

**Report from the Select Committee on the Poor Laws; with the minutes of evidence taken before the Committee. Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, July 4, 1817.**

### **Contributors**

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. Select Committee on the Poor Laws.

### **Publication/Creation**

London : Printed by and for C. Clement, 192, Strand, [1817]

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/grr2hkev>

### **License and attribution**

This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>





EPD SUPP/D

60598/8

7240





REPORT  
FROM THE  
***SELECT COMMITTEE***  
ON  
**THE POOR LAWS.**

REPORT  
FROM THE  
SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON  
THE POOR LAWS.



REPORT  
FROM THE  
SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON THE  
**Poor Laws;**

WITH THE  
*MINUTES OF EVIDENCE*

TAKEN BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

---

---

*Ordered by the House of Commons to be Printed,  
July 4, 1817.*

---

---

LONDON:

PRINTED BY AND FOR C. CLEMENT,  
192, STRAND.



REPORT

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

OF THE

House of Commons

WITH THE

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE COMMITTEE

---

Ordered by the House of Commons to be Printed

July 4. 1817.

---

LONDON:

PRINTED BY AND FOR T. BURNETT,

105, ST. MARK'S LANE.

## REPORT.

*The Select Committee appointed to consider of the Poor Laws, and to report their Observations thereupon from time to time to the House, have, pursuant to the Order of the House, considered the same accordingly, and agreed to the following Report:*

YOUR Committee have forborne to avail themselves of the permission to report their observations from time to time to the House, from the persuasion that they could not do justice to so extensive and intricate a subject, by presenting it in detached parts before they had the means of taking a deliberate view of the whole; and not seeing it probable that they could recommend any such alteration of the existing laws as would afford immediate relief in those cases of severe and urgent pressure, which can scarcely be deemed to have arisen out of the ordinary operation of this system, they could not feel themselves justified in offering any suggestions hastily to the House on questions of acknowledged difficulty, enhanced in a high degree by the circumstances of the times, and on which they cannot but recollect, that the remedial efforts of the most able and enlightened men have practically failed.

In bringing under the view of the House the whole of this system of laws, they feel it unnecessary to refer minutely to the statutes which passed antecedent to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It may be sufficient to state, that they were generally directed to the relief of the impotent poor, by the contributions of the church and the alms of the charitable, and to the suppression of vagrancy and idleness; for while permission to solicit support from



private benevolence was given to those who were disabled by age or infirmity, it became probably extremely difficult to repress the same practice in others, who "as long as they might live by begging, did refuse to labour, giving themselves to idleness and vice." Enactments the most harsh were therefore provided against "strong beggars, persons whole and mighty in body;" and the relentless rigour of these laws, which was consummated in the first year of Edw. VI. visited the offence of vagrancy with the barbarous penalties of slavery, mutilations, and death. And although these severities were somewhat relaxed, even before the expiration of that short reign, yet they did not wholly give way to a milder system till the beginning of the last century.

The impotent poor, on the other hand, were permitted to beg within certain districts, and no means of exhortation were spared to excite the people "to be liberal, and bountifully to extend their good and charitable alms towards the comfort and relief of the poor, impotent, decrepit, indigent, and needy people." Subsequent statutes in the reign of Edw. VI. were directed to the same object, till at length, by the 5th Eliz. c. 3, upon the exhortation of the priest, bishop, and justices in sessions, having been directed in vain to those who were unwilling to contribute, the justices, after repeated admonition, were empowered with the churchwardens to assess such persons according to their discretion for a weekly contribution. Thus gradually was established a general and compulsory provision for the maintainance of the impotent poor; it was modified and extended by various successive enactments, and at length matured and consolidated by the statute of the 43d of the same reign, which continues to this day the fundamental and operative law on this important subject.

This statute enacts, that "the churchwardens and overseers" shall take order from time to time (with the consent of two or more justices) for setting to work the children of all such whose parents shall not be thought able to keep and maintain their children; and also for setting to work all such persons, married or unmarried, having no means to maintain them, and use no ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by; and also to raise by taxation, &c. "a convenient stock of flax, &c. to set the poor on



work ;" and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them, being poor and not able to work."

This new and important principle of compulsory provision for the impotent, and for setting to work the able, originated, without doubt, in motives of the purest humanity, and was directed to the equitable purpose of preventing this burthen falling exclusively upon the charitable. But such a compulsory contribution for the indigent, from the funds originally accumulated from the labour and industry of others, could not fail in process of time, with the increase of population which it was calculated to foster, to produce the unfortunate effect of abating those exertions on the part of the labouring classes, on which, according to the nature of things, the happiness and welfare of mankind has been made to rest. By diminishing this natural impulse by which men are instigated to industry and good conduct, by superseding the necessity of providing in the season of health and vigour for the wants of sickness and old age, and by making poverty and misery the conditions on which relief is to be obtained, your Committee cannot but fear, from a reference to the increased numbers of the poor, and 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; and as every system of relief founded on compulsory enactments must be divested of the character of benevolence, so it is without its beneficial effects; as it proceeds from no impulse of charity, it creates no feelings of gratitude, and not unfrequently engenders dispositions and habits calculated to separate rather than unite the interests of the higher and lower orders of the community; even the obligations of natural affection are no longer left to their own impulse, but the mutual support of the nearest relations has been actually enjoined by a positive law, which the authority of magistrates is continually required to enforce. The progress of these evils, which are inherent in the system itself, appears to have been favoured by the circumstances of modern times, by an ex-



tension of the law in practice, and by some deviations from its most important provisions. How much of the complaints which have been referred to your Committee may be attributable to one cause or the other, it is perhaps not easy to ascertain. The result, however, appears to have been highly prejudicial to the moral habits, and consequent happiness, of a great body of the people, who have been reduced to the degradation of a dependence upon parochial support; while the rest of the community, including the most industrious class, has been oppressed by a weight of contribution taken from those very means which would otherwise have been applied more beneficially to the supply of employment. And, as the funds which each person can expend in labour are limited, in proportion as the poor rate diminishes those funds, in the same proportion will the wages of labour be reduced, to the immediate and direct prejudice of the labouring classes; the system thus producing the very necessity which it is created to relieve. For whether the expenditure of individuals be applied directly to labour, or to the purchase of conveniences or superfluities, it is in each case employed immediately or ultimately in the maintenance of labour.

This system, it is also to be remarked, is peculiar to Great Britain; and even in Scotland, where a law similar in principle was about the same period enacted, the intelligent persons to whom the administration of it has been entrusted, appear by a valuable Report (for which your Committee are lately indebted to the prompt exertions of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland) to have possessed so much foresight and judgment as to its effects, that they have very generally and successfully endeavoured to avoid having recourse to its provisions for a compulsory assessment. Their funds, therefore, continue to be derived, except in comparatively few places, from charity, and are dispensed with that sound discrimination, which in the ordinary transactions of life belongs to real benevolence; and the committee of the general assembly state, "That it is clear to them, that in almost all the country parishes which have hitherto come under their notice, where a regular assessment has been established, the wants of the poor and the extent of the assessment have gradually and progressively increased from their com-



mencement ; and that it does appear to be a matter of very serious interest to the community at large, to prevent as far as possible this practice from being generally adopted—to limit the assessments as much as they can be limited, where the circumstances of particular parishes render them unavoidable, and whenever it is practicable to abandon them.”

Under this impression, respecting the effect of a system, which having been in operation upwards of two centuries, has become interwoven with the habits and very existence of a large class of the community, your Committee have anxiously endeavoured to devise such means as may be calculated, by their gradual operation, to revive, with habits of industry and frugality, those moral feelings in the people which are intimately connected with their self-support and independence ; and further, to correct any such defects in the mode in which the law has been executed, as may have tended to create or aggravate the evils to which they have referred. With these views, they have felt it their duty to consider maturely every plan which has either suggested itself to your Committee, or which has at various times been proposed by the most eminent persons, who have devoted their attention and efforts to the amelioration of this part of our law ; and such suggestions as may seem worthy, either of the adoption or consideration of the House, your Committee will notice as they arise, on the consideration of the subject in detail, as it relates to the assessment and the purposes for which it is levied.

Before your Committee proceed to these considerations, they must lament that it has yet been found impossible to reduce the returns made under the 55th of the King, to the shape in which they should be presented to parliament ; even the abstract of the expenditure could only very recently be completed, from the tardiness with which the statute has been executed in no less than 854 parishes. From the want of the details of these returns, they have been deprived of a large mass of the most valuable, and for some purposes indispensable information ; they have been compelled to make new and otherwise unnecessary inquiries, and they are still without the means of presenting to the House any view of the comparative increase or diminution of this expenditure in different parts of the kingdom.



What might have been the amount of the assessments for the poor during the 17th or 18th centuries, the Committee have no means of ascertaining; for although the preamble of 13 and 14th Ch. II. states "the necessity, number, and continual increase of the poor, to be very great and exceeding burthensome;" and in the year 1699, King William thus expressed himself in a speech from the throne, "the increase of the poor is become a burthen to the kingdom; and their loose and idle life does in some measure contribute to that depravation of manners which is complained of, I fear with too much reason; whether the ground of this evil be from defects in the laws already made, or in the execution of them, deserves your consideration;" and though complaints appear continually to have been since made of the increasing numbers of the poor, yet it was not till the present reign in the year 1776, that authentic accounts of this expenditure were required under the authority of the legislature. From the returns made under Acts passed in that and subsequent years, it appears that in 1776, the whole sum raised was 1,720,316*l.* of which there was expended on the poor, 1,556,804*l.*; on the average of the years 1783, 1784, and 1785, the sum raised was 2,167,749*l.* expended on the poor 2,004,238*l.*; in the year 1803 the sum raised was 5,348,205*l.* expended on the poor 4,267,965*l.*; in 1815, 7,068,999*l.* expended on the poor 5,072,028*l.* The excess above the sum applied to the poor, was expended in church rates, county rates, highway and militia; and it appears from the evidence before your Committee, that the amount of the sums assessed is largely increased since those last returns; a part of which increase cannot fail to have arisen from the peculiar pressure and difficulty of the times, aggravated by the high prices incident to the calamity of a deficient harvest. But independent of the pressure of any temporary or accidental circumstances, and making every allowance for an increased population, the rise in the price of provisions and other necessaries of life, and a misapplication of part of these funds, it is apparent that both the number of paupers, and the amount of money levied by assessment, are progressively increasing, while the situation of the poor appears not to have been in a corresponding degree improved; and the Committee is of opinion, that whilst the existing poor laws, and the sys-



tem under which they are administered remain unchanged, 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.

For if the means could be found to distribute the burthen more equally, by rendering the interest of money and the profit of stock liable to the assessment, these funds being also in themselves limited, must finally be absorbed by the increasing and indefinite amount of the demand. It having, however, been strongly pressed upon the House and the Committee, in petitions from various quarters, to devise some better means than now exist, of bringing the income derived from personal property in aid of this assessment, which is now nearly confined in practice to the revenue arising from land and houses, and bears undoubtedly with unequal pressure on the occupier of land, the Committee have given their most attentive consideration to this subject. They find that the only enactment which regulates the description of persons and property subject to the rate, is the original clause in the 43d Eliz. which directs the churchwardens and overseers "to raise weekly or otherwise 'by taxation of every inhabitant, parson, vicar and others, and of every occupier of land, houses, tithes impropriate, proportions of tithes, coalmines, or saleable underwoods in the said parish, in such competent sum and sums of money as they shall think fit,' a convenient stock of flax, &c. to set the poor on work; and also competent sums for and towards the relief of the lame, impotent, &c. to be gathered out of the same parish, according to the ability of the same parish." Without troubling the House with the numerous, and in some instances contradictory decisions, of the courts of law upon this short enactment, it will be sufficient to state, that the intention of the statute to tax the inhabitants of the parish for their local and visible property, as well as the occupiers of land, has been recognized as indisputable; and if in practice the burthen has been imposed almost exclusively on land and houses, it has not arisen from the taxation of personal property being either illegal or unjust, but from the insurmountable difficulty of ascertaining legally the amount, or even existence of a species of property, to which in truth the terms *local* and *visible* seem scarcely



to apply. The intention of the Legislature therefore to bring into equal contribution all species of income, has failed in this instance, as it has done subsequently under the original land-tax act, which was designed in its first establishment as a tax on all income, and from the same cause, namely, the difficulty of ascertaining with any reasonable precision, the amount of the contribution without the exercise of powers which the exigency of the state in time of war has alone induced the legislature to grant. The Committee conceive therefore that the House would deem the equalization of the poor rate, if practicable, purchased too dearly at such a price. There is however one species of income derived from personal property, the dividends payable to the public creditor, which though it has been decided not to come within the existing law, as being neither local nor visible, is yet free certainly from the above difficulties, and if it presented no others, would afford a facility of assessment which has naturally suggested it as a convenient source of contribution. But without considering in what proportions a sum raised by an assessment on such property should be distributed among all the parishes of England and Wales, to none of which it has any local relation, it is a far more important question for the consideration of the House, whether justice and good faith to the public creditor would permit the income derived from this one species of personal property alone to be taxed, in direct violation of the clause in every loan act, by which the payment of the dividends is secured, "free from all taxes, charges, and impositions," when almost all property of a similar description is practically exempted. In the case of the income tax, the profits of all personal property were brought into equal contribution for the general purposes of the empire; in this instance it is proposed to select one species of such property for taxation, which has been by law specially exempted, and to apply it in aid of the disbursement in local districts, in the control and administration of which this class of contributors would alone have no share. It must be recollected also that even the general tax on income did not attach on the dividends due to a foreigner; and that the stockholders, inhabitants of Ireland and Scotland, must be considered, with reference to the poor rate, in the same



light. Nor can the Committee think, that either justice or policy would permit a tax to be imposed on money lent to the state, while sums at interest on other securities remain practically exempt.

If, therefore, it should be deemed neither practicable to provide the means for rating all personal property, nor wise or just to select one species of such property, so circumstanced, for taxation, it may be still considered, whether any other means could be devised of correcting the inequality of the assessment, in parishes in which the occupier of land now bears the principal part of the burthen. As each householder is likely to burthen the parish in proportion to the number of persons he employs in his service, it has been suggested, that it would be equitable that his contribution to the poor rate should bear some proportion to that number. An obvious objection, however, to any such arrangement presents itself, in the case of the numerous persons employed by manufacturers; and from the possibility of such a principle of assessment creating, in other cases also, some discouragement to employment. But if this, or any other expedient on a similar principle could be adopted, which would bring other property in aid of the land, it would in that case become doubly necessary to provide effectually against the mischief of a practice, to which the Committee must more particularly advert hereafter, of making up the deficiency of the wages of labour out of the poor rate. While that rate is derived chiefly from land, the occupier pays, in the shape of poor rate, what should be more properly paid in wages; he still, however, throws some share of the burthen of the maintenance of his labourers on other contributors, according to their share of the rate. But if personal property were brought effectually in aid, the mischief of this practice would become of intolerable magnitude, and would produce, perhaps, more injustice than the present inequality of the rate.

In large towns little inequality in the mode of assessment might be expected to prevail; but various representations have been made to your Committee, of a large proportion of property necessarily escaping its share of contribution, from tenements being of small value, rented for short periods, and the occupiers, who alone



can be rated under the existing law, either quitting their residence before the rate can be collected, or being too poor to admit of the rate being levied; while, it is represented, the proprietors find no difficulty in securing a rent, which is increased in the exact proportion of the amount of the rate which is due, but impossible to collect. In these cases the deficiencies arising from this cause must be added to the succeeding rate, and paid by the more industrious class of occupiers. This complaint is not new to the House, their attention having been called to the subject by the application from the town of Birmingham, for relief from this alleged grievance; and though the House rejected a proposed Bill, for rating the owners of such tenements in that town, in default of payment by the occupiers; yet as that vote might have proceeded from the provision being proposed to be local, which, if expedient, the House might have thought should be general, the Committee feel it their duty to represent, that similar applications have been made to them from other quarters, from Bristol, Brighthelmston, Hull, Manchester, Portsea, and Coventry, in each of which a large portion of the property of the town escapes contribution, from the poverty or transient residence of the tenant; while the landlord secures on that very account an increased rent. The objection to rating the owners, instead of the occupiers, which would at once equalize the burthen in such towns, is, that it would be introducing a new principle into this law, whereby persons would be made to contribute to the rates, who are not on the spot to control the expenditure. Such, at least, is the objection stated in the Report of the Committee, to whom the different provisions of various local acts for the management of the poor were referred in the year 1813\*; who, nevertheless, were of opinion, that in particular instances, some departure from the general law might be expedient. But your Committee cannot wholly concur in the reasoning of that report, because they conceive that the occupiers of such tenements are much more likely to bring a burthen upon the parish than to control its expenditure; and they are disposed to think,

---

\* See Report ordered to be printed 26 March 1813.



that such beneficial control would most probably be produced by the owner having, in these instances, a more direct interest than at present in the disbursements of the parish. In the assessment of lands, it would undoubtedly, for obvious reasons, be far otherwise. In the case of houses, however, it seems of far more importance to preserve the principle of making all property contribute equally when it is practicable, than to adhere to the law of rating the occupier rather than the owner, by which, as in the case of Birmingham, nearly half the rental of the town, and above three-fourths of the houses, escape a burthen which it largely contributes to create. On this subject the Committee can speak from experience, for the practice has been adopted with perfect success, and without a complaint, as it should seem, in the parishes of Christ Church, Spitalfields, Shadwell, Gravesend, and probably others which have not come within the knowledge of your Committee. In such cases the landlord, no doubt, makes his agreement with his tenant accordingly, and has no reasonable ground of complaint, if he is deprived of that part of his rent which should in justice have been paid to the parish fund. If it were possible to distinguish in any enactment between parishes in large towns and those in the country, your Committee would recommend such an alteration in the persons rated, to be limited to parishes of the former description. But if that should be found, as they fear, impracticable, they would still recommend such a general provision, exempting cottages below a certain value, from its operation. By which exemption, such cottages as are now rated, would be excluded from the assessment.

With the same view of making all property contribute to the relief of the poor, where it is practicable, the committee think that provision should be made to prevent extra-parochial places being exonerated from this burthen. Whether they should be made contributory to some other district, or compelled themselves to provide for their own poor, it is obviously most unjust, that burthens properly belonging to them should continue to be borne by others.

The Committee are well aware, that however important and desirable it undoubtedly is to equalize this heavy



burthen, yet if new funds are provided, it should at the same time be remembered, that a facility of expenditure will be also created. But whether the assessment be confined to land and houses, or other denomination of property be made practically liable to the same charge, your Committee feel it their imperious duty to state to the House their opinion, that, unless some efficacious check be interposed, 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.

The gradual 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 itself, as it does not appear to have depended entirely upon any temporary or local circumstance. Scarcity of provisions, and a diminished demand for particular manufactures, have occasioned from time to time an increased pressure in particular parishes, and at no former time in so great a degree as during the early part of the present. But by comparing the assessments in the two counties in this kingdom, in which the largest portion is employed in agriculture, namely Bedfordshire and Herefordshire, it will be seen that there has been the same progressive augmentation in the amount of the assessments, as may be observed to have taken place in the manufacturing counties.



County of	Money expended on Paupers, in the Year ending Easter 1776 .		Medium average of Annual Expenditure on account of Paupers, in Years ending Easter 1783, 1784, 1785.		Expenditure on Paupers, in Year ending Easter 1803.		Expenditure on Paupers, in Year ending 25 March 1815.	
	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.	£.	s. d.
HEREFORD	10,593	7 2	16,727	18 2	48,067	8 10	59,255	19 —
BEDFORD -	16,662	17 1	20,977	— 11	38,070	3 8	50,370	10 11



What number of years, under the existing laws and management, would probably elapse, and to what amount the assessments might possibly be augmented, before the utmost limitation would be reached, cannot be accurately ascertained; but with regard to the first, your Committee think it their duty to point out, that many circumstances which, in the early periods of the system, rendered its progress slow, are now unfortunately changed. The independent spirit of mind which induced individuals in the labouring classes to exert themselves to the utmost, before they submitted to become paupers, is much impaired; this order of persons therefore are every day becoming less and less unwilling to add themselves to the list of paupers. The workhouse system, though enacted with other views, yet for a long time acted very powerfully in deterring persons from throwing themselves on their parishes for relief; there were many who would struggle through their difficulties, rather than undergo the discipline of a workhouse; this effect however is no longer produced in the same degree, as by two modern statutes the justices have power under certain conditions to order relief to be given out of the workhouses, and the number of persons to whom relief is actually given, being now far more than any workhouses would contain, the system itself is from necessity, as well as by law, materially relaxed.

In addition to these important considerations, it is also apparent, that in whatever degree the addition to the number of paupers depends upon their increase by birth, that addition will probably be greater than in past times, in the proportion in which the present number of paupers exceeds that which formerly existed; and it is almost needless to point out, that, when the public undertakes to maintain all who may be born, without charge to the parents, that the number born will probably be greater than in the natural state. On these grounds, therefore, your Committee are led to apprehend, that the rate at which the increase would take place under the existing laws, would be greater than it has heretofore been; but at whatever rate the increase might take place, it could not fail materially to depend on the general state of the country, whether it was in an improving, a stationary, or a declining state, and it would also be



affected by the recurrence of plentiful or deficient harvests.

With regard to the second point, namely, the probable amount beyond which the assessments cannot be augmented, your Committee have again to lament, that the returns collected in 1816 are not yet before them in detail, and there are no means of ascertaining with sufficient accuracy, either the amount of the rates now assessed, or the gross rental of the property on which they are levied. Whatever indeed that may be, it appears to be certain that the land owners and the farmers would cease to have an adequate interest in continuing the cultivation of the land, long before the gross amount of the present rental could be transferred to the poor rate; for it is obvious, that a number of charges must be provided for out of the gross rental of land, without an adequate provision for which the land cannot be occupied; the general expenses of management, the construction and repairs of buildings, drains, and other expensive works, to which the tenant's capital cannot reach, constitute the principal part of these charges, and the portion of the gross rent which is applied to these purposes, can never be applied to the augmentation of the poor rate.

Even if it can be thought possible that any landlord could suffer his land to be occupied and cultivated, or that he would continue to give to it the general superintendence of an owner, when the whole of the nett rental was transferred to the poor, it is perfectly clear that no tenant could hold a farm upon the condition of maintaining all the poor who might under any circumstances want relief; it would be as much impossible for a tenant to do so as to undertake to pay any rent which the wants of his landlord might induce him to desire, which condition could never be complied with. The apprehension, however, of being placed in such a situation as this, could not fail to deter persons from holding land long before they paid to the poor rate as much as they would otherwise pay in rent; and as under these circumstances, the land owner would still remained entitled to the soil, the paupers could not enter and cultivate for themselves; nor could it be occupied for any beneficial purpose, as whatever stock might be found on the land would be liable to distress for poor rate.



The consequences which are likely to result from this state of things are clearly set forth in the petition from the parish of Wombridge, in Salop, which is fast approaching to this state: the petitioners state, "that the annual value of land, mines, and houses in this parish, is not sufficient to maintain the numerous and increasing poor, even if the same were to be set free of rent; and that these circumstances will inevitably compel the occupiers of lands and mines to relinquish them, and the poor will be without relief or any known mode of obtaining it, unless some assistance be speedily afforded them." And your Committee apprehend, from the petitions before them, that this is one only of many parishes that are fast approaching to a state of dereliction.

