superannuates some members, lets others fall out of benefit, and keeps what remains of the demand as a good livelihood, at high rates, for an ever dwindling remnant of skilled men.† If the Trade Union is powerless, the whole membership sinks, like the hand-loom weavers, into the morass of chronic Under-employment, and thus falls out of our First into our Third Class. To this descent into the morass of Under-employment of whole sections of highly skilled and responsible wage-earners we shall recur in a subsequent section of this chapter.

But the vast majority of the unemployed of our First Class—men who have lately been in definite situations of presumed permanency—are not men of any definitely specialised skill which has been organised in a Trade Union. They are isolated individuals of every variety of aptitude and experience, of every degree of deftness and trustworthiness, and of every kind of nondescript occupation, not amounting to any definitely recognised handicraft. They are the very opposite of the "man of odd jobs," for they have often remained in one and the same industrial function for many years. These men, though they have trained themselves to fit the particular situations that they have lost, have no skill that meets a general demand, and indeed often none that bears any distinctive name. For this reason, indeed, it is almost impossible to state from what occupations they come. They are the responsible "handymen" of large firms of every kind, acting as warehousemen, packers, storekeepers, porters, gate-keepers, caretakers, lamp-trimmers, men in charge of this or that small department of work, etc. They may have been employed as general assistants in breweries, large stores, or, indeed, any big concerns. They may, in the alternative, have been the universal assistants of small masters; sometimes rising for a brief period into being small masters themselves.‡ Included in this class, too, are the skilled craftsmen of small and decaying handicrafts in course of supersession by machinery or new processes, such as assistants in rope walks, or coachmakers' wheelwrights. Their numbers, for instance, are at present swollen by grooms, stablemen, carmen, cab-drivers, and other workers about horses. Among them are "men who for years have satisfied the demand [for labour] in one form [and who] may find the form suddenly changed, their niche in industry broken up; their hard-won skill superfluous in a new world; themselves also superfluous unless they will and can learn fresh arts and find the way into unfamiliar occupations. They are displaced by economic forces entirely beyond their control and taking little or no account of personal merits."§ All these men, valuable to the community as their qualities of industry, regularity and aptitude to direct, to co-operate, or to obey ought to make them, find, under present circumstances, the greatest difficulty in regaining the permanent situations for which they are fitted. A man may be of excellent character, full of health and vigour, and eager to get work. But if he has been

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* Thus, at the present time, St. Pancras, "a great centre of the transport industries," is suffering from the present "convulsions of that particular section of industrial life—the appearance, and sometimes the disappearance, of the motor bus, the advent of the electro bus, the development of tubes and electric cars," whereby "drivers of horses, stablemen, and others connected with allied industries, will, no doubt, suffer seriously" (Report of St. Pancras Distress Committee, 1907).

† This policy was successfully pursued by the old hand boot and shoe-makers, and by the hand paper-makers ("Industrial Democracy," by S. and B. Webb, 1897, pp. 417-424).

‡ From the case-papers of the Unemployed men sent to the Hollesley Bay Farm Colony we have taken the following specimens of men who belonged at one time to our First Class, having dropped out of permanent situations (and, apparently, through no fault of their own) before sinking into the Third Class; a foreman decorator (7 years in situation); a coachmaker's wheelwright (6 years); a felt hat-maker (17 years); a handy man at the Army and Navy Stores (10 years); a lamp-trimmer in a large concern (10 years); a greengrocer on his own account (6 years); assistant in a railway goods department (7½ years); a pewterer (17 years); a bone boiler (10 years); a horse-keeper and carman (4 years); a collector and traveller (11 years); an engine driver to dust-contractor (16 years); a cartridge-maker in Woolwich Arsenal (17½ years); another operative in Woolwich Arsenal (19½ years); another in Woolwich Arsenal (7 years); a rope-maker (13 years); a machine hand at Battersea Projectile Works (13 years); at a bottle-stopper making works (14 years); a machinist at Maxim's (6 years); a handy man (10 years); a railway porter (7 years); a painter (20 years); an iron-moulder (11 years). We take from a careful private register, kept by the Workhouse Master, the following cases of respectable men who passed through his Casual Ward: a barber in business for himself, who lost custom owing to fever in his house; a hotel porter, who had been in one situation 23 years; a hatter's labourer, 13 years; a groom in private employ, 4½ years; a groom at livery stables, 13 years; a wheelwright, 14 years; a clerk and waiter in a coffee house, 2 years; a lawyer's clerk, 25 years.

§ "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909, p. 111.

for years in one place—especially if that place has been not a regular handicraft but something of nondescript character, in which he has adapted himself to his employer's needs—he is least of all men in a position, unless by happy accident, to get another situation. At best, he depletes his little savings by answering innumerable advertisements in as many newspapers as he can get access to; keeping his wife and family respectably week after week; and week after week losing heart and self-respect. And whilst it is more difficult for him than it is for men of less permanent employment to find another situation, the evil effects of unemployment, the physical and moral deterioration consequent on enforced idleness, work on him all the more quickly and all the more seriously.* If for some reason he has few friends, or if his savings have already been depleted by family illness or other misfortune, what is vital to him is to be able to discover, without a ruinous loss of time, without the cost of advertising, without even the very real tax of answering advertisements, what situations are open to him anywhere in his town, or anywhere in the Kingdom. In the absence of any social machinery for this purpose such men often lose heart. "The general impression," notes one of our informants, "was one of despair and bitterness, and they considered themselves the sufferers from a great deal of mismanagement, but where the mismanagement was they were unable to say. Several of these men had held good situations for periods varying from seven to twenty-four years each, and had lost those situations through no fault of their own but through the firm giving up, one man being turned out after twenty years' service because the firm changed hands." In short, the faculty of finding work is wholly distinct from the faculty of doing work. Each faculty grows with use, and shrinks with disuse; the man who has always been in one situation has neither the experience nor the aptitude—he may even be lacking in the temperament—requisite to push himself into another situation. His very excellencies stand in his way.† He is, in fact, often as unfitted to find work as the "casual" in any trade is to keep it.

In many respects this First Class of Unemployed, the men from permanent situations, are those to whom it is most important to bring timely help. But, so long as they can be included in this class, they seldom appear among the applicants to Distress Committees‡ and they are practically never found in the Workhouse or the Casual Ward. Such a man, if not provided for by a Trade Union, struggles on as best he can§; clinging to the hope of regaining a permanent situation through friends and old shop-mates, by advertising and answering advertisements, by applying personally here and there at hazard.|| For

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*This physical and moral deterioration, which few of the Unemployed can escape, is, we are told, "relatively more noticeable in men who have been used to permanent employment than in that class who have always depended upon casual and precarious employment. In the former class Unemployment long continued induces a feeling of pessimism, loss of hope, and finally loss of desire" (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 85701, Par. 12).

† "The more continuously a man has been with one employer or in one trade the less able is he to find other openings in unfamiliar fields. There is an art in living casually" (*Ibid.*, Q. 77832, Par. 21).

‡ "Hardly any applications are received from men of this description" (Report of Chelsea Distress Committee, 1907). At Stepney, "the supply of applicants who had till recently been in regular continuous employment was so scanty that in order to keep their vacancies for relief work filled, the Selection Committee were obliged to have recourse to casual labourers. . . . On the whole, the 'best' men, the men with recent record of regular work, who had maintained hitherto a high standard of independence, did not apply. It was not apparently that this class resented inquiry as inquiry. On the contrary, those of this class who did apply, were often proud to give particulars, which proved them to have work records superior to those of the ordinary applicants. To do away with all inquiry would probably drive away even the few applicants of this class, as there would be no means of distinguishing them from the casual labourer to whose work record they rightly feel theirs to be superior. The reason seems to be something as deep as human nature. Men take a pride in being independent. . . . To the end of time, the stronger and more self-reliant men will avoid having recourse to Poor Law, charity, or relief works. I came across one or two instances of men in this district who would have been received with open arms by the Distress Committees if they had applied, and sent to relief work immediately. I hinted as much to them, but I could not induce them, though to my knowledge they were suffering great hardships, to humble their pride and apply" (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 82147, Pars. 20, 22). "To sum up," say our Investigators, "we cannot say how far" the applicants to Distress Committees "represent the Unemployed. Besides the large number of skilled men who would be in receipt of Trade Union benefit there would be many who had saved in other ways out of their comparatively high wages, and who would tide over periods of distress by disposing of furniture or other possessions, rather than by applying to Distress Committees" (Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 70).

§ Report of Lewisham Distress Committee, 1905–6.

|| "The textile worker or the coal miner, if out of work, hangs about his own town with his hands in his pockets, and waits till better times come" (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 98875).

him the chance of odd days, or even odd weeks, of "Employment Relief" has little attraction and no advantage. He has no more aptitude for the rough digging, hauling, wheeling, road-making, road-sweeping, or even tree-planting, furnished by the Local Authority, than for the stone-breaking of a Labour Yard. What he needs is to discover some position of responsibility that he can fill, or some opportuntiy to work at his own trade; or in default of this, the chance of fitting himself by training for some other occupation whether in this country or another. None of these are offered to him by a Local Authority whose only notion of dealing with unemployment is to set as large as possible a crowd of heterogeneous men to labouring work for brief spells. The other functions contemplated by the Unemployed Workmen Act, though at present not generally in operation, might be of greater use to him. A well-managed Labour Exchange, frequented by all the employers of the town and in connection with the Labour Exchanges of other towns, might be able to bring him in touch with an employer in search of a man of regular and responsible conduct, or of his special aptitude. Migration to another part of the kingdom might then help him. If he has a taste for country life he is the sort of man who might make a success of a small holding. Or emigration to another part of the British Empire might prove to be the best solution for him personally and especially for his family, though by this method the mother country loses a man of regular habits and persistent industry. Failing all these expedients for regaining their position, we see men of this type sinking lower and lower, so that, before they apply to the Distress Committee for "Employment Relief," or to the Board of Guardians for admission to the Workhouse, they have often fallen into one or other of our following classes. If such a man is physically strong, he gravitates towards the building trades, or "goes labouring" at some job which lasts for a few weeks or months (Class II.). If he is a weakling, or growing infirm through advancing years, he falls into daily odd jobs, and becomes one of the chronically under-employed (Class III.). If he is a man with grave moral imperfections and weaknesses, hitherto kept in curb by regular employment, he rapidly becomes one or other kind of unemployable (Class IV.). Thus, although those who register themselves with the Distress Committees or for Poor Relief belong, at the time of application, almost entirely to one or other of the last three classes, such a classification, in, we fear, thousands of cases, veils the tragedy of a descent from the First Class*—the tragedy of the physical and moral degradation, through lack of timely and appropriate help, of a man who once honourably filled a permanent situation†.

(B) CLASS II.—THE MEN OF DISCONTINUOUS EMPLOYMENT.

The next largest class of wage-earners is that of the Men of Discontinuous Employment; men who do not in any case remain permanently in one situation, but whose normal

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* "The great bulk of them . . . are casual workmen, *though very many in the past have been permanently employed.* . . . After a certain age it is easier for the displaced workman to perform casual services than to initiate himself into the ways of a new employer and a new process" (Report of Stepney Distress Committee, 1907). Of the applicants who worked casually at docks or wharves, *one third were found to have had, at some time in their lives, regular situations at weekly wages (Ibid.).* "The effects of long-continued Unemployment," deposed a provincial witness, "are in many cases most demoralising, as the men lose heart looking for work day after day without securing it, drift into want and poverty, pawn their goods, apply for Poor Law relief, get desperate and ultimately become to a great extent physically unfit for hard work, and drop into the ranks of the submerged tenth" (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXVII. (Par. 6) to Vol. VIII).

† It is only another aspect of this tragedy that it is the men who have left the permanent situation afforded by the Army, and who, after more or less interval, have abandoned hope of getting any new employment of permanent character, who furnish the largest contingent, not, perhaps, of the professional Vagrants, but of the floating population of the Casual Wards. What they aim at is to get permanent situations "of trust," as it is called, as caretakers, bailiffs, gate-keepers, grooms, valets, chauffeurs, porters, clerks, etc., or as members of the Corps of Commissionaires. But only a minority of them secure such places (Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1896, *Qs.* 1037–8; Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 81669–81755). The others mostly sink gradually to the "casual" class (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 79573). Out of 1,512 men who passed through the Casual Ward of a rural Workhouse in the West of England in 1905, no fewer than 333 convinced the Master that they had served in the Army (mostly producing their discharges). Of these, 136 were "public works men," and 107 labourers; these two sections constituting more than two-thirds of all the ex-soldiers. There were 10 painters, 7 grooms, 6 shoemakers, and 4 each of carpenters, moulders and gardeners; the others being divided among dozens of the most varied occupations. By way of contrast we may note that out of the whole 1,512 men, in spite of the proximity of a great port, only 74 claimed to have been seamen; and of these 8 were "public works men," and 13 labourers, most of the others being merely sailors on their way to other ports. Similarly, in the Church Army Homes, "many of the men helped are ex-soldiers. In 1907, out of 1,856 admitted to London Homes, 302 were ex-soldiers, 16·3 per cent.; and 22 per cent. of the men who passed through the provincial Homes had been in military service. It is very rarely that any seamen apply for help" (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 93611, Par. 6).

condition, even at the best of times, is that of working at a succession of jobs, passing from one job to another, from one employer to another, each engagement usually lasting, in practice, perhaps a few weeks or months. The problem presented by this large class is not, as with our First Class, the complete and long-continued Unemployment of a relatively small proportion of the total number; but the perpetual "leakage" between jobs, and the periodic occurrence, in the lives of nearly all the men, of periods of distress, and even of destitution, during the intervals between jobs.

(i.) *The Operatives of the Building Trade.*

The most numerous section of this class of Men of Discontinuous Employment is that of the artisans and labourers of the building trades,* whom we find in great numbers on the registers of the Distress Committees. Of these men, who may be estimated to number, throughout the United Kingdom, something like a million, a certain proportion normally hold, especially in rural districts and small towns, situations of some permanency, and really belong to our Class I. A very small proportion of those employed by the large firms in the great towns are in like case. But the vast majority of them—as towns increase in size, apparently a steadily increasing proportion—habitually pass from job to job, working a few days or weeks for one employer, and then, when his particular building is finished, getting taken on at another job, usually by another employer. In times of good trade, among the best men, in the most skilled branches of the industry, employment throughout the greater part of the year may be practically without intermission, and even the time lost through the winter's slackness may be small. At the best of times this is not the case with the bulk of the labourers, or with the less skilled or less steady men, who have, each winter, spells of unemployment.† In times of depression the best of men may find the intervals between jobs, especially in the winter, extending into weeks and even into months at a time.‡ The labourers, like the less steady or less assiduous among the skilled men, will then often get only a few odd days' work in a month, or a few odd weeks throughout a whole year. The building trades operatives, unlike the navvies, do not seem to move much from town to town, though the young men among the bricklayers and stonemasons will still use the "travelling benefit" afforded by their Trade Union to look for work in other towns. But the spreading out of London, Glasgow, Manchester and other large urban aggregations has made the men of the building trades very mobile within these towns—tramping all over the urban aggregation, applying for jobs at one building after another, and readily shifting house from one side of the district to the other—often ten miles across—in order to be near their work.

It is not generally realised that hardly any man among this vast population of building trades operatives, amounting to one-ninth of the whole nation, escapes, at some time of his life, a period of severe distress, from which he and his family seriously suffer. When the trial comes, it is inevitable that a proportion of those exposed to it should succumb—one or other member of the family may die in consequence of prolonged lack of the full necessaries of life; there are widows and orphans prematurely robbed of the breadwinner of the family; and, more frequently, there is a demoralisation of character, and a descent in the social scale—it may be from the carpentering to casual labouring, it may be from steady work to life as a professional Vagrant or other variety of the Unemployable. That this excessive discontinuity of employment, and the distress which it occasions, is not

* These include bricklayers, masons (hard, soft or pavior), carpenters, joiners, plumbers, painters, decorators, glaziers, plasterers, paperhangers, whitewashers, slaters and tilers, gas and hot-water fitters, locksmiths, bellhangers, scaffolders, bricklayers' labourers, masons' labourers, carpenters' labourers, plumbers' labourers or "mates," painters' labourers, plasterers' labourers, handymen, and general builders' labourers.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 82377, Par. 2.

‡ Statistics indicate that among carpenters and joiners who are unemployed at all, nine-tenths obtain a job within four months, but that 2 or 3 per cent., even in this relatively well-organised trade, may be continuously out of work for six months or more. Such a state of things can hardly have a good effect on character. "The mechanic," it has been said, "can scarcely make both ends meet the whole year, so he gradually drifts into a listless state. That is the evil of a lot of it. He can hardly be blamed for not hurrying to get himself out of work, knowing full well that the sooner he gets his job done, the sooner he will be walking about. I do not believe that natural laziness is the cause of it. It is simply due to the hopeless state that the [building] trade has got into, I do not know for what reason." (Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, *Q.* 134). The same witness declared that the men who could rely on continuous employment worked better, were better men all round, and were induced to show greater zeal (*Ibid Qs.* 277–280) than the men who were dismissed after each job.

due to any lack of vigour or activity in the operatives seeking work is, we think, clearly demonstrated. "There is always such a plentiful supply" of men eager for work, deposed the general foreman of a large building firm, "that the trouble is having to refuse applicants who attend early morning and throughout the day, waylaying the foreman at every turn. . . . They will follow a builder's cart should it have material until they find out where the job is, and also report same to Trade Unions, so that on going to an entirely vacant site to commence operations you will often find it surrounded by men of all trades."*

The result on the men of these conditions of employment is often disastrous. "The enforced idleness on completion of a job naturally throws the men upon their own resources, which is, in nine cases out of ten, the nearest public-house. The frequent change from strenuous hard work to absolute indolence to men of this character naturally tends to gradual moral and physical degeneration, and ultimately the individuals become unfit for work even when opportunity offers."†

(ii.) *The Public Works Men.*

Even more typical of the class of Men of Discontinuous Employment is the navvy, or, as he usually describes himself, the "public works man."‡ He has never been, and never expects to be, continuously in the employment of one contractor for more than a few weeks, or perhaps a few months, though here and there a man may keep at a job continuously for a year or more. How extensive is this class of navvies is not recorded; but we have it in evidence that it is estimated to number, in the United Kingdom, no less than 170,000 men.§ "They move about," reports the Local Government Board, "from one public work to another, a distinct class or tribe, separated by habit and circumstances from the rest of the community, and in some respects often outside the action of ordinary sanitary laws."‖

The conditions under which these men habitually work can hardly be deemed favourable to the development of thrift, sobriety or general regularity of life.¶ "There appears to be," says the Local Government Board Report, "no legal obligation on contractors to provide accommodation for their workmen. When important works are in progress, likely to last over a considerable time, and especially if these are at a considerable distance from centres of population, the contractors generally, in their own interests and in order to secure workmen, provide accommodation, and this is often excellent (*e.g.*, the Tidworth Settlement on Salisbury Plain); but I am informed that smaller contractors, who have tendered at 'cutting prices,' are apt to save in the 'hutting,' and to provide inadequate accommodation or none."** What these conditions were for several hundreds of men, as recently as 1907, at a place close to London, is vividly set forth:—

> "Messrs. Price & Reeves have pushed on the work (Brooklands Motor Track, Weybridge) rapidly; the number of men employed by them since the beginning of the contract has progressively increased, and has been approximately as follows:—
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | January (1907) | 300 to 400 |
> | February | 600 „ 700 |
> | March | 1,000 „ 1,100 |
> | April | 1,500 „ 1,600 |

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* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 134.

† Evidence before the Commission, Macaulay (not yet in volume form).

‡ For information as to the navvy, *see* Report of House of Commons Committee on the Condition of Labourers Employed in the Construction of . . . Public Works, 1846; Dr. S. Monckton Copeland's Report to the Local Government Board on . . . Diphtheria and Small-pox in Langport Rural District, 1906; Dr. Reginald Farrer's Report . . . on the Accommodation of Navvies (Cd. 3694), 1907.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 83576–7.

‖ Dr. Reginald Farrer's Report . . . on the Accommodation of Navvies, 190[illegible]

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 80022–9.

** Dr. Reginald Farrer's Report . . . on the Accommodation of Navvies, 1907, p. 6. "One of the suggestions," deposed the Master of the Workhouse in a rural Union, "is whether this Committee, in their recommendations, could not recommend that in future, where large works are to be started, the authorities who are responsible for those works, either the Council, or whoever they may be, or the contractors, should not be required to provide accommodation for their workmen that flock to the place; because it is well-known that in several places where large works have been started, even the men who honestly go to work will go to the Casual Wards the first few nights in order to get the [illegible]ght's lodging for nothing, or because they cannot get it elsewhere." (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, *Q* 3136.)

"As the track is now approaching completion, the number of men employed will rapidly diminish during the month of May, and it is estimated that the work will be completed by the end of June. Night and day shifts are at work, each shift working for ten hours, the night shift working with Wells' flare lamps. The men are paid not less than 5½d. an hour, but those on piece-work make 6d. to 7d. an hour. Thus the wages in fine weather vary from about 27s. to 30s. a week, but time is apt to be broken by rain, and the average wage may be taken at about 24s. a week. At the time of my visit, April 23rd to 25th, at least 1,600 men were employed daily on the work. In addition to those in regular employment there were a variable and uncertain number of irregular workers who work about two days at a time, draw a "sub.," and then hang about the public-houses till the money is consumed. There were also casual unemployed labourers and tramps who had come into the neighbourhood on the chance of a job, or to sponge on the regular navvies. In all, it may be assumed that a floating population of not fewer than 2,000 men has been added to the normal population during the month of April. . . .

"Having been round the works by night as well as by day, and conversed with scores of the men, I can confidently state that many—probably 300 or more—of the men regularly employed on the works at the date of my visit were without any proper lodging. Men working on the night shift resort after work to the public-houses where they buy beer to wash down their breakfast, after which they commonly lie down in the open, and sleep for several hours. If the weather be cold or wet, they are prone to half stupefy themselves with beer before lying down to rest under these conditions. On the occasion of my visit I found a large group of navvies having their breakfast outside the 'Hand and Spear Hotel,' and several scores of them were sleeping among the gorse and heather of Weybridge Common. Of these, some were doubtless 'camp followers,' or Unemployed, but the majority were genuine navvies, as was evident from their dress, their hands, and the condition of their boots, as well as from their own statements. On the night of April 24th, I patrolled the neighbourhood of Byfleet and the track, accompanied by two constables. I may mention that the police had recently, and particularly the night before my visit, been active in evicting navvies sleeping out in cowsheds, etc., and that, therefore, fewer were to be found than would otherwise have been the case; many, doubtless, having gone further afield to find shelter. We visited several public-houses, which we found so full as barely to afford standing room. The navvies in these houses complained bitterly of the failure of the contractors to find accommodation. After the public-houses were closed we found:—Six men sleeping in straw-yards, in or under the stacks; seventeen men sleeping in a disused cowshed, 24 feet by 12 feet by 7 feet at the eaves. This shed was inside the track. The men were sleeping on the bare ground, without straw or hay for bedding. The available air space was certainly less than 200 cubic feet per head. More than a score of men were lying or sitting round a brazier near a coffee-stall, having no other prospect of shelter for the night. About thirty were sleeping in a dell near the railway line in groups round fires, which they had kindled between the trunks of felled trees. A casual search revealed three men sleeping among the gorse and heather of Weybridge Common. I cannot doubt but that careful search would have led to the finding of many more. As was the case in the day-time, the great majority of these homeless men were genuine navvies, regularly working for the contractor. Prior to April 10th, some rough shelters of fir boughs and corrugated iron had been erected by the men themselves on two sides inside the track, nicknamed respectively 'Firwood Avenue' and the 'Hotel Cecil.' On that date a letter from Mr. Bilney, a local magistrate, appeared in the local *County Times*, drawing public attention to the inadequate and insanitary nature of these shelters. Mr. Davenport, the contractors' manager, forthwith caused these shelters to be burnt down, and seems to claim merit for his action in this respect, despite the fact that prior to my visit he took no action whatever to provide shelter for those evicted, whose condition was thus worse than before. The Inspector of Nuisances of the Chertsey Urban District informs me that on April 17th, and again on the 24th, he found four navvies sleeping in a hen-coop. The fact cannot be too strongly emphasised that the navvies employed on this work, other than those having lodgings in the neighbourhood, or returning directly after work by train to their lodgings in London or elsewhere, had no place provided by the contractors to which they could resort."*

Another feature of the brutalising conditions under which the navvy works, making thrift and regularity of life almost impossible, is the practice of subbing. "A large proportion of navvies, after doing two or three days' work, draw a 'sub.' for the work done and rest for a few days till the amount drawn has been expended (usually in drink). Thus it not seldom happens that a contractor must have 100 men on his books in order to secure that fifty shall be always at work, and the housing difficulty is intensified. 'Subbing' is necessary at the commencement of work, as many of the navvies will probably have tramped long distances to the work, and arrive penniless, but the evil might be minimised if the contractors refused to 'sub' after the first fortnight, and in any case refused to 'sub' the full amount earned." †

This section of Class II. is of special interest to reformers of the Poor Law because it is almost the only part of the working class population, apart from the seamen on tramp from port to port, which habitually makes use, without scruple and without any sense

* Dr. Reginald Farrar's Report . . . on the Accommodation of Navvies, 1907, pp. 2–4. Dr. Farrar estimates roughly that the number finding lodgings in the neighbourhood is probably not less than 600, and that about 500 others travel to and from their work by train (*Ibid.* p. 3).

† *Ibid.*, p. 6.

of degradation, of the Casual Wards lying on the great lines of communication from town to town. "When walking from place to place, and very often finding it impossible to get work," we were told by Mr. John Ward, M.P., of the Navvies' Union, "one is obliged to seek the Casual Ward occasionally. . . . The great difficulty, then, with the workman is that he loses two or three days. No matter how regular his habits may have been, if he finds himself in difficulties and obliged to seek the Casual Ward while looking for work, he has to perform a task which makes it impossible for him to get on to the public works or works of any description that day to look for employment; and that is a great inconvenience."* We find, indeed, that in 1905, at a little rural Workhouse on the high road between Plymouth and London, more than one-third of the total number of persons admitted to the Casual Ward were navvies passing from the newly completed Birmingham Waterworks at Rhayader and the Avonmouth Docks, on their way to the Keyham Dockyard Extension Works and the St. German's Railway. We append notes relating to some of these men from the interesting reports of the Master of the Workhouse to his Board of Guardians.

> "*G. D.*, aged 28 years; a labourer. Last employed at Rhayader, in Wales, on the Birmingham Waterworks. Out of work about three weeks. Previous to that worked on the Swansea Waterworks, at Craig, Brecknockshire. He was there several months. Admits that when he is in work he drinks rather heavily, and that if it were not for this weakness, he would probably get permanent work. He is a well-spoken and finely developed young man.
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> "*W. B.*, 61 years; a labourer. Public works man. Last worked on Salisbury Plain. There about eight months. Left two months ago. Shortening hands. This man is an annual visitor. He calls about once in every twelve months. Is a good worker. Served 16 years 128 days in the Royal Engineers. Invalided out in 1885. Had a pension of 1s. a day for twelve months, and 8d. a day for a further period of four years.
>
> "*G. N.*, 28; a labourer. Last worked at Saltash. Left there last Saturday. He is a public works man. From conversation, it appears that at this time of the year the amount earned is very small. By the time deductions are made for train fare to work, loss of time, etc., there is little left after paying for lodgings, and this little is, no doubt, got rid of in drink.
>
> '*W. H.*, 45 years; a labourer. Last worked at Langport. Worked there twelve months, and left on February 4th, on account of difficulty in procuring lodgings. In the first part of the time he was on a section where lodgings were procurable. Public works man. Has been here several times.
>
> "*C. R.*, 29; a labourer. Last employed on the Honeybourne Railway, near Cheltenham. Left there three weeks ago. Was employed driving horse and cart for nine months. Asked why he left he said he 'got the sack for being drunk.' Was here once before. Is suffering from an attack of sciatica. He volunteered the statement: 'Us chaps' (meaning public works men) 'drink heavy, and if out of a job have got to go on tramp. Forget being in these places' (Casual Wards) 'when we get into another job.'"

"There is a lot of truth in the foregoing," remarks the Master of the Casual Ward. "A large number of the men who have recently passed through the Wards are without doubt hard-working men, but as soon as they get their money a lot of it (in fact all the surplus after paying for lodgings) goes for drink. The result is they are always living from hand to mouth, and consequently when they get discharged from their works—either through their own fault or the 'shortening of hands' or any other cause—they have no money and are compelled to go on tramp until they are fortunate enough to get other employment."†

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 83576.

† There is abundant evidence that it is mainly this section of the wage-earning class, and those who have fallen into Class IV., who prey upon this section, who frequent the Casual Wards (outside the Metropolis). "We bring in a tremendous number of good-class navvies for these public works," stated the Chief Constable of Lanarkshire, "and they are followed by a regular horde of tramps who live on them. They are an absolute curse to the whole country. They come in and take away the character of these good-class labourers. People come and say: 'We want extra policemen. We have navvies, and they are playing the mischief with the whole countryside.' I say that the navvy is a poor, harmless person who gets drunk every Saturday like other people. It is these people who follow him who are the nuisance." (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, *Q.* 6937). "There is a certain amount of that (*i.e.*, vagrants following public works in order to cadge on the navvies)," stated the Chief Constable of Ayrshire, "but of the men who do the work, it is exceptional for a man to stay on for any length of time." (*Ibid.*, 1906, *Q.* 6807.) "The largest number," stated the Chief Constable of Northumberland, "is the incorrigible 'work-shy,' and they are mostly able-bodied; and then, secondly, there is a very large number of travelling labourers, navvies, masons, bricklayers, tailors, carpenters, who work for two or three days, and then drink every farthing they have got. They spend a week or perhaps a fortnight on the roads before they get another job; there is a very large proportion of these.' (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 7587). Sir John Dorington attributed the increase of vagrancy in Gloucestershire to "the increasing destitution of the country, and, no doubt, partly the great works going on in Gloucestershire. Great works, I think, bring the vagrants in, partly in search of work, and partly in search of the very good begging ground which a large collection of navvies supplies.'" (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 4280.)

It is apparently into the grade of navvies that the physically strong men of the First Class—especially those from the Army—tend to pass, if they are unsuccessful in regaining a permanent situation, and are unencumbered by wife and children.*

The existence of so large a class of men not only in discontinuous employment under demoralising surroundings, but also perpetually shifting from place to place, without their wives and children, and without any systematic arrangement for their travelling or their accommodation, appears to us a great social evil. For the lack of any proper provision for the accommodation of these "public works men," as described in the Local Government Board Report from which we have quoted, is not exceptional, but habitual. † We need only mention the danger to the Public Health. "Not only are these men," reports Dr. Farrer, "owing to their migratory habits, apt to carry infection from place to place, and in particular from one common lodging-house to another, but they are as a class, specially averse to vaccination or re-vaccination, partly, no doubt, owing to the interference with work which the operation entails." ‡ As soon as each job is completed the men are paid off, and are left stranded without employment; some to drift about the locality to which they have been attracted, to intensify the local competition for casual labouring work, and presently to swell the register of the Distress Committee.§ Such "stranding" of public works men, on the completion of jobs, is a frequent cause of local distress.‖ Others of the contractors' men drift away by all the great roads, using the Casual Wards and common lodging-houses on the way, attracted hither and thither by mere vague rumours that great engineering works are about to begin in this place or that.

(iii.) *Existing Agencies dealing with the Men of Discontinuous Employment.*

For practically the whole class of Men of Discontinuous Employment, whether building trades operatives or navvies, or men in those parts of other industries ¶ in which employment is habitually discontinuous from employer to employer as well as from job to job —numbering at least 1,250,000 wage-earners, and possibly twice as many—the existing agencies for preventing or providing for distress from Unemployment are hopelessly inadequate, if not incurably inappropriate. The first method by which the more regularly employed and the better paid section of the Men of Discontinuous Employment have sought to fortify themselves against Unemployment is by Trade Union Insurance. But although a large proportion of the skilled artisans among them, and many thousands even of the labourers, are members of Trade Unions, hardly any of these societies, in these industries of discontinuous employment, find it possible to give regular Out-of-Work Pay. The amount of Unemployment in the winter, in the periods of depression, and in the frequent intervals between jobs, is relatively so large as to put such a benefit out of the reach of

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* Nearly a quarter (136 out of 552) of the navvies who used the Casual Ward already referred to in the year 1905 had served in the Army. We understand that public works contractors will often consent to employ discharged prisoners, and that many of the "situations" found for such men by the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Societies are of this kind.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 80022–9.

‡ Report of Dr. R. Farrer to Local Government Board on the Accommodation of Navvies, 1907, p. 7.]

§ Among the Unemployed at Leicester in 1895 were the "navvies attracted to the town by new railway works." (Second Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895, p. 128.) This was again complained of in 1907, on the completion of the Leicester Tramways Works. (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 86772.)

‖ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 83600–1, 83614. The Reports of the Distress Committees of Leyton, Dudley, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Halifax, and many others, specify that hundreds of applicants were in distress owing to "completion of job." "The completion of Sir John Jackson's contract for the extension works at Keyham Dockyard in the early part of the year threw a considerable number of men out of employment." (Report of Plymouth Distress Committee, 1907.)

¶ "The shipyard employés," we were informed, "may, on the whole, be regarded as a little better positioned. In the first place they are better organised and have had better training. Then there is some show of continuity with their work, but still, owing to the exposed nature of this work, spells of wet or windy weather throw all out of gear. And, again, many men work in squads or batches and at times a squad is temporarily stopped until some other squad's work has far enough advanced to allow the others to get on again. This is such a constant trouble that it can be regarded both as a chronic and a periodic complaint." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XI. (par. 3) to Vol. VIII., p. 509.)

even the strongest Unions.* To this rule there are but half a dozen exceptions. The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, an old and highly organised Trade Union, established in 1860, and now numbering 64,268 members, † pays Unemployment Benefit on much the same lines as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, with the result that comparatively few carpenters apply to Distress Committees.‡ But even this exceptional society, with nearly half a century of careful management behind it, finds this benefit an increasingly heavy burden, the payments for the whole of the past four years averaging nearly 25s. a year per member, involving a weekly contribution of nearly 6d. per week for Insurance against Unemployment alone, irrespective of sickness, superannuation, burial and strike pay. The result is that a certain proportion of men in each year exhaust the period of twenty-four weeks' benefit before they get into work again; a large number find it impossible to keep up their contributions,§ and accordingly in one of their intervals of Unemployment fall "out of benefit," whilst many others are prevented from joining. The result is that the membership of this Union has, since 1903, steadily declined, and is now falling at an alarming rate. During the year 1908 it lost nearly 100 members every week.‖ There are now in the United Kingdom at least four times as many carpenters outside the Union as within it. In fact, experience has proved, not once or twice, but repeatedly, that, in these trades where discontinuous employment is the rule, and where the employment is sporadic, and ever shifting in locality, no system of Insurance is either financially or administratively practicable. The time lost in the intervals between jobs, in the recurrent seasonal slackness, and in the years of depression, is so considerable that an abnormally heavy premium has to be paid in the weeks when the men are at work. Such a premium would have to be specially heavy in the case of the labourers, who are the least well paid section, and who make up half of the whole.¶

There is, however, a further difficulty in the way of insurance against Unemployment which seems to us, *without some better organisation of the building and constructional trades*, to militate seriously against any attempt to provide Out of Work Pay for the Men of Discontinuous Employment. Even if the men could afford, and could be induced to spare a premium sufficiently high to provide for their inevitable and recurrent periods of Unemployment, it is impossible, as things are, to make sure that the member drawing Out of Work Pay is actually doing his utmost to get employed, or even that he is made aware of the opportunities of re-employment. To the engineer or the boiler-maker every factory or

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* The typical provision made by the Trade Unions in the building trades for their Unemployed members (notably among the bricklayers and stonemasons) is that of Travelling Benefit or Tramping Pay. This, the archaic form of Unemployment Benefit, takes the form of an allowance of a shilling or so per day, payable only if the member has just come into the town that day, and usually not payable for more than one day in any one town, nor more than once in any town during six months. The towns at which the Union has branches and pays this benefit are usually ten or twenty miles apart, so that to obtain it the member must travel (*i.e.*, walk) practically all day. From the standpoint of provision against Unemployment, we can hardly count this Travelling Benefit (though the Board of Trade does so in its financial statistics, and incidentally includes also the payment of railway fares to take up jobs which is superseding it) It does nothing to keep the wives and children; and, far from directing Unemployed members where they are needed, it promotes an aimless wandering up and down the Kingdom of a demoralising kind. It is being discontinued by one Society after another, and is being used, even where it remains in force, by a diminishing proportion of the members.

† Report of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, December 1908.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXV. (par. 10) to Vol. VIII.

§ In addition to the regular contribution of 1s. a week, extra levies have been made during 1908, amounting to no less than 4*6*s. for the fifty-two weeks. Thus, the average weekly payment throughout the year has been 1s. 10½d.

‖ Forty-eighth Annual Report of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, 1908. We append particulars of cases reported to the head office, in which members of this Union, who have paid heavy contributions for many years, are now in distress through being unable to get employment before the expiration of the maximum period during which they can draw Out-of-Work Pay:—"*W. T.*, age 55; nineteen years' membership. Out of work nine months; believed to be 'actually starving'; his wife seems to be dying. She wants to go to the Workhouse, but he will not allow her to go; a very sorrowful case." "*J. V.*, age 48; eighteen years' membership. Out of work twenty-six weeks during 1908; has been dogged by misfortune this year; he was compelled to break up his home, and is now staying in a single room with his children; he is a steady, respectable man, and feels his position acutely."

¶ "It would be difficult for them to earn enough in the summer to carry them through the winter. . . . There are very few subsidiary occupations available for builders' employés, as they are trained for that alone. . . . There are a few employed in the gas works, but the majority walk about looking for work, and are supported by their various Unions, the gifts of fellow-workmen, or starve. I might say that the builders' labourer is a very generous chap. If he has sixpence he will give threepence away to his mate who is out of work." (Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, *Qs.* 134, 229.)

shipyard is known, and the number of men required by every employer in the country can be ascertained by an efficient Trade Union office. But no trade organisation, however efficient, can discover as a matter of practice, in which town or at which outskirts of a town building operations are beginning to develop, or where exactly a contractor has been set to make a motor track, to reclaim a marsh, to build a sea wall, or begin or extend a line of railway. One of the hardships of this class is that they are bound, as things are, to go in search of work on mere rumour, and that this rumour may reach and affect the movements of dozens or hundreds of thousands of men all over the country quite independently of how many may be actually required at one particular work. The Contractors, we were told, take only "the skeleton of their staff, that is, the whole of the time-keepers, the head walking foreman, and the gangers underneath. These are generally fairly regular men, although they may stand off occasionally for a month or so. The rest of the men have to go to the work haphazard as best they can." * "Occasionally, advertisements appear in the papers," we were told by Mr. John Ward, M.P., who has had personal experience of the trade, "that a certain number of men are required on certain works, and I have known cases where there was not a man who could get a job. More than once I have seen that, and then, of course, they are hopelessly stranded, and it does create great difficulty in the neighbourhood."† No trade organisation can discover whether its Unemployed members have actually applied for such work as there is or why it is that out of the crowd of applicants for work the contractor's foreman picks one man and rejects another; and why, when he is reducing his staff, he discharges some men weeks earlier than others. On these scattered works all over the country no Trade Union could even discover whether a man had been dismissed or had simply thrown up the job of his own accord.‡ Thus, in the present anarchic condition of the building and constructional trades, Out of Work Benefit may easily prove a weapon of double-edge. Where intervals of Unemployment are normal in the industrial life of every member of the trade, and where their duration is under no effective supervision and control, the power to draw Out of Work Pay may, by its subtle play upon motive, tend insidiously to slacken the effort to get another job as quickly as possible and to keep the job until it is completed, and thus actually lengthen the average interval between jobs and therefore the amount of Unemployment.

On the other hand, whilst Trade Union insurance against Unemployment is, to this class, practically impossible, the "Employment Relief" offered by Distress Committees and Municipal Authorities is fatally attractive. The job of a few days or a few weeks on the Municipal Relief Works—repellent, and not really useful to the men of Class I.—just suits the less skilled, the less well-paid, the less regular, the less steady of the workers of Class II., and even the good men brought low by prolonged Unemployment. To the builders' labourers and navvies who make up the bulk of the men in distress from Unemployment belonging to this class, the construction of roads, the excavation of land, the planting of trees, the improvement of open spaces, the laying of drains, or the building of embankments—which is the work to which Local Authorities inevitably turn—is exactly the kind of occupation that they prefer. When they are put to such work alongside the heterogeneous crowd of under-employed and unemployable men, the very minimum of effort enables them to pass muster and even to gain the approval of the harassed superintendent. Even the Rural Colony, though it takes them away from their haunts, has familiar features to the man who is perpetually working on contractors' jobs in remote parts of the country. Though the wages earned on Relief Works do not equal the ordinary earnings when working full time for a contractor, the men quickly discover the advantage of being paid without deductions in all weathers and without lost time. § They appreciate the short hours and the low level of effort.

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 83612.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 83715.

‡ "Would the navvy," asked the Chairman of the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, "come under the description of a working man in search of work; he goes off to wherever he hears there is a job, and stays there probably as long as the job lasts?" "No," replied the Chief Constable of Northumberland, "not as a rule as long as the job lasts; probably only a week; at those waterworks in Northumberland during the last three or four or five years, hundreds of men stay only a week or less, and then get their wages and go." (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, *Q.* 7590.)

§ "Then, too, it must be kept in view that the men were paid during wet weather when it was impossible to undertake any work, and there was, unfortunately, a very heavy loss on this account during the months of February, March and April. Taking the aggregate number of men working, 24,038 complete days were lost through inclement weather—in other words, the Committee paid £2,640 in wages to the men for days and portions of days during which no work was done." (Report of Glasgow Distress Committee, 1908, p. 9.)

Hence the builders' labourers and the navvies who happen to be in an interval between two jobs gleefully welcome the efforts of the Distress Committees to persuade Local Authorities to start public works for the Unemployed. If these works would not otherwise have been done, it means the clear gain of another job; if they are merely anticipated, at any rate it is a job in hand which is secure, as against the mere chance of a job at the normal time, which would very likely go to men following the successful contractor, men probably more vigorous, more steady, or at least more favoured by the foreman. What is unfortunate from the standpoint of the community is that when the Relief works stop the builders' labourer or navvy finds himself exactly where he was when they began, but with the difference that more men have been attracted into this particular calling. While he has been working on the job of the Local Authority some other man has been called up or down from other sections of wage-earners to take his place on the job which may have been started meanwhile by the Contractor for whom he is accustomed to work. And from among the heterogeneous crowd taken on by the Local Authority other men who have previously worked at other trades will have grown accustomed to and perhaps fitted for the work of the navvy or the labourer. If it is thought necessary that public works should be executed in periods of trade depression, in order to create employment for the building and constructional trades, it would clearly be more advantageous to the men of those trades, and to the community as a whole, that such works should be undertaken, not by Distress Committees, nor as Relief Works for the benefit of the men on particular local registers of persons in distress, but in the ordinary way, by the Departments usually ordering such works, and that they should be manned exclusively by the best of the men habitually employed in these trades, whom the foreman is able to engage in the manner to which they are accustomed.

Finally, whilst both Trade Union Insurance and Employment Relief are unavailable or inappropriate remedies for the Distress of the Men of Discontinuous Employment, we see that, from the very nature of the case, it is futile to attempt to grapple with the evil by seeking to get the men individually into work, or to move them to other parts of the country, or even to other parts of the Empire. What has to be remedied is not the Unemployment of the 5 or 10 per cent. who happen to be on our hands at a particular time, but the fact that *all* the men are periodically unemployed, and that practically the whole number are subject occasionally to intervals between jobs so long as to produce distress even to the thrifty household. It is, in fact, not the woes of individual men, but the excessive discontinuity of the employment of the whole class, aggravated beyond all need by the absence of organisation and information, for which we have here to find a remedy.

(c) CLASS III.—THE UNDER-EMPLOYED.

In our First Class we had to deal with individuals who happened to be undergoing the experience—in their lives occasional only, and even rare—of being out of work. In our Second Class, we found the whole body normally and habitually out of work in the intervals between jobs; such intervals occurring every few weeks or months, involving a chronic "leakage" in loss of time and wages, and being, in the course of the lifetime of nearly every man, occasionally so prolonged as to create acute distress. Now that we come to our Third Class we have to face the problem of a whole population of manual workers who are, year in and year out, week by week, continuously in a state of partial destitution of the necessaries of life owing to their chronic failure to get a full week's work. This is not Unemployment in the ordinary sense, but something which (as we shall see), is, in its social effects, even worse. It is not a case of the man being alternately fully at work and fully at leisure. His whole life is absorbed, either in work, or in looking or waiting for work; but he does not get his time paid for. It represents "at bottom not so much want of employment as a wrong distribution of employment, a spreading say, of 3,000 days' work in a week over 1,000 men at three days each instead of over 500 men at six days each."*

* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 77832, par. 8.

(i.) *The Casual Labourer.*

The evil of Under-employment is shown in its most common form in the great class of Casual Labourers.* These men hold no situations. They are engaged, day by day, and often hour by hour, for brief and discontinuous jobs; sometimes mainly by one employer for successive jobs, but more usually by a shifting series of different employers, often in different occupations. The bulk of the work is, in fact, unskilled labouring; and it is so unspecialised that men habitually work in succession for employers carrying on different industries.

The Casual Labourer assumes, here and there, slightly specialised characteristics. We need not describe the hackneyed figure of the "Docker."† so well-known as the man who struggles in East London at the dock-gates for the privilege of being taken on at sixpence an hour, for a few hours' job at unloading goods from the ship's hold, and wheeling or carrying them into the warehouses that line the dock quays. We find practically the same type, under slightly varying conditions, at every large port,‡ notably at Liverpool, Bristol and Hull, and to the list we must now add Manchester, where, starting afresh, the evil might have been avoided.§ The Casual Labourers of the wharves and landing places by whom the bulk of the port and riverside work of all kinds is everywhere performed belong to essentially the same class. Here, too, must come the large class of porters, labourers and "odd job men" who pick up a living at the various markets for cattle, meat, fish, fruit and vegetables, hay and straw, etc., in London, and all market towns, great or small. Some other towns, like Middlesborough, have a considerable population of Casual Labourers and "spare hands," who hang about the wharves and furnaces on the chance of occasional jobs.‖ "This," we are told, "is especially the case in the large iron and steel works, where often an influx of work means the setting on of

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* "The casual labour system means giving out work in jobs, instead of providing regular employment. This invariably results in so many scrambling for the jobs that there is not sufficient work to go round. No man thinks he is likely to be the unlucky person who gets nothing to do, and there is always the chance of him finding something the next day to keep him going. Many people with a tendency to slackness like work of this kind; many drift into increasing slackness; and the irregularity of the provision of the work is thereby encouraged." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 84791, par. 24). "It (the term 'casual labour') applies shortly to those who are engaged from hour to hour or day to day, and for whom it is a matter of chance whether employment will be forthcoming on the morrow." (Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, p. 2.)

† Much has been written on the London "Docker," and his work. *See* the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Labour, 1894 (Cd. 7421); Third Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895; Report on Dock Labour and Poor Law Relief, by the Hon. G. Walsh; Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism in London, by Mr. Steel-Maitland and Miss Squire, 1907, pp. 46–50; Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, 1907, Appendix W., pp. 398–417.

‡ He is not always an undifferentiated general labourer; he may be more or less specialised, and bear a special name, such as stevedore, grain-porter, grain-bearer, coal-porter, coal-trimmer, trucker, trimmer and lander, busheller, bag-holder, weigher or meterer, timber-porter, etc.

§ "In Manchester the problem attracts less attention than in the other cities, but at the same time the opinion must be expressed that it is in Manchester that there is least excuse for the casual system. Owner and employer are one. It is admitted that at least half the staff could be regularly employed. The docks are of recent formation, and it may well be that the Manchester Docks form an instance of a place where a better system might have been and even now might be started with comparative ease. It may also be the case that the evils which are not so noticeable there at present, because the docks have not long been in existence, will arise in the future unless they are now prevented." (Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. Steel-Maitland and Miss Squire, p. 34.)

