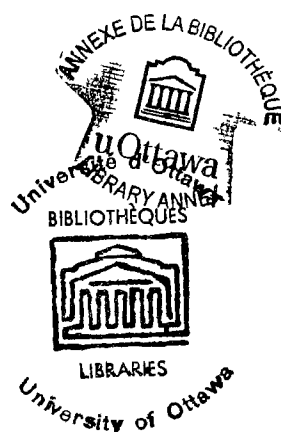


PARLIAMENT LOOKS AT THE ENGLISH POOR LAWS 1815 - 30

AN EXAMINATION OF THE INFLUENCE OF BRITISH

ECONOMIC THOUGHT ON THE OPINIONS

OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT



A Thesis submitted for the
Degree of Master of Arts at
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PREFACE

The Poor Laws embodied the attempts by successive English parliaments to deal with poverty. These laws were the major means used by the state to meet the problems presented to society by the existence of the unemployed, the underpaid, the sick, the old, the widowed and orphan and illegitimate children.

The basis of these laws during the 1815-30 period was the Elizabethan Poor Law Act of 1591. In the more than two hundred years since its enactment a bewildering variety of methods of administering relief had developed.

The rapid and continuous rise in Poor Law expenditures in the immediate post-war years and in the last half of the 1820's coupled with what some believed to be the wastefulness and inhumanity of the system helped create a demand for some sort of reform of the laws.

Despite the demands for reform little changes were effected by Parliament in the Poor Laws in the period. A considerable debate developed in the country and in

Parliament over the extent to which reform of the Poor Laws was necessary.

The economists advocated the gradual abolition of the Poor Laws. Their arguments were based on a general presumption against government intervention in the economy and specifically on the Malthusian principle of population and the wages fund theory. In agreement with the economists over the need to abolish the Poor Laws were a number of Commons Committees and individual Members of Parliament.

The successive Tory governments and a number of individual Members of Parliament were opposed to any radical reform of the Poor Laws. There is however some evidence of a movement towards a compromise after 1823.

How far the supporters of radical reform of the Poor Laws were influenced by the economists is difficult to ascertain. For the ruling classes there was a clear economic benefit to be derived from the abolition of the Poor Laws. The reduction of the poor rate would redound to the advantage of most property owners. There was too, a clear social and political gain to be derived by the members of the middle class by the movement towards a

more individualistic society.

In these circumstances it is probable that the ideas of the economists only played a secondary role in influencing the thoughts and actions of the reformers. However the economists did provide the abolitionists with the arguments to attack the retentionist position. They also defined the most influential alternative to the retention of the Poor Law. Other possibilities urged by Curwen and Owen met with scant discussion during the period.

In examining this period of the history of English Poor Law it is striking that so little work has been done on the period since the monumental work of the Webbs except for J. R. Poynter's Society and Pauperism.¹ Poynter's book came too late to incorporate his ideas into the body of this thesis.

Most of the work of this thesis was done in Toronto. I am grateful to the staffs of the libraries of

¹and B. Webb, English Local Government, Vols. VII and VIII, London, Oxford.

J. R. Poynter, Society and Pauperism, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, P. 367, xxvi.

Toronto and York Universities, Osgoode Hall, and of the cities of Scarborough and Toronto for their generous assistance. I am also very much indebted to my thesis director, Professor Desmond Morton, for his perceptive advice and judicious encouragement and to the chair and Professor Marcel Henel for the staff of the History Department of the University of Ottawa who granted me time to complete this thesis.

CHAPTER I

POOR RELIEF IN THE PAST

Methods and forms of poor relief during the period 1815 to 1830 show a bewildering variety. The administration of relief on the other hand was comparatively simple and straightforward -- there being but three basic types -- the closed vestry, the comparatively democratic open vestry and the boards of guardians.

The controlling agency of the Poor Laws was usually the parish -- of which there were about 15,000 in England and Wales. The parish necessarily had a small population, as late as 1831 four-fifths of the parishes had fewer than 200 families each.¹ The Poor Law administration was based on Section 1 of the Elizabethan Act of 1601.² By this statute the Justices of the Peace were to

¹ Sand B. Lebo, English Local Government, The Old Poor Law, London: Oxford, 1929, Vol. VII, p. 156.

² J. E., C. 2, p. 1. Aschrott and A. Preston-Thomas, The English Poor Law System, 2nd. ed.; London: Knight and Co., 1902, p. 7.

nominate annually two to four substantial householders who were to serve with the churchwardens as the overseers of the poor for each parish. The overseers were to be responsible to the magistrates for the relief of the poor and were to raise money for that purpose from local taxation. Subsequent enactments and practice passed the power of granting relief to the fairly democratic open vestry which consisted of the overseers and ratepayers of the parish.³ As the burdens of the office of overseer, which was unpaid and annual, increased during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century the task became increasingly onerous and unpopular. The open vestry was held to be irresponsible in that it was too ready to grant relief.⁴

In order to diminish this generosity and to increase the influence of the wealthy, parishes were given the power to establish select or representative vestries.⁵

³3 and 4 W. and M., C. 2, S. 2, and 9 G. I, C. 7, S. 1. Report From His Majesty's Commissioners For Inquiring Into The Administration And Practical Operation Of The Poor Laws, London: Fellowes, 1834, P. 107.

⁴Ibid., P. 108.

⁵By 59 G. III, C. 12, S. 1. The Statutes Of The United Kingdom Of Great Britain And Ireland From 1817 to 1819, London: George Eyre and Andrew Stahan, 1819, P. 657.

These select vestries were to consist of not more than twenty and not less than five representatives. In voting for the representatives, a system of plural voting on the basis of poor rate assessment was instituted. Paid assistant overseers could also be appointed. The representative vestry did not however prove to be very popular. After reaching a maximum number of 2,668 in 1828, it began to diminish thereafter.⁶

The third kind of Poor Law administrative structure was established by Gilbert's Act of 1782.⁷ By this statute parishes were permitted to unite for the purpose of administering poor relief. Paid guardians, appointed by the magistrates, were to take over the task of granting relief whilst the overseers were only left the task of assessing and collecting the poor rate. In 1834 the total number of Gilbert's Act unions only amounted to 67 embracing 924 parishes, mainly in rural districts in south-east England, East Anglia, the Midlands, Westmorland and Yorkshire.⁸

⁶Poor Law Report, P. 117.

⁷22 G. III, C. 83, K. de Schweinitz, England's Road to Social Security, Barnes: New York, 1961, P. 85.

⁸E. Melling, The Poor, Maidstone: Kent County Council, 1964, P. 80; Schweinitz, England's Road, P. 68; Webb, Local Government, Pt. I, P. 275.

In addition to the select and open vestries and the Gilbert unions, Parliament had established by a number of local acts a variety of administrations such as ^{the} Select Vestry of the Parish of St. George's Hanover Square and the Boards of Guardians of the City of Bristol.⁹

One of the duties of the Poor Law administrations was that of raising money from local taxation. The Elizabethan statute had enacted that the costs of poor relief should be defrayed from the taxation of the "local and visible property". Whatever the intent of the statute, in practice the burden had been placed almost exclusively on land and houses.¹⁰ Fundholders, profitmakers and ship-owners were exempted from the rates.¹¹ The poor rate was levied on the occupier and not the owner of the property though labourers' cottages in the country were frequently

⁹Bristol Corporation of the Poor: Selected Records 1696-1834, ed. E. E. Butcher, Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1932, p. 2-3. The Report From the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Poor Laws, London: G. Auld, 1817, p. 71.

¹⁰The Annual Register, 1817, Vol. LIX, London: Baldwin Cradock and Joy, 1818, where the Report of the Select Committee on the Poor Laws of 1817 is produced in its entirety, p. 267.

¹¹Poor Laws Report, p. 14; Bristol Corporation, p. 24; E. J. Erith, Essex Parish Records, 1240-1894, Chelmsford: Essex County Council, 1950, p. 262.

exempt. In the cheaper tenements in many towns, the tax could not be collected. Yet the proprietors got a rent which is increased in the exact proportion of the rate which is due, but impossible to collect. In the manufacturing cities this tax evasion was a serious problem leading to a movement from the Poor Law authorities of some of them -- such as Birmingham, Manchester and Coventry -- to rate owners when the occupiers could not pay.¹² In some cases the poor rate reached such proportions that it became unprofitable to farm the land and estates were left uncultivated. In 1832 in the parishes of Lenham and Ardingly in Kent, and Hinckley in Leicestershire some of the land was not farmed because of the poor rate.¹³ In Buckinghamshire, the entire land of the parish of Cholesbury was uncultivated in 1833.¹⁴ Lenthall, Shropshire was in a similar predicament in 1817.¹⁵

¹²Annual Register, 1817, P. 269-270.

¹³His Majesty's Commissioners, P. 64.

¹⁴Extracts from the Information received by His Majesty's Commissioners as to the Administration and Operation of the Poor Laws. London: H. M. C. O., 1837, P. 86-93.

¹⁵The Times, March 1st. 1817.

With the rapid rise in the price of wheat, a basic staple in diet, Poor Law expenditures rose rapidly between the 1780's and 1813 -- more than tripling to reach seven million pounds. Between 1813 and 1815 Poor Law expenditures diminished with the decline in wheat prices and a resurgence in economic activity based largely on the expected opening of foreign markets.¹⁶ This expectation failed to materialize. The decline in demand for military supplies and the demobilization of soldiers and sailors in 1815 produced large-scale unemployment in 1816, 1817 and 1818. Hence Poor Law expenditures rose rapidly to reach a maximum of seven and a half million pounds in 1818. Thereafter the expenditures declined to five and a half million in the mid twenties but increased again to 1834.¹⁷ Expenditures on the poor varied greatly from place to place being generally high in the south and east of England and low in the north and west. In 1835 in Bedfordshire the annual expenditure was 15/11 per head of population; in Buckinghamshire, 15/6; in Berkshire, 14/2; in Cambridge, 12/8; in Cheshire, 6/10; in Cornwall, 5/10

¹⁶A. D. Gayer, W. W. Rostow and A. Schwartz, Growth and Fluctuations of the British Economy 1750-1850, Vol. 1, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1927, p. 111.

¹⁷See Appendix I.

in Cumberland, 5/6.¹⁸

The level of poor expenditure created a great deal of opposition -- not only because of its amount but also because of its inequitable personal and local incidence.

In general the administrative structure and the levying of the local poor rates were relatively simple and uncomplicated. The distribution of poor relief, on the other hand showed very great variation from one part of the kingdom to the other. Section 1 of the Elizabethan Act of 1601 defined which persons were to be relieved by the overseers. Relief was to be granted to the aged, lame and impotent. The unemployed able-bodied and children were to be set to work. By Section 3 of the Act poor children could be bound as apprentices. By Section 4 of the Act overseers were empowered to erect houses for the relief of the poor.¹⁹

Between 1815 and 1830 distribution of relief took on a great variety of forms. There were two broad classifications of relief -- indoor and outdoor. The former

¹⁸Poor Law Report, Supplement, p. 12.

¹⁹Aechrott, The English Poor Law, p. 7.

describing the condition whereby the poor were granted relief in the workhouse, or poorhouse and the latter all other kinds of relief.

The poor house had little order or discipline.

It consisted usually of a cottage or several cottages, used indiscriminately as free lodgings for some of the parish pensioners, as an occasional receptacle for the disabled and sick and as a temporary shelter for tramps and for paupers awaiting removal to other parishes.²⁰

Samuel Whitbread the brewer, was interested in the condition of the poor. His estate agent's report on the poor house in the parish of Haynes, Bedfordshire, also reveals a condition of filth and disorder.

The workhouse was a much more important institution for the relief of the poor. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, it had superseded most of the poor houses.²¹ Between 1815 and 1818 four thousand and ninety-four parishes maintained the greater part of their poor in workhouses -- the number averaging 95,142 persons.²²

²⁰Webb, Local Government, Pt. 1, P. 214.

²¹Ibid., P. 215.

²²Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws, (1818), House of Commons, March 1818, P. 11.

During the period 1815-30 the workhouse had several distinct uses -- as a place for the profitable employment of the poor, as a deterrent and as an asylum for the impotent poor.

The poor who were frequently relieved in the workhouse were the children, the old, the chronically infirm and the lunatics or the idiots. In general, the administration of the workhouse was lax. There was frequently no attempt to classify the poor or to separate the sexes. The aim of the overseers was merely to keep the poor alive.

The workhouse was distinguished from the poor house by its provision of a common diet, a common discipline and being under the control of a governor or matron. Attempts to provide work in the workhouse as a means of profitably employing the poor were sporadically tried during the period. Liverpool workhouse manufactured cotton cloth. Kendal workhouse began the manufacture of coarse sackings in 1809.²³ Staplehurst produced sacks, bags and leather goods.²⁴ In Essex, oakum picking and the manu-

²³Webb, Local Government, Pt. I, P. 220.

²⁴Melling, The Poor, P. 155.

facture of sacks, ropes and canvas were common workhouse occupations.²⁵ In general, the hope of making the poor provide for their own upkeep did not meet with success.

The rules varied from place to place. If the overseers were benevolently inclined, the dietary would be liberal with perhaps permission to smoke and an allowance of beer or gin. The workhouse was frequently over-crowded. It was estimated that the Bristol workhouse could take 500 inmates comfortably yet between 1820 and 1834, 420 inmates was the lowest estimate of numbers.²⁶ Sometimes the diet in the workhouse was better than the one the independent labourer could afford.²⁷ The Poor Law Commissioners expressed their disapprobation of the workhouse in the following way

...in by far the greater number of cases the workhouse is a large alms-house, in which the young are trained in idleness, ignorance, and vice; the old-bodies maintained in sluggish sensual indolence; the aged and more respectable exposed to all the misery that is incident to dwelling in such a

²⁵ J. Erith, Essex County Records, p. 44.

²⁶ Bristol Corporation, p. 14-15.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 16; Thomas Mackay, A History of the English Poor Law, London. P. . . ALG and Co., Vol. III, 1899, p. 17.

society, without government or classification, and the whole body of inmates subsisted on food far exceeding both in kind and in amount, not merely the diet of the independent labourer, but that of the majority of the persons who contribute to their support.²⁸

The workhouse was, in some cases, used as a deterrent and as a means of determining the eligibility of the pauper for relief. This 'workhouse principle' was to form one of the bases of the reforms introduced by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. Reforms using the workhouse as a deterrent were introduced by George Nicholls in Southwell (Nottinghamshire), publicised by him in the Nottingham Journal in 1821 and advocated by the Reverend J. Bosworth, vicar of Little Harwood, Buckinghamshire.²⁹ Nicholls' approach was outlined in his History of the English Poor Law. His workhouse principle

...consisted in so regulating parish relief, as to ensure its non-acceptance unless under circumstances of actual want, such want being at the same time always certain of finding the relief of which it stood in need.³⁰

²⁸Poor Law Report, p. 33-34.

²⁹See the review of Bosworth's pamphlet in the Gentleman's Magazine Pt. I, June 1829, p. 528-330.

³⁰Sir George Nicholls, A History of the English Poor Law, New York: 1898, Vol. II, G. P. Putnam's Sons, p. 236.

In this way "there should be nothing to tempt people to look to the parish instead of relying on their own exertions."³¹ Employment of paupers, payments of pauper rents, and allowances to the able-bodied employed workers were all abolished by 1823. The lax administration of the workhouse was abolished. The building and yards enclosed by walls, a competent master and matron appointed and a set of rules established. Relief was only granted to those who entered the workhouse. With the restraints on the paupers, they were unwilling to enter unless absolutely forced by pressure of dire need. In this way the poor rate diminished. Nicholls' approach was similar to that adopted in 1818 by the Reverend Robert Lowe in the nearby town of Bingham.³² Nicholls' methods were adopted in the parishes of Wey (Gloucestershire), Penzance (Cornwall), St. Werburgh (Derbyshire) and Cookham.

Nicholls' approach of using the workhouse as a test of need for relief and as a deterrent to those who

³¹Ibid., P. 230.

³²J. D. Marshall, "The Nottinghamshire Reformers and their Contribution to the New Poor Law", Economic History Review, Second Series, Vol. XIII, 1960-1961, P. 388.

would use it did not spread very widely in the 1820's. A variety of methods for granting outdoor relief was practiced in the 15 years following the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The various methods for relieving paupers included apprenticeship schemes for pauper children, a system of doles and pensions, the employment of the able-bodied and the subsidisation of wages from the poor rate.

The system of apprenticing pauper children had been sanctioned by Section 1 of the Elizabethan Act of 1801. Three apprenticeship methods were used during the period. Individual children could be bound to a master in consideration of a premium. Pauper children could be allotted among the ratepayers of the parish who were compelled to accept them or pay a fine. Children could be sent in large numbers to work in factories. The last of these three methods met with considerable objections from magistrates of Yorkshire and Lancashire because of the inhumanity of the system.³³ Its investigation by a select committee of the House of Commons led to an act in 1816 which limited the distances to which children could be

³³Report from the Select Committee on Parish Apprentices,
House of Commons, 19 May 1815, P. 6-7.

sent as apprentices and made the justices directly responsible for their welfare.³⁴ The system of allotting pauper children among ratepayers varied greatly from place to place. In some, children were allocated by lot, in others, by the amount of an individual's poor rate. The allocation system was systematically employed in all parishes from Cornwall to Yorkshire.³⁵ Pauper children, however, had a bad reputation and employers occasionally preferred others as apprentices. In Bristol, after about 1820, shipowners preferred non-pauper children as apprentices -- even though they had to pay a £10 fine for each non-pauper apprentice.³⁶ The system of apprenticeship of pauper children even after the passage of the 1816 act was far from ideal. The apprentice was caught between overseers who sought to get rid of him or her as expeditiously as feasible and an employer who sought to make him or her provide a profit as quickly as possible.

³⁴56 G. III, C. 139, s. 1, 2, 78, The Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, London: Eyre and Strahan, 1816, Vol. VI, P. 1067-1068.

³⁵Webb, Local Government, Pt. I, p. 209.

³⁶Bristol Corporation, p. 21.

The system of apprenticeship appealed to overseers as being a means of reducing costs. Similar reasons existed too, at least initially, for the granting of pensions to widows, and to the impotent. In this way the overseer could pay less than the amount which would be necessary for the upkeep of the pauper in the workhouse. It was quite common to grant pensions to widows of amounts ranging from 1/- to 5/- a week and usually 1/6 for each legitimate and 2/- for each illegitimate child.³⁷ An Act of 1805 required that a weekly allowance was to be granted to the wife of each militia man called up for service.³⁸ In some cases relief was granted in kind. In the parish of Tysoe, Warwickshire, assistance was occasionally granted in the form of shelter, fuel or furniture. In Suffolk and Surrey, Mr. Maclean, one of the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners, found the payment of paupers' rent was universal in 1834.³⁹ Mr. Tweedy, also an Assistant Commissioner,

³⁷Arthur Wilfred Ashby, One Hundred Years of Poor Law Administration in a Warwickshire Village, Oxford: Clarendon, 1912, p. 144-5; Mackay, English Poor Law, p. 59; His Majesty's Commissioners, p. 42.

³⁸43 G. III, C. 47. Elie Halévy, England in 1815, London: Bonn, 1960, p. 380.

³⁹Poor Law Report, p. 17-18.

found the practice of paying rent 'to prevail to a greater or less degree throughout the West Riding'.⁴⁰ In Chevening Parish in Kent, coal was sold by the parish to the poor at prime cost during the winter of 1821.⁴¹ Beaudesert parish (Warwickshire) gave twenty-nine hundred weights of coal to the poor in 1841.⁴² Cranbrooke parish built cottages for the poor in 1815 because of the high cost of rent.⁴³

The contract system was one of the methods used especially before 1815 of getting rid of the odium and problems of relieving the poor. Parishes would contract with individuals to provide for women and children, lunatics, the sick etc. In some cases all of the poor were contracted out. The hundred small parishes of the city of London used this method for indoor relief.⁴⁴ The

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 18.

⁴¹Melling, The Poor, p. 164.

⁴²William Cooper, The Records of Beaudesert, Henley-in-Arden, Leeds: Jann Hitchcock, 1931, p. 32.

⁴³Melling, The Poor, p. 163.

⁴⁴Webb, Local Government, pt. 1, p. 233.

abuses of the system led to its regulation in 1815.⁴⁵

The systems of poor relief around which most of the discussion centred in the early 1800's were the provision of work for the unemployed and the subsidization of wages from the poor rate. The latter system of relief, usually called the Speenhamland system became widespread after its adoption in Newbury, Berkshire on the 6th of May 1795.⁴⁶ The Justices together with several discreet persons agreed to make up the wages of the labourers according to a scale dependent on the price of corn and the size of the family. They decided that,

When the Gallon Loaf of Second [quality] Flour, weighing 8lb. 11 ozs. shall cost 1 s.

Then every poor and industrious man shall have for his own support 3 s. 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, 1 s. 6 d.

When the Gallon Loaf shall cost 1 s. 4 d.

Then every poor and industrious man shall have 4 s. 3 d. weekly for his own, and 1 s. and 10 d. for the support of every other of his family.

⁴⁵By 45 G. III, C. 54, Nicholls, English Poor Laws, Vol. II, p. 158.

⁴⁶English Historical Documents. (1783-1832) ed. C. Espinall and E. Anthony Smith, London: Lyre and Spottiswoode, p. 414. The name of the system came from the part of Newbury -- Speenhamland -- where the magistrates met.

And so in proportion, as the price of bread rise or falls (that is to say) 3 d. to the man, and 1 d. to every other of the family, on every 1 d. which the loaf rise above 1 s.⁴⁷

Similar scales were adopted in many areas. After 1815 when the scales began to be considered to be injurious and expensive there was a movement to lower the scale of relief.⁴⁸

The Berkshire Justices meeting was called because of the 'great inequality of labourers' wages and the insufficiency of the same for the necessary support of an industrious man and his family. Many parishes had not 'advanced their labourers' weekly pay in proportion to the very high price of corn and provisions'.⁴⁹

The meeting agreed that the state of the poor required 'further assistance than had been generally given'.⁵⁰ The widespread adoption of the Speenhamland System was facilitated and expedited by the passing of

⁴⁷Readings in Economic and Social History, ed. Michael W. Flinn, London: MacMillan, 1964, P. 133.

⁴⁸Lebb, Local Government, Pt. 1, P. 182-3.

⁴⁹Advertisement in the Reading Mercury, 20 April 1795, English Historical Documents, Vol. X 1, P. 414.

⁵⁰Minutes of the Meeting of the Berkshire Justices May 6, 1795, Ibid., P. 414.

an act which allowed the granting of outdoor relief to the poor.⁵¹ The magistrates could, of course, have decided to attempt some other means for the relief of the poor. They had considered some form of minimum wage regulation but had rejected it as being inexpedient. The Suffolk magistrates on the other hand had resolved, 'that the members for this county be requested by the chairman to bring a bill into parliament so to regulate the price of labour that it may fluctuate with the price of corn.'⁵² A minimum wage bill was introduced in the House of Commons by Samuel Whitbread, Charles Grey and the M.Ps. for Suffolk. It was however rejected without a division in both 1790 and when it was reintroduced in 1800.⁵³ Pitt's opposition to the 1800 bill echoed his position on the 1795 bill. 'The measure now proposed struck him as highly improper. It went to introduce legislative interference into that which ought to be allowed invariably to take its natural

⁵¹ G. III, C. 23, Aschrott, English Poor Law System, p. 22.

⁵² Webb, Local Government, Pt. I, p. 174.

⁵³ English Historical Documents, Vol. 1, p. 415.

course... 54

An alternative way of dealing with the problem of low wages was that of just simply leaving them alone. According to Villiers, an assistant Poor Law commissioner in 1834 it was apprehended by many at that time, that either the wages of labour would rise to a height from which it would be difficult to reduce them when the cause for it had ceased or, that the labourers must face starvation.⁵⁵ The latter solution was, of course, unacceptable -- especially in a country at war, without an efficient police force and where food riots had already been widespread.⁵⁶

The Speenhamland System became very widespread in its application not simply because it was an immediate answer to a pressing problem but also because it was, at the time, the most advantageous way of meeting the difficulty. An increase of wages either by means of minimum wage legislation or by allowing the wages to rise to meet

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 419.

⁵⁵Poor Law Report, p. 126.