By following the dictates of their own interests, landowners and farmers become, in the natural order of things, the best trustees and guardians for the public; when that order of things is destroyed, and a compulsory maintenance established for all who require it, the consequences cannot fail in the end to be equally ruinous to both parties. These impressions, upon subjects of such great importance, could not fail to induce your Committee to take into their consideration whatever plans could be referred to or suggested, the object of which might be to check and modify the system itself, a duty to which they were the more strongly urged by the view which had presented itself to their consideration of the state of society, created by an extensive system of pauperism, and which led them, for the sake of the paupers themselves, to seek for the means of setting again into action those motives which impel persons, by the hope of bettering their condition on the one hand, and the fear of want on the other, so to exert and conduct themselves, as by frugality, temperance, and industry, and by the practice of those other virtues on which human happiness has been made to depend, to ensure to themselves that condition of existence in which life can alone be otherwise than a miserable burthen; the temptations to idleness, to improvidence, and want of forethought, are under any circumstances so numerous and enticing, that nothing less than the dread of the evils, which are their natural consequence, appears to be sufficiently strong in any degree to control them; which the neglect and absence of those virtues, as long



indeed as fresh funds can be found for their relief, those evils may in some degree be mitigated; but when such resources can no longer be found, then will these evils be felt in their full force; and as the gradual addition of fresh funds can only create an increased number of paupers, it is obvious that the amount of the misery which must be endured, when these funds can no longer be augmented, will be the greater (though the longer delayed) the greater the supplies are, which may be applied to the relief of pauperism, inasmuch as the suffering to be endured must be increased with the number of sufferers.

Your Committee forbear to expatiate on these considerations which have pressed themselves on their attention; they have said enough to show the grounds which induce them to think that the labouring classes can only be plunged deeper and more hopelessly into the evils of pauperism, by the constant application of additional sums of money to be distributed by the poor rate; true benevolence and real charity point to other means, which your Committee cannot so well express as in the emphatic language of Mr. Burke; "patience, labour, frugality, sobriety, and religion, should be recommended to them; all the rest is downright fraud."\*

With the view then of providing such a check as may lay the foundation for a better system, it may be worth the most serious consideration, whether a provision of various local acts by which the assessment itself was limited for the time to come, might not be applied to all other parishes or districts. Your Committee are not aware that such a provision would be less practicable, as applied generally, than locally; and it would obviously not only operate in aid of any other check to expenditure which might be devised, but would necessitate a degree of economy, which would probably be more effectual than any detailed regulations which could be prescribed by particular enactments, and render necessary such careful and just discrimination in selecting the properest objects of relief, as would contribute materially to put an end to numberless evils arising from the lax administration of the poor

---

\* Thoughts and Details on Scarcity. Burke's Works, Vol. 7, p. 337.



laws; the check, indeed, which is proposed is perfectly consonant with the nature of things, not only individuals, but states themselves are compelled to limit their expenditure according to their means; and the money raised for the poor being strictly a tax, is in no greater degree capable of unlimited extension, when applied to relieve the necessities of the poor than for the purposes of the state. Whether the future assessments should be limited in the first instance to the amount of any one year, or to an average of many, 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 limitation. It is fit, however, to apprise the House, that it was thought necessary by the Legislature, in the year 1795, to relieve these parishes from the obligation of this clause, "by reason (as it is stated) of the late very great increase of the price of corn, and other necessary articles of life." They were, therefore, enabled to raise sums exceeding the amount of the limited assessment, whenever the average price of wheat in Mark-lane exceeded the average price at the same market, during those years from which the average amount of the poor rates were taken. But a new limitation was again imposed by the same act, providing, that after 1st January, 1798, no assessment should exceed double the sum raised in 1795. And your Committee apprehend, that this limitation remains still in force. In case it was thought expedient to adopt this limitation of assessment generally, it appears to your Committee, that provision might be made against such an emergency as that of the year 1795, without abandoning the principle, by providing, that in case of an urgent and unforeseen necessity, far exceeding any such average, the vestry of the parish might apply to the justices, in their quarter sessions, for an aid from the county to the amount of one moiety of such necessary excess, and for permission to raise the other moiety, by way of assessment within the parish, in addition to such average amount; and if the justices, or a committee of them appointed for that purpose, should, after examination on oath as to the necessity of such ex-



cess of expenditure, be of opinion that it was unavoidable, they might order the moiety of such excess required for the ensuing quarter to be paid out of the county rate, (subject to exception in the case of a parish whose rate is below the average ratio of the county) and make an order to permit the overseers, &c. to levy the other moiety, by way of assessment, on the parish. The necessity of the strictest economy, which would be created by the limitation of the rate, would not, it is hoped, be impaired under this strict scrutiny, in case of excess. For an interest would thus be given to the justices, to make the examination into the expenditure of such parish rigorous; and further, to regard continually the mode in which the poor are managed and maintained in the different parishes of their county. It would be necessary also to provide, that the power to levy the augmented rate should never be continued longer than the duration of the temporary exigency which gave occasion to it.

The House are aware, that, by the statute of Elizabeth, the parishes of the hundred, and in some instances those of the county, might be rated in aid of every parish in which the inhabitants are not able to levy sufficient sums for the relief of their poor; great difficulties however have occurred in practice, from the want of a clear definition of such inability; nor does it afford any sufficient security against the mismanagement or misapplication of the funds of one parish being rendered, against every principle of equity, a charge on others, who had no share or interest in such expenditure; and on these grounds your Committee are not disposed to recommend any facility being granted for the execution of this provision of the law.

Your Committee cannot close their observations on the subject of the assessment, without adverting to a suggestion which has been made to them from various and respectable quarters; that the maintenance of the poor should be made, by way of equalizing the burthen, national rather than parochial. To this proposal your Committee feel one, among various other difficulties, which appears to them insuperable, and of such a nature and magnitude as to supersede the necessity of entering into the other considerations connected with such a measure. They refer to the impossibility of devising any



adequate means to check the demands upon such a fund, when every excess in parochial disbursements would be merged in the general expenditure of the empire.

If your Committee have been desirous to recommend some gradual but effectual check to the otherwise certain growth, and ultimately inevitable effects of the present system of poor laws, they have not been less attentive to the duty of suggesting every possible means of affording special encouragement and facility to meritorious industry, for rescuing itself from the evils of an habitual reliance on parochial relief, and they have looked to this part of the subject with the more anxiety, from the entire conviction, that, in proportion to the aggregate number of persons who are reduced to this unfortunate dependence, must be not only the increase of misery to each individual, but also the moral deterioration of the people, and ultimately, from the concurrent tendency of these evils, the insecurity and danger of the state itself.

The encouragement of frugal habits would, in any state of society, be an object of importance; but your Committee are strongly impressed with the opinion, that, in the present situation of the poor in this country, it is chiefly by the gradual restoration of a feeling of reliance upon their own industry, rather than upon the parochial assessments, that the transition to a more wholesome system can be effected.

Your Committee have the satisfaction of seeing, that institutions for the secure and profitable deposit of the earnings of the industrious, which was heretofore projected, are now, by the spontaneous exertions of individuals, in actual and successful operation; and from the growth of the system of Saving Banks, they are inclined to expect very beneficial results, not only in affording to the industrious poor a secure deposit for their savings, but in familiarizing them with a practice, of which the advantage will be daily more apparent.

Other institutions founded upon a principal of mutual assurance, are familiar to the people, and as far as they provide for sickness and old age, and some other casualties, have received the sanction of Parliament, under the name of Friendly Societies. Your Committee have reason to believe that these societies, judiciously managed, have in some parishes tended greatly to the melioration of



the condition of the people; but they trust that they may be enabled to set before the people, in a way that they cannot misunderstand, the means of securing their own comfort and happiness, by holding out advantages exceeding in amount any that the existing establishments with which they are familiar can offer, with the certainty of the advantages offered, viz. relief in sickness, and an annuity in old age, being secured by the contribution of the parish. Your Committee is therefore of opinion, that it will be expedient to enable parishes to establish Parochial Benefit Societies, under the joint management of the contributors and the nominees of the parish, calculated to afford greater pecuniary advantages than could result from the unaided contributions of the subscribers. Your Committee trust, that, holding out to the people benefits somewhat superior in amount and security, to any which they can now obtain by the contributions of their earnings, and adding some which are not generally afforded by voluntary association, they may be enabled to render these institutions not less popular than advantageous. They are of opinion therefore, that parishes should be enabled to afford to the contributors a benefit rather greater than that which a table formed on mere calculation would yield; and in order to adapt their new system to the situation of the country, under the administration of the poor laws, your Committee are of opinion, that at the outset of these institutions, parishes should be permitted to place, by contribution from the parochial funds, those who have advanced in years without having made any provision of this nature, on the footing of advantage on which they would have stood, if they had commenced their contributions at an earlier age.

Your Committee is well aware, that under present circumstances the incapacity of individuals to make even the smallest deduction from their wages, may render this species of institution inapplicable in some parts of the country; but they conceive, that it may safely be left to each parish, under the inspection of the local magistracy, to determine upon the propriety of trying the experiment within itself.

The casualties, however, for which friendly societies generally provide, namely, those of sickness and old age,



do not constitute the greater proportion of the demands upon the poors rate which have raised it to its present high amount; a much greater proportion, as they shall have occasion to observe, consists of the allowances distributed in most parts of England to the labouring poor, in addition to their wages, by reason of the number of their children.

Your Committee are of opinion, that parochial benefit societies may furnish facilities for affecting the desired transition, from the present system of relief to one founded upon better principles; and that it would therefore be expedient under the present circumstances of the country, to enable parishes to increase the benefits of the institutions, to an extent beyond the precise result of the contribution required; or, at least, to pay for the admission into those benefits of persons now having large families, and receiving relief on that account. Each parish, considering what it now pays for the maintenance of children, would be the best judge for itself of the policy of adopting this course.

In the view with which the Committee suggest the expediency of affording this assistance from the parochial funds, it is essential that, whatever may be the contribution in the first instance, the parish should have the power of reducing prospectively its proportion, without affecting the rights of existing contributors, so as gradually to render the people dependent upon their own contributions only; but in the mean time they may be used in destroying the familiarity with parish pay, which it is above all things desirable to eradicate.

Your Committee have taken measures for ascertaining by calculation, the operation of societies formed upon the principle which they have recommended; and on this ground, as well as on account of the impracticability of framing any Bill upon this subject in the present session, they forbear from entering into the detail of the arrangements which have occurred to them, as desirable for effectuating their recommendation.

But the House may perhaps think it reasonable, that persons who have the option of partaking in the advantages which it is thus proposed to secure to them, should be subjected to an administration of the laws of relief, rather less favourable than that which is applied to the



community in general; and particularly that the benefits of the Act 36 Geo. III. c. 23, and 54 Geo. III. c. 170. respecting workhouses, should be withheld from such persons.

They cannot, however, quit this topic without observing, that a bill passed this House in the year 1789, having for its object much of what the Committee have now recommended, and accompanied by tables which the Committee have reason to hope may be found useful in arranging any similar measure. One of the tables will be found in the Appendix.

Having submitted to the House such observations as have occurred to them, with respect to the assessment of the poor rate, your Committee proceed to consider the purposes for which it is authorized to be levied, as they regard the persons entitled to relief, and the mode in which it should be administered. These will be found, by a reference to the same part of the fundamental law of Elizabeth, to be directed to—

1st. Setting to work the children of all those whose parents shall not be thought able to maintain them.

2nd. Setting to work all persons having no means to maintain them, and using no ordinary or daily trade to get their bread by.

3rd. The necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them as are poor and not able to work, as well as for apprenticing such children as are before described.

And it appears to your Committee, that the above description and classification of persons entitled to relief has not been intentionally altered by any subsequent statute; that the general term, *the Poor*, contained in all subsequent Acts on this subject, has reference only to the poor as above classed and defined in the 43d of Elizabeth; and though the persons entitled to relief, and the sort of relief, seem to be pointed out with sufficient clearness, yet the practice has in many instances long been at variance with the law. The statute directs the children to be set to work; the almost general practice is to give money to the parents, without any provision for the setting the children to work. The course adopted requires, undoubtedly, less trouble and attention than the providing and superintending proper establishments for their



moral instruction, employment, and maintenance; and this deviation from the injunction of the statute obtained so early as to have attracted the attention of Lord Hale and Mr. Locke; and the Committee cannot but avail themselves of the high authority of a Report of the Board of Trade, in the year 1697, drawn up by Mr. Locke, and confirmed (if it needed confirmation) by the concurrence of the other Commissioners, after an exercise of the full powers of inquiry conferred on them for this purpose by King William the Third, and which appears to your Committee still more applicable to the present moment than to the time at which it was written.

“The children of labouring people are an ordinary burthen to the parish, and are usually maintained in idleness, so that their labour also is generally lost to the public, till they are twelve or fourteen years old. The most effectual remedy for this, that we are able to conceive, and which we therefore humbly propose is, that working schools be set up in each parish, to which the children of all such as demand relief of the parish, above three and under fourteen years of age, whilst they live at home with their parents, and are not otherwise employed for their livelihood, by the allowance of the overseer of the poor, shall be obliged to come. By this means the mother will be eased of a great part of her trouble in looking after and providing for them at home, and so be at more liberty to work; the children will be kept in much better order, be better provided for, and from their infancy be inured to work, which is of no small consequence to the making of them sober and industrious all their lives after; and the parish will be either eased of this burthen, or at least of the misuse in the present management of it; for a great number of children giving a poor man a title to an allowance from the parish, this allowance is given once a week, or once a month to the father in money, which he, not seldom, spends on himself at the alehouse, whilst his children (for whose sake he had it) are left to suffer, or perish under the want of necessaries, unless the charity of neighbours relieve them. We humbly conceive, that a man and his wife in health may be able, by their ordinary labour, to maintain themselves and two children; more than two children at one time under the age of three years will seldom happen in one family; if, therefore, all



the children above three years old be taken off their hands, those who have never so many, whilst they remain themselves in health, will not need any allowance for them. We do not suppose that children of three years old will be able, at that age, to get their livelihoods at the working school; but we are sure, that what is necessary for their relief will more effectually have that use, if it be distributed to them in bread at that school, than if it be given to their fathers in money. What they have at home from their parents is seldom more than bread and water, and that, many of them, very scantily too; if, therefore, care be taken, that they have each of them their bellyfull of bread daily at school, they will be in no danger of famishing; but, on the contrary, they will be healthier and stronger than those who are bred otherwise. Nor will this practice cost the overseer any trouble, for a baker may be agreed with to furnish and bring into the school-house every day the allowance of bread necessary for all the scholars that are there. And to this may be added also, without any trouble, in cold weather, if it be thought needful, a little warm water-gruel; for the same fire that warms the room may be made use of to boil a pot of it. From this method the children will not only reap the forementioned advantages, with far less charge to the parish than what is now done for them, and apply themselves to work, because otherwise they will have no victuals; and also the benefit thereby, both to themselves and the parish, will daily increase; for the earnings of their labour at school every day increasing, it may reasonably be concluded, that computing all the earnings of a child from three to fourteen years of age, the nourishment and teaching of such child, during that whole time, will cost the parish nothing; whereas there is no child now which from its birth is maintained by the parish, but before the age of fourteen, costs the parish fifty or sixty pounds. Another advantage also of bringing poor children thus to a working school is, that by this means they may be obliged to come constantly to church every Sunday along with their schoolmasters or dames, whereby they may be brought into some sense of religion: whereas ordinarily now, in their loose and idle way of breeding up, they are as utter strangers both to religion and morality as they are to industry. In order, therefore, to



the more effectually carrying on this work to the advantage of this kingdom, we further humbly propose that these schools be generally for spinning or knitting, or some other part of the woollen manufacture, unless in countries where the place shall furnish some other materials fitter for the employment of such poor children; in which places the choice of those materials for their employment may be left to the prudence and direction of the guardians of the poor of that hundred; and that the teaching in these schools be paid out of the poor rates, as can be agreed.

“ This, though at first setting up, it may cost the parish a little, yet we humbly conceive that the earnings of the children abating the charge of their maintenance, and as much work being required of each of them as they are reasonably able to perform, it will quickly pay its own charges, with an overplus.

“ That, where the number of the poor children of any parish is greater than for them all to be employed in one school, they be there divided into two, and the boys and girls, if thought convenient, taught and kept to work separately. That the handicraftsmen in each hundred be bound to take every other of their respective apprentices from amongst the boys in some one of the schools in the said hundred, without any money, which boys they may so take at what age they please, to be bound to them till the age of twenty-three years, that so the length of time may more than make amends for the usual sums that are given to handicraftsmen with such apprentices.

“ That those also in the hundred who keep in their hands land of their own to the value of £25 per annum, or upwards, may chuse out of the schools of the said hundred what boy each of them pleases, to be his apprentice in husbandry upon the same condition.

“ That whatever boys are not by this means bound out apprentices before they are full fourteen, shall, at the Easter meeting of the guardians of each hundred every year, be bound to such gentlemen, yeomen, or farmers, within the said hundred, as have the greatest number of acres of land in their hands, who shall be obliged to take them for their apprentices till the age of twenty-three, or bind them out at their own cost to some handicraftsmen; provided always, that no such gentleman, yeoman, or



farmer, shall be bound to have two such apprentices at a time."

There can have been no period at which the literal and faithful execution of the law so strongly recommended, and by such high authority, can have been more indispensable than (at the present moment; and some facilities appear to offer themselves at this time, which have not existed at former periods; the institution of parochial or district schools for education, proposed some years since as the basis of an amended system, are now so generally established and supported by voluntary subscriptions, that they appear to afford the readiest means by which education and industry may be most advantageously united. And if the large sums of money now given to the parents were really bestowed on the maintenance of their children in such schools, it would probably more than defray the expense of such an institution.

The Committee would therefore recommend most earnestly a more faithful execution of the existing law by the establishment of schools for the above purposes; and they believe such institutions would be in all respects more beneficial, if the children were lodged where they would be employed and maintained, for in extensive parishes the daily attendance of the younger class would be impracticable; and where proper establishments for these purposes shall be adopted to the satisfaction of two justices, who shall certify the same, relief should no longer be given on account of such children as shall be of a fit age to be there instructed and maintained. And if it should be found that the 43d of Eliz. aided by the 9th Geo. I. has not provided sufficient means for the accomplishment of its own purpose, new powers should be given to parishes for this end.

In such an execution of the directions of the 43d Eliz. to set to work the children of parents who cannot maintain them, your Committee see, besides the advantages so forcibly above stated, the only remedy for that practice which has prevailed in the South of England particularly, of defraying what should be part of the wages of labour out of the poor rates, according to an uniform scale of relief, to which an undeviating adherence is in some instances required, without reference to any other consi-



deration than the numbers of the family of the claimant, and the amount of their actual present earnings, and the price of bread. Higher wages may have been squandered away, and the actual earnings may be far less than increased and reasonable industry might secure, and yet the amount of relief is unvaried. Such a practice, by placing the idle and industrious upon an equal footing, must necessarily destroy every human motive to exertion; nor does your Committee conceive it to be strictly consonant to law; for an order of relief they apprehend to be invalid that does not adjudge the party to be "impotent" as well as "poor." It has familiarized the labourer to a dependence upon the parish, which he would formerly have considered as a degradation, as imposed upon those contributors to the rate who employ no labourers a most unjust burthen, and has swelled the amount of the assessment to a degree that makes it impossible to ascertain how much should be considered as a relief, properly speaking and how much wages. This deviation from the provisions of the 43d Elizabeth, may perhaps have arisen not only from the neglect of providing proper places for setting to work such children, but from the necessity of abandoning the practice at that time enjoined by law, of regulating the wages of labour, by which it was attempted to bring to one standard the value of each man's labour, which must be in the nature of things unequal; and your Committee would deeply lament, if the continuance of the present low price of labour, and of this practice growing out of it, should create a general wish throughout the kingdom to revive those laws, which have not only been abandoned in practice, but at length repealed by the legislature; whereas, if such children were set to work and maintained as the law directs, this practice would scarcely continue in any great degree to prevail.

On this general head, however, your Committee think it their duty, in pursuance of their wish, to suggest to the House such provisions as may tend to remove the general dependence on the poor rate; to submit for their consideration, whether, 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.

It may also be provided with a similar view, 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.

The next provision of the statute directs the overseers "in like manner, to take order for setting to work "all such persons, married or unmarried, as have no "means to maintain them, and use no ordinary or daily "trade of life to get their bread by;" and it then prescribes the manner in which this is to be done, which is directed to be "by raising a convenient stock of flax, "hemp, wool, thread, iron, or other necessary stuff or "ware, to set the poor on work."

These plain and simple provisions continue to this day to be the rules and authority by which the overseers and magistrates are bound to govern themselves, in setting able-bodied poor to work.

The act of 9 Geo. I. cap. 7, which enables parishes to establish workhouses, was designed to limit, rather than enlarge, the powers above recited; by providing that the work, as above prescribed, should be carried on under the superintendence of the overseers, in houses to be provided for the purpose.

What class of persons it is who are described as "using no ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by," it cannot at any time have been very easy correctly to ascertain; the words were probably, in the first instance, to apply to such persons as appear to have been the object of all the old statutes to which your Committee have before alluded. Your Committee, however, think it extremely doubtful, whether persons who may from time to time be out of work, but who for the most part occupy themselves in a daily trade, ought to be comprehended within the description of the statute.

But whatever may be the class of persons to which the description of the statute applies, it is clear, that the powers of the overseer as to setting them to work, are, by the existing law, confined within narrow limits; they



are to be employed in working "flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, or any other ware or stuff."

Your Committee have already explained the manner in which they think provision should be made for such children as it may be necessary to maintain and employ; it is their duty now to state to the House, their opinions on the subject of providing work for all such persons as may require it. If the object of the statute was merely to set to hard labour such idle wandering persons as might be found in a state nearly approaching to that of vagrancy, such an object might possibly be carried into effect, with a fair hope of beneficial consequences; but if the object of the statute was (as it is now interpreted) that the state is to find work for all, who in the present and in all succeeding time may require it, your Committee are of opinion, that this is a condition which it is not in the power of any law to fulfil. What number of persons can be employed in labour, must depend absolutely upon the amount of the funds which alone are applicable to the maintenance of labour.

In whatever way these funds may be applied or expended, the quantity of labour maintained by them in the first instance, would be very nearly the same. The immediate effect of a compulsory application of the whole or a part of these funds, is to change the application, not to alter the amount of them. Whatever portion is applied under the provisions of the law, would have been applied to some other object had the money been left to the distribution of the original owner; whoever therefore is maintained by the law as a labouring pauper, is maintained only instead of some other individual, who would otherwise have earned by his own industry the money bestowed on the pauper; as long as the amount of the funds remains the same, the effect of a compulsory distribution would not be such as materially to alter the total number of labourers employed; but there are many modes by which the compulsory application under the provisions of a statute, of the funds which provide the maintenance of labour, would tend most materially to place the labouring classes in a much worse condition than that in which they would otherwise be situated.

1st. An increased demand for labour is the only



means by which the wages of labour can ever be raised ; and there is nothing which can increase the demand, but the increase of the wealth by which labour is supported ; if therefore the compulsory application of any part of this wealth, tends (as it always must 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.