‖ "Middlesborough's staple industry being the making of pig-iron and steel-smelting, the dealing with huge quantities of iron-ore and large shipments of crude metal, a peculiar feature is stamped upon the employment of the district, that is to say, there is a constant unsteadiness in the volume of unorganised, casual, rough-and-tumble kind of labour needed. A great many hands are employed, more especially in the shipping and stocking portion of this business, by the hour or by the ton, or even by the lot or job work. In some cases the job may run out less than a day's work. In many cases this partial employment goes on the whole year round, which is bad enough at any time, but in spells of rough weather, or slackness, or lull in shipments, or for any other cause, then the trouble becomes acute and the suffering terrible. Most of the men thus employed are quite untrained and ill-adapted to do any other class of work, even if that chance arose" (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XI. (par. 2) to Vol. VIII. "In the iron and steel works there is also a great deal of intermittent labour amongst the unskilled workers. For example, I will give you merely one instance: When a boat loaded with iron-ore arrives at the iron works wharf, a gang of labourers is engaged until the boat is discharged, and if there does not happen to be another boat following, the gang is paid off. This is another instance of the prevalence in this district of what are called catch jobs." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XIV. (par. 6) to Vol. VIII.)

men who must be dismissed as soon as the pressing order is completed."* In the great centres of commerce, there is a whole class of Casual Warehousemen. "There is," says Mr. Rathbone, "another class of semi-skilled labour in Liverpool which is even more casual in its nature than that of the *bona fide* dock labourer. I refer to the warehouse porter and other similar employments. In the case of a warehouse it is utterly impossible as a rule for the warehouseman himself to tell from day to day how many men he may require the following morning. He may have a heavy stock of any particular class of goods in his warehouse, the owner of which may sell it, say late in the afternoon, the order is passed through and the carrier applies for delivery first thing in the morning. The warehouseman thus requires a considerable number of men; but for days on end, even although he has a heavy stock in his warehouse, he may not require more than one or two hands besides himself to attend to sampling orders, and such small matters of that kind."† Every railway company has, for the goods traffic of its principal stations, its set of extra men, who get taken on for a few hours, or for a day or two, whenever there is pressure of business. But apart from the docks owned or worked by railway companies, where the labour is as casual as at other docks, the Companies vary in the extent to which they rely on casual labour. At the Marylebone terminus of the Great Central, the men on the permanent staff (average weekly totals for 1906–7) numbered 155, the regularly employed men not on the staff, 42, and the casuals no fewer than 117; and these latter got, on an average, only 28 hours' work per week. More than 37 per cent. of the whole work was done by these casuals. On the other hand, the King's Cross Goods Depot of the Great Northern had less than 3 per cent. of casuals. In July, 1906, "about 200 extra porters, etc., were taken on at Euston, in addition to 200 extra men taken on for the rest of the Euston section, which extends to Stafford. The majority of these extra men are only wanted for the very heavy pressure between July 20th and August 12th, but from June 1st the staff is gradually increased, and after August 12th is diminished to about September 15th, when it becomes normal."‡

The "casualness" of the employment of the Casual Labourer is aggravated by the competition for jobs by men belonging to other trades, who happen to be unemployed and in distress. A skilled mechanic does not do "labouring" unless he is hard pushed. But turning over a batch of record papers of unemployed carpenters we note men who are reduced to "working at the shipping" (*i.e.*, dock labour); to "labouring at 17s. per week"; to being "employed as a labourer at 18s. per week"; to "the work of a general labourer at one of the timber yards rather than go on Unemployed Benefit"; to "working as a labourer"; to "discharging timber ships, which is only labouring"; to "navvying for the Corporation," etc. The lower sections of the building trades, notably the painters, the scaffolders, the builders' labourers and the navvies, who may be said to be normally in employment, though in very discontinuous employment, habitually work as casual labourers, when they cannot get work in their trades of building and construction, and when they are sufficiently in distress to be willing to change their habits. Indeed, the boundary between Class II. and Class III. is at this point obscure. In all periods of depression a considerable proportion of the section of builders' labourers find themselves employed in their own trade for such short spells—often only for a few hours at a time —and so rarely obtaining forty or fifty hours' work in a week, that their condition really amounts to one, not of Discontinuous Employment, but of chronic Under-employment.§

The want of employment of the Casual Labourer is, according to many witnesses, at present being aggravated by a declining demand for mere muscular effort. "It is," we are informed, "now increasingly true that machinery is displacing the purely unskilled labourer, and causing a demand for men of more general ability and reliable character, and affording them more regular employment. The 'Scotchman' and the 'grab' in the building trade, the mechanical stoker in gas-works, the steam crane, the grain elevator, etc., at the docks, and the motor 'bus or trolley, are materially diminishing the demand for unskilled labour in London."‖

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* *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXXVIII. (par. 5) to Vol. VIII.

† *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXIII. (par. 9) to Vol. VIII.; also *Q.* 35537.

‡ Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, 1907, Appendix W., pp. 418–419.

§ "The building labourers are casual labourers just at present," deposed an experienced witness. (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 79880.)

‖ Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, p. 6.

(ii.) *The Fringe of Casuals about Skilled Trade.*

But the class of Under-employed includes not merely the whole of the men in such occupations as dock and wharf labour and market porters, and a waxing and waning share of the lower grades of the building operatives, but also a very extensive fringe of men more or less attached to particular industries, and working at them only by way of brief and casual jobs. "'To go in' for one half-a-day, one day, two, three, four, or five days out of the five and a half is common to bootmaking, coopering, galvanising, tank-making, oil pressing, sugar boiling, piano-making, as it is to dock labouring, stevedoring, crane lifting, building."* Some trades, like that of the London bakers, regularly employ more men on one or two days of the week than on others. In London "a large body of men is always required for the Friday night baking," when "the work . . . in preparation for Saturday and Sunday is, we are told, exceedingly heavy. The usual hours of working are fifteen or sixteen instead of the ten of other nights, and *twice as many* men are required." These Friday night men, many hundreds in number, pick up odd jobs the rest of the week. "At the factory gates every night during the week, a number of men are always hanging about ready to be taken on in an emergency, or to fill the place of any man who, according to a very common custom, has 'taken a night of.'"† In busy marketing neighbourhoods, a whole class of butchers' assistants are engaged only for Fridays and Saturdays. Analogous arrangements exist in many other trades. Moreover, in every trade there are men whom the employer takes on only when he has a sudden and temporary press of business.‡ They may be the "glut men" of the Customs Department or the Christmas hands of the Post Office. Every tramway undertaking, municipal or commercial, has its reserve of extra drivers, conductors, yard-men, washers, etc., who get a day's work now and then when they are wanted. At Liverpool, and indeed in all large towns, there is a whole class of casual carmen, who are taken on for the job as required.§

(iii.) *The Under-Employment of Declining Trades.*

These ascending grades of lifelong "casuals" are not the only sections of wage-earners who suffer the distress due to Under-employment. There are the trades in which, whether owing to a persistent falling off of the demand, or to some change of process, Under-employment has become chronic and almost universal. What is elsewhere the lot only of the fringe of casual hands, becomes in these trades the misfortune of practically all the workers employed. Though few may be wholly Out of Work, hardly any get a full week's employment; and the whole trade may thus pass (as did the Framework Knitters and the Hand Loom Silk and Woollen Weavers) into a condition in which—throughout the whole year—each man gets only a few days' earnings a week. This is, apparently, in our present industrial anarchy a constant phenomenon. The particular trades that are suffering vary from decade to decade, but there seems no time at which the evil cannot be traced in some locality or another. At present, as we gather, the boot and shoemaking trade is, to a great extent, in this condition, owing to the rapidly changing processes, involved in the successive introduction of machine after machine. Even where men are not altogether displaced they are finding, in some centres, their work

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* Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 121.

† Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism in London, by Mr. Steel Maitland and Miss Squire, p. 30.

‡ Such a fringe of irregularly employed spare hands exists, for instance, in the hosiery trade, among copper and chemical workers, in glass-bottle works, with chain-makers, in seed-crushing mills, and at gas-works. (Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, pp. 23–24; *see also* Final Report of Royal Commission on Labour, 1894, Part II., pp. 92, 243, 292, 299, 419, etc.)

§ At Liverpool, where the "carmen, carters, etc., form a large group in the Census (11,171) . . . . a great proportion are the well-paid drivers in the regular employment of the 'Teamsters,' or large firms who do the ship and warehouse cartage of goods. These are a steady, respectable set of men, as, indeed, they are required to be, so much valuable property being entrusted to them, including the magnificent horses for which Liverpool is famed. The Secretary of the Cartowners' Association estimates the number of regular men at about 7,000. Besides these, there is a large number of casual carters who are taken on by the day. These are needed to fill the places of the regular men who are off work through sickness or other cause, or as extra hands in time of pressure. There are several 'stands' in the city, recognised by the police and the employers, where the casual carters wait to be hired. The men are skilled, otherwise they would not be trusted to drive and load." (Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. Steel Maitland and Miss Squire, p. 12.)

becoming so intermittent as to amount to chronic Under-employment.* Much the same state of Under-employment appears to exist to-day in some centres of the hosiery trade, also owing to the shifting of the industry.† A similar state of chronic Under-employment has long prevailed in some of the branches of the leather trade in Bermondsey owing to the shifting of the fell-mongering and tanning.‡ It is even a question whether certain sections of so extensive and so widespread an industry as the building trade may not be falling into a chronic state of Under-employment, owing to changes in processes. It may be that the Carpenters and Joiners have become too numerous for the work to be done, now that concrete floors and steel joists have come in; that the bricklayers and stonemasons are in process of supersession by the workers in "reinforced concrete," and steel-frame erections; whilst the plasterers are, in face of a double change of fashion as well as of processes, finding their work dwindling to a vanishing point.§ There are actual signs that, in London at any rate, the prolonged Unemployment of the carpenters and bricklayers is out of all proportion to the shrinking of building operations. Statistics as to the number of building operations reported to the District Surveyors in the Administrative County of London, and as to their aggregate rateable value (which furnish some imperfect index to their extent), as shown in the accompanying diagram, indicate that the reduction in the amount of building between 1899 and 1905 was inappreciable, and that of 1906–7 not great. On the other hand the percentage of Unemployment among London carpenters has risen steadily from 1899 out of all correspondence with the amount of building. Moreover, there is some evidence that it is worse among these skilled craftsmen than among the labourers.‖

(iv.) *The Social Evil of Under-Employment.*

All these sections and subdivisions (and indeed, many more, for no one has yet completely explored the whole field) come, from our present standpoint, within one and the same class of Under-employed. Of its numerical extent there are no available statistics. It is, in the main, a town phenomenon, and one characteristic principally of towns of large size, though it is not wholly absent anywhere. Confining ourselves to adult men, we cannot estimate the number in the United Kingdom who are, to-day, thus holding no situations, continuous or discontinuous, but are existing on casual jobs of brief duration, and who habitually do not get a full week's work, at less than between one and two millions.

The existence of this large class of Under-employed men, living on casual jobs, and habitually unable to obtain anything like a full week's work, is universally recognised to be a grave social evil. Their average earnings for the year are so low that even with careful management they are unable to procure for themselves and their families the necessaries of healthy life. They are the occupants of the over-crowded one and two-roomed homes

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* "Particulars of the Boot Industry," report out Investigators, "were given us by a practical bootmaker who is on the Executive of the Boot and Shoe Operatives' Union, and who was until recently Chairman of the Board of Guardians. As his information embodies that obtained from other sources we may, with advantage, quote his remarks: 'In the boot and shoe trade men are hit hard in Bristol, especially in Kingswood. There is absolutely no doubt that machinery has displaced one-third of the men, and the use of machinery is increasing. Machines now turn out twenty-five dozen a day, a man turns out the same in a week; the demand for boots cannot so far increase as to give employment for displaced men in the trade. Numbers have emigrated from Bristol, and others pick up work here and there. *A boot hand is no fool, and manages to get repairs to do and odd jobs from various firms, so that he keeps off the rates; but he earns from 8s. to 12s. a week only, and that casually.* There are numbers of such men between forty and fifty years of age in the boot trade. Their daughters go to the chocolate and tailoring factories, and so a wage is made up, none earning a living wage separately.'" (Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. Steel Maitland and Miss Squire, p. 51).

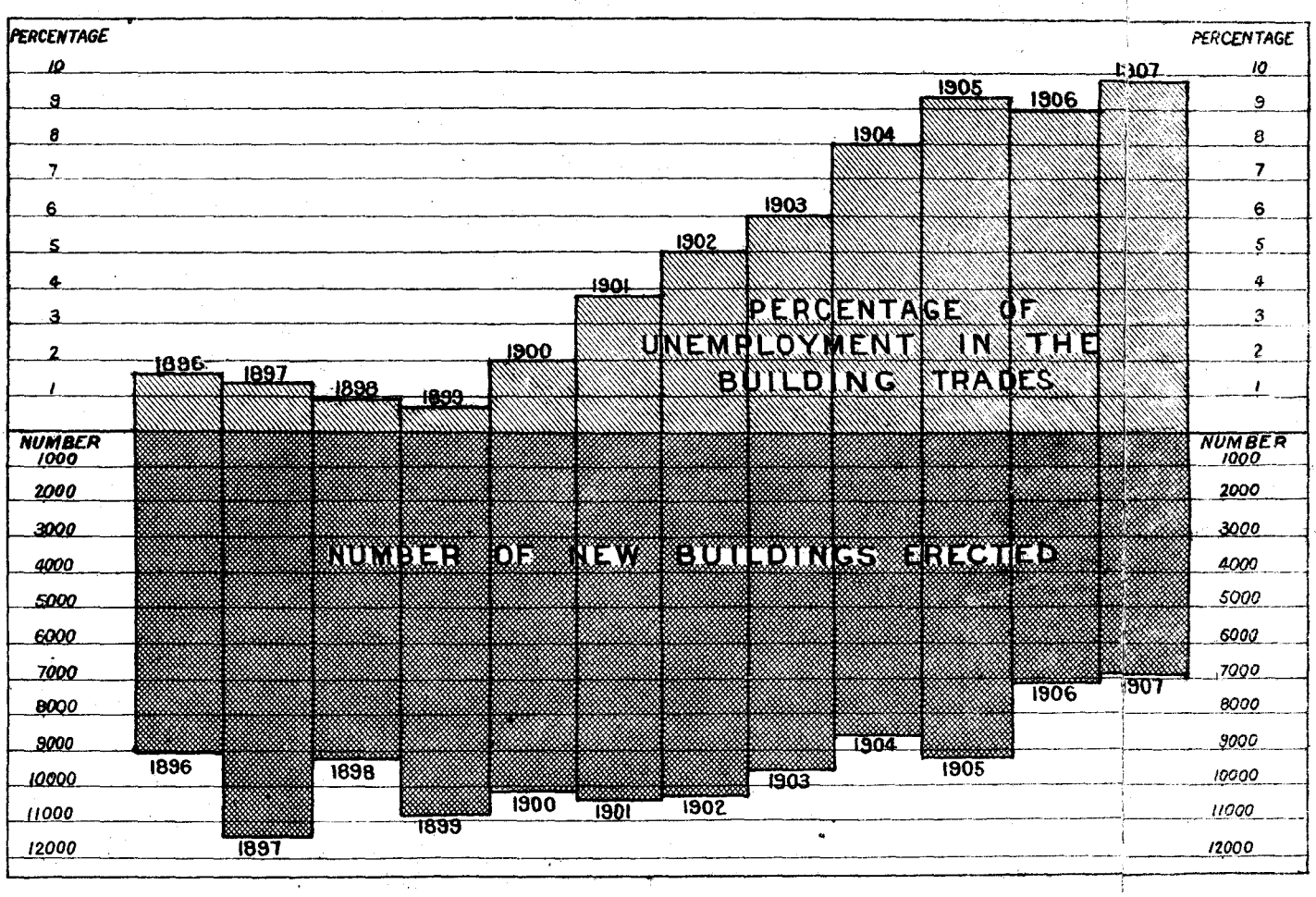
† Evidence before the Commission, Q. 86726, par. 4.

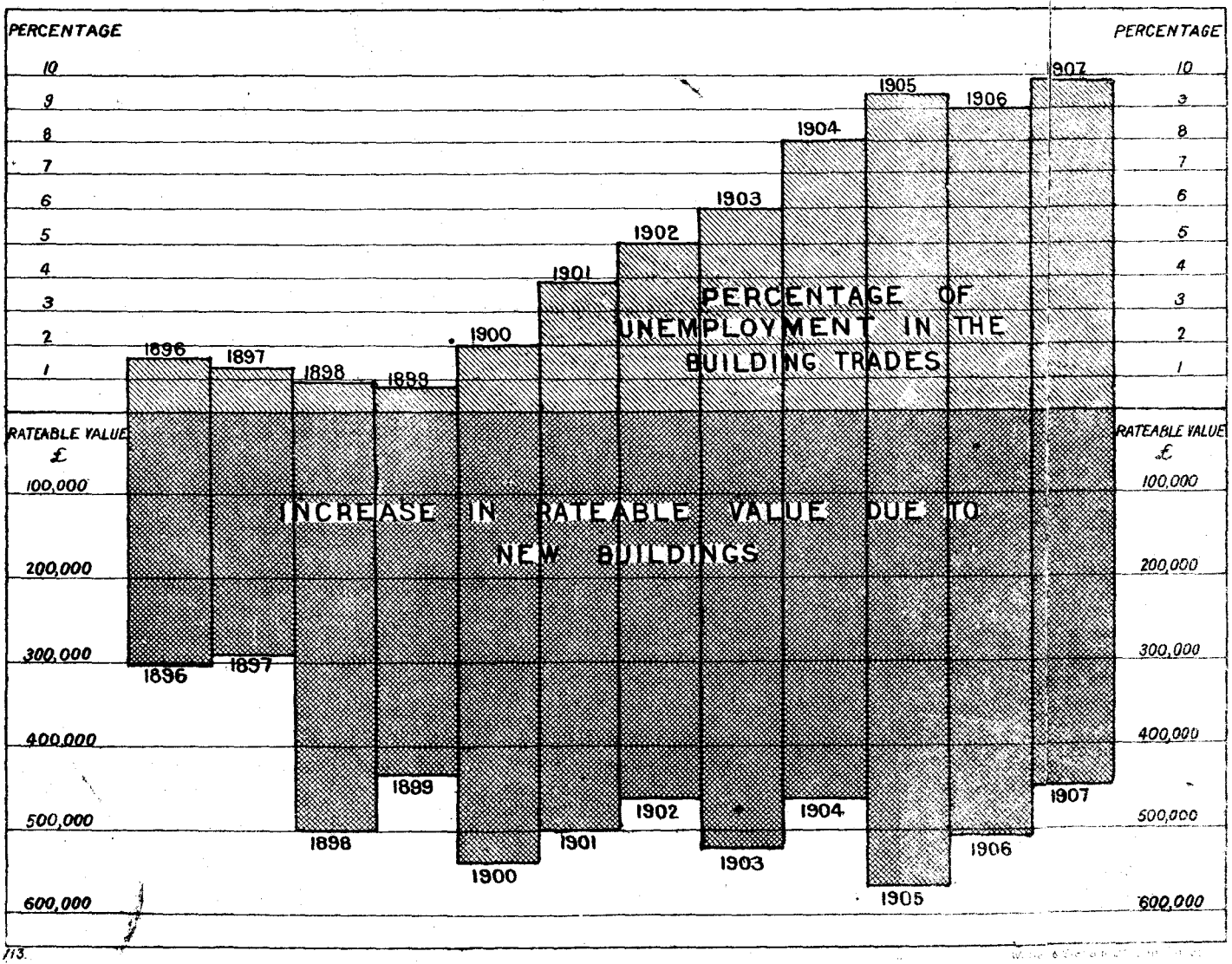
‡ Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism in London, by Mr. Steel Maitland and Miss Squire, p. 26.

§ "New building methods have also affected employment in Liverpool. Ironwork is now used to a much larger extent than formerly in construction, even to the displacing of brickwork for the outside in some cases. Roofs and floors are constructed of iron; scarcely any of the ironwork is prepared in the district; therefore the new methods do not appear to benefit the men in Liverpool." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXVIII. (par. 12) to Vol. VIII.)

‖ "What would be the proportion of mechanics, carpenters, and bricklayers, practically permanently employed? Is it higher than that of the labourers?——No, it is considerably less in my case." (Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, Q. 157.) "Your experience is that the skilled men are becoming abundant and falling out of work," the foreman of a large building firm was asked, to which he replied: "Yes." (*Ibid.*, Q. 182.)

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE RELATION BETWEEN THE AMOUNT OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE BUILDING TRADES IN LONDON (MAINLY THE CARPENTERS' TRADE UNIONS) AND THE NUMBER AND RATEABLE VALUE OF NEW BUILDINGS AS REPORTED BY THE DISTRICT SURVEYORS AND IN THE VALUATION LISTS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF LONDON FOR THE TWELVE YEARS 1896-1907.





of London and Glasgow, Newcastle and Plymouth. They fill the cellar dwellings which are the shame of Liverpool. Their families contribute the great majority of the 49,000 children who were being fed at school in London in the winter of 1907–8, and of the much larger number who are being similarly fed in a hundred towns in the winter of 1908–9. Among them privation and exposure, and the insanitary conditions of their dwellings, lead to an excessive prevalence of diseases of all kinds. It is, to an extent quite disproportionate to their actual numbers, they who fill the hospitals and infirmaries, and keep the city's death-rate at a high figure. It is in their households, particularly, that the infantile death-rate is excessive; that the children have rickets; and that an altogether premature invalidity is the rule. It is recognised, in short, that it is among the class of the under-employed casual labourers—constituting, perhaps, only a tenth of the whole town—that four-fifths of the problems of the Medical Officer of Health arise.*

More important even than the adverse effects of casual employment upon physical health, are, in our view, its demoralising effects upon character. The perpetual discontinuity of the work, with its intervening spells of idle loafing, is in itself deteriorating. "The irregularity and uncertainty of the weekly work and income," deposed one witness, "act in the most demoralising way. It weakens the desire, and finally the ability to undertake regular work. The loafing habits that it entails undoubtedly lead to more gambling and drinking than need otherwise go on."† "It is a sort of feast and famine with them," said another witness. "The effects are that the men get into a loafing habit and will not have regular work, and eventually do not like any work at all."‡ The fact that the work is done for a shifting succession of different employers makes zeal, fidelity, and even honest effort of practically no account. In the majority of cases, nothing in the nature of a "character" is required before employment can be gained. The intermittent stream of jobs, on which livelihood depends, comes along, plentifully or scantily as the case may be, without any regard to individual merit; success in "catching the foreman's eye," and getting picked out of the struggling crowd, may come, indeed, more frequently to the physically strong man of dissolute habits and brutal instincts, than to the more refined nature. Amid the evil influences of such a life, no personal character is likely to be able to maintain itself against temptation. Accordingly, wherever we have casual employment, we find drunkenness and every irregularity of life more than usually prevalent. Nor is the evil influence of casual employment confined to the man. It seems almost inevitable that the home should also become demoralised. Among these casual labourers, we were informed, "the uncertainty of the amount that will be earned in any week, and the impossibility experienced by the wife and family of ascertaining what has been actually earned contribute, we have no doubt, much more largely than can be estimated, to the shiftlessness and the general misery."§ In fact, not even the most careful housekeeping could stand up against the irregularity of the income day by day available. In one ascertained case, "for instance, 8s. 4d. was earned in one week in the following way: Monday, a whole day's work, 5s.; Tuesday, one hour, 8d.; Thursday, four hours, 2s. 8d. When the money comes in such small uncertain amounts, it would be difficult for the most thrifty housekeeper to expend it to the best advantage. . . . In these households . . . a heavy responsibility rests on the wife. It is a serious thing to find this responsibility held so frequently in such light esteem, while the habit of drinking among the women undoubtedly leads to more neglect and suffering for the children than anything else."‖

Gravest of all, in our opinion, is the effect that this demoralising irregularity of life is having upon the hundreds of thousands of children who are being brought up in the homes of the Under-employed. The elaborate investigation made by the London County Council into the circumstances of the families whose children need to be fed at school brings to light, not only that it is very largely the offspring of Under-employed

* "During my experience of the working classes," deposed the Works Superintendent of the Central (Unemployed) Body, "I have found that quite one-third of unskilled labour is out of work four months, taking the year round." (*Ibid.*, Q. 79863, Par. 2.) "The earnings of the casual labourer are so small and precarious," deposed a Liverpool Relieving Officer, "that he is unable to pay a subscription to a club or tontine, or make any provision for emergencies, and has, therefore, no alternative at a time of stress but to seek Poor Law assistance." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 35452, Par. 5.)

† *Ibid.*, Q. 83251, par. 43.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 52169, Pars. 19, 20.

§ Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. A. D. Steel-Maitland, and Miss R. E. Squire, p. 16.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 83251, Par. 59.

casual labourers who are thus growing up stunted, under-nourished, and inadequately clothed; but also that, in the vast majority of the cases, the children lack, not food and clothes alone, but even a low minimum of home care. It is these children who, in the main, fill the Industrial and Reformatory Schools. It is these children who furnish the 10 per cent. of "regular irregulars" that are the despair of the Public Elementary School. Needless to say, it is these children who, in the main, when they grow up, recruit the ranks of unskilled and largely of casual labour. As one well-informed witness deposed before us, the irregularity and uncertainty of the life "has a deplorable effect on the children of the casual labourer, who are quick to follow the parental example, and decline to take up regular work or learn a trade when they leave school."*

(v.) *The Swamping of the Distress Committees by the Under-employed.*

All these features of the grave social evil that this class of the Under-employed constitutes to-day are widely recognised and well known. They acquired for us a special significance when it was pressed upon our attention that it was this same class of chronically Under-employed casual labourers that, as a matter of fact, furnished year by year the bulk of the applicants to the Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act. "The great bulk of applicants to Distress Committees," deposed a member of the Central (Unemployed) Body, "are men normally in or on the verge of distress, men earning perhaps fair daily wages, *but getting on an average only two or three days' work in a week or two or three weeks in a month.*"† An examination of the registers of these Committees, in all the hundred towns of England, Scotland and Ireland in which they exist, reveals, with remarkable uniformity, that about one-half of all the distressed applicants are men whose only means of livelihood is casual labour. "We have nearly everywhere received the same general impression," report our Special Investigators, "namely, that the bulk of the applicants to Distress Committees are men of the labouring class, *who have for years been accustomed to casual work.* A large proportion are chronic cases who are always in and out of employment"—that is to say, belong to our Class III.—"and by no means the class of regular workers who have lost jobs in which they have been long employed owing to exceptional depression of trade"—our Class I. We have to conclude, in short, that at least half the task of the Distress Committees has been to relieve, not the Unemployed of our Class I., for whom the Unemployed Workmen Act was designed; nor yet the Unemployed of our Class II., who need only to be tided over an unusually prolonged interval between two engagements of some duration; but to supply the clamant wants of the Unemployed of our Class III.—men whose chronic condition is one of partial destitution tempered by odd jobs.

(vi.) *Under-employment the Main Cause of Pauperism.*

What brings the problem presented by this class of the Under-employed even more vividly home to us is that we have discovered, on quite irrefragable testimony, that it is from the same class that is directly drawn at least two-thirds of all the pauperism,‡ other than that of old-age, sickness, widowhood and orphanage; and probably, if we include indirect results, at least as large a proportion also of these parts of pauperism.§ We were, at the outset of our enquiries, struck by the fact that there was evidently going on a *constant manufacture of paupers.* It became apparent, from a consideration of the entering stream of persons relieved for the first time, that, even if we could to-day kill or deport, or otherwise remove every existing pauper between the ages of sixteen and sixty, we should, if we made no other change, within ten or twelve years find as great a number on our hands as at present. In view of this grave fact, it seemed to us of less importance to consider what was being done to the existing paupers, *than to discover what it was that was creating them.* We accordingly appointed three sets of Special Investigators, one to enquire into the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism; another

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* *Ibid.*, Q. 83251, Par. 43.

† *Ibid.*, Q. 77832, Par. 8.

‡ This is sometimes explicitly confirmed by Poor Law officials. "The opinion of one Clerk to Guardians was that '75 per cent. of the paupers are casual labourers, chiefly dock labourers.'" (Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. A. D. Steel-Maitland and Miss R. E. Squire, p. 24.)

§ "The effect of the irregular wage and thriftless habits culminates when sickness occurs, and pauperism often the result." (*Ibid.*, p. 25.)

to enquire into the effects of Outdoor Relief upon Wages and a third to enquire into the Effects of Employment and Assistance of the Unemployed. In addition we were led, as we have already mentioned, to the appointment of other Investigators to enquire into the condition of the Children whom the Guardians were maintaining on Outdoor Relief and in institutions respectively. The outcome of these investigations was all the more impressive in that it was not what we anticipated. We do not exaggerate when we say that all these enquirers—numbering, with their assistants, more than a dozen, starting on different lines of investigation, and pursuing their researches independently all over the Kingdom—came, without concert, to the same conclusion, namely, that of all the causes or conditions predisposing to pauperism the most potent, the most certain and the most extensive in its operation was this method of employment in odd jobs.* Contrary to the expectations of some of our number and of some of themselves, our Investigators did not find that low wages could be described, generally speaking, as a cause of pauperism. They were unable to satisfy themselves that insanitary conditions of living or excessive hours of labour could be shown to be, on any large scale, a cause of pauperism. They could find practically no ground for believing that Outdoor Relief, by adversely affecting wages, was itself a cause of pauperism. It could not even be shown that an extravagant expenditure on drink, or a high degree of occasional drunkenness—habits of which the evil consequences can scarcely be exaggerated, and which are ruinous to individuals in all grades—were at all invariably accompanied or followed by pauperism. All these conditions, injurious though they are in other respects, were not found, *if combined with reasonable regularity of employment*, to lead in any marked degree to the creation of pauperism. Thus, the regularly employed railway porters, lowly paid as they are, contribute only infinitesimally to pauperism. Even the agricultural labourers in receipt, perhaps, of the lowest money wages of any section of the wage-earners, do not nowadays, so far as they belong to the section in regular employment, contribute largely to the pauperism of adult able-bodied life. Again, though the average consumption of alcoholic drink among the miners, the boilermakers, the iron and steel workers, and many other trades appears to be enormous, these trades do not contribute largely to pauperism. On the other hand, where high earnings and short hours and healthy conditions are combined with the method of casual employment—as is the case with some sections of wharf and riverside labourers, and of the men who labour in connection with furnaces and gas works—there we find demoralisation of character, irregularity of life and a constant recruiting of the pauper army. "It is from the casual labour class," sums up the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, "that those who fall upon the Poor Law, Relief Works or Charitable Funds are mostly drawn."†

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* "Among the most effective pauperising agencies must be placed casual labour and its concomitant women's work. It has been said that we may have as many paupers as we care to pay for. It is about as true that *we may pauperise as many as we care to casualise.*" (Final Report on the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and the Conditions of Employment, by Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 55.) "Whereas it was said in 1834 that, because of the Allowance System whole branches of manufacture followed, "not the course of coal mines or of streams but of pauperism," we may say to-day that *pauperisation follows the course of casual labour.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 55.) "The most urgent need is the decasualisation of men's labour." (*Ibid.*, p. 57.) For similar testimony as to casual labour being the chief cause of pauperism, *see also* the Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. A. D. Steel-Maitland and Miss Squire, pp. 38, 44, 50, 63. "To each of the Relieving Officers in all four unions (Liverpool), we addressed questions as to the applications he received from employees in the chief trades, and in all cases the reply was similar, that of men in definite trades they heard very little; *the casual labourer was* the chief applicant. Thus in West Derby and Birkenhead, in two relief districts where trades and docks were found, the Relieving Officer said: 'The applicants are casual labourers chiefly—only occasionally of any other occupation. We may get a few mechanics, joiners, and engineers. Plasterers come to us in the winter.' And, again, 'We get a few building trade labourers, especially in winter, but not many.'" (*Ibid.*, pp. 11–12.) "Of sixty able-bodied men interviewed in workhouses (Liverpool) most called themselves 'dock-labourers,' but their history showed that they had drifted to this from other employments of a casual nature." (*Ibid*, p. 18.) "To the predominance of casual labour among the causes of pauperism in these cities (London, Liverpool, Manchester, and Bristol), the Relieving Officers testify, as the following statements show: '*Paupers are drawn in our Unions from the casual class.*' 'The admissions to the Workhouses are chiefly of casual labourers who make no provision.' . . . 'Applicants for relief are all casual and scarcely do anything.' . . . 'Paupers are chiefly broken down casual labourers and hawkers from slums and common lodging-houses.' Such corroborative opinions as to casual labour might be multiplied indefinitely." (*Ibid.*, p. 22.) "It is . . . in the effect on the man of average character that the answer must be found as to the pauperising character of the dock work, not on the steadiest men, nor yet the wastrels that may be found under any conditions. Viewed from this standpoint, *the system in Liverpool* appears to create pauperism. . . . Above all considerations of *accident and exposure, it is the casual system of employment which appears chiefly responsible for the large amount of pauperism.*" (*Ibid.*, p. 25.) Of Bristol, they say: "It is the casual nature of the work. Skilled tradesmen, however low the degree of skill, seldom come." (*Ibid.*, p. 28.)

† Report of the Special Committee of the Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, p. 23.

(vii.) *The Cause of the Constant Existence of an Under-employed Class.*

Hence we were led to study the phenomenon of Under-employment with some care. We found, as has been demonstrated by the series of admirable researches carried on by Mr. W. H. Beveridge,* that this chronic over-supply of casual labour in relation to the local demand was produced and continued, irrespective of any excess of population or depression of trade, *by the method by which the employers engaged their casual workers.* This method inevitably creates and perpetuates what have been called "stagnant pools" of labour, in which there is nearly always some reserve of labour left, however great may be the employer's demand. We may illustrate this by a glaring example. The Liverpool employers of dock labourers † take on the men they require, at irregular and uncertain hours, at eighteen different "stands" situated at a considerable distance from each other. Around each "stand" there tends to collect a particular crowd of labourers, who usually work for the shipowners using that "stand," and who get more or less known to their foremen. The chance of employment induces at least as many men to attach themselves to each "stand" as are called for at that "stand" on its busy days. Indeed, it would not suit the employer not to find as many men there as he ever requires. When the call comes, and a certain number of men are taken on, the others do not like to go off to other "stands," partly because these are probably just as well supplied with men, and partly because they might, by their absence, miss a chance of being employed at their own "stand," with the result of weakening their hold on the foreman's acquaintance, and, perhaps, also (as he likes to be sure of there being a large enough crowd for any emergency) on his favour. Now, as the busiest days at particular "stands" do not come simultaneously, and have individually no necessary coincidence with the busiest days for the port as a whole, the result of the creation of the eighteen "stagnant pools" is that the total number of men collected in them (though perhaps not more than enough in each case to satisfy the maximum demand of the "stand") is plainly far greater than the maximum demand of the port as a whole on its very busiest day—it is estimated at half as much again. Thus it is that there are estimated to be something like 15,000 dock and quayside labourers in Liverpool, all of them chronically under-employed, to do work which never, on the busiest day of the port, needs more than 10,000.‡ Much the same conditions prevailed at the London Docks twenty years ago, in spite of the fact that the labourers were everywhere engaged by a single employer (the Dock Company). Men were taken on at each gate at irregular hours, and according to the demand at that particular part of the docks. Largely at the instance of Mr. Charles Booth, the Dock Company was induced to do the greater part of its work by a staff of labourers equal to the minimum requirements of the docks as a whole at the slackest time, to whom regular employment was given; and a further staff of preference men, who were taken on in the numbers required for the regular busy seasons; leaving only the margin of work to be distributed to the fringe of casual labourers. The result is that the work of the London and India Docks Company (which forms, however, only a small proportion of the dock and wharf labour of London) is now spread over a much smaller number of individual men than was formerly the case, and these are much more fully employed. Attempts to adopt a similar plan at Liverpool have so far failed, partly because of the difficulty of combining the large number of shipowners, who there employ the labourers, and partly because of the opposi-

* Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 77831–78370; now fully set forth in "Unemployment: a Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909.

† For accounts of the dock labour at Liverpool, *see* Report on the Unemployed Problem in Liverpool, by Mr. Charles Rouse (Liverpool Labour Conference, 1893); Full Report to the City Council of the Commission of Inquiry into the Subject of the Unemployed (Liverpool, 1894); The Poor of Liverpool, by Mr. William Grisewood (Liverpool Central Relief and Charity Organisation Society, 1897); *Liverpool Courier*, June 5th, 6th and 7th, 1906; Report of Dock Labour Conference, 1906; "Report of an Inquiry into the Conditions of Labour at the Liverpool Docks," by E. F. Rathbone and G. H. Wood; Report upon the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, 1907, Appendix R., pp. 339–343; Final Report upon the Relation of Sanitary and Industrial Conditions to Pauperism by Mr. Steel-Maitland and Miss Squire, pp. 22–26, 31–35; Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 35483–35510, 35521–35536, 36248–36261, 37105 (Par. 5), 83251–83476, 84125–84499, and Appendices Nos. LIX. and LXIII. to Vol. VIII.

‡ Similar conditions have been created at Manchester since it became a port. It was pointed out to us that "Casual labour in this district can best be appreciated by a visit to the Salford Docks of the Manchester Ship Canal Company, at the Main Gate, Trafford Road, Salford, about 7.30 a.m, 1.30 p.m., or 6.30 p.m. At these hours workmen are taken on. Here may be found almost every day a struggling mass of able-bodied men fighting each other to obtain one of the metal cheques from a foreman of the Company, that would entitle them to a few hours' work at 6d. per hour. It is very often the case that there are ten times as many men as there are jobs vacant." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q* 83911, Par. 5.)

tion of the labourers themselves, because each of them fears to be squeezed out by any reform that regularises the labour of the fortunate half, and thus left without even his present gambling chance of a job.

Even in London, however, matters have been little mended. The demoralising struggle for work still goes on. There are indications that the London and India Dock Company and the Millwall Dock Company have, together, about 7,000 men in attendance; the Surrey Commercial Dock Company, 2,000; the shipowners employing their own labourers, 5,000; and the various wharves, 10,000, making on the roughest of estimates, something like 24,000 in all. Yet the maximum number of men employed by all these employers, taken together, on any one day in 1906 was only 14,482. It appears as if this number of men, properly distributed, would suffice to meet the demands of the busiest day. There might, accordingly, be a surplus of 9,000 wholly dispensed with, apart from any improvement in organisation of the work. The mean number employed during the year, taking averages for each month, was only 11,935; so that it might conceivably be possible, by improved organisation of the work, to dispense with anything up to 2,500 more. It is significant to notice that it is not the fluctuations of work from day to day, *in the port as a whole*, that cause the bulk of the irregularity of employment. This only varies from about 11,000 to 15,000; and might, therefore, apart from any improvement in the organisation of the business, cause 4,000 to be occasionally idle. What causes nearly 10,000 men to be constantly in attendance in excess of the maximum requirements of the port as a whole, and causes nearly all the 24,000 to be chronically under-employed, is merely the lack of organisation of the hiring of labourers and of the necessary reserve.*

We have described the case of the London and Liverpool Dock labourer in detail, because the connection between the method of engagement and the chronic state of Under-employment is there close, obvious and undoubted. But the dock labourer presents only one example of what is common to the whole range of the one to two millions of men who are chronically Under-employed. In almost every great industry we find the employer or his foreman—partly from a sense of the convenience of being able at any moment to get all the labour he requires for an urgent demand, but mainly, as we prefer to believe, without actually realising what he is doing—tending to attract outside his wharf, or at his factory gates,† or on the list of persons to whom he gives out work, or to whom he sends a postcard when he has a job, a group of workers who look principally to him for employment, on whom he relies as extra hands to meet the emergencies of his busiest days, and who, therefore (whether through their fears of missing a chance of work from him, or because he likes to be sure of a sufficient reserve), do not easily seek work elsewhere. In fact, as we have been told: "Employers sometimes object to men whom they employ habitually (not regularly) working for a rival employer, even on off days."‡ Nevertheless, as we have it in evidence, "Employers with a fluctuating demand for labour do not as a rule keep a regular staff, even up to the minimum number required on their slackest day. A wharfinger requiring daily from 100 to 200 men will perhaps have only 50 regular men, and will use the other 50 places that might have been permanent in order to keep together a reserve for emergencies. Sometimes this takes shape in a very definite plan of giving out work in rotation."§ Each wharfinger, each contractor, each manufacturer, each giver-out of work to be done at home, each builder's foreman,‖ tends thus to accumulate his own reserve of labour, his own "stagnant pool," from which he draws to satisfy the maximum demands of his business.¶ But as the busiest days of the different employers

* The sum of the maxima employed by the 115 wharves of London on their several busiest days in November, 1906, was 8,035; yet the maximum number ever employed by these wharves, as a whole, on any one day in that month was only 6,615; and the average number employed throughout the month was only 5,536. (Board of Trade Memorandum on Statistics of Seasonal Industries and Industries carried on by Casual Labour, Appendix No. XXI. (D.) to Vol. IX.)

† We have had many instances described to us of "the tendency for every separate employer giving out work to collect men looking for work outside the gate of the works." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 78129.)

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 77832, Par. 9 (*b*).

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 77832, Par. 9 (*a*).

‖ In 1895, it was given in evidence that "almost every foreman would have a nucleus, on any big job, of men that he knows, and very likely would have their names and addresses, and would write to them if the men did not follow him up on their own account." (Third Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895, *Q.* 10913.)

¶ This is, of course, no new practice. It is interesting to note that it was reported as long ago as 1806 that "the opulent clothiers make it a rule to have one-third more men than they can employ, and thus these have to stand still part of their time." (Report of House of Commons Committee on the Woollen Trade, 1806.)

even in the same trade do not exactly coincide in time—as the busiest seasons of different trades occur at different parts of the year—the aggregate of these individual reserves of casual labour is far in excess of what is actually required by the industry of the country as a whole, *even on the busiest day of the year.* Hence the chronic Under-employment, varied by brief spells of work under pressure, of all the casual workers. Thus, as Mr. Beveridge rightly says, " the main force keeping together this under-employed reserve of labour is *the casual demand of a multiplicity of individual employers. Each employer has his own group of hangers-on at his gate, instead of all employers sharing a common reserve drawn from one centre.*"*

The evil effects of this method of engaging labour, which leads to each employer having a Stagnant Pool of his own, may be aggravated in various ways. Sometimes out of a mistaken philanthropy, or it may be out of a deliberate desire " to keep as many men about them as possible, in order to keep up an unlimited supply upon which to draw,"† the employer or his foreman takes means to " spread the work," or " share the jobs."‡ But there are graver abuses. The system gives a valuable patronage to the foreman, which sometimes leads to the exaction of bribes§ and is often, we are informed, the real obstacle to its reform. " The master porter, foreman, or other who has to get work done is much helped if he is always conferring a favour upon the man he employs, and a very marked favour upon those whom he employs frequently or constantly. This we believe to be the real objection to the schemes for diminishing the irregularity of employment in the docks and warehouses of Liverpool by an association among the employers of this kind of labour, so ably and powerfully urged by the leading men of that city for many years. The men responsible for getting the work done are afraid to give the men security of tenure, for fear lest it should weaken their power over them."‖ In fact, as we were informed, " the whole foreman system—however convenient from a business point of view—undoubtedly has the effect of keeping groups of men waiting about individual foremen and thus, as a whole, increasing the leakage of time between jobs and the total volume of labour in an occupation. The system increases enormously the uncertainty of employment. Men in the building trades, and even under local authorities, may be thrown out after years of fairly constant work by the death or removal of a particular foreman. The system undoubtedly lends itself to much abuse of patronage, and encourages convivial drinking as a means of 'keeping in' with the foremen."¶

But it is not only the selfishness of the employer or the corrupt interests of a foreman that perpetuates the evil of each employer having his own reserve, or his own Stagnant Pool of Under-employed labour. Sometimes it is the employer who objects to, and the men who insist on, the system by which the men work only a few days per week. Sir Hugh Bell, for instance, has repeatedly explained how seriously the great firm of Bell Brothers and Company, Limited, loses by the men's irregularity of attendance.** More frequently both employers and employed prefer the demoralising system. Many of the

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* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 77832, Par. 9.

† Report to the City Council of the Commission of Inquiry into the Unemployed in Liverpool, 1894, *Qs.* 540–8.

‡ At Liverpool, it was alleged that " they have a method of calling out the (names of the) . . . men who have worked one day. If they have not enough . . . then they call out the men who have worked two." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 542.)

§ " I know cases of dock and tram work where the foreman had half-a-crown a week from each man, and if they did not pay half-a-crown to him, they got the sack." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 80063.)

‖ Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 31. At the Manchester Docks, the foreman objects to any system of " decasualising " the labour. " The objection of the foremen to the engagement of men on more permanent footing " was thought to be " more imaginary than real. But the fact remains that they did object. They came from Liverpool, and had been accustomed to a casual system, and did not want another. They could not be allowed to appoint permanent men, *and they liked having the patronage of giving the employment.* The additional advantage also existed in the present system that the traffic superintendent could hold the foremen responsible for the way in which work was executed. It was also admitted both that the men have more or less to follow particular foremen, and also that, though it was difficult to sift the tales of the alleged bribery of foremen, . . . yet it was possible there might be reason for them." (Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. Steel-Maitland and Miss Squire, p. 28.)

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 77832, Par. 9 (c).

** *See*, for instance, *North Eastern Gazette*, May 1st, 1908.

casual workers, reports one of our committees, like the gambling nature of Under-employment. They earn high hourly rates, "and can break their employment for a day or two whenever they like without its permanent loss. The shipowners have a plentiful supply of good labour for permanent employ, and a great reservoir of inferior labour for exceptional or sudden wants. Neither side, therefore, wishes to disturb a practice which in some respects suits them, and thus a system is allowed to continue, which is wasteful of labour, demoralising to those not constantly in employ, terribly hard on the wives and children, and the main source of pauperism and its attendant evils in a vast population of nearly 750,000."* Finally, the men get into such a state that, even when they earn only low rates per hour, and are actually in distress, they are unable to remain continuously at work. "There is little doubt," report our Investigators, "that a number of men object to regular and continuous work. There has been much evidence of men leaving the relief work after a few days nominally for other jobs, but, as was shown, when they were revisited at a later date, really because they were tired of it." †

(viii.) *Existing Agencies dealing with the Under-employed.*

We do not think it necessary, in the light of the preceding pages, to dwell at any length upon the utter inappropriateness and inadequacy of the existing agencies for dealing with the distress of the Under-employed. If the provision of Out of Work Pay by Trade Union Insurance is impossible for the Men of Discontinuous Employment, it is obviously still more out of the reach of the Under-employed. In no way can it be ascertained at present whether the casual labourer who professes to be starving has really sought the thousand and one odd jobs for unskilled labour which are offered each morning, and every hour of the day, in any great city. In no way, at present, can it be proved, on any particular day, what is the surplus of men seeking jobs, over and above the aggregate of jobs that are being offered, somewhere or other in the 300 square miles of commercial and industrial London, or the 50 to 100 square miles of the business and manufacturing aggregations at Liverpool and Manchester, among the thickly clustered towns of the Black Country and the Clyde estuary, in the West Riding and along Tyneside. Yet without some check of this kind, no system of Unemployment Insurance, by whomsoever organised, and no provision of Out of Work Pay, by whomsoever provided, could possibly be maintained. The same difficulty of ascertaining and identifying the real surplus hampers equally the Distress Committees and the Municipal Authorities in providing Employment Relief,‡ and discourages both private alms-giving and the grant of Outdoor Relief. All these expedients for meeting the distress and destitution to which the Under-employed are reduced—inevitable as it may be to resort to them in emergencies, when nothing better can be done—have the drawback of positively aggravating the evil. Individuals are temporarily relieved at the expense of perpetuating, and even increasing, the vicious Under-employment system itself. The same is true of the mistaken philanthropist's device of "sharing work," or giving each man work for half a day or half a week only, or taking the work in rotation. This, which has long

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* Reports of Visits by Commissioners, No. 1 F., p. 8., Liverpool.—"Mr. X. took four porters at random, and asked them questions, *e.g.*, how long they had been at the docks, wages, conditions, and especially, whether they would accept a fixed wage for six days' work a week. The answer to this last, in three cases out of the four, was that they preferred to remain as they were, *i.e.*, they would not give up the freedom of taking a day off when they wished, and lying in bed longer when they wished. This was stated quite frankly, even in the case of the best of them—a man of about 35, perfectly steady, with a family, and a home of his own, rented at 5s. (not a flat), a man, indeed, of whom my guide had a high opinion. One, a 'regular Liverpool Docker,' of the hooligan class, with no home ties but a sister and brother, said he gave 14s. a week as a fixed sum for the house-keeping, and kept the rest, whatever it was. This man, a young fellow, evidently thought the idea of giving up his present life for a six days' week only a good joke." (*Ibid.*, No. 1 C., p. 5.)

† Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 60.

‡ "In the part of London I know," said Mr. T. Mackay, "you have got an intermittently employed population. Every man in St. George's-in-the-East is unemployed, so to speak; that is, he has no regular employer. They are all employed by the hour, or the day; and if you meet a man off his job, he is practically unemployed. If you open Relief Works there is nothing to prevent that man walking in any day he is unemployed, or if he does not like the job he is on." (Third Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, 1895, *Q.* 5368.)

been a device of the Under-employed themselves,* as well as of their employers, really enlarges the circle of those condemned to chronic Under-employment. For the essential evil of the whole system of engaging labour for casual jobs, and of each employer tending to accentuate his own reserve or his own Stagnant Pool of labour, is the retention, in a particular district, of a much larger number of men, expecting such jobs, than are required for the performance of the whole of the jobs on the busiest day. What is required is some improvement in organisation which stops the waste of unemployed time, and more accurately adjusts the supply of labour to the demand. Whether we give doles of Municipal Employment, doles of Outdoor Relief, or doles of alms—whether we spread the work or share out the jobs among all who clamour for them—we do nothing to effect any such adjustment. This or that individual is temporarily fed who would otherwise starve.† But the system, which necessarily involves a constant surplus of labourers and their chronic Under-employment, is not changed; and by the silent enlargement of the Stagnant Pools that goes on if the men are maintained, the evil has been even increased.‡

(D) Are Women Unemployed?

We have so far left unmentioned the case of women, who are to be found, of course, in each of our classes, and whose sufferings from industrial disorganisation are certainly no less than those of men. We have found it impossible to obtain any statistics as to the number of women in distress from Unemployment. Women constitute only a small fraction of the applicants to Distress Committees; perhaps because these Committees have so far been able to afford them little help. Able-bodied women without husbands or young children are nowadays scarcely to be found in the Workhouses. Just at the time when the number of Able-bodied Men in the Workhouse is seriously increasing, the number of Able-bodied unencumbered Women—at one time considerable—has fallen away to next to nothing. This is all the more significant in view of the fact that the number of Able-bodied Women, unencumbered with husbands or children, who are in receipt of Outdoor Relief is very small.

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* "The Unions connected with waterside labour do not pay out-of-work benefit, and the only way in which, as a rule, they attempt to mitigate the effect of want of employment is by various methods of equalising work in slack times. One of the commonest of these measures is the penalisation of overtime by insisting on extra rates of pay after certain hours. . . . Another plan adopted by some classes of waterside labourers is that of rotation of gangs, so that all may share in the work. Thus the dock labourers working for a certain firm of shipowners at the Albert Docks are divided into five gangs, of which the one which has the first position on the list for one fortnight occupies the second place for the next fortnight, then the third place, and so forth. Again, the riverside corn-porters working regularly at the Surrey Docks are divided into twenty-eight gangs, among whom a certain rotation is observed. No casual labour is taken on until all these gangs are employed . . . Schemes, however, on a large scale for equalising work, such as ordinary dock labour, among an indefinite and elastic number of low-skilled labourers are, as a rule, found impracticable as a means of dealing with want of employment." (Board of Trade Report on Agencies and Methods for dealing with the Unemployed, 1893, pp. 89-90.)

† The individuals thus assisted are not permanently benefited. At every opening of the books of the Distress Committee the same cases recur. We append some typical statistics:—

Summary of Cases Registered in the Years 1905–6 and 1906–7, and also registered in Previous Years:—

Of 1,165 men registered in 1906–7:—
- 327 men registered in 1906–7 and 1905–6 only.
- 27 „ „ „ 1906–7 and 1904–5 only.
- 133 „ „ „ 1906–7, 1905–6 and 1904–5.
- 12 „ „ „ 1906–7, 1905–6 and 1903–4.
- 81 „ „ „ 1906–7, 1905–6, 1904–5 and 1903–4.
- 12 „ „ „ 1906–7, 1904–5 and 1903–4.

Of 2,040 men registered in 1905–6:—
- 564 men registered in 1904–5 and 1905–6.
- 88 „ „ „ 1903–4 and 1905–6.
- 206 „ „ „ 1905–6, 1904–5 and 1903–4.

Of the 281 men for whom work was provided in the winter of 1905–6, 177 applied in 1906–7, showing a percentage of 63.

Of the 2,040 men who applied during the winter of 1905–6, 553 applied again in 1906–7, showing a percentage of 27·1.

(Report of Camberwell Distress Committee, 1906–7.)

‡ "When centres of casual labour have thus been formed, it is clear that all artificial schemes for supplementing casual earnings by the offer of further opportunities for casual earning—for example, by a regular system of Borough Council Relief Work, or by wood-chopping yards—only tend to aggravate the evils when once they have become permanent." (Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, p. 7.)

So far as women suffer distress from Unemployment, they are distributed among our three classes in quite different proportions from the men. In Class I., Women from Permanent Situations, we find beyond individual cases here and there, practically none. The greatest occupation of this kind for women is domestic service; and in this there seems to be a chronic state of unsatisfied demand—a demand accompanied, however, by the requirement of residence in the employer's family, which seriously narrows the sources of supply. The large number of women now employed in all great cities in offices, warehouses, shops and restaurants—as distinguished from those employed in the actual processes of manufacture—usually hold regular situations at weekly wages. These, so far as we can discover, are—so great and growing is the demand—seldom in distress from Unemployment; though occasionally losing time from "leakages" between situations. Of Class II., Women of Discontinuous Employment, although individuals exist here or there, there is no whole trade comparable with the building trade operatives or the navvies; unless we may include here those female hotel servants who habitually take "season" engagements. Practically the whole of the women in distress from Unemployment belong to our Class III., the Under-employed, their case being usually aggravated by seasonal rather than by cyclical fluctuations of trade.

From Unemployment of this kind—seasonal slackness, resulting in prolonged Under-employment, women suffer to an even greater extent than men. We were supplied by the Women's Industrial Council with much useful information on this point:—

> "We have a good many replies from unions in the textile trade in Lancashire, etc., where the record usually is, that for the past two or three years almost every available woman and girl has been able to find work in the mills, as they are so busy. The Hyde and Hadfield Weavers' Association, however, reports 150 female members unemployed now, out of a total of 5,000, and the numbers unemployed during the past year average from 100 to 200. These women are cotton weavers, winders and warpers, and some have been out for three months, some more, owing to the introduction of Northrop looms and other labour-saving machinery. The Bury Cardblowing and Ringroom Operatives' Association has sixteen cardroom operatives out of work now, out of 600 female members, and has had sixty-eight during the past year. The Todmorden and District Weavers' and Winders' Association has 100 unemployed out of about 1,000 female members, and has had 150 during the past year as the result of a strike. The Hyde and District Card-Blowing Room Operatives' and Ring Spinners' Association has about eight unemployed now out of 1,400, and has had about forty during the year. . . . The Cigar Makers' Union reports about seventy-four unemployed now out of a membership of 894 females. A correspondent in the cigar trade in the Midlands reports that the trade has suffered very much in Birmingham, Coventry and Leicester, especially as cigars have, for some reason (probably cheapness) been replaced by the vogue of cigarette smoking. The two trades are quite separate, the cigar makers being highly skilled workers who are usually apprenticed for five years, during which they get very low wages, and some of these girls have turned their hands to dressmaking or working at the Dunlop rubber mills, etc. Many of them were married women. The secretary of the Clothiers' Operatives of Leeds reports that the clothing trade is very different to most other trades, as the females are generally on piece-work, and, no matter how slack work is, they are not discharged. Therefore the number of unemployed is no guide as to the state of the labour market. A Preston correspondent tells us that dressmakers and milliners suffer from seasonal slackness, expecting, indeed, two or three months' loss of work in a year, and that some of these went into the mills in the less arduous departments when they were finding their own trade slack, and that some of them are remaining there so as not to risk out-of-work periods again. Upholsterers report a slack period in November, January, and February; whilst the shirt and collar makers in Taunton say that: 'there is a slack period of four or five months in the summer.' Clerks and shop-assistants both give account of a good many out of work. The Aberdeen Shop Assistants' Branch paid unemployed benefit to two women out of forty-four during the past year; one, a milliner for one week, and the other, a saleswoman in a fruit-shop, for twelve weeks. Another, a London branch, reports two out of work now, and nine during the past year, for periods varying from three to twelve weeks, out of a total of fifty-two female members." *

In London valuable testimony was given by philanthropic workers among girls and women.

"Miss Cheetham, Canning Town Settlement, puts down roughly three facts:—

> "(i.) That all the working girls in our clubs give evidence of short time during the late winter. The girls I questioned last week belonged to (*a*) jam; (*b*) paper; (*c*) match; (*d*) mat; (*e*) pickle; (*f*) baking-powder (factories); (*g*) shirt-making. Every one of these girls had been on short time for part or the whole of the winter in some departments of their work, at any rate, with the result that those girls who, when working full time, can earn about 12s. a week, have for many months now averaged not more than 9s. weekly.

* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 82467, Pars. 4, 5.

"(ii.) Those women, widows, etc., who earn their living by taking in shirt-making and tailoring to do at their own homes, all complain of slackness of work, so that they could not get the work, much less earn a livelihood by it. Have seen much distress amongst these shirt-makers this winter, and we have had no work-room open to help them!

"(iii.) There is very little charing or washing to be had in a district likeCanning Town, few being able to afford to pay wages. Even the laundries have been slack and have had to discharge hands."

"The club which makes the most special point of interesting itself in the industrial welfare as well as moral welfare of its members, the Jewish Working Girls' Club, Dean Street, Soho, reports that it has 375 members, 341 of whom work for wages; that about twenty are unemployed now, and that during the past year about 200 have been unemployed for periods of from one week to three months. The unemployment occurred in the dressmaking, Millinery, tailoring, and corset-making trades, and was due to seasonal slackness. There is an employment bureau connected with the club, and employment was found for 152 girls last year, some of them being cases of unemployment. Many girls learn secondary trades in the club, and they try to make a little out of this work. . .

"A Mission at Seven Dials has about 200 women and girls connected with it, a large number being employed at Crosse & Blackwell's. Work here is seasonal and the girls are often out. They fill in their time in various ways, a large proportion going to cardboard-box making under other women who have piece-work. Others go to seed-sorting at Carter's and other large seed merchants. A club in the City Road returns thirty-five workers, of whom four are now out of work, fifteen have been out for periods of two or three weeks during the past year, their work being that of upholsterers, sweet fillers, paper-folders, hawkers, and in Lipton's."

From Euston Road Miss Bunting reports that:—

"Many of the girls were on three-quarter or even half-time for weeks and weeks during the winter. The tailoresses, of course; the liquorice girls at various intervals; Maple's carpet-weavers for nearly six months had slack work; between Christmas and Easter the rest of them had three days a week at home constantly. Shoolbred's carpet-sewers were so slack before Christmas that four girls left. One got work elsewhere, one went to service." *

The difficulties created by the "seasonal" fluctuations in the volume of the employment in nearly all the manufacturing industries in which women are engaged, are increased by the extremely low rates of remuneration for women's work of this kind.

It is sometimes assumed or suggested that, in trades in which there is much seasonal slackness, the earnings during the months of brisk trade will always be higher than in trades offering continuous employment; and high enough to enable the workers to be supported in the slack time out of the savings which they ought to make. Unfortunately this economic assumption is even less true as regards women's work than it is with regard to men's. We have been painfully impressed by the evidence afforded to us that many hundreds of thousands of adult able-bodied women, giving their whole time to their work, can, even in times of full employment, earn only the barest maintenance. Even in workshops and factories there are many thousands of women, in London and other towns, whose full week's earnings do not exceed 6s. or 8s.; whilst 10s. a week is a good wage. Among the outworkers the condition of things is even worse. Though a small proportion of them may earn a fair wage, there are many who get only a starvation pittance. To give only one instance a Relieving Officer of Birmingham informed our Investigators that:—

"Button and hook and eye carding is done at home by some who apply for relief. It is the last resort of those who have come down and who delay coming for relief until they are in the deepest destitution. They get starvation wages. About 6d. a day is the most they can get. A woman would have to work very hard to earn 3s. 6d. per week if confined to her own labour."†

Our Investigators expressly report that:—

"The wages paid for home work in wholesale tailoring and corset making of the cheaper class—which is the chief part of the Bristol trade—are so exceedingly low that no amount of industry on the part of the worker could provide an adequate support for a single woman."‡

The example of women disposes, we think, of the suggestion which has been quite seriously made to us, that *Unemployment might be prevented if only the workers would*

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* Evidence before the Commission, Q. 82467, Pars. 9411.

† Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. A. D. Steel-Maitland and Miss R. E. Squire, 1907, p. 98.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

accept lower wages! The docility of women, and their lack of organisation, has led them to take this course; but although women's wages are as low as anyone could conceive possible, this does not prevent their having to stand idle, probably to an even greater extent than men, at each recurring slack season.

These facts must not, however, be allowed to obscure what seems to us the most important feature of the women's case. Only a small minority of the women in distress from lack of work are unencumbered independent wage-earners, both supporting themselves entirely from their own earnings and having no one but themselves to support. Among this class, though there may be occasional Unemployment, and certainly recurrent Under-employment, there is—so long as they retain their health—very little distress. The vast majority of the cases of suffering and distress among women are those of mothers of families, who have either no husbands, or whose husbands are, for one reason or another, not at work, or are not earning enough to maintain them and the children. It is upon these unfortunate mothers, who are driven to engage in industrial work, without technical training, encumbered by home ties and responsibilities, and desperately anxious to make up the family livelihood, that the main burden of the suffering of Unemployment falls.

It would, however, be misleading to ascribe the distress of these mothers to the conditions—bad as they are—under which women work, or to the Unemployment from which they suffer. They are unwilling recruits in an industrial army which has no real need for them, and for which their circumstances unfit them. "Undoubtedly," reports our Investigator, "in the great majority of cases the cause of [the women] taking in work is that the husband's work is casual, or ill paid, or that he is in some trade, such as a carman's, where he is liable to work short time."* The present Archbishop of York (lately Bishop of Stepney) gave us the following testimony:—

> "I might mention that I made a long tour of visits to women engaged in what are called these sweated industries in a certain district of London; I visited them all, and went as carefully as I could into their conditions. I remember in one day five or six cases where the unemployment of the man—and in most of these cases they were dock labourers—had forced the young wife, in spite of her having children, some of them children whom she ought to have been nursing, to undertake this sort of labour."†

We were given the following instance by the Women's Industrial Council. One club leader writes:—

> "I cannot give you any exact statistics of unemployed in our club, as owing to the large number of married women who only work when their husbands are ill or under special circumstances, it is difficult to know when they actually want work and cannot get it, or when they think it best not to work, but to stay at home."‡

It is, therefore, clear that a large part of the evils of Under-employment among women are, in these cases at any rate, "effect not cause. They generally originate in the fact that women, unskilled and unable, even not desiring, to work regularly, compete in low-grade occupations at the time when their casually employed husbands and fathers are out of work. . . . Casual employment is one of the most potent causes of sweating in the ordinary sense. When the head of the family cannot get enough work, his wife and children are driven out to take what they can get at once. The tendency of low-grade women's industries—jam making, sack and tarpaulin work, matchbox making and the like—to get established in districts where casual labour for men is rife has often been noticed. The effect, of course, is to increase the immobility of the labourer; even if his earnings dwindle away to almost nothing he is kept from effectively seeking work elsewhere by the occupation of his family."§ The distress of the women, and, more important still, the neglect of the children, has obviously to be remedied, not by dealing with the conditions of employment of the mother, but by dealing with the Unemployment or Under-employment of the husband and father.

We may regard in an analogous way the tens of thousands of unfortunate widows left with young children to maintain. These can never, so long as their children need their care, become regular and efficient recruits of the industrial army. It is in vain

* Final Report on the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and the Conditions of Employment, by Mr. Thomas Jones, p. 22.

† Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 79641.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 82467, Par. 13.

§ "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909, pp. 108–9.

that the Central (Unemployed) Body, and one or two Distress Committees, have sought to meet their need by the opening of workrooms, where the women are employed in making garments. It is no gain, in dealing with the problem as a whole, to set these mothers to work at the most "sweated" of trades, in which there is a chronic oversupply of labour. In so far as they produce in the over-stocked market commodities of commercial value, they are but taking the work out of other women's hands. This has been pointed out by those most closely responsible for the administration of the workrooms. Far more sensible is the practice of most Unions of allowing freely Outdoor Relief (unhappily as we have seen, seldom adequate in amount) to the widowed mothers of young children. In our view, such mothers should not be aided or encouraged to engage in industrial work at all. As we have already said in Part I. of this Report, we have chosen so to organise our industry that it is to the man that is paid the income necessary for the support of the family, on the assumption that the work of the woman is to care for the home and the children. The result is that mothers of young children, if they seek industrial employment, do so under the double disadvantage that the woman's wage is fixed to maintain herself alone, and that even this can be earned only by giving up to work the time that is needed for the care of the children. When the breadwinner is withdrawn by death or desertion, or is, from illness or Unemployment unable to earn the family maintenance, the bargain which the community virtually made with the woman on her marriage—that the maintenance of the home should come through the man—is broken. It seems to us clear that, if only for the sake of the interest which the community has in the children, there should be adequate provision made from public funds for the maintenance of the home, conditional on the mother's abstaining from industrial work, and devoting herself to the care of the children.

(E) CLASS IV.—THE UNEMPLOYABLE.

The Unemployable are the "Can't Works" and the "Won't Works." To this type there approximate a heterogeneous crowd of persons without any recognised means of subsistence, who either do not seek work, or who seek it in vain, being, owing to physical or mental shortcomings, in such a condition that they are not taken on by any employer or, if taken on, are incapable of working, or are unwilling to work, or to retain any situation, for more than a few hours.* In this crowd there are to be found men who have fallen from every social grade, every profession and every section of the wage-earners; along with others who have, so to speak, been born and bred in the class, and have known no other experience. Among them we find many of feeble intellect and infirm will, but also some of moral refinement and exceptional talent. Others, again, are strong and competent, but of incurably parasitic or criminal disposition.‡ To the observer of this flotsam and jetsam of our industrial life, it recalls the wreckage with which a foundered liner strews the ocean shore; material once of the most hetereogeneous and sharply differentiated kinds, bright and clean and in active use, but now so battered and sodden as to appear, in bulk, almost homogeneous in its worthlessness—nevertheless yielding, if sorted out and properly treated, much that can still be made serviceable; sometimes matter that will become dangerous unless put in a proper place; and occasionally, lost to the world, a gem of real value.‡

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* "My experience," deposed a clergyman of experience among the Unemployed of Yorkshire, "leads me to the conclusion that one of the chief difficulties to be met lies in the physical unfitness of a large proportion of candidates for charity or relief to compete with their stronger fellows. They are soon exhausted, even when put to such light labour as cutting firewood, and they are quite incapable of earning a wage upon which they can live. They cannot keep a job for long, and often take to begging, and finally become chargeable to the rates in the Workhouse or the taxpayers in the ranks of habitual criminals." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 42048, Par. 2.) "A great many of the men who register their names [at the Bolton Distress Committee], are physically unfit to do a day's labour, and a number are those who never follow any regular employment, but do an odd job occasionally." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 36693, Par. 25.)

† "Those who, from one cause or another, are unable or unwilling to do a fair day's work of average quality or quantity owe their position to many causes, and come from all ranks of society. Among the chief causes may be enumerated ill-health, intemperance, restlessness (*often produced by irregularity of work* . . .), hereditary incapacity, improvidence, overwhelming misfortune, orphanage, bad home-training." (Report to City Council of Commission of Inquiry into the Subject of the Unemployed in Liverpool, 1894, Par. 21., p. xv.) Voluntary agencies give similar accounts. Officers of the Salvation Army have laid stress on the "large proportion made up of these unhappy people who *from prolonged misfortune* have almost reached the stage of despair. . . . There is also a fair sprinkling of skilled workmen of all trades, and broken down clerks and professional men in this class, but as a rule some moral disability *or advancing age* has been a contributory cause of their present condition." (*Manchester Evening News*, December 13th, 1905.) The Secretary of the Church Army deposed that: "About 17 per cent. of Labour Home inmates in 1907 were dismissed, or absconded. Dismissals are almost invariably caused through drink. . . . Amongst the married men given day work there are few dismissals, but many do not come after the first day, lacking industry and perseverance. *Men of troublesome or vindictive character* are rare. Lack of initiative; objection to steady employment; and excessive drinking seem to be the chief faults in the men who seek assistance from the society.' (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 93611, Pars. 8, 10).

‡ *See*, for instance, the "Autobiography of a Super-Tramp," by W. H. Davies, 1908.

These men are to be found, in greater or smaller numbers, wherever subsistence is to be had without work, or with only slight and intermittent work. Perhaps the largest section of them is that which habitually resorts to the Casual Wards of England and Wales, the "Casual Sick Houses" of Scotland and the sheds and outhouses set aside for the "night lodgers" of the Irish Poor Law. Quite apart from the navvy and the genuine seeker after work, who are found in these refuges in all but the times of brisk trade, there are estimated to be, always on the move, an army of between 20,000 and 30,000 professional tramps, to whom this mode of existence is habitual.* Next to these must be reckoned the "Houseless Poor" of London, Manchester, Liverpool, the Black Country and other large centres of population; heterogeneous crowds of men who (though often confused with the Vagrants) seldom leave their own particular urban aggregations. These men oscillate between the Casual Wards and Free Shelters of their neighbourhoods, with occasional nights in the Common Lodging Houses; and between all these and the General Mixed Workhouse, where they form a great part of the troublesome class of "Ins and Outs." Latterly, as we have mentioned, they have been accumulating in increasing numbers in the Workhouses of London and Liverpool, and in the larger Poorhouses of Scotland. We cannot estimate their aggregate number at much less than that of the Professional Tramps.

Among the Unemployable we must class, too, the extensive, though quite uncounted host of men who have settled down, with more or less infrequent odd jobs, to live in reality on the earnings of their wives, their children, or the women with whom they consort. What is socially most grave is not the existence of here and there parasitic individuals of this sort, but the degradation—owing to the combination of states of chronic Underemployment for the man with the habitual absorption in wage-earning occupation of mother and child—of whole batches of men, in particular industries or particular localities, into unemployable parasites.

Finally, we have, scattered all over the country, the prematurely invalidated of every kind and grade—the cripple, the man with defective eyesight or hearing, or with rupture or varicose veins, the able-bodied but aged man, the somewhat feeble-minded man, the sane epileptic whose fits are troublesome,† the chronic inebriate—in short, all sorts of men who have infirmities not grave enough to allow or to compel their admission to the hospital or Workhouse, but whom an employer will not hire at wages. There is some reason to fear that this section of the Unemployable is a steadily increasing one, partly because of the adverse physical influences of the town slums‡, and partly because employers are coming more and more to exact a high standard of physical fitness.

All these different sections of the Unemployable exist at the edge of destitution, into which they are individually perpetually falling. We see them accordingly now and then getting relief, as we have described, on account of "Sudden or Urgent Necessity"; getting admitted for a day or two at laxly administered Labour Yards; or being discharged from the Relief Works of even the most long-suffering Distress Committee.‡ But although

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* Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, par. 74, p. 22.

† "Epileptics," deposed a doctor, "cannot obtain employment. They start work—have a fit—and are discharged on the spot. I saw one man on three occasions at three different works in this district. He had had a fit on each occasion and was discharged on the spot each time." (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 43126, Par. 10.)

‡ The Managing Director of a great brewery company informed us that 16 per cent. of all their applicants for employment were rejected on medical grounds; and that, "generally speaking, it is the impression of the Board that few town-bred men satisfy the requirements of the company as regards physique." (Evidence before the Commission, Latouche, not yet in volume form.)

‡ The percentage of such dismissals varies enormously. In 1887-8, out of 394 men who were given relief work by the Mansion House Committee, no fewer than "134 were dismissed for misconduct or incapacity." (Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 41.) On the other hand, in 1906-7, under the Stepney Distress Committee, "out of 1,461 applicants sixty-four were rejected for defective character, fifty-three dismissed for grave faults, eleven found unsatisfactory by previous Committees, and ninety-five who could show no verifiable record of Employment." (Report of Stepney Distress Committee, 1907.) It must be remembered that the man who will really do no work at all is rare; and that all the "work shy" come into this class. "They will work for two or three days, and then go off," deposed one of the chief officials of the Salvation Army. "But I have no recollection of having met a man who said deliberately that he would not work. It is my experience all over the country that they will start; they will take a pick and shovel, though they may throw it into the ditch within an hour." (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, Q. 6129).

the whole class of the Unemployable are perpetually passing in and out of the Poor Law in and out of the Employment Relief of the Distress Committee, and in and out of the operations of Voluntary Charity, it may safely be said that the greater part of their maintenance, *which we cannot put at less than a couple of millions sterling annually*, is, in one way or another, a burden on the lowest paid and most irregularly employed sections of the wage-earning class.

This whole class exists, year in and year out, irrespective of the state of trade. Even in the busiest times—even when employers are really in need of men—the Unemployable are not employed. What is even graver is that we are, year by year, creating new Unemployables. The class is, indeed, no mere inheritance from an evil past. Its members are not, on the whole, long-lived. If we were suddenly relieved of the whole of the present incubus, without any change in the conditions, we should, within ten or twelve years, have just as many Unemployables on our hands as ever. It behoves us, therefore, to examine whence it is that they are being continually recruited.

(i.) *The Daily Manufacture of the Unemployable.*

The Unemployables come, it is clear, from all sources. We may disregard, in this consideration, the rare figure of the ruined baronet or clergyman, university graduate or younger son, who, through drink, drugs, or gambling, sinks to the legion of the lost. We may disregard, too, the really professional criminals, who are—perhaps equally rarely—occasionally in distress from want of employment. Confining our attention to those Unemployables who represent the wastage from the manual working, wage-earning class, we must distinguish those who, in the prime of life, drop into the Unemployable class, from those who graduate to it from adolescence or gravitate to it from the premature appearance of old age.

We may, in the first place, here and there watch the descent of men from our Class I. Losing their permanent situations, they seek in vain for another. After trying expedient after expedient, some of them—perhaps because unanchored to a home, perhaps because of too restless a disposition to starve in one place—take "to the road," and gradually adopt the life of the Professional Tramp. The process has been sketched by one who has spent many years as a well-conducted but habitual Vagrant. "This man soon begins to see that the life of a man out of work is not so terrible after all. He gets enough to eat, and is free to go his way and he has no responsibilities. A fine healthy appetite compensates for the low quality of his food; for he will now relish plain bread and cheese as he never relished the beefsteak and onions of his former days. Day after day he passes before strange eyes, and, therefore, has no need to study appearances. He loses all fret, and settles himself to a wandering life. He cannot fail to see how happy are the real beggars he meets on the road and in lodging-houses—and he soon becomes indifferent to work."*

More frequently, however, the descent is from Class II., the Men of Discontinuous Employment. To these men, the relatively high earnings whilst at work, the brutalising conditions of their labour and the incessant recurrence of days, and perhaps weeks of idleness, afford an almost irresistible temptation to drink. The haphazard way of taking on men without references, and discharging at a moment's notice those who prove themselves unfit, both facilitates and encourages bouts of drunkenness. The man of irregular habits does not fail to get employment; what happens is that his employment is even more discontinuous than that of the men to be depended on. "It is at the beginning of a job, as a rule," we are told, that men are sacked for drunkenness or incompetence. "As a job goes on, you generally find the right men and keep them on."† "A good many are discharged for losing time, inefficiency and drunkenness," deposed another witness. "I am very sorry to say that the drunkenness business is a big item in the building trade. They are generally no good for a day or two after Bank Holiday, and very little good on each Monday. We have to keep our

* "How it feels to be out of work," by W. H. Davies (*English Review*, December, 1908); author of "Autobiography of a Super-Tramp."

† Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, Q. 399.

eyes a little closed on the Monday and to try to make them do more on the Tuesday." * But it is not always through drunkenness that these Men of Discontinuous Employment drop into the Unemployable class. "You would be surprised," said a Manager of a building firm, "at the number of men that we have to discharge after two or three days. Some of them do not want the work. . . . In Princes Street we had a job outside the Bank of England with excavators. We are continually discharging men. They will not do the work. They say it is too hard." In reply to the question whether this was through inefficiency or laziness, the witness replied: "Laziness, I should say. A good many of the wives of the workmen are ironers and washers. They work at the wash-tub and earn a good wage." † But the man may find himself continually turned off for mere incapacity, due to physical or mental shortcomings. "If," said a builder, "I employ a man who cannot do his work and he fails in an hour or two, because, perhaps, he has not been fed for weeks as he ought to have been, I have to dismiss him. I do not know the cause of the failure, and I do not ask the cause. I cannot go to him and say: 'My man, have you not had anything to eat for a week?' or something of that sort. I simply say: 'Come to the office and get your money.'" ‡ It is, in fact, difficult to discover, in any hasty survey, whether the inability to work arises from physical weakness or mental. "It is not the unwillingness to work," explained an experienced Manager of a philanthropic Labour Yard, "so much as the lack of power to persist in work. So many men seem to be able to work spasmodically; I find increasing difficulty on that point in getting men work, and they do not seem to be able at all to continue long in work." § Such men, if not taken hold of in time, and cured, do not remain at this stage. They "quickly become degenerate in their habits, commence to drink and gamble, become loafers and spongers and criminals and paupers, living upon women, or upon the community as best they can." ‖

The navvies, or "public works men," are, owing to their wandering life, and usual lack of a home, even more apt than the building operatives to drop into the Unemployable class. There has grown up a whole host of men who get only a day's work now and then, but who are habitually parasitic upon those who are employed. "It is an established fact," stated the Chairman of the Gloucestershire Vagrancy Committee, "that wherever the navvies are at work, there vagrants abound. I suppose the ostensible idea of people being there is that they are attracted by the work. I believe they cadge upon the navvy. The navvy is a generous sort of fellow, he gets large pay and they turn up when he is paid, and they get a 1s. and so forth from him. And on the road they have always got the plausible excuse that they are going down to Bristol seeking for work. I daresay you know similar cases have occurred elsewhere. For instance, while the Manchester Ship Canal was being constructed the number of tramps was so great there that I believe they had to hire warehouses to accommodate them."¶ We have had described to us in evidence, by the same witness, on the one hand the constant increase in Scotland of the Professional Tramp and the perpetual recruitment of this class from the Men of Discontinuous Employment, and, on the other, the growth of this latter class, owing to the discontinuance of the engagements for definite terms that once characterised that country. The "daily pay" system, under which men are actually paid off at the end of each day, to be employed or not on the morrow as it may suit the convenience of the employer, or the caprice of the men, is said to be spreading in all directions.** "We are at our wits' end to know how to deal with the tramps," said the Chief Constable of Kirkcaldy.†† The tramp nuisance "is very much on the increase in Scotland." Sixty per cent. of them "are habitual 'ne'er-do-wells,' 25 per cent. casual labourers, and 15 per cent. other seekers for work." ‡‡

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* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 134.
† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 1664–6.
‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 143.
§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 37470.
‖ *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXVIII. (par. 9) to Vol. VIII.
¶ Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, *Q.* 1571. "There is this to be said about 1903," deposed the Chairman of the Wiltshire Vagrancy Committee, "that there were large works going on, and whenever that is the case an immense number of navvies are travelling, and there is always a certain percentage of men following after those navvies that are not navvies at all; they follow them and cadge on the navvies." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 1896.) For evidence that the presence of navvies in a district attracts vagrants, who come to cadge on the navvies, *see ibid.*, *Qs.* 1571–3, 1664, 1767–70, 1806, 1807, 1896, 1962, 1963, 2135, 2448, 4280–3, 5543, 5544, 6670, 6806, 6807, 6936–41, 7634.
** Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 94786–99.
†† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 94777.
‡‡ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 94783–9.

But the most prolific of all the sources of the Unemployable is, without doubt, our Class III., the Under-employed. Here the causes of the worker's fall are to be sought far less in his personal weaknesses or shortcomings, though these all co-operate, than in the system of Under-employment to which he is condemned. "It is not," testifies an experienced Charity Organisation Society secretary, "that the casual man has a larger dose of original sin than his fellows; it is that he is exactly what any other class in the community would become . . . were they submitted for any length of time to the same system of employment. . . . That so large a proportion are weak in character should not surprise, when the conditions of their employment are remembered. The men flit from odd job to odd job; their 'characters' are not 'taken up'; when no records are kept, strenuous efforts to maintain a high moral standard do not necessarily secure a man a preference, and complete failure to maintain the ordinary standard of his class creates no prejudice against him in the eyes of a fresh employer. *The world of work to the typical casual man is governed by chance, for the good are not more successful in securing work than the evil. No class in the community could withstand the demoralising influence of such a view of life and such a system.*"*

(ii.) *The Wife and Mother as Breadwinner.*

To this class there comes with special force the temptation afforded by women's work. The household of the Casual Labourer, subject to chronic Under-employment, cannot possibly be maintained at all without making use of the wife's earning power. At Liverpool, for instance, "there is a good deal" of supplementing the wages by the women of the family, "*owing to the fact that so many dock labourers are very irregularly employed.* In many cases they depend to a very large extent upon the earnings of their wives and daughters, but those earnings are scanty and irregular."† In London, we are told, "the man's unemployment is almost without exception the cause of the woman's work."‡ "Eighty per cent. of the married women with young families engaged in outwork in Poplar are the wives of casual unskilled labourers, most of them connected with the docks. . . . Where many men are casually employed, there many married women will be found casually employed also. This is notoriously the case in districts like Bermondsey and Poplar, where there are many men in comparatively low-skilled, low-paid and irregular occupations. When the husband's work is slack or when he is ill, or when he is drinking, the wife goes out to do a little charing or a little fruit-picking, or a little of the hundred and one things a woman may do in London."§ Here the tragedy of the descent begins. "In the case of striving couples," we are told, "the extra shillings earned by the wife may help to sustain the standard of comfort in slack times and to raise it a little in good times. *But the husband may be anything but striving. He may be, and not infrequently is, in this class, a 'labourer' of one sort or another, whose demoralisation has been begun or continued by irregular employment and will now be completed by his wife's willingness to work.* The weaker husband, sometimes out of work, leans more and more on the stronger wife, sometimes in work, and by-and-by the husband is 'unemployed' and the wife doubly employed. . . . What is certain is that the irregularity of men's labour has a determining influence on the quality and amount of women's work and has far-reaching and injurious effects on family life."|| "When," as the result of the scantiness of the man's earnings,

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* *Ibid.*, *Q.* 82147, par. 1, *note.* We append the following summary of "effects," as supplied by one of our witnesses:—

"(1) Deterioration both moral and physical of the man.

(2) The wives being sent out to work.

(3) The children made to work both in and out of school hours, and on leaving school being placed as errand boys, etc., instead of being put to a trade.

(4) Loss of articles pledged through inability to redeem them and partial loss of home, which is rarely recovered or replaced when once lost.

(5) Withdrawals of savings from provident clubs, loss of membership of friendly societies and trade societies." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 82377, par. 3.)

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 83326.

‡ City of Westminster Health Society, Fourth Annual Report, 1907–8. "But although immediate needs are there met, the woman's low and irregular earnings at the unskilled trade for which alone she is fitted, are a poor substitute for the man's wages, and the neglect of domestic duties further aggravates the poverty in the home." (*Ibid.*)

§ Final Report on the Effect of Outdoor Relief on Wages and the Conditions of Employment, by Mr. Thomas Jones, pp. 9, 10, 23.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 10.

"the wife has 'set to' and is earning, there is too often a tendency to slacken in the pursuit of work. The great influence of women's earnings in encouraging slackness among their husbands has been remarked upon in many quarters."* We watch this progressive creation of Unemployables, by Under-employed men becoming parasitic on their wives, among the cases that come before every Distress Committee. "Women's work and girls' work," report our other Investigators, "ruin the man's responsibility until it becomes almost *nil*. Many men before the Distress Committee did not know what the rent was or what was owing. One did not even know the names of his children. The reason is that the wives will sometimes do anything to keep the home together while the husbands loaf."† This is seen in a bad form in West London, where "the laundry industry offers inducements to the women to become bread-winners of the family; the consequent loss to the home life is seen in the neglect from which the children suffer, and in the wild independence of the older girls."‡ It is seen in an aggravated form at Leicester, and, perhaps, at its worst at Dundee. In the boot and shoe factories in the former town, successive changes in the processes of manufacture have thrown the men out of employment "because their places are taken by women and young persons, and this drives a number of married women to seek work in the factories, since they have to try and earn wages instead of their husbands."§ At Dundee, our Investigator found "plenty of female employment *to keep loafers there* who could not otherwise exist, and decent men there who had far better have gone elsewhere."‖

(iii.) *The Misuse of Boy Labour.*

It is, however, a moot point whether a larger number of the Unemployable become so in the prime of life, as we have just described, by degradation from one of the three other classes, or graduate into Unemployableness from adolescence. There is no subject as to which we have received so much and such conclusive evidence as upon the extent to which thousands of boys, from lack of any sort of training for industrial occupations, grow up, almost inevitably, so as to become chronically Unemployed, or Under-employed, and presently to recruit the ranks of the Unemployable. In Glasgow nearly 20 per cent. of the labourers in distress are under twenty-five; and one-half of them are under thirty-five. The registers of Distress Committees all over the country not only reveal the startling fact that something like 15 per cent. of the men in distress are under twenty-five;¶ and that nearly one-third of the whole are under thirty; but also that an alarmingly large proportion of these young men are already "chronic cases"—in fact, are Unemployable. "Most of us," formally reports the York Distress Committee, "are inclined to regard the existence of a large class of irregular and casual workmen and the presence of a number of Unemployables" as a necessary condition of "modern life. Our registers, however, show one avenue by which men come into these classes, and suggest how it might be closed. There are youths under twenty-one classified as 'irregular' and as 'been regular.' The 'irregular' ones must always infallibly spend their whole lives as irregular workers. Many of them are the sons of the poorest class of workmen, but a few are youths whose parents have done their best for them, but who have not stuck to work. Those who have 'been regular' have generally started life as errand boys or in some position where a boy can earn good money, but which does not offer the means of learning any trade that will serve him through life."** "A large proportion of working lads," reports the Birkenhead Distress Committee, "grow up without any definite industrial training. They take any employment that offers, the work itself is of a casual description, the growing lad moves from one job to another, and each change of situation is accompanied

* Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the Unemployed, by Mr. Cyril Jackson and Rev. J. C. Pringle, p. 60.

† Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism in London, by Mr. Steel-Maitland and Miss Squire, p. 44.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 82467, Par. 5 (*b*).

‖ Report on the Effects of Employment or Assistance given to the "Unemployed". . . in Scotland, by Rev. J. C. Pringle, Appendix, p. 106. *See also Ibid.*, p. 27.

¶ Report of Glasgow Distress Committee, 1908, Appendix VII., p. 20: "There is an alarmingly large number of young men among the applicants to the Distress Committee." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 96610, Par. 4 (iii.).)

** Report of York Distress Committee, 1907.

by a spell of idleness while work is being looked for. The lad reaches manhood without acquiring a trade or establishing himself in any situation of a permanent character, and he swells the ranks of the unskilled labourer. *His frequent spells of idleness affect his fitness for employment, and in periods of depression he quickly becomes unemployable.*"* We were so impressed with the gravity of the problem thus revealed that we appointed a Special Investigator to deal with this subject alone. His Report, unfortunately, more than confirms the evidence supplied to us.†

It has been demonstrated beyond dispute that one of the features of the manner in which we have chosen to let the nation's industry be organised is that "an increasing number of boys are employed in occupations which are either uneducative (in the sense of producing no increase of efficiency or of intelligence), or unpromising (in the sense of leading to no permanent occupation during adult life); secondly, that there is a constant tendency for certain industrial functions to be transferred from men to boys, especially when changes in the processes of manufacture or in the organisation of industry are taking place rapidly. The resulting difficulty is the double one of the over-employment of boys and the under-employment of men."‡ This is, we are informed, partly because work has been sub-divided and arranged, with the increasing aid of machinery, so as to be "of a character which can be done by boys, and therefore boys, being cheaper than adult labourers, are employed to do it. This particular class of boys—loom-boys, doffers or shifters—is to be found in greater numbers in Dundee than in Glasgow. . . . The demand for men's labour would have to be three times as great to provide work for all these lads . . . and a number whose parents have sent them to mill or factory as children are turned adrift at the age of seventeen or eighteen. A few of them become skilled workmen in other trades. . . . Some boys become labourers in other trades, others enter the Army . . . a number leave the town to seek work elsewhere, while others live from hand to mouth as casual labourers, or join the ranks of the permanently unemployed."§ Then there are the rivet-boys in shipyards and boiler shops, the "oil cans" in the nut and bolt departments, the "boy minders" of "automatic" machines, the "drawers off" of saw mills and the "layers on" of printing works and scores of other varieties of boys whose occupation presently comes to an end. The employment of boys in uneducational occupations from which they are dismissed at manhood is, however, specially extensive in the great commercial centres. In London, as there is reason to believe, no fewer than 40 per cent. of boys leaving the elementary schools become errand boys, van boys, etc.; 14 per cent. become shop boys, and 8 per cent. office boys and junior clerks, whilst something like 18 per cent. enter the building, metal, woodwork and clothing and printing trades. In towns like Glasgow, Liverpool, Bristol and Newcastle the proportion of van boys, errand boys etc., appears equally large. It seems that, instead of the years of youth leading naturally to a rise in competence and earning power in the same industry, if not even under the same employer, a large majority of boys have nowadays, between eighteen and twenty-five, "to seek new occupations for which they have little or no aptitude. They begin all over again, and may or may not be able to fit themselves for their new position. The main question is whether their previous years have benefited or deteriorated them; whether in fact they have been improved or *worn out and wasted* from the standpoint of their own industrial fitness as producers and wage earners."‖

Unfortunately, as all the evidence shows, a large, and as we fear an increasing proportion of the occupations to which boys are put are of the kind that does not fit them for any skilled occupation, or indeed for a regular trade of any sort. In the words of a frank employer, they are not taught; they are made to work continuously at their own little temporary tasks. Of those who enter clerkships or the skilled trades a considerable proportion do well. Of those who enter low-skilled trades, a number fall into casual labour of one sort or another, and are at best among the Under-employed. Of the heavy contingent who

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* Report of Birkenhead Distress Committee, 1907.

† Report . . . on the Subject of Boy Labour, by Mr. Cyril Jackson, 1908.

‡ Evidence before the Commission, Q. 96921, pars. 1, 2.

§ *Ibid.*, Q. 96610, par. 11. For a similar account of the fate of boys formerly employed in "laying on" and "taking off" paper in London printing houses, *see* Toynbee Record, "Report on Boy Labour." These printers' boys were stated to enter the Army and eventually to take to the docks; a large number of printers' labourers were found in the Whitechapel Casual Ward in the course of an investigation made into the previous employment of the men there. (*Ibid.*, Q. 96610, *note to* par. 11.)

‖ Report on the Subject of Boy Labour, by Mr. Cyril Jackson, 1908, p. 7.

become van boys and errand boys, the Army absorbs a large number, the mercantile marine gains a few; some get into low skilled trades; * but many—we fear a majority—have no other outlook than casual labouring and chronic Under-employment, from which it is inevitable that a certain proportion should become Unemployable.† Nor is this using up of boys, without providing them with any industrial training, a new observation. In 1888, as in 1908, it was noticed that there were quite a large number of young men between twenty and thirty habitually "out of work," and rapidly deteriorating, who have had no "training for work.' ‡ "We took the trouble, on the relief committee," deposed one of our number in 1895, "to investigate some of the cases of these lads who asked for work, and in each case it appeared that they nad left . . . one of those industries" in which there had grown up a system of doing the work mainly by boy labour, discharging them as soon as they asked men's wages. "I have lived there about ten years, and, from my own knowledge, I have seen these boys growing up into real corner lads.§ You meet them at each corner at this time of the year; they get through life by carrying betting news, and in various other ways; in the winter they have got to get help either by going into the workhouse or into stone-yards, if such are open. What I want to point out is that it is not these boys' faults, but it is really the condition under which they come into the world and grow up, and the industrial life by which they are surrounded."||

We regard this perpetual recruitment of the Unemployable by tens of thousands of boys who, through neglect to provide them with suitable industrial training, may almost be said to graduate into Unemployment as a matter of course, as perhaps the gravest of all the grave facts which this Commission has laid bare. We cannot believe that the nation can long persist in ignoring the fact that the Unemployed, and particularly the Under-employed and the Unemployable, are thus being daily created under our eyes out of bright young lives, capable of better things, for whose training we make no provision. It is unfortunately only too clear that the mass of Unemployment "is continually being recruited by a stream of young men from industries which rely upon unskilled boy labour, and turn it adrift at manhood without any general or special industrial qualification, and that it will never be diminished till this stream is arrested."¶ In our Proposals for Reform we shall accordingly make specific recommendations on this point.

(iv.) *The Alleged Exclusion of the Elderly.*

But besides the youths who, so to speak, graduate into the Unemployable class, there are the men who gravitate into it with advancing years, or with infirmity. We have had it brought to our notice that men who are, or who appear to be, too old for the incessant "drive" and rapid processes of modern competitive industry are being dismissed at an earlier age than was formerly customary; and that such men, whether fifty or even forty years of age, find it increasingly difficult to obtain fresh situations. To quote one of the many statements made to us, it was said that "one very alarming feature of very recent years is the ever-increasing number of elderly men that seem to be cast aside as useless. This is, undoubtedly, a natural outcome of these limited liability company days, when every workman is simply a unit in a dividend-earning machine, and all personal relations have ceased to exist between employer and employed. The Compensation Act, too, has probably a great deal to do with it."** It must, however, be remembered that the complaint of an increasing tendency to replace elderly men by the young is one that is always being made.†† In particular, it is to be traced as a constant refrain at every decade of the past century. In 1839, for instance, it was officially reported, as a partial

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* *Ibid.*, p. 10.

† "One schoolmaster in a very poor South London school says fully 50 per cent. of his boys go into occupations which lead to Unemployment." (*Ibid.*, p. 11.)

‡ Major C. C. Fitzroy in *Charity Organisation Review*, June, 1888, p. 273.

§ This type has been thus described: "The well-known corner-boy and loafer, who in normal times live off their parents, some even to the extent of asking money from their mothers for cigarettes before leaving the house in the morning; who are never home to a meal, but turn up to go to bed." (The Unemployed in Glasgow, 1904–5, by James R. Motion, p. 3.)

|| Third Report of House of Commons Committee on Distress from Want of Employment, *Q.* 10408 (Mr. Lansbury).

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 96610, Par. 2 (*b*).

** *Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXII. (Par. 5) to Vol. VIII.

†† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 88115–22.

explanation of the Unemployment among the Handloom Weavers, that "a great majority, including those who are past fifty years of age, or who from any cause do not possess the requisite skill, quickness of sight and strength have great difficulty in getting employment to enable them to live."* In 1848 we read, in terms that sound familiar, that "Workmen . . . . are discharged as soon as grey hair appears, or a pair of spectacles is attempted to be used; many of the workmen straining their sight to the uttermost before they give in to be turned adrift through wearing them."† "Old carpenters," it was said in 1850, "are generally despised by master builders; the failure of sight and wearing of spectacles is almost a death blow to many a good old tradesman. And in many cases a master will not give an elderly man employment at any price; the consequence is that many have been compelled to go to the parish for relief or into the Workhouse. Employers instruct their foremen to deny a job to men above a certain age." And further "it is one of the chief evils of the carpenters' trade that as soon as a man turns forty masters won't keep him on."‡ What was said in 1839 and 1848–50, was being said in 1894—still prior to the Workmen's Compensation Act. "Throughout the entire field of industry the shortness of employment is most largely represented in the progressive Under-employment of the middle-aged. In many departments of labour, for example, among miners, sailors, mule-spinners, in metal and machine making, it is practically impossible for a man to have any security of work over the age of forty-five or fifty." § We suspect, indeed, that the same thing has been alleged ever since the master-craftsman, himself producing and selling his own product, was replaced by the capitalist hirer of labour.