⁵⁶Webb, Local Government, Pt. 1, p. 173.

their competitive level would have forced the farmer to pay more in wages and the landowner to receive less in rent. A system of subsidizing wages from the poor rate kept them low -- thus redounding to the disadvantage of the unmarried labourer, the labourer with a small family and those small farmers or small businessmen who employed no labour.

The Speenhamland system spread rapidly throughout England after 1795. The webbs maintained that the system was adopted 'in principle, at one time or another, by practically every rural parish outside Northumberland' of which they had examined the records.⁵⁷ It was in the south and east that the system was most prevalent.

In Suffolk, Sussex, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorsetshire and Wiltshire, the plan of paying wages out of the poor-rate, has been carried to the greatest extent. Norfolk Huntingdonshire and Devonshire are likewise afflicted by it.⁵⁸

The Select Committee on the Poor Laws of 1828 agreed with the opinion of the Labourers' Wages Committee stating that the allowance system prevailed "very gener-

⁵⁷Webb, Local Government, Pt. I, P. 181.

⁵⁸Report from the Select Committee on Labourers' Wages, House of Commons, 4 June 1824, P. 3.

ally in several southern counties".⁵⁹ In Kent, however, the allowance system was not widely adopted.⁶⁰ It appears that in the decade and a half after the Napoleonic wars the system was slowly introduced into the North of England. It was, for example, introduced into the West Riding of Yorkshire in 1826.⁶¹ It was not until 1824 that an allowance system was found in various parts of Nottinghamshire. In that year, ninety south Nottinghamshire parishes were giving allowances -- but only to labourers with four or more children.⁶² The report of the Royal Commissioners of 1834 affirmed the view that the allowance system was more prevalent in the south and east than the north and west. In the four counties which they regarded as being typical of the south and east of England (Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Cambridgeshire) the commissioners reported that, of ninety-two parishes only

⁵⁹Report from the Select Committee on that part of the Poor Laws Relating to the Employment or Relief of Able-Bodied Persons from the Poor Rate, House of Commons, 3 July 1828, P. 5.

⁶⁰Melling, The Poor, P. 150.

⁶¹Webb, Local Government, Pt. I, P. 181.

⁶²Marshall, Nottinghamshire Reformers, P. 385.

twenty-one did not grant allowances. In the three typically northern and western counties (Cheshire, Cornwall and Cumberland) of the eighty parishes which reported fifty-two did not grant an allowance.⁶³

The effects of the Speenhamland system were disastrous. Since it was largely immaterial to the worker who received an allowance from the parish what his pay was, wages were kept down. There were great variations in wages. Speaking of the counties in the south and west of England the Labourers' Wages Committee stated that 'In some of these counties wages are eight or nine shillings; in others, five shillings; and in some parts they have been and are so low as three shillings a week for a single man, four shillings and sixpence for a man and his wife'.⁶⁴ There were great variations even within a county. In one part of Kent the lowest wages paid 'were in one parish, sixpence; in four, eight-pence; in eleven, one shilling and sixpence; in four, two shillings; and, in the greater number, one shilling per day'.⁶⁵

⁶³Poor Law Report, Supplement, P. 2-4.

⁶⁴The Labourers' Wages Committee, P. 3.

⁶⁵Ibid., P. 3.

These wide variations could take place because of the operation of the Speenhamland System and the Laws of Settlement.

In addition to depressing the wage rate and limiting the mobility of labour, the system led to the spread of pauperism throughout the country.⁶⁶ In the view of the many critics of the system it also destroyed or came near to destroying the independent character of the worker, and, by removing the economic disadvantages of marriage, encouraged early and improvident marriages.

The Speenhamland System had been devised to meet the problem presented by the high price of wheat. However, following the end of the war, it began to be increasingly apparent that a new problem was facing parts of the country -- that of local overpopulation.⁶⁷

⁶⁶For a view which contradicts this contemporary opinion see M. Blaug "The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New", Journal of Economic History, XXIII, No. 2, June 1963, p. 151-84 and "The Poor Law Report Reexamined," Journal of Economic History, LXIV, No. 4, December 1964, p. 777-242. Blaug maintains that the old Poor Law was essentially a device for dealing with the problems of structural unemployment and substandard wages in the rural sector of the economy.

⁶⁷N. Cash, "Rural Unemployment 1815-34", Economic History Review, VI, No. 1, October 1935, p. 90-93.

This problem was exacerbated by the laws governing those who had the right to receive relief in a parish. In general a settlement could be acquired by birth, marriage, occupation of a tenement of £10 annual value, forty days' residence without removal, serving an annual public office, and contributing to the public taxes of a parish.⁶⁸ By an act of 1795 persons were removable from the parish only when they had become chargeable, and not, as had formerly been the case, when it was anticipated that they would be.⁶⁹ Since a large percentage of the population was receiving relief during the period then the laws of settlement would affect a large number. The possibility of moving from one parish to another to find work was therefore very limited.

Various methods were used during the period to provide for the employment of the unemployed pauper. There were parish farms, work on the roads, the roundsman

⁶⁸14 C. II, C. 12, C. Grant Robertson, Select Statutes and Documents, 3rd. ed.; London: Methuen, 1919, P. 34; and 3 and 4, W. and M., C. II, Poor Law Report, P. 154.

⁶⁹33 G. III, C. 101, Paschroff, English Poor Law System, P. 18.

system and the labour rate.

The parish farms at Cranbrook and Benenden, Kent, at at Boldre, Hampshire, were used in part to provide work for the unemployed.⁷⁰ The House of Commons was sufficiently interested in the idea to pass legislation in 1819 allowing parishes to provide land not exceeding 'twenty acres in the whole' for the employment of the poor and to set them to work and pay them as if they were agricultural labourers.

Attempts were made to provide employment for local advantage. The poor were employed on road construction. The money to employ the poor could be provided by the poor rate or private subscription. In 1816 a new road from Coalbrookdale to Wellington was constructed and the streets of Salisbury were paved. In both cases the money was raised by public subscription and used to employ the poor.⁷¹ Parish funds were also used for the same purpose. Fulborough, Essex spent £318 0s 0½d. in 1826 on road

⁷⁰Webb, Local Government, Pt. I, P. 230-1; Melling, The Poor, P. 150; Report of Poor Law Committee, 1817, P. 187.

⁷¹Gentlemen's Magazine, July to December 1816, Vol. LXXXVI, Part 2, London: Nichols, Son and Bentley, 1816, P. 55 and P. 363.

work.⁷² Bristol provided work for the unemployed by the lowering of Redcliff Hill, the "steining" of Bristol streets and stone-breaking.⁷³ Knockholt (Kent) vestry passed resolutions on February 22, 1822 and January 10, 1825 governing the pay of paupers employed on the roads. Tysoe parish (Warwickshire) made use of road work in 1827 and 1828.⁷⁴

One obvious way of meeting the problem of over-population was to encourage emigration. Select Committees of the House of Commons to study the matter were established in 1826 and 1827. Parliament had voted £50,000 in 1823 to assist emigration to British North America. In 1825 2024 men, women and children received government assistance to aid them to emigrate.⁷⁵ Individual parishes found it to their advantage to pay for paupers' emigration rather than to pay for their upkeep indefinitely. Cran-

⁷²Third Report of the select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom, 1827, House of Commons, 19th February 1828, P. 138.

⁷³Bristol Corporation, P. 8-9.

⁷⁴Ashby, Poor Law Administration, P. 153.

⁷⁵The Annual Register, 1826, London: Baldwin, Cradock and Joy 1827, P. 43-44.

brook parish vestry minutes for October 5, 1827 show this kind of calculation. Siddenden and Staplehurst parishes were willing to subsidize emigration of paupers.⁷⁶ In some cases parishes were willing to help a man migrate from the parish to another. Tysoe, Warwickshire gave a man £5 to take his family to London.⁷⁷

The two most characteristic means of relieving the unemployed in the 1820's were the roundsman and the labour rate systems. By the roundsman system the parish agreed to sell to the employer the labour of one or more paupers at a certain price. The difference between that sum and the allowance was paid out of parish funds. The allocation of paupers could be done by auction, ballot or rotation. The system was adopted by many parishes in Kent, Nottinghamshire in the 1820's.⁷⁸ In Tysoe, Warwickshire, the system was operating in 1810 but by January 1820 the system had been brought to an end.⁷⁹ In Oxford-

⁷⁶Melling, The Poor, P. 175-6.

⁷⁷Ashby, Poor Law Administration, P. 162.

⁷⁸Melling, Op.Cit., P. 165; Marshall, Nottinghamshire Reformers, P. 385.

⁷⁹Ashby, Poor Law Administration, P. 160.

shire there were some examples of the use of the system in the 1770's but most are from a later date.⁸⁰ The first recorded attempt to establish a labour rate in Essex was in 1824.⁸¹

The effects of the roundsman system were deplorable. The Harmonds maintain that,

The combination of the Speenhamland system with the roundsman system produced universal pauperism. A man could not get any help from the rates unless he was destitute, and unless he got help from the rates he could not obtain employment, for a farmer would not pay a man 10s. a week when he could employ the roundsman at half that sum. Free movement from village to village was checked by the settlement laws. Nor were the labourers the only victims; the yeoman and small farmer who spent little on wages had to pay part of the wages bill of their richer neighbours.⁸²

The Labourers' Wages Committee roundly condemned the system. By the system, a labourer had no incentive to work hard and he naturally became 'an idle and careless labourer'.⁸³ People who had no need of farm labour

⁸⁰ Marshall, Op.Cit., p. 186.

⁸¹ Erith, Essex Parish Records, p. 25.

⁸² J. L. and Barbara Hammond, The Rise of Southern Industry, Methuen: London, 1925, p. 94-95.

⁸³ Labourers' Wages Committee, p. 1.

were forced to pay for labourers. A surplus population was encouraged. By far the worst consequence of the system is, the degradation of the character of the labouring class.⁸⁴

The labour rate system developed as a modification of the Roundman system in the 1820's.⁸⁵ By it, an agreement was made by the occupiers of land that they would employ at wages fixed by the parish their quota of the unemployed. The quota was determined in a variety of ways -- according to the proportion of the rental, rateable value, acreage, number of horses or tillage, or according to some other scale -- frequently irrespective of their requirements for labour.⁸⁶ The variety of methods employed points to one difficulty of the system. It was hard to find a method which was fair to all. Since the system was really illegal until 1831 it was possible for one man to torpedo the scheme by simply refusing to join

⁸⁴ibid., P. 2.

⁸⁵Webb, Local Government, Pt. I, P. 193.

⁸⁶Mackay, English Poor Law, P. 58-59.

or by withdrawing.⁸⁷ The effect of the system was to the disadvantage of the independent labourer. It was evident that an employer would dismiss his independent labourers since he was obliged to employ the labour-rate workers.

During the period 1815 to 1830, it had become evident to many contemporaries that there was a need for some drastic overhaul of the whole system of the Poor Laws. The freedom of the individual worker was impeded by the Laws of Settlement. The independence of the worker was being sapped by his reliance on the support from the parish. Wages and poor relief were indistinguishable. It was also apparent that some drastic new departure in the administration of the Poor Laws would be essential if reforms were deemed essential, since the vestries and guardians could not be relied on by themselves to bring about the necessary changes.

⁸⁷Third Report from the Select Committee on Emigration,
1827, House of Commons, 1828, P. 137, John Austin's letter.

CHAPTER II

THE ECONOMISTS AND THE POOR LAWS

One group of thinkers who highlighted the dangers of the Poor Law and who suggested a way of dealing with the problem were the economists. By an examination of population growth, the development of the means of subsistence and the determinants of wages they arrived at the conclusion that the Poor Laws could not accomplish their aim -- the elimination of poverty. Indeed they went further. The Poor Laws exacerbated the condition that they were designed to relieve. The economists' recommended that the appropriate government policy was to abolish the Poor Laws.

In order to understand their reasons and their rejection of various reforms proposed in the early decades of the century, it is necessary to examine their views on the role of government and the individual in the economy.

In general, the economists believed that economic

institutions are not only natural but also spontaneous. The major motivating force is individual self-interest -- the words of the Scots economist Adam Smith "the natural effort of every individual to better his own condition".

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner but from their regard for their own self-interest."¹ spontaneous self-seeking action on the part of consumers and producers is brought into harmony by the mechanism of the market and the spur of competition. Each individual intends here only his own gain but he is, in this, as in many cases, led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention .² Thus the prime object of government policy should be to free trade and sweep away all obstacles to it. It does not mean, however, that the state has no role. It must provide law and order in the society and protection from other states.³

¹Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations, ed. E. Cannan, London: Methuen, Vol. I, 1961, P. 18.

²Ibid., P. 477.

³Wealth of Nations, Vol. II, P. 213 and 211.

The third

...and last duty of the sovereign or commonwealth is that of erecting and maintaining those public institutions and those public works, which, though they may be in the highest degree advantageous to a great society, are, however, of such a nature, that the profit could never repay the expence to any individual or small number of individuals, and which it therefore cannot be expected that any individual or small number of individuals should erect or maintain.⁴

The purposes of these public works are to facilitate 'the commerce of society and the education of the people'.⁵

The other economists generally agreed with Smith's suggestions. To Thomas Malthus, the Anglican minister and economist, the sovereign can best help the country by good government, impartial justice, a peaceful foreign policy, light taxation, the dissemination of information and assistance to education.⁶ John R. McCulloch, the Professor of Political Economy at the University College of London, believed that 'the more individuals are thrown on their own resources... the greater will be the amount of public wealth'. But just

⁴Ibid., p. 244.

⁵Ibid., p. 244.

⁶Bonar, Malthus and His work, p. 141-2.

as there is friction and resistance of matter so too, there are feelings, passions and prejudices in society which must be allowed for.⁷ He therefore recommended housing and health regulations, factory laws, some recognition of employers' liability and some assistance to the unemployed.⁸ Nassau Senior, the first Professor of Political Economy at Oxford and member of the 1833 Poor Law Commission, on the other hand, favoured housing regulations and aid for emigration but opposed factory legislation.⁹

The general presumption in favour of economic freedom runs through the economists' discussion of wage theory. In Adam Smith there is no clear-cut theory. There are, in fact, according to Haney, traces of "virtually every theory ever developed."¹⁰ Thus there is

⁷From the Preface to McCulloch's Principles of Political Economy, quoted in L. C. Robbins, The Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy, London: MacMillan, 1932, P. 45.

⁸L. Woodward The Age of Reform (1815-1870), Oxford: London, 1964, P. 446.

⁹Ibid., P. 446.

¹⁰L. H. Haney History of Economic Thought, 4 ed.; New York: MacMillan, 1931, P. 223.

evidence of a supply and demand theory, a wages fund theory, a productivity theory, and a subsistence theory.¹¹ Whatever determined the wages of labour, Smith is clear on one score -- he believes that wages should not be subject to government regulation.¹² Malthus agrees that legislation would be unwise. The price of labour, he maintains, clearly expresses the wants of society respecting population.¹³ David Ricardo the millionaire stockbroker and economist echoes similar sentiments, like all other contracts, wages should be left to the fair and free competition of the market, and should never be controlled by the legislature'.¹⁴ As with Smith there is doubt about the wage theory espoused by Ricardo. He maintains that the natural price for labour 'is that price which is necessary to enable the labourers, one

¹¹Smith, Wealth of Nations, Vol. I, P. 76-78.

¹²Ibid., P. 158.

¹³T. R. Malthus, An Essay on the Principle of Population, 3rd. ed., London: J. Johnson, 1806, Vol. II, P. 168.

¹⁴P. Sraffa and M. H. Dobb (eds.) David Ricardo, Works and Correspondence Vol. I On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, Cambridge: Royal Economic Society, 1952, P. 105.

with another, to subsist and perpetuate their race, without either increase or diminution. Here Ricardo states a subsistence theory of wages. However, elsewhere, Ricardo seems to be suggesting a wages-fund theory.¹⁵ Whatever theory Ricardo actually accepted, his disciples and popularizers -- James Mill, the Scots economist and radical, John McCulloch and Nassau Senior, picked up the wages-fund theory and accepted it. For example, Mill states that "the rate of wages depends on the proportion between population and employment, in other words, Capital" and "...if population increases, without an increase in capital, wages fall; and that if capital increases, without an increase in population, wages rise".¹⁶ McCulloch is in agreement. The rate of wages is dependent on the proportion between the labouring population and capital.¹⁷ Senior echoes the views of

¹⁵Ibid., p. 101.

¹⁶Donald Finch (ed.) James Mill: Selected Economic writings, Edinburgh: Scottish Economic Society, 1964, p. 230.

¹⁷See John McVicar, Outlines of Political Economy, containing in its entirety McCulloch's article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica on, Political Economy, New York: Augustus Kelley, 1906, p. 73-84.

Mill and McCulloch. "The rate of wages" he maintains, "depends on the extent of the fund for the maintenance of labourers, compared with the numbers of labourers to be maintained".¹⁸

It follows then that the only way of raising the rate of wages are either by restricting the growth of population or by raising the fund for the maintenance of labour.¹⁹ Any factor which would encourage the growth of population is to the obvious disadvantage of workers' living standards. The only means of increasing the fund for the maintenance of labour is by raising the productivity of labour. The efficiency of labour can be increased by providing the individual worker with incentives for exertion and by freeing industry from the mass of restrictions, prohibitions and protective duties.²⁰

Adam Smith singled out for especial comment one of those restrictions which impeded the free flow of productive factors. From an examination of various laws

¹⁸Nassau William Senior, Three Lectures on the Rate of Wages, 2nd. ed.; London: J. Murray, 1831, P. iii.

¹⁹Ibid., P. v.

²⁰Ibid., P. IV and V.

of settlement (13 and 14 Ch. II, C. 11; 1 Ja. II, C. 17 and 3 Wm. and Ma. C. 11) he admitted that it was virtually impossible for a labourer to gain a settlement outside his own parish.²¹ By 8 and 9 Wm. III, C. 30, certificates of settlement were granted in the hope of restoring the free circulation of labour. But, thinks Smith, these great hopes were not realized and quotes the following very judicious observation of Mr. Burn', author of History of the Poor Laws:

It is obvious that there are divers good reasons for requiring certificates with persons going to settle in any place...that if they become chargeable, it is certainly known whither to remove them, and the parish shall be paid for their removal, and for their maintenance in the meantime; and that if they fall sick, and cannot be removed, the parish which gave the certificate must maintain them: none of which can be without a certificate. Which reasons will hold proportionably for parishes not granting certificates in ordinary cases; for it is far more than an equal chance but that they will have the certificated persons again and in a worse condition.²²

Smith suggests that

The moral of this observation seems to be that certificates ought always to be required by the

²¹Smith, Wealth of Nations, Vol. I, P. 151-4.

²²Ibid., P. 156.

parish where any poor man comes to reside, and that they ought very seldom to be granted by that which he proposes to leave.²³

To make things just a little more difficult, churchwardens were not obliged to grant certificates of settlement.

Apart from the fact that these settlement laws are an "evident violation of natural liberty and justice", they have had effect on the mobility of labour which is obvious in

the very unequal price of labour which we frequently find in England in places at no great distance from one another, ...probably owing to the obstruction which the law of settlements gives to a poor man who would carry his industry from one parish to another without a certificate. A single man, indeed, who is healthy and industrious, may sometimes reside by sufferance without one; but a man with a wife and family who should attempt to do so, would in most parishes be sure of being removed, and if the single man should afterwards marry, he would generally be removed likewise. The scarcity of hands in one parish, therefore, cannot always be relieved by their super-abundance in another, as it is constantly in Scotland, and, I believe, in all other countries where there is no difficulty of settlement. In such countries though wages may sometimes rise a little in the neighbourhood of a great town, or wherever else there is an extraordinary demand for labour, and sink gradually as the distance from such places increases, till they fall back to the common rate of the country; yet we never

²³Ibid., p. 156.

meet with those sudden and unaccountable differences in the wages of neighbouring places which we sometimes find in England, where it is often more difficult for a poor man to go to the artificial boundary of a parish, than an arm to the sea or a ridge of high mountains, natural boundaries which sometimes separate very distinctly different rates of wages in other countries.²⁴

There is scarce a poor man in England of forty years of age, who has not in some part of his life felt himself cruelly oppressed by this ill-contrived law of settlements.²⁵

Smith's attack on the Laws of Settlement only dealt with one aspect of the Poor Laws. It was left to Malthus to deliver the attack on the whole basis of the laws themselves.

His argument is really very simple, Malthus says,

I think I may fairly make two postulates. First that Food is necessary to the existence of men. Secondly that the passion between the sexes is necessary and will remain nearly in its present state.²⁶

Malthus does not attempt to prove his postulates but

²⁴Ibid., p. 157.

²⁵Ibid., p. 132.

²⁶Thomas Robert Malthus, First Essay on Population, London: MacMillan, 1966, p. 11.

rather, he regards them as being self-evident. From there he goes on to examine the rate of growth of population without any checks. Taking an example, the United States of America,

...where the means of subsistence have been more ample, the manners of the people more pure, and consequently the checks to early marriages fewer, than in many of the modern states of Europe, the population has been found to double itself in twenty-five years.

This ratio of increase, though short of the utmost power of population, yet as the result of actual experience, we will take as our rule and say, that population when unchecked, goes on doubling itself every twenty-five years, or increases in a geometrical ratio.²⁷

On the other hand examining the rate of growth of the means of subsistence, he suggests that,

...by great exertion, the whole produce of the Island might be increased every twenty-five years by a quantity of subsistence equal to what it at present produces. The most enthusiastic speculator cannot suppose a greater increase than this... Yet this ratio of increase is evidently arithmetical. It may be fairly said, therefore, that the means of subsistence increase in an arithmetical ratio.²⁸

This ratio, he suggests, 'is probably a greater

²⁷Ibid., P. 21-22.

²⁸Ibid., P. 22-23.

increase than could, with reason, be expected'. He is then, again offering no proof but rather suggesting that it is perhaps the very best that could ever be expected. If then, the two ratios are put together,

...the human species would increase in the ratio of 1,2,4,8,16,32,64,128,256, 512, etc. and subsistence as 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10, etc. In two centuries and a quarter, the population would be to the means of subsistence as 512 to 10, in three centuries as 4096 to 13 and in two thousand years the difference would be almost incalculable, though the produce in that time would have increased to an immense amount.²⁹

The natural tendency of population is to outstrip the means of subsistence. There must therefore, be some factors which check this tendency.

The positive check to population, by which I mean the check that represses an increase which has already begun is confined chiefly, though not perhaps solely, to the lowest orders of society.³⁰

This natural check results in misery. The other great check, the preventive, is defined as a foresight of the difficulties attending the rearing of a family. The effects of these preventive restraints upon marriage are but too conspicuous in the consequent vices

²⁹Ibid., P. 25-26.

³⁰Ibid., P. 62.

that are produced in almost every part of the world; vices that are continually involving both sexes in inextricable unhappiness".³¹

The power of population so far outstrips the power of the earth to produce subsistence

...that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race. The vices of mankind are active and able ministers of depopulation. They are the precursors in the great army of destruction; and often finish the dreadful work themselves. But should they fail in this war of extermination, sickly seasons, epidemics, pestilence and plague, advance in terrific array, and sweep off their thousands and thousands. Should success on still incomplete; gigantic inevitable famine stalks in the rear, and with one mighty blow levels the population with the food of the world.³²

The choice before man is indeed bleak -- misery or vice.

By 1803, however, Malthus had shifted ground quite considerably. He has so far adhered to principle from the former essay as to suppose another check to population, which does not come under the heading of vice or misery. He has also endeavoured to soften

³¹Ibid., p. 69-70.

³²Ibid. p. 139-140.

some of the harshest conclusions of the first Essay'.³³ The new preventive check is moral restraint which Malthus defines as 'the restraint from marriage which is not followed by irregular gratifications... Marriage is to be postponed until a man can take upon himself the responsibility of bringing up a family or, if necessary, the complete renunciation of marriage should economic conditions prove unfavourable.

The Malthusian principle of population, like with the approval of the other members of the Classical School. For Senior, one of the five general propositions of the theoretic branch of economics is the 'Malthusian principle of population'.³⁴ In the note to his edition of the Health of Nations McCulloch states that the power of increase in the human species, must always in the long run, prove an overmatch for the increase in the means of subsistence. The principle of population was the basis of Ricardo's views on the Poor Laws.³⁵

³³Thomas Malthus, An Essay on Population, 3rd. ed., London: J. Johnson, 1806, Vol. 1, P. xiii.