2dly. The effects of holding out to the labouring community, that all who require it shall be provided with work at adequate wages, is such as to lead them to form false views of the circumstances in which they are likely to be placed ; as the demand for labour depends absolutely on the amount of the wealth which constitutes its support, so the rate of wages can only be adjusted by the proportion that demand bears to the supply. Now it is on the greater or less degree of nicety in which that supply is adjusted to the demand, that the happiness of the labouring classes absolutely depends.

If the demand for labour increases faster than the supply, high wages are the natural result ; labourers are enabled to provide better for their children ; a larger proportion of those born are reared ; the burthen, too, of a large family is rendered lighter ; and in this manner the marriage and multiplication of labourers are encouraged, and an increasing supply is enabled to follow an increased demand. If, on the contrary, the waste or diminution of wealth should reduce the demand for labour, wages must inevitably fall, and the comforts of the labourer will be diminished, the marriage and multiplication discouraged until the supply is gradually adapted to the reduced demand. It is obvious, that the condition of a country, whilst this latter course is in progress, must be painful ; but it is more or less, so according to the degree in which the foresight of the industrious classes might have prepared them for such a reverse. The habits and customs of the labouring classes in different countries must in a great degree depend on the circumstances which, by affecting the de-



mand for labour, regulate the condition in which they are content to exist. But where prudent habits are established, they avail themselves of a high rate of wages, to better their condition, rather than greatly increase their numbers. In England a labourer would not, formerly, have thought himself justified in marrying unless he had the means of providing himself with many things which in other countries would have been deemed unnecessary luxuries. In a state similar to this, if the labouring classes are met by a fall in wages, they will always have something to spare, which will assist in mitigating any difficulties to which they may be exposed.

Though it is by contemplating the possibility of a reverse that they can alone be stimulated to prepare for it, it is, unfortunately, far less difficult to induce men to neglect all such preparation: 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 law, whilst they profess to compel both labour and wages to be provided, under these circumstances, in reality effect nothing but a more wasteful application of the diminished capital than would otherwise take place: they tend thereby materially to reduce the real wages of free labour, and thus essentially to injure the labouring classes. In this situation of things, not only the labourers, who have hitherto maintained themselves, are reduced, by the perversion of the funds of their employers, to seek assistance from the rate, but the smaller capitalists themselves are gradually reduced, by the burthen of the assessments, to take refuge in the same resource. The effect of these compulsory distributions is to pull down what is above, not to raise what is low; and they depress high and low together, beneath the level of what was originally lowest.



If these views of the effect of undertaking to provide employment for all who want it are founded in truth, there results from them an obvious necessity of abandoning gradually the impossible condition, that all who require it shall be provided with work, which, whether or not, it be the real object of the statute, has by many been held to be so. On this head, your Committee submit, that if the provision which they have pointed out be made for children whose parents cannot maintain them, and the provision also for such as are of the class of poor and impotent be continued, the labouring classes will continue to be relieved from the heaviest part of their necessities. But if any portion of the general and indiscriminate relief which is now given must of necessity be withheld, your Committee think it can be withheld from none by whom the privation could so well be borne, as by those who are in the full vigour of health and strength; it may therefore be worthy of consideration, whether, if under favourable circumstances of the country, the demand for labour should again be materially enlarged, it might not be enacted, that no person should be provided with work by the parish, other than those who are already so provided, and who might be permitted to continue until they could provide for themselves; but if the change by this provision might be thought too rapid, limitations might still be provided, the effect of which would render it more gradual, as by enacting, that none shall be provided with employment who are between the ages of 18 and 30; and then after a certain lapse of time, that none between 16 and 35, 40 and so on, until the object shall be gradually effected.

As whatever money would have been applied to the maintainance of these persons by the means of the poor rate, cannot fail to be employed in some such way as to put other labour in motion, the money thus restored to its natural channel cannot fail to assist in increasing the natural demand for labour; and if the wages of agricultural labour, which are now in so great a proportion paid through the poor rate, were left to adjust themselves by the operation of the market, it could hardly fail to have the effect of gradually raising the wages of labour; for it is the obvious interest of the farmer



that his work should be done with effect and celerity, which can hardly take place unless the labourer is provided according to his habits, with such necessities of life as may keep his body in full vigour, and his mind gay and cheerful.

If, however, it should be thought wise or even practicable to persevere in endeavouring to provide work for all who want it, fresh powers must certainly be devised for that purpose; the narrow limits and the strict specifications by which the existing authority to set to work is confined, have made your Committee somewhat at a loss to ascertain on what legal provision the practices of making up the wages of labour, according to a certain scale, of sending roundsmen, &c. have been imagined to depend. But if labour is to be continued, it would be idle to attempt to prescribe to every parish the means which they should respectively adopt, in order to comply as far as it be possible with such an injunction of the law; and your Committee can only recommend all possible facility of providing employment being given, not so much with a view to the profit to be derived from it, as from the necessity of withholding from idleness the wages that should be due to industry alone; care however should be taken, with a view to the interests of industrious persons, that the local work to be supplied, should be such as will least sensibly interfere with existing occupations and trades. In country parishes, agriculture affords the most obvious and useful source of employment; for though the whole stock of subsistence be thereby increased, yet the cultivator of the land would be more than compensated for any diminution in the value of his produce, by the corresponding diminution of the expense of maintaining his family and labourers, and the more important reduction of the poor rate. Your Committee find, that in the county of Kent it has been thought expedient, in two instances, to carry this practice so far as to establish parochial farms in the parishes of Benenden and Cranbrooke; an account of them, which has been communicated to your Committee, will be found in the Appendix.

If it should be found impracticable or inexpedient, as from the difficulty of providing a careful and economical superintendent over such a concern, it probably may be



in the generality of agricultural parishes, to make such an experiment on so large a scale; yet great benefit might, in the opinion of your Committee, be derived from some parishes being enabled to possess themselves of as much land as might produce at least an adequate supply of provisions for those whom they are bound to maintain, and would afford the means, which otherwise might be wanting, of bringing to the test the willingness to work of some of the applicants for employment; but it would operate still more beneficially, if it enabled parishes collectively, under proper restrictions, to follow the example of those individual proprietors of land, who have been in the practice of letting very small portions of land, on reasonable terms, to industrious labourers, to cultivate on their own account: some of the instances to which your Committee allude will be found in the Appendix; and they cannot too earnestly recommend them to the practice and imitation of those who have similar opportunities. Where the means of providing a supply of productive labour are wanting, the repair of the roads has been found to afford a useful occupation, and it might be expedient to make the duty of the surveyor of the highways more available to the overseer for the purpose of providing employment.

A practice has long prevailed in agricultural parishes in different parts of the kingdom, of sending men out of work to the inhabitants of the parish, in rotation, according to their share of the rate; and this usage has naturally increased as the demand for labour is diminished; as it appears to afford the means of securing some return for the sums paid. It has been generally, and perhaps wisely, arranged in those cases, that the remuneration for such service should be less than the ordinary wages of labour in the parish, that an inducement might remain to such persons to seek employment for themselves. A proportion of the sum has also been usually paid by the overseers out of the rate. This latter practice has been subject to such abuse, as to have rendered this mode of setting persons to work highly objectionable; for the occupiers of land are supposed in many instances to get their work thus performed, and paid for, in a great part, out of the parish fund.

With respect to large towns, in the present state of this



kingdom, your Committee fear the difficulty of fulfilling the obligation of this part of the law must be almost insuperable, notwithstanding all the exertions which can be made to provide useful, if not profitable employment.—Your Committee, therefore, feel that all obstacles to seeking employment wherever it can be found, even out of the realm, should be removed; and every facility that is reasonable afforded to those who may wish to resort to some of our own colonies.

The sums to be raised for the relief of the lame, impotent, &c. your Committee apprehend can be applied, according to the letter of the law, to the relief of such persons only as the justices can conscientiously adjudge to be not only poor, but impotent. For this appears not only by reference to the 43d Eliz. and the adjudged cases, but the 8th and 9th W. III. c. 30. imposes on those receiving relief as such the necessity of wearing a badge, (since repealed) “to the end that the money raised only for the relief of such as are as well impotent as poor, may not be misapplied or consumed by the idle, sturdy, and disorderly beggars.” Notwithstanding which, chiefly from the want of proper means to set to work their children, and the difficulty of finding employment for those out of work, persons, who are avowedly not impotent, have, by a long course of practice, received pecuniary relief on account of the number of their family. Your Committee must, therefore, again state, in how great a degree the faithful execution of the law respecting children would remedy the abuses which have prevailed respecting the administration of pecuniary relief: on this head, therefore, it remains only to consider the mode of giving the relief granted to persons more properly belonging to this class. Whether they should receive the necessary assistance in money, or by a supply of the articles wanted—whether at their own houses, or in workhouses, are questions which it is conceived would be best left to the uncontrolled discretion of their respective parishes.

Your Committee are aware how very frequently workhouses have been condemned, as little corresponding with the denomination they have received; and being rather in truth, in many instances, houses of idleness and vice.—Yet in some parishes, from the want of habitations, such establishments seem to be indispensable, to avoid the



greater evils of granting pensions to out-lying parishioners. If, by the means which your Committee are about to suggest, an improved administration of parochial affairs should be produced, these establishments would undoubtedly derive the immediate benefit of a constant and active superintendence. The proper separation of the respective inmates of such houses can and ought to be regulated at present by the vestry and parish officers, without minute instructions from the Legislature; and whether it be or be not expedient to incorporate different parishes, under Mr. Gilbert's or local acts, must depend entirely on the circumstances of such parishes and the adjoining districts.—As far as your Committee can judge, from the imperfect materials before them, they believe that great benefit has been derived from such institutions, in every case in which they have been superintended by the principal inhabitants of the united district; and that their success and advantage depend almost wholly on that circumstance.—Under such an impression, they think every facility should be given to render that act available for the purpose; thereby saving the expence which has in various instances been incurred, of resorting to the Legislature in particular cases.

It is obviously of the last importance that this enactment respecting the impotent, which was humanely intended to secure the indigent and helpless from actual want, should not be made equally available to the idle and the dissolute. For it is to be recollected, that there will always be a class of persons, and among them the most industrious, who find it difficult, with their utmost labour and exertion, to maintain their families, after having contributed their quota to the assessment. Such is the cultivator of a small farm; of whom it has been said, forcibly and truly, that he “rises early, and it is late before he can retire to rest; he works hard and fares hard, yet with all his labour and his care, he can scarcely provide subsistence for his numerous family. He would feed them better, but the prodigal must *first* be fed; he would purchase warmer clothing for his children, but the children of the prostitute must *first* be clothed.”\* There are others, whose contribution

---

\* Dissertation on the Poor Laws, by the Rev. Joseph Townsend. Written in 1786, and re-published in 1817.



could only be levied by the seizure of that part of their property which the pauper himself is humanely and properly allowed to retain ; till by a late statute (54 Geo. III. c. 170, s. 11.) such persons may be, by magistrates, legally exonerated from the charge.

Your Committee feel, that it is in the execution of this part of the law that a discriminating power has, in practice at least, been chiefly wanting ; such a discrimination as would direct voluntary benevolence in the distribution of its bounty, not excluding wholly from its care even the victims of their own vices, as in some of the numerous charitable institutions by which this kingdom is distinguished.

That such discrimination may be found practicable, your Committee cannot doubt, after the experience afforded by Scotland. The provisions of the law in England and Scotland were almost coeval with each other, and in principle nearly the same ; but the results are so different, that they must be ascribed chiefly to the different mode in which relief, from whatever fund it may have been provided, has been administered. This has arisen perhaps, in a considerable degree, from the different description of persons in whom the raising, managing and distributing the parochial funds is respectively vested ; the heritors and kirk session (*i. e.* the land owners and ministers and elders of the church) being selected in the one case, the churchwarden, and 4, 3, or 2 substantial householders (overseers) to be nominated yearly in the other. Instead therefore of having in this part of the kingdom, persons the most educated, enlightened, and interested in the welfare of the parish, entrusted with the administration of its affairs, we have doubtless a respectable but less enlightened class of persons appointed annually for the purpose ; and however fit for the duty, annual officers of this description may have been in the reign of Elizabeth, it is obvious that the task which now devolves upon them, is of such disproportionate magnitude as to require qualifications to be found only in well-educated persons, and a degree of knowledge and experience which is incompatible with an annual appointment, together with a sacrifice of time which it is unreasonable to expect, when it is inconsistent with the attention due from such persons to their own affairs ; and though your Committee feel that



no enactments can secure a correct judgment and discrimination in the execution of any law, yet they think it not difficult to correct so much of the evil as results from the office being annual, and its duties without remuneration. With this view, therefore, they think it expedient, to enable every parish or township, maintaining their own poor, at any legal meeting called for that purpose, to appoint an officer or officers, with such salary as they shall think fit, to assist the overseers in the execution of their duty, and that two or more parishes or townships might unite for the appointment of such officer, and apply such proportion of their respective rates for the payment of his salary, as shall be agreed upon between them. Such an officer properly selected and remunerated, may be expected so to devote his time and attention to his duty, as to make himself fully acquainted with the character and circumstances of each applicant.

In recommending such an arrangement, your Committee proceed on grounds of experience rather than theory, the practice having been long beneficially adopted in many populous parishes, either under a provision in local acts, or with the unanimous consent of the parishioners. And it would be sufficient strongly to recommend such a practice, if it were not necessary to legalize the payment of the salary; for, according to the present law, the objection of an individual, however unreasonable, may control, in this respect, the wishes of the rest of the parish. Your Committee are also of opinion, that it might in many cases tend to an improved management in parishes, where no such officer with a salary might be appointed, if the present law was so far altered as to admit of any individual rated to a parish, being eligible to fill the office of overseer in such parish, although not actually residing therein, provided the place of his habitual residence should not be distant more than three miles from the church of such parish. Is it not, however, proposed to make such an appointment of an overseer with a salary compulsory, because in many small parishes it may be unnecessary; and your Committee take this opportunity of observing, that they have felt it their duty in other instances to recommend enabling rather than compulsory provisions, from the obvious consideration, that the most judicious measures cannot be equally adapted to the town



and country, to an agricultural and manufacturing population.

Having thus attempted to correct the defective execution, arising from the duration of the office of overseer being only annual, your Committee are of opinion, that the relief and maintenance of the poor might be better administered, if more important assistance could be required from the vestry of each parish, than is usually derived from that quarter. The Legislature has indeed contemplated their interference, but having left it to the body at large, which is not perhaps in populous parishes very conveniently constituted for that purpose, their interposition has in many places been discontinued. Your Committee think it expedient, therefore, to enable parishes, either singly or in union with others, to establish Select Vestries, for the purpose of managing the parochial concerns; and that such select vestries should be annually chosen at a general vestry, and should consist of the minister, or, in his absence, the resident curate (being assessed to the poor rate) the churchwardens, overseers, and as many other substantial householders, not exceeding a limited number, as the majority of such general vestry shall think proper to elect; provided that the amount of the property for which such majority shall be assessed to the poor rate, shall be equal to at least two-third parts of the property for which the whole of the persons attending such general vestry are assessed; and the appointment of such select vestry should be made under the hands and seals of two justices of the peace, in the same manner as the appointment of overseers of the poor has heretofore been made; that such select vestry should meet once in each fortnight, or oftener if necessary, and at such meeting should examine into the state of the poor, determine upon the nature and quantity of relief required, superintend the collection and administration of all funds arising in and belonging to such parishes, as well as the execution of all laws relating to the poor, and which have been heretofore executed by the overseer; and in all cases relative to the poor, except in those of urgent necessity, the interference of justices of the peace, acting in that capacity, shall not be admitted, either directly or indirectly, until reference has been made to such select vestry; but that in cases of extreme necessity the overseers of the poor shall have the power to furnish



temporary relief, or to take such other steps as the urgency of the case may require; and in all such urgent cases in which the overseers of the poor shall have refused or neglected to take cognizance thereof, any justice of the peace acting for the division should, upon complaint, to be verified by oath, inquire into such case; and if he shall find matter which he shall deem of sufficient importance to call for the immediate consideration of the select vestry, he shall have power to require such select vestry to assemble forthwith, and to take such case into consideration; and if such select vestry shall refuse or neglect so to assemble and to consider such case, such magistrate should then have power to make such an order as he would have been empowered to make, had the case been previously considered and determined upon by the select vestry; and where the parties shall not be satisfied with the decisions of such select vestry, they should have a right to apply to two or more justices of the peace, in petty sessions assembled, who, upon the complaint being verified by oath, shall have power to summon the overseers to inquire into and decide upon the merits of the case, and to make such order as they may think proper, stating the grounds upon which they make their adjudication; and in all parishes in which the select vestry shall be established, general vestries shall in future be held within one week after Easter, and within one week after Michaelmas, in each year, for the purpose of consulting and determining upon parochial matters, before which general vestries shall be laid for consideration and approval, the proceedings and accounts of such select vestry, according to the practice of Scotland. It might also be expedient that the accounts of the parish should be kept in a prescribed form.

In such a body, acquainted as they must be with the situation, character, and habits, of the applicants, might well be vested that discretion which is so much wanted to discriminate between the claims of the idle and industrious; and their decisions may, it is hoped, supersede the necessity of those appeals to the magistrates, which have been so numerous as to preclude frequently that attention being given to each particular case, which it might otherwise have received, and perhaps suggested



the adoption of that scale of relief, which has been applied indiscriminately to those whose earnings, so measured, were found insufficient for their maintenance.

The frequent application to magistrates originated, perhaps, in a proviso of the 3d and 4th of William and Mary, c. 11. that no persons, but those registered in a book directed to be kept in each parish, should "receive collection," but by the authority of a justice or the justices in sessions. If any neglect therefore occurred in keeping such register, recourse would naturally and properly be had to the justices; but without such neglect, a probability was afforded of procuring from the justices, that which was refused by the parish officer, insomuch that it should seem from the 9th Geo. I. c. 7. that it had become necessary to check such applications; for it recites "that many persons have applied to some justice of the peace without the knowledge of any officers of the parish, and thereby upon untrue suggestions, and sometimes upon false and frivolous pretences, have obtained relief." It therefore provided that no poor person should be relieved till oath made of a reasonable cause for such relief, and that application had been made in vain to the parish; and the justice is ordered to summon two of the overseers, to show cause why such relief should not be given. But under this statute every person who is dissatisfied with the decision of the overseer, of course applies to the justice, to whom his wants and habits must generally be less known; and in default of the attendance of the officers, which, constituted as the office of overseer is, frequently happens, either from the distance of the magistrate, or from the pressure of other business, an order or recommendation is given on the statement of the applicant. This preventive provision of the 9th Geo. I. appearing therefore to have wholly failed, it is hoped that the intervention of such a select vestry would be more effectual, especially if they were aided by the establishment of the parochial benefit fund, which would afford, after some time, the surest criterion of the industry and providence of each parishioner.

The efficacy however of this as well as of any other expedient which can be suggested, must depend upon some of those who are most interested in the welfare of a pa-



rich, taking an active share in the administration of its concerns. Without this, the Committee are convinced no benefit will be derived from any amendment that can be made in the details of the system; and with it, even under the existing law, much may be effected, as it has been, both in single and in incorporated parishes, where such superintendence prevails; and they think no means are so likely to lead to this desirable practice, as giving to such a part of the vestry as may bear some analogy to the heritors and kirk session of Scotland, a practical and efficient discriminating power in granting relief, still leaving an appeal to the petty sessions open, if the judgment of such a body should be thought erroneous. The heritors and kirk session continue to perform the duty of adjusting the list of the poor; and though, by 3 & 4 W. III. c. 11. the same duty has been enjoined upon the parishioners generally, and none but those in such list are permitted to a share of the assessment, except by order of a justice, your Committee believe that this provision has been so generally neglected, as to be almost forgotten.

One of the cases in which such a discriminating power may be exercised with the greatest justice, occurs not unfrequently where the party is in present want, from having squandered away earnings that would have afforded ample means for the support of a family; in such instances, in conformity with this principle, it might be expedient that there should be a power to advance such sums as may be necessary for the immediate support of the family, by way of loan only, to be repaid by instalments, according to the discretion of the select vestry or magistrates; such a practice would at least be attended with the advantage of securing inquiry and discrimination. The application of the same principle to the wants of persons who are in the receipt of allowances from Chelsea and Greenwich hospitals, leads the Committee to think it expedient to recommend, that, where any person entitled to a pension or other allowance from Chelsea or Greenwich hospital, shall apply for parish relief, the parish officers may require, and any magistrate may authorize and direct the assignment of such pension or allowance for the reimbursement of the parish, such assignment to be made in a short form to be prescribed, to be



of one or more quarterly payments, as the magistrate may think fit, regard being had to the amount of the relief ordered. The parish officers should be required to give immediate notice to the revenue officer of the district who is authorized to pay such pensions, and the parish officers, or their successors, should be authorized to receive the payments when due, according to the tenor of the assignments, subject to account with the pauper before a magistrate.

And as it might contribute materially to the comfort of the persons entitled to such allowances, and tend to prevent the necessity for such applications on their part for relief, if they were enabled to receive the sums due to them weekly instead of quarterly, it is recommended that authority should be given by law to any person entitled to a pension or other provision from Chelsea or Greenwich hospital, to assign such pension to the overseer of the parish in which he may reside, and to provide that upon such assignment being made with the approbation of a magistrate, and registered at Greenwich or Chelsea, it shall be lawful for the overseer to pay to such person out of the poor rates a weekly allowance corresponding to the rate of such pension; and the directors and governors of Chelsea and Greenwich respectively should direct the quarterly issue of any pension so assigned to be paid to such overseer, in reimbursement of the weekly advance, under proper regulations to be made for that purpose. In the one case, the parish will be reimbursed the sums advanced, as in justice it ought to be, and in the other, the temptation to extravagance being removed, the want perhaps will not created.

Having thus considered the description of persons to be relieved, either by employment or pecuniary assistance, it remains to your Committee to direct the attention of the House to the place in which such persons were respectively to be so relieved or set to work, embracing what is termed the Law of Settlement; which, if not the most important branch of the subject in other respects, yet, as it affects the comforts, the happiness, and even the liberty of the great mass of our population, is of the highest interest.

From the reign of Richard II. impotent beggars were



directed to repair to the place of their birth ; afterwards, to the place where they had last dwelled or were best known, or were born, or had “ made last their abode by “ the space of three years.” And such continued to be the law at that period, when funds for the relief of the poor were first raised by a compulsory assessment ; a provision which rendered it still more important to define correctly, what persons were locally entitled to partake of this local fund ; and the 14th Eliz. consequently authorized the removal of persons “ to the place where they were born, or most conversant for the space of three years next before.” And this enactment appears to have remained unaltered by any Act of the Legislature, except in the case of rogues and vagabonds, who were to be sent to their last dwelling, if they had any ; if not, to the place where they last dwelt by the space of one year ; though decisions of the courts of law seem to have considered a month’s abode, or a residence of forty days, in some cases sufficient to gain a settlement. The doubts which, however, existed on this subject, were removed by 13 & 14 Car. II. c. 12, which established a new system, imposing a restraint on the circulation of labour, essentially affecting the domestic comforts and happiness of the poor, and giving rise to various subsequent provisions, which have become the fruitful source of litigation.