At the same time, we felt that, as the impression of an increase in this tendency to premature superannuation was so universal, and as it was very commonly alleged to have been aggravated by the Workmen's Compensation Act, the hypothesis demanded consideration. We, therefore, sought for some evidence that elderly men, or men who appeared to be elderly, were actually being excluded from employment at an earlier age than had previously been customary. It appeared that, of all the many witnesses who repeated to us the current popular opinion, not one could produce any sort of statistical evidence in its support.‖ If men are being dismissed at an earlier age, it would result in the average age of all the men in the employment of particular firms, or of all the men in employment at particular trades, steadily falling. In no case have we been able to find that this was the fact. On the contrary, Trade Union statistics indicate that the age at which members have to draw their superannuation allowance (on ceasing to be able to get employment) has, with the improved health of the nation, steadily risen. Thus, in the great Union of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the average age of all the members who, year by year, begin to draw their Superannuation Benefit, on finding themselves unable to continue in wage-earning employment, *steadily rises*. In 1885 it was sixty-one and a half years; in 1906 it was sixty-three and a half; in 1907 (possibly through increased strictness) it even rose to sixty-four and three-quarters. The fact is confirmed by the records of other Unions. Thus, in the Friendly Society of Ironfounders, the average age at superannuation in 1883–5 was sixty-one and three-quarter years; in 1906–7 it was sixty-two and three-quarters.¶ A similar rise is to be seen in the records of the United Society of Boilermakers.

Nor have we been able to ascertain that the Workmen's Compensation Act has supplied a new motive for the replacement of elderly men by those who are young. The liability for compensation is so generally covered by insurance that the employers have no pecuniary interest in the matter beyond the amount they pay in premiums. It was suggested to us that the Insurance Companies were stipulating in their policies against the employment of elderly men, or penalising it by heavier premiums. We accordingly took

* Reports of the Commissioners on Handloom Weavers, Vol. XXIII., 1840, p. 417. (Report of A. Austin, Frome, January, 1839.)

† *Nottingham Journal*, January 21st, 1848.

‡ *Morning Chronicle*, July 18th, 1850.

§ "The Meaning and Measure of Unemployment," by John A. Hobson, *Contemporary Review*, March, 1894, p. 422.

‖ Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 34393–403, 39600, 39601, 77503–5, 88115–22.

¶ "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909; Annual Report of Amalgamated Society of Engineers, 1908.

steps to ascertain whether this was the case. We were definitely informed by the Chairman of the Associated Accident Insurance Companies transacting workmen's compensation business that "in the case of general industries no restriction or stipulation is made in the contract of insurance with regard to . . . old men or men past middle life."* It was admitted to us by employers that the Insurance Companies did not inquire the ages of the men thus insured, and that there was no attempt to differentiate against the elderly men.† As a matter of fact the Insurance Companies are under no temptation to do so, because—as was pointed out to us by workmen who knew the facts ‡—contrary to current popular theories, it is not found that the elderly men are more liable to accidents than the young men. The evidence is, in fact, in the opposite direction. At the South Metropolitan Gasworks, for instance, where the late Sir George Livesey kept careful note of all the accidents between 1897 and 1905, it was found that, out of 2114 accidents in these eight years, no fewer than one third had happened to the men between twenty and thirty years of age; and that, in proportion to the numbers employed, this was the most hazardous age. More than 5 per cent. of the men of that age had accidents in the year, whilst the percentage of men between fifty and sixty who had accidents was only two thirds as great.§ "It therefore seems quite clear," concluded Sir George Livesey, "in all the operations of gas manufacture, which are many and various, with much machinery, that advancing age does not make men more liable to accidents. They are, on the contrary, considerably less liable as they grow older. I may here say that the Company never discharges any man because he is growing old."‖ The same testimony is given by Sir John Brunner with regard to chemical works. During the years 1893 to 1907, Brunner, Mond and Co., Limited, found that the men between eighteen and twenty-five had the largest percentage of accidents (8·5); those between twenty-five and thirty, the next largest (6·8); whilst the men between forty-one and forty-five and forty-five and fifty had less than half those percentages (2·8 and 3·7). "The figures," says Sir John Brunner, "are absolutely decisive, the scale of the inquiry both as regards the number of men and the number of years being abundantly sufficient. They show that the proportion of accidents becomes less and less with remarkable regularity, as the men advance in years, and, therefore, that no employer is justified in his own interest, in refusing to take elderly men into his service, or in dismissing them from his service in the belief that they are more liable to accidents than their younger brethren. . . . One feature in this statement deserves emphasis. The reduction in comparative liability to accident is in exact relation to the increase of steadiness due to increase of age; it begins at the very beginning, not at the age at which men may be excused from dangerous work on account of lessened activity."¶ And though the elderly man may not so easily recover from an accident as a young man, and may be longer in the doctors' hands,** the remarkable statistical proof that has been adduced has confirmed the Accident Insurance Companies in their practice of ignoring age in their estimation of risks.

We then turned to the statistics relating to the persons known to be unemployed, expecting to find that the applicants to the Distress Committees were elderly men, men with premature grey hairs, men wearing spectacles, men bowed down with the infirmities that come with advancing years. To our surprise, we found that the very reverse was the case. Of all the qualified applicants to Distress Committees in England and Wales

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* Evidence before the Commission, Mr. S. Stanley Brown (not yet in volume form). To this there is one exception and one only. In farm work, where the proportion of elderly men among the labourers is exceptionally large, and where it is not even suggested that there is any exclusion of them, the Insurance Companies do inquire the ages of the men employed, with a view, if the proportion of men *over sixty* be unusually large, of charging an additional premium.

† *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 87097–102.

‡ "The old man, instead of being more liable to accident, is, on the whole, less liable to accident than the young man . . . because he is more careful. . . . The larger proportion of those who get hurt is of young men, and not of old men." (*Ibid.*, *Qs.* 82807–9.)

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 83244–83250; Return showing the Accidents at various ages among the workmen in the employ of the South Metropolitan Gas Company, Appendix No. XCVI. to Vol. VIII.

‖ *Ibid.*

¶ "Age and Accident," by Sir John Brunner; in *Times*, May 9th, 1908. Similar testimony with regard to the accidents to all the men in the employment of the Sheffield United Gas Light Company (where between twenty and thirty proved much the most hazardous age) was given in *Times*, May 22nd, 1906.

** Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 43173–6, 82803 87110–2.

in 1907–8 only 2·7 per cent. were over sixty; and only 14·2 per cent. were between fifty and sixty; whilst no fewer than 22·8 per cent. were under thirty. "Thus nearly 80 per cent. of the applicants were between the ages of twenty and fifty years, the group of persons aged thirty to forty being actually the largest."* This general result is confirmed in all the localities.

"The two most startling facts which have impressed me," writes the Chairman of the Bristol Distress Committee, "are, first the very large proportion of general labourers to be found upon our books, and secondly, the large number of applicants who are in the prime of their working life, namely, between the ages of twenty and fifty. . . . Of a total of 2,900 applications registered in the year ending March, 1906, ninety-one only were under the age of twenty, whilst 807 were between twenty and thirty, 787 between thirty and forty, 573 between forty and fifty, and 443 between fifty and sixty, whilst over sixty years of age we had only 200. We have thus 2,166 out of a total of 2,900 applications made by men in the prime of their working life. . . . The figures for the year ending1907 work out very much in the same proportion."† We imagined that the men who found themselves "too old at forty" might be in the Workhouses. But, though there is an alarming increase of able-bodied men in the Workhouses of London and various other centres, these too are found on examination to be mainly men in the prime of life; and certainly not men who could, with any credibility, ascribe their failure to get situations merely to the infirmities of age. "I have been curious," wrote a Local Government Board Inspector in 1903," to ascertain what effect the Employers' Liability Act and the Workmen's Compensation Act have had upon elderly workmen. So far I have not found many men driven to the Workhouse as the result of these Acts. I have conversed with employers of labour on the subject, and they tell me that machinery is now so much used that an elderly man is as good as a younger man, and if capable, he has the advantage of experience in dealing with machinery."‡

Thus, whilst there is no evidence that the average age of the persons at work is declining, or that elderly men are found in increasing numbers among the Unemployed, there is also no reason why the Workmen's Compensation Act should have supplied a new motive to employers to differentiate against elderly men. Some explanation is required of the widespread impression to the contrary. We think it may be that—as it was put to us by an eminent statistician—" employers have got in rather a flurry when they found these new claims upon them, and have possibly discharged a few men, but very possibly by this time they are re-engaging them."§ What has generally happened is, however, that when employers have wanted to get rid of elderly men—*as they have done at all times*—they have used the Workmen's Compensation Act as an excuse. Equally often, when elderly men have been dismissed for some irregularity of conduct, or find the same difficulties as other men in regaining employment, they are prone to account for it by a cause so impersonal as the Workmen's Compensation Act. Every aged pauper man now gives the same explanation of his presence in the Workhouse.‖ "There is," deposed the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, "always a proportion of loafers amongst the Unemployed who do not want work, and they are always willing to avail themselves of any excuse that offers to explain their being out of work."¶

(v.) *Raising the Standard of Efficiency.*

Much the same scepticism may be felt with regard to the alleged increased exclusion from employment of the one-eyed man, the one-armed man, the slightly crippled or the ruptured man. At all times employers have preferred to take on a sound man rather

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* Return as to Proceedings of Distress Committees, for 1907–8 (House of Commons, No. 173 of 1908).

† Replies of Distress Committees, p. 79, Bristol.

‡ Thirty-second Annual Report of the Local Government Board, 1902–3, p. 109.

§ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 88117. The "flurry" is shown in the following evidence on behalf of a large steel works. "As regards old age, the custom at these works up to the present is that men who have served the firm for any length of time, when they become aged, are found light work. In a short time, however, these conditions will be altered, as, in view of the 'Compensation Act, 1906,' coming into force in July next, our directors are considering the question of pensions for the old men employed at Clarence, so that they will be prevented coming to the works. It is positively unsafe for such men to go about the works, more particularly as the firm is responsible, in case anything happens to them in the form of an accident, to pay weekly compensation, or if the accident should prove fatal, and they have dependents, three years' wages." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XLIII. (Par. 3) to Vol. VIII).

‖ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 50693; Relieving Officers' Return *re* Compensation Acts, Appendix No. VII. (A) to Vol. V.

¶ Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 82804.

than an unsound man. Here, however, we think that the evidence points to an increasing tendency among employers—whether this is due to the Workmen's Compensation Act or to a general tightening up of conditions under stress of competition—to scrutinise very carefully the men whom they take into their service, in order that, in return for the Standard Rates of Wages that they have to pay, they may get the most efficient workmen. Various large firms now make it a rule to have all workmen medically examined before engagement, and the practice is now spreading to the mercantile marine. Though this began before 1897, it is now ascribed to the operation of the Workmen's Compensation Act of that year; and the giving of a preference to sound and healthy men may well have been promoted by such legislation. "In my opinion," said a North Country witness, "the Workmen's Compensation Act has made employers more particular as to the class of men employed. Defective vision or hearing has to some extent placed men on the labour market who would otherwise have been employed."* "Last year," it was given in evidence, "Messrs. Vickers, Maxim tried the experiment of examining all the new 'starts.' In twelve weeks I examined 286 men and rejected fifteen. The rejected included men with one eye, those with bad ruptures, bad ulcerated legs or scars indicating old ulcers, also men physically unfit. Owing to the opposition of the trade unions, this rule was suspended, but the firm may reintroduce it. Vickers, Maxim carry this rule out at their works at Erith, and have done so for six years."† But perhaps the clearest case is that of the workman subject to epileptic fits. Insurance Companies are said to refuse to insure such men, and employers to employ them.‡ We were informed that "as a matter of fact prior to the 1897 Compensation Act Messrs. Vickers had quite a large number of epileptics working, and they had contracted-out; under the old Employers Liability Act of 1894 they could contract out of that Act, but when the 1897 Act came into force these men were all discharged."§

The difficulty which the aged and the partially incapacitated find in obtaining employment, owing to the employers' preference for the more efficient workmen, is, however, viewed from the standpoint of the community, not a cause of Unemployment. So long as there are young and healthy workmen unemployed, it cannot be expected—it cannot even be desired—that the less efficient should fill the places to the exclusion of the more efficient. In so far as aged men, and partially incapacitated men, are found among those in distress from Unemployment—and this is to some slight extent the case—the problem is one of how best to maintain them in their old age and partial invalidity—not how to get them again into industrial employment for which other men, also compulsorily idle, are more fitted.

(vi.) *Existing Agencies Dealing with the Unemployable.*

The Unemployable, it will now be clear, constitute, not so much a class, as a heterogeneous multitude of individuals, requiring endless diversity of treatment. Yet the administrators of the present Poor Law persist in treating them merely as "the Able-bodied"; in one Union apparently regarding them all as "work-shy" loafers or incorrigible rogues; in another treating them as if they were all excluded from employment on account of their age or infirmity, through no fault of their own. Thus, one Board of Guardians will offer to all alike the same General Mixed Workhouse or laxly administered Casual Ward. The next Board of Guardians will insist on "testing" all able-bodied

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* *Ibid.*, Appendix No. LXXVI. (Par. 4), to Vol. VIII.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 43126, Par. 9. "To protect ourselves from the responsibility of taking such men into our employ, about twelve months ago it was made a condition that all new men seeking employment should undergo a medical examination. Whilst this rule was in force it tended to raise the standard of physical fitness of the new men engaged, and prevented men from applying for work who knew they were physically unfit. During the ten weeks the examination was enforced, 286 men were examined, of whom fourteen were rejected as physically unfit. Of those rejected:—

Six were suffering from inguinal hernia.
Three from bad varicose veins.
One from large varicocele.
One from varicose eczema of left leg.
One from old scars on left leg, of low vitality.
Two from results of injury to eye, causing sight to be seriously affected."

Ibid., *Q.* 87722, Par. 7.

‡ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 87473.

§ *Ibid.*, *Q.* 43197.

applicants by a task of stone-pounding on insufficient diet and under penal conditions, in the so-called "Able-bodied Test Workhouse," or the cellular Casual Ward. Under these circumstances, it goes without saying that the Unemployable man of the "won't work" type accepts the hospitality of the laxly administered institution, and refuses that of the disciplinary one; preferring, to the latter, "the life of the road" or the hand-to-mouth existence of the loafer of the great cities, varied with brief sojourns in gaol. The worthy Unemployable, who is really unable to get taken on by any employer, finds the promiscuity of the General Mixed Workhouse and the penal discipline of the Able-bodied Test Workhouse equally deterrent, and resorts there only in the direst need, preferring to suffer slow starvation in his slum, or to struggle along on the scanty earnings of wife and child. Many of the intermediate types constitute the great army of "In-and-Outs" of the Workhouse of either kind. Of preventive or curative treatment under the Poor Law there is, with regard to the Unemployable, at present practically no question.

Much the same may be said of the operations of the Distress Committees when "Employment Relief" is offered; the "won't works" sheer off, and the "can't works" linger on, to lower the standard of effort and increase the cost of the work. Neither section can be found places by the Labour Exchange or moved to another country. For the Unemployable, in short, the Unemployed Workmen Act is as futile as is the Poor Law.

The least unsuccessful of the agencies at present at work are, with regard to all sections of the Unemployable, the Working Colonies administered by certain religious or philanthropic organisations For the slightly feeble-minded and the sane epileptic there is provision at Lingfield established in 1896 by the Christian Social Service Union. For the man of irregular conduct and doubtful past there is the training given at Hadleigh since 1890 by the Salvation Army. What is lacking, even to the most successful training Colony of this type, is, on the one hand, an assured outlet for those whom it has redeemed or trained, and, on the other, various grades of Colonies to which might be committed those who prove to be incorrigible and recalcitrant to training, or who are permanently unfitted for association with the outside world. The latter requirement points to establishments with powers of detention. The former demands some better organisation of the Labour Market so that the cured or reclaimed Unemployable may not have to be thrown once more into the morass of chronic Under-employment.

(f) Character and Unemployment.

It may be thought that we have, in the preceding survey of the types of the Unemployed, given insufficient attention to drunkenness and other forms of personal misconduct as responsible for the failure of men to retain their situations, or to get again into employment. We have deliberately subordinated the question of personal character, because in our view, although of vital importance to the method of treatment to be adopted with regard to the individuals in distress, it does not seem to us to be of significance with regard to the existence or the amount of Unemployment. "The casual labourer engaged on Monday is dismissed on Tuesday, not because he refuses to work longer, but because the work for which he was engaged is at an end. The percentage of Unemployed carpenters rises from two in August to six in December, not because 4 per cent. of the men have become unfit or unwilling to work, but because winter is a bad time for building. When two handicraftsmen are replaced by one man at a machine, the change is not in them but in economic conditions."* It is no doubt true that the efficiency of labour is one of the factors of productivity; and the greater the national product the larger the number of persons whom it will sustain. But, speaking broadly, employers take on the labour that they have occasion for, and no more; and the aggregate amount of their wages bill from week to week does not depend on the habits of the workmen. When trade is brisk, even the drunken men, the turbulent men, the negligent men, and the men of every kind of personal immorality, so long as they possess the requisite physical vigour, are pretty fully employed. The residuum of Unemployables, to be found, even at such times, in distress from want of employment, are not the men of bad character or conduct, but those who have, by long-continued Unemployment, become incapable of regular labour. When trade slackens, some of the men who have found work have to be discharged; presently others must share the same experience; and in the trough of the depression the staff has to be cut down to the lowest possible point. Doubtless, the least efficient wage-earners are the first to go, drinkers among the rest; although it is remarkable how great a degree of occasional drunkenness and personal misbehaviour an employer or a foreman puts up

* "Unemployment: a Problem of industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909, p. 132.

with from an expert or docile workman. Doubtless, too, the drunken and improvident workman, when thrown out of work, comes much more quickly into distress than his sober and saving brother. But the fluctuations in the volume of employment, and, therefore, the aggregate number of the Unemployed in the nation are in no way related to the existence of drunkenness or misconduct among the workmen; and the fluctuations certainly would not be any the less (though the consequent distress would be) if all the men were teetotallers and as thrifty as could be desired.*

Nor do we find that the Unemployed, as a whole, can be described as either drunken or vicious. Those in our Class I. have, in thousands of cases, lost their apparently permanent situations through absolutely no fault of their own; and, as we have already described, they are often impeded in the attempt to regain situations by the very characteristics which their long and continuous service has developed in them. Those belonging to our Class II. are, by the very conditions of their calling, exposed at all times, and whatever their characters, to such extreme discontinuity of employment that not even the most virtuous operative can escape periods of enforced idleness; and there are unhappily far too many cases, in bad times, of the Unemployment being so prolonged—extending to many months, and even to a year at a time—that even the most thrifty households of carpenters and engineers exhaust their Trade Union benefits, and are brought to severe distress. And when we come to Class III., the Under-employed, there is, as we have seen, no ground whatever for assuming that the men's descent into this class was due to drink or misconduct. Once in it, indeed (and this is the worst of the tragedy), character is apt to go; and it is certainly no qualification for success. There is even reason to fear that, in the demoralising scramble for casual jobs, it is the lower, the more brutal, even the more dissolute natures that prevail. Among the Unemployable, too, there are, as we have seen, not a few who are pathetic in their respectability. Thus, in their case also, it seems idle to ascribe their distress to personal misconduct.†

At the same time we do not wish to ignore the fact that, *taking the workmen as a whole and ignoring many individual cases to the contrary*, the men out of work at any one time are apt to include the less efficient, the less energetic, the less strong, the less young, the less regular, the less temperate or the less docile of their class; 5 or 10 or 20 per cent. had to go, and these particular men were chosen for discharge rather than other men, for one or other of these reasons, some of which relate to personal conduct whilst others do not. Especially is this true of many of the Unemployed of Class II., whose Unemployment is specially prolonged; to many of those of Class III.; and to the bulk if not all of those of Class IV. Thus it is that it can be said "that, on the whole, the character of this class is comparatively weak, *i.e.*, weak in intelligence, training, physique, or *morale*, or all four. The men themselves say they are out of work through slackness of trade, and this is true in the sense that when a trade is extraordinarily brisk almost anyone can pick up some

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* It must, in short, be taken to be conclusively proved that "Unemployment is not due merely to personal or isolated causes, *e.g.*, to unfitness or unwillingness to be employed or to the failure of particular employers. It does indicate specific mal-adjustments between the demand for and the supply of labour at certain times or places. It is in part at least an industrial or economic problem. . . . The records of applicants for assistance first accumulated in considerable numbers by the Committee of the Mansion House Fund, 1903–4, and later in the administration of the London Unemployed Fund, 1904–5, and of the Unemployed Workmen Act, 1905, show that many men *individually certified by their employers to have been willing and competent workmen in the near past* were unable for long periods in the years 1904–6 to obtain employment." (Evidence before the Commission, Q. 77832. Par. 4.)

† In many ways the most unattractive of the Unemployable are the men who have become worthless parasites on their wives' labour. This degradation is often assumed to be accounted for by an inherent tendency to loafing in the man, and to self-sacrificing industry in the woman. But even here the local conditions of employment come in as a potent cause. In Lancashire, many thousands of wives work for wages, and earn sufficient to maintain the home; but the idle parasite of a husband is not a typical figure in the textile towns. Because, we suggest, there are opportunities of regular employment for men, the men have not been deteriorated by their wives' labour. Things are different in Dundee, not because the Dundee men were more disposed to become parasitic on their wives than the men of Lancashire, but because they have been subjected to a whole generation of Under-employment, and to a positive deficiency in the opportunities for men's employment at all. Thus, the real cause of the deterioration of so many of the men of Dundee is the vicious system of employment to which they have been subjected.

work. Employers' written and verbal characters show why one is chosen to be dismissed in time of slackness rather than another."*

When all is said, however, the extent to which the Unemployed are men of good character or bad—important as it is to themselves, and to the method of treatment to be adopted with regard to them—appears to us, from the standpoint of prevention of the evil, wholly irrelevant. Whether the men are good or bad, drunken or sober, immoral or virtuous, it is a terrible misfortune to the community, as well as to themselves, that they should be Unemployed. In Unemployment their working power is lost to the nation; their wives and children are half-starved; the men themselves are steadily and almost inevitably deteriorated in body and mind. It is worth notice that not one of the many witnesses who appeared before us suggested that there was any advantage, social or individual, to be credited to Unemployment. Whether the man is good or bad, no one has pretended that a period of Unemployment tended to strengthen his will, to fortify his character, to brace his nerves, or to increase his thrift. The effect, by common consent, is the reverse.† Indeed, if the Unemployed are all as faulty and as feeble as they are sometimes pictured—and in so far as they do include among them great numbers of the faulty and the feeble—the evil seems to us all the worse. The capable and perfectly virtuous man may possibly be able to go through a period of prolonged Unemployment without physical or mental deterioration. He tightens his belt; reduces his needs to the barest minimum; is fertile in contrivances for protecting his little household from the worst consequences, and in picking up odds and ends of income; and when the nation once more needs his services he is ready at call, little or none the worse for having been thrown aside for a time. Such perfection is, however, rare in any class of men, and it is, we fear, especially rare among the builders' labourers of our Class II., or among the whole of our Class III. (the Under-employed), whilst it is, of course, absent from Class IV. (the Unemployable). Among all these merely average men, a prolonged spell of Unemployment is apt to mean the ruin, mental and physical, of the man and his family. "The

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* (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 82147, Par. 1.) This witness "had analysed 108 unselected applications to the Stepney Distress Committee. Of these 108, ninety-eight men give as the reason of their discharge 'slackness.' The written employers' characters confirm this in sixty-eight cases (though three of these state that the applicant has no chance of re-employment). In thirty cases the reasons for discharge are given as follows:—

'Partly slack'	1
Unsatisfactory	5
Dishonesty	1
Bad time-keeper	3
To better himself	1
Ill-health	1
Most unreliable and only irregular earnings for rough work	1
Gambling	1
Want of attention to his work	1
Left of own accord (no chance of re-employment)	2
Dishonesty suspected	1
Private reason	2
Irregularity in attendance	2
Not stated by employer	8
Total	30

"Thus, in about a third of the ninety-eight cases, we get from the employers an indication of the personal weaknesses leading to selection for discharge in time of slackness.

"In some other instances, where the employé gave as cause of discharge:—

'Illness'; the employer gave: 'unsatisfactory last six months.'
'Death in family'; the employer gave: 'absent without leave.'
Not stated (in three cases); the employer gave: 'unsatisfactory.'
'Being a union man'; the employer gave: 'neglecting horses.'
'Special'; the employer gave: 'pilfering.'
'Reduction in wages'; the employer gave: 'careless.'" (*Ibid.*)

† There is evidence that drinking habits are actually fostered by Unemployment. "It seems rather funny," deposed a builder's foreman, "but I think that the more men are out of work the more drunkenness there is. A fellow who is out of work goes and meets Tom, Dick, or Harry at dinner-time coming from work, and instead of his being given a pennyworth of bread and cheese, or something of that sort, he is given a half-pint of beer, and the man who gives it to him has one with him" (Report of Special Committee of Charity Organisation Society on Unskilled Labour, 1908, *Q.* 211). "In many cases it encourages idle habits," says another witness, "and in others where a man sees his earnings all consumed he is disposed to cease to be thrifty." (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXV. (Par. 4), to Vol. VIII.)

effect of Unemployment upon the individual workman is to make him in course of time Unemployable."*

> "The men and their families," deposed Captain Hamilton, the Secretary of the Church Army, "physically deteriorate owing to lack of proper food and clothing. . . . Unemployment causes deterioration in the skilled worker, in habits and ability. . . men known as good workmen develop a distaste for steady work after a long spell of Unemployment. Church Army officers . . . report that about half of those who apply for temporary work appear to have lost all ambition or hope of permanent employment, and have grown quite contented to depend upon casual work for short periods, and they attribute this to the gradual deterioration of the men from Unemployment. . . . However industrious and deserving the unskilled worker may be, a period of Unemployment with the consequent lack of nourishing food and the worries attendant upon such a condition of life, soon reduces the physical efficiency of the men; this, with the increasing shabbiness of his clothing makes it more and more difficult for him to obtain employment, and eventually he swells the ranks of the chronically inefficient and very casual worker, and, if married, his wife and children have to work to maintain him."†

In short, it is just because the bulk of the Unemployed are, like other men, full of faults and shortcomings, that it is of such vital importance to the community to put an end to the incalculable waste, misery and deterioration that Unemployment at present causes.‡

(c) The need for a National Authority for all sections of the Unemployed.

We find an overwhelming consensus of opinion among our witnesses that the task of dealing with the Distress from Want of Employment is one altogether beyond the capacity of the Local Authorities; and that, from the very nature of the case, the duty can be successfully undertaken only by a National Department.§ Thus, the Town Clerk of Bath, in an able summary of the results of a conference of representatives of more than fifty Distress Committees in December, 1907, states as his conclusion "that the permanent solution of the Unemployed problem must be found *nationally and not locally*, and must be considered in conjunction with proposals for providing for those incapable of work, dealing with those who can but will not work, and promoting schemes for increasing the supply of labour for those who honestly desire to work, such as Farm Colonies, Afforestation, Reclamation of Foreshores, Extension of Inland Navigation, etc.; and even curtailment of the hours of labour."‖

To this conclusion of the need for a National Authority, the foregoing analysis of the different classes of the Unemployed, as it seems to us, inevitably points. In considering what is needed for each of these types, the disabilities of even the wisest Local Authority become apparent. For the men of Class I., who have newly fallen out of permanent situations, what is wanted is some effective agency for discovering whatever vacancies for them may exist anywhere in the Kingdom, and the means of promptly migrating them

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* Report of Edinburgh Distress Committee, 1906–7; *see also* Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 97154, Par. 10.

† *Ibid.*, *Q.* 93611, Pars. 16, 18.

‡ "The effect of Unemployment on the idle workman is disastrous to his personal character. In the case of men subject to casual labour—brief periods of employment alternating with equal or longer periods of idleness—the effect upon the man is to render him totally unfitted for sustained industry. Where the idleness is prolonged, the character of the workman so far deteriorates that laziness becomes fixed and even the restraint of casual employment becomes intolerable. The physical efficiency of the workman must necessarily suffer from that moment when the man's resources are no longer adequate to supply his daily needs. . . . I consider Unemployment to be the most fruitful cause of moral failure on the part of the working class" (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXIV. (Pars. 7, 8) to Vol. VIII.). "There is not anything that demoralises a man so much as want of employment, and the longer it lasts and the oftener it occurs, the greater is the effect and the worse it is to throw off. I have known many men, who have been good, honest workmen, gradually reduced to the level of 'loafers' simply through long and frequent periods of Unemployment." (*Ibid.*, Appendix No. XXII. (Par. 7,) to Vol. VIII.)

§ *Ibid.*, *Qs.* 78372 (viii.), 79408 (Par. 44), 79664–7, 79863 (Par. 11), 80092, 80109, 80733 (Par. 27), 81466 (Pars. 21, 22), 81550–3, 81760 (Par. 19 (*b*)), 81787–90, 82467 (Par. 37 (i.)), 82527, 82882, 82959, 83005–6, 83042–60, 83504 (Pars. 8 (*a*) and 9 (*a*)), 83555–9, 83770 (Par. 21), 83858 (Par. 15 (3)), 84315–8, 84405, 84406, 85949–74, 86085 (Par. 10), 86126, 86127, 86466 (Par. 2 (*c*)), 86664–6, 86726 (Pars. 26, 27, 33), 86785–6, 88364, 88448 (Par. 7), 88508–14, and Appendices I. (19), XX. (11), XXVII. (9), XXXI. (5), LII. (23), LIV. (15), LVIII. (9–11), LXIII. (12), LXXII. (8), LXXIII. (10) to Vol. VIII.

‖ Report to Town Council, Bath, January 15th, 1908.

and their families to take up these appointments. But, as we have seen, the Local Authorities have found it impossible to bring their little local Labour Exchanges into effective mutual co-operation. Each town has naturally wanted to keep all its vacancies for its own Unemployed. Moreover, it is an invidious thing for one Local Authority to transport its necessitous families into the district of another; and but little in the way of migration has proved practicable. We can hardly expect a Local Authority to provide, at its own expense, the training which may be required to enable its Unemployed to fit themselves to go off and engage in a new industry which may be expanding in some other part of the Kingdom. Still more difficult is it for a County Borough to bring itself to acquire land outside its own area, in order to give such men of this class, for whom small holdings might be the most suitable provision, the chance of becoming self-supporting ratepayers in another county. The disadvantages of local action are even more obvious with regard to the Unemployed of Class II., the Men of Discontinuous Employment. These must necessarily wander over the borough boundary to building operations in the suburbs; or from Northumberland to Cornwall in pursuit of great public works in progress. No organisation of information as to the jobs within the area of any one Local Authority can ever be of much use to this class. It is even a hardship to a Local Authority to find stranded within its area the men who have been attracted from all parts of the Kingdom to some large undertaking, sometimes on the mere rumour that men were required, or men who have been left high and dry on the completion of the work. If, to tide over years of depression in the building trade, it is deemed desirable to set going great works of Afforestation or Land Reclamation, these are obviously beyond the scope of any Local Authority, and would be required for the men of all parts of the Kingdom. Neither the organisation of the employment of "public works men," nor the provision to be made for such of them as are in distress, can be fairly regarded as a local problem. The men of our Class III., the Under-employed, are, it is true, usually found stagnating in a particular locality and may be said to "belong to it." But what is needed in such districts as West Ham and Poplar is not an active Local Authority relieving the distress due to this chronic over-supply of labour, but some outside power to draw off the surplus, convert it into good material, and place it where it is wanted, either in this country or somewhere else in the Empire. Municipal Relief Works, and everything else that a Local Authority can devise for this type of Unemployment, merely perpetuate the evil. But the class which is most intractable to treatment by a Local Authority is that of the Unemployable. This class is, we may hope, a relatively small one, but it is, as we have seen, extraordinarily heterogeneous. What is at once apparent is that any appropriate treatment of these men involves, not one device or one institution, but a considerable variety of devices and institutions, each dealing with its peculiar section. Yet to start Farm Colonies for the work-shy, Farm Colonies for the prematurely aged, Farm Colonies for the sane epileptics, Farm Colonies for the men of inferior physique or defective will—not to mention semi-penal establishments for the incorrigible rogues—is beyond the capacity of any Local Authority, even that of the Metropolis. Moreover, the most troublesome section of the Unemployable are the Professional Vagrants. Here we have what is obviously a National question. It is useless to hope that this section will be diminished so long as Local Authorities are chiefly concerned—as experience shows that they always will be, so long as it is a matter of local administration—to get the Vagrants over the boundary into the next district, in order to avoid the trouble and cost of maintaining them.

It is, we think, also clear that the action to be taken must be such as to deal, not with this or that section only of the Unemployed, but with all of them. The different classes that we distinguish are not marked off from each other by sharp lines; and the individuals pass downwards from class to class with appalling ease. "The distinction between the Unemployed and the Unemployable," says Sir John Gorst, "which is very real from an economic point of view, is unstable and transient in the individual. Nothing degenerates from lack of use faster than the capacity to work."* "No one," adds General Booth, "will ever make even a visible dint in the morass of squalor who does not deal with the improvident, the lazy, the vicious, and the criminal."† For the Government to provide means of rescue or provision for this or that section, and not for the other sections, is practically certain to lead to the provision being swamped—as has been the experience of the Unemployed Workmen Act—by those for whom it was not intended, but for whom no alternative provision is made. To deal nationally with one section whilst leaving the rest to be provided for by the Local Authorities is open to the same

* "The Unemployed—a National Question," by Percy Alden, M.P. (preface by Sir John Gorst), 1905.

† "In Darkest England," by W. Booth, 1890, p. 36.

objection. No small part of the trouble in the past has arisen from the fact that rival Authorities have been simultaneously dealing with parts of the problem in different ways. It has been left to the Poor Law Authorities to provide for the man at the crisis of destitution; whilst the Distress Committees and the Municipalities have been trying to prevent the destitution of the Unemployed by giving him work at the ratepayers' expense. The Local Police Authority is often scolding the Poor Law Authority for compelling, by its penal conditions, the houseless poor or Vagrants to "sleep out." The Prison Commissioners complain that the Local Police Authority crowds the prisons with the "sleepers-out," whom the regulations of the Board of Guardians have thus made into criminals. In return, the Board of Guardians complains that the prisons are made so comfortable that men prefer them to the Casual Ward, and even to the Labour Yard. Meanwhile, Voluntary Agencies try to make up for any shortcomings in public provision by Free Shelters and Soup Kitchens. And when the Local Education Authority and the Local Health Authority find themselves feeding the children of Unemployed men, or medically treating their dependents, there is no Authority to whom they can turn in order to get enforced on the man the responsibility of earning sufficient to keep his family. Amid all this conflicting and overlapping activity, the mass of suffering and the continuous degradation due to want of employment remain, in spite of all the expenditure, practically undiminished.

(H) Conclusions.

We have, therefore, to report:—

1. That distress from want of employment, though periodically aggravated by depression of trade, is a constant feature of industry and commerce as at present administered; and that the mass of men, women and children suffering from the privation due to this Unemployment in the United Kingdom amounts, at the best of times, to hundreds of thousands, whilst in years of trade depression they must exceed a million in number.

2. That this misery has no redeeming feature. It does not, like the temporary hardships of work or adventure, produce in those capable of responding to the stimulus, greater strength, energy, endurance, fortitude or initiative. On the contrary, the enforced idleness and prolonged privation characteristic of Unemployment have, on both the strong man and the weak, on the man of character and conduct and on the dissolute, a gravely deteriorating effect on body and mind, on muscle and will. The magnitude of the loss thus caused to the nation, first in the millions of days of enforced idleness of productive labourers, and secondly in the degradation and deterioration of character and physique—whether or not it is increasing—can scarcely be exaggerated.

3. That men in distress from want of employment approximate to one or other of four distinct types, requiring, as we have described, distinct treatment; namely, the Men from Permanent Situations, the Men of Discontinuous Employment, the Underemployed and the Unemployable.

4. That what is needed for the Men from Permanent Situations is some prompt and gratuitous machinery for discovering what openings exist, anywhere in the United Kingdom, for their particular kind of service; or for ascertaining with certainty that no such openings exist; with suitable provision, where individual saving does not suffice, for the maintenance of themselves and their households whilst awaiting re-employment. Both the machinery and the provision are at present afforded, in some industries, by Trade Union "Vacant Books" and Trade Union Insurance. This, however, does not meet the need of the large numbers of men in occupations for which no Trade Union exists, or in which no machinery for reporting vacancies and no insurance against Unemployment have been organised. Nor does it meet the cases, unhappily always occurring in one industry or another, of men whose occupation is being taken from them by the adoption of new processes or new machinery, without any effective opportunity being afforded to them of training themselves to new means of livelihood.

5. That for the Men of Discontinuous Employment the same prompt and gratuitous machinery for discovering what openings exist, anywhere in the United Kingdom, is required, not only for individuals exceptionally Unemployed, but for the entire class,

at all times; in order to prevent the constant "leakage" of time between job and job, and to obviate the demoralising aimless search for work, whether over any one great urban aggregation, or by means of wandering from town to town. The same machinery becomes imperative, in times of bad trade, in order to ascertain with certainty that no opportunity of employment exists. Without some such machinery, experience shows that Insurance against Unemployment breaks down, owing to the excessive amount of "time lost" between jobs, and the impossibility of securing that every claimant has done his best to get work.

5. That of all the forms of Unemployment, that which we have termed Under-employment, extending, as it does, to many hundreds of thousands of workers, and to their whole lives, is by far the worst in its evil effects; and that it is this system of chronic Under-employment which is above all other causes responsible for the perpetual manufacture of paupers that is going on; and which makes the task of the Distress Committees in dealing with the Unemployed of other types—such as the Men from Permanent Situations, or the Men of Discontinuous Employment—hopelessly impracticable.

6. That we have been unable to escape from the conclusion that, owing to various causes, there has accumulated, in all the ports, and indeed in all the large towns of the United Kingdom, an actual surplus of workmen, there being more than are required to do the work in these towns even in times of brisk trade; this surplus showing itself in the existence of the Stagnant Pools of Labour that we have described, and in the chronic Under-employment of tens of thousands of men at all seasons and in all years.

7. That we have been struck by the fact that this chronic Under-employment of men is coincident with the employment in factories and workshops, or on work taken out to be done at home, of a large number of mothers of young children who are thereby deprived of maternal care; with an ever-growing demand for boy-labour of an uneducational kind; and actually with a positive increase in the number of "half-timers" (children in factories below the age exempting them from attendance at school). Thus we have, in increasing numbers (though whether or not in increasing proportion is not clear), men degenerating through enforced Unemployment or chronic Under-employment into parasitic Unemployables; and the burden of industrial work cast on pregnant women, nursing mothers and immature youths.

8. That the task of dealing with Unemployment is altogether beyond the capacity of Authorities having jurisdiction over particular areas; and can be undertaken successfully only by a Department of the National Government.

9. That the experience of the Poor Law in dealing with destitute able-bodied men and their dependents; of the Distress Committees in providing for labourers out of employment; of the Police in attempting to suppress Vagrancy and "sleeping out"; of the Prison Commissioners in having to accommodate in gaol large numbers of men undergoing short sentences for offences of this nature; of the Education and Public Health Authorities in feeding and medically treating the necessitous dependents of able-bodied men; and of the Voluntary Agencies dealing with the "houseless poor" of great cities, all alike prove that every attempt to deal only with this or that section of the Able-bodied and Unemployed class is liable to be rendered nugatory by the neglect to deal simultaneously with the other sections of men in distress, or claiming to be in distress, from want of employment. That accordingly, in our judgment, no successful dealing with the problem is possible unless provision is simultaneously made in ways suited to their several needs and deserts for all the various sections of the Unemployed by one and the same Authority.

CHAPTER V.

Proposals for Reform.

We have now to state the Proposals for Reform to which our consideration of the problem presented by the Distress from Unemployment and the Destitution of the Able-bodied has led us. We put forward these proposals, far-reaching in character as some of them are, with a deep sense of responsibility. We have done our best to investigate the actual facts and conditions of the problem, and to weigh carefully all the considerations that have to be taken into account in grappling with it. We have tested our proposals, so far as this is possible, by individually and privately consulting, with regard to each of them, the men of practical experience, both official and commercial, whom we thought best qualified to judge as to what could, and what could not, be successfully put into operation. We must however point out that, with regard to this Part of our Report, the conditions do not permit the presentation of the same sort of detailed and finished Scheme of Reform as that with which we were able to conclude Part I. In respect of all the classes of the Non-Able-bodied, what we had to recommend lay rather in the domain of administrative policy and organisation, than in the *technique* of the several services. When we were considering the appropriate treatment of Children, the Sick or the Insane, we could take for granted the existence of an elaborate body of knowledge, worked out by specialised Local Authorities, as to how to run a school, a main drainage system, an isolation hospital or an asylum. All that we had to do was to show cause and devise means for transferring from an antiquated system of Destitution Authorities such of the members of these classes as had fallen into the hands of those Authorities; and for the assumption of the necessary responsibilities by the several specialised Local Authorities already dealing with similar services. But in the prevention and treatment of Able-bodied Destitution and Distress from Unemployment, we are, at the beginning of the twentieth century, in a position somewhat similar to that in which the prevention and treatment of sickness stood at the opening of the nineteenth century. We have still to work out by actual practice the appropriate *technique*.

For this reason among others, we wish to make it clear that the adoption of the Scheme of Reform, with which we have concluded Part I. of this Report, is in no way dependent upon an adoption of our present Proposals for Reform with regard to Distress from Want of Employment. We are, for instance, compelled to propose that the Local Authorities, to whom would be entrusted the whole administration of the Children, the Sick, the Mentally Defective, and the Aged, should have nothing to do with the provision for the Unemployed.* In our view the task of dealing with the Able-bodied person in destitution or distress transcends, by its very nature, the capacity of even the best Local Authorities, and must, if success is to be attained, be undertaken in its entirety by the National Government, on new principles, and with the help of new administrative machinery. If, however, organisation on a national basis is deemed inadvisable, or premature, the addition, to our Scheme of Reform, of a Committee for the Unemployed, dealing with all Able-bodied persons in distress, would even give to that Scheme administrative symmetry and logical completeness. In that case, there would need only to be a distinct committee of the County or County Borough Council, dealing with all sections of the Able-bodied and with the Able-bodied exclusively. In this committee (which might be called the Committee for the Unemployed) the existing Distress Committee would be merged. It would have at its disposal all or any of the devices of the Poor Law and the Unemployed Workmen Act; the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, the Outdoor Labour Test, the Casual Ward, the Municipal Relief Works and the Farm Colony, the Labour Exchange and Emigration. To have one Local Authority, and one only, dealing with Able-bodied men, whether Paupers, Vagrants or Unemployed, would be, in itself, a vast improvement on the present conflict and confusion caused by the existence of two rival Local Authorities simultaneously relieving the same class of men. To have this Statutory Committee for

* It is interesting to see that the need for making a sharp distinction between the Able-bodied and all the other classes, and for entrusting their treatment to quite separate Authorities, has impressed itself upon the contemporary Commission considering Poor Relief and Unemployment in the Transvaal State; though, in that new country, the Authorities suggested are not the same as in the United Kingdom. "Assistance to the Able-bodied," states the Report, "and Relief to the Disabled should, as far as possible, be kept distinct. The former is the concern of Public Authorities; the latter is the proper object of private enterprise." (Report of the Transvaal Indigency Commission, 1906–8, p. 182.)

the Unemployed, entirely distinct from the Statutory Committees for Children, for the Sick, for the Mentally Defective and for the Aged—administering its own separate institutions, by its own staff of officials, and working out its own specialised *technique*—would be an enormous advance on any general Destitution Authority, with its inevitable "mixed" policy, its "mixed" officials, and its "mixed" institutions, always crumbling back into the General Mixed Workhouse.

The dominant exigencies that must govern all proposals for reform in this field are, as we have described in the preceding chapter :—

(*a*) The existence, practically at all times, of honest and respectable workmen in distress from Unemployment ; either because they have fallen out of permanent situations, or because the interval between jobs is unusually prolonged.

(*b*) The chronic state of Under-employment in which hundreds of thousands of workers, especially at the seaports, and in all the great towns, habitually exist, owing to the casual and intermittent nature of their engagements.

(*c*) The vague and aimless wandering in search of work, either within a large town, or from town to town, which leads to demoralisation and vagrancy.

(*d*) The lack of any systematic provision for the training in new means of livelihood, whether in industry or in land settlement, of men displaced by new processes, machinery or other industrial changes.

(*e*) The intermixture among the Unemployed, the Under-employed and the Vagrants, of all sorts of "unemployables"—the debilitated and the demoralised, loafers and wastrels, beggars and criminals, who, whilst in one way or another maintaining a degenerate existence at the public expense, are always ready to appropriate and pervert any provision made for the more deserving sections.

Our Proposals for Reform are designed to meet all these exigencies.

(A) The National Labour Exchange.

The first requisite is the organisation throughout the whole of the United Kingdom of a complete system of public Labour Exchanges on a national basis. This National Labour Exchange, though in itself no adequate remedy, is the foundation of all our proposals. It is, in our view, an indispensable condition of any real reform.

We are impressed by the need, throughout nearly the whole field of industrial life, of some better means than at present exist by which those seeking employment can discover, *quickly, gratuitously and with certainty,* exactly what places are vacant, and where these are situated ; by which employers seeking assistance can have before them those persons who happen to be disengaged ; and (what in our view is no less important) by which it may be conclusively ascertained that no opportunities of employment exist for particular kinds of labour at particular times. Some such organisation of information has clearly become necessary in practically all trades, if not to employers, at any rate to all sections of the Unemployed. It was easy, in the village, or even in the small town, with scant variety of occupation, for employers and wage-earners to be aware of all vacancies and of all available men. But in the huge wildernesses of London and other great cities, with the bewildering multiplication of occupations and specialisation of employments, a deliberate organisation of means of communication between employers and employed is as indispensable, if time is not to be wasted in endless runnings to and fro, as the central sorting room of the Post Office or the Telephone Exchange. *

* It is interesting to find the National Labour Exchange advocated as long ago as 1869 by a charitable worker and Poor Law Guardian of great experience. "We do not," said the Rev. Brooke Lambert, "want Government to spend money on Emigration . . . but whilst applying such exceptional remedies as the case may require, to institute or promote a *general system of registration whereby men might learn where labour was wanted.* If some such plan was in force, a great deal of valuable labour which is, by emigration, for ever lost to the country, might be kept in it to add by its produce to the wealth of the land." ("Emigration," by Rev. Brooke Lambert, in Transactions of Social Science Association 1869, p. 537.)

(i) *The Experience of Germany.*

But the utility of the Labour Exchange has been abundantly demonstrated. In nearly all the large towns of Germany such an institution has now been established; and we have available, in some cases, the testimony of ten, and even of twenty years' experience. Over 700 Labour Exchanges of one kind or another are now regularly reporting to the Imperial Statistical Office at Berlin. They are filling about *two millions of situations annually.* These Labour Exchanges are of various sorts, but the most interesting to us are the Public General Exchanges, established by the municipal authorities in practically every town of 50,000 inhabitants. Perhaps the most remarkable example is that of Stuttgart, a town standing in population between Leicester and Newcastle-on-Tyne, where the Public Labour Exchange, which has been in operation since 1895, finds situations for *more than a thousand male and female workers every week in the year.* Here the Labour Exchange has the hearty support of both employers and workmen. All the large Trade Unions (with one exception) have voluntarily given up their own registers of unemployed members, preferring such members to utilise the Public Exchange. Many Trade Unions (including those of the wood-workers, metal-workers, bookbinders, saddlers, millers and brewers' operatives) compel their unemployed members to report themselves daily at the Public Exchange as a condition of receiving their out of work pay. Turning to another German city, we may note that the Labour Exchange at Munich, which has a salaried staff of eighteen clerks, etc., and fills *over* 200 *situations a day,* " is situated on an island over which passes the principal bridge connecting the two halves of the city. The accommodation consists in essence of a number of waiting-rooms opening off a central corridor, and each communicating directly with the office of the superintendent in charge of the particular section. There are, for instance, three sections for men—unskilled, skilled workers in iron and wood, and all other skilled workers—each with its own waiting-room and superintendent; one for apprentices and two for women (industrial workers and domestic servants). Applicants for employment come to the appropriate waiting-room and fill up there a short form, indicating name, address, age, whether married, single, or widowed, occupation and work desired, last employer, and one or two other details. Applications for workpeople are received in the corresponding office by personal call on the part of the employer or his representative, by post, or most commonly by telephone. As they are received they are announced by the superintendent in the waiting-room, and the number required picked out from the men presenting themselves. From the forms already filled in by the men the superintendent enters the essential points in a current register, and sends the men off to the employer with a card of identification. The employer receiving the card is requested to note on it which, if any, of the men he has engaged, and to return it through the post—it is already stamped and addressed—to the Labour Office. Where the employer has called in person or sent an agent, this is, of course, not necessary; the hiring is concluded there and then at an interview in the superintendent's office. In the unskilled section men may stay in the waiting-room all day. In the skilled sections there are fixed hours—generally one in the morning and one in the afternoon for each trade. It should be added that any situation not at once filled is notified on a blackboard in the waiting-room, so that any man coming in later and desiring to apply for one of them may at once present himself to the superintendent. Twice a week, moreover, lists of situations unfilled are drawn up and exhibited in public places. They are also inserted in the Press and sent round to all the neighbouring Labour Exchanges.