³⁴Nassau W. Senior, Selected Writings on Economics, 'An Introductory Lecture on Political Economy (1827)', New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1960, P. 35-36.

³⁵Ricardo, Principles of Political Economy, I. 90.

From the basis of his theory of population which was generally accepted by the economists, Malthus examines the English Poor Laws. He is very dubious about their usefulness.

I feel little doubt in my own mind, that if the Poor Laws had never existed, though there might have been a few more instances of very severe distress, yet that the aggregate mass of happiness among the common people would have been much greater than it is at present.³⁶

Despite the very large sums collected for the poor, yet there is much distress. All feel that the funds must be very ill-managed. The trouble is that government cannot carry out the promise of the Poor Law Act of 1834 since it cannot by legal means alone increase the amount of food in England.

In fact, he believes the Poor Law has not really been put into operation in England. The scanty relief granted and the very high rates of infant-mortality revealed by Jonas Hanway cannot be regarded as maintaining the poor. The net effect of the Poor Laws is quite the contrary to what is intended.

The Poor Laws, Malthus suggests, tend to depress

³⁶Malthus, Op.Cit., 1st. ed., P. 94.

the condition of the poor. These laws increase the population without at the same time increasing the food supply for its support. A poor man may marry with little or no prospect of being able to support his family in independence. The Poor Laws "may be said therefore in some measure to create the poor which they maintain;...".³⁷

The result is that the share of the available food supply of those who do not depend on the parish for support is diminished. Many of them are, therefore, driven to ask the parish for support.³⁸

The Poor Laws affect not only those who are paupers but also

...the whole class of the common people of England, [which] is subjected to a set of arbitrary, inconvenient and tyrannical laws, totally inconsistent with the genuine spirit of the constitution. The whole business of settlements, even in its present amended state, is utterly contradictory to all ideas of freedom. The parish persecution of men whose families are likely to become chargeable and of poor women who are near lying-in, is a most disgraceful and disgusting tyranny. And the obstructions continually occasioned in the market of labour by these laws, have a constant tendency to add to the difficulties of those who are struggling to support themselves

³⁷Ibid., p. 83.

³⁸Ibid., p. 84.

without assistance.³⁹

These laws also diminish the ability and will to save of the common people and in this way they weaken one of the strongest incentives to sobriety and industry, and consequently to happiness.⁴⁰ Malchus gives an example

A man who might not be deterred from going to the ale-house, from the consideration that on his death or sickness, he should leave his wife and family upon the parish, might yet hesitate in thus dissipating his earnings, if he were assured that, in either of these cases, his family must starve, or be left to the support of casual bounty...⁴¹

Senior agrees. There is, he suggests, no reason for the worker to be lazy, and hard-working. The parish allowance is regarded as being a right.⁴² To Ricardo there is a tendency of the Poor Laws not to alleviate the condition of the poor but rather to deteriorate the condition of both rich and poor. The danger is that the Poor Laws by their continued growth will make the rich, poor. In the current circumstances there

³⁹Ibid., p. 91.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 87.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 88.

⁴²Senior, The Rate of Wages, p. x and xi.

is a real danger that the fund for the maintenance of the poor will increase till it has absorbed all the net revenue of the country.⁴³

What then can be done to cure the problem of poverty?

Malthus suggests that,

To remove the wants of the lower classes of society is indeed an arduous task. The truth is that the pressure of distress on this part of a community is an evil so deeply seated, that no human ingenuity can reach it. Were I to propose a palliative; and palliatives are all that the nature of the case will admit, it should be, in the first place, the total abolition of all the present parish laws. This would at any rate give liberty and freedom of action to the peasantry of England, which they can hardly be said to possess at present. They would then be able to settle without interruption wherever there was a prospect of a greater plenty of work and a higher price for labour. The market of labour would then be free and those obstacles removed which, as things are now, often for a considerable time prevent the price from rising according to the demand.⁴⁴

However Malthus' suggestion is not that the Poor Laws be abolished immediately and completely because 'the evil is now so deeply seated, and the relief given by the Poor Laws so widely extended, that no man of humanity could venture to propose their total abolition'.⁴⁵

⁴³Ricardo, Principles of Political Economy, P. 166.

⁴⁴Malthus, Essay on Population, 1st, ed., P. 95-96.

⁴⁵Ibid., 3rd. ed., Vol. II, P. 396.

Ricardo agrees. Changes in the Poor Laws should only be accomplished "by the most gradual steps".⁴⁶

Malthus proposes a gradual diminution in the number of people who can gain assistance from the parish fund.

To this end, I should propose a regulation to be made, declaring that no children born from any marriage, taking place after the expiration of a year from the date of the law; and no illegitimate child born two years from the same date, should ever be entitled to parish assistance.⁴⁷

In order to ensure that all people should have knowledge of this law, he suggests that

...to enforce it more strongly on the minds of the lower classes of people, the clergyman of each parish should after the publication of laws, read a short address, stating the strong obligation of every man to support his own children; the impropriety and even immorality of marrying without a fair prospect of being able to do this; the evils which had resulted to the poor themselves, from the attempt which had been made to assist by public institutions in a duty which ought to be exclusively appropriated to parents; and the absurd necessity which had at length appeared, of abandoning all such institutions, on account of their producing effects totally opposite to those which were intended.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Ricardo, Principles of Political Economy, P. 106.

⁴⁷Malthus, Essay on Population, 3 ed., Vol. II, P. 396.

⁴⁸Ibid., P. 396-397.

For cases of extreme distress, however, Malthus is willing to allow the establishment of county workhouses, open to persons from all counties and supported by rates on the whole kingdom. In these workhouses, however, the "fare should be hard, and those that were able obliged to work". He is at pains to point out that they should not be regarded "as comfortable asylums in all difficulties; but merely as places where severe distress might find some alleviation". A part of these workhouses may be set aside as a place "where any person may do a day's work at all times, and receive the market price for it".⁴⁹

A second possible advantageous effect of some kind of poor relief was discussed by Malthus in 1800. The continued high price of provisions after 1800 even after good harvests was in the public mind attributed to the actions of monopolists. Malthus attempts to show, however, that with poor allowances linked to the price of corn, a rise in the price of corn will bring an increase in the allowances which will in turn bring an increase in the price of bread. But these effects have been generally

⁴⁹Ibid., P. 97-98.

advantageous.⁵⁰ Without the Poor Laws two to three million people would have starved. The price rise has however spread the scarcity over five or six million people and has forced economy in the use of wheat among the entire population.

The high prices also encouraged 'extraordinary importation' and gave incentive to farmers to plan more wheat.⁵¹ Hence in times of temporary and extraordinary stress when a fairly large section of the population is on the verge of starvation, Malthus would accept the need for some form of government intervention -- providing of course the poor did not come to rely on it and resort was made to every cheap substitute for bread.⁵²

In examining the high price of food caused by a deficient supply, Ricardo suggests that

Under such circumstances no policy can be more absurd, than that of forcibly regulating money

⁵⁰T. R. Malthus, "An Investigation of the Present High Price of Provisions, 1800, 2nd. ed., reprinted in its entirety in the Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, May 1949, Vol. 15, No. 2, P. 199.

⁵¹Ibid., P. 199.

⁵²Malthus, Essay on Population, 3rd. ed., Vol. 2, P. 169.

wages by the price of food, as is frequently done, by misapplication of the Poor Laws. Such a measure affords no real relief to the labourer, because its effect is to raise still higher the price of corn, and at last he must be obliged to limit his consumption in proportion to the limited supply.⁵³

It would appear that there is a disagreement between the two economists on this score but it is probable that Malthus' concern was with conditions where famine faced the nation while Ricardo was discussing a situation where prices were high.

Malthus is concerned that his proposal for eliminating the Poor Laws could be placed in jeopardy by the indiscriminate distribution of private charity. It is essential for the donor to ensure that his charity does not encourage improvidence. Those who were suffering in spite of their best directed efforts should be helped 'liberally and adequately'.⁵⁴ The idle and improvident, on the other hand,

...should, on no account be enabled to command so much of the necessaries of life, as can be obtained by the worst paid common labour. The brownest bread, with the coarsest and scantiest

⁵³Ricardo, Principles of Political Economy, P. 162.

⁵⁴Malthus, Essay on Population, 3 ed., Vol. II, P. 436.

apparel is the utmost which they should have the means of purchasing.⁵⁵

There are, of course, a variety of ways in which the large numbers of paupers could be diminished and the production of corn in the country could be increased -- thus lowering the poor rate.

A combination of a variety of methods to hold down population -- such as widespread abortion, prostitution, birth control and sterilization were implicitly rejected by Malthus.⁵⁶

James Mill, on the other hand, was the first economist to endorse birth control in print, though in rather a circumspect fashion. In his Elements he writes of a form of marital prudence where 'care is taken that children, beyond a certain number, shall not be the fruit', and of securing the happiness of the matrimonial union without the attendant evil of over-population. After starting at the point where wages are at the barest minimum he ends by holding out boundless hopes of improvement. The limitation of births could 'raise the condition

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 437.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 20.

of the labourer to any state of comfort and enjoyment which may be desired.⁵⁷

Emigration could be a means of siphoning off the redundant population of England, thus lowering the pressure of population on the means of subsistence, and diminishing the number of paupers and the parish rate. However in Malthus' opinion when we look to experience, "and to the actual state of the uncivilised part of the globe", instead of anything like an equal remedy it will appear a slight palliative. In the past, the establishment of colonies was both difficult and very expensive. Even for emigration to settled colonies some resources are necessary -- vessels for the voyage and supplies for the emigrants until they can be settled. It is, in Malthus' view, too much to expect governments to provide for these expenses.⁵⁸ Past experience shows too, that despite massive emigration to the American colonies before 1776, it is doubtful that it lessened the distress of the common law or that every man felt

⁵⁷Winch, James Mill: Selected Economic Writing, p. 196.

⁵⁸Malthus, Essay on Population, 2 ed., Vol. II, p. 134-142.

secure before embarking on marriage. To clinch the discussion, however, Malthus reverts to his principle of population. Suppose the population of Europe outside Russia is 100 millions and that all governments give unlimited aid to emigration, in a century the redundant population would be 1,100 millions. It is doubtful that the uncultivated parts of the earth could support such a population. If there is any doubt, suggests Malthus, just add another twenty-five or fifty years to the time period.

: summary

It is clear therefore, that with any view of making room for an unrestricted increase of population emigration is perfectly inadequate; but as a partial and temporary expedient, and with a view to the more general cultivation of the earth, and the wider spread of civilization, it seems both useful and proper; and if it cannot be proved that governments are bound actively to encourage it, it is not only strikingly unjust but in the highest degree impolitic to then to prevent it.⁵⁹

To Malthus senior, however, emigration is much more important. The abolition of the Poor Law would create widespread distress. Malthus therefore suggests that "the only immediate remedy for an actual excess in

⁵⁹Ibid., P. 146-147.

one class of the population is the ancient and approved one, coloniam reducere. Emigration is then the sole and immediate method. It is a remedy preparatory to the adoption and necessary to the safety of every other.⁶⁰ He considers the usual objections -- that it is expensive and that in any case the vacuum would soon be filled. However, the expense of keeping the paupers at home is greater than paying the costs of their emigration. Relief is provided by emigration to those who stay as well as to those who leave. The dangers of riot and rebellion are thus diminished.

Malthus was the sole advocate to support bounties on the export of corn and restrictions on its import. He also supported premiums... for turning up fresh land, and... encouragements... to agriculture above manufactures and to tillage above grazing.⁶¹ But these suggestions, though meeting with Malthus' evident approval are mere palliatives. His arguments used against emigration

⁶⁰Senior, Rate of Interest, i. v.

⁶¹Malthus, Essay on Population, 1st. ed., P. 96-7.

⁶¹Ibid., 1st. ed., p. 96-7.

could very well be used here.

All economists were agreed that the one factor which could have a substantial effect on the problems presented by the Poor Laws was education. Moral restraint could be taught. Education was the key.

Here Malthus agrees with the proposals of Adam Smith except that he would

...be disposed to lay considerable stress on the frequent explanation of the real state of the lower classes of society as affected by the principle of population, and their consequent dependence on themselves for the chief part of their happiness or misery.⁶²

Malthus' suggestions for the education of the poor go beyond the mere imparting of knowledge, he suggests that

...the great object should be, to elevate as much as possible the general character of the lower classes of the community and to draw a more marked line between the dependent and independent labourer.⁶³

He recognizes, of course, that "this must neces-

⁶²Malthus, Op.Cit., 3rd. ed., Vol. 2, P. 410.

⁶³Malthus, "A letter to Samuel Whitbread Esq. M.P., 1807", given in full in H.V. Glass ed. Introduction to Malthus, London: Watts, 1931, P. 191.

sarily be the work of time".⁶⁴

The attack on the Poor Laws by the economists came from a number of directions. They objected to them because they impeded the free movement of labour within the country. By subsidizing wages in many parts of the kingdom, they diminished its efficiency. By holding out to labourers the certainty of subsistence at all times, they made a promise which could not be made good. By schemes such as the Speenhamland system they guaranteed subsistence to any child which may be born and thus encouraged early marriage and the growth of population. The increase of population would lead to a reduction of wages and the increase in pressure on the means of subsistence. The appropriate government policy involved the gradual abolition of the Poor Laws, and possibly some aid for emigration, education and agriculture.

⁶⁴ Malthus, Op.Cit., 3rd. ed., Vol. 2, P. 413.

CHAPTER III

THE ABOLITION OF THE POOR LAWS

Even though the economists could find good reasons for advocating the total abolition of the Poor Laws yet there was a substantial body of opinion which opposed any radical reform. The Tory government and the House of Commons were unwilling to submit the Poor Laws to a drastic overhaul.

Government support came from the Church, the universities, the unreformed municipal corporations in the towns, most of the great landed families and nearly all the country gentry.¹ In the House of Commons about half of the members prided themselves on attachment to no party.² Thus there was a mass of independents which was necessarily a cause of political uncertainty. The government could not in such a situation adopt bold and

¹Woodward The Age of Reform, p. 52.

²C. J. Bartlett, Castlereagh, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955, p. 166-7.

controversial policies without the certain support of these M.Ps. It could adopt two different lines of policy. It could ally itself with the manufacturing interest and follow a policy of fiscal retrenchment and reform, or it could make common cause with the country landlords and develop the principles of paternal government. In fact, the government oscillated in general between the two policies.³

The government was largely in favour of leaving the Poor Law alone. Speaking in the House of Commons on February 21, 1817, Lord Castlereagh, Leader of the House and Foreign Secretary, affirmed that 'any notion of precipitate measures directed against the system of the Poor Laws could not be entertained'.⁴ George Canning, President of the Board of Control, agreed that in these laws it was 'most unadvisable to take a precipitate course'.⁵ Robert Peel, Home Secretary, reaffirmed the

³Halévy, The Liberal Awakening (1815-30), London: E. Benn, 1961, p. 325.

⁴Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. CCV, p. 224.

⁵The Speeches of George Canning, 3rd. ed.; London: 1836, Vol. IV, p. 143.

cautious approach. He maintained in April 1829 that changes in the laws of settlement should only "be brought about, if at all, with the utmost discrimination". While agreeing that the system of paying wages out of the poor rate was highly objectionable, yet he doubted whether a system which had long existed and which had been uniformly acted on for so many years, could safely be removed otherwise than gradually". Indeed, Peel, was pessimistic about the effectiveness of any government action in 1829. There was, he suggested, a necessity in the present condition of the poor that would paralyze any act of parliament."

Canning and Castlereagh agreed with Peel. Castlereagh affirmed on February 4 1816 that "the system of the Poor Laws was interwoven with the institutions of the country, and the repeal of such a system was not to be thought of".⁷ Canning agreed. The Poor Law was a question growing out of the usage of centuries, interwoven with the habits and deeply rooted in the prejudices

⁶Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XL, 1829, P. 1052.

⁷Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXXVII, P. 154.

of different classes of the people'.⁸

But not only were the Poor Laws an integral part of the institutions of the country but, also, Castlereagh suggested, they were,

...so generally considered as founded in right as well as in law; especially at the present moment, when the poorer classes had established such a claim on the admiration of the more affluent by their patience, their fortitude, and resignation under those great sufferings and privations which arose out of the transition of the country from one state of social exertion to another.⁹

Even though the government was unwilling to effect a radical transformation of the Poor Laws, it did not mean that some reform of the Poor Laws was unnecessary or that government was uninterested in them.

Castlereagh maintained in 1817 that "if no change were soon effected in the Poor Laws the fabric of our greatness and the system of our industry, would soon be shaken".¹⁰ Peel, eleven years later, agreed that the subject was very important".¹¹ Even though both states-

⁸Canning's Speeches, Vol. IV, p. 145.

⁹Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXV, p. 524.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 525.

¹¹Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XVIII, 1828, p. 528.

men felt the Poor Laws needed some reform they were unwilling to commit the government to a policy of reform. Castlereagh believed that it was "unfair" to call on the government to reform the Poor Laws. Peel agreed. "He really thought that this subject would be much better dealt with by individual members [of the House of Commons] than by the Government."¹²

Though generally unwilling to foster comprehensive schemes of Poor Law reform, both gave every verbal encouragement to private members to bring in bills to reform the laws. The intencion of government, it seemed, was to encourage the discussion of the Poor Laws so that, in Castlereagh's words, "the mind or the country" would "ripen" to a solution. The prospect of reaching a consensus however seemed to Castlereagh, at least, to be a long way off.¹³

Even though the government attitude towards any major measures of reform was somewhat cool, its members were willing to participate in various committees es-

¹²Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XIV, 1830, p. 335-6.

¹³Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. V, 1821, p. 998.

established to examine the Poor Laws. Castlereagh was a member of three committees of the House of Commons -- of 1817, 1818 and 1819. Peel was a member of the Emigration Committee, the Labourers' Wages Committee and the Poor Law Employment Committee. Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister, proposed the establishment of a Select Committee of the House of Lords on the Poor Laws.

In addition to favouring investigation and discussion of the Poor Laws the government was in favour of some 'practical treatment and gradual amelioration of the system'.¹⁴ Castlereagh favoured an improvement in the administration and to this end advocated the appointment of full-time administrators. He believed too, that work should be a criterion for the receipt of relief. Indeed, 'he would push this principle so far, that he would rather employ the labouring poor to dig a hole one day, and make them fill it up again the next, than allow them to remain idle...' ¹⁵ Canning and Huskisson favoured

¹⁴Castlereagh: Hansard, Debates, Vol. XXXVII, p. 154. Castlereagh's point of view met with editorial support in the Times, see The Times, January 5, 1818.

¹⁵Hansard, Debates, Vol. XLIV, p. 525.

a simplification of the Settlement Laws.¹⁶ Both Peel and William Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade, favoured emigration as a means of relieving the country of its excess population but both were less than enthusiastic in advocating state aid for that purpose.¹⁷

To the suggestion of John Curwen, the Cumberland landowner and coal magnate, that Poor Law taxes be based on all forms of property -- not simply landed property -- and that such taxes be used to equalize assessments, the government, suggested Castlereagh, "could never approve of such a system... because there would be... no interest at all to counteract abuses, and to watch over the due application of the parish fund".¹⁸

Of the proposals for government to undertake or encourage the cultivation of waste lands, Liverpool was opposed. In phrases redolent of Adam Smith, he stated

¹⁶Hansard, Debates, Vol. XL, 1819, P. 286 and 287.

¹⁷A. Brady, William Huskisson and Liberal Reform, London: Oxford University Press, 1928, P. 154; Hansard, Debates, Vol. XXI, 1829, P. 1730-1733; Hansard, Debates, Vol. I, 1823, P. 507-9; Hansard, Debates, Vol. XVIII, 1828, P. 1556-7.

¹⁸Hansard, Debates, Vol. XXXV, 1817, P. 527.

that it was up to private capitalists "to find out the way in which their capital could be best employed...

[because] under such circumstances the interest of the public was not distinct from the interest of the individual.¹⁹

This concern for economy in government was also evident in the position taken by the Prime Minister over the proposal to establish schools for pauper children. He believed, "let economy be the first result, and he should be disposed to pay more attention" to the proposal.

On some occasions members of the government were willing to go beyond providing verbal support for the exertions of other M.P.'s. and peers, and to support actively measures of reform or relief. Castlereagh was one of the M.P.'s. who drew up and brought in the Poor Law Amendment Bill and the Select Vestries Bill.

In a few cases where costs could be carefully controlled and where there was dire distress, government was willing to intervene. In 1817 it was willing to loan up to £500,000 "to these corporations or other bodies for

¹⁹Hansard, Debates, Vol. I, 1820, P. 419.

the purpose of making harbours or canals or to trustees of roads, or to any persons engaged in public works now in progress, or about to undertake them" for the purpose of providing employment.²⁰ To meet the distresses of Birmingham, the government was willing to loan 30,000 to 40,000 to the manufacturers which, in the words of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would be "of material service in the present exigence".²¹ Sums of money had been provided in 1823 and in 1825 to support emigration to British North America as a measure of relief.²²

Tory government policy in the period was then opposed to any measure of radical reform of the Poor Laws. It was, however, willing to engage in the investigation and discussion of the Laws and to support limited programmes of reform.

In the House of Commons a number of M.P.'s. verbally supported this policy for a variety of reasons. It

²⁰The Annual Register 1817, Vol. LII, London: Baldwin, Craddock and Joy, 1819, P. 46.

²¹Ibid., P. 46.

²²The Annual Register 1826, London: Baldwin, Craddock and Joy, 1827, P. 43-44.

was believed by some that the poor had a right to support. Charles Fyshe Palmer, M.P. for Reading and a West Indies landowner, 'considered the Poor Laws as the chartered rights of the poor, and hoped the House would pause before it consented to touch them'.²³ Sir Robert Wilson, M.P. for Southwark and Major-General, agreed. The House, he maintained, should not touch 'the statute of Elizabeth which was the Magna Charta of the poor...'.²⁴ He believed that the unemployed poor had just the same right to a subsistence 'as every gentleman had to his estate'.²⁵ Thomas Peregrine Courtenay, M.P. for Totnes, son of the Bishop of Exeter and Vice President of the Board of Trade in 1828, believed 'that the poor... had a fair and reasonable claim before God and man for relief'.²⁶ Lord Milton, M.P. for Yorkshire and only son of the second Earl Fitzwilliam, suggested that the poor had earned the Poor Laws by their exertions during the war in which they

²³Hansard, Debates, Vol. V, 1821, p. 1483.

²⁴Ibid., p. 994.

²⁵Ibid., p. 582.

²⁶Hansard, Debates, Vol. V, 1821, p. 995.

had shown great attachment to the higher orders. Were they now to be told, he continued, that it was the pleasure of the higher orders to break through the long-established system, and determine that provision should be no longer made for them from the poor rates on which they had been taught to depend?²⁷ Lord Ellesley, the dissolute nephew of the Duke of Wellington, simply affirmed that the principle of the Poor Laws was excellent and their mis-administration the cause of all the evil of which the people complained.²⁸ John Benett, landowner and M.P. for Wiltshire, agreed.²⁹

Some of the opponents of radical change in the Poor Laws felt it necessary to state their position on the Malthusian principle of population. Lord Ellesley agreed with Benett that "in a great country like this it was rarely indeed that the supply of labour would be found too great".³⁰ Michael Thomas Sadler, social re-

²⁷Hansard, Debates, Vol. XL, 1819, p. 471.

²⁸Hansard, Debates, Vol. XXV, 1830, p. 1322.

²⁹Hansard, Debates, Vol. XI, 1825, p. 577.

³⁰Hansard, Debates, Vol. V, 1821, p. 996-7; Hansard, Debates, Vol. XXXIV, 1819, p. 412.

former, merchant and M.P. for Newark, believed that it was not possible to speak of redundant population in England. At harvest time, for example, there was always a shortage of labour and it was necessary to import Irish Labourers to do the work. He felt that the best colonies that could be planted were those which might be established in the uncultivated deserts of our European Empire.³¹ Robert Preston, M.P. for Ashburton and a spokesman for the landed classes, believed that by the cultivation of waste lands, such as Barle Moor and Exmoor by workers on their own, the United Kingdom could maintain a population of sixty million.³²

Beyond simple affirmations of doubt in the conclusion of Malthus, were M.P.'s. who made some attempt to refute his views. Hudson Gurney, M.P. for Newtown, landowner and bibliomane, speaking on the Poor Relief Bill maintained that it,

³¹Hansard, Debates, Vol. XXI, 1829, P. 1728-9: A similar sentiment was expressed by the author of Hints for the Cultivation of the Fast Bogs of Ireland in a letter to T. R. Malthus', Pamphleteer, Vol. I, No. 17, 1817, P. 80-99.