The statute enacts, that, “ whereas by reason of some defects in the law, poor people are not restrained from going from one parish to another, and therefore do endeavour to settle themselves in those parishes where there is the best stock, the largest commons or wastes to build cottages, and the most woods for them to burn and destroy ; and when they have consumed it, then to another parish, and at last become rogues and vagabonds, to the great discouragement of parishes to provide stocks, when it is liable to be devoured by strangers : Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall and may be lawful, upon complaint made by the churchwardens or overseers of the poor of any parish, to any justice of the peace, within forty days after any such person or persons coming to settle, as aforesaid, in any tenement under the yearly value of 10*l*. for any two justices of the peace, whereof one to be of the quorum, at



the division where any person or persons that are likely to be chargeable to the parish shall come to inhabit, by their warrant to remove and convey such person or persons to such parish where he or they were last legally settled, either as a native householder, sojourner, apprentice or servant, for the space of forty days at the least, unless he or they give sufficient security for the discharge of the said parish, to be allowed of by the said justices."

But as a settlement would be thus gained by 40 days residence, and that residence might not be matter of notoriety, when such a natural inducement would exist to conceal it, by a subsequent act the 40 days residence is to be reckoned not from the day of the person coming to inhabit, but from the time at which he gives a notice in writing to one of the parish officers of his abode, and the number of his family. But even this precaution against a clandestine residence was not enough to prevent such notice being defeated by the inattention and misconduct of the officers; and it was therefore further provided, that such notice should be published in the church and registered; it was felt necessary, however, to provide that the following persons should be deemed to have a legal settlement in the parish, though no such notice in writing be delivered or published:

1st. Any person executing a public annual office in the parish, or paying parish taxes.

2d. Any unmarried person, without child or children, hired for one year.

3d. Any person bound an apprentice by indenture.

Notwithstanding these exceptions, the mischief of making the labouring classes thus stationary appears to have been soon felt, and the expedient was adopted of granting certificates by the major part of the parish officers, and allowed by two justices, acknowledging the persons removing to belong to their parish, undertaking to provide for them whenever they may be forced to ask relief of the parish to which such certificate is brought; in that case they were irremovable till actually chargeable; but in that event they might be conveyed to their place of settlement. By these means, it was hoped, that those who were in want of work in one parish might be enabled to seek it in another, notwithstanding the provisions of the 13 & 14



Ch. II. which restrained them from carrying their labour to the best market.

By a subsequent act, care was taken that no settlement should be gained by a residence under such certificate, unless the party took a lease of a tenement of the annual value of 10*l.* or executed some annual office, being legally placed therein. And by the 12th Anne, c. 18, an apprentice or a hired servant to a certificated person, could not by virtue of the apprenticeship, or hiring and service, gain any settlement in such parish. Another act was passed to ensure the regular execution of such certificate, by the attestation of witnesses, and again for the more certain reimbursement by the certifying parish, of the expenses attendant on the removal of the certificated person. After all, it was solemnly decided, that the granting these certificates was quite discretionary both with regard to the parish officers and the magistrates. And such continued to be the only means by which this restraint on the free circulation of labour could be avoided, till in the thirty-fifth year of the present reign, the privilege of persons not being removed till actually chargeable, which had been recently conferred on members of friendly societies, was extended by a law which deserves perhaps more notice and applause than it has received, and the liberty of removing from place to place was made no longer to depend upon the will and judgment either of parish officers or magistrates, but the removal of poor persons was prevented till they were actually chargeable.

No material alteration has been made in the law of settlement since this act; and the result of the various enactments on this subject now is, that every poor person when entitled to parochial relief, can claim it only (except in cases of sudden accident or calamity) in that parish in which he has resided during forty days, either on an estate of his own, if purchased of the value of 30*l.* or in a tenement rented by him of the annual value of 10*l.* or under indentures of apprenticeship, or having served a year under a yearly hiring, as an unmarried man, without a child, or by executing a public annual office during the year. If a settlement has been acquired by neither of these means, the father's settlement becomes that of his issue; if that be unknown, the mother's; and if that also should not be ascertained, recourse must be had to the



place of birth, which is also (with certain exceptions) the place of settlement of illegitimate children, till they have acquired another by one of the modes described by the statute above enumerated. Persons not born within the kingdom, and who have acquired no settlement by either of the above means, are by the humane interpretation of the law to be relieved, in case of necessity, in the parish in which they are found.

These various provisions have given rise to a course of expensive and embarrassing litigation, of which a very inadequate measure would be formed by reference to the cases, numerous as they are, which have been reported in the superior court; for supposing all that have been there decided to have been reported, still they are decisions of such questions of law only as seemed doubtful to the magistrates and courts below, exclusive of the infinitely greater number of questions of fact, on which it is the peculiar province of the justices alone to decide, either in the first instance, or by way of appeal; and it may perhaps be added, that on no branch of the law have the judgments of the superior court been so contradictory. A better judgment may perhaps be formed by a reference to the sums expended in litigation, and the removal of paupers at different periods. These sums amounted in 1776, to 35,072*l.*; in 1786, to 35,791*l.*; in 1803, 190,072*l.*; in 1815, 287,000*l.* And it appears that the appeals against orders of removal, entered at the four last quarter sessions, amount about 4,700. Great however as the inconvenience confessedly is of this constant and increasing litigation, there are still other effects of the law of settlement, which it is yet more important to correct; such are the frauds so frequently committed by those who are intrusted to prevent even the probability of a burthen being brought on their parish; and such are the measures, justifiable undoubtedly in point of law, which are adopted very generally in many parts of the kingdom, to defeat the obtaining a settlement; the most common of these latter practices is that of hiring labourers for a less period than a year; from whence it naturally and necessarily follows, that a labourer may spend the season of his health and industry in one parish, and be transferred in the decline of life to a distant part of the kingdom. If the means cannot be found of wholly removing both the mischief of litigation, and the hardship that in particular and not unfre-



quent instances attends the operation of this part of the law, still the Committee hope much may be done to mitigate both. The entire abrogation of the law of settlement has indeed been suggested, and the suggestion has generally been accompanied with a proposal to maintain the poor from a national fund, in order to relieve particular places from the pressure which might in that case arise from an accumulated number of paupers. But believing, for reasons which have been stated in a former part of this report, to which it more properly belongs, that transferring these funds from parishes to the government, would be on various grounds in the highest degree inexpedient, the Committee cannot but feel, that as long as a provision for the poor is raised by compulsory parochial assessments, some means must continue to exist of assigning them to their respective parochial limits; and they are satisfied, that something short of a total repeal of the law of settlement, yet going further than all the various minor alterations which have been suggested from different parts of the kingdom, would simplify the law so much, as to reduce the subject of litigation to a very few questions of fact, place the maintenance of those who want relief upon a far more just and equitable footing, and at the same time consult in the greatest degree the comfort and happiness of the poor themselves. With these views, your Committee recommend, that in future any person residing three years in a parish, without being absent more than months in each year, and without being in any manner chargeable, should obtain a settlement in such parish; and to prevent as far as possible this fact becoming the source of such litigation as frequently arises, from the difficulty of ascertaining the most simple facts, by the evidence of the paupers themselves, it might be permitted that after such residence was completed, a deposition of the fact might be made by the party before two justices, after notice given to the overseers. Your Committee are persuaded, that if service was required to be combined with residence, it would not only render the provision complicated, but would prevent a settlement being acquired within either of the parishes in which the person serves or resides. And it is recommended, that no person, from a day to be named, shall acquire a settlement, by renting a tenement, serving an office, hiring and service for a year, apprenticeship or



estate. With respect to such poor persons who, not being natives of England, may be without a settlement, the influx of them to particular places has been so great and oppressive, that the Committee think provision should be made for passing such persons, upon their application for parochial relief, to the nearest ports or places, from which they may return to their native country; but that any native of the British Empire shall acquire a settlement in any parish in which he may have resided five years without being chargeable.

It is not to be supposed that such an abrogation in future of the 13 & 14 Car. II. and all that has been built upon that statute, can be wholly exempt from inconvenience: but the only objection that has appeared entitled to serious consideration, is founded on an apprehension that it might tend to the reduction of the number of cottages, a consequence which would be undoubtedly much to be lamented; but the inconvenience of driving labourers to a distance from the farms which they cultivate, would tend, it is hoped, to counteract the evil; for it is chiefly from motives of this sort, that such tenements are in many instances at present upheld. It will, however, be for the House to consider whether the advantages resulting from such a change are not calculated to counterbalance this, which the Committee deem the only substantial objection to the alteration; recollecting always, that inconveniences must be inseparable from such a compulsory provision for the poor, as exists in this part of the United Kingdom alone.

Your Committee, however, may cite in support of their opinion, the authority of the accurate and judicious author of the History of the Poor Laws, who says, "It must be owned, the statute of the 13th and 14th Ch. II, hath exceeded, perhaps, the due bounds. If alterations should be thought requisite, it is submitted, whether it might not be reasonable to reduce the settlement to where it was before that statute, to wit, to the place of birth, or of inhabitancy for one or more years. For so long as this was the plain simple settlement, there were very few disputes in the courts of law about settlements. It was the easy method of obtaining



a settlement by residency of forty days, that brought parishes into a state of war against the poor, and against one another; and caused the subsequent restrictive statutes to be made, all which would fall of course, by reducing the settlement to its ancient (and indeed most natural) standard."

To state the advantages attending the alteration fairly, it is necessary to direct the attention of the House to the sort of questions which arise out of each of the heads of settlement proposed to be abrogated.

In the case, for instance, of a settlement being supposed to be acquired by renting a tenement of the annual value of 10*l*. the question in dispute generally respects the value. If it may be really not far from that sum, and the family of the pauper be numerous, the interests of the contending parishes, supported by the conflicting opinion of their respective surveyors, leads to the utmost expense and extremity of litigation.

But this question of fact has not been the only subject of dispute. The kind of tenement, and the nature of the tenure, will be found by a reference to the reports of the King's Bench, to have given rise to the most difficult and numerous questions; the same reference will afford a still greater variety of intricate questions, and of conflicting decisions, respecting hiring and service; as to who may be hired, as servants, what the contract of hiring, whether general, special, customary, retrospective, conditional, personal; hiring, service in different places, with different masters, of marriage during the service, and absence from service.

The settlement by serving an apprenticeship has also its various decisions, arising out of the nature of the binding, the time of the service, the place of the service, the discharging the indentures, and the service with different masters, the execution of indentures, and stamps. The last head of settlement by estate, it is obvious, besides the question of value, which, in case of purchase, must amount *bonâ fide* to 30*l*. involves necessarily some of the most intricate questions respecting real property and testamentary bequests and devises. The Committee are persuaded they need do no more than refer to these several heads of litigation to show its extent; and that minor alterations in any of these, while each head of set-



tlement is retained, would only lead to new questions. It has, for instance, been suggested, that the rent of the tenement should be substituted for its value; but the question would then be shifted, and every agreement for a rent a little above or a little below 10%. would be impugned as collusive. Raising the sum from 10%. to 20%. has been also suggested, and would have its advantages by diminishing litigation; but it would at the same time increase the difficulty of charging a settlement, and, consequently, of permitting skill and labour to find its best market. It has been proposed also to the Committee from various quarters, that under the head of hiring and service, a contract of hiring should be dispensed with, and service for a year confer a settlement. But your Committee fear, that the same means which are now successfully adopted to prevent a settlement from being obtained under this head, would in that case operate more prejudicially to the labourer, by preventing his remaining a year in one place; at present he can do so, under successive hirings, for a shorter period. If these apprehensions are well founded, the change would be most prejudicial to him, and so impolitic in its effects, as to counteract any advantage which could be derived from such diminution of litigation. These are among the reasons for which the Committee suppose that no alteration, short of that which they venture to propose, would have the effect of removing the evil of litigation incident to the present law of settlement. But it is to the labouring class of the community that they conceive this great alteration would be most beneficial. It would insure their being maintained, where they had maintained themselves, where they would be more likely, if meritorious persons, to experience in case of need the kindness of real benevolence. It is hoped also that it might operate as an inducement to active and faithful service on the one hand, and on the other, to prevent such service being interrupted by an interested consideration for parochial funds. And they propose this alteration with the more confidence, because they thereby recommend the restoration of that law, which was coeval with parochial contributions, whether voluntary or compulsory; and because it is still the existing law in that part of the United Kingdom, Scotland, where the local manage-



ment and maintenance of the Poor has been best conducted.

There are some other suggestions of inferior importance, which have not found a place in the foregoing part of the Report, to which your Committee would refer before they conclude their observations.

It appears desirable, that justices out of sessions should have the power, which they can now only execute in sessions, of making orders of maintenance on near relations.

That a power should also be given to enable overseers to recover by a summary process, the possession of tenements which they may have rented and used for the accommodation of the poor, without being driven to the tedious and expensive proceeding by way of ejectment.

Your Committee moreover think, that the vexation and expense of removals might, in some instances, be saved, by an arrangement for postponing the execution of the order, till after a final decision in case of appeal.

It is also suggested, that the power given by the Mutiny Act (vide 56 Geo. III. cap. 10, sect. 70,) "to any justice of the peace, where any soldier shall be quartered, in case such soldier have either wife, child, or children, to examine such soldier as to the place of his last legal settlement, and which requires him to give an attested copy to such soldier, of any affidavit made by him in this respect, in order to be produced when required; and which provides that such attested copy shall be at any time admitted in evidence, as to such last legal settlement," be extended to any person confined in any goal or place of safe custody in Great Britain, provided that such copy of the examination shall not be admitted in evidence after the discharge of such prisoner.

By the act 22 Geo. III. c. 83, it is provided, that when any application shall be made to a justice of the peace for relief, such justice shall not summon the guardian, unless application shall have been first made by the applicant to the guardian, and if he refuses redress to the visitor. In incorporated parishes, the visitor is frequently from ten to fifteen miles distant from the residence of the pauper, and frequently absent from home. Some alteration in the law appears necessary to obviate this inconvenience.



Your Committee have thus stated to the House the result of a laborious investigation, which has been protracted to a period of the session which precludes their proposing at present such legislative enactments as it might be thought fit to adopt. They cannot, however, regret this circumstance; for, conceiving that the House expected at their hands a general revision of the whole system of our Poor Laws, in which, though it be not difficult to point out inconveniences and mischiefs, yet the task of providing practical remedies is so arduous, that your Committee is persuaded, that even more time and labour would not have been misspent in considering further the various provisions of the law, and the numerous proposals which, from different quarters, have been submitted to their judgment. The House also will not be called upon to adopt any of the suggestions of this Report, till an ample opportunity will have been afforded to correct any errors in the judgment of your Committee, or to confirm their opinions: and this delay will above all be salutary, if the lapse of time, aided by a more favourable season, should restore the kingdom in some degree to its wonted and healthy state. For, though a period of depression and distress may bring out more prominently the weak and unsound parts of the system, it is obvious that the application of the most effectual remedies is at such a moment of more than ordinary difficulty. And if it should be the pleasure of the House that the consideration of this subject should be resumed in the next Session of Parliament, no inconsiderable advantage will be derived from that mass of information contained in the returns in 1815, to which they have not yet had access, and from a further valuable accession of detailed accounts of the admirable practice of Scotland.

*July 4, 1817.*



# MINUTES

OF

# EVIDENCE.

*Jovis, 27<sup>o</sup> die Februarij, 1817.*

**The Right Hon<sup>ble</sup> WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE,**

**in the Chair.**

**Mr. John Heaver called in, and examined.**

**ARE** you one of the present overseers of the parish of Christ Church Spitalfields?—**I am.**

**Is this the first year of your serving in that office?—**  
**It is.**



Are you a native of that parish?—No, I am not.

How long have you lived in it?—About ten years.

The population of your parish, according to the last return to Parliament, was about sixteen thousand?—Sixteen thousand two hundred.

That amounts to a little more than when the former census was taken in the year 1801?—I believe it does; but very little.

Have you any reason to suppose the population has increased since, or otherwise?—I think it has increased.

Is the bulk of that population employed in manufactures?—Chiefly so; or has been.

Are your poor maintained under any local Acts of Parliament applying to your parish alone, or under the general Poor Laws?—Under a local Act.

Have you that Act?—I have not.

Can you tell in what the provisions of that local Act differ from the general provisions of the Poor Laws?—I cannot.

Can you tell us the number of persons who have been wholly maintained or partially relieved by your poor rate in the last year?—They amount to nearly 3,000.

Can you distinguish between those who have been wholly maintained from the poor rate, and those who have been partially relieved?—The average number of paupers that have been maintained in the house alone, has been, for the last ten weeks 564, and 21 children out at nurse, which is 585 souls.



They derive their whole subsistence from the poor rate?—The whole.

How many are there who have received relief out of the poor house?—Upon the average about 360 persons per week; 96 by the renter warden, and 50 by the overseer of the week; and taking those upon the average at four in a family, it is 2,000 individuals.

From what time do you date, that so large a number have received relief?—From the 19th of last December to the 20th instant.

Are those who are maintained in the workhouse, maintained by contract with any individual, or under the officers of the parish?—Under the officers of the parish.

You say there were 564 in the house, and that there were 21 children out at nurse, the question is whether you can tell whether the others out of the house who receive relief, any of them are wholly maintained by parochial assistance?—They are not.

Tell the Committee the sums that have been raised within the last year for the maintenance of the poor?—About 8,000*l.* sterling, as nearly as possible.

From what dates?—From the average of the quarters; we make our rate quarterly, and the book is 2,200*l.* a quarter; but we fall off about 200*l.* in a quarter.

Have you any account of the rates raised in former years?—I have not.

Perhaps you cannot tell the Committee without such?—They have never been less than 6,000*l.* in any former year.

How far do you mean to go back?—There has been but one alteration, and that was three years ago; and then it was increased to about 8,000*l.* a year.



What is the amount and the nature of the property which is so assessed?—The rental of the parish is 28,933*l*.

At what proportion is that rental assessed; is it a rack-rent?—It is a complete rack-rent; in many instances the land-tax is put on the rent to enhance the rental.

Is any employment found for those who are in the work-house?—There is at present that of weaving bunting.

Who are so employed?—The men chiefly who are weavers.

Is there any employment for the women and children?—Not particularly. I believe winding the silk when they can get it; there is very little employment now for them.

Do those who receive relief out of the house, receive it in the shape of money, without having any work to do for it; or is work given to them for which they are paid?—They receive it in money without any reference to work at all; we cannot come at any actual knowledge what that may gain; we endeavour to ascertain it as far as possible by our visiting them.

Can you speak to the expenses to which your parish has been put in the removal of the poor, either from your parish or to it? have you had any appeals in the course of the last year?—Yes, to Hicks's Hall.

Can you tell what your law expenses generally in the course of the year have been?—From 150*l*. to 200*l*. a year; that is, to the vestry clerk.

It is meant, the expenses of litigation in taking the opinion of counsel, or in the actual removal, or in appeals against removal?—I should think that would not come to more than 100*l*. a year; we have near London what are termed "friendly orders."



What do you mean by "friendly orders?"—A printed paper, that when a pauper comes we fill up to the parish where he wishes to go; we insert his name, and get from him what we can, whether he belongs to the parish by apprenticeship, or renting a house, or by any other means, and we sign our name, and they accept it.

Do they accept that of course, without an order of removal?—Yes.

That is an understanding between the parishes?—Yes.

What parishes?—Mile-end, Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, Bishopsgate, and Whitechapel.

If a pauper wishes to remove himself from one parish to another, does he obtain one of those friendly passes, and go there?—Very often they apply for it; sometimes we find they belong to another parish, and then they are requested to go to the house of the overseer, and they have one of those orders.

Do you give those friendly orders as matter of course?—In case of a friendly order being disputed, it is generally written upon the back by the officer of the parish where the pauper is carried to, and then immediately we take them to the magistrate, upon their oath, whether they belong to the parish or not.

Can you tell the Committee under what head of settlement the bulk of your poor are fixed in your parish?—Generally by rental.

Do you apprehend that a great portion of them were not born in the parish?—I should think the major part were.

Is the word "disputed" only written upon this friendly order, or are the grounds of dispute stated?—No, not at all; they generally say we consider the pauper does not belong to us, and he comes back again, and we take him



to the magistrate, and go through the course prescribed by the law.

And that practice arises out of the confidence one parish has in another?—Yes.

Is every individual who is relieved out of the house, relieved at a specific rate?—We believe them as near as possible, according to the situations of their families.

You endeavour to make up the sum necessary for their relief?—Yes; and there is no case relieved but what has been often visited by the officers of the parish, and no fresh case is taken without visitation.

And you inquire into the earnings?—We go into the habitation of the pauper.

And you compare his statement of his earnings with what you can ascertain from the master?—Yes.

The actual relief will vary in every year according to the price of provisions?—Yes.

In relation to the price of bread principally?—Yes.

What is the maximum you at present give? what is your way of estimating the amount you give?—We have a table of ratio; I cannot immediately say off hand what they are, but every day they have so much meat, so much bread, so much butter, so much tea, so much sugar, and every day it varies.

Given in kind, or in money?—In kind; the relief given to those out of doors is given in money.

According to what scale?—We have no scale; we give them according to their distresses.

Then two persons having a wife and the same number of children receive the same quantum of money?—As nearly as possible.



Suppose a man gets nothing, and has a wife and child, what would you give him?—We give him half a crown, three shillings, or three and sixpence.

Why does that so vary?—It depends upon the nature of their distress.

How do you ascertain the nature of their distress?—By visiting.

It cannot depend upon the number of children, but upon the capacity of those children to assist in the maintenance of the family?—In a great measure.

Of course it must vary from year to year; but have you no rate in this year which you consider as the maximum to relieve a person that gets nothing?—No; we do not go beyond five shillings.

Is that for a single man?—No, for a family.

Whatever the number of the children are?—Whatever the number of children may be.

What do you give to an old person who is past his work, and can do nothing?—We give him eighteen-pence or two shillings a week.

What is the highest sum you give to a person in that situation?—Two shillings.

And five shillings a week is the utmost in any case?—Yes, at the committee that is the utmost they get; but they frequently apply to the overseer, and get something extra, an extra shilling or so.

Did you say five shillings was the maximum of what you allow in any case to a family?—Yes.

In the event of a man being disabled by ill health, and having five or six young children, would you restrain the relief to five shillings?—We generally in that case write them into the house.

Then that is the maximum of your out-door relief?—Yes, because we cannot see them starve, and therefore write them in at once.

In administering relief to persons at home, is that done by the officers themselves, or have the magistrates to order it?—No, it is very seldom the magistrates have interfered.

Have they ever interfered?—No.

Supposing the pauper to be dissatisfied with the allowance made by the overseer, what means has he of appeal?—He goes to the magistrate and gets a summons.



You will be so good as to state, whether in point of fact the paupers when dissatisfied apply to the magistrate, and obtain an order for relief?—They do sometimes, but very seldom.

What is the maximum granted by the magistrate?—The magistrate does not stipulate any sum; we give the man what we think proper.

What has the magistrate ever ordered in your knowledge?—They never order any thing with those summonses.

What is the nature of their order?—"This complainant maketh oath that he is out of employment, and wants relief;" we give him a shilling or two shillings, and he goes away.

If he is not satisfied?—We meet him at the magistrate's the next morning.

What is the utmost sum given on such an order?—That I cannot tell; I never was present before the magistrate, but I understand he always leaves it to the overseer.

You have stated that 564 persons are accommodated in the poor house?—Yes.

What has been the number in former years?—The average of three months, from the 1st of January 1815 to the 30th of March was 327; the average for the next three months 324; the average for the next was 306; the average of the latter three months 388. The year 1816 has considerably increased: the first quarter of 1816 is 466, the second quarter 472, and the third quarter 450; the fourth quarter 533, and there are at present in the house 545; there were the other day 570 and 580.