" The Labour Office appears to concern itself very little with inquiries as to the character of applicants for employment. They are not even always asked to produce their infirmity insurance cards. Efforts are, of course, made to send the sort of man asked for by the employer, but, in the unskilled section at least, the attitude is taken that it is ultimately the employer's business to satisfy himself as to the capacity of the men he engages. The Labour Office is essentially a means of communication. It does, no doubt, in the long run, give the employer a better workman than he would get by chance from the streets; the superintendent has almost always a certain choice in the waiting-room, and can pick the abler or the better-known man. This, however, is only an indirect service. The direct utility of the Labour Office—as it presents itself unmistakably to anyone spending a morning in any one of its rooms—is to prevent economic waste by reducing to a minimum the period during which employers are seeking for men or men for employers. *In the unskilled section, with men always in the waiting-room and applications from employers arriving in an almost continuous stream, business has to be conducted at lightning speed."**

* " Public Labour Exchanges in Germany," by W. H. Beveridge (*Economic Journal,* March, 1908); included in " Unemployment, a Problem of Industry," by the same (1909). Nearly all the German Labour Exchanges charge no fee, and in the others the tendency is towards gratuitousness of service.

(ii) *The Experience of London.*

Nor are we without experience of the working of a Public Labour Exchange in this country. As we have mentioned, the Central (Unemployed) Body began, in 1906, the organisation of a system of Labour Exchanges for London as a whole.* In spite of many difficulties, which are gradually being overcome, this score of Metropolitan Labour Exchanges, at last covering all London, are now, each year, regularly receiving from employers information as to about thirty to forty thousand permanent situations that are vacant; and are actually filling, from among the workpeople who gratuitously register themselves as desiring places, no fewer than 25,000 situations a year. What is interesting is to find that, although there are many applicants for employment for whom situations are not found, *there are also many vacancies notified by employers, for workers of particular experience, which cannot be filled.* Still more numerous are the situations notified to any one Exchange which that Exchange, for all its long list of waiting applicants, is unable to fill. A steadily increasing use is accordingly being made of the Exchanges in other parts of London, and the central office. An employer sends to the local Exchange for a workman of such and such a kind. The Superintendent of the local Exchange finds that he has none on his "live register." He telephones to the central office, and the inquiry is sent to every one of the London Exchanges. It is significant of the proved value of the organisation that no fewer than *a hundred situations per week are filled from applicants in other districts.* The working of the Metropolitan Exchanges shows, in fact, that, whatever the state of trade, the wider the area covered by the Labour Exchange organisation, the larger is the proportion of situations filled, the fewer the employers whose wants remain unsatisfied and the smaller the remnants of applicants for employment for whom places cannot be found. But the Metropolitan Exchanges are working under great difficulties. They find their operations confined by the boundary of the Administrative County of London, whilst industry has spread out into West Ham and Tottenham, Willesden and Ealing, Wimbledon and Croydon. With such industrial "overflows" from London as the rapidly-growing factories of Luton and Reading, Chelmsford and Erith, and all the intervening country, the London Exchanges are practically unable to get into easy and regular communication. From places further afield they are wholly cut off. It is, in fact, a grave misfortune that, as we have seen, the "network of Labour Bureaux" covering the whole country,† which the Unemployed Workmen Act ordered to be established, has not yet come into existence.

(iii) *The Experience of the Seamen's Labour Exchange.*

What is in some respects an even more interesting experiment in Labour Exchanges is that, confined to a single industry, but extending to the whole of the United Kingdom, which the Board of Trade has conducted for nearly half a century under the Merchant Shipping Acts. Under certain sections of these Acts, which were designed to suppress the evils of "crimping," every engagement of a seaman, a fireman, a cook, a cabin-boy, or other person in the mercantile marine is required to be entered into at the public office maintained by the Government for that purpose. There are nearly 150 Mercantile Marine Offices in as many different seaports, at which places alone seamen can be hired. Thirty-seven of these are nothing but Labour Exchanges, whilst the others are adjuncts of the local Customs offices. There is a waiting-room where Jack can sit and smoke; a register where he can inscribe his temporary address; even a small staff of "runners"—in the Civil Service Estimates euphemistically entered as messengers—whose business it is to know Jack's haunts, so as to find him promptly when he is required. "We undertake practically to find a crew for every ship," said one enthusiastic Superintendent. The master mariner comes to the waiting-room; questions the men; picks out those whom he thinks will best suit his ship; and enters into contract with them then and there, in the presence of the Superintendent, who sees that the conditions of the contract include such as the law makes obligatory, but has otherwise no authority in the matter. These offices are situated where most convenient to the shipping trade, and they are open for the most suitable hours—even, as at Grimsby, where fishing boats need to catch the tide, in the middle of the night. If no suitable man can be found in the port—say, for a boatswain's place—the Superintendent may, at the master's expense, telegraph to the Mercantile Marine Office at the next port

* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LXXXVI. (A) to (E) to Vol. VIII.
† *Ibid.*, Q. 77737.

and have, as a favour, a suitable man advanced his railway fare and sent along. These 150 Mercantile Marine Offices fill more than half a million situations a year; 492,133 in 1906 in the 37 principal offices alone. No seaman is ever at a loss where to apply for whatever situations in his calling may be vacant. It is an interesting reflection upon this experiment that in all our investigations into the tens of thousands of Unemployed whom the Distress Committees have had on their hands, *we have seldom found a seaman*—practically none from the Royal Navy, and very few from the Mercantile Marine.

(iv) *The Functions of the National Labour Exchange.*

We propose that the institution of the Labour Exchange, using the experience of Germany and the Metropolis, should be adapted to the needs of each of our four classes of the Unemployed.

(*a*) *The Labour Exchange and the Men from Permanent Situations.*

The Men from Permanent Situations—our Class I.—would discover at once what situations were vacant, and in what towns; would learn promptly if there was nowhere any opening for them; would ascertain whether the particular services for which they had been trained were being superseded by industrial changes; and, if so, to what occupations they could best turn. Where Trade Unions existed, they could, if desired, use the public offices of the Labour Exchange for keeping their "Vacant Books," and even for their branch meetings. For the Men from Permanent Situations, indeed, the National Labour Exchange would, as we shall presently describe, become the axis of a system of subsidised Trade Insurance against Unemployment. But for the whole of this class, and for their employers, and therefore for the majority of the persons engaged in the industry of the nation, the use of the Labour Exchange might, we suggest, be left entirely optional.

(*b*) *The Labour Exchange and the Men of Discontinuous Employment.*

For the second class, the Men of Discontinuous Employment, the Labour Exchange has to fulfil a more important function. The need for bringing together employer and workman, in our Class I. only an occasional requirement, is, in our Class II., a perpetually recurring need. By its rapid and continuous collection of information, the Labour Exchange would be able to obviate the present futile drifting about in search of work and the incessant "leakages" of time between jobs by which so many men are ruined. The operatives in the building trades and the navvies might ascertain, even before the actual expiration of one job, what other jobs were beginning. In each large urban aggregation, whether the 300 square miles of the Metropolitan business area, or the 50 to 100 square miles of the other great centres, it would be possible, by a free use of the telegraph and telephone, to make known, hour by hour, exactly what openings there were, for each class of labour, in each part of the town. Every morning it could be published all over the Kingdom, in which towns, if any, there was an unsatisfied demand for labour, and for what kind of labour. No less important would it be to make known in which trades, and in which towns, there was an ascertained surplus of workers for whom no places could be found. The navvies, for instance, instead of wandering hither and thither on mere rumours of public works, could be directed straight to the places in which they were needed, in exactly the numbers required. We think that it will probably be found desirable—and, indeed, for the common convenience of employers and employed—that, as in the case of the seamen, it should be made compulsory, at any rate, in certain scheduled trades, for all engagements to be made, not necessarily on the premises of the Labour Exchange, but at least through its organisation, and registered in its books.

(*c*) *The Labour Exchange and the Seasonal Trades.*

A special type of Discontinuous Employment is presented by those trades which have fairly regular fluctuations in the volume of work according to the season of the year. Here the workers find themselves busy during certain months, and habitually short of work during others. As workers in these "seasonal" trades supply a considerable proportion of the Unemployed, we were glad to be furnished by the Board of Trade with statistical returns of their fluctuations during the decade, 1897–1906.

> "These Returns show, in the first place, a good many spring and summer trades. Of these building . . . is the most obvious. During spring, employment improves rapidly, and receives a fresh impetus in July; from the end of August it falls off quite steadily, till the end of the year. Furnishing follows the same general course with a busy time more concentrated in the spring, and coach-building with one in June and July. In coopering, the season comes somewhat later, and is carried

on with only slightly diminished briskness till the end of the year. Brush-making and hat-making have each a second season in the autumn. In clothing, the worst time is in October and November; every subsequent month shows improvement till the late spring. Leather-workers and mill-sawyers, though also busiest in spring and summer, and slacking off to the winter, have not such well-marked seasons. . . .

"The Returns show, in the second place, certain trades whose general tendency is directly the contrary of that outlined above. They may be regarded as winter trades. Steel-smelting, while somewhat irregular, has undoubtedly its slackest times in June and July.

"In the third place, certain trades have . . . very characteristic fluctuations, which are apparently more dependent on social habits than on climatic conditions. Printers are always busiest at the end of November, grow slack as soon as Christmas is past, grow busy in February and March, and slack again from April to June, always recover a little in July, and then fall into a dead season during the summer holidays. Paper-makers, as might be expected, follow the same course, though not so regularly. Tobacco-workers also are busiest in November, and stand idle in July and August. Book-binders . . . agree with printers in being busiest in November, but have a slack season more or less throughout the late spring and summer.

"It will be seen that there is, in coal-mining, a definite seasonal fluctuation. December is busiest; employment falls off in January to recover in February and March; after which it falls off in April, and though recovering in May, becomes slack again throughout June, July and August. With September, there is, in all cases, a recovery. . . . Iron-mining shows definite though limited seasonal fluctuations. The last four months of the year, and May, are busy times; January, April and June to August are times of comparative slackness. For iron and steel works . . . the three months June to August, and January, are marked out as periods of comparative slackness. The tin-plate industry . . . has apparently a similar fluctuation."*

It thus appears that there is no such marked predominance of briskness in the spring and slackness in the winter as is commonly supposed. On the contrary, many industries are at their busiest in the winter months. There is, indeed, no month in the year in which some trades are not usually at their busiest; and no month in the year in which some trades are not usually at their slackest. Thus, January is the busiest of all months at the docks of London and most other ports and one of the busiest for coal-miners; February in paper-making; March in steel-smelting and textile manufacture; April in brush-making and the furnishing trades; May in engineering and ship-building, coach-making, hat-making and leather work; May, June, and July in all the ramifications of the clothing trades, as well as among mill-sawyers; July and August for the railway service and all occupapations in holiday resorts, as well as for carpenters and coopers; August and September for all forms of agricultural harvesting; September for plumbers and iron-miners; October in iron and steel works; November for printing and book-binding, for the tobacco trade, the tin-plate manufacture and the metal trades generally; whilst in December coal-mining, the very extensive theatrical industry, the Post Office service and the gas and electricity works are all at their greatest volume of employment. On the other hand, January shows iron-mining and the furnishing trades to be at their slackest; in February (contrary to popular belief), the plumbers have the most Unemployment of any time of the year; in March and April the coopers; in May and June the London dock labourers and the coal-miners; in July the iron and steel and tin-plate workers; in August the paper-makers, printers, book-binders and tobacco workers; in September the textile operatives and various metal-workers; in October all the clothing trades are at their slackest; in November ship-building is, on the average, at its minimum; whilst December is the worst month for carpenters and engineers, mill-sawyers and coach-builders, leather-workers and brushmakers.

The inference is irresistible that, if we had accurate statistics of the daily volume of employment in all industries, it might well be that we should find the aggregate for all trades, in all parts of the country, to be approximately uniform throughout the year. And this, when we come to think of it, is suggested by the character of the consumers' demand. The income of any highly differentiated industrial community accrues to it from day to day, and becomes available for personal expenditure from week to week, in approximately equal instalments throughout the year. Though each family varies its consumption of different services and commodities at different seasons—now buying winter clothes, now summer clothes, now using more coal, now taking holidays—the total amount of the weekly outlay of the typical household does not exhibit any great variation throughout the year. It is clear, at least, that the variation from season to season, when we take the aggregate for all industries and for the nation as a whole, must be very much smaller than the seasonal slackness which, at present, in trade after trade, annually brings tens of thousands of families into the desolation of prolonged Under-employment.

* Board of Trade Memorandum on Statistics of Seasonal Industries, and Industries carried on by Casual Labour: Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No XXI. (D) to Vol. IX.

.The Discontinuous Employment due to seasonal slackness is, in fact, so far as the labourers and all unspecialized workers are concerned, strictly analogous to the Under-employment of the dock and wharf-labourer. Just as each employer of this kind of labour tends to keep his own reserve, or "Stagnant Pool," which he drains only on his busiest day, so each seasonal trade attracts to itself, not merely enough workers to do its daily average of business throughout the year, but enough for its busiest season, with the result that each trade in turn, as its own particular slack season comes round, has a large proportion of its workers under-employed.

This, however, overstates the case. In some cases the seasonal industries avoid variations of staff by working more continuously in the busy season and "short time" in the slack months. This, in various forms, is the practice of the coal-miners, the textile operatives, the iron and steel and tin-plate workers, and many kinds of factory operatives. It is also to a great extent the practice in agriculture and many minor industries. Where wage-earners enjoy practical continuity of employment under the same employer (but only in those cases), this variation of the length and assiduity of the working time is no doubt the most convenient way of meeting the variation of the demand, especially for the men of any specialized skill.*

In other seasonal trades there is a certain amount of unorganised "dove-tailing." The hop-gardens get their harvesting done by 20,000 workers drawn each September and October from other occupations. About 25,000 Irish labourers still come from Connaught to help to reap the potatoes, and do other harvesting work from Perthshire to the Fen Country.† Some of the Thames riverside workers supply the increased staff still required in the winter (though to a lesser extent than before so much machinery was employed) in the London gas-works. And everywhere in all sorts of industries a certain amount of individual and almost casual "dove-tailing" goes on, by which workers, in their own slack season, contrive to earn a little irregular income at other occupations.

With a National Labour Exchange in effective operation this "dove-tailing" of one seasonal trade into another could be enormously increased, at any rate among the labourers who follow each trade, the women workers, the less specialized of the skilled workers, and the "handy men" and nondescripts whom every industry employs. Thus, to take dock labour and three other large industries only, employing a large proportion of general labourers and only slightly specialized men, we have been furnished by the Board of Trade‡ with figures showing the average number of men employed daily in each month of the year, during 1906, at the London docks and wharves, and in the gas-works, at the water-works, and on the tramways of the whole country. Each of these industries, by itself, shows a variation between its busiest month and its slackest month of between 9 and 22 per cent., the fluctuations affecting some 10,000 men, and that repeatedly. Adding them together, the variation between the total employed at the extremes of high pressure and slackness is only 7 per cent.; the most extreme fluctuation affecting only some 5,000 men, *and the busiest months being those of November, December and January*, when the building trades and brick-making are at their slackest. It is probable that the inclusion of the unskilled men in these two further industries would reduce the aggregate seasonal variation to a vanishing point. This it would be the business of the National Labour Exchange to accomplish. In this way, a much greater continuity of employment throughout the year could be secured for those persons who were employed at all; at the cost (which accompanies every stage in the Suppression of Under-employment) of squeezing out altogether, once and for all, some of those not really required for the work to be done, who now pick up, owing to the absence of organisation, half a subsistence in chronic Under-employment. For these, of course, as a condition of the reform, suitable provision would have to be made.

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* It is in these trades also, that the variations in the consumers' pressure can be made much less extreme by means of a legal limitation of the hours of labour. When the hours of cotton operatives were settled by the individual mill-owner, cotton-spinning and weaving were extreme instances of seasonal trades; as the manufacturer was unable to resist the customers' insistence on instant delivery. Now that the maximum hours are legally fixed, the buyer has learnt to be more regular in his demands. The extreme seasonal irregularity of the London dressmaking would undoubtedly be mitigated if dressmakers were absolutely prevented from working more than a fixed maximum day. Customers would simply not be able to insist on delivery in an unreasonably short time.

† Report . . . relating to Irish Migratory Agricultural Labourers, for 1906 (Cd. 3481).

‡ Board of Trade Memorandum on Statistics of Seasonal Industries, and Industries carried on by Casual Labour (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (D) to Vol. IX.). The case would be stronger if the statistics for dock labour could be given for all the ports, and not merely for London. At Liverpool, also, and apparently at most ports, the dock labourer is busiest in the winter.

(d) *The Labour Exchange and the Under-employed.*

The Men from Permanent Situations, the Men of Discontinuous Employment, and especially those among them whose industries are subject to considerable seasonal fluctuations, are, as we have shown, in the preceding chapter, constantly dropping into our Third Class—the men who are, year in and year out, chronically Under-employed. It is with regard to this class that the Labour Exchange reaches its highest utility. It presents us with what, in our opinion, is the indispensable instrument for dealing with Under-employment. We must postulate, to begin with, the great desirability, from the standpoint of the community, of putting an end to all this "casual" or irregularly intermittent wage-labour, if we could do so, because of its social effects. No housekeeping can stand a demoralising uncertainty as to whether the week's income will be five shillings or five and twenty. We cannot, however, hope to abolish the irregularity of demand which lies at the root of Under-employment. At every port the loading and unloading of ships necessarily depends on their arrival and departure. Whether we have to do with the private enterprise of unloading ships or harvesting crops, or with the public service of the Post Office or the tramways, we cannot expect ever to prevent incessant fluctuations from day to day in the number of men required. But although we cannot prevent, and may not even be able appreciably to lessen, the fluctuations of employment, by each separate firm, and in each separate industry, it is not necessary that these fluctuations should work themselves out, in the world of labour, into *an army of hundreds of thousands of men who are chronically Under-employed.* What a National Labour Exchange could remedy would be the habit of each employer of keeping around him his own reserve of labour. By substituting one common reservoir, at any rate for the unspecialized labourers, we could drain the Stagnant Pools of Labour which this habit produces and perpetuates.

For this purpose, an element of compulsion is indispensable. The evils of the present way of engaging Casual Labour are so manifest, and its direct results in Pauperism and demoralisation have been so clearly ascertained, that our Investigators were led to propose, with regard to dock labour at any rate, that it should be prohibited by law.

> "There seems to be no right," they report, "to claim that such a state of things should continue. We believe that the voluntary establishment of a weekly wage for the great majority of the labourers employed, if not for all of them, is possible, and that if this is done, an employment of such a nature, which requires its extra hands in the winter, might prove a boon to the unskilled workers in other trades, whose busy time is in the summer. Lastly, if no system of weekly engagements is voluntarily established (and we believe it would be an advantage to employers as well as employed), we would be prepared to go further, and suggest *that such a minimum period of engagement be made a legal obligation.*"*

To some such legal prohibition of a method of hiring labour that is demonstrably quite as injurious to the community as was the Truck System, we must inevitably come, if no other remedy can be found. Stopping short, however, of the legal prohibition of casual hirings, we may reasonably ask those employers who continue to adopt this mode of engaging labour to submit to some slight regulations calculated to reduce the social evil that they undoubtedly cause. We propose that it should be made legally compulsory on employers (being persons carrying on industrial or commercial operations for profit), in all those cases in which it is not convenient to them to guarantee a minimum period of employment, which might be put at a month (subject, of course, to the power of dismissal of any particular individual for misconduct, and even of arbitrary replacement of one man by another if desired), to hire such labour as they want, whether for a job, a day, or a week, exactly as is done without complaint in the mercantile marine, *exclusively through the National Labour Exchange.*

We recommend that the National Labour Exchange should make a point of accommodating itself to the needs of every kind of fluctuating industry; that it should be assisted in each locality by an advisory committee of employers and employed; having offices opened exactly where most convenient to employers (for instance, actually inside the dock gates, or at the principal wharves, or at any other places where sudden demands for labour occur); keeping whatever office hours were required (ready, for instance, to supply labourers at five in the morning); and, of course, telephonically interconnected, and organised up to the maximum efficiency. As there would be no other opportunity of getting casual employment at all (with the possible exception of the odd jobs offered by private persons, not engaged in business; and even these we may hope to diminish),

* Final Report on the Relation of Industrial and Sanitary Conditions to Pauperism, by Mr. A. D. Steel-Maitland and Miss Rose Squire, p. 35.

it would not be necessary to make it legally compulsory on the labourers to enrol themselves at the Labour Exchange, except under the circumstances that we have described. Nor would it be necessary legally to prohibit the existence of other agencies for filling situations. As employers would not be able to use them for casual labour, such agencies, dealing, as they do, almost entirely with certain specialized kinds of employment, such as domestic servants, hotel employés and secondary school teachers, would scarcely compete with the National Labour Exchange, and would have, perforce, to confine themselves, as they practically do now, to filling situations of at least a month's duration.

This plan, it will be seen, reduces to a minimum the proposed restriction on the employer, or the interference with his business. It would cause him absolutely no increase of expense. In so far as he can offer regular employment of a month's duration, he is not affected at all. Even for casual labour, he remains as free as before to hire it by the job or by the day only, for as short a period as he chooses. He will have at his disposal all the men in the whole town who are not already engaged. He is able, in fact, to draw from a common reservoir instead of from his own Stagnant Pool. He may have his own choice of men (assuming that they are momentarily disengaged). He may ask for this man or that; he may keep his own list of "preference men"; he may send for ten or a hundred men in order of his preference, or send merely for so many men without naming them. He may even bargain privately with the man of his choice, and virtually secure him beforehand; provided that he lets the formal hiring take place through the Labour Exchange. All that he is forbidden to do is, at any time or under any circumstances, to take on casual labour otherwise than through the Labour Exchange.*

The result to the labourer living by casual employment will be that he will find effectively open to him, not merely the particular demand for labour of this or that wharf, or this or that foreman, on which he has been in the habit of waiting, but the whole aggregate demand of the town. One employer needs men to-day only, but another needs men to-morrow; one trade is busy this month, another next month. The policy of the National Labour Exchange would be, subject to any preferences expressed by employers, so to distribute the available men, and so to "dovetail" the engagements offered to each of them, as to secure to each man who was employed at all five or six days' work in every week. In so far as this was achieved, we should have done for Casual Labour what has been done compulsorily for every person employed in the mercantile marine, and voluntarily for skilled nurses in most large towns by the various nurses' institutes, etc., and for the members of the Corps of Commissionaires in London, namely, combined freedom to the employer to hire only for a job, with practical continuity of work to the person employed. To quote the words of an able student of this problem, "decasualisation will reconstruct the whole conditions of life in the lowest ranks of industry, sifting out for remedial treatment a certain number of 'unemployables' and forcing up the level of all the rest. It will replace the casual class—always on the verge of distress, always without reserves for an emergency—by a class for whom the words foresight, organisation, and thrift may represent not a mockery but a reality."†

The question may present itself, why, if the chronic Under-employment of the labourers can be thus prevented, has it not already been prevented? The answer is to be found, as has been demonstrated at Liverpool and elsewhere, partly in the difficulty that each individual employer experiences in attempting to reorganise the habits of a trade; partly in the difficulty of even a whole trade by itself affecting a change; but very largely also in the very real opposition which the labourers themselves have offered to the introduction of regular employment. There is, indeed, a difficulty which has to be faced. If, by means of an effective Labour Exchange at Liverpool, the whole work of the docks could be done by 8,000 men con-

* We see no reason why it should not be open to the employers in any particular trade to undertake, if they prefer, the organisation of their own casual employment. The Liverpool shipowners, who now refuse to avoid creating a quite unnecessary congestion of surplus labour at the Liverpool Docks, with the gravest social consequences, might elect (rather than rely exclusively on the National Labour Exchange) to establish such an organization for themselves. Provided that they offered continuous employment of not less than a month to their men—as a very little organisation and a small insurance premium would enable them to do—they would be free to make their own arrangements. They might, for instance, establish a mutual society, which itself engaged the labourers by the month, and supplied them to the shipowners as required. They might even combine both advantages, the mutual society engaging and supplying the regular corps of men, of the number up to which constant employment could be guaranteed, and also drawing on the National Labour Exchange in any temporary emergency (as any individual shipowner could also do). Analogous arrangements might be made by other Associations of Employers.

† "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909, p. 219.

tinuously employed, with a thousand or two more retained for exceptional times of pressure, instead of (as at present) being spread over 15,000 men who are chronically Under-employed, the social gain to Liverpool would be great, but there would be 5,000 men squeezed out altogether. Every dock labourer in Liverpool fears that he would be among the excluded. It is, in fact, not possible to abolish Under-employment, except at the cost of depriving some of the Under-employed men even of the employment that they have. Hence the task cannot be undertaken except by a public Authority, and by one prepared at the same time to provide, adequately and honourably, for the men displaced by the improvement. We deal with this in our sections on the Absorption of the Surplus and the Provision for the Unemployed.

(e) *The Labour Exchange and the Suppression of Vagrancy.*

The National Labour Exchange presents what, in our opinion, is the only effectual way of suppressing Vagrancy. As is recited in the Report of the recent Departmental Committee,* every variety of treatment of the Vagrant, from the most penal severity to the most generous laxity, has been tried in vain. So long as the only method of finding work is for the workman simply to go and seek it, there is no possibility of preventing the Unemployed from wandering from town to town. So long as the workman in search of a job has to wander, it is impossible to distinguish between him and the Professional Vagrant. So long as the "public works men" are left to stream helplessly from one job to another on mere rumour, without any kind of adjustment between the numbers attracted and the numbers required, it is impracticable to stop the swarm of "cadgers," who prey on the generosity of the navvy and contaminate the locality in which the contractor is at work. "The knowledge of men of this class which I have gained," sums up Captain Eardley-Wilmot, "in my experience as governor of both convict and local prisons, and more recently as an Inspector, has convinced me that no alteration in treatment, within the limits that would be allowed in this country, could affect their number. Causes for increase must be looked for in the social and economic conditions of the period under discussion. I may add that this is the opinion of every thoughtful and experienced prison official with whom I have discussed the question."†

With the National Labour Exchange organised in all towns it will become possible for the unemployed workman in any part of the Kingdom to inform himself, with precision, whether or not he is required in any other place. There will cease to be any excuse for wandering in search of work. We propose that, if it appears, on telegraphic or telephonic communication, that there is reason to believe that a workman can obtain employment in another town, and if he wishes to go there for that purpose, but has not money, a special non-transferable railway-ticket should be supplied to him, upon an obligation to report himself the same day at the Labour Exchange of the town to which he is sent, and to repay the cost of the ticket by weekly instalments from his wages. Arrangements could be made, whenever thought desirable, for the man to be met on arrival, and conducted to the Labour Exchange. If this were done, it would be possible to prohibit all wandering without means of subsistence and to abolish the Casual Ward. But we do not propose that the man found destitute "on the road" should be sent to

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* After elaborate inquiry, the Departmental Committee, in the absence of a National Labour Exchange, found no better expedient to recommend than the revival of a device which has already had a long career of failure. Without alluding to the hopeless breakdown of the plan of giving "passes" to such persons as were considered legitimately entitled to travel on foot from place to place—a breakdown amply recorded in the official records—the Committee recommende "that the police should be empowered to issue a way-ticket to a man who can satisfy them, either that he has worked at some employment (other than a casual job) within a recent period, say, three months, and that he has reasonable ground for expecting to get work at a certain place, *and that he is likely to keep to it* (!), or that he has some other good ground for desiring to go to some particular place" (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, p. 481). The way-ticket is then to entitle the bearer to food and lodging each night at the Casual Ward. Thus, it is actually recommended in 1906, that working men should be encouraged and helped to *walk* to the town in which they can get work, though it would be far cheaper (considering the loss of time and the daily cost of food, etc.), to send them by rail! "Going on foot," deposed a distinguished economist, "is the dearest way of travelling; I should certainly send him by train." (Evidence before the Commission, *Q.* 88146). Moreover, as the Committee itself sagely remarks elsewhere, in contradiction of its own recommendation, "a ticket giving the right to wander . . . is in itself *an inducement to tramp*, and the habit of Vagrancy and a confirmed love of the road, would, in our view, more probably result than the finding of any settled employment." (Report of Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, 1906, p. 48). We concur in this opinion, and we consider that any form of way-ticket would prove, *as it has repeatedly proved already, whenever it has been tried*, a positive aggravation of the evil.

† *Ibid.*, p. 122. (Memorandum by Captain Eardley-Wilmot.)

prison. His duty would be to report himself to the nearest branch of the National Labour Exchange, where he would find, without fail, either opportunity of working, or else the suitable provision that we shall describe. If this were done it would be possible to make all the minor offences of Vagrancy—such as begging, "sleeping out," hawking or peddling without a licence, wandering without means of subsistence, wandering with children in such a way as to subject them to hardship or deprive them of the means of education, etc.—occasions for *instant and invariable commitment* by the Justices, not for short sentences to the ordinary prison, which experience shows to be useless, but to one or other of the reformatory Detention Colonies which must form an integral part of the system of provision, and which will be described in our section on the Provision for the Unemployed.

(*f*) *The Labour Exchange as a Method of enforcing Personal Responsibility.*

A large part of what is erroneously classed with Vagrancy is, as we have seen, merely a failure of a section of the residents of the great cities to get work sufficient even to provide themselves with a night's lodging. At present there is, indeed, no practical method of enforcing upon able-bodied men the obligation of working. Every large town has its class of "houseless poor" who, with the aid of Free Shelters and philanthropic distributions of food, and occasional resorts to the Casual Ward and to "sleeping out," manage to exist with the very minimum of work. This deteriorating and contaminating class cannot at present be suppressed, because (in the absence of any proof that they could get work for the asking) public opinion does not permit of any real punishment of their offence, and persists, in fact, in relieving their physical wants. An analogous difficulty stands at present in the way of any real enforcement on negligent or drunken parents of their parental obligations. The Local Education Authorities, who find children hungry at school, and the Local Health Authorities, who are driven to supply milk to starving infants, find it practically impossible to prosecute even the most criminally negligent parents, because there is no proof that they could get work if they chose. We have seen, moreover, in our chapter on Charge and Recovery, how difficult it is for the Poor Law Authorities, even where men could earn substantial wages, to bring sufficient proof to convince County Court Judges and Magistrates that they are in a position to pay what is due from them. In all these directions the existence of the National Labour Exchange, where any man may be ensured either the opportunity of working, or else the provision that we shall presently describe, will enable personal responsibility to be far more effectually enforced than is now possible. Whilst no man who is fulfilling all his obligations need be compelled to report himself to the Labour Exchange, even if he is Unemployed, such attendance and report would, of course, be an imperative requirement and condition of any form of Public Assistance. If a child is found hungry at school, or without boots, the first question will be why is the parent not at the Labour Exchange, where either work or adequate provision is available for him. When this is understood, it will be found possible to take much more drastic action against those who, out of idleness, selfishness or negligence, or through drunkenness, refuse to provide themselves with lodging, or deprive their wives and children of the necessary food and clothing, or fail to make any payments that are due from them.

(B) The Absorption of the Surplus.

Some enthusiastic advocates of the Labour Exchange think so highly of the improvement that it would introduce in the organization of the nation's industry that they believe it would be possible to give continuous employment to those at present unemployed, and at the same time, through the constant growth of the nation's industry, obtain other places for the section of the Under-employed who would thereby be squeezed out. We do not take this view. We think that the "Decasualisation of the Casual Labourer" and the Suppression of Under-employment cannot be undertaken, and ought not to be undertaken, without simultaneously providing, in some way or other, for the men who would be thrown out. We have shown that there exists in the United Kingdom to-day no inconsiderable surplus of labour—not, indeed, of workmen who could not, with an improved organization of industry, be productively employed; but of workmen who are, as a matter of fact, now chronically Under-employed, and of whose potential working time a large part is, to their own mental and physical hurt, and to our great loss, at present wholly wasted. By the working of a National Labour Exchange such as we have proposed, and by the deliberate draining of the Stagnant Pools of Labour into a common reservoir, we contemplate that a rapidly increasing number of these Under-employed men will find themselves employed with practical continuity, whilst there will be a corres-

"(1) The employer would find it less advantageous to employ boys, even if he took them in double shifts, and paid them no more per hour than he did before, and he would consequently not be so anxious so to alter his processes as to substitute them for adult men. But (as the supply of boy labour would be halved) there would be a positive scarcity of boys, and their rate of wages per hour would probably rise, so that the employer would tend to employ, instead of boys, actually more adult men than at present.

"(2) The youth, who now has even too much pocket-money, and gets, therefore, too soon independent of home, and too easily led into evil courses, would find his earnings reduced, perhaps not by half, but probably by one-third, and his leisure absorbed under discipline.

"(3) At the Polytechnic it would be possible, in thirty hours a week, from fourteen to eighteen (or twenty-one) to put the youth through a course of physical training, under medical supervision, under which he would learn to swim, to row, to box, to ride, etc.; and it could be ensured that the adverse hygienic conditions of town life would be rectified.

"(4) There would be possible, in the course of four or seven years' half-time at the trade school, an education of hand, eye and brain; a practical ability to use competently the ordinary tools; a knowledge of drawing, practical geometry, and workshop arithmetic; and even a groundwork of training in particular handicrafts; such as few even of duly indentured apprentices get. We need not try, or even desire, to convert every boy into a skilled engineer, cabinet-maker, or compositor. But we could make every boy, whatever his occupation, into a man of trained hand, eye and brain; disciplined, and good-mannered; of sound muscle and fully developed lungs; with a general knowledge of common tools and simple machines; able to read a plan and make a drawing to scale; ready to undertake any kind of unspecialized work, and competent, even if he does unskilled labour, to do it 'with his head.'"*

With regard to the need for extending, to boys between 14 and 18, something like the supervision and control exercised over them whilst at school, there is abundant evidence. At present, as in the past, it is mainly the "juvenile adult," between 16 and 21, who recruits our prison population. It is the absence of any system of control and organization for the employment of the young which is universally declared to be one of the principal causes of wrong-doing. "When a boy leaves school the hands of organization and compulsion are lifted from his shoulders. If he is the son of very poor parents, his father has no influence, nor, indeed, a spare hour, to find work for him; he must find it for himself; generally he does find a job, and if it does not land him into a dead alley at 18 he is fortunate. Or he drifts, and the tidy scholar soon becomes a ragged and defiant corner loafer. Over 80 per cent. of our charges admit that they were not at work when they got into trouble."†

We have hitherto referred only to boys. But the problem of the girl is, from an educational standpoint, analogous. They all need the training of body and brain, hand and eye; they all need the instruction in the use of the household implements and tools; they all need the technical education that is necessary to produce competent housewives and mothers. Even if we regard the industrial work of girls as, for the most part, a "blind alley," destined to end at marriage, the need for their technical training in household duties becomes all the more imperative. They do not, and cannot, get such training before they leave the elementary school. The compulsory release of girls up to eighteen from industrial wage-earning for half their time, and their compulsory attendance at suitable educational courses, in which physical training and the various branches of domestic economy and household management (including how to rear a baby) would find place, offers, in our opinion, the best way of ensuring their adequate preparation for their duties as wives and mothers.

We should recommend these reforms even if they rested solely on their educational advantages. It is upon the proper physical and technical training of its youth that the nation has eventually to depend. But they present also the additional attraction that they would, we believe, arrest the tendency so to arrange industrial operations as to replace the labour of adult men and women by that of boys and girls. We do not think, in the face of the large numbers of the Unemployed and the Under-employed which our inquiry has revealed, that any objection can be made on the plea that the labour of immature boys and girls is indispensable to the nation's industry. One result of halving the effective labour force of boys and girls in industrial employment would, in fact, be to enable the National Labour Exchange to find places, at the time of "decasualisation," for at least as many men as the "Decasualisation of Casual Labour" and Suppression of Under-employment would leave on its hands.

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* Evidence before the Commission, Q. 93031, Part I.

† Annual Report of the Commissioners of Prisons for 1907–8 (Cd. 4300).

(ii.) *The Reduction of the Hours of Labour of Railway and Tramway Servants.*

We look for a gradual reduction of the daily hours of labour in practically all industries. Just as the fourteen hours' day common in the eighteenth century gave way to the twelve hours' day of the opening of the nineteenth, and this again successively to the ten hours' day of a couple of generations ago, and to the nine hours' day of 1871, so we anticipate that, at no distant date, we shall regard as normal the eight hours' day already obtained in various industries. This, however, has, in our view, little bearing on Unemployment, and none at all on Under-employment. In most cases the improvement in industrial organization, the universal "speeding up" of work, and the diminution of those spells and intervals which, in the longer day, so greatly mitigated the severity of the toil, have resulted in the workers, in most manufacturing processes, at each successive reduction of hours, turning out practically as much product as before. Though the working hours have been reduced, the number of men employed has not thereby been increased. The social and economic advantage of the shortening of the working day, which we think it difficult to exaggerate, are to be found in the increased opportunities which it affords for recreation and self-improvement, and the duties of family life and citizenship.

In one great industry, however, that of the railway service, together with the allied omnibus and tramway services, the working day of nearly all the workers is still greatly in excess of what is socially desirable. The excessive hours of duty of engine-drivers and firemen, guards and porters, and tramway and omnibus drivers and conductors still amount, we regret to say, to a public scandal. It is not in the public interest that men should be on duty for twelve, fourteen, and occasionally even eighteen hours out of the twenty-four; or that they should resume duty after less than ten or twelve hours' interval. The failure of voluntary effort to obtain a reduction of hours led Parliament in 1893 to pass into law the Regulation of Railways Act, under which the Board of Trade was empowered, on being satisfied that the hours of labour of any railway servant were excessive, to require the railway company to submit a new and improved schedule of working hours. Under this Act, which has been slowly enforced by the Board of Trade, a certain improvement has taken place in the course of the fifteen years, especially in the hours of signalmen in busy signal-boxes, who now usually enjoy an eight hours' day.

The hours of most grades of railway operatives are, however, under nearly all the companies, still excessive. The Board of Trade Returns do not now reveal the exact hours of duty of the railway men; and no account is taken of any instances of less than a twelve hours' day, which often means, not forty-eight, but eighty-four hours per week. Yet in the one month of October, 1907, no fewer than 113,490 cases were reported by the railway companies themselves of men who were kept on duty for more than twelve hours in the day. Even deducting the time spent in travelling home (which is, however, rightly paid for as time given to the employer's service), there were no fewer than 56,180 cases in which men were kept on arduous and responsible duty for thirteen hours or more in a day—some of them for fifteen and even for eighteen hours.* That such excessive hours of duty are not really required by the exigencies of railway administration, or by the accidents of fog or breakdown, provided proper arrangements are made, is demonstrated by the fact that the Great Central Railway Company, in the same month of October, 1907, was able to report that scarcely any of its passenger train workers, and a tiny percentage only of its goods train workers had ever once exceeded twelve hours' duty.†

The evil is not confined to the railway service. The great majority of tramway conductors and drivers in the United Kingdom still apparently work, not for forty-eight but for seventy, and occasionally as much as eighty or ninety hours per week; and even those directly in the services of the Municipal Authorities administering their own tramways usually work for twelve hours a day. The day's duty, too, is often made more harassing by being "split" between two turns, with an interval between, so that from start to finish the man is away from home for as much as sixteen or eighteen hours. The work of the omnibus drivers and conductors usually extends to eighty and even ninety hours per week.

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* Return in Pursuance of Sec. 4 of the Regulation of Railways Act, 1889 (Cd. 3894), 1908.
† *Ibid.*

Here there is no question of a new principle being involved. For the past twenty years the Board of Trade has intervened, in order to secure, by means of the powers deliberately entrusted to it by Parliament, shorter hours of labour for adult men. We think that the time has come when this intervention should become systematic, covering the whole field of the railway, tramway and omnibus services; and that those responsible for the administration of these services should be required to submit schedules providing that no man's ordinary duty should exceed, if not forty-eight, at any rate, as a maximum, sixty hours in any one week, or should be so divided as to deprive him of proper intervals for sleep, recreation, and the duties of family life.

This reform is advocated and required for its own sake. But such a reduction of the hours of duty of these classes of operatives would have the further advantage of actually increasing the number of men required in an occupation where employment is exceptionally stable and regular. If undertaken concurrently with the suppression of Under-employment, it would undoubtedly enable the National Labour Exchange to find places, not necessarily for the particular men thereby displaced, but for a number of men equivalent to a large proportion of the surplus labour thereby revealed and identified.

(iii) *The Withdrawal from Industrial Wage-Earning of the Mothers of Young Children.*

We have seen that, of the 50,000 widows and deserted wives whom the Poor Law Authorities of the United Kingdom elect to maintain on Outdoor Relief, mainly because of their 135,000 children under fourteen, the vast majority are driven to engage in industrial work, notwithstanding their receipt of Outdoor Relief, because this is deliberately fixed at a rate inadequate for their support. It has long been the policy of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, as well as of that for Scotland, that Outdoor Relief or Aliment, where given at all, should always be adequate for the proper support of the family. It is obvious that, where there are young children, it is suicidal for the nation to drive the mother to earn money in industry, at the expense of so neglecting the children that they grow up, if they grow up at all, stunted, weak and untrained, and almost inevitably destined to recruit the ranks of the Under-employed and of Pauperism. Yet this, as we have seen, is what is happening to-day.

An analogous evil is taking place among the majority of the Unemployed and the Under-employed. Because the man's earnings cease, or are small and uncertain, the wife is driven to earn money at the laundry, or by "charing," by taking work out to be done at home in all the "sweated" trades, or in the thousand and one ways in which hard-driven women toil for a few shillings a week in London and other great cities.

Under a reformed administration such as we propose, the mothers of young children will not be driven to neglect their home duties by engaging in industrial work. If the widow, or other mother to whom Home Aliment is allowed, is not actually unfit to have the charge of her children, the Registrar of Public Assistance will, in accordance with the policy hitherto pressed in vain on the Boards of Guardians, peremptorily see to it that the amount allowed to her is sufficient for the proper support of the family group. The children will be, in effect, "boarded-out" with their own mother; and it will naturally be a condition of such Home Aliment that she devotes her time and energy to their up-bringing, and not to the industrial work which, with its concomitant neglect of the children, is as uneconomical to the nation as it is distasteful to every good mother. Similarly, when we get the Under-employed men, by the operation of the National Labour Exchange, regularly getting five or six days' work a week; and the Unemployed getting either prompt work or the provision that we shall presently describe—this, too, so far as made for the support of wife and children, being conditional on the mother giving her time and energy to her own children—the wives will, at any rate, not be driven to neglect their homes by engaging in industrial work in order to keep the household from starvation. There is, as we have seen, a consensus of testimony that it is the chronic Under-employment of the men, not any craving of the women to leave their home duties, that causes the greater part of the industrial work of wives and mothers. Concurrently with the operations of the National Labour Exchange for the Suppression of Under-employment, we may accordingly count on a considerable voluntary withdrawal of wives and mothers from industrial wage-earning; leaving, therefore, directly or indirectly, in the various re-arrangements of industry that will be taking place, many vacancies to be filled by men.

It is not, of course, suggested that the particular work heretofore done by the boys and girls, by the railway and tramway workers and by the mothers of families should be given to the particular men displaced by "decasualisation." What would happen would be that each employer would so re-arrange his employment of labour as to get his work done as conveniently as before, taking on, as additional hands, the most efficient men that he could obtain. These would leave vacancies which would tend to be filled by men who would otherwise have furnished the daily recruitment of the Under-employed that now goes on; or by the younger, the more energetic of those already in that great army. It is in this way that the total number of those at present Under-employed would be reduced to the number who could get fairly continuous employment. It is not necessary to imagine that the most demoralised and deteriorated man among the casual dock labourers would be able to become either a railway signalman, a telegraph messenger, or a shirt-maker.

(c) The Regularization of the National Demand for Labour.

We have given prominence to the Absorption of Labour by the three desirable reforms that we have just described, apart from the usual expansion of industry, because the nation cannot be expected to undertake even so great an improvement as the Suppression of Under-employment, without adequate assurance that its industry would not thereby be crippled at times by lack of hands, or that openings could be found for the Casual Labourers who would be no longer required as such. But apart from preventing the weary and demoralising aimless hunt for work, and diminishing the present "leakage" of time between jobs, the National Labour Exchange will not prevent Unemployment, whenever the total volume of the business of the nation, and even of all the nations of the world, falls off in those periodical depressions of trade of which we have, as yet, no complete explanation. In the years 1826, 1839–42, 1847, 1857–8, 1867–9, 1878–9, 1884–7, 1892–5, 1903–5, and 1908–9 such cyclical trade depressions of general character have sent up the percentage of Unemployed workmen to three, four and even five times as many as in the better years. The proportion of Trade Union members in Unions paying Out of Work Benefit (as to whom alone there are yet any statistics), who retain their situations, falls from the 97 or 98 per cent. characteristic of good years, to 92 or even to 89 per cent. This means that something like a couple of hundred thousand skilled workmen in the United Kingdom find themselves, through no fault of their own, without work or wages, and unable, whatever their character or their efforts, for a prolonged period to get employment. At the same time all the various grades of unskilled and general labourers find their employment more than usually intermittent, and all the evils of Under-employment and of the seasonal fluctuations are intensified. The National Labour Exchange will be more than ever useful in these years of depression in demonstrating and accurately measuring the surplus of applicants over situations. But it cannot fill vacancies that do not exist. What is needed in the lean years, which we must expect to recur once or twice in every decade, though we cannot yet accurately predict their dates—what is required as much for the skilled men as for the labourers—is some means of keeping the demand for their services at a uniform level.

We think that the Government can do a great deal to regularize the aggregate demand for labour as between one year and another, by a more deliberate arrangement of its orders for work of a capital nature.

> "In round numbers," deposed our most distinguished statistician,* "it may be estimated that 200,000 or fewer able-bodied adult males are out of work from non-seasonal causes one year with another, and have no sufficient resources, and that this number fluctuates between 100,000 in the best year, to 300,000 in the worst. . . . The economic and industrial problem is to re-arrange the demand for labour to the extent indicated by these numbers. . . . There is consequently a need, in the worst year, for wages to the extent of £10,000,000 to bring it to a level with the best, so far as these men are concerned; for the whole of the last ten years £40,000,000 would have sufficed. The annual wages bill of the country is estimated at £700,000,000. . . . Is it possible for the Government and other public bodies who employ labour in large quantities to counteract the industrial ebb and flow of demand by inducing a complementary flow and ebb; by withdrawing part of their

* Mr. A. L. Bowley, Reader in Statistics, London School of Economics, University of London; Evidence before the Commission, Q. 88192, Pars. 6, 9; *Westminster Gazette*, March 27th, 1907.

demand when industry needs all the labour it can get, and increasing the demand when industry is slack? To have a useful effect this alteration would have to be commensurable with the sum named above (£40,000,000 in ten years)."