³²Robert Preston, Pamphleteer, P. 151-2.

...was an attempt to bring the detestable system of Mr. Malthus to bear upon the legislation of the country, -- a system which every chapter of sacred history condemns, every page of civil history confutes, and every map of a half unpeopled world, after a duration of near 6,000 years, proves the absurdity of. Mr. C. said that hardly forty years had elapsed since Mr. Price had convinced the philosophers of his day, that the country was going so fast to depopulation, that there would not be enough of Englishmen left to till the soil of their fathers. But he hoped and trusted that that House would never be led to legislate on the theories of such philosophers as these; and least of all, to give any countenance to a doctrine which in this country should recognize a right in the rich, to say to the poor, that they had no business to be born; that it was in the order of nature that they should starve; and that whatever might be the abundance of his superfluities, from him they could demand nothing.³³

John Calcraft, M.P. for the family borough of Latham and Paymaster-General in Wellington's administration, declared that he was "a friend to an unrestricted and compulsory levy for the maintenance of the poor" and doubted that the Poor Law had the effect of increasing the population to such an extent as was asserted by Malthus. Indeed,

If the present amount of those [poor] rates be compared with the amount sixty years ago, it would be found that they had only increased in

³³Hansard, Debates, Vol. V, 1821, p. 1461-2.

proportion to the increase in the price of provisions, in the amount of taxation, and in the rental of the kingdom.³⁴

Some M.^{rs}. believed that the level of Poor Law expenditures was not higher than ought to be expected.³⁵

Courtenay maintained that,

...the Poor's' Taxes have not operated uniformly concurrently with the continually increasing pressure which has been imputed to them, and it is not right not to infer, from the acknowledged progression of the amount, a lasting proportionality of the proportion. It is alleged that the amount has constantly increased with a rapidity too great to be accounted for by the increase of population, or of the price of provision; and on comparing the assessments at the periods in which the country was comparatively poor, with those which have been assessed in better times, the allegation will be found correct. It is, however, worthy of observation, that if we compare the returns of 1815 with those of 1801, an accurate allowance for the increase in population and in the price of wheat, will sufficiently account for the increase of expenditure; while the proportion which the number of paupers bears to the whole people, has scarcely increased within that period, and in some counties has been diminished. But materially the amount is affected by the price of corn is shown by a fact appearing in the returns of 1815. In the three years included in those returns, not only the sums expended upon the poor but the number of persons relieved are shown

³⁴Ibid., p. 1250.

³⁵The Quarterly Review, second edition, London: John Murray, 1817, Vol. III, p. 431-2.

gradually to have declined. A corresponding fall appears in the price of wheat.³⁶

Edward Copleston, provost of Oriel College, Oxford, and Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine were in substantial agreement with him.³⁷

In addition, Courtenay believed that "an exact proportion between the demand and supply of laborers... is utterly impracticable. Indeed, he believes, men are unable to calculate far ahead of the times what will happen. Hence to use Malthus' views on population and the Poor Laws as the basis of public policy is unsound.

Michael Nolan, Barrister and M.P. for Barnstaple, expressed his conservative bias for the Poor Law. His

...design is not to destroy the existing system for the relieving the poor, but to restore and bring it back, so far as the existing modes and habits of society will admit, to the true spirit of the statute passed in the 43rd year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.³⁸

³⁶Thomas Peregrine Courtenay, A Treatise upon the Poor Laws, London: John Murray, 1818, p. 7.

³⁷Edward Copleston, Second Letter to the Right Hon. Robert Peel M.P., London: John Murray, 1819, p. 111, and Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, Vol. XVIII, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1828, p. 930.

³⁸Hansard, Debates, Vol. VII, 1821, p. 1567.

Courtenay and Sturges Bourne, the chairman of the 1817 Poor Law Committee, agreed.³⁹

From an examination of the rates of growth of population of England and Wales and Scotland between 1701 and 1821 -- which were in both cases about 1 2/3%, Nolan concluded that it was wrong to attribute the growth of population to the English Poor Laws.⁴⁰ Sir Robert Wilson echoes a similar thought. Would any man maintain, he suggests, that an allowance of a shilling or eighteen pence a week for a man's second or third child was a premium on population?⁴¹ Lord Milton agreed. With respect to the encouragement which the Poor Laws gave to early and improvident marriages, he doubted if those marriages were so frequent as they were supposed to be.⁴²

³⁹Thomas Courtenay, "A letter to Sturges Bourne", Pamphleteer, London: Rest and Fenner, 1818, Vol. XI, P. 368.

⁴⁰Hansard, Debates, Vol. VII, 1823, P. 1562.

⁴¹Hansard, Debates, Vol. V, 1821, P. 995.

⁴²Ibid., P. 997-8. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, introduced a sentimental note. It believed that men married not from a calculation of their income from the Poor Laws but for love and passion. Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 23 June 1828, P. 932.

The views expressed by members of the Tory government and individual M.Ps. gave some idea of the opinions of the Poor Law supporters -- though little idea of the extent. Two indicators of the amount of support for particular points of view can be seen in the bills introduced in Parliament and by those which actually received Royal Assent.

Of the acts of Parliament of the 1815-30 period not one made any considerable change in the Poor Laws. The most important reforms were made in the years 1818 and 1819 and were mainly concerned with improving the administration of the laws.⁴³

There were a number of bills introduced into Parliament in the 1820's which would have made very basic changes in the Poor Laws but none of them got beyond third reading in the Commons.⁴⁴ There was, therefore, substantial opposition to radical reform.

⁴³The Statutes of Great Britain and Ireland, London: George Eyre and Andrew Strahan, 1819. 15 G. III, C. 69, P. 523; 20 G. III, C. 12, P. 557; 22 G. III, C. 85, P. 925.

⁴⁴These bills will be examined in the next chapter.

Government and some M.Ps. were unwilling to accept radical reform of the Poor Laws for a variety of reasons. The Tory government had no clear majority in the House of Commons and it was therefore obliged to be very circumspect in the bills it introduced. There was too, a long tradition that government did not interfere in parochial and municipal affairs. British governments were mainly concerned with foreign policy, civil order, justice and taxation.⁴⁵ The Webbs suggest that,

...it is scarcely too much to say that between the Lord of Salisbury (1801) and the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834... there is, in the statute book, no indication of any governmental policy with regard to such a domestic affair.⁴⁶

The promotion of legislation on the Poor Laws was traditionally left to individual M.Ps.⁴⁷ There is a feeling in the speeches of members of the government that they are baffled by the problems presented by the Poor Laws and cannot see any solution to them.

⁴⁵ Woodward, The Age of Reform, p. 13.

⁴⁶ J. Webb, English Local Government pt. II: The Last Hundred Years, p. 34.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

Part of the reason for this feeling no doubt arises from the fact that government and parliament did not have adequate statistics to give them a picture of what was happening in the country. It was not until 1801 that a decennial census of population was begun. It was only in 1815 that annual statistics of the Poor Law expenditures began to be collected.⁴⁸ Even these statistics left much to be desired. The Select Committee on Poor Rate Returns suggested that there should be included in the statistics a breakdown listing the reasons why relief was granted and the amount under each heading.⁴⁹ Such information would be an obvious basic essential for anyone contemplating a reform of the Poor Laws.

In the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century government and parliament's energies were mainly absorbed by the Napoleonic wars. In the five years after the war, both were afraid to act because of the

⁴⁸By 55 G. III, C. 47; Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, London: George Wyre and Andrew Strahan, 1811, p. 35-36.

⁴⁹Report of the Select Committee on Poor Rate Returns, 1822, House of Commons, 1822, p. 10-12.

fear of revolution. In 1812 a secret report of the House of Lords connected the Luddite outbreaks with organized revolutionary designs.⁵⁰ The Spa Fields riot of December 1816, the Blanketeers march on London of 1817, the Lancashire strikes of 1818, the Peterloo meeting of August 1819 and the Cato Street conspiracy of November 1819 were symptoms of the considerable unrest in the country. A secret committee of the Commons reported that the avowed objects of these disturbances were manifestly short of revolution.⁵¹ Government and parliament showed their concern by the passage of the Six Acts and the suspension of Habeas Corpus.⁵²

The Poor Law was held by some to be a kind of insurance against theft, outrage and revolution.⁵³ Gur-

⁵⁰ Broderick and Fotheringill, Parliamentary History of England, Vol. XI, p. 83.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 175.

⁵² Three of these celebrated acts dealt with the procedure for bringing cases to trial, prohibition of meetings for military exercises and the issue of warrants for the search of arms. The other three acts regulated public meetings, allowed magistrates to seize seditious literature and placed stamp duties on all newspapers. See; Woodward, The Age of Reform, p. 65.

⁵³ Halevy, England in 1815, p. 379; Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 20 June 1828, p. 220.

ney maintained that the 'only possible tendency of a bill to end the Poor Laws 'would be to make the country a scene of rapine and violence and utter confusion, from one end to the other'.⁵⁴ Calcraft echoed similar sentiments. The bill 'must be attended with one of two alternatives -- starvation or intestine commotion'.⁵⁵

Nolan agreed that

To pluck such a large means of subsistence [as the Poor Laws] ...would be cruel, if it were safe; and would be most unwise, as it would be most dangerous -- I say most dangerous, as it must arouse the strongest feelings of nature against our civil tranquillity, and give to commotion the colour of necessary resistance against wanton oppression.⁵⁶

It may be argued that government policy during the 1815 to 1850 period reflected economic opinions of its members and of its supporters. Most of the government's support came from the country gentry and the landed aristocracy, as is most of its members. Of those individual members who spoke in favour of a retention of the Poor Laws, Wilson, Sturges Bourne, Courtenay, Cal-

⁵⁴Hansard, Debates, Vol. V, 1821, p. 1490.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 1228-9.

⁵⁶Hansard, Debates, Vol. VII, 1823, p. 1365.

craft, Gurney, Bennet, Long, Wellesley and Milton derived much of their income from land. Nolan was a barrister; Sadler, a merchant; and Palmer, an owner of land in the West Indies.⁵⁷ It may thus appear that there was a connection between land ownership and a desire to retain the Poor Laws.

In the twenty years prior to 1811, it is probable that the Speenhamland system was adopted by many parishes purely because it was the most economical means of holding down wages.⁵⁸ Malthus maintained that, if wages had been left alone, they would have risen to meet the cost of food.

During the war years it is probable that the standard of living of the worker declined.⁵⁹ On the other hand farmers' profits went up and rents with them in amounts in no way commensurate with additional efforts,

⁵⁷According to Judd the West Indies landowners acted very much like members of the English landed gentry, see Gerrit F. Judd, Members of Parliament (1734 - 1832), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959, P. 67.

⁵⁸Villiers Report, Poor Law Report, P. 126.

⁵⁹Woodward, The Age of Reform, P. 9; F.M.L. Thompson, English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century, London: Routledge and Paul, 1963, P. 215.

new outlays or fresh practices.⁶⁰ Part of these increased profits were due to the fact that wages were held at lower levels than would have been the case without the Speenhamland system. Following the end of the war, prices of agricultural products fell, profits fell and rents began to fall with them.⁶¹ The Poor Law tax was levied mainly on the land and was therefore ultimately paid by the landowner. In the 1840's there was much evidence of overpopulation in rural districts. There was too, in contemporary opinion much evidence of the inefficiency of agricultural labour due to the Poor Law. Since the law guaranteed a labourer his subsistence, the costs of the inefficiency and overpopulation were borne by the landowners via the poor rate. The movement away from centres of overpopulation was inhibited by the settlement laws. A total abolition of the Poor Laws therefore would undoubtedly have been in the economic interest of the landowners. Such an enactment coming closely after the passage of the Corn Laws of 1815 would probably have been regarded

⁶⁰ Thompson, Op.Cit., p. 215-6.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 234.

as an expression of cynical self interest on the part of the landlords.

Underlying the ideas of the supporters of the Poor Law was a particular concept of society. Though not clearly enunciated a picture of a paternalistic status society emerges. The traditional pattern of the mutual obligation of classes to each other and the responsibility of the powerful and wealthy for the welfare of the weaker and poorer members of society was emphasised.⁶² The duties and obligations were balanced by rights and privileges.

The Quarterly Review suggests that the poor have the strongest claims on all those classes of society whose incomes are derived from their labour and from any calamity or misfortune... they are unable to continue labour.⁶³ Other supporters speak in the right of the poor to relief.⁶⁴ This right is based on the law of the

⁶²Samuel Kanichar, Four days to Liverpool, Liverpool: University of Liverpool, 1967, p. 21.

⁶³Quarterly Review, 2nd ed., London: J. Murray, 1817, Vol. XII, p. 421.

⁶⁴H. Gurney, Hansard, Vol. VI, p. 173; C. J. Valuer, Hansard, Vol. VII, p. 1463; Nolan, Hansard, Vol. VII, p. 776-7; Castlereagh, Hansard, Vol. IX, p. 524.

land, the laws of nature, and the laws of God.⁶⁵ The obligation of the wealthy to provide for the poor is advantageous for the rich, for in this way they can develop and gratify their humane and charitable impulses.⁶⁶

In some way, perhaps, the privileged supporters of the Poor Laws sensed that an end of the Poor Laws would mark a stage in the transformation of society from paternalism to individualism, where the status of their class would be questioned and their privileges abridged. One writer has suggested:

The reform of the Poor Law was not an isolated issue. It was an integral part of the growing body of changes necessary for England's transition to an industrial and commercial society. Speenhamland and the Poor Law policy founded upon it represented one of the last reminders of the status ancestry of the evolving society.⁶⁷

Part then, for a few minor proposals made in 1817, a year of very widespread concern over the extent of pauperism in the country, government was largely unwilling to initiate or countenance any radical reform of

⁶⁵H. Burney, *Hansard*, Vol. V., p. 1480.

⁶⁶H. C. Careless Davis, *The Life of Grey and Peel*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1914, p. 142.

⁶⁷Leachner, *Poor Law to Poverty*, p. 98-99.

the Poor Laws. In the House of Commons, opposition to radical reform was sufficiently strong to prevent any radical measure going beyond third reading. It is therefore evident that there was a wide divergence between the opinions of the economists and those of the government. It is also apparent that there was a considerable number of M.P.s. who opposed the views of the economists. The opposition to the economists sprang from the belief that the poor had a right to relief, the fear of revolution, the very complexity of the problem, the radical nature of the proposals, the rejection of the Malthusian principle of population, and the belief that the traditional order of society was threatened.

CHAPTER IV

POOR LAW REFORMERS

Even though the Tory government and a number of M.Ps. favoured the retention of the Poor Laws, a considerable body of opinion in the Commons favoured the radical reform of the Poor Laws. Some measure of the support for radical reform can be gauged from the Reports and debates of the House of Commons.

Select Committees were created by both Houses of Parliament on a sessional basis for the purpose of examining and reporting on any particular subject. Committees of the House of Commons on the Poor Laws were appointed in 1816, in 1817, 1818, 1819, and 1824. Parliament was obviously not afraid to appoint to these committees interested men of diverse background and divergent views. Thus, for example, serving on the same Poor Law Committee of the House of Commons in 1819 were Castlereagh, Curwen and Ricardo. Castlereagh, the Tory leader of the House of Commons and a landed aristocrat, was an avowed supporter

of the Poor Laws. Ricardo, a Radical, a retired stock-broker and an economist, sought their abolition, Cullen, a Whig and a member of the landed gentry advocated a national system of Benevolent Societies. One of the aims of appointing these Members of Parliament with conflicting views to the same committee was perhaps to provide a clash of opinion from which the truth or, at least, a common-sense compromise would appear.¹ Committees had no power except that delegated to them and the House was in no way bound by their Reports.²

Some of the Committees, appointed to consider the Poor Laws in the 1815-30 period dealt with very narrow aspects of the problem. They did not therefore get or take the opportunity to express their opinions on the whole Poor Law system. Such committees were, for example, the Select Committee on Parish Apprentices of 1815, the Select Committee on Mendicity in the Metropolis of 1815, the Select Committee on the Poor Rate Returns of 1821,

¹Gordon Strathearn, The People's Conscience, London: Constable, 1952, p. 7.

²House of Commons, Manual of Procedure in the Public Business of the House of Commons: n.p., 1904, p. 76-86.

and the Select Committee on Parish Settlement of 1828.³

The most detailed examination of the Poor Laws was made by a Select Committee in 1817.⁴ Other Committees on the Poor Laws were established in 1815, 1818, 1819 and 1828. A committee on labourers' wages was set up in 1826 and two committees on emigration in 1826 and 1837.

The five Poor Law Committees and the Labourers' Wages Committee showed the very strong influence of the economists both in their examination of the nature of the problems presented by the Poor Laws and in their proposed solutions to these problems. They were too, in very substantial agreement. The 1818 Committee stated that it was "satisfied of the justice of those principles and opinions which have been before submitted to the House" by the 1817

³Report from the Committee on Parish Apprentices, House of Commons, 19 May 1815; Report from the Committee on the State of Mendicity in the Metropolis, House of Commons, 11 July 1815; Report from the Select Committee on Poor Rate Returns, House of Commons, 10 July 1821; Report from the Select Committee on the Law of Parish Settlements, House of Commons, 9 June 1828.

⁴It was decided to give the report a wider circulation than usual. On Huskisson's initiative each magistrate was given a copy. See The Times, July 5, 1817. The Report was also published in the Annual Register and in pamphlet form in 1817.

Committee.⁵ The 1819 Committee affirmed that "the further consideration of the laws for the relief of the poor ... had tended to confirm ... the correctness of that view of the subject which was taken by the Committee in the year 1817, and the soundness of the principles which were then stated in their Report..."⁶ The 1828 Select Committee acknowledged its indebtedness to the 1817 and 1819 Poor Law Committee Reports and to the Report of the Labourers' Wages Committee.⁷

The 1817 Committee attacked the system of compulsory assessments for the support of the poor. These assessments had produced 'the unfortunate effect of abating those exertions on the part of the labouring classes, on which... the happiness and welfare of mankind has been made to rest'.⁸ It was afraid that, "from a reference to

⁵Third Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws, 1818, House of Commons, 26 May 1818, p. 11.

⁶Report from the Committee on the Poor Laws, 1819, House of Commons, 22 June 1819, p. 3.

⁷Report from the Select Committee on that part of the Poor Laws Relating to the Employment or Relief of Able-Bodied Persons from the Poor Rate, House of Commons, 3 July 1828, p. 1.

⁸Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws, 1817, Annual Register, 1817, p. 264.

the increased and increasing amount of the sums raised for their relief, that this system is perpetually encouraging and increasing the amount of misery it was designed to alleviate, creating at the same time an unlimited demand on funds which it cannot augment.⁹ It was apparent to the Committee that 'both the number of paupers, and the amount of money levied by assessment are progressively increasing.'¹⁰ Moreover, whilst the contemporary system of administering the Poor Laws obtained it would appear that there does not exist any power of arresting the progress of this increase, till it shall no longer be found possible to augment the sums raised by assessment. The increase which has taken place both in the number of paupers, and in the assessments for their support, can hardly fail to have arisen from causes inherent in the system of Poor Laws itself, as it does not appear to have depended entirely upon any temporary or local circumstance.¹¹

⁹Ibid., p. 255.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 267.

¹¹Ibid., p. 271.

If things continue as they have, then

...there is every reason to think that the amount of the assessment will continue, as it has done, to increase, till at a period more or less remote, according to the progress the evil has already made in different places, it shall have absorbed the profits of the property on which the rate may have been assessed, producing thereby, the neglect and ruin of the land, and the waste or removal of other property, to the utter subversion of that happy order of society so long upheld in these kingdoms.¹²

The only way to avoid these unhappy consequences is by bringing about a "gradual restoration of a feeling of reliance" of the labourers "on their own industry, rather than upon the parochial assessments, that the transition to a more wholesome system can be effected".¹³

If compulsory assessments for the poor were not only unwise but also dangerous, the same was true, the Committee thought, of the assumed responsibility to provide work for the unemployed. "This is a condition which it is not in the power of any law to fulfil."¹⁴ The only

¹²Ibid., p. 271.

¹³Ibid., p. 277.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 283.

way of raising the wages of labour was by increasing the demand for labour

...and there is nothing that can increase the demand, but the increase of wealth by which labour is supported; if therefore the compulsory application of any part of this wealth tends (as it must always tend) to employ the portion it distributes less profitably than it would have been, if left to the interested superintendence of its owners, it cannot fail, by thus diminishing the funds which would otherwise have been applicable to the maintenance of labour, to place the whole body of labourers in a worse situation than that in which they would otherwise have been placed.¹⁵

The 1819 Poor Law Committee agreed.¹⁶

The Poor Laws also affected the supply of labour,

...by holding out to the labouring classes, that they shall at all times be provided with adequate employment they are led to believe they have nothing to dread while they are willing to labour. The supply of labour, therefore, which they alone have the power to regulate, is left constantly to increase, without any reference to the demand, or to the funds on which it depends. Under these circumstances, if the demand for labour suddenly decreases, the provisions of the Poor Law alone are looked to, to supply the place of all those circumstances which result only from vigilance and caution. The powers of the law, ... in reality effect nothing but a more wasteful application of the diminished capital than would otherwise take

¹⁵Ibid., p. 234-5.

¹⁶Committee on Poor Laws, 1819, p. 5.

place: they tend thereby materially to reduce the real wages of free labour, and thus essentially to injure the labouring classes.¹⁷

In sum then,

...the demand and supply of labour have in the natural course of things, such a tendency to regulate and balance each other, unless counteracted by artificial institutions, that any excess of either arising from temporary causes, would, if met by temporary expedients alone, in no long time correct itself; whereas the practice now under consideration, originating perhaps in a humane extension of the law to meet cases of occasional or occasional emergency, and inconsiderately continued, is calculated to perpetuate evils that would otherwise be transient, and permanently to derange the whole industry of the country.¹⁸

It is immediately apparent that there was a strong coincidence of thought between the economists and the Poor Law Committees over the effects of the English Poor Law. The committees accepted implicitly the Malthusian principle of population and more explicitly the wages fund theory. They agreed that the Poor Laws' effects were to exacerbate the problem they sought to solve. The growth of population was encouraged by the Poor Laws and the promise of the Elizabethan Act of 1591 -- to provide work

¹⁷Committee on Poor Laws, 1817, Annual Register, p. 285-6.

¹⁸Committee on Poor Laws, 1819, p. 7.

for all -- could not be fulfilled. The wages Fund Theory with its demand for workers dependent on the amount of capital and its supply of workers dependent on the growth of population, was stated in a form similar to that of the economists. The general position of the economists in favour of a policy of laissez-faire in the labour market was also accepted. They agreed too, in the belief that the real answer to the problem of poverty rested on the self reliance, foresight, thrift and prudence of the workers. Both believed that without some changes in the Poor Laws there was a prospect of all the profits of land being eventually swallowed up by the poor rate.

Fundamentally, too, the Poor Law Committees accepted the kind of society that the large-scale adoption of the economists' proposals would bring. The right of the poor to receive relief was largely denied. The paternalistic status society was rejected in favour of an individualistic society. Labourers were largely responsible for their own economic condition.

On the analysis of the problems presented by the Poor Laws there was then much agreement between economists and committees. On the proposals for reform there was

some divergence. This was not too surprising for in the analysis of a problem a large degree of abstraction and speculation is possible. In suggesting measures for reform, a problem has to be examined in terms of the concrete and practical situation of the day and the immediate political, social and economic realities have to be faced.

The question of taxation for the levy of a poor rate showed in some way the conflict between theory and practice. While the intent of the Elizabethan Act was to tax "people on their local and visible property", in practice the burden had been "placed almost exclusively on land and houses".¹⁹ While agreeing with the principle that the tax base should be wider, the 1817 committee pointed out that practically it was not possible. "With a national levy for the poor rate, it would be impossible to devise, "any adequate means to check the demands on such a fund, when every excess in parochial disbursements would be merged in the general expenditure of the empire".²⁰

In presenting its proposals for the reform of the

¹⁹Committee on Poor Laws, 1817, Annual Register, 2. 267.