What do you consider the capacity for accommodation of the workhouse in your parish; what number ought to be accommodated?—It will not accommodate more than 400 well; there are many of them now three and four in a bed, and I believe the boys are six; the master told me so. If the house was spacious enough, I think I could write in a hundred families to-morrow.

You are not unacquainted with the local law that applies to this parish?—I am not.

Does the common law, as to the amount of rent, 10*l.* give a settlement in your parish?—Yes, it does; or four shillings a week will give a settlement, if the pauper has resided there six weeks.

Do you happen to know whether any of the adjoining parishes have local laws, by which a higher rent is requisite?—No, I believe not.



Do you not attribute the great increase of your poor to that ground of settlement, *videlicet*, rental of four shillings a week for six weeks?—No, I do not.

You do not suppose you have any accidental poor fixed upon you by that arrangement?—No, I do not.

What do you conceive to be the effect of that facility of obtaining settlement, as to your immediate poor?—That is a question I cannot immediately answer.

Do you know whether this local law, which applies to the parish of which you have been speaking, does not exclude many opulent parts in the vicinities, which, previous to that local law, would have been called in aid to your poor?—Yes.

Is there any part of the city of London within your parish?—No, it is all in the county of Middlesex.

How then was the city of London excluded by any particular Act?—They do not at all contribute or assist in any way; many parishes in the city have not a single pauper; the ward of Cheap has none.

Why do you suppose Spitalfields has any claims upon the city of London?—We have a claim on them; for many weavers are employed by city masters, and when out of employ, fall on our parish, by their residence in it.

When a pauper applies for relief, do you at all inquire into the causes of the necessity for that relief; whether any part of it arises from his own idleness?—We inquire into every particular.

Suppose the man appears not to have done his utmost to get his living, do you grant the same relief to him as if he was an industrious man?—Certainly not.

You give him less?—Certainly; and tell him, the cause of it is from his own inactivity; the paupers are so numerous, we cannot do our duty as we ought.

Do you find any difficulty in collecting your rate?—No, we collect it tolerably well.

You have no great arrears?—I cannot say what they are, but the collector mentioned, that in the rate, which is two thousand one hundred and sixty-nine pounds per quarter, the deficiency is about from eighty to one hundred pounds; that makes it about eight thousand pounds a year.

Under what classes of settlement do the paupers appear to be settled on the parish; are the great class settled by apprenticeship or by rental?—Chiefly by rental.



Is it chiefly under that six weeks class?—No; many of them have been there twenty or thirty years.

In making your rate, are there any persons who do not receive relief from the parish, whom you exempt from the rate on account of their circumstances, or does the rate go to the lowest of those who do not receive relief?—Many are exempt.

Forming a middle class between those receiving relief and those that pay?—Yes.

Is that done in consequence of any powers given you by your local Act to make that exemption, or at the discretion of the overseer?—I believe it is chiefly done by appeal before the magistrates.

What do you mean by an appeal before the magistrates?—There is a day appointed after the collector has called, and the person states his inability to pay; a day is fixed for two magistrates to attend; they attend, and relieve the party with the assistance of the overseer.

Is that in consequence of any provisions in your Act or not?—I think there is a provision for it, because we have been waiting sometimes till we could get two magistrates.

You made some mention in the course of your evidence, of the committee who decided in the first instance the quantum of relief to be given to a pauper?—Yes.

How is that committee formed?—Of the four overseers and two wardens; and generally by the governors who have served those offices.

Is the constitution of that committee such as is directed by your local Act?—I believe it is.

You have stated, that the employ of the poor in the house was in the manufacture of bunting; how is that bunting disposed of?—The material is not found by us.

Are the materials with which the bunting is made, spun in the house?—At present it is.

Who furnishes those materials?—Courtney & Sons, in the Old Jewry.

They furnish the raw material?—Yes.

After the material has been spun and the bunting manufactured, is it returned to the person who furnishes the raw material?—Certainly.



In what way is the money applied for the manufacture of that article?—The money is received by the master of the work-house, and applied to pay bills for the house and other things.

Could this manufactory be carried on to a greater extent if you had more room in your house: could you get a larger demand for it?—Certainly not; the greatest extent the master could get was about thirty-five looms.

The greatest extent is an employment for those thirty-five looms?—Yes.

Have you those thirty-five looms employed in your house?—Yes.

Then all the bunting wanted by the gentlemen you have named, is made in Spitalfields?—I do not believe all; because they have a manufactory at Norwich.

Are you aware of any means by which the poor out of the house could be in any way employed by you?—None; they are chiefly weavers, and there is no employment to be got but when the weaving trade is good; and they are men of that description, that they cannot turn their hands to hard labour; many of them are women, and others are disabled.

Has it entered into your consideration that a man who having had work for a period of time beyond what was necessary for his maintenance, had laid by nothing, is entitled to more or less than the allowance you would give him?—Very often it does; and we ask them (many I have known) why did not you lay by from the money you have earned.

Suppose you find that a man has realized in any way any sort of property, are there any instances of your giving relief without his parting with that property in the first instance, or do you think it your duty to insist he shall sell what he has?—Certainly not his furniture and those things.

You respect that in his possession, and leave it in his possession?—Yes, we assist them to keep it in their possession.

Do you do that from thinking it useful to the parish to do so?—Yes certainly; otherwise we must write them into the work-house.

You have stated that the whole amount of the rates collected is 8,000*l.* annually; what part of that is appropriated to the poor-house, and what part to casual relief?—According to my recollection, for the ten weeks, averaging the money which has been there expended, it was 141*l.* a week for the house, which is at the rate of five shillings and a penny per head per week.



And the remainder is appropriated to occasional relief, and law expences?—Yes, many who sleep a night at some of the lodging houses, come to the overseer and get a shilling.

You do not know how much that takes of your rate?—It was made out, but I have not got the paper.

Can you furnish the Committee with such a paper?—I can; I think about 10 *l.* a week the casual poor which do not belong to the parish.

Is that eighty to a hundred pound that you state as an arrear, an ultimate loss?—I believe an ultimate loss.

Is it a much greater loss than you have usually had?—No, the fair average I believe, for several years.

Has the loss increased of late?—No, I think not.

Do you think there are any means of preventing idleness and dissoluteness in the workhouse, in the present state of labour; does it arise from the constitution of the workhouse system, or from the management of the work?—My mentioning that was merely as to the present system, because the major part of the people in the workhouse have been employed in the silk trade, and not having a sufficient employment for them, they become idle for want of that employment; and we cannot turn them to make shoes or any thing else, because they are weavers, and many incapable of very hard labour.

Does the loss of 80 or 100 *l.* arise chiefly from removal or from paupers?—Chiefly from persons not being able to pay.

And therefore those are cases where you do not think it right to enforce the law by a warrant of distress?—Certainly not.

Are there frequent instances of men earning their own livelihood, after passing any length of time in the workhouse?—Sometimes they do; if there is work in the weaving trade, a great number will go out; several now are employed by the Lord Mayor in cleaning bricks, on the part where Old Bethlem stood, and we get rid of the men out of the house.

Is it a large portion of them who get habits of idleness in the workhouse to such an extent that they do not support themselves again?—No.

Can you state a sort of average length of time that a pauper remains in the workhouse?—The aged remain for life, and the others according to the employment they can get; when there is work they go out.



Are not a great number of children in the workhouse?—I think there are about 130 boys and girls.

At what age are the boys usually put out from the workhouse?—I cannot immediately answer that; we bind them out to different things; the boys go out weekly to some employment from eight years of age.

Do not they altogether at some age quit the house, and support themselves by labour?—Not altogether, unless we bind them out as apprentices.

Have you many instances of boys continuing as adults in the workhouse?—Not many; very few indeed; I suppose there may not be ten out of the 130.

Describe the manner in which they are able to provide for themselves when they come to sufficient age, after being reared in the workhouse?—The master generally seeks employment for them to carpenters or bricklayers at so much a week; it is his duty to do that, and he does it as far as it lies in his power.

Do not they quit the workhouse, and provide for themselves by their labour?—If they are steady they do.

Are the greater proportion of them so steady as to be able to support themselves?—Yes, the boys are well inclined, and generally the girls too.

Has the workhouse the effect of rendering the boys idle and dissolute?—Certainly not.

Be so good as to describe in what manner you are able to find employment and provision for the girls educated in the workhouse?—By getting slopwork for them; working at the needle.

Do the girls quit the workhouse and provide for themselves by their labour, when they are of sufficient age to do so?—Very often they go to service; the mistress of the house and those interested make a point of inquiring who wants a steady girl, and put them out as fast as they can.

And for the most part are the habits they acquire idle and dissolute, or steady and industrious?—Steady and industrious, for the most part; they are strictly attended, and well attended as to going to church, and every thing else.

You stated the amount of the rack rent of the parish to be 28,933 £.; will you describe upon what property that is assessed; is it houses and lands?—Houses only.



Are there no lands of a garden description, or agricultural description?—None at all.

And the assessment is at the rent at which the houses are let?—As nearly as possible, ascertained by the rent paid.

Will you describe to the Committee what is the description of persons, generally speaking, who occupy those houses, and what source, speaking generally, their means of maintaining themselves arise?—There are a great number in the silk trade, a great number keep shops and things of that description, by which they maintain themselves.

Are they a wealthy class of inhabitants or otherwise?—I believe not wealthy.

How do you select the persons who shall manufacture the bunting?—The master of the workhouse being a weaver himself knows well what hands to select for that purpose.

Then the master can order to the manufactory of the bunting such persons as he thinks proper?—Certainly the quickest hands.

Does he give to those persons so employed any trifle to encourage them to exert themselves, and to be industrious, in preference to remaining idle in the house?—Yes, he does; they have every encouragement possible; if they work hard, they have two-pence in the shilling allowed them.

It is not long since, is it, that you have manufactured this bunting?—Not long; it is in consequence, I understand, of an order from Russia; bunting is for the purpose of making flags.

Have you sufficient employment in the manufactory of it to employ all those who are able to work at it?—No.

Does your manufacturing bunting cause a complaint from other persons employed in that manufactory?—No, not all.

It is quite new?—Yes, at our house; it is an order wanted quick, and to be done in a certain time by contract, and we have a portion of it in our house.

Can you give an account of the money expended in the purchase of the raw materials?—No, we could not get that from Mr. Courtenay.

You spin it and weave it?—Yes, and are paid so much a piece.



How much has been paid you for it?—It is very little; we have not had it more than two months; I think each individual can earn about five shillings a week by it upon the average, according to my recollection of what the master said.

Then he earns the whole of his maintenance?—Yes, but then he has two-pence out of every shilling for himself.

Does he earn that five shillings by the manufacture of bunting only?—Yes.

Then he maintains himself within a fraction?—Yes, but this man perhaps may have his wife and three children besides, which the house is supporting.

Does not the wife work too?—No, there are so many men.

How many people are employed in the manufacture of the bunting in the house?—I think about five-and-thirty.

How many are employed in spinning?—Very few; it is such coarse stuff, it soon runs off; I do not think there are more than a dozen wheels.

You say that five shillings a week is the maximum allowed out of the house, and you have stated you have more inhabitants in the house than can be accommodated there?—Yes.

Then if a person applies with a wife and five or six children, what would you do; would you limit them to five shillings, or compel them to come into the house?—We endeavour to induce them to keep out of the house; we tell them it is very full.

Do you give them more than five shillings?—If they call on the overseer in the course of the week, he may give them one, two, three, or four shillings.

Then you do not limit the assistance to five shillings a week?—No, only at the board; the overseer may give beyond that what he pleases.

But you do not go beyond that without inquiry into the necessity of it?—Certainly not.

You have said, that upon the application of paupers to magistrates for relief, the course pursued by the magistrate is to send him back to the overseer, what does the pauper get by that?—Perhaps the pauper has never applied to the overseer in the first instance.

Would the magistrate hear him, without his having gone to the overseer first?—He could not help it.

When you have it in your power to take a man into the



house, do you find a reluctance or a desire on his part to go there?—The distress is so great, I am sorry to say the application is now to go into the workhouse; and they would be happy to go in, for they are literally starving out. I know men who had saved money, and had a tolerably decent room or two of furniture, who have nothing left but what they stand upright in; and I have seen an instance of women lying-in on straw, and have not had a pillow but the bare wainscot of the room to lay her head on, till I took one off my servant's bed, and a mattress, and sent down to her; and that is not a solitary instance by twenty or thirty, for I pay great attention to that, and employ a servant to make caudle for them during the month.

With regard to the families out of the workhouse, what is the greatest sum any family now receives from the parish, including 5s. a week from the board?—That I am not able to answer; because we are not so liberal, as we should be, on account of the association which gives them relief, therefore the parish is not called on to give much more than is given at the board at this moment. This Association was set on foot, through my humble means, by relating to Mr. Gurney and Mr. Buxton, and some other gentlemen in Lombard-street, the general distress in Spitalfields.

You stated, you could now write in a hundred families?—I think I could.

What is the greatest sum any one of those hundred receives from the parish?—I think the greatest may be 8s. a week; 5s. a week from the board; and the overseers may extend 3s. They may come on Monday, and we give them one shilling, and again on Saturday.

What do you suppose to be the number of the family you consider in such extreme distress, that you give them so much?—Four or five children.

What is the greatest sum you give to a man who is past work?—One shilling and six-pence, and not exceeding two shillings.

Does the overseer ever grant him a sum beyond that in the course of the week?—It never comes within my knowledge.

Can he subsist on that two shillings a week?—I suppose not; but they get assistance from people in the parish, who give them a little meat.



You would not consider yourself justified, as managing the parish, in exceeding that sum?—Certainly not; we should not find the money.

In any case of the extremest distress?—Yes; certainly then.

What is the amount of the subscription raised for the parish, that you receive weekly from the Association—The money given away, weekly, is £350. in our parish alone.

There was a distinct Association for your parish alone? No; the Association is central in our parish; the vestry-room of the church is appropriated for the meeting; and there are thirty-nine divisions, and each division has four or five gentlemen, who, in turn, visit every person they give relief to; and no person is relieved but what is first visited, and the exact number in family, and so many out of work, and so on, they put down. We receive 350*l.* weekly from the Association, which is given away.

That is sent in aid of your poor rates?—No, only 50*l.* of it is sent to assist the poor of the parish, but not in aid of the poor-rates; if it had not been for this Association, I cannot tell what would have been the consequence.

Have you ever applied to magistrates, or do you suppose your local Act prevents your rating other parishes in aid of yours?—We are prevented from that by the local Act; that was a thing which suggested itself to my mind, that the city of London, which have no poor, ought to contribute towards the distressed and manufacturing parishes; I believe they could assist us materially, if we could get them to do it.

Is it consistent with your knowledge, that a considerable part of the poor population of your parish has come from the city of London, from the houses being taken down to build extensive warehouses?—Certainly not; but there is one thing, which is, that the men, when they had employment, worked for many masters in the silk line in the city, and resided in our parish.

You say, the amount of the rates per quarter is 2,100*l.*—Yes, 2,159*l.*

The amount of the subscription which is now applied to the relief of your poor will be 3,500*l.* per quarter?—4,500*l.*

Supposing the subscription to be withheld, or to cease, do you not conceive that your parish would be bound to raise an equal sum for the maintenance of your



poor?—Certainly not, we could not do it; we are bound by law to make a rate for the maintenance of the poor, and if this is withheld, some other rate must be established, or some other means got to give relief to those who have it from the Association.

You do not think it possible to maintain the poor at a less rate than 6,500*l.* a quarter?—That I cannot answer; they have been maintained for less.

Are they at this moment?—No.

Under existing circumstances, could you maintain your poor at a less rate than the sum received from the Association plus your rate?—Certainly not; we could not.

At what rate do you suppose, upon the subscription ceasing, you could maintain your poor under the present circumstances?—That I cannot answer, for this reason; the Association has given to certain individuals, shoes, blankets, and all kinds of clothing; which, if that money was withheld, they would not at present want from the parish: if the persons were to call on the parish for more relief, they would not want shoes and blankets and those things, therefore that expenditure would be saved to the parish for a length of time.

Therefore the charge upon the parish, if the subscription were to cease, would be equal to the subscription, with the exception of this, which you would have otherwise to expend in those necessities?—That I cannot immediately answer.

Provided there had been no subscription, would it not most considerably have increased the rate?—The rates could not have been increased, for I believe now, if we were to attempt (and it is the opinion of more persons in the parish) to raise the rate to eight shillings, instead of six, many would not be able to pay the eight, who now pay the six.

What would have been the consequence to the parish, if they had not had the subscription?—I have always contemplated with the greatest horror the consequences, if this Association had not been established.

The parish would have been incapable of maintaining their poor?—I think they would not have been able to do it.

Is the relief afforded by the subscription confined to the poor of Spitalfields, or extended to other poor in that parish?—There are five divisions who receive relief out of that subscription; there is about 1,500*l.* weekly expended.



The proportion of the subscription that the Spitalfields parish receives, is how much?—Three hundred and fifty pounds out of the 1,500*l*.

This parish receives 150*l*. a week from the subscription?—Yes.

Out of that 350*l*. a week, which is received by your parish, are not other poor relieved, as well as the poor of your parish; namely, resident Irish, and others?—Yes, persons of every description, it does not signify who they are.

If those Irish, and other persons, not your parishioners, who are receiving assistance from your subscription, had not that subscription, would not you be obliged to relieve them from your parish?—I do not think they would have made application for relief; a great number who now receive relief from the Association would not have applied.

Why?—I do not know the reason; many from pride, and some for one thing and some another.

Then persons residing in your parish, and now receiving assistance from the subscription, you think would have continued to reside in your parish, and to have endeavoured to maintain themselves by their own industry, perhaps in a very bad way, and would not have exposed themselves to removal by applying for relief?—I think so.

The manufacturers of Spitalfields are confined very much to the silk line?—They are.

Is it not the practice then of your parish for master manufacturers to employ a number of poor persons in the use of their looms and other parts of the trade?—It is.

Is not that a trade which during the last fifteen or sixteen years has been liable to variations?—A very little variation till last August twelvemonth; it had been carried on I believe tolerably fair, not much variation in the quantity of silk purchased and sold in a year.

Was not there a great stagnation in the Spitalfields manufactories ten or twelve years ago?—I do not believe there has been any while I have been there, except at present; I have been there near ten years; shopkeepers felt the stagnation in trade.

From the fluctuations of trade at different times, has not distress occurred to a considerable amount in Spitalfields, and during those times have not the charitable exertions of master manufacturers contributed to relieve the lower orders, who had been from the variations of fashion kept out of employment?—I have learnt from



persons longer resident in the parish than myself, that when there was great distress, applications were made to Government for a sum of money, which was applied to their relief; there has been no distress to my knowledge, but from the time I have stated.

Do you mean to convey to the Committee an idea that the distribution made of the subscription has been made improvidently?—No, it has assisted them in little things, which have gone to the pawnbrokers, which they would not otherwise have possessed, and relieved them materially.

Has the parish any mode of getting rid of Irish or Scotch who have been resident in the parish forty days?—By the mode of passing them.

If the subscription should cease, and the poor increase, what do you think would be the consequence of enforcing the rates now?—I believe it is well ascertained by the collectors that they could not raise the same sum at eight shillings as they do now at six shillings; and the major part of the housekeepers now resident in Christ Church, Middlesex, are living upon their capitals, for there is not trade to support any individual. I myself have kept near one hundred and fifty hands at work, and I have not got three. I have paid wages to the poor of Spitalfields, to weavers only, from five to six thousand a year, hard money, for nine years, besides dyers and warpers, and many other things connected with the trade; and now I am not paying five pounds a week.

What is your assessment to the poor?—Six shillings in the pound upon a house of sixty pounds a year.

Is your assessment now the same as when you had all those individuals employed?—Yes, but it was at 5s. instead of 6s.

You are now just assessed equally to what you were then?—Yes, and with a greater inability to pay it.

Is any other property except houses rated?—I believe not; for when I have gone through the book with the collector, I do not recollect any other property but houses.

What system of education is pursued in the workhouse? Reading, writing, and the Church of England religion.

There is a school in the workhouse?—Yes; there is a regular master and mistress to teach them, they have as good an education as such a house can give them.

Is there any education for adults?—I believe not.

Has not the number of poor materially increased this year?—Yes, they are increased in number.



When you state that many persons would not have applied for relief if it had not been for this subscription, do you apply it only to the Irish?—Not merely to the Irish.

What is the whole sum now remaining of that subscription unappropriated?—About 10,000*l*.

How long is that likely to last?—Perhaps about two months.

What numbers of poor were relieved in and out of the house in the year 1815?—That I have not an account of; I can send it to the Committee.

You have no account of the increase this year?—I have only got the increase in the house. I have heard many former overseers say, that instead of their giving away as we do, perhaps, nine or ten pounds per week, they have not given away as many shillings: that is, to people who apply at the house of the weekly overseer.

Are you aware of any circumstances which would act as impediments to advancement of trade, or to the flourishing condition of trade in that parish, independent always of those accidental stops which all trades are liable to which are dependent upon national change?—My opinion has been, ever since the peace, that the silk trade would almost leave Spitalfields, that it would leave London entirely.

In point of fact, is there, within your knowledge, as an experienced man in the trade, any thing that operates to check that trade, independent of national changes?—Several things operate on our trade; first, the duty on the raw material; secondly, the smuggling, and many other things.

Are you enabled to state to the Committee, what may be the expense brought upon the parish by Irish, Scotch, or Manx paupers, who have no residence in the parish, but are there merely as casual poor?—About one-tenth of our expenditure.

Have you ever attempted any means to remove persons of that description from your parish?—We have not; for this reason, the expense would be so great, we have not funds sufficient to pay it; there was, up to Christmas last, due to tradesmen, 3,734*l*. 6*s*. 3*d*. for things supplied to the workhouse, and they must wait till we can pay them.

And one-tenth you conceive to be the expense of persons who have no legal settlement in the parish?—I do.



Do you think any inconveniency is found in the parish by persons having small properties, and letting them to individuals from whom no poor-rate can be obtained?—The landlords pay the rate.

Are you empowered by your local Act to levy it on the landlord?—Yes, or we could not levy the rate on the tenant.

Is the pressure of the poor rates in the parishes of Shoreditch, Mile End, Bethnal Green, and Whitechapel, as great as in your parish?—I believe so.

And do those parishes receive a part of the subscription?—They do.

In an equal proportion with your parish?—I believe in an equal proportion, or nearly so; it is entirely in the breast of the visitor to distribute what he thinks proper.

Are those parishes governed by local Acts?—I believe they are.

Do you apprehend they are managed in the same way as your own?—I believe similar.

Have they the same mode of giving a settlement, renting a house at four shillings for forty days?—Yes, I believe so; the friendly order shows; they are all in the same state, or else the friendly order could not be received.

*Mr. James Graham* was called in; and stated, that the reason why there is a certain sum usually collected in Spitalfields is, that the rate rests on the shopkeepers and the better part of the housekeepers and tradesmen.

*Mr. William Hale* called in, and examined.

YOU are very conversant with the management of the poor in Spitalfields, and the poor have derived great advantage from your interposition; will you make a statement of the principal circumstances that have fallen within your knowledge, from the management and superintendence you have of the poor?—I have been treasurer of the parish twelve or thirteen years, and prior to that time, for nearly twenty years, devoted a considerable portion of my time to the condition of the poor in the district; we have several local Acts, but they do not in general go against the poor laws; we have one, by which all the rental of houses under 15*l.* a year are subject to the payment of the poor rates.