We think that there can be no doubt that, out of the 150 millions sterling annually expended by the National and Local Authorities on works and services,* it would be possible to earmark at least four millions a year, as not to be undertaken equally, year by year, as a matter of course; but to be undertaken, out of loan, on a ten years' programme, at unequal annual rates, to the extent even of ten or fifteen millions in a single year, at those periods when the National Labour Exchange reported that the number of able-bodied applicants, for whom no places could be found anywhere within the United Kingdom, was rising above the normal level. When this report was made by the Minister responsible for the National Labour Exchange—whenever, for instance, the Percentage Unemployment Index as now calculated † rose above four—the various Government Departments would recur to their ten years' programme of capital outlay; the Admiralty would put in hand a special battleship, and augment its stock of guns and projectiles; the War Office would give orders for some of the additional barracks that are always being needed, and would further replenish its multifarious stores; the Office of Works would get on more quickly with its perpetual task of erecting new post offices and other Government buildings, and of renewing the worn-out furniture; the Post Office would proceed at three or four times its accustomed rate with the extension of the telegraph and telephone to every village in the Kingdom; even the Stationery Office would get on two or three times as fast as usual with the printing of the volumes of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, and the publication of the national archives. But much more could be done. It is plain that many millions have to be spent in the next few decades in rebuilding the worst of the elementary schools, greatly adding to the number of the secondary schools, multiplying the technical institutes and training colleges, and doubling and trebling the accommodation and equipment of our fifteen universities. All this building and furnishing work, on which alone we might usefully spend the forty millions per decade that are in question, is not in fact, and need not be for efficiency, done in equal annual instalments. There might well be a ten years' programme of capital Grants-in-Aid of the local expenditure on educational buildings and equipment. It requires only the stimulus of these Grants-in-Aid, made at the periods when the Minister in charge of the National Labour Exchange reports that the Index Number of Unemployment has reached the Warning Point, for these works to be put in hand by the Local Education Authorities all over the Kingdom to exactly the extent that the situation demands. At the same time the Local Authorities could be incited to undertake their ordinary municipal undertakings of a capital nature, whether tramways or waterworks, public baths or electric power stations, artizans dwellings or Town Halls, drainage works or street improvements, to a greater extent in the years of slackness than in the years of good trade. This, indeed, they are already tending to do; and to the great development of municipal enterprise in this direction, setting up a small ebb and flow of its own to some extent counteracting the flow and ebb of private industry, we are inclined to attribute the fact that the cyclical depressions of the last twenty years have been less severely felt in the United Kingdom than were those of 1878–9 and of 1839–42.

What we are proposing is not that the Government or the Local Authorities should start Relief Works. It is, indeed, the very opposite of the Relief Works for the employment of the Unemployed to which we have been accustomed:—

"A scheme of this kind," continues Mr. Bowley, "would differ from a crude form of Relief Works in four important ways:—

(*a*) The work concerned would be started before Unemployment became acute, say, when the Percentage Unemployed Index reached 4 per cent.

(*b*) There would be no artificial demand made for labour, only an adjustment in time of the ordinary demand.

(*c*) The Unemployed, as a class, would not be attracted, *for the demand would come through ordinary trade sources*, and before there was any considerable dearth of employment.

(*d*) The wages paid would be measured only by the work done, being contracted out on the ordinary commercial basis.

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* Including expenditure out of loans, but excluding all interest and repayment of debt and pensions.

† But a much more accurate statistical index would presently become available.

"Such a scheme need involve no expenditure, save of thought and of forethought; is of the nature of prevention rather than of cure; and in proportion as the scale of its operation was sufficient would remove the principal legitimate cause of dissatisfaction of the genuine workman with industrial conditions."*

It is, in fact, vital to this plan of Regularizing the Demand for Labour that there should be no attempt to employ the Unemployed as such. The men and women taken on would be picked out for employment, in the ordinary way, because they seemed the most efficient at their trades, and the most suitable for the service required. They would be taken on exactly in the numbers, and in the proportions between grade and grade, as was required for the most economical and efficient execution of the work. It would be quite immaterial whether they were momentarily out of a job or whether they relinquished other employment to take up what seemed a better engagement. In short, whether the works put in hand are done by direct employment (as at Woolwich Arsenal, the Army Clothing Factory or the Government Dockyards), or put out to contract (as with some warships, most of the buildings and stores, and all the furniture and printing), it is essential that they should be done *in the ordinary way*, by the departments or contractors ordinarily concerned, and by the best of the available workmen and labourers usually engaged in just those kinds of work, taken on because their services are wanted, and without any regard to whether or not they are "out of a job". They would have absolutely no connection or contact with whatever provisions were made for the men in want or in destitution. It is not the function of these enterprises to relieve distress—that will, as we have presently to describe, be otherwise provided for—but to prevent, long before they fall into distress, the two or three hundred thousand good and efficient workmen from becoming Unemployed.

The works that the National Government or the Local Authorities might, in this way, put in hand in the lean years of the trade cycle, need not, of course, be confined to the kinds that we have mentioned, or to those to which we have hitherto been accustomed. It has, in particular, been pressed upon us by many witnesses that considerable schemes of Afforestation might advantageously be undertaken by the Government; and one estate in the West of Scotland has actually been acquired for that purpose. Moreover, the attention called to the loss of land by erosion of the coast at various points has led to proposals for Coast Protection and Land Reclamation, for which it has been suggested that "the Unemployed" could be engaged. These latter proposals are under the consideration of a separate Royal Commission, whose Report will doubtless show to what extent and under what conditions any such works could usefully be undertaken. It is, however, clear that, to the extent that it may be profitable for the nation to engage in either Afforestation or Land Reclamation, these enterprises should be undertaken, not as Relief Works for the Unemployed, but as public enterprises of national importance, valuable in themselves, but, as we should suggest, executed out of loans on a ten years' programme; and, within the decade, made to vary in volume, in such a way, as far as may be practicable, as to ebb and flow in a manner complementary to the flow and ebb of private industry. Both Afforestation and Land Reclamation have the advantage that they can be done in intermittent spells, the progress made and the staff employed being capable of graduation according to need. But neither Afforestation nor Land Reclamation can be done by men quite unskilled in these occupations. In both cases experience shows that the work is of a kind that is within the compass, if there is to be economy and efficiency, of particular classes of labourers, and of these classes only. It is work for which they have been more or less trained, and akin to that on which they are usually employed. It is these men who ought to be engaged for the work, whenever, in accordance with the Report of the Minister responsible for the National Labour Exchange, it is decided to undertake it, or to augment the staff upon it—not a heterogeneous crowd of men drawn from those who have applied for relief in the large towns. The work of planting trees, for instance, can best be done by the agriculturists out of work; and *so long as any such can be hired by the local superintendent of the plantation*, there is no reason why townsmen should be brought down to do it. To start making embankments and sea-walls with distressed tailors and bricklayers and clerks, when there are navvies looking for employment, is as great a wrong to the navvies (and as uneconomical) as it would be to take on the navvies at the Army Clothing Factory or to put them to build a new school. Each work, in short, should be undertaken, not by any Distress Committee or Unemployment Authority, but by the particular Department requiring it; and should be executed by the best and most efficient of the men accustomed to that kind of work who can, at the time, be found and hired in the ordinary way. Under these conditions we think that

* Evidence before the Commission; Q. 88192, Par. 9.

the Board of Agriculture might well take its share with the other public Departments in regularizing the national demand for labour; and might always therefore have on hand extensive works of Afforestation and Land Reclamation, to be done out of loan, and executed on a ten years' programme, for which it would take on men, or place contracts, to a greater or smaller extent each year, according to the Reports of the National Labour Exchange as to the state of the Labour Market.

It is an advantage of this method of executing the public enterprises of capital value which the nation requires during each decade, that it is actually cheaper than doing them, year by year, without thought of the Labour Market. For (what is usually forgotten) capital is Unemployed and Under-employed to at least as great an extent as labour. It is in the lean years of the trade cycle, when business is depressed, that most capital is Unemployed, and the Bank rate is at its lowest. It is, accordingly, just in the years that Government works are needed in order to keep up the National Demand for Labour that Government can borrow at the cheapest rate. The influence of this fact upon municipal enterprise has, in the last two decades, been most marked. It has, however, as yet scarcely affected the ordering of the national expenditure of a capital nature; partly, perhaps, because the Treasury book-keeping excludes, deliberately, anything in the nature of a capital account, and insists on regarding all expenditure within the year as chargeable exclusively to the income of that year. Yet to concentrate in the lean years most of the whole capital outlay of each decennium is clearly to reduce the cost of the works. This consideration enables us also to see that the undertaking of such works by the Government in the lean years does not, as is sometimes thoughtlessly alleged, cause as much Unemployment as it prevents. On the contrary, it actually increases the total volume of industry for the decade as a whole. It is objected that if the Government spends a pound on employing labour, it has to take that same amount from the taxpayer, who thereupon has necessarily to reduce his own expenditure on labour. But this is to ignore the fact that, in the years of trade depression, if the Government (which need not be subject to depression) sets the machine in motion, it may use, not the proceeds of taxes, but Unemployed floating capital, and mills and plant that are temporarily Under-employed, to employ the labour. If the Government, in years of depression, when no one else is willing to embark in new undertakings, borrows some of the capital that is lying idle and unused—offered, in fact, in vain at 2 or 3 per cent. per annum—in order to augment its own enterprises, it interferes with no taxpayer's employment of his coachmen or gardeners. Even those from whom the capital has been borrowed increase rather than decrease their personal expenditure. Thus there is in this way a real addition to industry. That which would otherwise have been idle is set to productive work. There is here, not merely a Regularization of the National Demand for Labour, but actually an increase, taking the ten years as a whole, over what would otherwise have been demanded. The interest and sinking fund on the loans raised in the lean years has, of course, to be met, but the nation has by that time the advantage of the new work; and the charge falls, moreover, largely on the years of good trade and high profits, when a curb on private expenditure is, from the standpoint of Regularizing the National Demand for Labour, a positive advantage.*

(D) The Provision for the Unemployed.

However effective may be the National Labour Exchange in getting men into continuous employment; however great may prove the opportunities of absorption afforded by limiting the labour of boys and the excessive hours of men; and however successful the Government may be in regularizing the National Demand for Labour, we cannot hope to escape having to make provision for a residuum of men and women who find themselves in distress from want of work. The measures that we have suggested will, we believe, go far to prevent unemployment; and they will certainly reduce the evil to manageable dimensions. Nevertheless there will be, at the outset, a considerable, and, at all times, a certain number of Unemployed, for whom (especially as there will be no Poor Law, and no other public agency dealing with able-bodied men) definite public provision must be made.

* On the other hand, it must be remembered that this plan of using Government Works as the means of Regularizing the National Demand for Labour is entirely inconsistent with the claim sometimes made that the Government and Local Authorities ought to afford constant employment to those in their service, and should never reduce their staffs. Whatever force there may be in the plea for permanence of tenure under the present conditions, we think that it will be greatly lessened when there exists an efficient National Labour Exchange, and a sufficiently Regularised National Demand for Labour.

(i.) *Trade Union Insurance.*

We are impressed with the advantages which Trade Union organization offers in dealing with Unemployment. Where a Trade Union is highly organized and efficiently conducted, it possesses, in its branch meetings and its "Vacant Book," machinery for making known opportunities for employment, and for seeing that every unemployed member gets as quickly as possible into a new situation, that cannot be surpassed. With this machinery it can safely offer to give "Out-of-Work Benefit," and thus enable its members effectively to insure against Unemployment. But the cost is heavy, and has been found, so far, beyond the means of any but a small minority of the better paid artizans. The difficulty, too, of getting prompt information of all vacancies, and of ensuring that unemployed members really apply for them, has stood in the way of the payment of Out-of-Work Benefit by the trades in which Discontinuous Employment is the rule.

We propose that the State should help and encourage workmen to insure against Unemployment. We think that the plan now spreading throughout the Continent of Europe, of affording to Trade Unions a subvention from public funds, in order to assist them to extend their own insurance against Unemployment, is one that should be adopted in this country. Under what is called the Ghent system—instituted at Ghent in 1901; since adopted in nearly all (27) the principal towns of Belgium; and now in course of imitation in France (since 1905), Norway (since 1906), Denmark (since 1907), Belgium (since 1907), several Dutch towns, and by St. Gall (since 1905), Basle (since 1908), and Strassburg (since 1906)—a contribution is annually made to the Trade Union equal to something like half of the amount actually paid in Out-of-Work Benefit to members unemployed in the last completed year, apart from any strike or other collective dispute. This contribution from public funds to Trade Unions giving Out-of-Work Benefit has, to quote the words of the Board of Trade, "undoubtedly, in certain cases at least, been accompanied by a great development of Unemployed Benefits on the part of Trade Unions anxious to participate." * What was before financially out of the reach of many of the Trade Unions has now become possible to them, with the result that a greater proportion of the workmen are protected from falling into distress from want of employment. "Insurance," reports the Board of Trade, "is thus encouraged both by the Trade Union motive of protecting the Standard Rate, and by the prospect of a bonus from without. Pressure to join a Trade Union is—at a price—converted by the Municipality into pressure to insure against Unemployment."† We think that a similar inducement should be offered in the United Kingdom with a view, not only to helping the Trade Unions that already insure, but also to inducing the million other Trade Unionists, not at present enjoying this protection, to subscribe for Out-of-Work Benefit.

A further encouragement might well be afforded to the provident workman. As a large proportion of the situations in the skilled trades are not of the nature of casual employment, but do, as a matter of fact, last for a month or more (or could easily be so arranged as to do so), it would not be compulsory for these to be filled through the National Labour Exchange. It might even be desirable to make arrangements also for the shorter engagements and "casual" jobs of the skilled mechanics in such trades to be independently organised. It might be well to provide that where a Trade Union, giving out-of-work benefit, desired (perhaps in conjunction with an organisation of employers) to manage its own register of men unemployed and situations vacant, it would be permitted to do so in close connection with the National Labour Exchange, which would transfer to it at once any application notified by its members, or by the employers in that trade who were in the habit of dealing with the Trade Union, and not fill any such situations unless and until the special office for the trade failed to do so. In this way there would be secured, to those workers in any trade who had been provident enough to insure themselves against Unemployment, a practical preference for the employment thus offered in that trade. This conjunction of the Trade Union register of unemployed workmen with the National Labour Exchange is, as we have already mentioned, coming to be a common feature in Germany, and is also working well in the London Labour Exchanges.

We have had it suggested to us that insurance against Unemployment might be universally extended if it were made compulsory. The idea of throwing upon the

* Board of Trade Memorandum on Insurance against Unemployment in Foreign Countries (Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. XXI. (K), to Vol. IX.).

† *Ibid.*

employers and workmen of particular trades, and through them on the consumers, the burden of the irregularity of employment in these trades has many attractions, but we cannot see that the universal and compulsory union of all the employers and all the workmen in an insurance fund is, even with Government aid, either practicable or desirable. It is worth notice that no such scheme has found a place in the elaborate proposals of the German Government for workmen's insurance; or has been adopted elsewhere.* We do not see how, without the aid afforded by Trade Union organization, a Compulsory Insurance scheme could possibly be worked in such a way as both to provide for the "bad risks"—the men who, for one reason or another, are constantly falling into Unemployment—and yet to take care that these men embrace every opportunity of getting into situations. Moreover, these "bad risks" are, even under the sharp superintendence of a Trade Union, always contriving to draw, each year, their maximum Out-of-Work Pay, and thus to inflict a considerable loss on the insurance funds. The same men are continually "running out of benefit," and becoming ineligible for Out-of-Work Pay, long before they get into employment again; and hence requiring some other provision than any scheme of insurance can make. Moreover, the Trade Union can, and constantly does, exclude from its membership men who have not attained a certain degree of skill, or of regularity of conduct; exactly as a Friendly Society excludes men suffering from syphilis or phthisis, or any mortal disease. Even then insurance is beyond the reach of large sections of Trade Unionists. It would require a beneficient revolution to be effected both in the scale of remuneration and in the continuity of employment of the Casual Labourers of the great cities, and we think also, among the platers' helpers and other ship-yard labourers, and the builders' labourers, before their periods of recurrent Unemployment could be provided for by any insurance premium within their means, even with Government help. Seeing that these ill-paid labourers constitute nearly one-half of all the persons employed in their respective industries, we doubt whether any system of compulsory insurance, administered by a Government Department, could possibly provide for their great needs.

The case may be different if Compulsory Insurance is applied only to particular sections of workers or to certain specified industries, under carefully considered conditions. Any such plan, applicable only to a portion of the industrial field, has the drawback of not solving the problem of providing for the bulk of those in distress from Unemployment; for it would, of course, be the Casual Labourers, and generally the great army of the Under-employed, who would be omitted; and these form, as we have seen, the bulk of the applicants to the Distress Committees. Hence a plan of Compulsory Insurance for some classes of skilled artisans, or for the more regularly employed workers generally, could not be substituted, either for the existing provision under the Unemployed Workmen Act, or for any improvement on it. It could, at best, be only an adjunct to a comprehensive scheme of dealing with Unemployment. But such a scheme of Compulsory Insurance, even if partial, may be worth considering for its own sake. If the Government and the employers were financially interested in it, they would both have a motive, even if somewhat indirect and remote, for reducing Unemployment to a minimum. It seems to us clear, however, that two conditions would be essential. No such scheme could possibly be worked without a national organisation in the nature of a Labour Exchange, *to which all available vacancies were reported*; and to which all insured workmen out of Employment were required to apply for situations. Without machinery of this sort, it would never be possible for the administrators of the Insurance Fund to be sure that the workman claiming benefit was really unable to obtain a situation. The "bad risks" would, in any case, constitute a serious drain on the Fund; and without some means of ensuring that definite situations were offered to them, these "industrial malingerers" would eat it up altogether. In short, resort to the National Labour Exchange would have to be made legally compulsory, in the insured industries, both upon all employers having vacancies to fill, and upon all workers claiming Unemployed Benefit. The second essential condition would be some definition of the terms upon which a workman could be required to accept a situation offered to him, under a penalty of being refused the Unemployed Benefit towards which he had contributed. It is clear that an engineer or a carpenter could only be expected and required to accept a situation in his own trade, and upon the wages, hours and other conditions customary in the locality. For the Government Insurance Fund to refuse to pay the engineer or the carpenter the Unemployed Benefit towards which these workmen had contributed, merely because they had refused to accept situations in "unfair" establishments, at wages below the recognised Standard Rate, or for hours or under other conditions of labour contrary to the customarily recognised Common Rules of the industry, would be to provoke a storm of indignation; and, indeed, to deal a mortal blow at Trade Unionism itself. It is plain that the Unemployed Benefit could not be refused to a workman merely because he declined to accept

* Compulsory insurance against Unemployment has been attempted only in the little Canton of St. Gall in Switzerland, where it proved, for many reasons, a hopeless failure, and was promptly abandoned.

a situation under unreasonable conditions. The conditions which a Government Insurance Fund would declare to be reasonable could, nowadays, hardly be other than what are commonly known as "Trade Union conditions"; namely, the rates of pay, hours of labour, methods of remuneration, and other conditions of employment which have been agreed to, for each locality, by the associations of employers and employed; and which, n the absence of such agreement, are, in practice, obtained by the members of the Trade Unions concerned. Thus, so far as the operations of the Government Insurance Fund extended, these so-called "Trade Union conditions" would, in effect, be compulsorily enforced on all establishments. Without these two essential conditions, a Compulsory Insurance scheme, even if limited to carefully selected sections of the wage-earners, would, in our opinion, be financially impracticable, and inimical to Trade Unionism. In view of the difficulties which so great an extension of the principle of compulsion would present, we prefer to recommend the simpler plan, already successfully put in practice in other countries, which involves no compulsion at all; namely that of a subvention to Trade Unions providing Unemployed Benefit, such as we have already described.

(ii) *Maintenance under Training.*

We have to face the fact that, make what arrangements we will, there will be, at all times and under any organisation of society, a residuum of men who will be found in distress from want of employment. That residuum will be greater or smaller in proportion to the appropriateness and the completeness of the organisation of the National Labour Exchange, the Suppression of Under-employment, the "dovetailing" of seasonal occupations, the measures taken for the Absorption of the Surplus, the Regularization of the National Demand for Labour and the development of Trade Union Insurance. It will, moreover, always wax and wane according to the changing circumstances of particular industries. But great or small, though the individuals will come and go, a residuum will always be there.

We may, however, confidently anticipate that the permanent residuum of men in distress from want of employment will differ very considerably, both in numbers and in composition, from the crowds that now embarrass the Distress Committees at every season of depression. The great bulk of these crowds—at least, one-half of the whole—consists at present of the Casual Labourers, and other members of the chronically Under-employed class; the suppression of which, as a class, is (as we have shown) not only possible but a necessary condition of any improvement whatsoever. When the National Labour Exchange has got thoroughly to work, and has "dovetailed" the jobs so as to provide practical continuity of employment; and when the surplus thereupon revealed and identified has been to a large extent absorbed by the measures that we have described, there is no reason to suppose that this part of the industrial army will furnish a larger contingent of persons in distress through Unemployment than other parts enjoying no higher remuneration do at present. Another important element is to-day contributed by the building trades and other seasonal industries; and these, as we have seen, can be provided for, the better-paid sections by an extension of Trade Union Insurance and the labourers, to a large, and probably a steadily increasing, extent, by the operations of the National Labour Exchange in "dovetailing" employment as between trades having different seasons of slackness. Even the men now out of work through the great cyclical fluctuations of the nation's industry can, as we have shown, be to a great extent provided for by the measures to be taken for the Regularization of the National Demand for Labour, and by the great extension of Trade Union Insurance that this Regularization, the work of the National Labour Exchange, and a government subvention will have made possible. Thus, instead of whole sections and whole classes coming on our hands at every season of stress, what we shall have to deal with will be individuals of all classes.

The individual members of the permanent residuum of men in distress from Unemployment will be of the most heterogeneous kinds and descriptions. There will be the man from Class I., who has fallen out of a permanent situation; who is uninsured because there was no Trade Union to which he could belong; whose savings have been exhausted by illness or other family misfortune; who bears a good character, but for whom the National Labour Exchange fails to find a place—perhaps because of his advancing years, or the lack of adaptability which is the result of his long and faithful service in one narrow groove. There will be the man from Class II., whose discontinuous employment has suddenly become so intermittent that nowhere in the United Kingdom can the National Labour Exchange find him a job; whose Unemployment is so prolonged that he "runs out of benefit" and exhausts his savings. Both these men may be suffering, probably unconsciously to themselves, from a change of process or of industrial organization, which is steadily and permanently enabling their particular service to be partly dispensed with—a case which is to-day that of various grades of boot and shoe operatives, that of the carpenters and bricklayers, and that of grooms and stablemen. And from all grades and sections of industry there will dribble down—we may hope, when chronic Under-em-

ployment and untrained Boy Labour are suppressed, to a smaller extent than at present —individuals of defective will, intelligence or training; of dissolute habits or irregularities of character; or of chronically weak physical health; together with all sorts of industrial "misfits," and, intermingled among them all, the constitutionally vagabond or "work-shy." It is indispensable, alike for social health, and for the success of all the other measures taken to deal with the Able-bodied, that the heterogeneous assortment of "Unemployed," whose existence we have been unable to prevent, should be definitely and adequately provided for. There must be no idea of deterring people from applying. It is, in fact, as essential for industrial well-being that every person in distress from want of employment should receive at once the Public Assistance appropriate to his need, as it is to Public Health that no sick person should go unprovided with medical attendance.

It will, we think, be clear that, for this heterogeneous assortment of individuals, there can be no question of "making work" or providing productive employment at wages. The steps taken by the Government for the Regularisation of the National Demand for Labour and the Absorption of the Surplus will, in fact, have already found employment, at their own trades, and at the Standard Rates of wages, for the men for whom any such work can be provided. To deliberately "make work" for the odds and ends of Unemployed tailors, jewellers, brickmakers, ironmoulders, clerks, handymen and hawkers—for each of them in his own trade, in his own town, at his own Standard Rate of Wages—is not only administratively impossible, but would actually have the effect of ousting from employment some other men of these trades. For, apart from the personal factor, the reason why Unemployment has fallen upon men of these particular trades, rather than upon others, is that the consumers' demand for their particular services, or for the products of their labour, happens to have temporarily or permanently diminished, relatively to the consumers' demand for other services or products. To increase the supply of waistcoats, jewellery, bricks and iron-mouldings, merely in order to give employment in trades which are already suffering from surplus stocks, would be a suicidal proceeding. As a matter of fact, the costliness and the impracticability of providing work "at his own trade" for each of the Unemployed Workmen has saved us from the dilemma. What is actually demanded, and what is occasionally provided in response to this demand, is "work which all can perform."

But it is a fallacy to assume that there is such a thing as work, in the abstract, or of an undifferentiated character. The work that is of any use to the world is always the doing of some specific service, which, however humble and nominally "unskilled," always needs a certain amount of training, experience, and even skill to perform efficiently. A favourite idea is to put the men to cultivate the land. But agriculture is, of course, a highly skilled and very hazardous trade. Even digging—which, however well done, produces no value unless directed by very expert knowledge—requires training to do it effectively, whilst the planting of trees, or the making of a road, an embankment or a sea-wall turns out, on experiment, to be a skilled occupation, of which the raw hand makes a sad botch. Repeated experience has proved, in fact, that there is no productive enterprise, even of the simplest character, which can be undertaken without actual loss by a mixed assortment of individuals of different grades of skill, of all sorts of antecedents, and, for the most part, without experience of the particular kind of work they are called upon to perform. In some respects, indeed, the more superior the men and the more specialized their former callings, the more wholly incompetent they prove at the "common work" which alone can be provided for them. Under these circumstances the men not only fail to earn their keep, which would under any form of provision have to be given them; in nearly every case they fail to produce even the cost of the necessary expert direction and supervision, which is actual out of pocket expense to the community. Nor is it ever possible to arrive at any satisfactory standard of wages. The heterogeneous crowd of men of different antecedents clearly cannot be paid the various Standard Rates to which they have severally been accustomed. If it is determined to pay them the usual Standard Rate for the common work to which they have been put, and to pay them in accordance with their achievements, this results in their earning a shilling or two a day; or less than they can exist on.* But the costliness of this method of providing

* If, on the other hand, some such rate as 20s. or 24s. per week is adopted, as being a sort of "moral minimum" for general labourers in the towns, the works, already carried on at a loss, at once begin to attract an inexhaustible supply of men who desert other employments in which, as a matter of fact, their average weekly earnings are far below this figure. In fact, "the root of the difficulty would remain; that no scale of relief can be made less attractive than the ordinary life of the casual labourer without being made ludicrously inadequate. The root of the difficulty lies in the inconceivably bad conditions of employment and earning in the lowest ranks of independent industry." ("Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge 1909. p. 188.)

for the Unemployed, and the difficulty of finding any satisfactory scale of remuneration, do not, in our opinion, constitute the gravest objections to Relief Works. The first question, to our mind, is, how does this method of provision affect the men subjected to it? Does it make them more fit and better qualified to regain their places in the industrial world, or less fit and worse qualified? It is clear, of course, that adequate maintenance, with any sort of occupation, is better for a workman than starvation and idleness. But no one who has ever watched Relief Works, in any form, or under any administration, can be satisfied with the effect of this kind of provision on the men to whom it is given. The work itself is monotonous and uneducational in character, even when it is not positively detrimental to particular forms of manual skill. With a heterogeneous gang of men, taken on, not because they are used to the work, and can be expected to perform it up to any normal standard of speed or efficiency, but merely because they are in distress from Unemployment, it is invariably found impracticable to discover and to exact from every man the full amount of effort of which he is capable. Inevitably, even if unconsciously, the pace is set for all by the slowest, the least efficient, and often the least willing of the gang. This has a grave effect on the whole gang. Thus the men put on Relief Works are in no way improving themselves for resuming work at their own trades; they are not being trained to other occupations so that they might find work in new directions; and they are steadily being more and more habituated to work at a low standard of speed, a low standard of effort, and a low standard of efficiency, at an occupation which is already chronically over-supplied with workers. For the "common work" thus provided for the heterogeneous assortment of men from all trades always turns out to be the appropriate work of the navvy and "ground labourer." Why is it that the advocates of work for the "Unemployed" of all trades never see anything objectionable in depriving the navvy of some of the jobs on which he would otherwise have been employed? Why, when it is sought to set the Unemployed to work, and when it is discovered that this involves training of some sort, should we always exercise them and train them in the trade of the navvy, and thereby increase the number of competitors of the existing navvies? The position is made the more ridiculous in that it has been abundantly demonstrated that it is just this kind of mere muscular effort and physical strength for which there is, in the industrial world of to-day, a steadily diminishing demand. It is the man who pushes, who lifts, who carries, who drags, who is finding more and more of his employment superseded by the hoist and the pulley, by the grain elevator and the travelling crane, by the "grab" and the "Scotchman" and the "iron man"—in short, by steam or electrically driven machinery of one kind or another.

But Relief Works for the Unemployed represent only a counsel of despair, in a community knowing no better alternative. The reduction in the numbers of those in distress from Unemployment, brought about by the various preventive measures that we have described, will enable the community to deal with the individuals in distress, not by such "wholesale" methods as Relief Works, but, personally, one by one, after careful consideration of each case, by the treatment best calculated to enable him to resume productive employment.

The first requisite is that all persons in distress from Unemployment should be provided with maintenance, so that they and their families may be kept in health and strength, and be prevented from the rapid deterioration to which they would otherwise be subjected. But this maintenance must be merely preliminary to attempting to solve the particular "human problem" that each man presents. What has to be discovered is why these particular individuals, out of the 12,000,000 whom employers have willingly engaged, have been left stranded and unemployed; and how their industrial efficiency can be increased so as to enable them to earn a livelihood. The first thing to be done is to "test" them, using the word in its proper sense, not of seeking how to induce them to take themselves off our hands, but of probing their capacity so as to find out the points at which they are weak, and can be strengthened, and the faculties latent in them which might be developed. No one can have watched the crowd of applicants to a Distress Committee—the scores of narrow-chested men under thirty, the emaciated and flabby men of all ages, the nerveless and rheumatic men, the men with varicose veins or untreated hernia—without realising how sadly "out of condition" are nearly all these "Unemployed," and how enormously their working power would be improved by mere medical advice, hygienic regimen, and physical training. We have to test their eyesight, their colour vision, their hearing, their hearts, their muscular power, the steadiness of their hands, in order to find out what particular exercises or remedies will increase their capacity. Nor must we stop at mere physical improvement. In the rough and tumble of industrial

life, with its monotonous toil in narrow grooves, the adult workman tends to leave dormant all but the one faculty required for his job. The man who has dropped out of a situation which he has held for ten or twenty years would probably have been equally efficient in any one of half a dozen other ways, if he had not been led to adapt himself to the particular line required by his employer. Now that he has lost that situation, and no similar one can be found for him, what has to be done is to see which of his undeveloped or dormant faculties can be stimulated and exercised. But there are moral invalids as well as physical ones. The men who have lost situations through irregularity of conduct of one kind or another plainly need training in character, under the beneficent influence of continuous order and discipline. In short, whatever may have been the economic or industrial cause that has necessitated a certain number of the nation's workers standing idle—and this cause may often be no fault of the workers themselves—it is inevitable that the *particular individuals* who, in that crisis, find themselves the rejected of all employers should be capable of improvement, either physical or mental, or in most cases both. Which of us, indeed, is *not* capable of improvement by careful testing and training? We can clearly best utilise the period of enforced Unemployment by placing these men in training, so that, when the National Labour Exchange eventually finds openings for them, they may return to work in better health, of more regular habits, and with awakened faculties of body and mind. As has been well said, "The capacity of the industrial system to absorb fresh labour is no doubt far from exhausted, but this capacity depends entirely upon the labour being of a sort to be absorbed, that is to say, being suited or able to become suited to the particular developments of the time."*

The National Authority dealing with the Able-bodied requires, therefore, what we might almost term a Human Sorting House, where each man's faculties would be tested to see what could be made of him; and a series of Training Establishments, to one or other of which the heterogeneous residuum of Unemployed would be assigned. These Training Establishments might, some of them, be in the man's own town, so that he need not be separated from his home; though it would be a condition that he should attend with absolute regularity from morning to night. For the young unmarried man, it would probably be best to send him at once to a residential settlement in the country, where he would be free from the distractions of town life. But whether in town or country, it is essential to successful treatment that the training should take up the man's entire day. If he is not at a residential Colony, he will be required to be in attendance at 6 a.m., as he would be if he were in employment; and as the day's training will need to be diversified, and must include organised recreation of various kinds, his obligatory attendance will usually be prolonged until eight or nine at night. This is not the place for any detailed plans of the curriculum and the regimen of these Training Establishments; which would, indeed, have to be worked out for men of different ages, different weaknesses, and different needs. But we can foresee that carefully graduated physical exercises will play a large part; that men of definite trades can be given opportunities for improving their skill and enlarging the range of their capacity in those trades; that practically all men can usefully be taught mechanical drawing, and working to plan and to scale; that they can all usefully improve their mental arithmetic and their power of keeping accounts; that all men nowadays need to know the use of the common tools and how to run the simpler machines; that many men have a desire, at least, to try their hands at the cultivation of the land, and these might well be put to the farm and garden work; and, seeing that all men would be the better for the seaman's knowledge of how to cook, how to clean, and how to mend and wash, there is every reason why all the men should take their share of the necessary work of the establishment.

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* "Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909, p. 116. With regard to women in particular, it was pressed upon us, on behalf of the Women's Industrial Council, that "where remunerative work cannot be provided," maintenance *under training* should be provided, for persons of any age, "on condition that they were learning something"; as "it would be easier to find employment for them after a little training" (Evidence before the Commission, *Qs.* 82517–9; Mrs. J. R. Macdonald). In Liverpool, we were informed, "in most of the needle trades, and in laundry work, the unskilled branches are greatly overcrowded, but there is plenty of room in the higher grades, *e.g.*, washerwomen are abundant, but skilled ironers scarce. A recent advertisement for a woman to run a small hand-laundry, wages £1 a week and a cottage, did not bring a single thoroughly skilled applicant. Again, the Needlewomen's Institute, Great Orford Street, suffers from a chronic scarcity of workers able to make really fine underlinen, etc., but has far more applicants for work in Class 3 (poor clothes, etc.) than it can find room for." (*Ibid.*, *Q.* 83251, Par. 32 (*b*).) In London, the Labour Exchanges of the Central (Unemployed) Body report a chronic state of unsatisfied demand for women of good industrial training.

We think that the proposal of Maintenance under Training avoids the grave defects that characterise the devices of the Poor Law and the "Employment Relief" of the Distress Committees. It is, to say the least, quite as "productive" to the community, as the occupations afforded by the General Mixed Workhouse, or the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, or as any "work at wages" to which the "Unemployed" are now being set by the Local Authorities; whilst it is far more "productive" than these to the man himself. Moreover, it escapes the demoralising element of pretence that the men are earning their own livelihood and have therefore the right to receive wages and to spend them as they choose. It avoids the economic dilemma of how to "set to work" the Unemployed in productive labour without taking away other men's jobs. And it escapes the administrative difficulty of how to keep up the Standard Wage and work the Normal Day without lowering the standard of effort and attracting men from low-paid employment. It avoids even the industrial disadvantage of habituating men to kinds of effort—general labouring, or "ground work," stone-breaking or hand-grinding—of which there is already a large surplus on the market. There is nothing degrading or depressing in physical, mental and technical training; there is in it, indeed, a strong element of stimulus and hope, because it will fit the men to take better situations than they could without it. On the other hand, it is not agreeable to the "average sensual man" to surrender himself continuously to an ordered round of continuous training of any sort under hygienic conditions, with every faculty kept alert by varied stimuli, so as to produce the highest state of physical and mental efficiency of which he is capable. In short, Maintenance under Training, whilst more "eligible" in every sense than starvation in idleness, is less agreeable than the ordinary industrial employment at wages, in one's own occupation, with freedom to spend or mis-spend one's wages and one's leisure as is desired. Thus, the individuals whom distress from Unemployment throws upon our hands will, by this Maintenance under Training, be restored to full health and vigour and otherwise improved, instead of, as at present, being deteriorated. On the other hand we shall, as is essential, leave in full force, not only the incentive to take employment and to keep it, but also the incentive to insure against Unemployment by joining an existing Trade Union, or forming one if none actually exists.

In working out the details of this scheme of Maintenance under Training with men of practical experience in connection with the treatment of the Able-bodied and the Unemployed, we have come face to face with four difficulties which will be urged as objections.

It is clear that Maintenance under Training will involve a greater expenditure per head than maintenance without training. But the grant of mere maintenance—that is, unconditional Outdoor Relief—is plainly impossible; and experience shows that both Relief Works and Workhouses are, as a matter of fact, with all the necessary plant and administrative expenses, themselves extremely costly, as well as extremely demoralising. It may, however, be admitted that the State could hardly undertake to provide very elaborate forms of training for hundreds of thousands of men. There can be no successful treatment of the Able-bodied unless they are dealt with *individually*, man by man. We agree with General Booth when he declares that he placed "Individual Reformation in the front in all operations which have for their object the betterment of society. Any effort at social reform that does not provide facilities for the regeneration of the individual is, in my opinion, foredoomed to failure." * Under the proposals that we are making the numbers of the Unemployed will be greatly reduced; and the ultimate residuum that must be maintained ought not to be so numerous as to transcend our powers. And the training must be adapted to circumstances. When the numbers in any one place become large it may not be possible to afford much beyond the simpler forms of physical training and elementary instruction, which can be inexpensively provided for men in mass. The more specialized treatment must necessarily be adapted to individuals, or small groups of similar individuals, which a National Authority could collect in particular establishments each with its own special variety of training. There is no reason why these should be more expensive per head than the Hollesley Bay Farm Colony. It is, indeed, inherent in any form of provision which aims at improving the quality of the material to be dealt with that some expense should be involved. The question is whether there is any alternative really cheaper to the nation.

* Evidence before the Commission, Appendix No. LVIII., Par. 1 (*a*), to Vol. IX.

It is objected that Maintenance under Training, although distasteful to the average workman, will be found attractive to some, at any rate, of the men; and that these will be constantly falling out of employment in order to resort to it. The Superintendent of every institution learns to recognise the docile man, with no vices and no initiative, who is inertly content with the day's routine, and who asks nothing better than to be allowed to go on for ever. Such men, at present, linger on indefinitely at Relief Works, or in the Labour Yard; and even in the Workhouse. It is, however, just one of the advantages of training, as it is of the skilled medical treatment of the sick in hospital, that it can be indefinitely adjusted so as to apply to each patient the exact stimulus required to call out his faculties. With what we may call the "industrial malingerer" there will be other remedies. With the co-operation of the National Labour Exchange he can be given successive chances of employment; and, after a certain number of trials, his repeated return will be a cause for his judicial commitment to a Detention Colony.

An entirely opposite objection is urged by others, namely, that Maintenance under Training will be so repellent to those in distress from Unemployment that they will put up with any hardship rather than submit to it. Many men are unconscious of personal defect, or shortcoming, or weakness of body or mind; and will be unable to understand why they should go into training. We all shrink instinctively from a searching medical examination; and we should shrink still the more from a testing of all our faculties. But, as a matter of fact, the difficulty is an imaginary one. Whatever may be our objection to medical and other examinations, this is not found, in any grade of life, to stand in the way of applying for what we want, whether it be an appointment in the Army, Navy, or Civil Service, or admission to the police force or the railway service. No man in distress, or whose family is suffering distress, will let a medical examination stand between him and adequate provision. And the medical examination and testing of faculties convinces every man of his need of training, in one respect or another, whilst the training itself soon brings home to him that he is susceptible of improvement. Yet we need force no man to come in, nor detain any unwilling subject. He has always the alternative of trying to earn his own living outside. The National Labour Exchange will, at any time, do its best to help him to get a place. So long as he commits no crime, and neglects none of his social obligations—so long as he does not fail to get lodging, food and clothing for himself and his family—so long as his children are not found lacking medical attendance when ill, or underfed at school—so long, indeed, as neither he nor his family ask or require any form of Public Assistance, he will be free to live as he likes. But directly any of these things happen, it will be a condition that the husband and the father, if certified as Able-bodied, shall be in attendance at the Training Establishment to which he is assigned. If he is recalcitrant, he will be judicially committed to a Detention Colony.

The final objection is that "the Unemployed" are not worth training; that they are, in effect, Unemployable, and incapable of being improved. We do not think that any instructed person can seriously assert that there are not, among those in distress from Unemployment, many men—probably, at present, many thousands of men—who are in every way eligible and suitable for training of one sort or another. But if there are none such, the first step is to ascertain and certify the defectiveness of the persons in distress in order that they may be segregated in appropriate institutions. We do nothing to test and discover which are really the Unemployable by offering tasks of work to half-starved crowds demoralised by periods of Unemployment. The men in distress present every possible variety; and the preliminary examination and testing of faculties, along with subsequent observation under training, will be always weeding out the definitely Unemployable. It will be the rule that no man is to be retained in any Training Establishment unless it is believed that he can be made fit, at some time or another, to resume his place in industrial employment. There will be room for experiment with different kinds of training, in different establishments, as well as in different opportunities of wage-earning. But there will inevitably be some hopeless cases. There will be men permanently incapacitated by physical defects, which cannot be cured, and which do not permit of their earning a living wage at any occupation whatsoever. Such men will, like those who fall ill during training, have to be remitted to the Local Health Authority, where they will be appropriately provided for as we have described (Part I., Ch. V. and VII.). There will be men found to be so mentally defective—whether epileptic, feeble-minded, or chronically inebriate—as to be incapable of continuing in wage-earning occupation. These will be handed over to the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective (Part I., Ch. VI.). There will be other men adjudged capable in body and mind of earning

a livelihood, but persistently neglecting or refusing to do so—whether as what we now know as Professional Vagrants, or as merely "work shy" and recalcitrant to discipline. These men will remain on the hands of the National Authority dealing with the Able-bodied; but they will leave the free Training Establishments and be judicially committed to a Detention Training Colony.

What is essential to the success of these Training Establishments is, not only the power of exclusion of those found to be mentally or physically hopeless, but also the stimulus of Hope. Every man in the establishment, staff as well as patients, must be always conscious that men enter with the prospect of improving their condition, and that, in fact, men are, after training, constantly passing out to better positions. It is therefore vital to these establishments to have the means of placing out the men whom they have found to be fit, or have made fit. This is one reason why the Training Establishments must be in the closest possible connection with the National Labour Exchange, and therefore under the same authority. They will receive constant advices from the National Labour Exchange as to what kinds of training are most in demand. They will be constantly passing individuals back to the National Labour Exchange, at this point or that, when there is any prospect of places being found for them. And when there is any great accumulation of men in the Training Establishments, who are, or who have been rendered, fit for employment, but for whom employment, owing to the depression in trade, cannot be found, it will be a case for representation to the other Departments of the Government that the time has come for putting into operation the action already described for Regularizing the National Demand for Labour.

There is, however, one special direction in the United Kingdom in which the Training Establishments will, we believe, constantly be able to place out some of their best men. Experience shows that a certain number of the best of the Unemployed—especially among our Class I.—have a desire for country life; and can be successfully established on Small Holdings. The Board of Agriculture should, we think, be able to afford opportunities—possibly in connection with its works of Land Reclamation—for these selected men to settle on the land.

Finally, there is emigration to other parts of the British Empire, where labour of various kinds is in greater demand than in these islands. For men who desire to try their fortunes in Canada or South Africa, Australia or New Zealand, residence at one or other of the Training Establishments will afford, not only useful training, but also a valuable opportunity for proving whether the would-be emigrant has such qualities and capacities as warrant the belief that he can make a successful start in a new country.

There remains the Detention Colony, the existence of which, as a place to be avoided, is an indispensable element in any scheme of dealing with the Able-bodied. The Detention Colony, though it will be entered only upon commitment by a judicial authority, will not be a prison, or a convict settlement. It is essential that the men committed to it should not be regarded as criminals. For this reason it should not be administered by the Prison Commissioners, or be under the Secretary of State for the Home Department. It should remain, in fact, as merely one among the Training Establishments, under the Minister dealing with the organisation of the National Labour Market. The Detention Colony will be, in fact, merely a Training Establishment of a peculiar kind, which has necessarily to have the characteristic of compulsory detention. Its inmates are sent there to be treated for, and if possible cured of, a morbid state of mind, which makes them incapable of filling a useful place in the industrial world. The general lines of the appropriate regimen have been laid down by various experimental colonies in Switzerland and Germany, Holland and Belgium; but there is much yet to be done to adapt them for this country, and to work them out in detail. Enforced regularity of life, and continuous work, of a stimulating and not monotonous kind; plain food, with opportunities of earning small luxuries by good conduct and output of work; restriction of personal liberty; and power to those in charge to allow return to one of the ordinary Training Establishments on probation, as soon as ever it is believed that reformation has been effected—these features sufficiently indicate the outlines of the experiment. Repeated recalcitrance, and, of

course, any assault on the persons in charge, would be criminal offences, leading to sentences of penal servitude in a convict settlement.*

(E) The Ministry of Labour.

It is, we think, clear that the whole of the elaborate organization that we have outlined for dealing with the various sections of the necessitous and destitute Able-bodied and of the persons in distress from want of employment must be the work, not of Local Authorities, having jurisdiction only over limited areas, but of a Department of the National Government. Whether we consider the fifty to eighty thousand Vagrants perpetually drifting, at the expense, one way or another, of the rest of the community, from North to South and from South to North, or the large Stagnant Pools of Under-employed Labour which make up so much of waterside Boroughs such as West Ham, it is plain that the problem, by its very nature, transcends the powers of even the ablest Local Governing Body. The remedies are not within its scope. The network of Labour Exchanges must, it is obvious, be free to act, and to find situations for the Unemployed and to select men for employers, quite irrespective of their places of residence—or of business. The areas of the various Local Authorities, whether urban or rural, are usually very far from coincident with the geographical aggregations of manufactures and commerce. The Metropolitan area for business purposes already greatly transcends that of the Administrative County of London; and its Labour Market cannot be organised without including East Ham and West Ham, Walthamstow and Tottenham, Willesden and Ealing, Richmond and Croydon—not to speak of Chelmsford and Luton, Reading and Guildford, Erith and Tilbury. We could not possibly have independently governed Labour Exchanges for Manchester, Salford, Prestwich, Stockport, Hyde and Oldham; or for Liverpool, Birkenhead and Bootle; or for all the separate Counties and Boroughs that make up the busy and closely interlaced industrial districts of the Lower Clyde, Tyneside, the West Riding and the Black Country respectively. The various local branches of the Labour Exchange must be free, it is clear, to fill situations and to place men where they can, anywhere in the Kingdom, without the clogging influences of local preferences for finding work for local men, or "keeping all our herrings for our own sea-maws." Moreover, it is essential that the Labour Exchange should work in the closest co-operation with the Associations of Employers and the Trade Unions; and these are organized without any regard for municipal or county boundaries, and are, indeed, to a great extent, national in scope. Any scheme of Government aid to Trade Union Insurance, dealing as it would with the great national trade societies, must clearly be national in its administration. Similarly, the Training Establishments, at which the ultimate residuum of Unemployed must be maintained whilst they are being tested and improved, are plainly beyond the capacity of the Local Authorities. Some kinds, like the Detention Colonies, will be few in number; possibly only one or two for each of the three Kingdoms. Of the others, the more highly specialized, providing particular kinds of training, or dealing with men in particular states of body or mind, must, like specialized hospitals, draw their patients from all over the country. Moreover, all these institutions must be in close and easy communication with each other, so that men can be transferred without any question of finance, from one to the other, being freely passed from grade to grade, and from training to training, according to their condition and their need. They must always be, too, in intimate touch with all the branches of the National Labour Exchange, acting constantly in conformity with its Reports as to the state of the Labour Market and its changing needs. But beyond all considerations of administrative efficiency of the Labour Exchange, Trade Union Insurance, and the Training Establishments, it seems to us essential to success that we should link up these measures of provision with the measures of prevention that are no

* The evidence in favour of such Detention Colonies, alike before our Commission, the Vice-Regal Commission and the Departmental Committee on Vagrancy, was overwhelming, and almost unanimous. "Our opinion," reported the Vice-Regal Commission, "agrees with that of the majority of witnesses examined before us that people who are travelling about the country without employment, without any means of their own, and who have to support themselves by mendicancy or recourse to the Poor Law, or by sleeping-out, should be brought by the Police before a Court of Justice. If they could not then, or through the Police or other agency after remand, give satisfactory evidence (documentary or other) to the Court of their being habitually hard-working and self-supporting, there should, we suggest, be power conferred upon a Court of Summary Jurisdiction to direct them to be sent for a term of from one to three years to a Labour House, in which the inmates should, as is said to be the case in Belgian establishments, be required to make or produce, as far as possible, the food, clothing and necessaries for such an institution. We think that at all events to begin with, four such Labour Houses might be established for Ireland, and that four disused Workhouses might be set apart for the purpose." (Report of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, 1906, Vol. I., p. 55.)

less required for the absorption of the surplus and the mitigation of the recurrent fluctuations of Trade. The legislative restriction of Boy Labour and the legislative reduction of the hours of the railway and tramway servants need to be put into operation in concert with the operations of the Labour Exchange. If there is to be any Regularization of the National Demand for Labour, by means of a Ten Years' Programme of Government Works, to be started by the various Departments in the years of depression, it is clear that this action can safely be taken only on the advice of another Department of the Government. If the provision for the Unemployed were in the hands of the Local Authorities, each of them would be pressing the National Government to start the supplementary Government Works whenever its own local industry happened to be depressed, irrespective of the state of the Labour Market in the nation as a whole; and to start them, too, within its own area, for the convenience of its own Unemployed, irrespective of the national needs. The result would inevitably be that, in order to prevent the measure degenerating into the mere opening of local relief works, the Government would tend to disregard the representations altogether. For all these reasons, it is imperative, in spite of the difficulty of inducing the National Government to undertake an extensive new service, that the Local Authorities, whom we are already sufficiently burdening, should insist on being relieved, once and for all, of all duties relating to the Able-bodied and the Unemployed.