²⁰Ibid., P. 276.

Poor Laws, the 1817 Committee was somewhat hesitant. It suggested that expenditures should be limited.

Whether the future assessments should be limited in the first instance to the amount of any one year, or to an average of any, your committee think the amount in each succeeding year not exceeding seven, ten or even a greater number, should then afford an average taken always from the last seven, ten or greater number; by which means a diminution in the amount might be afforded, without the possibility, on the other hand, of an increase beyond the original limit on.²¹

To diminish the number of those who received relief the committee recommended:

...that when the demand for labour may have revived, it may not safely be provided, that, from and after a certain time, no relief shall be extended to any child whose father being living, is under ---- years of age; a principle, which by altering the age from time to time, might, if it should be thought desirable, be carried still further into operation.²²

In addition, the committee also suggested that

It may also be provided... that from and after a specified time, no relief shall be provided for any child whose father being living, has not above _____ children under _____ years of age.²³

The committee also proposed that when the demand for

²¹Ibid., p. 27.

²²Ibid., p. 28.

²³Ibid., p. 29.

labour revived then the numbers being provided with work by the parish be gradually diminished.²⁴

While proposing to limit the relief granted, the committee also lent support to various programmes of self-help. It favoured Friendly Societies and Savings Banks. It also recommended the establishment of parochial Benefit Societies which would provide relief in sickness and an annuity in old age. When these institutions were first set up, parishes would be permitted to place from parochial funds an amount equal to the sum parishioners would have had to pay if they had begun to contribute earlier. In this way, the inhabitants in the parish would have an assured income in old age and in sickness.²⁵

In addition to these various schemes of encouraging individual self-help the committee suggested the establishment of work schools for pauper children. The children of paupers, it recommended, should be taken from their parents and educated in these schools. Here children would be "inured" to work.²⁶ The committee also

²⁴Ibid., p. 286.

²⁵Ibid., p. 278.

²⁶Ibid., p. 279.

recommended the establishment of parochial farms for the employment of the unemployed, and the letting of small portions of land to industrious labourers.²⁷

The proposals of the committee follow from its analysis of the problems presented by the Poor Law system. Its suggestions to diminish gradually the numbers of recipients of poor relief were variations of Malthus' proposals. Proposals for Savings Societies fit with the support of the economists since they emphasized individual responsibility. The support of working schools for pauper children seems to conflict however with proposals to diminish the number of recipients of poor relief and to encourage the independence of the working classes since there would be no disadvantage to having many children. Proposals to establish parochial farms also conflicted with their suggestions to limit the number who were dependent on the parish for work. These conflicting proposals were probably the reflection of the dissent within the committee.

The 1819 Committee recommended that relief should

²⁷Ibid., p. 287.

be confined to the old, the sick and the impotent; that labour should be allowed to circulate freely; that the "provident habits" of the poor should be aided by the establishment of Savings Banks and Benefit Societies and that the children of the poor should be educated in the principles of morality and religion, united with habits of industry.²⁸

The Labour Wages Committee of 1824 concerned that the roundman system would diminish the industry of the labourer, degrade his character and encourage a surplus population, recommended that the parish provide the unemployed,

...with labour less acceptable in its nature than ordinary labour, and at lower wages than the average rate of the neighbourhood. Your committee can add, that this method has been found practically beneficial in all places where it has been carried into effect.²⁹

The rising expenditures on the poor after 1825 brought the establishment of a Poor Law Committee in 1828. The Committee recommended that it should be made unlawful

²⁸Committee on Poor Laws, 1819, P. 10.

²⁹Report from the Select Committee on Labourers' wages, House of Commons, 4 June 1824, P. 7.

for any overseer to pay the poor any addition to his wages on account of himself or his family. If this proposal were acted upon, the committee believed that, "a gradual improvement would take place in the condition of the poorer classes... and a rise in wages would there be a consequence." Parish labour and parish pay would act as a deterrent to the worker so that,

...should the independent workman be thus induced to delay his marriage for a short time, the supply of labour being then a little slower, wages will gradually rise to the amount sufficient to support a family in comfort; and in such case the Poor Rate will fall as the wages rise.³⁰

The Committee underlined its belief in the importance of education in the following way:

The ultimate success of any such alteration of the law as contemplated by Your Committee would depend also upon the degree of intelligence and forethought among the Poor themselves; and, on this account, the general diffusion of such an education as may assist and promote the development of these qualities, will be of the utmost consequence, and may be considered as the most valuable and permanent benefit that can be conferred.³¹

The committee's proposals again agreed very strongly

³⁰Committee on Poor Laws, 1828, P. 10.

³¹Ibid., P. 11.

with those of the economists in spirit. They concurred in recommending the abolition of relief to the able bodied, in the importance of controlling the growth of population and of educating the working classes. However, instead of using starvation as a deterrent to early marriage, the committee proposed that of parish labour.

Select Committees on Emigration were established by the House of Commons in 1826 and 1827. In both committees the influence of the economists was very evident. Malthus was the star witness of the 1827 final report. His opinions were continually used throughout the report to buttress its analysis and its conclusions. Milnes Horton, the chairman of the 1826 Committee, Under Secretary of War and the Colonies 1821-7, and "the official parent" of the 1826 Report recognized McCulloch as an authority and was happy to note that their views were in agreement.³²

Using phrases redolent of the economists, the 1827 Committee maintained that "labour which is the con-

³²Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 21 April 1827, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1827, P. 378-9 and T. C. Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, New Series, London: T. C. Hansard, 1827, Vol. XV, P. 511.

modity of the poor man, partakes strictly, as far as its value is concerned, of the circumstances incident to other commodities, and that its price is diminished in proportion to the excess of supply as compared with demand".³³ It opposed laws to regulate the price of labour.³⁴ The 1826 Committee accepted the wages fund doctrine speaking of the 'fund for the remuneration of labour'.³⁵

The committee believed that the greatest practical improvement that could be made in the system involved the end of relief to able bodied paupers. It believed that this elimination of relief would be rendered much more practicable by the introduction of a system of regulated emigration than by any other measure.³⁶ This opinion is exactly that of Nassau Senior. The committee agreed also with Malthus who maintained that emigration could provide

³³Third Report from the Select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom, 1827, House of Commons, 19 February 1826, P. 15.

³⁴Ibid., P. 15.

³⁵Report from the Select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom, 8 December 1826, P. 10.

³⁶Third Report, Committee on Emigration, 1827, P. 12. This opinion also found support in the pamphlet, Hints on Emigration, London: J. Hatchard, 1828, P. 4.

for the prevention of a redundant population in future if the houses of the poor were pulled down when they emigrated. It agrees with him that it was sound policy to let emigration from the poor rates if a possibility that the vacancies thus created would not be filled up.³⁷

It is evident that there was a considerable degree of agreement with the opinions of the economists in the House of Commons. However, it is not at all clear how much support the reports received from the members of the Commons' Committees and how much dissent there was within the committees themselves. It could be expected that a majority of the committee would be generally in favour of the report. For each committee five members constitute a quorum. However, since the total membership of the committees varied between twenty and thirty, it could be expected that the committee meetings were not well attended and that a dedicated minority could, in fact, determine the content of the report.

It is probable that the members and some of the poor over whom they would call as witnesses before the Committee.

³⁷Third Report, Committee on Emigration, 1847, p. 11.

Robert Owen recounted in his autobiography his unfortunate experience before the 1817 Committee when it kept him waiting for two days while it discussed whether it would see him.³⁸ Owen also mentioned that all forty members of the committee were present on that occasion.

As has been mentioned above there was a certain degree of conflict between the analysis of the problem presented by the Poor Law and the proposals suggested by the 1817 committee. This conflict is evidence of the divergence of opinion between members of the Committee.³⁹ There were on the Committee at least three groups of thought -- those suggesting the abolition of the Poor Laws, those recommending minor reforms and those who would use Benefit Societies and Savings Banks as the main means of reforming the Poor Law.

It is possible to identify some of the major

³⁸Robert Owen, The Life of Robert Owen, London: G. Bell, 1920, p. 183-4.

³⁹Castlereagh was quoted in The Times, February 5, 1818, as affirming in the House of Commons that, "it was not correct that there were any opinions... as there were members". He maintained that he could, with confidence affirm, that although different opinions necessarily prevailed..., the committee were unanimous on many leading points'.

supporters of each of these points of view. Curwen and Brydges were advocates of the Benefit Societies.⁴⁰

Sturges Bourne, Mathurst and Castlereagh accepted the principle of the Poor Laws.⁴¹ Others whom it is not possible to identify condemned the general principle of the Poor Laws.⁴²

By 1819 the division of opinion, if judged the proposals of the committee of that year, had largely disappeared since its suggestions were clear and unambiguous. It sought the abolition of the Poor Laws with the only qualification of the time being ripe. While the 1819 Committee did favour Savings Banks and Benefit Societies, it did not support the subsidization of Benefit Societies from parish funds.

It may perhaps be suggested that the difference between the 1817 and 1819 reports was due to the change in

⁴⁰The basis of this opinion will be established in the next chapter.

⁴¹P. Courtenay in his "Letter to Sturges Bourne" published in The Pamphleteer, London: Rest and Fenner, Vol. XI, 1818, p. 377.

⁴²Ibid., p. 377. Courtenay refers to a "Mr. H." There were however three Mr. H's -- Hall, Holford and Huskisson, who were members of the committee.

membership of the two committees. Twenty-eight of the forty members of the 1817 Committee served again in 1819. The 12 leaving members and the 10 additions represented similar interest groups and similar geographical areas except in two respects. One of the leaving M.P.s., Lockhart, and three of the additions, Grant, Kennedy and Riddell represented Scottish constituencies. In general, the Scots ruling classes were in favour of the abolition of the compulsory assessment for the poor being content with their own voluntary system and a raid on the extension to Scotland of the English Poor Law system with its vastly larger expenditures.⁴³

The addition of Ricardo to the 1819 Committee would also add a powerful advocate to the anti Poor Law forces.

The other change which may have been decisive in one respect was the fact that Brydges, one of the leading advocates of Benefit Societies, was not a member of the

⁴³Reverend Robert Burns Historical Dissertations on the Law and Practice of Great Britain and Particularly of Scotland with regard to the Poor, Glasgow: Peter Hill, 1819, p. 73-8, and Report of the Sub Committee of the General Assembly of Church of Scotland reproduced in the Third Report of the Select Committee on Poor Laws, 1819, p. 25-27.

1819 Committee. Curwen appeared to have lost confidence in the ability of the 1819 Committee to perform any further useful function.⁴⁴ This difference in the composition of the 1819 as compared with the 1817 Committee plus the decline in Curwen's interest may have been decisive in changing the benefit society proposals. It had appeared to Courtenay in April 1817 that the Committee was not going to recommend Benefit Societies as a means of altering the Poor Laws.⁴⁵ It is probable that the inclusion of the Benefit Societies' recommendation appeared in the 1817 report largely because of the powerful advocacy of Curwen and Snydgas.

The absence of conflict in the proposals of the later Poor Law Committees probably suggests the substantial agreement of the majority of members attending the committees with the reports.

The legislation introduced into Parliament in the 1820's also showed a degree of coincidence of thought with that of the economists. In the half decade after

⁴⁴Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXXII, p. 402.

⁴⁵reface to Courtenay's letter to Sturges Bourne, The Emancipator, vol. II, p. 372.

1815 by contrast, all bills introduced in the Commons largely accepted the principle of the Poor Laws.

On May 11, 1821 James Scarlett, an eminent lawyer, moved for permission to introduce a bill to place a maximum on Poor Law expenditures, to abolish the laws of Settlement, and to exclude the able-bodied from the receipt of relief.⁴⁶ These proposals met with Bickersteth's support.⁴⁷ Although the bill received second reading, Scarlett was forced to withdraw the Bill on July 7, 1821 after the further discussion of it had been postponed seven times.⁴⁸

Recognizing that the opposition to the bill was too strong, Scarlett, in the next session, attempted to carry only one part of it -- the abolition of the Settlement Laws.⁴⁹ The motion for the second reading of the bill was lost.⁵⁰

⁴⁶T. C. Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, New Series, London: Hansard, Vol. V, p. 573-5.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 585-7.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 1480.

⁴⁹Journals of the House of Commons, House of Commons, 1822, Vol. LXXIII, p. 221.

⁵⁰T. C. Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, New Series, London: Hansard, 1822, Vol. VII, p. 771.

The bill of John B. Monck, M.P. for Reading, to restrict 'the payment of any part or portion of the wages of Labourers out of the Poor Rates' was introduced on May 12, 1825.⁵¹ The bill was given second reading on June 2 and withdrawn on the same day.⁵²

Two years later on June 13, 1827, Robert Aglionby Slaney, the barrister and M.P. for Shrewsbury, was given leave to bring in a bill 'to declare and amend the law relating to the Employment and Payment of able-bodied Labourers from the Poor Rates'. In his speech Slaney referred 'to the opinions of Mr. Ricardo and Mr. Malthus... as authorities to guide him'.⁵³ This bill was submitted to the Select Committee on the Poor Laws of which Slaney was the chairman.⁵⁴ On February 24, 1829 Slaney reintroduced his bill. He proposed 'to do away with money allowances to able-bodied men, so long as they were in the

⁵¹T. C. Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, New Series, London: Hansard, 1825, Vol. XI, p. 15.

⁵²Journals of the House of Commons, House of Commons, Vol. LXXI, p. 407.

⁵³T. C. Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, New Series, London: T. C. Hansard, 1828, Vol. VII, p. 1256.

⁵⁴Journals of the House of Commons, Vol. LXXXI, p. 574.

employment of third persons" except in case of illness or old age.⁵⁵ Though falling short of the proposals of the economists, yet Slaney's bill would require employed labourers to support their own children without assistance from the poor rate. Thus "improvident marriages" would be checked and "forethought" encouraged.⁵⁶ The bill, which reached the committee stage in 1829, was reintroduced in the 1830 session where it reached the third reading.

It would appear, then, that by the kind of bills introduced in the House by Slaney, Monck and Scarlett that there was some evidence that there was support for the economists' proposals. There are, however, some grounds for believing that the influence of the economists reached its zenith in the Commons in between 1819 and 1823. The 1819 Committee and Scarlett's bill of 1820 accepted both the analysis and policy recommendations of the economists without reserve. After 1824 however, while still accepting the economists' analysis of the Poor Law problems, the labourer's wages and the 1828 Poor Law Committees

⁵⁵T. C. Hansard, The Parliamentary Debates, New Series, London: Hansard, 1829, Vol. XX, P. 541.

⁵⁶Ibid., P. 540.

recommended the provision of parish labour for the unemployed at lower rates than those regularly employed.

Slaney's and Monck's bills to abolish the payment of relief to employed labourers were also less radical than the stand taken by Scarlett in 1820 and fell short of the recommendations of the economists.

It is, of course, possible that the Committees and Slaney and Monck recognizing the extent of the opposition to the economists' proposals compromised in order to obtain the maximum amount of support in the Commons for some fairly substantial reform of the Poor Laws.

In addition to the committee reports and the process of legislation through the Commons, individual M.P.s. betrayed a coincidence of thought between their opinions and those of the economists. Scarlett and Slaney both had introduced bills in the House using arguments which were similar to those of the economists. Wilnot Horton was "the official parent" of the 1826 and 1827 Emigration Committee Reports. John Monck by his bill of May 12, 1825 had sought to restrict the payment of wages out of the poor rate. In 1821 he had maintained that the Poor

Laws ought to be abolished.⁵⁷ He maintained too, that 'the system of Poor Laws gave no discouragement to the increase of the number of paupers'.⁵⁸ Colonel Thomas Henry Davies, M.P. for Worcester City, agreed with the views of Malthus on the Poor Laws.⁵⁹ Sir Samuel Romilly, the law reformer and barrister, was much influenced by the Wealth of Nations which he called 'a work which will benefit the latest posterity'.⁶⁰ His opposition to the Settlement Laws was based on humanitarian and economic grounds.⁶¹ In a letter written on November 17, 1789, he stated that he was opposed to the poor being able to demand support 'as a matter of right'. He believed that the English Poor Law was 'a source of much greater misery than would arise from the poor being left to depend entirely on the casual bounty of the charitable'.⁶² Colonel

⁵⁷Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. V, P. 1483.

⁵⁸Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XVIII, P. 1543.

⁵⁹Ibid., P. 1346.

⁶⁰Sir Samuel Romilly, Memoirs of the Life of Sir Samuel Romilly with a Selection from his correspondence, 3rd. ed.; London: John Murray, 1841, Vol. I, P. 365.

⁶¹Ibid., Vol. II, P. 103.

⁶²Ibid., Vol. I, P. 207.

Robert Torrens, M.P. for Ipswich and friend of Ricardo, agreed with the Malthusian principle of population and the wages fund theory. He maintained that the food supply "can no longer be kept up to the population, the only possible means of eradicating pauperism, is by keeping down the population to a level with capital and subsistence". There were, he maintained, two ways of accomplishing this either by moral restraint or emigration.⁶³ Joseph Hume showed his agreement with Malthus when he stated that he hoped that an M.P. would bring in a bill declaring that "from and after the passing . . . this act, no child legitimate or illegitimate should be entitled to a maintenance from the parish".⁶⁴

Four members of Parliament who became members of the Whig cabinet of November 1830 had expressed their support of the reform of the Poor Laws and showed unmistakably their agreement with the economists. Lord Althorp became Chancellor of the Exchequer; Brougham, Lord Chancellor; Melbourne, Home Secretary and Graham; First

⁶³Major Torrens "A Paper on the Means of Reducing the Poor Rates", The Pamphleteer, Sept. 1817, London: Gale and Fenner, 1817, Vol. 3, No. 22, p. 518.

⁶⁴Hansard, Debates, Vol. XL, p. 472.

First Lord of the Admiralty.

Henry Brougham made clear his position on the Poor Laws on a number of occasions. He "had no hesitation in stating, that the excess of population was one of the great causes of the distress which at present afflicted the country". The principle of population "was the soundest principle of political economy".⁶⁵ He maintained that the Poor Laws removed "all checks upon imminent marriages" and tended "to multiply the number of the people beyond the means of subsistence, that is to multiply the numbers of the poor". He could see but one effectual remedy for this great and growing evil; it is the one which follows so immediately from the principles unfolded in Mr. Malthus's celebrated work'.⁶⁶ Brougham believed that the right to be supported out of the work of others was destructive of frugality and diligence. A permanent fund for the support of the poor would ultimately multiply the evils it sought to destroy.⁶⁷ The old and the sick were entitled to the

⁶⁵Hansard, Debates, Vol. XLI, P. 1196.

⁶⁶April 9, 1816, "Speech on Agricultural Distress", Opinions of Brougham, London: Henry Colburn, 1837, P. 24-25.

⁶⁷Arthur Aspinall, Lord Brougham and the Whig Party, Manchester: University Press, 1927, P. 242.

support of the community -- but this was best left to private charity.⁶⁸

Lord Althorp was perhaps of the members of the Cabinet the one who was the most active in Poor Law reform. He was a member of the Labourers' Causes Committee of 1824, of the Emigration Committee of 1826 and of the 1828 Poor Law Committee. He was also one of the authors of the 1829 and 1830 bills to declare and amend the law relating to the Employment and Relief of Able-Bodied Persons from the Poor Rate of 1829 and 1830. These bills and the committees on which Althorp served showed a large degree of agreement with the views of the economists.

Lord Melbourne, the Home Secretary in Grey's government, had read some of the works of the economists and had been converted to laissez-faire. It seemed to him that the problems of poverty could only be solved by allowing the laws of supply and demand to take their course. This course of action entailed much suffering by the poor and the idea of dragooning them into thrift and industry by ending the old Poor Law appalled Melbourne --

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 243.

but yet he supported the reform.⁶⁹

Graham supported Scarlett's Poor Relief Bill in May 24, 1824.⁷⁰ He had read the works of Smith and Ricardo.⁷¹ In 1829 he began a major attack on the Poor Law administration in Cumberland.⁷²

It would appear then, that at least four of the members of the Grey's cabinet were in favour of the radical reform of the Poor Laws along the lines suggested by the economists.

Of the thirteen M.P.s. who were in substantial agreement with the economists on the Poor Laws, four were lawyers -- Scarlett, Denney, Roskilly and Brougham, two had made their fortunes in India -- Munro and Davies; two were landed aristocrats -- Melbourne and Althorp; two were members of the landed gentry -- Horton and Graham; one was a merchant -- Torrens, and one, Ricardo, a stock-broker. Of the group six were Whigs, two were radicals

⁶⁹David Cecil, Lord M., London: Constable, 1954, p. 93.

⁷⁰Hansard, Debates, New Series, Vol. V, p. 990.

⁷¹J. T. Ward, Sir James Graham, London: MacMillan, 1957, p. 41.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 44-5.

Horton, the only Tory and the others probably had no party affiliation.

The radical reform of the Poor Laws was probably in the economic interest of all members of the ruling classes with the possible exception of the lawyers. Stockbrokers, nabobs, merchants, landed gentry, and landed aristocrats would all benefit by reduced expenditures on the poor through reductions in the poor rate. The landed gentry and aristocracy as has been shown, had economic and political reasons for supporting the Poor Laws in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. By the beginning of the third decade, however, the economic reasons had gone.

Those individuals associated with the rising middle class and especially merchants, manufacturers and stockbrokers had much to gain from the abolition of the Poor Laws. Not only would taxation be reduced but also the mobility of labour would be increased. Thus the wide disparity of wages between agricultural districts and urban agglomerations would be diminished and urban wages, under the pressure of increasing competition for labour would probably decline. Also the surplus rural population

could be tapped for further economic expansion.

The lawyers alone, had perhaps something to lose by the ending of the Laws of Settlement. The huge legal costs of the Poor Laws would be eliminated by the abolition of the Laws of Settlement.⁷⁵

There was then a considerable degree of coincidence of thought between the economists and some politicians on the question of the Poor Laws. Many politicians agreed with the Malthusian principle of population, with the wages fund doctrine and with a society based on individual self-interest. However it does not follow that the major factor which determined their thinking was the views of the economists. Indeed, the fact that their individual self-interest coincided with the economists' views would suggest that the theory had at best a secondary role to play in conditioning their thoughts.

⁷⁵H. L. Baynes. Social Security in Britain, 2nd. ed., London: Isaac Pitman, 1902, p. 79-81.

CHAPTER V

CURWEN AND OWEN

The supporters of the Old Poor Law and those who proposed its simple abolition had a considerable amount of support in the House of Commons. Two other approaches to the reform of the Poor Law were proposed by Robert Owen the philanthropic cotton manufacturer, and John Curwen. Owen proposed the establishment of cooperative villages which at first he recommended as a means of reforming the Poor Laws and later, as a means of transforming society. John Curwen suggested the establishment of Benefit Societies on a national basis which would eliminate the need for a Poor Law.

Curwen believed that the great development of pauperism after the war was due to three causes: 'first, excessive taxation; second, the depreciation of money; and thirdly, the great rise in the necessaries of life.'¹

¹Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXXIX, p. 402-3, February 9, 1819.

He was convinced that the labouring classes "did not pay less than 25 per cent of their income to the government in the shape of taxes".² Wages in the last decade of the eighteenth century were "about 8s. per week". During the next thirty years "the necessaries of life had doubled whilst wages had only advanced to 12s. or one-third [sic]". Nor is this all, "taxation had trebled taking 1s. a week from every poor family".³ Thus the worker was caught between rapidly rising prices and taxes and slowly rising wages. The result was poverty.

The evils of the Poor Laws were many. The laws to raise money were unjust and oppressive. The distribution of relief had sapped the independence of the worker. "Pauperism contaminates all who come within its vortex... Does it produce happiness, content and gratitude among the poor? No, Sir! discontent, gloom and misery pervade all who partake of it. Not a particle of gratitude, not more of contentment is to be found."⁴ If the Poor Law system

²Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXXVII, P. 740, March 3, 1818.

³Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XL, P. 466-7, May 17, 1819.