Under those local Acts, are any other persons entrusted with the management of the poor besides the churchwardens and overseers?—The churchwardens and the overseers, and a certain number of governors of the poor, who consist of gentlemen who have passed the office of overseer.

There is no individual paid a salary for the superintendence of the poor?—None but the regular servants, the vestry clerk, beadle, and apothecary.

We heard of a person intituled a warden; what is he?—We have no such person; we have two churchwardens and four overseers, and it is customary for us to choose churchwardens for two years, the overseers serve but one year; we choose a churchwarden at Lady-day, and another the following Lady-day; thus we have an upper and a renter warden, and one has been in office a year before the other is chosen. Two of our overseers are chosen at Michaelmas and two at Lady-day, so that we have two of some experience to guide those who come in; those that come in at Easter, are under the direction of those who came in six months before them: but after all, it takes them more than twelve months to become acquainted with parochial business, or they are liable to be imposed upon a great deal.

How long do the governors remain in office?—They are elected every year; they amount to twenty or thirty.

By the householders?—No, by a select vestry; and they meet in rotation at the workhouse once a week, and oftener if they are required; by the time the overseers become acquainted with the depravity of the lower orders, and are capable in some measure of detecting them in endeavoring to impose upon their humanity, they get out of office; they are glad they are rid of it, and we have fresh ones come in, liable to the same impositions; and that is one cause of the great increase of pauperism.

Is it your opinion, benefit would be derived by there being attached to the overseers a permanent officer?—Very much.

Whose time should be devoted to the object, and who should be paid for his services?—Yes, very much so; for the individuals who are fixed on are tradesmen, and they consider they shall have to serve the office but for one year, and that it will never come to their turn again during their natural lives; they are not acquainted with the impositions of the lower classes, and they have a strong feeling in their favour, and are anxious to avoid their ill



opinion, and are aware that they may be liable to some inconveniences if they get a bad name, therefore they are anxious, not out of any desire to give the money away in any improper manner, for I am far from imputing any motives unworthy the character of gentlemen, but they must feel a strong desire to keep a good name amongst the poor that reside around them, knowing it will be but for one year and no longer, and under this impression they give the money liberally away: but if they were more aware of the consequences, and were to continue in office some years, they would see great reason to alter their conduct.

Will you communicate to the Committee any information you can respecting the amount of the poor-rate in this parish of late years, and its increase latterly?—The poor-rates, since I have been treasurer, have been six shillings in the pound, and for some years before, which brings in about 8,000*l.* a year within two hundred or three hundred, more or less; sometimes we do not collect so much as we do at others; it is hard to go and pull up the machinery of the poor people, and we give them time.

It is made on houses?—Yes, we have no land; the parish is under peculiar circumstances, and does not form a precedent for parishes in general; for, in proportion as trade and commerce have increased in the City, all the small houses in little courts and alleys have been taken down, and superior habitations erected in their stead, and the poor have been driven from the City into the north-east district, called Spitalfields, till almost the whole poor of the city are there congregated, and by degrees have obtained legal settlements: all the mechanics of various descriptions, who work for their employers in the City, reside in Spitalfields; the carters, porters, and persons of every description, down to the mendicant, the man who sweeps the streets, the barrow-woman, the fishwoman, and all employed in the most servile way in the City, reside there; consequently the applications of the poor for relief, in a great measure, recur back upon themselves; they are chiefly poor, and our chief resource to alleviate distress is to assess those who are but ill prepared for it.

Do you attribute to the facts you have stated the increase of population which has taken place in this parish as well as others in England of late years?—I do not apprehend the population has increased much, because it has been always full; but that has been one cause of it; there were a number of houses taken down some time ago to make room for the East India Docks and Wapping Docks



and some for the enlargement of the Bank, where some alleys were removed.

We find that under the local Acts persons have settlements by hiring in houses of four shillings per week; if they reside there forty days; has that increased the poor?—I think very much so; the houses have always been occupied; there is scarcely a house or room to let but what is soon occupied by the poor; they frequently change their residence, so that the landlords very often go without their rent.

The Committee has been told by the overseers that they are put to a great expense by giving relief to persons who have no permanent settlement in the parish?—Yes.

They are persons without a settlement then?—Yes; circumstanced as we are, so near to the Metropolis, where there are a number of cheap habitations for the poor to reside, we have many journeymen and bricklayer's labourers; most of the latter are Irish, who have no permanent settlement in England, and they come to Spitalfields because there are cheap lodgings; many pay three-pence to four-pence a night for a bed, and lodge in houses where they make sixty beds a night; if they fall ill, or are out of work, they are casual poor, and we must relieve them or find them work; if we cannot find their parish, they are casual poor, and we are bound to relieve them just the same; if we find their parish, we may pass them home, if it is not too far; or we may put them to work, and take their produce for their maintenance, and they are perfectly aware they have that claim, and that has operated very much of late years to the increase of pauperism.

Are your expenses of litigation much?—Very little.

To what do you attribute that?—To the attention of several gentlemen who take an active part, and the prudence of our vestry clerk.

There is an arrangement with some neighbouring parishes?—We take them by a friendly order, without the expense of a regular pass; if it appears that the individual sent to us belongs to us, we take him without putting the parish to the expense of a regular pass.

Do you conceive much is saved by that practice?—No, no great deal.

What is the expense of a regular pass?—Four or six shillings only, where they are near each other. I have observed of late years pauperism has very much increased.

To what do you attribute that?—To the operation of the poor laws.



What particular part of them?—I am persuaded they tend to break down the national independence and character of the people.

Can you suggest any thing that without abrogating the system, would improve it?—At present the lower classes are sensible they can have recourse to parochial relief, and they are brought up to claim it as a right, nor do they seem thankful to those who grant it.

You have been twenty years in this parish?—It is nearly twenty years since I served the office of overseer; I was two years overseer.

In that period has there been a great increase of poor?—Yes, I suppose we pay now four times the sum for the relief of out-door poor to what we did at that time; and as to the house, I suppose there might be three hundred or three hundred and fifty, and now it would average five hundred and sixty during the year.

That is nearly double?—Yes.

And the other quadruple?—Yes; we have many that are grown up now that regularly take relief, that used to do so when they were children; it descends from father to son.

Will you state in what proportion you think the miseries of the people have increased within that twenty years?—There has been one cause operating very much to the decrease of morals, and that is the drinking such quantities of spirits; I have invariably observed in all the lower classes of society, and among those I may employ, that when they once take to drinking spirits their usefulness to society is lost.

Then you look upon the drinking of spirits as one great cause of the demoralization of the lower orders?—Yes?

In what state do you conceive the poor to be, with respect to their independency or aversion to receiving parochial relief?—It is not so much as it was; in proportion as pauperism increases, so the stigma of receiving parochial relief is lessened.

Do you think that the misery of the lower classes has increased in proportion to the increase of the sum for their maintenance?—I speak of that class of the poor who have been in the habit of taking regular parochial relief, for there are many who can still say, "Thank God, I never have been a pauper;" many of them belong to benefit clubs; it is rarely we have an application from any person who belongs to



a benefit club, and very rarely that I observe any individuals apply for relief who have been in the habit of saving any money; if it is only thirty or forty shillings, a man possessed of that will preserve it and aim to increase it; but it is the individuals who have never saved any thing, let their earnings be what they will; they know they can take parochial relief, and with them present enjoyment is better than future comfort.

Have you many instances of people of the lower description making savings?—A great many; I have several who worked for me, and who saved several hundred pounds, and put it in the funds.

What are the wages out of which they can have saved? Perhaps not so much as those who take relief.

State how much they might be?—I have known those who have earned from twenty to twenty-five shillings a week, in the course of a year, lay by a considerable sum; I have known others who have earned almost double that never save a shilling.

What is the lowest wages from which savings have been made?—It depends on the number of the family.

What are the lowest earnings you have known any savings made from by any individual or by a number?—Twelve or fifteen shillings a week.

Not by men with families?—No; by single people; young women.

How do they make use of those savings?—Some of them keep it by them; some of them will lend it to an individual and lose it; I have in several instances taken the money and allowed them interest.

In many instances those individuals who from economical motives have made savings, have lost them from a want of proper security for them?—Yes; but in proportion as Saving Banks are known and acted on, that will be done away; many female servants have lent money and lost it, but that will be done away by Saving Banks.

Have you known any come to the parish who have laid by a considerable sum?—I never knew an instance of any one coming to the parish who had saved money; and those individuals who save money are better workmen; if they do not do the work better, they behave better, and are more respectable, and I would sooner have a hundred men who save money in my trade, than two hundred who would spend every shilling they get; in proportion as



individuals save a little money, their morals are much better; they husband that little, and there is a superior tone given to their morals, and they behave better from knowing they have a little stake in society.

Is the state of the poor worse considerably now than it was twenty years ago?—A great deal.

And daily growing worse?—I believe it is.

Do you believe if there was an opportunity for workmen to save money by the parish putting a small sum into the bank with it, people would agree to it?—I think they would; I know no objection; I have thought it often a great pity that some plan should not be adopted with a particular class of the poor, who earn a great deal of money and spend every shilling of it; there are men who earn thirty-five or forty shillings a week with the help of their family and children, and if they are out of work a week they become paupers.

Is there any Bank for Saving in your neighbourhood?—Yes.

How long has it been established?—About six months.

Is it doing well?—I have no doubt of it.

Do you know the amount of it?—No.

Nor the number of depositors?—No.

You stated that overseers acting only for a single year did not become sufficiently capable of guarding against deception!—I have no doubt of it.

Do you conceive those acts of deception have increased of late years?—Yes; the number of paupers have increased, and of course the number of deceptions must be greater.

Is there greater art of deception in individuals than there used to be?—I think there is.

It has become more the practice?—It has become a system.

Do you believe the poor rates would be much less were they more economically administered?—I think it would; I think it would save the poor rates if an individual was appointed who had had considerable experience in parochial affairs in a permanent office, and to act under the direction, or rather to give advice to the overseers annually chosen; he would know the paupers, and be able to distinguish between those who would wish to impose, and avoid that system of deception which is carried on from time to time.



You think that the poor funds would be saved in two ways; first, by seeing the deceptions; and secondly, by deterring them from making applications without sufficient ground?—Certainly. I do not mean by this to say, that the poor should be prevented from making applications when they have just grounds; but a great part, in the best regulated parishes, of the money given away, must be given away improperly, when you consider the individuals who dispose of it are only in office one year, and they are anxious not to get ill will of the poor in the neighbourhood where they reside, and they take care to go out of office with a good name; they do it from the best motives I have no doubt, but they are imposed on; it is a common thing for the paupers to find the new overseers, and go from parish to parish and collect from them all in the course of one day, and they communicate with each other who is the best overseer, the most good-natured man, or that one has a good-natured wife, and then tell others if you go at such a time you will get relief.

There was an application to Government from your parish for money some years ago?—In the year 1801 upwards of 20,000*l.* was advanced by Government in aid of Christ Church, the hamlet of Mile End New Town, and Bethnal Green, and those parishes constitute what is generally understood to be Spitalfields.

Your experience, I suppose, has been a good deal confined to London parishes, and populous town parishes?—Yes.

Do you conceive that any objection would arise to simplifying the law of settlement, by abandoning a great many of the heads of settlement, for instance, hiring a tenement and so on, and reducing it to birth and parentage, and residence for a certain number of years!—No, I am not aware of any mischief from it; it would not make much difference to a parish like ours, because a residence of forty days gives a settlement.

You have stated that a Saving Bank is established in Spitalfields?—Not in Spitalfields. I had a meeting with some gentlemen seven or eight months back to raise a Bank, but soon after I found there was to be one on a more general system, in which Sir Thomas Baring took an active part, and I relinquished mine, and united with that which is now in Bishopsgate Church-yard.



How long has that Saving Bank been established?—  
About six months, I believe.

Are you at all acquainted with the description of persons who contribute to that Bank?—I have, at present, very few of my journeymen who can contribute to it, owing to the depressed state of the trade; but they are labouring classes, and female servants chiefly, I suppose.

They are generally persons in work?—Yes, I should understand so; I have not had opportunity of attending it, but I know it is well attended to, and I have enough to do without.

Do any of the manufacturers in Spitalfields, who have large families, receive from the parish money in aid of the support of their children?—Very rarely indeed in our parish; our out-door consist mostly of those who are out of work entirely, but many of those out of work are very indifferent characters; manufacturers, who employ a great number of poor, will select the best characters, because when a man once drinks spirits we consider him as almost lost to society.

But if, from the largeness of any family, a manufacturer is obliged to apply occasionally for a small sum of money, weekly, to assist him through a difficulty, and had he been previously contributing to a Saving Bank, would you not wish his stock in the Saving Bank should remain, and that he should receive the relief in money, without the parish being enabled to call on the Saving Bank for the sum he there has?—My wish in that respect of course would be directed from the moral conduct of the individual; it must, in a great measure, be left to the individuals who make the application; if individuals generally were to deposit their little savings in a Bank, and at all times could have recourse to parochial relief without taking that, according to the present system of the conduct of parishes, such a thing would not be tolerated. Every person who comes for parochial relief, we have a claim to the property they possess. If a person is out of work, and applies for relief, his property is sometimes taken from him; if he comes into the workhouse, and we keep it till he goes to work again, and then we return it. When individuals once begin to save money, they will seldom have recourse to the parish; they are a distinct class of poor who apply for relief, and not the industrious poor, who save money. I have a number of poor working for me, who have been in the habit of drawing a



weekly sum on account for the work in the loom; they will draw fifteen shillings a week for two weeks, and have the balance when they bring the work home. I have others who pride themselves in saying, they never take weekly money; and those individuals who never take weekly money, are much more regular in their work; they earn more; they are more economical, and more industrious; and, generally speaking, they do their work better. I have never known an instance scarcely of the families of that description coming to want, or having recourse to parochial relief; but those who are in the constant habit of drawing money, every week, let them earn what they will, if they are out of work a week or two, are destitute.

If a man by accident by breaking his arm or leg, or some such affliction should be obliged to apply for temporary relief, his furniture is not generally disposed of, but money given to him without?—In a case like that, of course the benevolence of the public around him will assist him.

With respect to a person who had saved money, and deposited it in the Saving Bank, would it not be desirable his savings should be protected as well as his furniture?—I should think so; I should hope it would if he was a good man.

There have been several benefit societies in Spitalfields?—Yes.

Have not latterly many individuals who had contributed to those societies, not been able to make good their payments?—I think but few; you observe those individuals who take care of themselves we see are more economical and more industrious, and more obliging to their employers; they are kept to work, when the worthless character is first turned out of employment.

In those instances of benefit clubs, have any of them failed from the drawings made upon them?—Some of them may, but I am not aware of any; I have an individual now who receives fourteen shillings a week, a man who worked for me many years; but it rarely happens that those who belong to benefit clubs are out of work, because when once a poor man begins to save something, or belongs to a benefit club, and looks to futurity, that man is generally more economical, is more industrious and more obliging, and they are the last of characters that are turned out of work; it is the individuals who get a great deal of money, and have had recourse formerly to parochial relief, if they earn twenty or thirty shillings a week, they will idle two or three days away to spend it; they frequently get intoxicated, and if they are in good employment twelve months, and then are out of employment one week, they are in distress; those are the persons who apply for relief, and their children after them.

You have stated the impositions of the poor, and also that there are children who have been the whole course of their life on the poor's rate; how do you administer relief to the poor?—According to their circumstances and number of their family.

Have you put any established value upon the price of a man's work by the day?—No, we very seldom give parochial relief to



made; if he saves but one or two guineas he will soon increase that.

The Committee wish to know, whether the Saving Banks have operated on the minds of those who were thoughtless, to make them thoughtful?—I have no doubt it has with some individuals; but the depression of trade of every description has been of that nature, we have not had an opportunity to recommend it, as manufacturers, to our work-people, from personal feelings, but we should be glad to do it when trade revives.

It has furnished matter of consideration to those who spent all before?—Yes; and I know instances of persons at Homerton, where I reside with my family, who wish for a Saving Bank there, that servant maids who have a few guineas might deposit it, to get a little interest.

Have you been in the habit of visiting the houses in Spitalfields lately?—Not so much since the Association has been established, because there are such a number of persons who visit them, it makes it the less necessary.

What number of persons have you generally found in each room?—A man and his wife, and sometimes three or four children, in one room.

Not more than that?—Very rarely; if there is a larger family than that, some of the family are at work, and they require an additional room; most of those who are in employment have two rooms, one for the loom and another for the bed; because frequently, where the bed is in the room, the shaking the bed will injure the work, and many masters would not give them any employment.

Do you not find more than one family in the same room?—Very rarely; in lodging houses there will be three or four beds in a room, where a number of men lodge, who after that night might never see each other again; we have one house, where there are from ninety to a hundred beds made up of a night, for three-pence and four-pence each.

Are you of opinion, that where men have acquired habits of economy, it is probable that any of those men, at the latter end of their life, would be likely to have recourse to the poor's rate?—No, I seldom meet with an instance of a person applying for parochial relief, where they belong to a benefit society, even where what they get is reduced from fourteen to two shillings, for they have a scale to go by; such has been their moral conduct, and their good character, that from the hands of the neighbours or some society, they are taken care of.

Then you are of opinion, if the lower class, in general, were, induced by any means to become depositors in those Saving Banks, it would not much lessen the number of people who would apply for relief from the parish?—I think it would; I think in proportion as encouragement is given to Saving Banks, and the poor are acquainted with their nature, one will induce another, and the



force of habit is very extraordinary; their prejudices are very great, and it requires a deal of trouble to conquer them; but when they see the good consequences of it, I dare say they will deposit money, and their children too.

Are you not of opinion, that in many instances, even an industrious and economical poor man might be induced to become a member of the Saving Bank, if he was not to be placed in a worse situation, by being precluded in the early part of it, from receiving parish relief?—I am not aware that that would operate much in London; it might do more in the country, where the scale of relief is much larger, and where the circumstances of every individual poor man is well known.

For what reason do you suppose the scale of relief is larger in the country than in London?—I am not aware of the scale of relief in the country, but it is much larger in many parishes within the bills of mortality than in Spitalfields; and the reason it is so small in Spitalfields is, because it is morally impossible to extend it.

It has been stated to the Committee, that as large a sum as 350*l.* a week is distributed in Spitalfields, arising out of other means than what are levied on the parish?—Yes.

How long is it likely the distribution of that will last?—Three or four months longer perhaps; we are reducing that now, it will be 300*l.* the next week I think, and about 250*l.* the week following.

Will you describe to the Committee whether that sum has been so applied as to afford to the persons to whom it has been given something more than mere necessities, or whether it has been applied in such a way as to enable them to exist in such a state as they would have existed if they had depended upon the poor rate?—In many instances individuals have partaken of this bounty that would have been deterred, and would not have applied to the parish for relief; and it has been the object of the visitors of the Association to search from house to house for those cases of real distress where persons were pining in misery, and were determined almost to perish sooner than degrade themselves by applying for parish relief; a number of those cases have been found, and visited and relieved; they have been propped up, and many of the individuals have said to our visitors, "Thank God, this will be the last week I shall have occasion for relief, I have got work, and I have been saved from ever applying to the parish."

Do you suppose, that when the distribution from that fund ceases, the poor in Spitalfields will be able to subsist upon the poor-rate of the parish, which, the Committee are informed, amounts to about 8,000*l.*?—I conceive the rate of the parish has never been adequate to meet the distress of the parish; I have stated before to the Committee the local situation of Spitalfields; all the labourers and mechanics of various descriptions, who work for their employers in the City, reside in that district, and it will be totally impossible to increase the parochial rate, because, were



we to increase that rate, we should not increase the aggregate amount of the rate to be collected; there are a number of societies in the neighbourhood that a number of gentlemen subscribe to, who have no connexion with it but from their benevolence; those benevolent societies have done a great deal towards relieving that distress which cannot be met with by the parish; but gentlemen must be aware, that all this money which has been collected must be an injury, though it is a present relief, it must bring an additional burden on the parish; a number of individuals, bearing money was to be given away, have moved from various parts of the Metropolis and taken lodgings to apply for this relief, and we are fearful that when this is dried up a number will have recourse to parochial relief, and will not be ashamed to become paupers; I cannot but contemplate the period with serious apprehensions, unless there is a revival of trade.

Have there not been benevolent societies for some years past established in the City, for the purpose of relieving the poor of Spitalfields?—The Benevolent Society I particularly allude to, consists of a number of individuals; the Reverend Josiah Pratt is the president, and many gentlemen residing in Spitalfields, and many in the City, are members, who divide and sub-divide the district, and visit the poor and give them relief at their own habitations; they never give persons relief but at their own dwellings. That society existed long before this present fund was collected, and they have done a great deal of good indeed; it is unknown the good they have done to hundreds of families; many families have been relieved who partook of parochial relief, for the sum we gave them from the parish would not find them with bread for a single day.

There are other societies independent of this Association, which has been established in consequence of the distress of the times, and those societies will still remain of course?—Yes, they existed long before this Association for the relief of the poor was formed, and will no doubt exist afterwards.

And the soup societies also?—Yes, there is no doubt of it.

Do you think that the sum of 10,000*l.* that remains, may not be so applied as to gradually diminish the sum now given to the relief of the people, and prevent that calamity which might arise from a total stoppage of all relief?—The committee of this Association, for that is the name of this society, are well aware of the consequences which are alluded to, and have come to a determination strictly to inspect the situation of every person that they relieve; if a man has but partial work, they inquire of the master he works for what is the amount of his earnings, and by that means they are enabled to detect some who otherwise would impose upon them; and in proportion as they cut off those, they deter others from applying, for fear of being detected also; and so they will be able to lengthen the fund, so that those who stand in need of relief may be supported a longer period. Every care is taken



to reduce the expenditure of that fund, to prolong it for the real objects of distress as near as they can.

Might they not reduce the quantum of relief given to those who require assistance?—They do.

You have stated, that in no instance do the overseers give more than five shillings to any case of distress, and you have admitted it is perfectly inadequate to their relief; why do not the poor people go to the magistrates to require more relief, or if they do go, why do not the magistrates order more?—We have cases where poor of that description have applied, and there may now and then be a case in which the committee may deem it prudent to go a little beyond this bounty; but generally speaking, they will say, We cannot do more for you, you must come into the workhouse, and we will put you to work.

Is it a fact that, at this time, there are nearly a hundred families who ought to come into the workhouse, if there were room?—Yes, they would be glad to come in.

What relief do they receive?—No more; they get parochial relief; they have relief from the Association, and some from the benefit societies; but there are many other ways to relieve them; fish is sold very cheap, and soup at a halfpenny per quart.

Does all this charity arise within the district or is there not very extensive assistance from without?—A great portion of the fund, raised for the different charities, comes from the benevolence of gentlemen who do not reside in the district.

You have stated, that it would be a great benefit to the parish to appoint a perpetual overseer, in point of economy, that it would prevent their being imposed upon; do not you think it would better the condition of the real poor, and afford them more effectual relief?—There would be more confidence in the money thus given away; the money would be better applied; and the cases of imposition being detected, there would be a larger support for those who really stood in need of it.