(i) *The Minister for Labour.*

We propose that, in order to ensure complete ministerial responsibility, and the full and continuous control of Parliament over so important a branch of industrial organisation, the whole work should be entrusted to a Minister for Labour, who would naturally be a member of the House of Commons and included in the Cabinet. His Department would embrace three entirely new administrative services, namely, the National Labour Exchange, the Trade Insurance Division, and the Maintenance and Training Division. To these three Divisions, we should be disposed to add, by transfer, three existing branches of other Government Departments; so that the Ministry of Labour would consist of six separate and distinct Divisions, each under its own Assistant Secretary. We should transfer, in this way, to form a new Industrial Regulation Division, all the administration of the laws relating to hours, wages and conditions of employment, including the Factories and Workshops Acts, the Shop Hours and Truck Acts, and the Mines Regulation Acts, from the Home Office; and the Regulation of Railways Act, 1893, from the Board of Trade. The Labour Department of the Board of Trade would form the nucleus of a new Statistical Division, and the Emigrants' Information Office under the Secretary of State for the Colonies the nucleus of a new Emigration and Immigration Division.

It has been suggested that the Minister for Labour should be the President of a Board including representatives of employers and employed. We are entirely opposed to any such arrangement, as calculated to interfere with the control of Parliament, and the complete responsibility of the Minister to the House of Commons. Unless the Minister, and the Minister alone, is placed in a position to decide what is to be done, it will be difficult for Parliament to ensure that its views upon policy will not be thwarted by influences over which it has no control; and impossible for the House of Commons to hold the Cabinet in general, and the Minister for Labour in particular, responsible for the results of his administration. The place of representatives of employers and employed is on Advisory Committees, which should be either constituted permanently or convened from time to time as required, to make suggestions, offer criticism, and supply information, in connection with particular subjects; or even generally with regard to such branches of the administration as the working of the National Labour Exchange, the arrangements for insurance or emigration, or the organization of the institutions for training.

There would be many advantages in making the Department of the Minister for Labour responsible for the whole of the United Kingdom, as are the Treasury (with the Inland Revenue, Customs and Post Office); the Board of Trade (with its Mercantile Marine Offices and its Labour Department); and the Home Office (for Prisons and Factory Acts). We think, however, on the whole, that the work would probably be organized with less friction if separate Departments on similar lines were arranged for Scotland and Ireland respectively; under the responsibility of the Secretary for Scotland, and the

Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary for Ireland.* We do not presume to suggest with what branches of the existing Scottish and Irish administration the new Department could be most conveniently associated.

(ii) *The National Labour Exchange.*

It would be the first task of the Minister for Labour to organize, in every populous centre, one or more branches of the National Labour Exchange, and to convert them, as contemplated by the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, into a network of intelligence as to the demand and supply of labour. These local offices would naturally vary in size and organization. In London the Minister would find ready to hand, and would naturally take over, the system of Exchanges now administered by the Central (Unemployed) Body. In a few other towns the "Labour Bureau" or Employment Exchange run by the Municipality under the Unemployed Workmen Act is sufficiently distinct to be also taken over. But the National Labour Exchange must, from the outset, make it clear that it has nothing whatever to do with the relief of Distress from Unemployment, and must therefore carefully avoid connecting itself in the public mind with the registers of applicants to Distress Committees.

The Labour Exchange would, of course, not confine itself to filling situations in the ranks of casual employment, or from among those who had to be supported or assisted in one way or another. It would receive, and in every way encourage, voluntary applications from employers for labour of better grades, for durable situations; which it would do its best to fill from the best of those whom it had on its books, whether or not they were in distress, or even actually out of work. Its business, in short, is to find situations for all men who desire them, whether or not they are actually Unemployed, and quite irrespective of their affluence or their distress; and to find men for all the vacancies notified by employers, entirely without reference to whether the successful candidates are married or single, in want or not. Indeed, in Germany a large proportion of the applicants are men who have not yet left their situations, or employers who expect to have vacancies. The object to be kept in view is that the Labour Exchange should be used by everyone who needs its services, just as if it were a post office or a railway station. Hence, in all populous centres the Labour Exchanges should have premises in prominent positions, sufficiently large to allow of capacious waiting-rooms, and different entrances and exits: and also suitable rooms for the meetings of Associations of Employers and Trade Unions, whom it is desirable to encourage to use the Exchange. Experience would show how far it was desirable to develop separate Labour Exchanges for particular industries like that at present maintained by the Board of Trade for the mercantile marine which should presumably be transferred to the new department. In any case there should be, in each town, a Local Advisory Committee of representatives of the employers and of the Trade Unions, which should supervise the working of the Exchange; and which could supply, not only useful criticisms and suggestions, but also valuable information without which the institution can never achieve its full measure of success.†

There will remain, after the Labour Exchange has met all the demands upon it, a residuum of men, who are demonstrably not wanted at that moment, in that place. This "surplus labour" will be a varying amount from day to day. Some of it will be needed to meet the periods of increased demand for labour—the "wools" and the "teas" at the docks, the pressure on the railway companies at the holiday seasons, the extra postmen at Christmas, the "glut men" at the Custom House, the curiously regular irregularities of the printing and bookbinding trades, the increased demand in winter of the gas companies on the one hand and the theatrical industry on the other, the spring rush on painters and builders' labourers, on dressmakers, and trouser-finishers, and so on. But we shall

* With regard to Ireland our proposals might be considered in connection with the Final Report of the Royal Commission on Congestion in Ireland, more especially, we think, the Minutes of Dissent of Lord Macdonnell. He suggests (p. 172) that the present Congested Districts Board should be merged in two Government Departments, one of which would be concerned with agriculture, the development of fisheries, and the promotion of industries, including technical instruction. In view of the close connection betweenAble-bodied Destitution in Ireland and the land question, it might be desirable to make the new services of the Labour Exchange, Trade Insurance, and Maintenance under Training, subordinate departments of the Authority dealing with agriculture, fisheries, etc.

† The Labour Exchange would probably adopt the practice of the Exchanges in London of suspending action, with regard to any particular trade, in a particular locality, as soon as any strike or lock-out was notified to it.

be surprised to find how easy it will prove, after a year or two's experience, to forecast these requirements *for the town as a whole;* and, as we have suggested, how comparatively small is the variation in the aggregate volume of employment for unskilled and casual labour of one day or of one month, or of one season of the year, compared with another. What remains to be discovered is how far the different sporadic demands can be satisfied interchangeably by the undifferentiated labour that is available. Complete interchangeability of labour, and complete "dovetailing" of situations may, of course, even in the realm of casual unskilled labour not be possible. But probably it would become every year more practicable; and it will obviously be part of the training of the ultimate residuum of Unemployed to promote a more complete interchangeability; moreover, whilst it would be the policy of the Minister for Labour so to direct the operations of the National Labour Exchange as to bring about the "Decasualization of Casual Labour," and the Suppression of Under-employment, and of the peculiar Discontinuity of Employment characteristic of the seasonal trades, this would have to be undertaken gradually and with caution. It could only proceed step by step with the arrangements for the Absorption of Labour that we have described, and with the organization of Training Establishments at which maintenance under training was provided for any person who might find himself without employment.

When the whole of the anticipated requirements of each town are provided for—and, of course, at all times as regards individual cases—it should be the duty of the various Labour Exchanges to communicate with each other as to the actual or anticipated requirements of other towns. Just as all the Labour Exchanges in one town would report, day by day, and even, telephonically, hour by hour, to a central office in that town, from which they would all be advised as to the localities where additional men were required, so the Labour Exchanges of all the different towns would report, at least once a day, to the Ministry of Labour as regards England and Wales, and to the corresponding Departments as regards Scotland and Ireland, stating:—

(*a*) What surplus labour they had; and

(*b*) How much of it was not needed for the proximate local requirements; or on the other hand

(*c*) What shortage of labour they had, or expected to have.

Particular Labour Exchanges could then be put telephonically in direct communication with each other, either with a view to filling particular situations or with a view to an offer, to those labourers who were disengaged, of the chance of migration to the town in which additional labour of any particular sort was required. It might well be part of the help afforded by the State to make this mobility possible by advancing any necessary railway fares, in the form of special, non-transferable railway tickets, available only for the particular journey authorised.

(iii) *The Trade Insurance Division.*

The Trade Insurance Division would, in the main, deal with finance and accounts. As we have explained we do not recommend any Government Insurance Fund to provide Out-of-Work Pay in competition with the Trade Unions. The Trade Insurance Division would prepare and administer the regulations under which the Government Subvention to the societies providing insurance against Unemployment was annually granted. It is not suggested that the Government should assume any responsibility for the management, or the financial soundness of the societies to which it paid its subvention. Nor would the Government give any undertaking as to the future; or come into contact with any individual member. All that it would do, year by year, would be, in recognition of the fact that certain voluntary associations had, by their system of Trade Insurance, actually provided Out-of-Work Pay in the preceding year for so many men, at such and such a cost, and thereby greatly relieved the burden which the Unemployed cast upon the Government, to grant to such societies amounts equal to some fixed proportion (not exceeding one-half) of the sums thus already disbursed. This would merely involve the making of an annual application by the Trade Union, supported by statistics from its duly audited accounts, stating the particulars of all its Out-of-Work Benefit for the preceding year. The Trade Insurance Division would, of course, be entitled to make any inspection of books, or other investigation necessary for satisfying itself that the application was, in all its details, in accordance with the regulations. But there would be no control over policy. The Trade Insurance Division would have no further power than to withhold payment of its subvention in respect of any cases in which it was not

satisfied that the Out-of-Work Benefit had been granted only in relief of members unemployed through slackness of trade.

The relations of the Trade Insurance Division with the Executive Committees of the different trade societies would be facilitated by the fact that their connection would be entirely voluntary, and terminable at any time. There is no advantage in pressing, still less in compelling, a Trade Union to accept the subvention offered to it. It might be allowed, if it chose, to remain as at present, paying its own benefits for its own members exclusively from its own funds; or declining to take up Out-of-Work Benefit.

(iv) *The Industrial Regulation Division.*

We need not describe the function of this Division, of which the present Factory Department of the Home Office and the analogous department of the Board of Trade dealing with the hours of railway servants, would form the most substantial part. We imagine that this department will be presently reinforced by the organization of boards of employers and workmen to decide on the conditions of employment which should obtain in particular industries, and to get these embodied in new clauses of the Factory Act or voluntarily agreed to by employers and workpeople. Some such industrial organization will become more than ever desirable in order to guide the National Labour Exchange with regard to particular industries.

(v) *The Emigration and Immigration Division.*

This Division would develop the office now maintained under the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in close communication with the responsible governments of other parts of the Empire. In particular it will be constantly transmitting information to the Maintenance and Training Division as to the qualities needed to make a man or woman fit to emigrate with a prospect of success. But we anticipate that this Division will not confine itself to overlooking the emigration of our citizens; it will also supervise and, if necessary, check the immigration of alien labour. When a National Labour Exchange has undertaken the responsibility of finding situations for unemployed citizens, and a Maintenance and Training Division has undertaken to provide for those for whom situations cannot be found, we do not think it likely that the community will acquiesce in any indiscriminate invasion by necessitous foreign wage-earners at times when the home market is overstocked. The principle of supervision has already been enacted by Parliament and we recommend that the carrying out of this statute should be transferred to the Ministry of Labour. With regard to the emigration of individuals to other parts of the Empire, we think that the Division should consider the expediency of making use of the organization of the various Colonial Governments and Voluntary Associations.

(vi) *The Statistical Division.*

The Statistical Division would work in close connection with the rest of the Department. It would summarise and collate all the information available with regard to the labour market, the temporary or permanent depressions in certain industries, the level of wages and hours, and the flow of labour in and out of the country. On this material it would be able to calculate the beginnings of waves of depression or waves of inflation with more certainty, and, we hope, with more practical result than the Meteorological Department forecasts the weather. Upon these statistics the Minister of Labour would inform the Ministers responsible for the spending departments of the approaching scarcity or surplus of Labour in particular trades or in the country at large. These statistics would be also available to calculate insurance premiums, or to guide the Maintenance andTraining Division in the determination of the kind of training required. Upon these statistics boards of employers and workmen might determine, subject to any statutory regulations, the hours and wages of particular occupations. Finally, on these statistics would be determined how far it was desirable to encourage emigration out of the United Kingdom, or permit immigration into it.

(vii) *The Maintenance and Training Division.*

To this Division there falls the most difficult and perhaps the most important task, that of working out the *technique* of an entirely new departure, in which previous experience, whether under the Poor Law or under the Unemployed Workmen Act, offers but little beyond examples of what to avoid.

We see at once that there will have to be one or more spacious Receiving Offices in each considerable centre of population, to which able-bodied persons in distress from want of employment, or unable to get food or lodging, could apply for maintenance. Such persons would either apply spontaneously, or they might be referred or brought in by the police, or by the officers of the Local Health or Education Authorities. Their urgent wants would have to be met, as they have to be at present under the head of "Sudden or Urgent Necessity"; and they would then be medically examined, and their faculties tested, to see what could be done for them. The Receiving Office would promptly pass all its cases on to one Training Establishment or another; but it would plainly require to have a certain amount of cellular sleeping accommodation available for occupation by persons absolutely homeless, pending their removal. The officers of the Receiving House for the Able-bodied would naturally act in close concert with those of the Local Health Authority and Local Education Authority, all alike "searching out" destitution, and passing to one another the cases with which each was specially concerned—all destitute children, for instance, being instantly taken charge of by the Local Education Authority, and all sick persons in distress by the Local Health Authority.

We have explained, in the Scheme of Reform with which we concluded Part I. of this Report, how the various classes of the Non-Able-bodied would be taken charge of by the several specialised statutory committees of the County or County Borough Councils—the children of school age by the Local Education Authority; the infants, the sick, the permanently incapacitated and the aged requiring institutional treatment by the Local Health Authority; the mentally defective of all kinds by the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective; and the aged in receipt of local or national pensions by the Local Pensions Authority. In order to avoid overlapping of assistance to different members of the same family, or to one and the same person by different Authorities or by private charity, as also to ensure that all necessary requirements are fulfilled, we have proposed that all forms of Public Assistance should be entered in a common Register for each County or County Borough; and that all proposals for the grant of Home Aliment by any Committee should be submitted for sanction to the local Registrar of Public Assistance. It is clear that the same course should be followed with all Public Assistance granted to the Able-bodied. The Superintendent of the local Receiving House for the Able-bodied would, in fact, stand in the same relation to the Registrar of Public Assistance as the various Local Authorities for the several classes of the Non-Able-Bodied.

From the Receiving Office the Able-bodied person in distress would be assigned to one or other of the Training Establishments according to the circumstances of his case. If he was a married man with a home, he would probably be directed to attend next morning at 6 a.m., at the Day Training Depot of his town or district, where his whole day would be taken up with the training appropriate to his needs; with good plain meals on the dietary prescribed by the Trainer. But he would return home at night. Day Training Depots of this kind will be required on the outskirts of all large towns though they will not all necessarily be on the same model. If there were dependent children at home, the Superintendent of the Receiving Office would have to apply to the local Registrar of Public Assistance (giving simultaneous notice to the officers of the Local Education Authority and Local Health Authority) for sanction to have Home Aliment paid. This would be charged to the Local Education Authority; and if that Authority was not satisfied with the home circumstances for the children, it could elect to take them into one of its residential institutions, or admit them to its Day Industrial School.

But the unmarried or homeless man would probably find himself assigned to one or other of the residential Training Establishments in the country. These Farm Colonies would be established as and where required. They would adopt different kinds of training and different types of regimen, according to the needs of their respective classes of inmates. Hence the Superintendent of the Receiving House would have to decide where each applicant could most appropriately be sent. He would bear in mind also the state of the local labour market, and whether it was expected that there would be an early increase in the demand. He would consider also the peculiar needs of each man, and where he was most likely to be benefited.

We have to consider the case of women as well as of men. There must, it is clear, be a Women's Side of the Receiving Office, under a female officer. The able-bodied woman applicant would be dealt with exactly on the same lines as the man; being assigned, if single and without children, or if homeless, to a suitable day or residential Training Estab-

lishment for women only. The woman with dependent children, and with a home which satisfied the minimum requirements of the Local Health Authority and Local Education Authority would receive (unless she was adjudged unfit to have the charge of the children) Home Aliment for their support from the Local Education Authority, subject always, in order to prevent overlapping and infringement of economic conditions, to the sanction of the local Registrar of Public Assistance. Far from being provided with industrial employment, the mother with whom her children were thus "boarded out" by the Local Education Authority would be required to devote herself wholly to their care, on pain of having them withdrawn from her.

There remains the case of the Able-bodied wife, without dependent children, of the able-bodied man having a decent home, but yet in need of assistance. Usually the man would be assigned to the Day Training Depot, where he would have his food. For the wife, the Superintendent of the Receiving House would enquire from the Labour Exchange whether employment of suitable nature could be found, which would permit her to keep up the home. If not, he would apply to the local Registrar of Public Assistance for sanction for the grant of Home Aliment, out of national funds, to the woman herself. This should be made conditional on her taking such steps for her own self-improvement as the Local Women's Advisory Committee might suggest; including, probably, daily attendance at the nearest Domestic Economy School for further training in cookery, dressmaking and housekeeping.

The Maintenance and Training Division would, it is clear, be able to make great use, at each stage of its work, of voluntary helpers and voluntary institutions. It would have its Local Women's Advisory Committees, and its volunteer visitors, who would look after the wives, and help with the women inmates of the Women's Training Establishments. In the establishment and management of these institutions, the Government might receive, too, a practically unlimited amount of voluntary help and co-operation. In this connection there would be a great opportunity for making use of the fervour and zeal of philanthropy and religion. The greatest results in the way of the reclamation and training of individuals have always been achieved by religious organizations. It would be wise for the State to make a greatly increased use (with proper inspection) of farm colonies and similar settlements and homes, conducted by religious and philanthropic committees, for such of the residuum as may be willing to be sent to them in preference to the Government establishments. It may well be that for all that important side of training that is implied in the strengthening of moral character, the building up of the will, the power to resist temptation, and the formation of regular habits, the most effective instruments are a degree of love and of religious faith that a Government establishment with a Civil Service staff may not always be able to secure. The Ministry of Labour would therefore be well advised to let the denominations and the philanthropists have all the scope that they can take, and only to establish such additional Government farm colonies as are found needful to supplement the private effort. This private effort could be subsidised by payments for each case, as has long been done for a whole generation in the reformatory schools, and is now being done in inebriate homes.

(F) "Utopian?"

This elaborate scheme of national organization for dealing with the grave social evil of Unemployment, with its resultant Able-bodied Destitution, and its deterioration of hundreds of thousands of working class families, will seem to many persons Utopian. Experience proves, however, that this may mean no more than that it will take a little time to accustom people to the proposals, and to get them carried into operation. The first step is to make the whole community realise that the evil exists. At present, it is not too much to say that the average citizen of the middle or upper class takes for granted the constantly recurring destitution among wage-earning families due to Unemployment, as part of the natural order of things, and as no more to be combated than the east wind. In the same way the eighteenth century citizen acquiesced in the horrors of the contemporary prison administration, and in the slave trade; just as, for the first decades of the nineteenth century, our grandfathers accepted as inevitable the slavery of the little children of the wage-earners in mines and factories, and the incessant devastation of the slums by "fever." Fifty years hence we shall be looking back with amazement at the helpless and ignorant acquiescence of the governing classes of the United Kingdom, at the opening of the twentieth century, in the constant debasement of character and *physique*, not to mention the perpetual draining away of the nation's wealth, that idleness combined with starvation plainly causes.

The second step is for the Government to make a serious endeavour to grapple with the evil as a whole, on a deliberately thought-out plan. By the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, Parliament and the nation have admitted the public responsibility in the matter. We may agree that the work of the Distress Committees has resulted in little. But the experiments of the last few years have definitely revealed the nature of the problem, and the lines on which it can be dealt with. *We have to report that, in our judgment, it is now administratively possible, if it is sincerely wished to do so, to remedy most of the evils of Unemployment*;* to the same extent, at least, as we have in the past century diminished the death rate from fever and lessened the industrial slavery of young children. It is not a valid objection that a demonstrably perfect and popularly-accepted *technique*, either with regard to the prevention of Unemployment, or with regard to the treatment of the Unemployed, has not yet been worked out. No such *technique* can ever be more than foreshadowed until it is actually being put in operation. Less than a century ago the problem of dealing with the sewage of London seemed insoluble. Half a million separate private cesspools accumulated each its own putrefaction. To combine these festering heaps into a single main drainage system seemed, to the Statesmen and social reformers of 1820 or 1830, beyond the bounds of possibility. We now take for granted that only by such a concentration is it possible to get rid of the festering heaps and scientifically treat the ultimate residuum. In the same way, a century ago, no one knew how to administer a fever hospital; the eighteenth century "pesthouse" must, indeed, have killed more people than it cured. Yet it was only by establishing hospitals that we learnt how to make them instruments of recovery for the patients and of a beneficent protection to the rest of the community. And, to take a more recent problem, less than half a century ago, when millions of children in the land were growing up untaught, undisciplined, and uncared for, it would have sounded wildly visionary to have suggested that the remedy was elaborate organization on a carefully thought-out plan. Could there have been anything more "Utopian" in 1860 than a picture of what to-day we take as a matter of course, the 7,000,000 children emerging every morning, washed and brushed, from 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 homes in every part of the Kingdom, traversing street and road and lonely woodland, going o'er fell and moor, to present themselves at a given hour at their 30,000 schools, where each of the 7,000,000 finds his or her own individual place, with books and blackboard and teacher provided? What has been effected in the organisation of Public Health and Public Education can be effected, if we wish it, in the Public Organization of the Labour Market.

(G) Summary of Proposals.

We therefore recommend:—

1. That the duty of so organising the National Labour Market as to prevent or to minimise Unemployment should be placed upon a Minister responsible to Parliament, who might be designated the Minister for Labour.

2. That the Ministry of Labour should include six distinct and separately organized Divisions, each with its own Assistant Secretary; namely, the National Labour Exchange, the Trade Insurance Division, the Maintenance and Training Division, the Industrial Regulation Division, the Emigration and Immigration Division and the Statistical Division.

3. That the function of the National Labour Exchange should be, not only (*a*) to ascertain and report the surplus or shortage of labour of particular kinds, at particular places; and (*b*) to diminish the time and energy now spent in looking for work, and the consequent "leakage" between jobs; but also (*c*) so to "dovetail" casual and seasonal employments as to arrange for practical continuity of work for those now chronically Under-employed. That whilst resort to the National Labour Exchange might be optional for employers filling situations of at least a month's duration, it should (following the precedent of the Labour Exchange for seamen already conducted by the

* "If . . by a solution is meant that no man able and willing to work should come to degradation or destitution for want of work, then a solution is not indeed within sight, but by no means beyond hope. Its direction is certain, and its distance not infinite. . . . It is a policy of industrial organization, of meeting deliberately industrial needs that at present are met wastefully because without deliberation. Fluctuations of demand are now provided for by the maintenance of huge stagnant reserves of labour in varying extremities of distress. There is no reason in the nature of things why they should not be provided for by organized reserves of labour raised beyond the reach of distress." ("Unemployment: A Problem of Industry," by W. H. Beveridge, 1909, p. 236.)

Board of Trade in the Mercantile Marine Offices) be made legally compulsory in certain scheduled trades in which excessive Discontinuity of Employment prevails; and especially for the engagement of Casual Labour.

4. That in our opinion no effective steps can be taken towards the "Decasualisation of Casual Labour," and the Suppression of Under-employment, without simultaneously taking action to ensure the immediate absorption, or else to provide the full and honourable maintenance at the public expense, of the surplus of labourers that will thereby stand revealed.

5. That, in order to secure proper industrial training for the youth of the nation, an amendment of the Factory Acts is urgently required to provide that no child should be employed at all below the age of fifteen; that no young person under eighteen should be employed for more than thirty hours per week; and that all young persons so employed should be required to attend for thirty hours per week at suitable Trade Schools to be maintained by the Local Education Authorities.

6. That the terms of the Regulation of Railways Act, 1893, should be so amended as to enable the Minister of Labour to require the prompt reduction of the hours of duty of railway, tramway, and omnibus workers, if not to forty-eight, at any rate, to not more than sixty in any one week as a maximum.

7. That all mothers having the charge of young children, and in receipt, by themselves or their husbands, of any form of Public Assistance, should receive enough for the full maintenance of the family; and that it should then be made a condition of such assistance that the mother should devote herself to the care of her children; without seeking industrial employment.

8. That we recommend these reforms for their own sake, but it is an additional advantage that they (and especially the Halving of Boy Labour) would permit the immediate addition to the number of men in employment equal to a large proportion of those who are now Unemployed or Under-employed.

9. That in order to meet the periodically recurrent general depressions of Trade, the Government should take advantage of there being at these periods as much Unemployment of capital as there is Unemployment of labour; that it should definitely undertake, as far as practicable, the Regularization of the National Demand for Labour; and that it should, for this purpose, and to the extent of at least £4,000,000 a year, arrange a portion of the ordinary work required by each Department on a Ten Years' Programme; such £40,000,000 worth of work for the decade being then put in hand, not by equal annual instalments, but exclusively in the lean years of the trade cycle; being paid for out of loans for short terms raised as they are required, and being executed with the best available labour, at Standard Rates, *engaged in the ordinary way.*

10. That in this Ten Years' Programme there should be included works of Afforestation, Coast Protection and Land Reclamation; to be carried out by the Board of Agriculture exclusively in the lean years of the trade cycle; *by the most suitable labour obtainable taken on in the ordinary way,* at the rates locally current for the work, and paid for out of loans raised as required.

11. That the statistical and other evidence indicates that, by such measures as the above, the greater part of the fluctuations in the aggregate volume of employment can be obviated; and the bulk of the surplus labour manifesting itself in chronic Under-employment can be immediately absorbed, leaving, at all times, only a relatively small residuum of men who are, for various reasons, in distress from want of work.

12. That with a lessened Discontinuity of Employment, and the Suppression of Under-employment, the provision of Out-of-Work Benefit by Trade Unions would become practicable over a much greater range of industry than at present; and its extension should, as the best form of insurance against Unemployment, receive Government encouragement and support. That in view of its probable adverse effect on Trade Union membership and organization, we are unable to recommend the establishment of any plan of Government or compulsory Insurance against Unemployment. That we recommend, however, that, following the precedents set in several foreign countries, a Govern-

ment subvention not exceeding one-half of the sum actually paid in the last preceding year as Out-of-Work Benefit should be offered to Trade Unions or other societies providing such Benefit, in order to enable the necessary weekly contributions to be brought within the means of a larger proportion of the wage-earners.

13. That for the ultimate residuum of men in distress from want of employment, who may be expected to remain, after the measures now recommended have been put in operation, we recommend that Maintenance should be freely provided, without disfranchisement, on condition that they submit themselves to the physical and mental training that they may prove to require. That it should be the function of the Maintenance and Training Division of the Ministry of Labour to establish and maintain Receiving Offices in the various centres of population, at which able-bodied men in distress could apply for assistance, and at which they would be medically examined and have their faculties tested in order to discover in what way they could be improved by training. They would then be assigned either to suitable Day Training Depots or residential Farm Colonies, where their whole working time would be absorbed in such varied beneficial training of body and mind as they proved capable of; their wives and families being, meanwhile, provided with adequate Home Aliment.

14. That no applicant for employment or man out of work need be legally required to register at the National Labour Exchange, or to attend or remain in any Training Establishment, so long as he abstained from crime (including Vagrancy and Mendicity), and maintained himself and his family without receiving or needing Public Assistance in any form; but that such registration, and, if required, such attendance, should be legally enforced on all men who fail to fulfil any of their social obligations, or are found houseless, or requiring Public Assistance for themselves or their families.

15. That the Maintenance and Training Division should also establish one or more Detention Colonies, of a reformatory type, to which men would be committed by the Magistrates, and compulsorily detained and kept to work under discipline, upon conviction of any such offences as Vagrancy, Mendicity, neglect to maintain family or to apply for Public Assistance for their maintenance if destitute, repeated recalcitrancy or breach of discipline in a Training Establishment, etc.

16. That for able-bodied women, without husband or dependent children, who may be found in distress from want of employment, there should be exactly the same sort of provision as for men. That for widows or other mothers in distress, having the care of young children, residing in homes not below the National Minimum of sanitation, and being themselves not adjudged unworthy to have children entrusted to them, there should be granted adequate Home Aliment on condition of their devoting their whole time and energy to the care of the children. That for the childless wives of able-bodied men in attendance at a Training Establishment, adequate Home Aliment be granted, conditional on their devoting their time to such further training in Domestic Economy as may be prescribed for them.

17. That upon the establishment of the Ministry of Labour, and the setting to work of its new organisation, the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 should cease to apply; and the Local Authorities should be relieved of all responsibilities with regard to the Able-bodied and the Unemployed.

18. That upon the necessary legislation being passed, a small Executive Commission be empowered to effect the necessary transfer to the Ministry of Labour of the functions with regard to the Able-bodied and the Unemployed at present performed by the Poor Law Authorities and the Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act; and to make, as from the Appointed Day, all necessary transfers and adjustments of buildings and officers, Farm Colonies and Labour Exchanges, assets and liabilities.

We cannot end our Report without expressing our great appreciation of the services rendered by the whole of the staff of the Commission. We have particularly to record our sense of obligation to the Secretary, Mr. R. G. Duff, and to the Assistant Secretaries, Mr. J. Jeffrey and Mr. E. Craven. This is, on our part, no mere conventional compliment. The task of serving a large Commission, made up of persons of very varied opinions, is as delicate as it is arduous. By their unfailing courtesy and helpfulness, and their constant impartiality, the Secretaries have lightened the work of every member of the Commission. Their ability, knowledge and varied experience have been uniformly at the service of the Minority no less than of the Majority.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF PART I. AND PART II.

PART I.—THE DESTITUTION OF THE NON-ABLE-BODIED.

CHAPTER I. The General Mixed Workhouse of to-day, pp. 726–738.

1. That the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland, and the Poorhouses of Scotland, whether urban or rural, new or old, large or small, sumptuous or squalid, all exhibit the same inherent defects, of which the chief are promiscuity and unspecialised management.

2. That these institutions have a depressing, degrading, and positively injurious effect on the character of all classes of their inmates, tending to unfit them for the life of respectable and independent citizenship.

3. That the institution of a General Mixed Workhouse, whether large or small, was decisively condemned by the Poor Law Commissioners of 1834; that it has been repeatedly condemned since that date by a succession of competent critics; that this condemnation has been confirmed by the evidence given before us, by the reports of our own Investigators and by the individual inspections that we have been able personally to make in many different parts of the United Kingdom.

4. That the institution is everywhere abhorred by the respectable poor, and that, in our judgment, the continued incarceration within its walls of the non-able-bodied or dependent poor, who are admittedly incapable of earning an independent livelihood, cannot be justified.

5. That the continuance of the General Mixed Workhouse as the main method of institutional treatment, alike by the Boards of Guardians of England, Wales and Ireland, and by the Parish Councils of Scotland, in spite of such long continued and widespread condemnation, is to be attributed to the fact that these bodies are essentially Destitution Authorities, charged with the "relief" of persons of the most different ages, ailments and conditions, in respect only of their destitution.

CHAPTER II. The Outdoor Relief of to-day, pp. 739–771.

6. That the abolition of Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied is, in our judgment, wholly impracticable, and, even if it were possible, it would be contrary to the public interest. There are, and, in our opinion, there always will be, a large number of persons to whom public assistance must be given, who can, with most advantage to the community, continue to live at home; for instance, widows with children whose homes deserve to be maintained intact, sick persons for whom domiciliary treatment is professionally recommended, the worthy aged having relatives with whom they can reside, and such of the permanently incapacitated (the crippled, the blind, etc.) as can safely be left with their friends. Nor can the community rely on voluntary charity providing for these cases. In many places such charity does not exist, and in many others there is no warrant for assuming that it would ever be adequate to the need. Moreover, our investigations show that voluntary charity, in so far as it exists in the form of doles and allowances to persons in their homes, has all the disastrous characteristics of a laxly administered Poor Law.

7. That so long as the alternative is admission to the General Mixed Workhouse, the policy of systematic refusal or restriction of Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied, pursued by a few Boards of Guardians in England, cannot be recommended for general adoption. We are unable to resist the evidence that this policy of "offering the House," even to the non-able-bodied, results, in not a few cases, in unnecessarily destroying the home and breaking up the family, in separating child from mother, and in exposing young and innocent persons to the demoralising atmosphere of the General Mixed Workhouse. Such a policy, moreover, by deterring the poor from applying for relief, leads, in far too many cases, to semi-starvation and physical and mental degeneration, from which the women and children especially suffer, and, in a small number of cases, even to death from want and exposure. The proposal made to us by some witnesses that, in order to obviate this latter danger, the Destitution Authority should be granted powers of compulsory removal appears to us—in view of the character of the General Mixed Workhouse in which these poor people would be incarcerated—wholly out of the question.

8. That the present system of administering Outdoor Relief to the non-able-bodied in England, Wales and Ireland, and to a lesser degree also in Scotland, is open to the gravest criticism. The large sum of nearly £4,000,000 which is now expended in this way annually—a burden on the community that is steadily increasing—is being dispensed, without central inspection or control, in doles and allowances, awarded upon no uniform principle, and differing widely from place to place. This lack of common principle is observable even in the Bylaws or Standing Orders by which the best administered Unions in England profess to guide their action. But in the actual practice the diversity between one place and another, in large districts between one Relief Committee and another, and sometimes even between one meeting and the next, according to the accident of which members attend—a diversity applying alike to the persons to whom Outdoor Relief will be given, to its amount and to its conditions—is still more extreme. It can, in fact, be described only as a total absence of principle.

9. That amid all this diversity of principle and practice, we find certain evil characteristics practically universal. Except in an insignificant number of well-administered districts in England and Scotland, the doles and allowances given are manifestly inadequate for healthy subsistence. They are given, not in relief of destitution, strictly so-called, but in supplement of other resources that are assumed to exist. In many cases, such other resources—whether earnings, charitable gifts or the contributions of relations—do exist, but are insufficient. In some cases, on the other hand, the total income of the household is such as not to warrant any relief from the Poor Rate. But no Destitution Authority that we have seen succeeds in ascertaining what other sources of income exist or whether any such exist; and the majority of them do not seriously attempt to do so. The result is that there are a great many cases in which, whilst Out-relief is given on the assumption that other resources will be forthcoming, none such are found; so that the dole of Poor Law relief—upon which thousands of old people, sick people and even widows with young children are steadily degenerating—is a starvation pittance.

10. That an equally grave defect in the Outdoor Relief of to-day, at any rate from the standpoint of the nation, is the unconditional character of the grant. With a few honourable exceptions, no attempt is made by the Destitution Authority even to ascertain how the household is actually being maintained upon the Outdoor Relief that is granted, still less to effect any necessary improvement in the home. The result, as we have grave reason to believe, is that a large part of the sum of nearly £4,000,000 sterling is a subsidy to insanitary, to disorderly, or even to vicious habits of life. The saddest feature of all is that no small proportion of the 234,000 children whom, in the United Kingdom, the Destitution Authority elects to bring up upon Outdoor Relief—in the course of a year, probably as many as 600,000 different children—are to-day without any interference by these Authorities chronically underfed, insufficiently clothed, badly housed, and, in literally thousands of cases, actually being brought up at the public expense in drunken and dissolute homes.

11. That we do not ascribe the disastrous social failure of the Outdoor Relief of to-day to any personal shortcomings of the individual members of Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, or of Parish Councils in Scotland. We have found no evidence that the corrupt and criminal practices which have unhappily occurred in certain places, are at all frequent or widespread. Nor have we reasons to suppose that the evil influences of electoral or social pressure have been otherwise than exceptional. We have, indeed, been impressed by the vast amount of zealous and devoted service, unremunerated and unrecognised, that is being rendered in all parts of the Poor Law administration of the United Kingdom, by men and women of humanity and experience. We ascribe the defects and shortcomings of the present administration of Outdoor Relief to the very nature of the Local Authority to which this duty is entrusted.

12. That we attribute the almost universal failure of the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, and of the Parish Councils in Scotland, in the matter of Outdoor Relief, in all districts, and in every decade, partly to an illegitimate combination, in one and the same body of duties which can be rightly done by a board or committee, and those which can be efficiently discharged only by specialised officers continuously engaged in the task. The "many-headed" body is exactly what is required, whether for Outdoor Relief or for the management of institutions, for arriving at decisions of general policy; for prescribing the rules that are to be followed in determining

particular cases; and for examining grievances and preventing the abuse of their powers by the officers. But if the administration is to be democratic in its nature—if, that is to say, the will of the people is to prevail—it is absolutely necessary that the application to individual cases of the rules laid down by the board or committee should be determined evenly, impartially and exactly according to the instructions, by a salaried officer, appointed for the express purpose. We recognise this at once in the management of a school, a hospital or an asylum, where the most democratic committee finds the best guarantee for the execution of its will in ordering its salaried officials to apply the rules that it lays down. But in the dispensing of Outdoor Relief the same "many-headed" body that makes the rules has also attempted to apply them to individual cases; and in doing so inevitably brings in personal favouritism, accident and the emotion of the moment, to thwart the will of the community as a whole. The relative success of the Outdoor Relief administration of some of the best governed parishes of Scotland is due, we think, to the fact that, whilst the Parish Council makes the rules, their application to individual cases is not left to the chance membership of a particular meeting, but is in practice largely entrusted, as a judicial function, to the Inspector of the Poor.

13. That it is, however, not merely that "many-headedness" of the existing tribunal that is the cause of the failure of the Outdoor Relief administration of to-day. We ascribe that failure quite as much to the fact that the duty is entrusted to a Destitution Authority, served by subordinates who are essentially Destitution Officers. To entrust, to one and the same authority, the care of the infants and the aged, the children and the able-bodied adults, the sick and the healthy, maids and widows, is inevitably to concentrate attention, not on the different methods of curative or reformatory treatment that they severally require, but on their one common attribute of destitution, and the one common remedy of "relief," indiscriminate and unconditional. And just as this Destitution Authority tends always, in institutional organisation, to the General mixed Workhouse, with its promiscuity and unspecialised management, instead of to the appropriate series of specialised nurseries, schools, hospitals and asylums for the aged that are needed, so it tends also, with its general "mixed official," the Relieving Officer, to provide, alike for widows and deserted wives, the sick and the aged, infants and school children, one indiscriminate unconditional dole of money or food, instead of the specialised domiciliary treatment, according to the cause or character of their distress, that each class requires.

CHAPTER III. Birth and Infancy, pp. 772–800.

14. That the Boards of Guardians of England, Wales and Ireland, and the Parish Councils of Scotland have proved themselves to be, by their very nature as Destitution Authorities, wholly unsuited to cope with the grave threefold problem as to Birth and Infancy with which the nation is confronted. Alike in the prevention of the continued procreation of the feeble-minded, in the rescue of girl-mothers from a life of sexual immorality, and in the reduction of infantile mortality in respectable but necessitous families, the Destitution Authorities, in spite of their great expenditure, are to-day effecting no useful results. With regard to the first two of these problems, at any rate, the activities of the Boards of Guardians and Parish Councils are, in our judgment, actually intensifying the evil. If the State had desired to maximise both feeble-minded procreation and birth out of wedlock, there could not have been suggested a more apt device than the provision throughout the country of General Mixed Workhouses, organised as they now are to serve as unconditional Maternity Hospitals. Whilst thus encouraging irregular sexual unions and the procreation of the feeble-minded, the Destitution Authorities are doing little to arrest the appalling preventable mortality that prevails among the infants of the poor. The respectable married woman, however necessitous she may be, can with difficulty take advantage of the free food, shelter and medical attendance provided at great expense by the Destitution Authority for Maternity cases. In Scotland she is, if living with her own husband, he being in good health, absolutely debarred from relief by law. In England and Wales she is, as far as possible, deterred.

15. That in view of the fact that the Destitution Authorities of the United Kingdom have constantly on their hands more than 65,000 infants under five years of age, and that there is grave reason for believing the mortality among them to be excessive, alike among the 50,000 who are maintained on Outdoor Relief and among the 15,000 in Poor Law Institutions, careful statistical enquiry ought immediately to be made, in order to discover where the mortality is greatest, and how this loss of life can be prevented.

16. That, in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feebleminded, those unmarried mothers who come on the rates for their confinements and are definitely proved to be mentally defective should be dealt with exclusively by the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective.

17. That whatever provision is made from public funds for maternity, whether in the way of supervision, or in domiciliary midwifery, or by means of Maternity Hospitals, should be exclusively in the hands of the Local Health Authority.

18. That, in accordance with the recommendations of the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland, the fullest possible use should be made, under the inspection and supervision of the Local Health Authorities, of such Voluntary Agencies as Rescue and Maternity Homes, Midwifery Charities, and Day Nurseries.

19. That the system, whfch has already proved so successful, of combining the efforts of both salaried and voluntary Health Visitors with the work of the Medical Officer of Health and his staff, should be everywhere adopted and developed so as to extend to all infants under school age.

20. That the Local Health Authority should, in all its provision for birth and infancy, continue to proceed on its accustomed principles of:—

(*a*) The provision, free of charge, of hygienic information and advice to all who will accept it;

(*b*) The strict enforcement of the obligation imposed upon individuals to maintain in health those who are legally dependent on them; and

(*c*) Where individual default has taken place in this respect, the immediate provision of the necessaries for health, and the systematic recovery from those responsible, if they are able to pay, of repayment according to their means.

21. That the Destitution Authorities of England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland have proved themselves—in spite of the devoted personal service of many of their members—inherently unfitted, by the very nature of their functions, to have the charge of the 237,000 children of school age for whom the State, in the United Kingdom, assumes the responsibility of whole or partial maintenance.

CHAPTER IV. Children under Rival Authorities pp. 801–845

22. That, as a result of this inherent unfitness of a Destitution Authority for the rearing of children, it has been demonstrated to us by our own expert investigators, and confirmed by other evidence, that certainly a majority of all the Outdoor Relief children—probably 100,000 boys and girls—are to-day suffering, definitely and seriously, in health and character, from the circumstances of their lives—these circumstances being, in great part, the inadequate and unconditional character of the Outdoor Relief upon which they are supposed to be maintained, and the lack of care and supervision exercised by the Destitution Authorities and of inspection by the three Local Government Boards, to prevent the too frequent neglect and ill-treatment of these wards of the State.

23. That, in spite of almost universal condemnation and notwithstanding a whole generation of effort on the part of the three Local Government Boards to get the children otherwise maintained, there are, in Great Britain three or four thousand, and in Ireland as many more, children of school age being brought up in the demoralising atmosphere of the General Mixed Workhouse; and we have found no evidence of any effective desire or intention on the part of the Destitution Authorities to take steps to bring to an end this discredited method of providing for children.

24. That the system of "boarding-out" the children with foster-parents, or placing them in certified institutions—a system which, under careful and continuous supervision, and confined to a minority of suitable cases, has much to recommend it—is, at present, seriously prejudiced by the fact that the Destitution Authorities and their officers are, by the very nature of their functions, unqualified to maintain an efficient inspection of the homes and institutions which they select for their children, let alone any continuous supervision of their welfare. In some cases it has even been deemed advisable to discourage or prohibit such visiting of the homes or institutions in order to avoid the connection of the children with the Destitution Authority, which is supposed to look after them.

25. That the children in Poor Law Schools and Cottage Homes—the conditions of which have, for the most part, greatly improved—are, in many instances, maintained at an unnecessary cost; an excessive expenditure sometimes directly attributable to the inexperience of a Destitution Authority in school management, and one which still leaves the children suffering, even in well-administered institutions, from:—

(*a*) The difficulty of getting the best teachers in Poor Law Schools;

(*b*) The impracticability of affording these "institutionalised" boys and girls proper experience of life in a small home; and

(*c*) The educationally defective grouping together of children merely by the common attribute of their parents' destitution, instead of allocating them severally to the particular types of school (*e.g.*, mentally-defective schools, crippled schools, higher-grade schools, technical schools, etc.) that their individual characteristics require.

26. That owing to their lack of any appropriate machinery for the purpose, the Destitution Authorities fail to-day even to discover a large amount of the destitution that exists among children in the great towns; and this not merely in the matter of medical treatment urgently required, but even in the matter of actual inadequacy of food, so that the powers entrusted to the Boards of Guardians for the prosecution of cruel or neglectful parents are hardly ever put in force, and many thousands of children are, for lack of the necessaries of life, growing up stunted, debilitated and diseased.

27. That, as a consequence of this failure of the Destitution Authorities to prevent or to relieve child destitution, Parliament has been led, after many official investigations, to entrust to the Local Education Authorities the duty of providing meals for the children found at school unfed, at any rate on those days of the week, and those weeks of the year when the elementary schools are open; with the result that these Authorities are in England and Wales, during the present winter, feeding more than 100,000 children, and probably nearly as many children of school age as are being relieved, otherwise than in institutions, by all the Destitution Authorities put together.

28. That these competing systems of relieving child destitution by rival Local Authorities in the same town—in many cases simultaneously assisting the same children—without any effective machinery for recovering the cost from parents able to pay, and for prosecuting neglectful parents, are undermining parental responsibility, whilst still leaving many thousands of children inadequately fed.

29. That it is urgently necessary to put an end to this wasteful and demoralising overlapping, by making one Local Authority in each district, and one only, responsible for the whole of whatever provision the State may choose to make for children of school age.

30. That the only practicable way of securing this unity of administration, and also the most desirable reform, is, in England and Wales, to entrust the whole of the public provision for children of school age (not being sick or mentally defective) to the Local Education Authorities, under the supervision of the Board of Education; these Local Education Authorities having already, in their Directors of Education and their extensive staffs of teachers, their residential and their day feeding schools, their arrangements for medical inspection and treatment, their School Attendance Officers and Children's Care Committees, the machinery requisite for searching out every child destitute of the necessaries of life, for enforcing parental responsibility, and for obviating, by timely pressure and assistance, the actual crisis of destitution.

31. That in Scotland the whole of the public provision for children of school age might be entrusted, at any rate in the large towns, to the School Boards, and elsewhere, perhaps, either to the District Health Committee or to the newly-formed "County Committee of the District," under the supervision of the Scottish Education Department.

32. That in Ireland, where no Local Education Authorities exist, it should be considered whether the whole of the public provision for children of school age might not advantageously be entrusted to the County and County Borough Councils, acting through special "Boarding-out-Committees," on which there should be women members, and sending the children to the existing day schools.

33. That the continued existence of two separate rate-supported Medical Services in all parts of the kingdom, costing, in the aggregate, six or seven millions sterling annually —overlapping, unco-ordinated with each other and sometimes actually conflicting with each other's work—cannot be justified.

34. That the very principle of the Poor Law Medical Service—its restriction to persons who prove themselves to be destitute—involves delay and reluctance in the application of the sick person for treatment; hesitation and delay in beginning the treatment; and, in strictly administered districts, actual refusal of all treatment to persons who are in need of it, but who can manage to pay for some cheap substitute. These defects, which we regard as inherent in any medical service administered by a Destitution Authority, stand in the way of the discovery and early treatment of incipient disease, and accordingly deprive the medical treatment of most of its value.

35. That it has been demonstrated to us beyond all dispute that the deterrent aspect which the medical branch of the Poor Law acquires through its association with the Destitution Authority causes, merely by preventing prompt and early application by the sick poor for medical treatment, an untold amount of aggravation of disease, personal suffering and reduction in the wealth-producing power of the manual working class.

36. That the operations of the Poor Law Medical Service, being controlled by Destitution Authorities and administered by Destitution Officers, inevitably take on the character of unconditional "medical relief"—that is, relief of the real or fancied painful symptoms—as distinguished from remedial changes of regimen and removal of injurious conditions, upon which any really curative treatment, or any effective prevention of the spread or recurrence of disease, is nowadays recognised to depend.