⁴Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXXI, P. 508-9, Feb. 21, 1817.

continued, "can it be doubted that it will stop short of swallowing up the whole revenue and industry of the country".⁵ In order to make the necessary changes in the system, he maintained that government would have to become involved.⁶

Curwen believed that no partial measures could be of use..." in effecting the necessary changes.⁷ He proposed to effect the radical reform of the Poor Law by a system of benefit societies. Everyone who made any income was to contribute to a parish fund. He calculated that the labouring classes would contribute £4,217,445 from their earnings, other classes would contribute £2,981,110 and that a levy on employers dependent on the numbers of workmen would yield £2,109,222.⁸ Thus a total of £9,305,777 would be available for the relief of sickness, old age, and misfortune, for "a general plan of

⁵Ibid., p. 308.

⁶Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XL, p. 465, May 17, 1819.

⁷Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXXVII, p. 151, Feb. 4, 1818.

⁸Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXXIV, p. 293-4, May 28, 1816.

education" and for other purposes conducive to "the comforts and happiness of the labouring classes".⁹

The administration of the plan would be in the hands of a committee elected from the "labouring classes, their employers and the representatives of landed and other property".

Curwen's plan was based on a scheme which had been in operation over thirty years at his coal mines and which he had later extended to cover all his agricultural workers.¹⁰ Contributions from his workmen and benefits to them were on a sliding scale dependent on income. Curwen added a total of three-tenths of the amount raised plus occasional contributions to keep the fund solvent.¹¹ Payments were made in the case of accidents, sickness, marriage, birth of a child and in the event of death.¹² Curwen was the permanent president of the societies and he drew up the rules. Once a year all members of the

⁹Ibid., p. 893.

¹⁰J. C. Curwen, Hints on Agricultural Subjects and on the Best Means of Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, 2nd. ed.; London: J. Johnson, 1869, p. 301.

¹¹Ibid., p. 280.

¹²Ibid., p. 302.

society would first attend church, and then, the "annual feast" (to which each member paid a shilling) after which came the elections of the Committee. The management of the fund was by a committee of workmen presided over by Curwen's agent.

The aims of the scheme were to provide self support in the case of sickness and accidents, to make workers "more respectable members of society", to place its control in the hands of the workers to some extent and to exempt the parish from the burdens of the poor rate. The poor rate in Workington, where Curwen was one of the principal employers, was less than two shillings per head annually for the years 1793 to 1801.¹³

Curwen's scheme on the national scale reflected then his actions on a local scale. By 1817, however, he modified his plan in certain respects. His plan, he suggested, would be optional in each area as an experiment to be adopted when the majority of the parishioners of any parish were disposed to try it".¹⁴

¹³Ibid., P. 287.

¹⁴Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXIV, P. 511, Feb. 21, 1817.

He was still clear about the impact of his proposals on the Poor Laws however,

The establishment I propose, at once extinguishes reliance on the Poor Laws; it combines with the earnings of the parties, the contributions of other classes: it opens to the poor, greater comforts than they could otherwise obtain -- the security of their own mansion; education of their children; rewards for meritorious conduct.¹⁵

By 1814 it was, however, apparent to Curwen that in some areas wages were not sufficient to give the workers 'a fair competency'. He pointed out that when laws were made to punish combinations amongst the men, the provisions had also been directed against combinations among the masters, he would have agreed in the justice of the enactment'.¹⁶ Curwen suggested that one of the reasons for the low rate of wages was the combinations of employers. Although admitting 'as a general principle, the inexpediency of attempting to regulate wages' he suggested the establishment 'in the various Districts' of 'a minimum of labour'.¹⁷ He was willing to force his fellow employers

¹⁵Ibid., p. 517.

¹⁶Hansard, Parliamentary Debates, Vol. XXXIX, p. 405, Feb. 9, 1819.

¹⁷Hansard, Vol. XL, p. 467-8, May 17, 1819. and Hansard, Vol. XXXIX, p. 406, Feb. 4, 1819.

to pay reasonable wages to their workers.

It is possible to see in Curwen's proposals of Benefit Societies an attempt to shift some of the burden of the poor rate off the shoulders of the landowners and onto the shoulders of everyone else. This view however is probably only partially true for it only takes in part of what Curwen proposed. He would have simply suggested that the poor rate be assessed on profits, and on interest from government bonds and let his proposals stop right there. He could too, have simply suggested the outright abolition of the Poor Laws. Both of these proposals would, if acted upon, have lightened the burden of the Poor Laws on landowners.

Curwen had shown however that he was genuinely concerned for the fate of the workers. He used to feed his pit horses "steaming potatoes" -- a practice he found less expensive than giving them hay and oats. Whenever the price of potatoes went beyond six pence per stone, he would offer his potatoes for sale -- thus forcing down the price.¹⁸ In Cumberland potatoes were an important

¹⁸Curwen, Hints on Agriculture, P. 19.

article in the diet of the people. In February 1817 he bought 18,000 bushels of potatoes at a cost of £2,000 for the poor of Workington.¹⁹ He recommended to his fellow landed proprietors the production of milk and its sale at a "fair price" to the poor. Even though the profit may be small yet, "as an act of benevolence, an attention to the interest of the most valuable class of man, it is an object highly worthy of consideration".²⁰ Curwen sold large quantities of milk to the people of Workington.

In discussing leases, a depreciation of financial gain is evident.

It is much to be lamented the practice of granting leases is on the decline. Some contend that leases emancipate a tenantry, and make them independent -- others, that the depreciation of money gives to the tenant an advantage over the landlord. What I depreciate and complain of is the spirit of mercantile calculation, which has swallowed up every other honourable consideration. The pride of being respected and beloved weighs nothing against rack-rents and servility -- nay, it goes so far as to reconcile men to bad and wretched husbandry.²¹

His continual concern was for the 'comforts' and

¹⁹Gentleman's Magazine, 1817, Part 1, p. 173.

²⁰Curwen, Hints on Agriculture, p. 73.

²¹Ibid., p. 229.

the "happiness" of the labouring classes. He maintained that

The legislature is called on to stay this evil [of pauperism] from motives higher and more dignified than any which self-interest can dictate. Every feeling of humanity and love of man for man, implanted in the hearts of all, bids us restore happiness and respectability to two millions and a half of fellow-Englishmen.²²

His concern over the Poor Law seems to spring not simply from the fact that the Poor Law taxes are based on land and are increasing in amount but mainly because of the effect it has on the comfort, character and happiness of the worker. He contrasted the administration he proposed for the Poor Laws

...with that under which it is at present --- Contempt and hatred extinguish all sentiments of compassion, harshness and brutality are in consequence dealt out to all. How different would be the treatment of the poor when they had a part of their own body superintending their concerns -- alive to their distresses by a sentiment of fellow feeling. It would be the wish of all to console the afflicted, and to relieve the virtuous. There would be an interest also to curb the excesses of the thoughtless... This operation of opinion would have a powerful effect on the whole community.²³

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²²Hansard, Vol. XXXV, P. 511, Feb. 21, 1817.

²³Hansard, Vol. XXXIV, P. 896-7, May 28, 1816.

How much support Curwen obtained for his far-reaching proposals is difficult to ascertain. Benefit Societies did receive support from the 1817 and 1819 Poor Law Committees. The 1817 Committee endorsed as has been seen, proposals similar to the ones advanced by Curwen. By 1819, however, the Committee's heart had hardened to the point that its major recommendations for Poor Law reform were clearly based on the opinions of the economists. Benefit Societies had merely an ancillary function.

Other M.P's did support Benefit Societies but it is clear that they did not view them in the same light as did Curwen. Thomas Courtenay, and Sturges Bourne saw Benefit Societies as a useful means of diminishing dependence on the poor rate. They would however continue the Poor Rate.²⁴ Benefit Societies again were to be merely ancillary and not, as Curwen had suggested, the focal point of the scheme. Sir Egerton Brydges, the genealogist and M.P. for Maidstone, was in substantial agreement with Curwen.²⁵

²⁴T. P. Courtenay, A Treatise Upon the Poor Laws, P. 143; T. C. Courtenay, The Pamphleteer, Vol. XI, P. 384.

²⁵E. Brydges, The Pamphleteer, Vol. XI, P. 152-153; Curwen also received some support from Thomas Lee, Pamphleteer, Vol. XVIII, P. 573-581.

Curwen is then, concerned to change the Poor Laws for reasons far removed from those which met with the support of economists. Curwen was aware of Malthus' work. On May 28, 1816 he stated that he 'perfectly' agreed with Malthus, "thinking that nothing less than the total change of system of poor laws can cure the evil".²⁶ Curwen does, however, seem to have misunderstood or been misinformed of Malthus' work. He suggested, for example, that Malthus proposed "to fix the amount of the sum raised in each parish and to take off annually a certain proportion, till the whole was annihilated and thus to let the Poor Laws expire".²⁷

Malthus attacked Curwen's proposals on a variety of grounds. Curwen's proposals to widen the base of the poor rates would have the effect that "the local distributors would have comparatively but feeble motives to reduce them, and they might be expected to increase with rapidity". In the establishment of friendly societies proposed by Curwen "there is certainly reason to expect

²⁶Hansard, Vol. XXXIV, P. 881.

²⁷Ibid., P. 880.

that every question which could be influenced by the contributors would be determined on principles still more indulgent and less economical" than the Poor Laws. It was likely too that "the whole of any deficiency ... would be made up by the assessments"²⁸ from the poor rate. In sum, "there is little hope that Mr. Curwen's plan would be successful in diminishing the whole amount of the rates, and the proportion of dependent poor."

Fundamentally Curwen was at odds with the economists over the kind of society he believed in. The economists, as has been suggested, advocated a community where each man was responsible for himself and where individual self interest was the major motivating force. Curwen on the other hand had a view of a state which sought to protect the individual citizen from the misfortunes of sickness and accident by collective action. The state to him should be paternalistic and humanitarian -- being primarily concerned with the well are, comfort and happiness of its citizens. To the economists, however,

²⁸T. R. Malthus, Essay on Population, Vol. II, 1951, P. 239.

²⁹Ibid., p. 240.

the state should primarily fulfill the role of assisting the economy to achieve maximum rates of growth in output. The state was incapable of ensuring the welfare of the individual citizen -- this could only be done by the citizen himself. In a way, Curwen seems to be one of the early harbingers of the modern welfare state while at the same time being imbued with the paternalistic and status views of the eighteenth century.

Owen too, seems to herald the twentieth century. His emphasis on a basically equalitarian society, devoid of the status concepts which were current at the time, strikes a familiar note today when read with other views of his day.

Robert Owen's model community at New Lanark had attracted a great deal of attention by many influential people. He was invited by the Committee for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor to submit to them a report on the causes and relief of poverty. In it he pointed out that during the Napoleonic wars there had been a great growth in productive power. However, after the war there was a decline in the demand for products. It was necessary therefore to contract the sources of supply and since

human labour was more costly than machinery, workers were ousted and were therefore unemployed. There were therefore, according to Owen, three possible results -- either the use of machinery must be diminished or millions must be left to starve or occupations must be found for the poor.³⁰ Owen opted for the last course, suggesting that machinery must be made subservient to man.

He pointed out that there was a danger of passing on bad habits from one generation to another and it was therefore necessary to provide for the education of the poor. He suggested the establishment of villages of 1200 persons each surrounded by 1,000 to 1,500 acres. There would be a public kitchen, messrooms and schools provided in addition to living accommodation. The cost of the scheme would be about £96,000 -- cost per head therefore £80 which at 5% was a mere £4 per annum.³¹ Thus the poor rates would be brought to an end. With spade cultivation the country could support a very large population.

As originally proposed the plan was simply an

³⁰Robert Owen, A New View of Society and Other Writings, ed. G. D. H. Cole; London: J. M. Dent, P. 150/

³¹Ibid., P. 150.

alternative to poor relief but Owen began to widen it.

In his Report to Lanark of May 1, 1820 Owen extended his plan as the basis of a new social order.³² Selfishness would be eliminated and individual accumulation would not be important. The growth of population poses no problem for under spade cultivation Great Britain and Ireland could support a population of one hundred million. "We possess the means of supplying the labouring poor however numerous they may be, with beneficial employment for many centuries to come."³³

The amount of influence which Owen had in the House of Commons was small. The 1817 Poor Law Committee refused even to allow him to present his views to it.³⁴ Sir W. de Crespigny's motion of December 16, 1819 to appoint a select committee to inquire into "the plan of Mr. Owen for ameliorating the condition of the lower classes"³⁵ was defeated by a vote of sixteen to one hundred

³²G. D. H. Cole, The Life of Robert Owen, London: MacMillan, 1930, P. 222.

³³Owen, A New View of Society, P. 259.

³⁴Owen, Life of Robert Owen, P. 183-4.

³⁵Ibid., P. 183-4.

and forty-one.³⁶ A similar motion by Maxwell on June 26, 1821 was also defeated.³⁷ The two motions, it may be noted, were simply to examine Owen's proposals and report to the House. Agreement with the motions did not imply agreement with Owen's approach. Ricardo,

...observed that he was completely at war with the system of Mr. Owen, which was built on a theory inconsistent with the principles of political economy, and in his opinion was calculated to produce infinite mischief to the community.³⁸

Yet Ricardo voted for the committee because he suggested it was advantageous to examine the claims of spade husbandry and discover to what extent its claims were justified. Brougham too, maintained that he would vote for the committee but yet he believed the theory on which Owen's proposals were "founded to be wholly erroneous".³⁹

Alderman Waithman disapproved of the plan of Owen as a whole but yet saw no objections to the formation of a committee to examine it.⁴⁰ Among other supporters of the

³⁶Ibid., p. 1217.

³⁷Hansard, Vol. V, p. 1320.

³⁸Hansard, Vol. XLI, p. 1206.

³⁹Ibid., p. 1190.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 1209.

appointment of a committee were those who seemed only to accept Owen's scheme in part. Lord Archibald Hamilton and Mr. Maxwell wanted a committee to extract the useful parts of Owen's plan.⁴¹ Creepigny and Alderman Wood favoured the parts of Owen's plan which would bring about the cultivation of wastelands and commons. Duxton would vote for the examination of Owen's plan because of the contrast between conditions in workhouses and in New Lanark.⁴² Not one of these M.P.s. then in their speeches, seemed to favour Owen's plan as a basic method for reforming the Poor Laws. However, it is probable that seeking for as much support as possible, they would tend to emphasise those parts of Owen's plans which would meet with maximum support in the Commons.

Owen, it is evident, was little influenced by the economists. Ricardo as has been seen was opposed to Owen's proposals. Malthus believed that the operation of Owen's plan would be calculated "to increase and multiply the number of paupers".⁴³ He believed that Owen's scheme

⁴¹Ibid., P. 1190, and Annual Register, 1821, P. 82.

⁴²Hansard, Vol. V., P. 1323, June 26, 1821.

⁴³Malthus, Essay on Population, 7th. ed., Vol. II, P. 236.

would be forced to come to an end "from the natural and necessary action of the principle of population".⁴⁴ Owen flatly rejected Malthus' views on population.

Owen and Curwen's proposals both sprang from the revulsion they both felt from the operation of the Poor Laws. Their objection to it in both cases, was basically humanitarian, and their solution largely collectivistic. Support for both was small and came from the landed gentry.

⁴⁴Ibid., P. 237.

CONCLUSION

It is probable that the majority of support for the status quo in the Poor Laws came from the landed aristocracy and landed gentry. The basis of this belief was rooted in the supposed right of the poor to receive relief and in the obligation of the upper classes to provide it. The support for Owen's and Curwen's proposals was based on the same humanitarian concern for the condition of the working classes and drew support from the same groups in society -- the landed gentry and landed aristocracy.

The simple abolition of the Poor Laws would be in the immediate economic interest of all members of the ruling classes with the possible exception of the lawyers. Poor Law taxes would be eliminated and the prospect of all the rent of land being swallowed up by the poor rate would be eradicated. The abolition of the Poor Laws, if seen as a vestige of the antislavery society would redound to the political and social advantage of the members of the middle-class.

Those who supported the abolition of the Poor Law along the lines suggested by the economists had then,

vested interests in its eradication. In such circumstances it is impossible to prove that the ideology of the economists had a conclusive effect on intellectual or the opinions of the A.P.s. It is probable that the economic opinions took a secondary role in determining their thoughts.

In some respects however the influence of the economists is clear and convincing. Contemporaries evidently believed that the economists' arguments were sufficiently clear or sufficiently persuasive to bear repeating or rebutting. Thus, Smith, Ricardo and McCulloch were often referred to as authorities. Frequently contemporaries regarded their works as being worth reading. It is noticeable too, that in the House not only are the arguments of economists presented but their very phraseology is repeated.

In the Commons and in the Reports and letters the characteristic theories of the economists are trotted out and aired. The Malthusian Theory, and the Principle of Population are the very staples of any discussion on the Poor Laws during the period. Thus the economists influenced not only the language of the debate but defined the crucial areas around which the debate would take place.

Perhaps most significantly the solutions of the economists to the problems posed by the Poor Laws, were the ideas around which the discussion centred. Other solutions to the Poor Law problem -- such as minimum wage legislation or a national system of benefit societies were rejected with scarcely any examination during the period.

How far the economists influenced the opinions of M.Ps. during the period is difficult to ascertain. Supporters of the old Poor law and of Owen and Curwen show little influence of the economists. The supporters of the economists' proposals on the other hand showed their influence in the arguments and phraseology they used and in the proposals they suggested.

APPENDIX IPOOR RATE ASSESSMENT AND EXPENDITURE 1748-1833

	Average of Three Years to Easter 1748, 1749, 1750		Year ending at Easter 1775.	
	Average of Poor-Rate Assessment	Average expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND:				£
Bedford	9,492	8,276	18,193	16,663
Berks	17,150	15,971	39,725	36,718
Buckingham	19,234	17,139	37,053	31,799
Cambridge	9,546	9,171	20,342	18,092
Chester	14,946	14,741	31,016	29,560
Cornwall	10,329	9,660	25,504	22,598
Cumberland	2,456	2,450	8,389	8,030
Derby	7,874	7,677	18,504	17,441
Devon	37,703	34,953	72,353	62,481
Dorset	13,790	12,266	27,415	24,538
Durham	7,276	7,143	19,409	14,441
Essex	40,267	38,233	88,098	74,067
Gloucester	26,576	25,687	59,158	53,812
Hereford	5,381	5,056	11,675	10,193
Hertford	18,232	16,452	31,578	25,486
Huntingdon	3,803	3,306	9,126	7,559
Kent	44,672	41,997	87,138	80,150
Lancaster	21,344	21,236	56,163	52,373
Leicester	7,658	7,549	26,360	24,399
Lincoln	14,851	14,790	35,623	31,913
Middlesex	83,883	81,030	189,876	174,274
Monmouth	3,331	2,898	7,468	5,575

COUNTIES	Average of Three Years to Easter 1748, 1749, 1750		Year ending at Easter 1776.	
	Average of Poor-Rate Assessment	Average expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND			£	
Norfolk	32,450	30,464	83,739	64,172
Northampton	12,542	12,367	38,899	35,233
Northumberland	3,562	3,796	15,057	14,699
Nottingham	4,502	4,375	14,684	11,914
Oxford	13,356	12,831	31,155	28,750
Rutland	870	862	2,887	2,664
Salop	8,762	7,925	25,443	22,316
Somerset	28,318	25,596	57,897	50,491
Southampton	22,485	20,521	54,814	48,928
Stafford	10,544	9,812	35,986	32,088
Suffolk	29,348	28,063	62,696	56,804
Surrey	28,364	26,598	57,303	49,744
Sussex	26,428	24,343	61,555	54,734
Warwick	11,925	10,445	48,330	44,071
Westmorland	1,834	1,802	3,042	2,835
Wilts	23,977	22,938	57,747	54,022
Worcester	9,695	9,134	29,758	26,906
York, E. Riding	4,144	4,110	11,523	11,036
York, N. Riding	5,007	5,581	13,353	12,702
York, W. Riding	20,365	20,218	53,436	50,688
WALES	<u>10,933</u>	<u>10,509</u>	<u>40,732</u>	<u>33,641</u>
Totals of England & Wales	<u>730,137</u>	<u>689,971</u>	<u>1,726,317</u>	<u>1,530,800</u>

COUNTIES	Average of Three Years to Easter 1783, 1784, 1785		Year ending at Easter 803	
	Average of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				£
Bedford	22,638	20,977	47,484	38,070
Berks	49,646	47,006	96,861	85,605
Buckingham	49,021	45,340	105,379	88,774
Cambridge	28,838	26,176	69,011	56,073
Chester	40,849	39,292	84,991	69,800
Cornwall	30,994	28,532	72,446	57,696
Cumberland	12,003	11,688	34,896	29,669
Derby	24,973	22,925	77,311	58,665
Devon	85,806	80,682	179,359	148,565
Dorset	34,620	31,528	78,358	66,981
Durham	21,702	19,531	71,666	54,689
Essex	103,255	94,570	216,688	184,428
Gloucester	69,114	64,895	144,565	113,415
Hereford	17,988	16,728	60,834	48,067
Hertford	36,634	32,779	71,291	58,636
Huntingdon	13,890	12,163	30,953	24,965
Kent	113,061	106,506	255,453	215,397
Lancaster	80,301	73,364	230,766	161,026
Leicester	53,547	30,805	107,568	83,806
Lincoln	47,191	43,024	145,849	100,896
Middlesex	210,912	195,527	490,144	367,285
Monmouth	9,990	8,108	25,049	19,762
Norfolk	100,988	94,671	204,532	175,765
Northampton	49,623	46,079	120,592	97,894
Northumberland	21,264	20,738	66,106	54,566
Nottingham	21,520	18,068	63,210	47,453

COUNTIES	Average of Three Years to Easter 1783, 1784, 1785		Year ending at Easter 1803	
	Average of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				£
Oxford	38,348	36,109	103,559	91,304
Rutland	3,855	3,537	12,674	8,675
Salop	37,048	33,937	83,477	69,884
Somerset	71,046	66,267	151,238	126,863
Southampton	66,002	58,956	183,429	129,121
Stafford	45,404	40,964	110,024	88,801
Suffolk	74,285	69,407	149,647	124,058
Surrey	75,139	66,156	179,006	142,411
Sussex	77,446	72,878	206,592	185,605
Warwick	65,683	59,557	155,205	122,952
Westmorland	5,757	5,617	17,593	14,296
Wilts	66,423	62,893	148,662	132,319
Worcester	38,135	34,509	87,307	74,779
York, E.Riding	15,835	15,499	68,325	44,035
York, N.Riding	19,777	18,860	76,061	51,212
York, W.Riding	70,033	66,095	277,051	197,097
WALES	<u>67,162</u>	<u>60,589</u>	<u>186,392</u>	<u>154,801</u>
Totals of England & Wales	<u>1,107,750</u>	<u>2,004,239</u>	<u>5,348,205</u>	<u>4,267,965</u>

COUNTIES	Year ending at Easter 1813		Year ending at Easter 1814	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				
Bedford	80,787	63,179	75,127	59,074
Berks	188,418	165,105	155,335	133,838
Buckingham	152,376	139,421	151,910	128,575
Cambridge	106,661	89,561	99,925	80,721
Chester	159,510	122,671	155,505	118,907
Cornwall	133,889	107,791	121,999	93,195
Cumberland	67,390	43,445	56,241	47,387
Derby	126,892	100,477	126,609	95,687
Devon	305,188	225,878	284,831	211,976
Dorset	130,046	112,578	114,314	96,810
Durham	104,475	86,528	108,964	89,872
Essex	367,237	325,219	332,860	289,397
Gloucester	212,954	172,683	219,330	167,321
Hereford	103,567	86,719	97,480	83,135
Hertford	113,622	79,943	109,924	96,201
Huntingdon	48,534	36,443	45,952	36,208
Kent	402,229	335,200	425,417	346,299
Lancaster	460,420	336,741	430,591	294,791
Leicester	154,410	116,544	159,159	119,855
Lincoln	227,681	140,380	234,391	140,509
Middlesex	627,853	525,438	686,291	567,059
Monmouth	37,939	30,138	36,950	30,525
Norfolk	361,633	300,957	308,254	257,123
Northampton	173,317	144,178	168,225	139,596
Northumberland	99,519	77,568	102,362	79,456
Nottingham	127,562	95,227	123,209	88,402