Have you any parochial schools for the infant poor in your parish?—A great number. I have stated, that the morals of the lower classes have greatly deteriorated in consequence of the drinking of spirits; but there is a circumstance which has operated to improve the morals, and that is, the number of Schools to educate the poor; but for the increase of drinking spirits, their morals would have been considerably better; and, but for these schools, they would have been much worse.

What number of children may be educated at those schools?—Some thousands; and there is now an adult school which was established about two years back, of which I am the president, and we have a great many adults who come of an evening to read; even those who are past the prime of life; there are women and men with spectacles that read exceeding well; we had a public meeting a few weeks back, where I took the chair, and many people were invited, and some of the old adults from forty to sixty years of age requested to read publicly a few verses in a chapter; the in-



dividuals I allude to, twelve months before, did not know a letter, several of the company were so struck, that they could not believe that those adults not knowing a letter twelve months before could have made such progress, and they called upon them to turn to such a verse of such a chapter, and they turned to it and read it with the same facility.

How long have the schools for the infant poor been established?—They have been progressively increasing every year almost.

When did they begin?—From the period the Lancasterian and Bell schemes came before the public; I suppose about seven or eight years ago.

Can you say you see any visible effect upon the morals of those children at this time?—Yes; and for this reason, the individuals who send their children to these schools go with them to the respective places of worship that those children attend on the Lord's day; the children of all the schools are expected to attend at a place of worship; many of their parents who before were not in the habit of going to any place of worship at all, have been induced to go because their children attend there; thus they have been prevented from immoralities in conduct, in breaking the Sabbath, and felt an interest in letting their children appear decent and clean, and this also has tended to increase habits of economy and cleanliness in the individual parents themselves.

[*Veneris.*



*Veneris, 28<sup>o</sup> die Februarij, 1817.*

The Rt. Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

*Robert Oldershaw, Esq.* was called in, and Examined.

You are vestry clerk of the parish of Saint Mary, Islington?—Yes.

Is it a select vestry?—No, an open vestry.

Have you a local act?—The poor are regulated under a local act, and I am clerk to the trustees.

How long has that been the case?—In the 17th year of his present Majesty's reign the act passed.

Now, under the provisions of that act, are the poor managed by annual officers, or not?—They are managed by trustees, who remain in office so long as they continue to reside in the parish, and attend the meetings of the committee once in six months; they consist of fifty, together with the vicar, churchwardens, and overseers for the time being; the trustees are permanent.

Of whom do the committee consist?—The principal inhabitants, who are rated at an assessment of 30*l.* a year, or worth a sum of 1000*l.*

All the persons rated to that amount are members of the committee?—May be on vacancy.

Your population is 15,000?—The last census 15,052.

By the former returns they were much less?—There has been a very great increase of building in the parish.

That return you suppose is quite correct?—I have no doubt of it.

Your population is not wholly a manufacturing population?—Not at all.

What proportion does the part of the parish engaged in manufacture bear to the other?—I am not at all aware of any manufactory; the principal part of our poor consist of persons engaged in husbandry; we have two persons who keep a number of cows there, and they employ many labourers.

The families employed in manufacture, trade and handicraft, are stated, in the return to Parliament, to be 1300; those in agriculture 329?—Those are persons who are concerned in town, it being a village a little way from town; most persons that live there have manufactories or business in town.

What has been of late the number of persons relieved in your parish; you have a workhouse?—Yes.

State the number that have been in the workhouse for the last three years?—I have a return to the end of the year 1815.

Begin with the year 1814?—In the year 1814 the number of persons relieved, occasionally, was 2,237; the number of persons in the workhouse was 364.

Tell the Committee, if you please, how that is now?—Our accounts are not made up for the present year.

You know the number in the workhouse at present, probably? Yes, 407; they consist of 95 men; women 186; boys 67 girls 48; lunatics 11; then there are at the infant poorhouse Palmer's



Green, children 48, under seven years of age; there are two men there.

In the second poorhouse?—Under the second Act of Parliament the parish must keep the children under seven years of age, a certain distance from the metropolis; then there are twelve nurses.

Are each of those houses filled at present?—I believe they are.

Would they hold more?—We could take some more in; about fifty more.

Are the persons in your principal workhouse employed?—They have been employed, the men in picking oakum, and the women have been employed in doing slop-work, which they cannot get to do now.

So that at present a great many are without employment.—Yes; but in order to keep them employed, we send those that are able about the parish to mend the footways.

The men?—Yes.

But the women are some without employment at present?—Many of them; many of them are infirm, and cannot do much; and the others are sent out to nurse the poor.

They are maintained by the parish?—Yes.

Have the children any instruction that are in either of the houses?—The children are all instructed to read and write in the workhouse.

State the number of those relieved out of the workhouse?—The weekly pensioners now amount to 186, who receive from two shillings to half-a-crown, and three shillings, according to their family, amounting to 27*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* a-week.

What is the highest sum they are allowed?—None higher than five shillings, and none lower than eighteen-pence.

Is that whatever the size of the family is?—In proportion to their family and circumstances; some can get money.

Supposing a person unable to earn any thing, and he has a family, is five shillings the largest sum allowed?—Yes; or they come into the workhouse.

Your workhouse not being full, they have the means of coming in at present?—Yes.

Tell the Committee, if you please, the sums raised in the year 1815, for the relief of the poor?—11,087*l.* 17*s.*

What was the amount and nature of the property on which those sums were assessed?—Upon land and houses.

Was the assessment upon the rack-rent of each?—On the presumed rack-rent,

That is below the real rent?—It is.

Were the land and the houses rated equally according to that supposed value?—Yes; in the same proportion.

What does the assessment amount to?—3*s.* 6*d.* in the pound.

How much of that sum was expended in the maintenance of the poor in the house, and how much on the maintenance of the poor out of the house?—I cannot answer that question; we have not divided it.



Tell the Committee, in this year, what sum has been raised?—We only make up the account once a year.

When were they last made up?—Lady-day 1816.

Is that the account you have given the Committee?—No, the account of the year before.

Tell us what you raised last year?—11,926*l.* 1*s.* 7*d.*

Was that at the same rate of 3*s.* 6*d.* in the pound?—Yes.

Have you had any difficulty in collecting your rate; are there arrears outstanding?—Yes, the last Lady-day book is not made up.

Is that owing to any considerable arrears being outstanding, or to any other cause?—In consequence of the depression of trade, people are not able to pay, and the trustees are not willing to levy till they are able.

Are the arrears considerable?—Not very considerable.

In what way has your parish suffered most?—I am not prepared to answer that; our parish have suffered very materially. There is a great increase of poor: such persons as I have described, persons who could not get work in the country have come to town, and that has brought fifty or a hundred persons.

Are such persons settled in your parish?—Unfortunately they cannot help getting settlements when they come in, because there is no house under 4*s.* a week, which is held to be settlement after forty days.

That is under the provisions of your Act of Parliament?—No, under the general law; Lord Ellenborough has decided that 4*s.* a week is not a settlement; but the Magistrates will confirm it.

Are you burthened with persons who do not belong to your parish, Irish and others?—A great number of Irish lately.

How happen they to have come into your parish lately?—I suppose in consequence of the subscription for the benefit of the poor; we found it so once before.

You have a subscription in aid of your poor rates?—Yes.

How is that applied?—In selling coals, bread, and potatoes, at a reduced price to the poor; at half the price.

To what does that subscription amount?—1,600*l.*

If that subscription had not been afforded, would it have been necessary to raise more money by way of rate?—I hardly think it would.

The subscription is not applied to the procuring that which is absolutely necessary to the subsistence of the people?—Not in all cases; in some cases the principal purpose of the money is to give the people work; we employ a 100 or 120, and pay them one-and-eight-pence a-day in wheeling gravel.

In the cases where you allow five shillings do you insist on any thing being done for that money?—No.

Had your expenses in the year to which you have referred been considerable in removals and law expenses?—Our law expenses have been very inconsiderable; they do not amount to 40*l.* a-year upon the average.

You have no removals, perhaps?—Yes, we have a good many.



Do not they appeal at the time?—I endeavour in general to be as correct as possible, in order to prevent appeals; the parish pay me a certain salary of 350*l.* as vestry-clerk and clerk to the trustees.

You are appointed under the local act?—Yes.

What share have you in the relief of the poor?—Only to attend the trustees at all their meetings.

The persons do not apply to you who want relief, and you do not decide?—Not at all.

You are employed to consider the questions of law as to the settlements?—Yes; and as to the right of the persons who come for relief to have it; because, if they do not belong to the parish they are passed to the parish they belong to.

According to your opinion, do you think any evil would result if settlements were derived only from birth, parentage, and a certain number, say five years residence?—I do not think it would affect us, as I have stated before.

You do not think it would affect you one way or the other?—I do not think it would.

You see no objection to it?—Not at present.

Have you often questions arising as to the value of tenements in which the poor reside?—Not often.

On what do your questions relating to settlements arise chiefly?—Servitude and renting tenements and unfurnished tenements; very few as to birth; we print an account of our annual expenditure, which I will deliver in, if the Committee wish it.

[It was delivered in.]

How long has your appointment existed?—Eleven years.

There was a person in your situation from the time the act passed?—Yes: the law expenses have been very considerable ever since the act passed.

Do you think, that the mode in which your poor are managed could be amended in any way?—I do not think it could; the powers are sufficient for our purposes.

Can you tell whether any workmen or labourers, in your parish, in the course of their lives, save money?—I do not know that any of them do: I think it is not the fact. We have a Saving Bank, of which my son is secretary, and we do not find such persons contribute to that; but a great number of servants. That has been established about twelve months.

Have you any friendly societies?—Several.

Has it occurred to you, that many of the members of these societies have come upon you for relief?—Not particularly. The constitution of these friendly societies is, that if they receive parish relief they have no allowance.

In consequence of that, do you observe whether they come to you for relief?—I do not know that they do.

Do not you enquire whether they are members of such a society?—Yes; and we do not find they are; except in two or three instances we have found it so, and told them the consequence, and they have rejected parochial relief and kept to the fund.



Have you any other parochial schools in the parish than those in the workhouse?—We have a school on Dr. Bell's plan; and there are 260 or 270 children.

How long have those schools been established?—The parochial schools has been established many years, and it has been changed about two years.

Do the benefit societies, of which you have spoken, furnish relief to any paupers on account of their not being able to find employment?—None.

You stated, that you make a rate of 3*s.* 6*d.* on a presumed rent; what proportion does that bear to the actual rent?—About four-fifths.

So that the actual rate is about 2*s.* 8*d.* in the pound?—Yes.

Among your regular pensioners, have you any able bodied men who are receiving weekly wages for work regularly?—None. If they are capable of work we do not allow them pensions.

Whatever their family may be?—No.

Supposing his wages are insufficient, from his family being large, do not you give him relief?—Yes; but we are careful how we give relief, because the more relief given to them the less they will work.

Probably, in your parish, there is a great deal of private distribution of charity?—Yes.

You have very few litigations, because it is so easy to gain a settlement, you say?—Yes.

By your act you have the power of punishing persons who misbehave in the workhouse; is that often exercised?—If they are insolent they mulct them of a meal, but nothing further.

Would it be possible to employ any of your out-pensioners in work?—If we could get it, we would.

Could you find work?—No, we have not sufficient work; it is created work we are doing now; the out-pensioners principally consist of widows and children, and not men.

You mention that a great portion of your parish are employed as cowmen, what sort of wages do they get?—From eighteen shillings to a guinea a week.

You also state that you never give more than 5*s.* out of the house, but that you are employing persons at one and eight-pence a day on work which you find for them?—Yes, that is employment obtained by a fund to relieve the poor.

Do you give a man the option of taking the 5*s.* without work, or 1*s.* 8*d.* a day with work?—No, that is a distinct thing.

You have no system of giving them employ out of the workhouse?—No.

Can you distinguish the money raised on houses, and the money raised on land?—I am not prepared to do it, but we can do it.

Does that appear by the last returns to parliament?—No.

Has the influx of persons on account of the subscription raised produced any increase upon the poor rates?—I think it nominally must, because we must believe before we can pass home, consequently if they apply for relief we must give it them.



Do you know the amount of the money expended on such persons, not being parishioners, in any one year?—No, it is impossible to tell that, because if they are resident in the parish the magistrates compel us to give relief, whether they are entitled or not: a great deal of money goes out of the parish, being on the high north road, for passes for soldiers and sailors to Liverpool, and the north; ten or fifteen shillings a day.

Can you tell us the amount of that in a year?—I can furnish the Committee with it.

They pass through the parish?—Yes.

By themselves?—Yes.

Do you get repaid by the county for it?—No.

You have annual overseers, have you not?—Yes.

Have you not found it inconvenient that those persons should be changed annually; and made a regulation that one person should continue in office two years?—Yes.

Does not that arise from the inconvenience of their being changed, and not being competent to get a knowledge of the duty for some months?—Yes.

Do you think it important that an overseer should be continued for more than a year?—It is extremely necessary, because otherwise he cannot know his duty.

Would it not be an important change, if there were a permanent overseer?—I have no doubt it would.

Are the tithes assessed to the poor rates?—Yes.

In the hands of the rector?—Assessed to the vicar.

At what rate?—I think 44*l.* a year.

Upon what income?—I do not know what his income is.

Is any other property, beside the lands, titles and houses, rated?—No, nothing else; homestalls, houses, and lands.

Is there no canal?—There is the New-River Company, who have lately been rated for the land the river goes through.

Not upon their profits?—No.

There is no profit payable there, there is no toll?—No; I believe the trustees intend to rate them for the profits they receive in the parish.

Do any profits accrue in the parish, are any tolls laid?—They are taken at every house that receives the water; the parish had not rated the Company for many years, till within these two years, and then they rated it at 60*l.* a year, to try the question.

That was the land the river occupies?—Yes.

You now mean to rate them for the profits in the parish?—Yes.

The Regent's Canal also passes through your parish?—Yes, but it is not opened yet. I have no doubt, from the appearance of our rates, we shall be able to reduce them before the next half-year; 3*s.* 6*d.* is the highest sum.

Does that circumstance arise from the subscription?—No, I think not.

Are there in your parish an intermediate class between the payers of rates and the paupers?—There are some few, not many.

What is the ground you have for believing the rates will di-



minish?—Because we have raised a sum sufficient to answer all the expenses for the present half year; and we have more to provide for in winter than in summer.

You do not think it will be a permanent reduction?—That is impossible to say; I am only speaking to the next half year.

*Joseph Fletcher, Esq. called in, and Examined.*

ARE you resident in the parish of Shadwell?—I am.

Have you long been so?—These twenty-four years.

Is the management of the poor in your parish conducted under any local Act, or under the general provisions of the laws?—Under a local Act, passed about five years since.

Have you taken any share in the management of the poor under that Act?—From the beginning, and previous to that Act passing, my friend, Mr. Mellish, and I, have been in office seven years.

In what respect does that Act deviate from the general law of the country?—Very little, except in charging the landlords for houses under a certain value.

Does it make any difference with respect to the law of settlement?—None.

The inhabitants of your parish are chiefly employed in trade and manufacture?—Principally labourers and mechanics.

Of what nature is the property assessed in your parish?—Houses, manufactories, and dock yards.

Any land?—No vacant ground, nor any arable, or land of that kind.

Tithes?—There are no tithes paid in our parish.

Can you be good enough to tell the Committee what sums have been raised in your parish for the relief of the poor in the two last years?—It is impossible to say in the two last years; for such is the distress in the parish we cannot collect the rate; the expected amount is 4,000*l.* a year.

What was it in former years?—Rather more than 4,000*l.* I think, from memory, 4,100*l.*, but I can answer on a future day.

How much in the pound is that on the property assessed;—Six shillings; we reckon our rated contributing capital at about 14,000*l.*

Is that the rack-rent?—It is not the rack-rent, certainly, but a fourth or a fifth under it; I think the fair estimate would be about two-thirds or three-fourths; I cannot speak with accuracy, because it is difficult to know the rent actually paid.

You have a work-house?—We have.

That is full?—It is overflowing.

Was it so in the year to which you have referred?—It has been increasing every year; but very rapidly in the last few months.

Do you know what proportion of that 4,000*l.* was expended in the house, and what out of it?—I cannot tell from memory, but I can give an accurate account, if it is required.

*[The witness was directed to prepare such an account.]*

Have you any other means of supporting the poor besides this assessment?—None, except the trifling labour of the poor in the



house, which is very much reduced lately; they have earned three hundred pounds in a twelvemonth, but it is considerably reduced.

You have a difficulty in finding employment?—Yes, the employment they had, was making slops for the navy, and picking oakum; these things are no longer necessary, and therefore that employment has almost entirely failed.

Have you any subscription in aid of the poor rate?—A subscription was entered into within the last month or six weeks, which produced very nearly 400*l.* but it was principally contributed by a few individuals, the parish is so poor.

The population of your parish is about 9,000?—By the last census about 10,000.

Is there in the workhouse any school, or any education for the children?—We have a school on the Lancasterian plan for them, and we endeavour, as well as we can, to get them taught by that means.

In the workhouse?—Yes.

Is there a parochial school?—Yes, but the children in the workhouse cannot go to it, because it is supported by a voluntary subscription.

Are you apprehensive your means of supporting the poor will fail?—It is to be feared they will; we cannot get our rates.

How have the cases of actual want of food been provided for?—In the best manner we are capable of; the overseers are continually contributing more than our funds will support; we have been to the magistrates; they afford us no aid; but compel us to relieve the persons.

From what fund is that done?—By the treasurers getting still deeper in advance.

Have you ever applied to rate any other parishes in the hundred?—We spoke to the magistrates of the Shadwell Police some days ago, but they considered it would require a strong case.

Can you point out to the Committee any evils under the existing poor laws, which you think admit of remedy?—That is a question of very great magnitude, and ought to be answered with considerable delicacy, considering the importance and difficulty attending it. I think one great evil is, the law of settlement.

Are you aware of any objection to so far simplifying the law of settlement, as to reduce it to birth and parentage, and residence for a certain number of years, say five years?—I think any modification of the present law would be very difficult. I think the whole law of settlement should be changed; and I have some time ago suggested an idea of that kind privately, that the poor being to be maintained at the expence of the country, the poor rates should be equalled; that they should be relieved where they fall, and not under the present cruel system, which obliges the officer not to inquire how to relieve, but how to get rid of them; a person must almost divest himself of feeling to execute the law; and thus the persons are tormented.



You would have it made a national plan?—Yes, I think so; and a plan I think might be arranged, very simple in its operation.

Do you think such a plan would ensure economy?—I do not think it would be more objectionable, or more likely to produce a want of economy than the present system; how far it would secure economy would depend on the provisions of the act.

Supposing the law was not altered to that extent, do you think reducing the law of settlement to what it has been stated, would be objectionable?—I think any thing that would simplify it, would be an amendment.

That would take away most of the complicated questions of law and fact?—Yes, the expense of removal, and the expense of litigation, which parishes are too fond of entering into.

If the law of settlement remains as it is, are you not of opinion, where a removal is to take place, it would be better to prevent its taking place till the appeal is decided?—Certainly, that would be an improvement, inasmuch as it would sometimes prevent the expense of the removal, but that is all.

What are the class of individuals that are generally in arrear to the poor rates?—Housekeepers and persons carrying on small trades, shopkeepers.

Does it amount to a considerable sum?—It is increasing continually; I think, on the average, it might be stated, the whole of the parochial rates are twelve months in arrear at this moment.

In consequence of this difficulty, have you not been obliged to multiply your rates?—The time we made our subscription was just after the last quarter day; and we raised the rates from eighteen pence to half a crown for the quarter.

That was doubling the rate?—An additional shilling.

And you can make four rates in a year?—We can only make four in a year.

Did the eighteen pence raise one thousand pounds?—We calculate so; but it is almost impossible to be certain; because we cannot collect the arrears.

In former times it would have done so? When the act first came into operation it would; taking the contributing capital at 14,000*l.* it is easy to see the produce of any rate.

Do you consider then, that without some mode of assistance the parish will be in danger of being incapable to support their poor?—Certainly.

You have stated that the sum raised was 6*s.* in the pound upon two-thirds of the rack-rent; in many parishes more is raised; how comes it to be impossible for this parish to raise more than that?—I conclude, that no more can be raised, because we cannot raise that already assessed.

Will you have the goodness to distinguish the property under 15*l.* and the property above it?—I could only do it by a detailed reference to the rate-book; I can state generally who the property belongs to, and the nature of the property is what I have stated.

Could you state the value of the property at 30*l.*—I have no



difficulty in stating any thing the Committee may require, by a reference to the books; it will be easy to take it out from any minimum the Committee wish.

You have said houses and manufactories were rated; do you mean by that the rent of the buildings, or the supposed profits of the manufactories?—Certainly not profit; nothing but the rack-rent, so far as the same can be known, which are the words of the preface of the rate.

Is the larger part of the property within your parish in small holdings?—More than two-thirds of the parish is the property of the honourable Thomas Bowes; it is called the Bowes estate; it is in the gift of the Dean of St. Paul's; the bishop of Lincoln receives a portion of the rent; another proportion of the parish belongs to the Mercers Company; a part of it was purchased by the London Dock Company to make their docks, which they have given up the idea of, and it remains a waste; the rest is the property of a few freeholders, and but a few; the larger part of the parish is as I describe. Each of those properties, with the exception of that belonging to the London Dock Company, are sub-let, through a variety of gradations, till they come down to the occupier, and the rates are made upon the tenant.

Are the occupiers generally small holders?—With a very few exceptions they are small. The manufactories I have mentioned are but two or three, and two dock yards; the rest of the premises are of the description I have named.

Then, when you speak of labourers, you mean labourers in the dock yard?—Labourers employed in the London Docks, the West India Docks, and on board the shipping.

Has there been any considerable reduction in the value of your houses?—The rents have depreciated very much.

In what proportion?—I cannot say in what proportion. The cause has been from the decrease of trade, and our parish depending on the river entirely for support.

You have made no calculation as to the decrease?—I have not.

Was the last assessment made with a view to any depreciation which had taken place?—The rate book has not been altered for several years; the premises remain at the same rate; for it is a difficult thing to make any alteration in the rate-book, unless you reduce it: if you lay on a single pound the owner is offended, and appeals.

Within what time has the property depreciated?—In common with the general depreciation of the property in the country; in no other way.

Was there any depreciation before 1815?—I think not before 1814. Certainly if the question goes to the actual depreciation upon our books, there is none: our rated rental is the same. If it is a depreciation of the value of the property, it is in the same proportion as in the other parts of the country.

As the poor rates paid by the tenant have increased in value within two years, has not the depreciation of the rent been partly



in consequence of the rates?—The value of the property, and the rent paid, perhaps may be two different things. A man bound by a lease must continue to pay the same rent. A man may be obliged to pay a certain rent for a house when it is not worth a tithe of it. Many of us in Shadwell would be glad to be rid of our tenures, but we cannot sell them without a loss.

You have stated the collection of the rates is twelve months in arrear; has that been the case every year?—Gradually getting worse and worse ever since I have known the parish.

Will you be good enough to state, whether the parish has received assistance from any society established in London?—We have never received a shilling advantage or emolument from any society whatever.

Has any application ever been made for pecuniary assistance to any of those societies?—No. We proposed applying to the committee at Lloyd's for some relief from their fund, but it has not been done.