37. That whilst domiciliary treatment of the sick poor is appropriate in many cases, it ought to be withheld:—

(i.) Where proper treatment in the home is impracticable;

(ii.) Where the patient persistently malingers or refuses to conform to the prescribed regimen; or

(iii.) Where the patient is a source of danger to others.

It has become imperative in the public interest that there should be, for extreme cases, powers of compulsory removal to a proper place of treatment. Such powers cannot, and in our opinion should not, be granted to a Destitution Authority.

38. That where Destitution Authorities cease to abide by the limitation of their work to persons really destitute, or pass beyond the dole of "Medical Relief," their attempt to extend the range or improve the quality of the Poor Law Medical Service brings new perils. We cannot regard with favour any action which, in order to promote treatment, openly or tacitly invites people voluntarily to range themselves among the destitute; or which tempts them, by the prospect of getting costly and specialised forms of treatment, to simulate destitution. Nor do we think that an Authority charged with the relief of destitution, whatever its method of appointment or whatever the area over which it acts, or any Authority acting through officers concerned with such relief, whatever their official designation, can ever administer a Medical Service with efficiency and economy.

39. That, with regard to the suggestion that the medical treatment of the sick poor should be left either to provident medical insurance or to voluntary charity, it has been demonstrated to us that these offer no possible alternative to the provision for the sick made by the Public Authority. With regard to domiciliary treatment, the evidence as to medical clubs, "contract practice," Provident Dispensaries and the out-patients' departments of hospitals is such as to make it impossible to recommend, in their favour, any restriction of the services at present afforded by the District Medical Officers and Poor Law Dispensaries. Nor do we feel warranted in giving any support to the proposal made to us that the whole of this Outdoor Medical Service of the Poor Law should be superseded by a publicly subsidised system of letting the poor choose their own doctors. Any such system would, in our judgment, lead to an extravagant expenditure of public funds on popular remedies and "medical extras," without obtaining, in

return for this enlarged "Medical Relief," greater regularity of life or more hygienic habits in the patient. With regard to institutional treatment, we gladly recognise the inestimable services rendered to the sick poor by the hospitals, sanatoria and convalescent homes supported by endowments or voluntary contributions. We approve of the use now made of these institutions by Public Authorities, and we think that many more suitable cases than at present might, on proper arrangements as to payment, be transferred from rate-maintained to voluntary institutions. But it is clear that such institutions provide only for a small fraction of the need, and that they leave untouched whole districts for some cases, and whole classes of cases everywhere, which there is no prospect of their being able or willing to undertake.

40. That the Medical Service of the Public Health Authorities, which now extensively treats disease, and actually maintains out of the rates a steadily increasing number of the sick poor, is based on principles more suited to a State Medical Service than that of the Poor Law. These principles, which lead, in practice as well as in theory, to searching out disease, securing the earliest possible diagnosis, taking hold of the incipient case, removing injurious conditions, applying specialised treatment, enforcing healthy surroundings and personal hygiene, and aiming always at preventing either recurrence or spread of disease—in contrast to the mere "relief" of the individual—furnish in fact the only proper basis for the expenditure of public money on a Medical Service.

41. That such compulsory powers of removal in extreme cases, as have been asked for, are analogous to those already exercised, with full public approval, by the Public Health Authorities; and that the proposed extension of such powers can properly be granted only to an authority proceeding on Public Health lines.

42. That we therefore agree with the responsible heads of all the four Medical Departments concerned—the Chief Medical Officer of the Local Government Board for England and Wales, the Medical Member of the Local Government Board for Scotland, the Medical Commissioner of the Local Government Board for Ireland, and the Medical Officer of the Board of Education—in ascribing the defects of the existing arrangements fundamentally to the lack of a unified Medical Service based on Public Health principles.

43. That in such a unified Medical Service, organised in districts of suitable extent, the existing Medical Officers of Health, Hospital Superintendents, School Doctors,* District Medical Officers, Workhouse and Dispensary Doctors and Medical Superintendents of Poor Law Infirmaries—the clinicians as well as the sanitarians—would all find appropriate spheres; that one among them being placed in administrative control who has developed most administrative capacity.

44. That we do not agree with the suggestion that the establishment of a unified Medical Service on Public Health lines necessarily involves the gratuitous provision of medical treatment to all applicants. It is clear that, in the public interest, neither the promptitude nor the efficiency of the medical treatment must be in any way limited by considerations of whether the patient can or should repay its cost. But we see no reason why Parliament should not embody in a clear and consistent code definite rules of Chargeability, either relating to the treatment of all diseases, or of all but those

* The question has been raised of the relation in which, with a unified Medical Service, the nascent medical activities of the Local Education Authorities should be placed. The question is one to be determined, in our opinion, by the dominant characteristic of the service. Within the limits of school age, the predominant service should be that of education; and the responsibility for the normal child should rest with the Local Education Authority. The case is different with the mentally defective child, for which the new Local Authority for the Mentally Defective will have the responsibility; and with the child withdrawn from school for definite illness, for which the Local Health Authority will be responsible. But when the child, without being so ill as to be withdrawn from school, requires the services of a doctor—as, for instance, in school medical inspection, in medical examination for scholarships, and in the treatment of minor ailments—we suggest that the Local Education Authority should, where the two Authorities are Committees of the same Council, not set up a medical staff of its own, but call in the Local Health Authority as its agent; just as it does already with regard to inspecting and certifying the drainage of the school building. On the other hand, where the children in the hospitals and sanatoria of the Local Health Authority are in need of education (a point now often neglected), we suggest that the Local Health Authority should not have its own teachers, but should call in the Local Education Authority as its agent. The case may be different where (as at present in England and Wales, outside the County Boroughs) the two Authorities are not Committees of the same Council, and do not serve the same areas. But even here arrangements could usually be made on similar lines.

specifically named; and of Recovery of the charge thus made from all patients who are able to pay. In our chapter on "The Scheme of Reform," we propose new machinery for automatically making and recovering all such charges that Parliament may from time to time impose.

45. That the existing provision for the Mentally Defective persons maintained in the United Kingdom at the public expense, probably approaching 200,000 in number, is far from satisfactory. CHAPTER VI. The Mentally Defective, pp. 891–898.

46. That the existence everywhere of rival Local Authorities maintaining the Mentally Defective, and the division of the supervision and control over their work among three (or even four) different Government Departments, no one of which has full responsibility, or combines in itself technical knowledge and financial control, involves —to use the emphatic words, formally given in evidence, of the Local Government Board for England and Wales—"*a large amount of unnecessary expenditure.*"

47. That the continued detention in the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland, and, to a lesser degree those of Scotland, of no fewer than 60,000 Mentally Defective persons, including not a few children, without education or ameliorative treatment, and herded indiscriminately with the sane, amounts to a public scandal.

48. That the practice of Ireland, where the inmates of the County Lunatic Asylums are wholly unconnected with the Poor Law, and are not stigmatised as paupers, should be adopted for Great Britain.

49. That we concur with the Vice-Regal Commission on Poor Law Reform in Ireland in thinking that all persons of unsound mind, whatever their mental state, and whatever their age, should be everywhere wholly removed from the Workhouses.

50. That, in the words of the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, it is "the mental condition of these persons, and neither their poverty nor their crime" that "is the real ground of their claim for help from the State."

51. That we accordingly concur with that Commission in the view that all grades of the Mentally Defective (including the feeble-minded, the epileptics, the inebriates, the imbeciles, the lunatics and the idiots) should, at all ages, be wholly withdrawn from the charge of the Destitution Authorities, and from pauperism, as well as from the Local Education Authorities, and that the entire responsibility for their discovery, certification and appropriate treatment (whether institutional or domiciliary) should be entrusted in England, Wales and Ireland, to the County and County Borough Councils, acting by statutory Committees for the Mentally Defective, in which the present Asylums Committees would be merged, and in Scotland to the County Councils and principal Town Councils, from which the District Boards of Lunacy are (with the exception of six towns) selected.

52. That the whole duty of supervision and control of the action of the Local Authorities in respect of the Mentally Defective, including the administration of the Grants-in-Aid, should be concentrated, in England (including Wales), Scotland and Ireland respectively, in a single self-contained and fully equipped Division or Department, concerned with the Mentally Defective alone, however that Division or Department may be grouped with others under a Minister responsible to Parliament.

53. That the inclusion, under the Poor Law, in one and the same category, of the congeries of different classes known as "the aged and infirm" is fundamentally inconsistent with any effective administration. CHAPTER VII. The Aged and Infirm, pp. 899–927.

54. That the majority of Destitution Authorities of England, Wales and Ireland make no other provision for this aggregate of diverse individuals, of all ages and of different mental and physical characteristics, than the General Mixed Workhouse on the one hand and indiscriminate, inadequate and unconditional Out-Relief on the other—forms of Relief cruel to the deserving, and demoralisingly attractive to those who are depraved.

55. That some of the Parish Councils of Scotland and a few Boards of Guardians in England have honourably distinguished themselves by providing, for aged persons of deserving conduct, either comfortable quarters or pensions in their own homes; though in the English Unions this provision has been unduly restricted by irrelevant conditions as to prolonged residence in one district, or as to the existence of relations not legally liable to contribute.

56. That no corresponding classification has been made among persons permanently, though prematurely, incapacitated, so that even the most deserving of these are very harshly dealt with.

57. That it is a necessary preliminary of any effective reform to break up the present unscientific category of "the Aged and Infirm," and to deal separately with distinct classes according to the age and the mental and physical characteristics of the individuals concerned.

58. That we concur with the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded that all persons, whatever their age, who are certified to belong to one or other grades of the Mentally Defective—including not only the lunatics and idiots, but also the feeble-minded and those suffering from senile dementia—should be entirely removed from contact with any form of Poor Law and should be placed wholly in charge of the Local Authority for the Mentally Defective.

59. That the establishment by Parliament in 1908 of a National Pension Scheme affords the proper provision for the aged who satisfy the necessary conditions in respect to income, residence in the United Kingdom, and conduct; but that it will be requisite at the earliest possible date to lower the pensionable age to sixty-five, if not to sixty; and that it is neither practicable nor desirable to make the previous receipt of any form of public assistance a ground for disqualification.

60. That, as there must always be a certain proportion of persons technically disqualified for a National Pension, for whom public provision must be made, and for whom institutional provision is neither necessary nor desirable, the Pension Committees of the Local Authorities should be empowered to grant out of the Rates, according to conditions settled by their Councils and approved by the Central Authority, pensions to persons of decent life, not being less than sixty years of age, who are not eligible for a National Pension.

61. That, whilst we anticipate considerable growth of voluntary agencies for securing, by insurance, supplementary pensions and provision for premature invalidity, we cannot recommend that the State should enter into competition for the workers' weekly pence with the Friendly Societies and Trades Unions, by any scheme of compulsory insurance; which would, we think, provoke the strenuous opposition of these societies, if they were left outside the scheme; and which must inevitably entail a national guarantee of their solvency, and Governmental control, if they were to be made part of the compulsory scheme.

62. That the responsibility for making suitable provision, domiciliary or institutional, for the prematurely incapacitated and the helpless aged, together with the necessary institutional provision for the aged to whom pensions are refused, should be entrusted to the Local Health Authority.

63. That the Local Health Authority should be granted compulsory powers of removal and detention similar to those which it now possesses in respect to certain infectious diseases, with regard to all aged and infirm persons who are found to be endangering their own lives, or becoming through mental or physical incapacity to take care of themselves, a nuisance to the public.

64. That, whilst all the obligations to support aged and infirm relations that are imposed by law should be strictly enforced by the appointed officers, where there is proof of ability to pay, no attempt should be made by any public authority to extract contributions from persons not legally liable, by subjecting aged or infirm persons, or threatening to subject them, to any treatment other than that deemed most suitable to their state.

65. That the existing provisions of the law for charging to, and recovering from, particular individuals, the cost of various forms of public assistance afforded to them, to their dependents or to other persons for whom they are legally liable to contribute, are confused and inconsistent with each other, and are based on no discoverable principle.

CHAPTER VIII. Charge and Recovery by Local Authorities, pp. 928–947.

66. That the practice of the multifarious Local Authorities, with regard to charging or recovering the cost of public assistance, varies, for identical services rendered to persons in identical economic circumstances, from place to place, from case to case, and even from time to time in one and the same case, according to the idiosyncracies of the members who happen to be present at successive meetings.

67. That the confused and uncertain state of the law, and the haphazard conflict of practice, lead to hardship and oppression on the one hand, and to demoralising laxity on the other; the net result being that a serious loss of revenue is incurred, the law-abiding citizen paying, and the habitual "cadger" escaping scot-free; with the additional absurdity that the patient for whom the cost is repaid is often classed as a pauper, whilst other patients suffering from the same disease get wholly gratuitous treatment and retain their *status* of citizenship.

68. That we recommend that a Departmental Committee should be appointed to consider the whole question of what forms of public assistance can properly be made the subject of these "Special Assessments," and upon what persons these assessments should be made; in order that the law may be amended on some definite principle, and consolidated by Parliament into a single statute.

69. That the duty of determining what Special Assessments are due according to the law, and from whom, together with the decision whether the person liable is of sufficient ability to pay, and the duty of enforcing payment by proper legal process, ought to be entirely separated from the work of administering the public assistance; and it would be most suitably undertaken, for all the forms of public assistance afforded in a given district, by a salaried officer of adequate *status*, appointed by and acting under the County or County Borough Council, but unconnected with either the Health, Education, Mentally Defectives or Pension Committees.

70. That we wholly disapprove and condemn the practice of some Boards of Guardians in England of varying the treatment, or threatening to vary the treatment—offering the Workhouse, for instance, instead of Outdoor Relief—in respect of persons entitled to relief from them, with a view to extracting contributions from other persons, whether or not these are legally liable for the payment. We think that it should be definitely laid down that the kind and amount of relief or assistance granted in any case should be determined solely by a consideration of the circumstances of the applicant or patient himself, and ought never to be made dependent on whether somebody else fulfils, or does not fulfil, a legal or moral obligation.

71. That the existing Law of Settlement and Removal, wasteful in its cost and occasionally the cause of hardship to the poor, will, under the scheme of reform which we are proposing, automatically cease to be applicable; and all the statutes bearing on the subject should be definitely repealed.

CHAPTER IX. Settlement and Removal, pp. 948–952.

72. That the assumption of the greater part of the charge for the aged by the National Government, and the proposed transfer to a Government Department of the provision for all sections of the able-bodied, will, in a large proportion of cases, obviate the necessity for raising the question of eligibility of an applicant for public assistance in respect of his previous residence.

73. That the re-organisation of the various services now included in the Poor Law on the lines of a County or County Borough administration under the several committees concerned, with the County or County Borough as the unit for rating, will, in the great majority of cases, render it unnecessary to raise the question of past residence.

74. That with regard to services rendered by the Local Health Authority, it should be made a condition of the proposed Grant-in-Aid that no question of the past residence of any applicant should be raised, except only with regard to admission to

any specialised institution; and in the latter case admission may, if thought fit, be confined, except on terms to be prescribed, to persons who have resided in the district for one year—any other persons being, if thought fit, refused admission (except when such refusal would involve danger to life), and relegated to the General Infirmary, or removed, under proper conditions and safeguards, to the specialised institution of the County to which they belong.

75. That (beyond the retention of the power to contribute towards school accommodation for "boarded-out" children) there is no need for any question of past residence to be raised in connection with the work of the Local Education Committee; and this should be made a condition of the Government Grants.

76. That whatever provisions are made in this respect, there should be identical and reciprocal rights as between England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland.

CHAPTER X. Grants-in-Aid pp. 953–976.

77. That alike in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, the Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure of the Destitution Authorities are urgently in need of revision. In return for the sum of £3,500,000 annually, which is being contributed to Boards of Guardians and Parish Councils, the various Departments of the National Government, which are charged with the supervision and control of the Local Authorities, now obtain the very minimum of power to prevent either extravagance or inefficiency, or of influence towards a greater efficiency of service. The relief afforded to the local ratepayer is so unequal and so arbitrarily distributed as to amount to a gross injustice, which is all the more intolerable in that, especially in Ireland, the poorest districts and those most heavily burdened often obtain the least relief. And the conditions of the Grants, whilst seldom so framed as to cause a wise discrimination in favour of the more desirable methods of expenditure rather than others, sometimes result in positively encouraging extravagance, laxness and refusal to carry out the policy desired by the Legislature.

78. That, in our opinion, in view of the large share of the cost of providing for the aged in their homes now borne by the National Exchequer under the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908, and of the share which we think it necessary for the National Government to take in the administration of the provision for the Unemployed and Able-bodied, we consider that no Grant-in-Aid should be made to the Local Authorities in respect of these two services.

79. That when all grades of the mentally defective are placed in the hands of the proposed new Local Authorities for the Mentally Defective, a Grant should be made to those Authorities in respect of all the persons satisfactorily provided for by them. It would be desirable that this Grant should be made on the same basis as that to the Local Health Authorities.

80. That a Grant-in-Aid should be made to the Local Health Authorities in respect of all the work now done by them, or to be hereafter entrusted to them.

81. That it is essential that all Grants-in-Aid should be administered by the particular Government Departments concerned with the particular services to be aided; and paid direct to the Local Authorities.

82. That all Grants should take the form of Grants-in-Aid of local services; that they should be conditional on the efficient performance of the services; that they should be governed by detailed regulations, and accompanied by systematic inspection and audit; and that they should be withheld, wholly or in part, on failure to comply with the law and the regulations in force.

83. That they might, for the convenience of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, be fixed in aggregate total, which might remain unchanged for a term of seven years; but that the allocation of the total among the several Local Authorities should be proportionate to their several expenditures from time to time on the services to be aided, subject to such expenditure being allowed by the Department to count for this purpose, as not being extravagant or improper. If not considered too complicated, the scale of distribution proposed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, determined jointly by expenditure and by poverty of the district, might advantageously be adopted.

84. That the Local Government Board for England and Wales—and in a lesser degree the Local Government Boards for Scotland and Ireland—have failed to secure the national uniformity of policy with regard to the relief of the poor, which was aimed at in the establishment of a Central Authority upon the Report of 1834. CHAPTER XI. Supervision and Control by the National Government, pp. 977–998.

85. That this failure has contributed to the extraordinary variations in Poor Law administration in different districts and to the present demoralised state of the majority of the Destitution Authorities.

86. That we attribute the failure, not to any shortcomings in the persons concerned, but to the obsolete character of the administrative machinery with which they have had to work; and notably to their not having been able to keep pace with the virtual transformation of the Destitution Authorities, from bodies set to "relieve destitution" under a deterrent Poor Law, into Local Authorities which, in response to public criticism, have started to provide, for this or that class of their patients, not deterrent relief, but curative and restorative treatment.

87. That the "Poor Law Division," with its General Inspectors, adhering to the old technique of a deterrent "relief of destitution," is unqualified to secure the efficient and economical administration of the different kinds of nurseries, schools, hospitals, asylums, custodial homes, farm colonies, and what not, that are now being run by the hypertrophied Destitution Authorities.

88. That each of the separate services administered by the Local Authorities—such as education, public health and care of the insane—imperatively requires the supervision, guidance and control of a distinct and self-contained Department or Division of a Department, having its own regulative orders, its own technically qualified Inspectorate, and its consistent line of policy; and that just as the Local Destitution Authorities should be broken up and merged in the several Committees of the County or County Borough Council dealing with the several services, so the Poor Law Division of the Local Government Board should be abolished, and its work distributed among the several Departments or Divisions of Departments to which may be entrusted the supervision and control over the Local Education Authorities, the Local Health Authorities, and the Local Authorities for the Mentally Defective, respectively.

89. That we cannot refrain from animadverting on the fact that, notwithstanding the enormous importance and steady expansion of the Public Health work of the Local Authorities, there exists, in England and Wales, no Department, and not even a distinct and self-contained Division of a Department, responsible for their supervision, guidance and control in this important service, and for maintaining in it a definite and consistent policy—the work of dealing with the questions as they arise being intermixed with the business of other services and scattered among five different Divisions of the Local Government Board; none of them having, under its control, any staff of inspectors for the systematic visitation of all the Local Health Authorities, or the administration of any Grant-in-Aid of the services of those Authorities; and none of them being charged with the duty of formulating and maintaining a consistent policy for the service as a whole.

Deferring our proposals with regard to the whole of the Able-bodied until Part II. of the present Report, we recommend:— CHAPTER XII. Scheme of Reform, pp. 999–1031.

90. That, except the 43 Eliz., c. 2, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 for England and Wales and the various Acts for the relief of the poor and the corresponding legislation for Scotland and Ireland, so far as they relate exclusively to Poor Relief. and including the Law of Settlement, should be repealed.

91. That the Boards of Guardians in England, Wales and Ireland, and (at any rate as far as Poor Law functions are concerned) the Parish Councils in Scotland, together with all combinations of these bodies, should be abolished.

92. That the property and liabilities, powers and duties of these Destitution Authorities should be transferred (subject to the necessary adjustments) to the County and County Borough Councils, strengthened in numbers as may be deemed necessary for their enlarged duties; with suitable modifications to provide for the special circumstances

of Scotland and Ireland, and for the cases of the Metropolitan Boroughs, the Non-County Boroughs over 10,000 in population, and the Urban Districts over 20,000 in population, on the plan that we have sketched out.

93. That the provision for the various classes of the non-able-bodied should be wholly separated from that to be made for the Able-bodied, whether these be Unemployed workmen, vagrants or able-bodied persons now in receipt of Poor Relief.

94. That the services at present administered by the Destitution Authorities (other than those connected with vagrants or the able-bodied)—that is to say, the provision for—

(i.) Children of school age;

(ii.) The sick and the permanently incapacitated, the infants under school age, and the aged needing institutional care;

(iii.) The mentally defective of all grades and all ages; and

(iv.) The aged to whom pensions are awarded—should be assumed, under the directions of the County and County Borough Councils, by:—

(i.) The Education Committee;

(ii.) The Health Committee;

(iii.) The Asylums Committee; and

(iv.) The Pension Committee respectively.

95. That the several committees concerned should be authorised and required, under the directions of their Councils, to provide, under suitable conditions and safeguards to be embodied in Statutes and regulative Orders, for the several classes of persons committed to their charge, whatever treatment they may deem most appropriate to their condition; being either institutional treatment, in the various specialised schools, hospitals, asylums, etc., under their charge; or whenever judged preferable, domiciliary treatment, conjoined with the grant of Home Aliment where this is indispensably required.

96. That the law with regard to liability to pay for relief or treatment received, or to contribute towards the maintenance of dependents and other relations, should be embodied in a definite and consistent code, on the basis, in those services for which a charge should be made, of recovering the cost from all those who are really able to pay, and of exempting those who cannot properly do so.

97. That there should be established in each County and County Borough one or more officers, to be designated Registrars of Public Assistance, to be appointed by the County and County Borough Council, and to be charged with the threefold duty of:—

(i.) Keeping a Public Register of all cases in receipt of public assistance;

(ii.) Assessing and recovering, according to the law of the land and the evidence as to sufficiency of ability to pay, whatever charges Parliament may decide to make for particular kinds of relief or treatment; and

(iii.) Sanctioning the Grants of Home Aliment proposed by the Committees concerned with the treatment of the case.

98. That the Registrar of Public Assistance should have under his direction (and under the control of the General Purposes Committee of the County or County Borough Council) the necessary staff of Inquiry and Recovery Officers, and a local Receiving House, for the strictly temporary accommodation of non-able-bodied persons found in need, and not as yet dealt with by the Committees concerned.

99. That the present national subventions in aid of the Destitution Authorities should be replaced by Grants-in-Aid of the expenditure on the whole of the services to be administered by the Health Committees of the County and County Borough Councils, subject to the administration of these services up to, at any rate, a National Minimum of Efficiency; the aggregate amount of such Grants-in-Aid for the United Kingdom and their allocation as between England (including Wales), Scotland and Ireland being

fixed and subject to revision only every seven years; but the distribution of this total among the several County and County Borough Councils being made, according to the plan we have specified, in proportion to their several gross expenditures on these services; and at the same time in such a proportion to the poverty of their districts as will enable the National Minimum of Efficiency to be everywhere attained without anywhere exceeding the Standard Average Rate.

100. That the Local Authorities in England and Wales, in respect of the services administered by each Committee, be placed under the supervision of a single Department or Division of a Department of the National Government, which shall itself administer the Grants-in-Aid of its particular services, issue its own regulative Orders, and have its own technically qualified Inspectors; the Education Committees in England and Wales being thus responsible, for the efficiency of all their services, to the Board of Education; the Mentally Defectives (or Asylums) Committees to the proposed Board of Control, in succession to the Lunacy Commissioners; the Pension Committees to whatever Department is deputed to take charge of the administration of the Old-Age Pensions Act of 1908; and the Health Committees, with regard to all their enlarged range of functions, to a separately organised and self-contained Public Health Department, whether this is organised as a separate Division of the Local Government Board or made a distinct Department. The determination of appeals from the decisions of the Registrar of Public Assistance, and whatever national supervision may be exercised over the Grant of Home Aliment to the Non-Able-bodied, should, we suggest, be entrusted to another separately organised and self-contained Department or Division of a Department, which, if it can be dissociated from the Local Government Board, might, with advantage, be placed, along with the Department or Division dealing with Audit, Loans and Local Finance generally, in close connection with the Treasury.

101. That a temporary Executive Commission be appointed to adjust areas, boundaries, assets and liabilities; and to allocate buildings and officers among the future Local Authorities.

Part II.—The Destitution of the Able-bodied.

CHAPTER I. The Able-bodied under the Poor Law, pp. 1036–1094.

1. That instead of the National Uniformity of policy in dealing with the Able-bodied, upon which the Report of 1834 laid so much stress, we find at the present time, among the different Destitution Authorities of the United Kingdom, five different methods of treatment being simultaneously applied.

2. That two of these methods—that of maintenance in a General Mixed Workhouse, and that of unconditional and inadequate Outdoor Relief—in spite of almost universal condemnation from 1834 down to the present day, a condemnation in which we concur, are still extensively persisted in; with the effect of perpetually increasing the area and the demoralisation of Able-bodied Pauperism.

3. That we have been surprised to discover that the number of Able-bodied men in health who, in England and Wales, in the course of each year, receive temporary Outdoor Relief, *without even any task of work*, is very large—numbering apparently between 30,000 and 40,000; some of this relief being given on account of "sudden or urgent necessity," but most of it being given as exceptions to the Orders, and merely reported week by week to the Local Government Board for its approval.

4. That the number of *Able-bodied men in health* now in the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland is large—probably considerably in excess of 10,000—and that there are ominous signs that, in the large towns, the number of sturdy Able-bodied men subjected to these demoralising conditions is steadily increasing.

5. That we have definitely ascertained that—contrary to the common opinion, and even in violation of the law—the huge Poorhouses of the populous towns of Scotland also contain large, and apparently increasing, numbers of Able-bodied men in health, of exactly the same type as the inmates of the General Mixed Workhouses of England, Wales and Ireland.

6. That the three specialised Poor Law methods of dealing with the Able-bodied—the Outdoor Labour Test, the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, and the Casual Ward—all, in our opinion, fail to provide treatment appropriate to any section of the Able-bodied, and are inherently incapable of being made to do so. If these institutions are lax (as is usually the case), they become the resort of wastrels and "cadgers," of the "work-shy" and the dissolute, to whom their demoralising slackness and promiscuity is positively an attraction. To plunge a respectable able-bodied man or woman, in the crisis of utter destitution, into the midst of such persons is, at once, a torture and an almost inevitable degradation. If, on the other hand, the Outdoor Labour Test, the Able-bodied Test Workhouse, and the Casual Ward are made strict in their discipline and prison-like in their regimen, they are shunned by the vagabond and worthless class of "the occasional poor"; who thereupon contrive, to the great annoyance, cost and danger of the public, to exist outside them. Their penal severity then falls only on such comparatively decent men as have become too debilitated and too incompetent to gain even the barest living outside; and these, though finding the regimen unendurable, are driven in again and again by sheer starvation. To subject such men to a brutalising regimen and penal severities is useless and inhuman; and it ought to be (if it is not already) contrary to law.

7. That by its provision of mere subsistence, available just when demanded, the Poor Law treatment of the Able-bodied, by any of the five methods at present in use, actually facilitates parasitic methods of existence, intermittent and irregular effort, and casual employment. In our opinion, this evil influence of the Destitution Authorities in the Metropolis and all the great ports—to some extent, indeed, in all the towns—is to-day spreading demoralisation and manufacturing pauperism on a large scale.

8. That it appears to us open to grave objection that the Destitution Authorities should have been allowed to exercise powers of compulsory detention and of penal discipline, such as those now enforced in the Able-bodied Test Workhouse and the Casual Ward. For the exercise of such powers, we do not think that either the members of a Board of Guardians, or its officers, without legal training, without any prescribed procedure, without appeal and without even a hearing of the person accused, are at all fitted. Nor do we consider that a Destitution Authority, or any staff that it is likely to engage, has the requisite knowledge or the requisite experience to enable it properly to administer penal discipline to those who might, in due form, have been sentenced to submit to it. The very use of compulsory detention and penal discipline by a Destitution Authority tends to defeat itself, as those for whom the rigorous measures were intended will, however destitute, certainly avoid applying for admission. On all these grounds, we must unreservedly condemn the proposal that extended powers of compulsory detention of adult Able-bodied persons should be granted to any Poor Law Authority, however constituted. Any such proposal would, in our opinion, arouse the strongest resentment, and would meet with determined opposition in the House of Commons.

9. That any attempt, by a repeal of the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, to force back into the Poor Law those sections of the Able-bodied who are now relieved by the Distress Committees, would be socially disastrous and politically impracticable. On the contrary, it is, in our judgment, of the highest importance to complete without delay the process begun under that Act, and to remove the remaining sections of the Able-bodied, once for all, from any connection with the Local Authorities dealing with the Children, the Sick, the Mentally Defective, and the Aged and Infirm. It is, in our opinion, essential that whatever provision the community may decide to make for Able-bodied persons in distress should be administered by an Authority having to deal with all the Able-bodied and with the Able-bodied alone; and dealing with them, not merely at the crisis of destitution, but in relation to the cause and character of their distress, and the means to be taken for its cure. For all sections of the Able-bodied the Poor Law, alike in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, is, in our judgment, intellectually bankrupt.

CHAPTER II. The Able bodied under Voluntary Agencies, pp. 1095–1101.

10. That, apart from other considerations, the maintenance of a penal Poor Law for the Able-bodied has, in the large towns, been rendered impossible by the development of extensive Voluntary Agencies which refuse to allow the destitute to starve, or the homeless to remain at night without shelter.

11. That so long as the public organisation for dealing with the Able-bodied in distress is so directed as to result in large numbers of persons remaining in want of the actual necessaries of life, on whatever excuse, it is neither practicable nor desirable to prevent Voluntary Agencies from relieving such persons.

12. That the relief thus given by means of Shelters and the distribution of food—whilst it can hardly be made the subject of blame or reproach so long as people are starving and homeless—is almost wholly useless for permanently benefiting the persons relieved; and has, moreover, many objectionable characteristics.

13. That whilst some of the Labour Homes and Rural Colonies present good features, and attain a certain measure of success, they are, in the absence of any Detention Colony for the "work-shy," and of any adequate outlet for those who have been regenerated, unable to deal with more than a tiny fraction of the problem.

14. That the co-existence, in the great centres of population, of a penal Poor Law for the Able-bodied, with extensive, indiscriminate, unconditional and inadequate relief by Voluntary Agencies, produces so much undeserved suffering on the one hand, and so much degradation of character and general demoralisation on the other, as to make it urgently necessary for the whole problem of Able-bodied Destitution to be systematically dealt with by the National Government.

15. That as compared with the methods of relieving the Unemployed under the Poor Law, the experience of the policy— inaugurated by Mr. Chamberlain's Circular of 1886, and definitely confirmed by the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905—of withdrawing the Unemployed from the Poor Law, has proved full of valuable suggestion and promise.

CHAPTER III. The Able-bodied under the Unemployed Workmen Act, pp. 1102–1130.

16. That the precedent of the Lancashire Cotton Famine suggests that Public Works, carried on under specialised organisation for a limited period, with the object of employing particular classes of persons deprived of definite situations by some accidental or temporary cessation of their regular employment, and practically certain to resume their ordinary occupations, may prove the easiest method of relieving their transient destitution.

17. That twenty years' experience has proved that it is not practicable in ordinary times to disentangle these cases from those of respectable men who are chronically Unemployed or Under-employed; with the result that any work at wages afforded by Local Authorities as a method of providing for the Unemployed tends to become chronic, and instead of being confined to the men thrown out of definite situations by the accidental and temporary dislocation of industry, it is, in practice, participated in by those who are chronically Unemployed or Under-employed, to an even greater extent than by those for whom it was intended.

18. That whilst the Unemployed Workmen Act has enabled a certain number of respectable workmen to tide over temporary distress without recourse to the Poor Law, it has demonstrated that, as a method for providing for chronic Unemployment or Under-employment, the provision of work at wages by Local Authorities affords no remedy and tends even to intensify the evil.

19. That the work at wages provided by Local Authorities, is, in practice, either diverted from the ordinary employees of the Local Authorities, or else abstracted from what would otherwise have gone to the regular employees of contractors for public works; with the result, in either case, of creating, sooner or later, as much Unemployment as it relieves, and of thus throwing the cost of relieving the distress upon other wage-earners.

20. That work at wages, given to the Unemployed by Local Authorities for a few days or a few weeks at a time, tends, like the opening of a Labour Yard by the Board of Guardians, actually to promote the disastrous Under-employment characteristic of some industries, and positively encourages employers and employed to acquiesce in intermittent employment and casual jobs, instead of regular work at definite weekly wages.

21. That the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905, whilst not excluding temporary Relief Works, contemplated and provided also for other experiments in providing for the Unemployed, which have unfortunately not been adequately put into operation by the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland respectively; or by the Local Authorities.

22. That one of the most promising of these experiments—the provision of Rural Colonies where the Unemployed could be trained with a view to their permanent re-establishment as self-supporting citizens, whether on the land or otherwise, in England or elsewhere—has been tried at the Hollesley Bay Farm Colony, with a considerable measure of success. Unfortunately, as it seems to us, the Local Government Board for England and Wales, now insists on regarding this Farm Colony only as a means of affording temporary *relief* and not as a means of training for future self-support; and refuses to permit any further expenditure for the purpose of permanently establishing even those men who have been selected and trained.

23. That another valuable provision of the Unemployed Workmen Act was that requiring the establishment, quite apart from the existence of distress from Unemployment, of a complete network of Labour Exchanges, covering the whole of the United Kingdom. Wherever a Distress Committee was not established, the Act expressly required the Council of every County and County Borough to appoint a Special Committee to investigate the conditions of the labour market by means of Labour Exchanges, and to establish or assist such Exchanges within its area. Such a network of Labour Exchanges, covering the whole Kingdom, would have afforded, as the experience of the Metropolitan Exchanges now demonstrates, valuable information, both to Unemployed workmen and to Local Authorities dealing with the problem. Unfortunately, this provision of the Act, though, as regards England and Wales, mandatory in its terms, appears to have been ignored by the Local Government Boards for England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland, and has accordingly, with the exception of London and three places in Scotland, not been put in operation.

24. That in consequence of this failure to establish the complete network of Labour Exchanges contemplated by the Unemployed Workmen Act, Local Authorities have been greatly hampered in their attempts to put into operation the other provisions of the Act. Thus, the Hollesley Bay Farm Colony has remained isolated; and great difficulties have been experienced in discovering suitable situations in other parts of England for the men there trained for agricultural pursuits. Moreover, the provision enabling Local Authorities to pay the expenses of removing men to places where situations had been found for them, has, in the lack of machinery for discovering such situations within the United Kingdom, been almost exclusively used for the purpose of conveying them to Canada.

25. That notwithstanding this failure to put the Unemployed Workmen Act in operation in the way that was intended, and the manifold shortcomings of the Act itself, we are of opinion that (as compared with the alternative of throwing the Unemployed back into the Poor Law), it has proved of considerable value; and that it should certainly be continued in force until a more adequate scheme of dealing with the grave social problem of Unemployment, otherwise than under the Poor Law, has been placed upon the Statute Book.

CHAPTER IV. The Distress from Unemployment as it exists to-day, pp. 1131–1178.

26. That distress from want of employment, though periodically aggravated by depression of trade, is a constant feature of industry and commerce as at present administered; and that the mass of men, women and children suffering from the privation due to this Unemployment in the United Kingdom amounts, at the best of times, to hundreds of thousands, whilst in years of trade depression they must exceed a million in number.

27. That this misery has no redeeming feature. It does not, like the temporary hardships of work or adventure, produce in those capable of responding to the stimulus, greater strength, energy, endurance, fortitude or initiative. On the contrary, the enforced idleness and prolonged privation characteristic of Unemployment have, on both the strong man and the weak, on the man of character and conduct and on the dissolute, a gravely deteriorating effect on body and mind, on muscle and will. The

magnitude of the loss thus caused to the nation, first in the millions of days of enforced idleness of productive labourers, and secondly in the degradation and deterioration of character and physique—whether or not it is increasing—can scarcely be exaggerated.

28. That men in distress from want of employment approximate to one or other of four distinct types, requiring, as we have described, distinct treatment; namely, the Men from Permanent Situations, the Men of Discontinuous Employment, the Under-employed and the Unemployable.

29. That what is needed for the Men from Permanent Situations is some prompt and gratuitous machinery for discovering what openings exist, anywhere in the United Kingdom, for their particular kind of service; or for ascertaining with certainty that no such openings exist; with suitable provision, where individual saving does not suffice, for the maintenance of themselves and their households whilst awaiting re-employment. Both the machinery and the provision are at present afforded, in some industries, by Trade Union "Vacant Books" and Trade Union Insurance. This, however, does not meet the need of the large numbers of men in occupations for which no Trade Union exists, or in which no machinery for reporting vacancies and no insurance against Unemployment have been organised. Nor does it meet the cases, unhappily always occurring in one industry or another, of men whose occupation is being taken from them by the adoption of new processes or new machinery, without any effective opportunity being afforded to them of training themselves to new means of livelihood.

30. That for the Men of Discontinuous Employment the same prompt and gratuitous machinery for discovering what openings exist, anywhere in the United Kingdom, is required, not only for individuals exceptionally Unemployed, but for the entire class, at all times; in order to prevent the constant "leakage" of time between job and job, and to obviate the demoralising aimless search for work, whether over any one great urban aggregation, or by means of wandering from town to town. The same machinery becomes imperative, in times of bad trade, in order to ascertain with certainty that no opportunity of employment exists. Without some such machinery, experience shows that Insurance against Unemployment breaks down, owing to the excessive amount of "time lost" between jobs, and the impossibility of securing that every claimant has done his best to get work.

31. That of all the forms of Unemployment, that which we have termed Under-employment, extending, as it does, to many hundreds of thousands of workers, and to their whole lives, is by far the worst in its evil effects; and that it is this system of chronic Under-employment which is above all other causes responsible for the perpetual manufacture of paupers that is going on; and which makes the task of the Distress Committees in dealing with the Unemployed of other types—such as the Men from Permanent Situations, or the Men of Discontinuous Employment—hopelessly impracticable.

32. That we have been unable to escape from the conclusion that, owing to various causes, there has accumulated, in all the ports, and indeed in all the large towns of the United Kingdom, an actual surplus of workmen, there being more than are required to do the work in these towns even in times of brisk trade; this surplus showing itself in the existence of the Stagnant Pools of Labour that we have described, and in the chronic Under-employment of tens of thousands of men at all seasons and in all years.

33. That we have been struck by the fact that this chronic Under-employment of men is coincident with the employment in factories and workshops, or on work taken out to be done at home, of a large number of mothers of young children who are thereby deprived of maternal care; with an ever-growing demand for boy-labour of an uneducational kind; and actually with a positive increase in the number of "half-timers" (children in factories below the age exempting them from attendance at school). Thus we have, in increasing numbers (though whether or not in increasing proportion is not clear) men degenerating through enforced Unemployment or chronic Under-employment into parasitic Unemployables; and the burden of industrial work cast on pregnant women, nursing mothers and immature youths.

34. That the task of dealing with Unemployment is altogether beyond the capacity of Authorities having jurisdiction over particular areas; and can be undertaken successfully only by a Department of the National Government.

35. That the experience of the Poor Law in dealing with destitute able-bodied men and their dependents; of the Distress Committees in providing for labourers out of employment; of the Police in attempting to suppress Vagrancy and "sleeping-out"; of the Prison Commissioners in having to accommodate in gaol large numbers of men undergoing short sentences for offences of this nature; of the Education and Public Health Authorities in feeding and medically treating the necessitous dependents of able-bodied men; and of the Voluntary Agencies dealing with the "houseless poor" of great cities, all alike prove that every attempt to deal only with this or that section of the Able-bodied and Unemployed class is liable to be rendered nugatory by the neglect to deal simultaneously with the other sections of men in distress, or claiming to be in distress, from want of employment. That accordingly, in our judgment, no successful dealing with the problem is possible unless provision is simultaneously made in ways suited to their several needs and deserts for all the various sections of the Unemployed by one and the same Authority.

CHAPTER V. roposals for eform, p. 1179–1217.

36. That the duty of so organising the National Labour Market as to prevent or to minimise Unemployment should be placed upon a Minister responsible to Parliament, who might be designated the Minister for Labour.

37. That the Ministry of Labour should include six distinct and separately organised Divisions, each with its own Assistant Secretary; namely, the National Labour Exchange, the Trade Insurance Division, the Maintenance and Training Division, the Industrial Regulation Division, the Emigration and Immigration Division, and the Statistical Division.

38. That the function of the National Labour Exchange should be, not only (*a*) to ascertain and report the surplus or shortage of labour of particular kinds, at particular places; and (*b*) to diminish the time and energy now spent in looking for work, and the consequent "leakage" between jobs; but also (*c*) so to "dovetail" casual and seasonal employments as to arrange for practical continuity of work for those now chronically Under-employed. That whilst resort to the National Labour Exchange might be optional for employers filling situations of at least a month's duration, it should (following the precedent of the Labour Exchange for seamen already conducted by the Board of Trade in the Mercantile Marine Offices) be made legally compulsory in certain scheduled trades in which excessive Discontinuity of Employment prevails; and especially for the engagement of Casual Labour.

39. That in our opinion no effective steps can be taken towards the "Decasualisation of Casual Labour," and the Suppression of Under-employment, without simultaneously taking action to ensure the immediate absorption, or else to provide the full and honourable maintenance at the public expense, of the surplus of labourers that will thereby stand revealed.

40. That, in order to secure proper industrial training for the youth of the nation, an amendment of the Factory Acts is urgently required to provide that no child should be employed at all below the age of fifteen; that no young person under eighteen should be employed for more than thirty hours per week; and that all young persons so employed should be required to attend for thirty hours per week at suitable Trade Schools to be maintained by the Local Education Authorities.

41. That the terms of the Regulation of Railways Act, 1893, should be so amended as to enable the Minister of Labour to require the prompt reduction of the hours of duty of railway, tramway and omnibus workers, if not to forty-eight, at any rate to not more than sixty in any one week as a maximum.

42. That all mothers having the charge of young children, and in receipt, by themselves or their husbands, of any form of Public Assistance, should receive enough for the full maintenance of the family; and that it should then be made a condition of such assistance that the mother should devote herself to the care of her children, without seeking industrial employment.

43. That we recommend these reforms for their own sake, but it is an additional advantage that they (and especially the Halving of Boy Labour) would permit the immediate addition to the number of men in employment equal to a large proportion of those who are now Unemployed or Under-employed.

44. That in order to meet the periodically recurrent general depressions of Trade the Government should take advantage of there being at these periods as much Unemployment of capital as there is Unemployment of labour; that it should definitely undertake, as far as practicable, the Regularisation of the National Demand for Labour; and that it should, for this purpose, and to the extent of at least £4,000,000 a year, arrange a portion of the ordinary work required by each Department on a Ten Years' Programme; £40,000,000 worth of work for the decade being then put in hand, not by equal annual instalments, but exclusively in the lean years of the trade cycle; being paid for out of loans for short terms raised as they are required, and being executed with the best available labour, at Standard Rates, *engaged in the ordinary way.*

45. That in this Ten Years' Programme there should be included works of Afforestation, Coast Protection and Land Reclamation; to be carried out by the Board of Agriculture exclusively in the lean years of the trade cycle; *by the most suitable labour obtainable, taken on in the ordinary way, at* the rates locally current for the work, and paid for out of loans raised as required.

46. That the statistical and other evidence indicates that, by such measures as the above, the greater part of the fluctuations in the aggregate volume of employment can be obviated; and the bulk of the surplus labour manifesting itself in chronic Under-employment can be immediately absorbed, leaving at all times only a relatively small residuum of men who are, for various reasons, in distress from want of work.

47. That with a lessened Discontinuity of Employment, and the Suppression of Under-employment, the provision of Out-of-Work Benefit by Trade Unions would become practicable over a much greater range of industry than at present; and its extension should, as the best form of insurance against Unemployment, receive Government encouragement and support. That in view of its probable adverse effect on Trade Union membership and organisation, we are unable to recommend the establishment of any plan of Government or compulsory Insurance against Unemployment. That we recommend, however, that, following the precedents set in several foreign countries, a Government subvention not exceeding one-half of the sum actually paid in the last preceding year as Out-of-Work Benefit should be offered to Trade Unions or other societies providing such Benefit, in order to enable the necessary weekly contributions to be brought within the means of a larger proportion of the wage-earners.

48. That for the ultimate residuum of men in distress from want of employment, who may be expected to remain, after the measures now recommended have been put in operation, we recommend that Maintenance should be freely provided, without disfranchisement, on condition that they submit themselves to the physical and mental training that they may prove to require. That it should be the function of the Maintenance and Training Division of the Ministry of Labour to establish and maintain Receiving Offices in the various centres of population, at which able-bodied men in distress could apply for assistance, and at which they would be medically examined and have their faculties tested in order to discover in what way they could be improved by training. They would then be assigned either to suitable Day Training Depots or residential Farm Colonies, where their whole working time would be absorbed in such varied beneficial training of body and mind as they proved capable of; their wives and families being, meanwhile, provided with adequate Home Aliment.

49. That no applicant for employment or man out of work need be legally required to register at the National Labour Exchange, or to attend or remain in any Training Establishment, so long as he abstained from crime (including Vagrancy and Mendicity), and maintained himself and his family without receiving or needing Public Assistance in any form; but that such registration, and, if required, such attendance, should be legally enforced on all men who fail to fulfil any of their social obligations, or are found houseless, or requiring Public Assistance for themselves or their families.

50. That the Maintenance and Training Division should also establish one or more Detention Colonies, of a reformatory type, to which men would be committed by the Magistrates, and compulsorily detained and kept to work under discipline, upon conviction of any such offences as Vagrancy, Mendicity, neglect to maintain family or to apply for Public Assistance for their maintenance if destitute, repeated recalcitrancy or breach of discipline in a Training Establishment, etc.

51. That for able-bodied women, without husband or dependent children, who may be found in distress from want of employment, there should be exactly the same sort of provision as for men. That for widows or other mothers in distress, having the care of young children, residing in homes not below the National Minimum of sanitation, and being themselves not adjudged unworthy to have children entrusted to them, there should be granted adequate Home Aliment on condition of their devoting their whole time and energy to the care of the children. That for the childless wives of able-bodied men in attendance at a Training Establishment, adequate Home Aliment be granted, conditional on their devoting their time to such further training in Domestic Economy as may be prescribed for them.

52. That upon the establishment of the Ministry of Labour, and the setting to work of its new organisation, the Unemployed Workmen Act of 1905 should cease to apply; and the Local Authorities should be relieved of all responsibilities with regard to the Able-bodied and the Unemployed.

53. That upon the necessary legislation being passed, a small Executive Commission be empowered to effect the necessary transfer to the Ministry of Labour of the functions with regard to the Able-bodied and the Unemployed at present performed by the Poor Law Authorities and the Distress Committees under the Unemployed Workmen Act; and to make, as from the Appointed Day, all necessary transfers and adjustments of buildings and officers, Farm Colonies and Labour Exchanges, assets and liabilities.

(Signed) H. RUSSELL WAKEFIELD.

FRANCIS CHANDLER.

GEORGE LANSBURY.

BEATRICE WEBB.