COUNTIES	Year ending at Easter 1813		Year ending at Easter 1814	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				
Oxford	170,614	147,627	162,222	132,856
Rutland	18,241	11,550	20,349	12,880
Salop	137,895	110,735	136,184	111,297
Somerset	245,969	194,380	240,133	189,506
Southampton	260,335	231,607	233,474	204,040
Stafford	169,810	135,239	165,714	132,927
Suffolk	279,925	234,015	255,563	205,852
Surrey	280,327	228,486	287,110	237,582
Sussex	350,610	324,110	327,939	291,997
Warwick	220,575	169,350	210,397	158,396
Westmorland	28,946	23,378	29,696	23,154
Wilts	272,493	239,989	229,046	194,902
Worcester	124,956	105,382	121,859	101,872
York, E. Riding	130,363	88,520	138,071	88,272
York, N. Riding	113,834	74,531	117,052	75,643
York, W. Riding	463,566	348,750	444,756	324,553
WALES	<u>304,272</u>	<u>248,093</u>	<u>306,195</u>	<u>249,381</u>
Totals of England & Wales	<u>8,646,841</u>	<u>7,001,061</u>	<u>8,388,974</u>	<u>6,627,248</u>

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1815		Year ending on 25 March 1816	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				
Bedford	68,432	52,165	62,600	53,677
Berks	122,352	104,509	119,674	105,815
Buckingham	129,948	107,375	126,300	109,775
Cambridge	86,519	69,256	85,562	73,870
Chester	142,409	108,138	123,900	98,579
Cornwall	105,820	81,864	97,200	85,211
Cumberland	61,756	44,445	54,800	44,148
Derby	107,862	78,494	103,229	76,981
Devon	260,267	194,211	23,500	198,608
Dorset	95,369	79,590	88,700	79,691
Durham	105,226	83,411	101,700	83,650
Essex	283,996	240,698	291,700	252,174
Gloucester	202,609	143,757	188,800	141,880
Hereford	85,437	70,300	80,300	67,905
Hertford	95,956	81,332	91,393	81,659
Huntingdon	41,302	32,636	39,700	33,093
Kent	394,754	312,431	363,600	309,283
Lancaster	389,248	240,093	356,800	222,116
Leicester	139,436	101,980	127,100	103,199
Lincoln	228,502	139,791	197,600	144,943
Middlesex	675,167	529,700	651,800	519,165
Monmouth	38,650	28,927	36,300	27,944
Norfolk	246,243	208,688	246,800	214,212
Northampton	156,507	127,728	152,800	133,117
Northumberland	91,813	74,053	90,889	77,995
Nottingham	113,615	77,994	106,300	77,992

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1815		Year ending on 25 March 1816	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				£
Oxford	136,258	110,684	136,800	117,802
Rutland	18,679	11,377	15,632	11,506
Salop	119,783	95,112	107,500	92,524
Somerset	203,876	159,112	185,600	159,545
Southampton	193,307	159,237	192,900	171,273
Stafford	153,286	121,976	145,000	116,758
Suffolk	209,026	153,674	204,300	170,697
Surrey	264,517	212,578	250,900	216,709
Sussex	274,462	239,649	259,100	236,059
Warwick	190,537	137,546	162,372	124,483
Westmorland	27,392	21,188	25,900	21,560
Wilts	172,690	143,267	164,582	143,355
Worcester	105,691	87,919	100,200	85,092
York, E. Riding	124,787	80,068	96,600	81,035
York, N. Riding	113,894	69,419	82,176	70,532
York, W. Riding	395,935	277,229	170,000	259,178
WALES	<u>284,287</u>	<u>229,829</u>	<u>272,300</u>	<u>230,050</u>
Totals of England & Wales	<u>7,457,676</u>	<u>5,743,442</u>	<u>5,937,000</u>	<u>5,724,839</u>

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1817		Year ending on 25 March 1818	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				
Bedford	74,300	63,522	85,300	74,163
Berks	156,382	141,870	173,917	157,959
Buckingham	148,200	129,869	167,800	147,912
Cambridge	108,600	94,685	118,400	102,972
Chester	145,500	119,585	158,500	127,460
Cornwall	117,900	103,150	140,100	127,254
Cumberland	59,200	48,384	68,800	57,029
Derby	122,800	97,742	135,600	103,540
Devon	247,100	215,173	286,000	247,911
Dorset	104,600	96,009	129,500	119,045
Durham	106,400	90,070	115,700	101,791
Essex	350,600	312,636	325,700	328,415
Gloucester	210,900	152,494	234,400	189,120
Hereford	91,200	79,031	92,500	94,579
Hertford	101,460	90,583	112,918	101,196
Huntingdon	44,200	37,242	48,200	40,473
Kent	408,100	345,177	471,600	398,886
Lancaster	454,600	336,485	563,400	372,964
Leicester	169,100	143,573	181,200	154,104
Lincoln	208,400	157,761	226,500	169,672
Middlesex	666,100	540,235	771,400	634,703
Monmouth	38,000	31,036	42,800	35,561
Norfolk	329,300	291,213	368,400	327,665
Northampton	157,700	147,152	187,600	162,358
Northumberland	98,577	83,777	109,312	94,438
Nottingham	137,800	108,362	132,400	101,523

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1817		Year ending on 25 March 1818	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the poor
ENGLAND				
Oxford	158,100	138,906	172,300	156,410
Rutland	16,798	12,754	16,982	13,077
Salop	136,300	120,988	156,200	135,760
Somerset	207,500	180,988	234,800	200,324
Southampton	246,900	221,446	314,400	281,637
Stafford	179,700	148,521	209,200	170,778
Suffolk	294,500	257,719	329,800	291,262
Surrey	279,000	247,717	310,800	271,068
Sussex	304,600	281,069	360,400	331,070
Warwick	204,903	169,831	239,597	194,450
Westmorland	30,900	26,462	34,300	29,556
Wilts	223,469	202,508	257,220	234,135
Worcester	126,900	110,523	141,300	123,639
York, E. Riding	104,435	89,787	128,200	111,839
York, N. Riding	91,298	79,479	103,293	91,876
York, W. Riding	361,300	300,867	415,100	337,395
WALES	<u>294,000</u>	<u>253,943</u>	<u>365,000</u>	<u>318,714</u>
Totals of England & Wales	<u>8,128,000</u>	<u>6,910,925</u>	<u>9,320,000</u>	<u>7,870,801</u>

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1819		Year ending on 25 March 1821	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				
Bedford	86,700	77,094	85,693	69,236
Berks	159,783	143,243	136,593	112,659
Buckingham	167,100	144,548	155,268	129,107
Cambridge	112,300	95,418	108,706	89,924
Chester	147,700	117,259	143,226	113,239
Cornwall	139,100	122,219	132,520	111,779
Cumberland	70,400	58,169	68,740	56,637
Derby	129,400	103,579	122,920	97,374
Devon	299,600	260,192	272,939	234,697
Dorset	121,100	108,750	110,630	95,857
Durham	116,900	101,066	120,605	97,612
Essex	359,700	318,774	331,775	288,921
Gloucester	235,600	189,902	195,159	164,913
Hereford	105,000	88,803	85,078	72,244
Hertford	112,900	101,116	111,313	98,001
Huntingdon	48,800	41,693	47,105	39,192
Kent	463,900	396,515	447,131	392,059
Lancaster	472,100	322,059	443,591	288,688
Leicester	174,600	146,370	168,990	143,535
Lincoln	230,500	172,427	229,768	172,879
Middlesex	783,600	634,747	754,800	615,494
Monmouth	41,300	34,848	35,854	29,261
Norfolk	315,300	278,715	309,963	267,869
Northampton	191,200	165,481	180,382	156,021
Northumberland	106,975	92,740	94,673	84,185
Nottingham	126,000	94,848	117,729	87,573

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1819		Year ending on 25 March 1821	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				
Oxford	171,100	150,801	156,659	131,845
Rutland	17,769	13,884	15,521	11,296
Salop	137,500	117,544	122,191	101,656
Somerset	266,900	196,718	221,781	176,773
Southampton	284,800	252,480	215,293	210,523
Stafford	194,500	155,310	197,035	151,178
Suffolk	288,000	248,451	283,758	244,808
Surrey	327,300	287,524	315,451	277,602
Sussex	344,900	315,163	311,071	276,469
Warwick	220,251	175,080	209,790	164,800
Westmorland	34,500	29,680	32,191	28,229
Wilts	222,916	200,600	201,443	172,409
Worcester	130,300	111,343	115,263	98,172
York, E. Riding	131,100	114,314	117,152	100,870
York, N. Riding	104,417	93,222	107,228	89,423
York, W. Riding	389,000	311,214	416,026	330,511
WALES	<u>381,000</u>	<u>330,091</u>	<u>332,876</u>	<u>283,507</u>
Totals of England & Wales	<u>8,932,000</u>	<u>7,516,704</u>	<u>8,411,893</u>	<u>6,958,445</u>

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1824		Year ending on 25 March 1828	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				
Bedford	74,787	64,937	88,854	77,976
Berks	109,137	91,110	112,124	96,258
Buckingham	124,064	104,921	143,851	124,199
Cambridge	99,776	83,888	109,215	91,308
Chester	116,487	86,821	139,412	100,602
Cornwall	111,087	95,152	121,178	101,538
Cumberland	54,200	43,610	60,472	45,971
Derby	91,570	70,145	101,960	70,035
Devon	232,935	200,735	248,018	207,781
Dorset	92,598	78,677	94,981	80,192
Durham	93,533	76,702	98,993	78,955
Essex	286,868	247,290	290,078	247,387
Gloucester	167,485	130,061	198,908	149,856
Hereford	62,496	54,403	69,285	57,501
Hertford	95,488	82,313	106,080	89,909
Huntingdon	43,825	37,655	46,135	38,841
Kent	377,699	345,778	376,372	333,030
Lancaster	327,724	203,399	496,777	289,335
Leicester	103,368	85,481	132,694	110,502
Lincoln	206,411	156,553	225,718	169,890
Middlesex	572,955	523,387	759,936	659,484
Monmouthq	28,243	23,237	30,430	23,338
Norfolk	305,254	262,393	319,995	281,122
Northampton	141,327	121,586	162,571	140,585
Northumberland	80,495	59,467	82,469	70,639
Nottingham	82,542	58,694	94,887	71,535

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1824		Year ending on 25 March 1828	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				£
Oxford	122,579	106,390	140,108	122,074
Rutland	12,196	8,824	12,545	9,292
Salop	88,868	77,569	97,891	80,195
Somerset	171,447	145,557	190,701	159,811
Southampton	210,463	184,062	212,719	186,456
Stafford	139,523	109,944	168,075	128,467
Suffolk	279,808	246,830	247,179	216,050
Surrey	263,481	216,194	285,091	236,063
Sussex	266,748	241,073	261,744	228,938
Warwick	142,744	127,450	168,132	146,354
Westmorland	26,080	23,141	32,943	27,365
Wilts	174,114	150,892	183,429	153,110
Worcester	83,352	68,146	92,577	74,029
York, E. Riding	107,613	89,486	118,002	95,420
York, N. Riding	87,757	73,651	100,450	77,602
York, W. Riding	289,595	226,866	368,548	270,890
WALES	<u>284,904</u>	<u>239,748</u>	<u>323,526</u>	<u>266,800</u>
Totals of England & Wales	<u>6,836,505</u>	<u>5,736,900</u>	<u>7,715,055</u>	<u>6,298,003</u>

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1832		Year ending on 25 March 1833	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND			£	
Bedford	92,741	77,237	91,761	81,657
Berks	144,297	121,217	136,400	114,718
Buckingham	173,393	144,588	159,787	136,452
Cambridge	120,376	103,922	119,817	103,977
Chester	151,640	105,139	141,493	106,052
Cornwall	120,898	101,629	121,435	104,771
Cumberland	58,708	47,846	58,244	49,098
Derby	110,811	81,403	108,074	86,396
Devon	256,386	225,299	260,320	234,921
Dorset	110,982	92,680	108,496	92,905
Durham	102,951	86,087	104,708	85,563
Essex	323,327	277,663	311,962	273,819
Gloucester	206,379	172,562	207,742	184,774
Hereford	72,588	63,468	70,288	62,009
Hertford	113,745	96,044	111,935	94,273
Huntingdon	50,142	41,151	46,734	40,652
Kent	425,578	364,361	433,275	385,598
Lancaster	411,293	301,373	430,430	292,196
Leicester	135,341	115,241	139,303	119,793
Lincoln	232,081	177,671	225,006	175,823
Middlesex	938,346	688,151	968,725	666,928
Monmouth	37,889	28,079	37,824	30,826
Norfolk	362,152	318,413	358,006	325,495
Northampton	176,614	154,120	159,614	151,784
Northumberland	94,745	78,087	99,747	73,649
Nottingham	100,622	74,377	115,380	78,467

COUNTIES	Year ending on 25 March 1832		Year ending on 25 March 1833	
	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor	Amount of Poor-Rate Assessment	Amount expended on the Poor
ENGLAND				
Oxford	158,318	136,685	158,650	134,385
Rutland	12,922	9,064	12,191	9,188
Salop	108,952	89,162	106,285	89,380
Somerset	224,433	191,687	223,493	191,059
Southampton	265,100	230,686	248,176	216,542
Stafford	176,827	133,071	175,591	133,270
Suffolk	311,024	279,490	300,017	266,157
Surrey	364,484	283,284	378,152	287,642
Sussex	327,862	284,687	319,753	272,148
Warwick	209,565	168,413	202,750	181,895
Westmorland	30,238	26,154	29,270	25,346
Wilts	232,840	199,088	221,414	193,716
Worcester	110,514	87,053	110,821	93,583
York, E. Riding	127,175	105,639	130,956	103,256
York, N. Riding	105,747	85,526	102,907	82,889
York, W. Riding	365,258	282,624	371,866	295,319
WALES	367,605	305,837	376,703	317,472
Totals of England & Wales	8,622,920	7,036,968	8,606,501	7,045,211

Source: Returns Relative to Local Taxation, 1832-3.

APPENDIX IIPRICE OF WHEAT PER QUARTER

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PRICE</u>
1748	25/1	1815	74/3
1749	29/4	1816	63/8
1750	29/4	1817	81/4
1775	37/8	1818	88/3
1783	50/-	1819	81/3
1784	43/1	1821	63/8
1785	43/10	1828	55/5
1803	50/2	1832	63/4
1813	100/1	1833	57/3
1814	91/11		

SOURCE: Returns Relative to Local Taxation, p. 4-5.

APPENDIX IIIPOPULATION IN THOUSANDS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, SCOTLANDAND IRELAND 1801-1830

	<u>England & wales</u>	<u>Scotland</u>	<u>Ireland</u>
1801	9,061	1,625	5,216
1802	9,130	1,644	5,286
1803	9,235	1,663	5,357
1804	9,367	1,682	5,428
1805	9,513	1,702	5,501
1806	9,555	1,722	5,574
1807	9,794	1,742	5,649
1808	9,924	1,762	5,724
1809	10,056	1,783	5,800
1810	10,186	1,803	5,878
1811	10,322	1,824	5,956
1812	10,480	1,851	6,036
1813	10,550	1,878	6,117
1814	10,820	1,905	6,198
1815	11,004	1,933	6,281
1816	11,196	1,959	6,365
1817	11,378	1,986	6,450
1818	11,555	2,014	6,536
1819	11,723	2,042	6,624
1820	11,903	2,071	6,712
1821	12,106	2,100	6,802
1822	12,320	2,126	6,803
1823	12,529	2,152	6,985
1824	12,721	2,179	7,078
1825	12,903	2,205	7,173
1826	13,074	2,233	7,269
1827	13,247	2,259	7,366
1828	13,438	2,288	7,464
1829	13,625	2,316	7,564
1830	13,805	2,345	7,665

Source: Mitchell, Abstract of British Statistics, I. 8.

APPENDIX IVPOPULATION OF THE COUNTIES FOR THE YEARS1801, 1811, 1821, and 1831

COUNTIES	1801	Increase Per Cent	1811	Increase Per Cent
ENGLAND				
Bedford	55,593	11	70,213	19
Berks	109,215	8	118,277	14
Buckingham	107,444	9	117,550	14
Cambridge	89,345	13	101,109	20
Chester	191,751	13	227,031	19
Cornwall	188,269	15	216,667	19
Cumberland	117,230	14	133,744	17
Derby	151,142	15	185,487	15
Devon	343,001	12	383,308	15
Dorset	115,319	8	124,693	16
Durham	150,551	11	177,525	17
Essex	225,437	11	252,473	15
Gloucester	250,809	12	285,514	18
Hereford	89,191	5	94,073	10
Hertford	97,577	14	111,654	16
Huntingdon	37,568	12	42,208	15
Kent	307,624	21	373,095	24
Lancaster	571,731	23	816,309	27
Leicester	150,081	16	156,419	16
Lincoln	208,557	14	237,891	19
Middlesex	816,129	17	955,276	20
Monsmouth	45,582	30	12,127	15
Norfolk	273,571	7	291,099	18
Northampton	131,757	7	141,553	15

COUNTIES	1801	Increase Per Cent	1811	Increase Percent
ENGLAND				
Northumberland	157,101	9	172,161	15
Nottingham	140,350	16	162,900	15
Oxford	109,620	9	119,191	15
Rutland	16,356	-	16,380	13
Salop	167,639	16	194,298	6
Somerset	273,750	12	303,180	17
Southampton	219,556	12	245,080	15½
Stafford	239,153	21	295,153	17
Suffolk	210,431	11	234,211	15
Surrey	269,043	20	323,851	23
Sussex	159,311	19	190,083	22
Warwick	208,190	10	228,735	20
Westmorland	41,617	10	45,922	12
Wilts	185,107	5	195,828	15
Worcester	139,333	15	160,546	15
York (East Riding)	110,992	16	134,437	14
City of York & Ainsty	24,393	12	27,304	12
York (North Riding)	158,225	7	169,391	11
York (West Riding)	<u>565,282</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>655,042</u>	<u>22</u>
	<u>8,331,434</u>	<u>14½</u>	<u>9,538,827</u>	<u>17½</u>

COUNTIES	1821	Increase Per Cent	1831
ENGLAND			
Bedford	83,716	14	95,383
Berks	131,977	10	145,289
Buckingham	134,068	9	146,529
Cambridge	121,909	18	143,955
Chester	270,098	24	334,410
Cornwall	257,447	17	302,440
Cumberland	156,124	10	169,681
Derby	213,333	11	237,170
Devon	439,040	13	494,168
Dorset	144,499	10	159,252
Durham	207,673	22	253,827
Essex	289,424	10	317,233
Gloucester	335,843	15	386,904
Hereford	103,243	7	110,976
Hertford	129,714	10	143,341
Huntingdon	48,771	9	53,149
Kent	426,016	12	479,155
Lancaster	1,052,859	27	1,336,854
Leicester	174,571	13	197,003
Lincoln	283,058	12	317,244
Middlesex	1,144,531	19	1,358,541
Monmouth	71,833	36	98,130
Norfolk	344,368	13	390,054
Northampton	162,483	10	179,276

COUNTIES	1821	Increase Per Cent	1831
ENGLAND			
Northumberland	198,965	12	222,912
Nottingham	186,873	20	225,320
Oxford	136,971	11	151,726
Rutland	18,487	5	19,385
Salop	206,154	8	222,503
Somerset	355,314	13	403,908
Southampton	283,298	11	314,313
Stafford	345,895	19	410,455
Suffolk	270,542	9	296,304
Surrey	398,658	22	486,325
Sussex	233,019	17	272,328
Warwick	274,392	23	336,988
Westmorland	51,359	7	55,041
Wilts	222,157	8	239,181
Worcester	184,424	15	211,356
York (East Riding)	154,010	10	168,646
City of York & Ainsty	30,451	17	35,362
York (North Riding)	187,452	2	190,873
York (West Riding)	<u>801,274</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>976,415</u>
	<u>11,261,437</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>13,089,338</u>

COUNTIES	1801	Increase Per Cent	1811	Increase Per Cent
WALES				
Anglesey	33,806	10	37,045	21
Brecon	31,633	19	37,735	16
Cardigan	42,956	17	50,260	15
Carmarthen	67,317	15	77,217	17
Carnarvon	41,521	19	49,336	17
Denbigh	60,352	6	64,240	19
Flint	39,622	17	46,518	15
Glamorgan	71,525	18	85,067	19
Merioneth	27,506	4	30,924	11
Montgomery	47,978	8	51,931	15
Pembroke	56,280	7	60,615	22
Radnor	<u>19,050</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>20,900</u>	<u>7</u>
	541,546	13	611,788	17
	=====	==	=====	==

COUNTIES	1821	Increase Per Cent	1831
WALES			
Anglesey	45,063	7	48,325
Brecon	43,603	10	47,763
Cardigan	57,784	10	64,780
Carmarthen	90,239	12	100,555
Carnarvon	57,958	15	65,753
Denbigh	76,511	8	83,167
Flint	53,794	11	59,012
Glamorgan	101,737	24	126,612
Merioneth	34,382	3	35,609
Montgomery	59,899	9	65,485
Pembroke	74,009	9	81,424
Radnor	<u>22,459</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>24,651</u>
	717,438	12	805,236
	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

Source: Accounts Respecting the Poor Rates, P. 41.

APPENDIX VEMIGRATION FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM 1815 to 1830

Years	North American Colonies	United States	Australian Colonies and New Zealand	All Other Places	Total
1815	680	1,209	...	192	2,081
1816	3,370	9,022	...	11 ^c	12,510
1817	9,797	10,280	...	557	20,634
1818	15,136	12,429	...	222	27,787
1819	23,534	10,674	...	579	34,787
1820	17,921	6,745	...	1,013	25,729
1821	12,955	4,958	...	384	18,297
1822	16,013	4,137	...	279	20,429
1823	11,355	5,032	...	163	16,550
1824	8,774	5,152	...	99	14,025
1825	8,741	5,551	485	114	14,891
1826	12,818	7,063	903	116	20,900
1827	12,648	14,526	715	114	28,003
1828	12,084	12,817	1,010	135	26,092
1829	13,307	15,670	2,016	197	31,198
1830	30,574	24,887	1,242	204	56,907

Source: Nicholls, Poor Law History, P. 439.

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The authoritative source material on Ricardo's thought. Volume 2 contains the complete text Malthus' Principles of Political Economy.

Robertson, C. Grant. Select Statutes, Cases and Documents. 3rd ed. London: Methuen, 1919.

This collection of the principle constitutional documents of England contains selections from various sources. Selections from the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1832 - 14 Charles II. Chapter 12 is contained in the book. Each selection has an introduction and refers to the principle authorities on the topic of the selection and has a brief summary of the main parts of the extract.

Senior, Nassau William. Selected Writings on Economics.
N. York: A. M. Kelley, 1956.

This volume of Senior's pamphlets contains among others his "Introductory Lecture on Political Economy" of 1827 and his "Two Lectures on Population with a Correspondence between the Author and T. R. Malthus" of 1829.

----- Three Lectures on the Rate of Wages. New York:
A. M. Kelley, 1959.

In these lectures delivered before the University of Oxford, Easter Term, 1830, Senior accepts the Wages Fund Theory.

Stanhope, Earl of, and E. Cardwell, eds. The Memoirs of Sir Robert Peel. 2 vols. London: J. Murray, 1857 and 8.

Prepared by Peel himself; they deal mainly with Catholic emancipation, Peel's first administration and the repeal of the Corn Laws. However some of Peel's views on the Poor Laws are stated.

The Statutes of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. 8 Vols. London: George Eyre and Andrew Stahan, 1810 - 1831.

These eight volumes contain the acts passed between 1814 and 1830.

Smith, Adam. The Wealth of Nations. Edited by E. Cannan. 2 Vols. London: Methuen, 1961.

One of the most influential works on economics that has ever been published. This work profoundly influenced many of those who thought about economic questions in the first third of the nineteenth century.

Tawney, R. H. and Power, Eileen (eds.) Tudor Economic Documents. 3 Vols. London: Longmans Greene, 1924.
A very useful collection of Tudor economic documents. Contains some of Tudor Poor Law legislation.

The Times. London, 1815 - 30.

The reports of the parliamentary proceedings were carried in The Times and were the basis of Hansard's Parliamentary Debates.

Winch, Donald, ed. James Mill: Selected Economic Writings. Edinburgh: Scottish Economic Society, 1964.

This volume contains some of the articles and books written by Mill which are most relevant to the Poor Laws. It includes his 'Essay of the Impolicy of a Bounty on the Export of Grain' of 1804 and his Elements of Political Economy of 1826.

Secondary Sources

Ambirajan, S. Malthus and Classical Economics. Bombay: Popular Book Depot, 1959.

A careful examination of the economic thought of T. S. Malthus with a consideration of his part in the classical school of Economic Thought.

Asbby, Arthur, Wilfred. One Hundred Years of Poor Law Administration in a Warwickshire Village. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912.

This 190-page book examines the operation and organization of poor relief in the village of Tysoe during the period 1730 to 1830. The book is useful in that it shows how one village reacted to the problems of the poor.

Ashton, Thomas Southcliffe. The Industrial Revolution, 1760 - 1830. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

An excellent brief survey of economic and social developments during the period 1760 - 1830.

Aschrott, Paul, Felix, and H. Preston-Thomas. The English Poor Law System, Past and Present. 2nd. ed. London: Knight and Co., 1902.

This volume is divided into three parts: Part I the historical development of the English Poor Law, Part II the existing relief system and Part III (by H. Preston-Thomas) Old age pensions. The work was extremely highly regarded at the time of its being written -- translations from the original German were made into English and a Russian version was "caused to be published" by the Empress of Russia. Aschrott is mainly concerned with the development of Parliamentary legislation. In some places his knowledge appears to be faulty -- he overestimates the importance of the Elizabethan Act of 1601 and underestimates those acts which preceded it and of which it was in fact simply the codification. Aschrott's work betrays the very evident bias of the liberal economist against the acts of government and local authorities (for example the Speenhamland system) which sought to humanize the system. For the Stuarts too, Aschrott has no sympathy. He fails to mention the tightening up of the administration which occurred under James I and Charles I and concentrates his attack on the moral laxity of Charles II in particular and Restoration England in general.

Aspinall, Arthur. Lord Brougham and the Whig Party. Manchester: University Press, 1927.

An examination of the life, ideas and accomplishments of Henry, Lord Brougham. One chapter gathers together Brougham's social and economic thought.

Bates-Harbin, S. A. Members of Parliament for the County of Somerset. Taunton: Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1939.

This book gives a chronological listing of the Members of Parliament for the County of Somerset from 1258 to 1832. Brief biographical notes are given of each M.P. listed with references to sources.

Bartlett, C. J. Castlereagh. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1900.

This biography gives a sympathetic interpretation of the career of Viscount Castlereagh. The work gives due emphasis to Castlereagh's contributions to the history of the period 1812 - 1822 as Leader of the House of Commons.

Bell, John F. A History of Economic Thought. 2nd. ed. New York: Ronald Press, 1957.

A useful brief outline of the history of economic thought.

Blaug, Mark. Ricardian Economics; a Historical Study. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.

This volume provides a detailed and very useful survey of the economics of the leading member of the English Classical School of economic thought.

-----, "The Myth of the Old Poor Law and the Making of the New" Journal of Economic History, Vol. XXIII, 1963, P. 151 - 178.

-----, "The Poor Law Report Re-examined". Journal of Economic History, Vol. XXIV, 1964, P. 231 - 244.
In these two articles Blaug attacks the opinion that the Poor Laws were responsible for the spread of pauperism, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. He maintains that the Speenhamland system was a response to structural unemployment in the rural section of the economy.

Boase, Frederick. Modern English Biography. 6 Vols. n.p.: Truro, 1892 - 1921.

These six volumes provide short biographies of some of the lesser-known figures who died in the 1850 - 1900 period.

Brady, Alexander. William Huskisson and Liberal Reform. 2nd. ed. Frank Cass: London, 1967.

A reissue of the first edition with an introduction of ten pages. The work is not a biography but rather an attempt to survey the changes in economic policy during the 1820's.

Brodrick, C. T. C. and Fotheringham, J. K. The Political History of England. Vol. II. London: Longmans Green, 1905.

This volume deals with the period 1801 to 1837. It is especially useful for providing the political framework of the period.

Cannan, Edwin. A History of the Theories of Production and Distribution in English Political Economy from 1756 to 1848. London: D. S. King, 1917.

This volume provides a useful survey of the theories of the English Classical Economists.

Cecil, David. Lord M. Constable, London: 1954.

A history of the life of William Lamb, Lord Melbourne. Unfortunately this work does not begin until 1827 but it does provide some insights into Melbourne's views on the Poor Laws.

Checkland, S. The Rise of Industrial Society in England, 1815 - 1885. London: Longmans, 1954.

A good introduction to the economic developments of the period.

Clapham, Sir John Harold. An Economic History of Modern Britain. Vol. I. Cambridge: The University Press, 1953.

The first volume covers the period from 1820 - 1850. This careful, scholarly work has established itself as being one of the springboards for an examination of the economic developments of the period.

Chambers, J. D. and Mingay, G. E. The Agricultural Revolution 1750 - 1880. London: Batsford, 1966.

An examination of the development of agriculture during the period from 1750 to 1880. This volume examines the impact of the Speenhamland system on rural poverty.

Coats, A. W. "Economic Thought and Poor Law Policy in the Eighteenth Century". Economic History Review. Vol. 13. No. 1, p. 39 - 51.

An article dealing with economic thought and its influence on eighteenth century Poor Law policy. It is mainly concerned with events and thought up to 1782 and has therefore no direct relevance to this thesis. However, since the problem posed is similar to the one in this thesis then the article suggests some interesting approaches to the problem.

Cokayne, T. D. The Complete Peerage. 13 Volumes. London: St. Catharine's Press, 1921.

A very useful work for obtaining a brier sketch of the lives of those peers who do not appear in the Dictionary of National Biography.

----- The Complete Baronetage. 2 Vols. Exeter: William Pollard, 1906.

A useful work for obtaining the salient features of the careers of baronets.

Colchester, Lord, ed. The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbott, Lord Colchester. 3 Vols. London: John Murray, 1901.

Charles Abbott was speaker of the House of Commons from 1802 - 1817. He was therefore in an excellent vantage point to be aware of the political happenings of his day. He did, however, write very little on the Poor Laws.

Cole, G. J. H. The Life of Robert Owen. London. MacMillan, 1930, p. 350.

A highly sympathetic biography of Robert Owen. The author is mainly concerned with linking Owen to the prevailing social and economic thought of the time. In particular Owen's influence on the development of socialist thought is discussed.

----- and Postgate, Raymond, The Common People 1746 - 1946. London: Methuen, 1941.

A careful examination of the life of the common people. Has some valuable information on the Poor Laws.

Court, William Henry Bessano. A Concise Economic History of Britain from 1760 to Recent Times. Cambridge: University Press, 1954.

A good general survey of the economic history of Britain.

Davis, H. W. Careless. The Age of Grey and Peel. Oxford: Clarendon, 1964.

A careful examination of the ideas and policies of the Whig and Tory parties between 1793 and 1852.

Deane, Phyllis, and W. A. Cole. British Economic Growth 1688 - 1959: Trends & Structure. Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1962.

This work supplies useful material on the economic trends during the 1615 - 1830 period.

----- **The First Industrial Revolution.** Cambridge: University Press, 1965.

This volume provides an interesting analysis of the economic developments during the industrial revolution.

Dicey, A. V. Law and Public Opinion in England. 2nd. ed. London: MacMillan, 1962.

A classic work on the influence of public opinion on the development of law in nineteenth century. According to Dicey there were three main currents of public opinion during the century -- the periods of Old Toryism, Benthamism, and Collectivism.

Eden, Frederick Morton. The State of the Poor; A History of the Labouring Classes in England, with parochial reports. Abridged and Edited by A. G. L. Rogers. London: G. Routledge, 1928.

Written in the 1790's, this book examines contemporary theories of poor relief and provides a quick survey of the conditions in a number of workhouses.

Erickson, A. B. The Public Career of Sir James Graham. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1952.

This biography of the Whig statesman makes use of new documentary material not available in earlier biographies or documentary collections. Some of Sir James' views on the Poor Laws are mentioned.

Erith, E. J. Essex Parish Records 1240 - 1894. Essex County Council: Chelmsford, 1950. P. 252.

This summary of the parish records of Essex has a useful introduction which outlines some of the details of the operation of the Poor Law in the county between 1815 and 1830.

Fay, Charles, Ryle. Great Britain from Adam Smith to Present Day; an Economic and Social Survey. London: Longmans Greene, 1928.

This work has almost become a classic examination of the social history of Great Britain.

----- Life and Labour in the Nineteenth Century.

Cambridge: University Press, 1920.

This volume deals with the social history of England from 1815 to 1914. Two chapters -- one on Owen and one on the Old Poor Law and the New are relevant to this thesis.

----- Huskinson and His Age. London: Longmans Green, 1951.

A detailed examination of the life and times of Huskinson. It does not, however reveal much of Huskinson's attitudes to the Poor Laws.

Ferguson, R. S. Cumberland and Westmorland M.P.s. from the Restoration to the Reform Bill of 1867. London: Bell, 1871.

This one volume work is dedicated to "The Right Honourable the Earl of Lonsdale the late", and to "Henry Lowther Esquire M.P." "whose political history this work attempts to record". We are therefore put on our guard from the start against the pronounced pro-Tory sentiments of the work. It does, however provide some interesting biographical data on J. C. Curwen.

Feiling, Keith. The Second Tory Party (1714 - 1832). London: MacMillan, 1951.

This work provides sympathetic treatment of the Tory party before the Great Reform Act. Little mention is made of party's attitude to the poor.

Flinn, Michael Walter. An Economic and Social History of Britain since 1700. Macmillan, 1953.

A brief economic history of the period, useful for providing a rapid sketch of the topic and period.

Foster, Joseph. Alumni Oxoniensis 1775 - 1886. 4 Vols. Oxford: Parker and Co., 1888.

This volume contains brief sketches of the career of the students of Oxford University. It is useful work for tracing briefly the careers of the lesser-known M.Ps.

Fowle, T. W. The Poor Law. London: MacMillan, 1893.

This work provides short examination of the development of the Poor Law institutions. The book is, however chiefly of interest for the authors examination of the main principles of the Poor Law thought.

Fulford, Roger. Samuel Whitbread (1764 - 1815) London: MacMillan, 1967.

This new biography of the brewer-politician examines in some detail Whitbread's attitude to the Poor Laws and his proposals for minimum wage legislation.

Gash, N. "Rural unemployment 1815 - 34". Economic History Review. Vol. VI, No. 1. Oct. 1935. P. 90 - 98.

In this short article Gash indicates the nature and extent and probable causes of rural unemployment. He collects some convincing evidence of the existence of widespread seasonal unemployment in the rural areas of south and east England.

Gayer, A. D. W. W. Rostow and A. Schwartz. The Growth and Fluctuations of the British Economy 1750 - 1850. 2 Vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953.

These two volumes examine the changes in the British economy in the Industrial Revolution. The work deals with business fluctuations and prices.

Gide, Charles, and Charles Rist. A History of Economic Doctrines. London: George G. Harrap & Co. 1915.

This volume is one of the classic works on the history of economic thought. The sections on the classical economists are especially good.

Glass, David Victor. ed. Introduction to Malthus. London: Watts, 1953.

This volume places Malthusian theories in their historical context and outlines their applicability to the twentieth century. In addition the volume contains an extensive bibliography of books, pamphlets and articles on the population question and two of Malthus' articles on population.

Gray, Sir Alexander. The Development of Economic Doctrine. London: Longmans, 1931.

This work provides brief witty introduction to economic thought. The author probably overemphasizes the role of Scottish and Socialist economists.

Griffith, G. I. Population Problems in the Age of Malthus. 2nd. ed. London: Cass, 1957.

A work in which the author examines the causes of the increase of population in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The first edition concluded that the major cause of the increase was the decline in death rates. This edition is a reprint of the first edition with a new introduction.

Halévy, Elie. A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century. 5 Vols. London: Benn, 1961.

The first two volumes in this period deal with the period from 1815 to 1830. The work covers the period in detail and deals extensively with the social history of the period. In addition each volume has an extensive and very useful bibliography.

Hammond, John Lawrence le Breton and Barbara Hammond. The Rise of Modern Industry. Methuen: London, 1925.

This volume is classic survey of the development of industry in Britain. The authors, as in their other works, show a great sympathy for the working class.

Haney, L. H. History of Economic Thought. 4 ed. New York: MacMillan, 1951.

This excellent survey of the history of economic thought covers the period from Moses to the present day.

Hansard's Catalogue and Breviate of Parliamentary Papers
1890 - 1894. Introduction by P. Ford and G. Ford.

Oxford: Blackwell, 1953.

One of the best guides to parliamentary sessional papers.

Heilbroner, Robert L. The Worldly Philosophers; the
Lives, Times and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers.

Rev. Ed. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961. P. 309.

Sections of this work are valuable. In addition to outlining the ideas of the economists the author examines, in considerable detail, the economic conditions of the times in which they lived.

Hennock, E. P. "The Poor Law Era". New Society. 29.

Feb. 68. P. 301 - 3.

This three-page article is a short popular survey of the development of the Poor Law from the origins to the 1890's.

House of Commons. Manual of Procedure in the Public
Business. n.p., 1964.

A manual of the procedure used by the House of Commons. There is an excellent section on the organization and operation of select Committees of the House.

Jackson, W. The Curwens of Workington Hall. Kendal:

T. Wilson, 1880.

Traces the history of the Curwen family to about 1800. Includes extracts from parish registers, wills and tombstones referring to the Curwens.

Jones, H. Vernon, ed. Catalogue of Parliamentary Papers
1801 - 1900. P. S. King, 1964.

An unofficial index of 1,500 papers with short descriptive summaries of the important ones.

Judd, Gerrit Parmale. Members of Parliament 1734 - 1832.

New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

An invaluable volume. This work lists the names and constituencies of every M.P. between 1734 and 1832. In addition the volume contains a series of short chapters on the nationality, age, status and social background of M.Ps.

Lely, J. M. The Statutes of Practical Utility. Vol. IX. London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1895.

A chronological selection of the major acts on the Poor Laws from 1601 - 1895 is included in this alphabetical and chronological survey of English law. Selections from the major acts of the period are included. The work is useful as a rapid review of the development of the Poor Laws.

Leonard, B. A. The Early History of English Poor Relief. Cambridge: University Press, 1900.

This work deals with the development of English Poor Relief, from Anglo-Saxon times to the 1640's. Though not exactly germane to the topic of this thesis it does, however, provide useful background information.

Lipson, Ephraim. The Economic History of England. 3 Vols. London: A. and C. Black, 1932.

Much space in volume III of this excellent survey is devoted to the development of the Poor Laws.

Mackay, Thomas. A History of the English Poor Law. Vol. III. London: P. S. King and Co., 1899.

This volume of the history of the Poor Law is intended to serve as, the third volume of Sir George Nicholls' History of the English Poor Law. However since the author felt that Nicholls wrote of the period 1830 - 1853 with considerable reserve he felt that he would deal with the period again. The author thus spends six chapters on the period up to 1853.

MacGregor, D. H. Economic Thought and Policy. London: Oxford University Press, 1949.

This book is concerned with the interaction of economic thought and public policy. One chapter is specifically related to the problem discussed in this thesis project.

Mantoux, Paul Joseph. The Industrial Revolution in the 18th Century: An Outline of the Beginnings of the Modern Factory System in England. London: J. Cape, 1951.

A classic general survey of the development of the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century. A few pages are devoted to the Poor Law and the Speenhamland System.

Marriott, J. V. B. George Canning and his times: a Political Study. London: John Murray, 1903.

This sympathetic study by a conservative of Canning's life and times is based largely on secondary sources. Little attention is given to Canning's views on the Poor Laws.

Marshall, Dorothy. The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century -- a study in social and Administrative History. London: G. Routledge, 1925.

This volume deals mainly with the period from 1562 to 1782. It does, therefore, end well before the period covered by this thesis begins. The work is valuable however for background information on the Poor Laws.

Marshall, J. D. "The Nottinghamshire reformers and their contribution to the New Poor Law" Economic History Review. Vol. 13. April 1941, p. 382 - 396.

An examination of the work of three Nottinghamshire reformers -- Becher, Lowe and Nicholls whose practical innovations were influential in the development of the Poor Law after 1800.

Medd, Patrick. Romilly. London: Collins, 1958.

In this new biography of the great lawyer and reformer the author has little more to say on Romilly's views on the Poor Laws and on the economists than what is contained in the statesman's memoirs, speeches and letters which have already been published.

Mencher, Samuel. Poor Law to Poverty Program. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1957. xix, p. 476.

This volume examines the history of the Poor Laws dealing with the poor from the end of the Middle Ages down to the present day. The volume concentrates almost exclusively on the Poor Law in Britain and America. This work is chiefly valuable for its examination of the development of the ideological framework of the Poor Law..

Mitchell, B. R. Abstract of British Historical Statistics.
Cambridge: University Press, 1962.

This volume provides basic statistical information (where available) for the period from the eighteenth century to the 1900's. It is the statistical supplement to F. Deane's British Economic Growth 1688 - 1959: Trends and Structure.

Nicholls, Sir George. A History of the English Poor Laws.
Vol. II. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898.

This history of the Poor Laws by one of the three commissioners of the Poor Laws is a very useful introduction to a study of the English Poor Laws. This volume deals with the period from 1714 to 1833. The author has a natural tendency to exaggerate his own accomplishments -- especially in the description of the Poor Law experiments at Southwell's Bingham and to use his accomplishments as a yardstick to measure other Poor Law administrations.

Oakes, G. G. Sir Samuel Romilly. London: Allen and Unwin, 1935.

A useful biography of the Georgian lawyer-statesman. It does not unfortunately add much to the knowledge of Romilly's thought on the Poor Laws.

Parker, Charles, Stuart. The Life and Letters of Sir James Graham (1792 - 1860). 2 Vols. London: John Murray, 1907.

These two volumes which are dated by other more recent biographies nevertheless contain some useful material. Some of the letters to, from and about Sir James are of interest.

Poor Law Commissioners. Returns Relative to Local Taxation. n.p. 1840. P. 50.

This booklet gives the poor rate assessment and expenditures on account of the poor rate by counties for England and Wales for the years 1743 to 1839 -- when available.

- Porritt, Edward. The Unreformed House of Commons: Parliamentary Representation Before 1832. 2 Vols. Cambridge: University Press, 1903.
Volume I which deals with England and Wales is useful. It examines the relations between M.Ps. and their constituencies and the various kinds of franchises prior to 1832.
- Poynter, John, Riddoch. Society and Pauperism; English Ideas on Poor Relief 1795 - 1834. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
This excellent, detailed and very scholarly work examines the development of thought on Poor Relief in the period 1795 - 1834. The author examines a wider spectrum of thought than that covered in this thesis but several chapters are directly related to the specific field of this thesis. Unfortunately the work appeared too late to incorporate any of his ideas in this thesis. The work also includes an excellent bibliography.
- Pratt, J. T. The Laws Relating to the Poor. 2 Vols. London: A. Strahan, 1827.
The Poor Law statutes and cases to 1827 are arranged under headings alphabetically. It is possible therefore to get a rapid review of any aspect of the Poor Laws as it stood in 1827 by topic and title.
- Raynes, Harold, Ernest. Social Security in Britain -- A History. 2nd. ed. London: Pitman, 1962.
This history of social security covers the period from the early guilds to the present day. Much information is given on the administration of the Poor Laws. One chapter deals with the political and economic thought leading to the Report of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws of 1832 - 1834.
- Robbins, L. C. The Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy. London: MacMillan, 1952.
In this work the author questions many of the widely-held notions of the opinions of the classical economists. He devotes part of one chapter to the views of the Classical Economists on the Poor Law.

- Roll, Erich.** A History of Economic Thought. 3d. ed.
New York: Prentice Hall, 1950.
This volume provides a rapid survey of the history of economic thought from the Old Testament to J. M. Keynes. Three chapters -- one each for Smith, Malthus and Ricardo are directly relevant to this thesis.
- Rolo, P. J. V.** George Canning. London: MacMillan, 1965.
In this biography of one of the leading statesmen of the period of 1815 - 1830, Canning's economic and social policies are scarcely mentioned -- and when they are the same phrase is simply repeated.
- Romilly, Sir Samuel.** Memoirs of the Life of Sir Samuel Romilly. 2 Vols. 3rd. ed. London: John Murray, 1841.
These volumes provide a very useful collection of the correspondence and memoirs of the statesman. Romilly unfortunately seems to have been only slightly interested in the Poor Laws and economic thought.
- St. Clair, Oswald.** A Key to Ricardo. London: Routledge and Paul, 1957.
A useful attempt to simplify and clarify Ricardo's economic thought. There is a useful chapter on the Wages Fund Theory.
- Samuels, Warren J.** The Classical Theory of Economic Policy. Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1966.
A rigorous theoretical discussion of the economic policy of the classical school. This work elaborates on Robbins Theory of Economic Policy in English Classical Political Economy.
- de Schweinitz, Karl.** England's Road to Social Security. Barnes, New York: 1961.
This volume covers the period from the Statute of labourers of 1349 to the Beveridge Report of 1942. Three chapters are directly relevant to this thesis topic. The work includes a bibliography.

Stephen, Sir Leslie and Sir Sidney Lee, eds. The Dictionary of National Biography. 22 Vols. London: Oxford 1964 - 5.

This work is extremely useful for providing brief sketches of the careers of some of the less well-known M.Ps.

Strathearn, Gordon and T. G. B. Cocks. A People's Conscience. Constable and Co.: London, 1952.

A description of the work of six select committees of the House of commons between the years 1729 - 1837. The first chapter deals briefly with the values and procedure of this method of inquiring into a problem.

Styles, Philip. "The Evolution of the Law of Settlement". University of Birmingham Historical Journal. Vol. 9. 1963, P. 33 - 63.

This article outlines the development of the Laws of Settlement to 1795 from 1601.

Temperley, H. L. V. Life of Canning. London: James Finch.

This biography of Canning concentrates largely on his foreign policy. Little evidence is given of Canning's concern with internal politics.

Thompson, F. M. L. English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953.

This work is useful in its examination of the economic social and political bases and influence of the English aristocracy and gentry.

Townend, Peter. ed. Burke's Landed Gentry. London: Burke's Peerage, 1965.

This useful work provides brief biographical details of the members of the landed gentry.

Toynbee, Arnold. The Industrial Revolution. Boston: Beacon Press, 1956.

A pioneering history of the Industrial Revolution, even though the work has been largely superceeded, it still retains a great deal of interest.

Venn, J. A. Alumni Cantabrigienses. Part II, 6 Vols.

Cambridge: University Press, 1940.

This work provides brief biographical details of Cambridge students. It is especially useful for tracing the careers of the relatively obscure M.A.s. of the period.

Webb, Sidney and Beatrice. English Poor Law History
Part II: The Last Hundred Years. Vol. II. Longmans
Green and Co., London: 1929.

This volume deals mainly with the period 1905 - 1929 though it does have a useful chapter on the development of the Poor Laws of Ireland and Scotland and some useful statistics on the English Poor Law from 1588.

----- English Poor Law History Part II: The Last
Hundred Years. Vol. I. Longmans, Green and Co.,
London: 1929, xvi, p. 468.

This volume deals with the poor law history in England and Wales from 1832 to 1908. The first chapter outlines briefly the factors which brought about the establishment of the 1832 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and examines its report.

----- English Local Government. Vol. 7. Pt. I.
The Old Poor Law. Longmans, Green: London, 1925.

This volume deals with the history of the Poor Law to 1834. It is the most detailed history of the Old Poor Law available. The work is based on a detailed study of primary sources.

Ward, J. J. Sir James Graham. London: MacMillan, 1967.

A modern depiction of the friend and political heir of J. C. Curwen. This sympathetic portrait is deeply concerned with the economic and social background of the events through which Graham lived.

Welch, R. Courtenay. The Harrow School Register 1800 -
1911. New York: Longmans Green, 1911.

A listing of all the pupils of Harrow School between 1800 and 1911. Brief biographical outlines are given of each student listed.

Woodward, L. The Age of Reform 1815 - 1870. London: Oxford, 1964.

A beautifully written survey of all aspects of English history during the period 1815 to 1870.

Yonge, Charles Duke. The Life and Administration of Robert Banks, Second Earl of Liverpool. 3 Vols. London: MacMillan, 1858.

This biography deals with the life of the man who was prime minister during four-fifths of the period covered by this thesis. However the volumes are mainly concerned with political and reflect little of great social problems of the day -- such as the Poor Laws.

Ziegler, Philip. Addington. New York: John Day. This biography of Sidmouth contains very little on Sidmouth's opinions on the economic and social problems.