You have stated that the equalization of the rates would be one means of altering with advantage the present laws respecting the poor; in what way would you propose the equalization of the rates?—The way I should propose it, would be in conformity to a plan which I submitted to an honourable member, now present, in the year 1814; by the means of the county treasurer. I have some memorandums of the plan in my pocket, if I may refer to them; it is a subject of great magnitude. The idea in its full extent is, the utter repeal of the present laws; and the equalization of the poor rates, to be effected by a short but comprehensive Act of Parliament, directing the supply; and providing, through the medium of the county treasurers, for the re-payment of those parishes whose disbursements should exceed their receipts.

The poorhouse, you say, is overflowing; what is the capacity of the accommodation in that poorhouse?—I think the poorhouse never was intended to accommodate more than 180, or 200 the outside, and we have now in it, I believe, 260 or 270, if not more.

How many sleep in a bed?—Two or three.

Grown persons?—Grown persons two in all beds, and some three and some four.

How many bed-rooms are there?—The wards are the whole length of the house, and the beds are put wherever there is room.

Do you know the number of poor relieved out of the house daily?—About three hundred a week; the relief is of two kinds, there is a weekly meeting at the workhouse when the officers of the parish dispense the regular relief; there are likewise casual applications, which are relieved daily, as they may arise, and the business of the overseers now is only to attend to the poor, they cannot get on with their own business.

How many are relieved out of the house?—The payment at the table is nearly three hundred per week; and I can, from the books, give the number of casual poor in each week.

You have stated that the great difficulties have arisen since the



year 1814; with respect to the difficulty of obtaining the rates, you have also stated that the parish has been gradually getting worse; with respect to the quantity of paupers for some years past, does that in your opinion proceed from an increased real poverty of the parish previous to 1814, or from the less difficulty people feel in coming upon the rates?—I apprehend it arises from the privation of the trade; previous to the year 1814 there was a much better trade.

You say the parish has been gradually getting worse for some years; did you mean to include previous to 1814 by that?—It has been gradually getting worse from the year 1814; it is a very difficult thing to specify a day or a year; I can only state, that as to the parochial relief, when we first set down to the weekly table in 1808, seven pounds covered the expense, and now thirty will not do it; there are two kinds of relief, the weekly payment of the committee, and the casual relief of the overseers, daily and hourly, as the persons apply; but that description which was eight pounds is now twenty or thirty.

Have the other branches of your expenses increased in the same proportion?—That depends upon the number in the house, and we have more persons applying to the house than can be admitted.

How long has the house been as full as it can hold?—It has been filling for a considerable time past.

Have you many regular weekly pensioners out of the house?—About 150.

Are they old and disabled persons?—The overseers enquire into their situation, and they are allowed a weekly payment.

To how much does that go to an individual?—From one shilling to six shillings a-week.

Never more than six shillings?—In very few instances more, I believe; this is the regular stated weekly allowance; but still those persons apply to the overseers in the course of the week, who perhaps give them two or three shillings more.

Are there many cases where you do not give a man sufficient to maintain himself and his family?—In no case sufficient; we endeavour to dispense relief according to our means, but it is not adequate.

Where does he obtain assistance, by private charity?—He wants assistance he cannot obtain.

Do you apprehend, that if you maintained him, and gave him as much as was necessary out of the house, it would cost more than maintaining him in the house?—Certainly; if we were to maintain them and their families, it would cost us far more; what is five shillings, to hand to the father of a starving family of five or six children.

What are the weekly earnings of a healthy labourer, who has not to depend on skill or dexterity, in your parish?—We pay our own men from a guinea to thirty shillings a week.

In what trade?—A ship builder.

Have you any Saving Bank?—No.



What is the pay of a labourer who has only his health and strength to depend upon?—Three shillings a day; there is a difference, between such a labourer and a mechanic who finds his own tools, he earns from twenty-five to thirty shillings a week.

A common labourer earns eighteen shillings?—Yes.

In your opinion, does there arise any inconvenience from the appointment of annual overseers?—I think there does.

Do you think the appointment of a perpetual overseer, who should be paid, would be beneficial?—I do, provided he was properly remunerated and chequed.

Will you be so good as to state in what manner you would think it to be beneficial?—I consider that it would be beneficial, inasmuch as such a perpetual officer would have a personal knowledge of the poor; might acquaint himself with their wants, and prevent imposition, which a man who is forced into the office will not take any pains to do.

Do you think the condition of the poor would also be benefited by it, or not?—I do not know that it would have any effect in bettering the condition of the poor: I think it could not; the wants of the poor, and their condition, depend upon circumstances beyond the reach of an overseer; all his duty is to relieve, and to do that in the best way, and at the least expense.

Have you any experience in the administration of the poor laws out of the parish of Shadwell?—None; I have not interfered out of our own parish.

Are the poor in the habit of making improvident demands, and do they use more deception?—I am afraid, in proportion as the increase of the means of supply is afforded by charitable donations, or parochial aid, if the wants of the poor do not increase, their applications do; and though we certainly ought not to curb our feelings in bestowing charity, yet still those charities, perhaps, do increase the evil.

Therefore you conceive that ill-founded claims upon the poor rate have increased of late?—Yes; and it is a very unfortunate feature in the case, that the poor themselves now look to the parochial distribution as their indisputable right, and they tell us they will have it. I have heard it said, when I have occasionally attended the meeting, which I very seldom do, “we will have it;” and they have thrown down the money which the committee in their wisdom has given, and demanded more.

Do you not conceive that the habit of providence and the feeling of necessity on their own part to provide for themselves, has decreased?—Certainly it has; that feeling of independence has certainly decreased—the desire of maintaining their families by their labour has decreased, I fear.

Do you not conceive that that has increased in proportion as the idea has been more generally entertained by the poor, that the poor rates are their right?—I think it has.

That idea, that the poor rates are their right has increased very much of late?—Yes.



You say your labourers earn from eighteen to twenty-five shillings a week?—They do.

Have you known instances of their receiving that for weeks together, and on the occasion of temporary want of work come to the parish?—Not among the persons we employ, they are of a different description; but among the coalheavers, and those whose business requires them to drink a good deal, they spend the whole, and are not provident; therefore if they are a week out of work many of them are upon the poor rates, and that is the reason why I consider, if they had not the dernier resort of the poor rates they must reserve something.

What do the coalheavers earn?—In full work from 10 s. to 20 s. a day, I suppose; they have so much a chaldron, but it is very hard work.

Then those men come to the poor rate as soon as they are out of employ?—Not immediately; it is very probable that these great wages may only last for a few days, and then they are several days out of work; it depends upon a fleet of colliers coming in, and they have no other means of employment.

When they are employed they earn as much as that?—Yes, and they might by husbanding it keep themselves away from application for parochial relief.

In point of fact, though their earnings may be from fifteen to twenty shillings a day, is it not necessary for them to spend a great deal in beer?—Yes, and that induces a habit of drinking which they cannot lay by when not at work.

Do you conceive that that improvidence has increased in your parish; that eight or ten years ago they were more inclined to be provident than now?—At that time they had an abundance of work, and there were fewer hands; the men were many of them employed in the army and navy, they had constant employment and might average ten shillings a day; the sum I have before given is an extraordinary case; I would not have it taken as the average.

You do not observe the same improvidence in shipwrights?—No, nor in many other mechanics.

Do not you suppose money might be advanced to those persons in the way of loan, instead of gift, for their relief, and then, when they earn money, be required to pay it before any further relief is given them?—If such were the general law; otherwise there would be no means of enforcing the re-payment, and it would be merely an individual loan; if it were the general law I should consider it excellent.

Supposing the man is in a starving condition when he comes a second time?—If I understand the question rightly, it comes to this, that it obliges the persons to depend on their exertion to lay by a part of their earnings; that has been the idea thrown out by different members; and I have considered, that if the poor rates were in the first instance equalized on some plan similar to what I have mentioned, then, upon the basis of equalization, such a fabric might be raised as would make them depend on their exertion.



*William Mellish*, Esq. having been present during the examination of the last witness, made the following statement :

Mr. Fletcher has taken entirely the active part in our parish, and he is more competent to give the Committee information than myself; I concur entirely with what he says. There is one or two observations, which, if the Committee will permit me, I will mention, which have escaped his recollection, I apprehend; they are, that the local situation of our parish subjects us to more calls on the poor rate than any other parish in the neighbourhood; our parish is between the London and West India Docks, which throw a great number of poor into our parish; the sailors are sent out of the ships when they enter the docks and become inhabitants of our parish, and they become very great burthens; and likewise from the police office being in our parish, when people apply there for relief, the magistrates cannot send them to any other place than the parish where the police office is; that subjects us to very heavy calls, and we are burthened by more than our share of the casual poor. I have applied to the magistrates, thinking it a very serious evil, and the reply I received was, that they had no discretion; that they must send them to the parish where the office happens to be at which the application is made.

---

*Lunæ, 3<sup>o</sup> die Martij, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

Mr. *Stephen Watts*, called in, and Examined.

In what office are you in the parish of St. Marylebone?—Clerk to the Governors of the Poor.

How long have you been so?—About nineteen years.

The poor of your parish are managed under a local Act?—Yes.

In whom is the government of the poor vested by that Act?

—In thirty persons taken from the vestry, appointed every year.

You mean that the thirty are appointed every year?—Yes.

The vestry is a select vestry, under the Act of Parliament?—Yes.

And the thirty are appointed annually by that vestry?—Yes.

Do they altogether manage the affairs of the poor, or are they subdivided?—All together; there is a sort of rotation to so many every Friday, but the meetings are open to the whole.

Do the vestry divide themselves to conduct the maintenance of the poor, the paving and lighting, and so on?—That the vestry clerk can answer better than myself.

The population of your parish is about 70,000?—Seventy-two or seventy-three thousand.

You have a work-house in the parish of course?—Yes.



How many does that workhouse contain?—We have now 1,238.

How many is it calculated to contain?—About 1,350.

So that it is not at present quite full?—Not exactly so.

Are those persons who are in the workhouse, and who are able to work, employed in any way?—Yes.

In what way?—In manufacturing all the clothes they wear.

Are the children employed?—In part.

The number in the workhouse are maintained by the parish, not let to any body to maintain?—Yes.

Do you know how many receive relief out of the workhouse?—1,147 families.

Consisting of how many persons?—About three to a family; that is 3,441.

Are they all parishioners?—Yes.

You do not happen to have brought with you the last returns made to Parliament respecting your rates?—I have the return made for the years 1812, 1813 and 1814.

Will you give the Committee an abstract of that?—Money raised by the poor rates, in the year 1812, 48,864*l.*; in 1813, 49,453*l.*; in 1814, 58,445*l.*

Does that paper distinguish what part of those sums was applied to the county rate, or any other purposes besides the maintenance of the poor?—Yes.

Tell the Committee, what those sums are, in each year?—In the year 1812, 10,140*l.* to county rates, and other purposes, except the poor; in the year 1813, 8,144*l.*; in 1814, 13,327*l.*

What occasioned that vast difference between 1813 and 1814?—It is stated under the head of church rate, county rate, and highway rate.

You have lately built a new church?—Yes.

Your paper will tell, probably, how much was expended on the people in the workhouse, and how much on the people out of the workhouse?—No, it does not.

Does it tell you the expenditure in law expenses?—Yes.

What did that amount to in each of those years?—In 1812, 477*l.* that includes suits at law, journies and expenses of overseers in removing the poor. In 1813, 487*l.* In 1814, 364*l.*

That is for law expenses, and expenses of removal?—Yes.

Have you any arrangement with other parishes, of sending a friendly note respecting the settlement of a person, in order to save the expense of litigation?—No.

Have you the number of poor in the workhouse, and out of the workhouse, in those three years?—Yes; in the year 1812, the average was 1,012 in the workhouse; out of the workhouse, 3,162. In 1813, 1,046 in the workhouse, and 3,126 out of the workhouse. In 1814, 1,051 in the workhouse, and 3,288 out of the workhouse.

Have you any account of the money expended in purchasing materials for work in the workhouse, and of the money earned by the work?—No.



Can you tell the Committee the number of persons at present wholly maintained by the parish in or out of the workhouse?—At this time we have 1,238 in the workhouse.

Those are wholly maintained by the parish?—Yes.

Can you tell how many out of the workhouse are wholly maintained by the parish?—There are not any of them that are fully maintained; they only have something in aid and assistance of what they do.

No employment is given to those whom you assist out of the house?—No.

Are there any persons in your parish, who are in an intermediate state, between those who pay rates, and those who receive relief?

—Yes; there certainly are persons who do not pay poor's rate.

Can you speak to the number excused from the rate in that way?—No, I cannot.

What is the amount of the sum raised in this year in your parish?—That I cannot answer; the accounts are not made up.

To what period can you answer that question?—Not further than 1815.

To Ladyday 1815?—No; our accounts are made up to Christmas.

Can you state the amount raised at Christmas 1815?—The money collected for 1815, was 46,218*l.* for the poor.

Does not that include the county rate, and the other rates you have specified just now?—That is for the poor rate, out of which the county rate is paid.

Can you state what part of that went to the county rate, and other purposes, besides the maintenance of the poor?—The county rate that year was 2,130*l.*

Will you state the expense of the poor, exclusive of all other things?—43,000*l.* or thereabouts.

Is this mixed up with the church rate at all?—No.

Tell the Committee, if you please, the nature and amount of the property assessed to your rate?—Houses and land.

What proportion do the houses bear to the land?—That is a question that will be answered better by the vestry clerk; there is a vestry clerk, and an accountant.

What is your rate in the pound?—1*s.* 8*d.* the last year.

For the whole year?—Yes.

Is the property rated at the rack rent, or at a proportion only?—It is understood to be rated at the rack rent.

Is it so really?—As nearly as it can be got at.

Are the houses and land rated in the same proportion?—As nearly as possible.

Have you any difficulty in collecting this rate at present?—That is a question the vestry clerk can best answer.

Have you a power under your Act, of assessing the landlord for tenements of small value?—I think there is such a power in the Act.

Have you been forced to raise any part of the rate by distress?—That is with the vestry clerk.



Have you reason to complain of any great number of casual poor, Irish and others?—Our Irish do not consist of a great number, about fifty families.

Are not the Irish in Calvert's Buildings, in your parish?—Yes. What may be the number of them?—Several hundreds.

Can you state the number of Irish who have received relief?—About fifty families, out of doors.

That is about 150 people you reckon?—Yes.

Are any of those you relieve out of the house, receiving permanent relief or only casual?—Only casual.

Are there any schools in your parish?—There are, a charity school and a school of industry.

Is the charity school an old established school?—It is old.

What is the number of children in it?—108.

Have you any schools established of late years?—The school of industry has been established about fourteen years.

How many children are there in that?—I cannot say.

Are not the schools united?—No, they are distinct.

The population of your parish has increased of late years; has your rate increased in a larger proportion than your population in that time?—I cannot answer that.

What is the highest rate of allowance you make to any family not in the house?—According to the family, and the nature of the distress, which is particularly inquired into; ten or fifteen shillings a week sometimes.

Is there any sum beyond which the vestry make it a general rule not to go?—No.

Suppose a man to be single, and totally without the means of earning any subsistence, what in that case, supposing there is nothing peculiar in it, do you allow him?—3s. 3s. 6d. or 4s.

That is clearly insufficient wholly to maintain him, is not it?—It is very rarely that a case comes where a man has not some mode of getting money to assist.

If such a case should come, do you apprehend the vestry would give enough to maintain him?—They would go as far as 5s. but not further, for they would then say come into the house.

Five shillings is your limit out of the house, and beyond that, unless under particular circumstances, you take him into the house?—Yes.

If he has a family you go further?—Yes.

Is it the practice in administering relief out of doors, supposing they have furniture of their own, to oblige them to sell it, or do you respect their property, and allow them to retain it, giving them parish relief?—Yes.

You allow them to retain the property?—Yes.

That is the uniform rule of the vestry?—Yes.

How and by whom is the rate assessed?—By the vestry.

How is it levied, and by whom?—By collectors.

And who has the disposal of the funds so collected?—The vestry, as far as concerns the money collected for the poor, but no further.



If a healthy young man applies for relief, do you attempt to find him work, or give him relief in money?—We generally take him into the house.

Has he employment given him there?—Yes.

Does the case ever happen of women applying for relief, and the husbands maintaining themselves upon their labour?—Yes.

Do you give relief to the wife, or summon the husband?—Summon the husband.

And in the case of children applying for relief, you summon the father?—Yes.

Do children often apply, and say their parents will not support them?—Not very often; the parents generally come with them.

Have you many cases of individuals abandoning their families, and leaving them to the parish?—Not many.

After 5s. you make them come into the house if they want more?—If they persist.

Does that operate as a check upon them to desist in their demands?—It does.

To a considerable degree?—Yes.

They dislike coming into the house?—Yes.

Can you state the total amount of the rental on which the rate is levied?—522,000l.

Can you tell how much of that is land and how much houses?—No, I cannot.

Has the number of paupers very much increased in your parish of late years?—Very much this last winter.

Is the workhouse provided with provisions by contract, or, in what way?—By contract.

The Committee wish to understand whether it is a contract for each individual so much, or whether you contract with the butcher and baker?—With the butcher and baker.

What is your allowance to a man for food; you give him meat?—Yes.

How often?—Three times a week.

A limited quantity of course?—Six ounces of meat dressed.

And the other days what?—Soups, suet puddings, and bread and cheese.

Are the men employed in making the clothing?—Part of them.

If you take into the house a bricklayer's labourer, can he be employed profitably in such work?—No; the greater part of them are employed in picking oakum.

Is there any other work, than picking oakum and making clothing?—No.

What do those who work receive?—One-eighth of what they earn.

What is the average expense of the persons in the workhouse per head?—7s. or 7s. 6d. taking in every thing.

You include the expense of servants to the establishment and every thing?—The bare maintenance of the poor and their clothes.



Not the expense of servants or the building?—No.

Can you state at all what the average expense per year is of the servants, and the building, exclusive of the maintenance of the poor?—The vestry clerk or the accountant could give those accounts.

Are many applications made of a fraudulent nature?—There are attempts of that sort, but they seldom come to anything.

What religious instruction have the poor in the workhouse?—There is a regular chapel and chaplain.

What is his attendance?—There is service twice on a Sunday, and prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays; and every day he attends, if he is required.

Does he visit the poor?—Yes.

Daily?—Yes.

Has he a salary?.. Yes.

What is it?—250*l.* a year.

Can you state the number of poor in the house in the year ending at Christmas, 1815?—No; I have not got that account; but I suppose about 1,100, 1,150, or thereabouts.

*Mr. John Leigh*, called in, and Examined.

You are vestry clerk of St. George's, Hanover-square?—Yes, and likewise clerk to the governors and directors of the poor.

How long have you served in those capacities?—As clerk to the governors and directors of the poor ever since 1782, and as vestry clerk ever since January 1789.

Will you please to tell the Committee how the poor of your parish are managed under the provisions of the local Act; by what officers?—By the governors and directors of the poor who are appointed under the Act of Parliament, consisting of the rector, two churchwardens, six overseers of the poor, and twenty substantial inhabitants appointed by the vestry.

That vestry is a select vestry under the Act of Parliament?—Yes, consisting of one hundred, besides the rector.

The churchwardens are in office two years?—Usually so, not always.

It is the usual practice of the parish?—Yes.

Are the overseers changed every year?—No; sometimes they serve two years, sometimes three, and sometimes four; we have one in office now who is in his fourth year.

Is that voluntary?—Yes; we cannot compel them to serve a second year.

Your parish has a workhouse?—Two.

How many persons are they calculated to contain?—They are pretty full now, and the present number is between eight and nine hundred; and if they were fuller than they are now, it would create some inconvenience; indeed during a part of this winter some of the poor have been obliged to lie three in a bed, but not in many instances.

That does not happen in ordinary years;—No; the highest number this winter has been 879.



One of your poor houses is in Mount-street; where is the other?  
—At Little Chelsea.

In each of those poor houses, are the persons employed in any way?—In Mount-street they are; the house at Chelsea is for a select number of old infirm people, and the very young; there is not much employment going on there.

The persons there generally are impotent, from age or infancy?  
—Yes, it is provided for them to be in a quiet place.

How are those employed in Mount-street?—In various work; they do the work of the house; there are some servants hired, but there must be more if the poor were not employed in it; they pick oakum, and they pick hair and comb wool for upholsterers, and needle-work is taken in from the slop-shops.

Are you able to prevent their being idle; can you always provide work for them?—I do not think we can.

In ordinary times do you find any want of work in the workhouse?  
—I think we do; I think sometimes the master of the house, who is also the task-master, has complained that he cannot get work for the people to do.

Can you tell the number that receive relief out of the workhouse?  
—Not with any degree of accuracy; but this winter they have prodigiously increased.

Can you speak to any former year?—I can guess a little; we have a list of persons relieved every fortnight, and when I made out that list last April, the number of names was 700, and I think the number of persons must be double; some are single persons and some are natural children; but many have families, so that I take for granted there must be more than 1,400 persons.

Have you any account of your expenditure in former years?—Yes.

Have you a copy of the account returned to Parliament?—I have not with me; our year ends at Lady-day; and our rate for this year is 1s. 7d. in the pound, on four-fifths of the supposed rack-rent.

The property in your parish is all houses nearly?—There is a little land in five fields; the assessment I have mentioned will produce about 25,000*l*.

What do you reckon the whole rental?—I am not prepared for that; but the poor and highway rates will amount this year to 25,000*l*. the highway rate does not amount to a farthing in the pound, and therefore we do not make a separate rate for that.

Is any county rate included in that sum?—I have only spoken of the receipts; the expenditure will be upwards of 30,000*l*. this year, when the year comes to an end; the rate is made at 1s. 7d. in the pound, which will produce 25,000*l*.; the expenditure will be at least 30,000*l*.; it will exceed that I am pretty confident, and in that will be included the county rates, which amount this year to not much less than 5000*l*. in our parish.

In your expenditure is included the paving and lighting?—No, that is separate.

Can you give the Committee such an account of any preceding



year?—Yes, as far as seven years back; in the year 1815, the rate was 1s. 8d. in the pound, that raised 26,491*l.* 11*s.* 10*d.* and the expenditure of that year 25,862*l.* 15*s.* 4*d.*; then the expenditure in 1814, was 26,628*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* the rate was then 1s. 9*d.*; the expenditure in 1813, was 28,831*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.* and the rate was then 1s. 9*d.* in the pound; in 1812, the rate was 1s. 9*d.* in the pound, and the expenditure was 26,364*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*; in 1811, the rate was 3*s.* 6*d.* in the pound, but we rated on two-fifths at that time, so that it is just equal to 1s. 9*d.* on four-fifths, and the expenditure was 26,092*l.* 15*s.* 1*d.*

The population of your parish is a little above 40,000?—The last time it was taken it was nearly 42,000; it had increased from between 37 and 38,000 to nearly 42,000.

Can you tell the average expense of maintaining persons in the workhouse per head?—No, I cannot.

Have you a power under your local Act of assessing landlords for small tenements?—No.

Have you a difficulty in raising your rate now; have you much arrear?—No.

Have you found it necessary to exempt a certain class of persons from paying the rate?—There are some few poor in the parish who do not pay; they are summoned before the Magistrates, and the Magistrates sometimes exempt them, and sometimes they give time to pay.

Is there any rule as to the greatest allowance out of the house?—No, every case stands on its own bottom.

Is there any person relieved out of the house permanently?—The 700 persons I spoke of relieved once a fortnight, are permanent.

But they are not wholly maintained?—No, they do something for themselves.

What is the highest allowance you give before you take them into the house?—There are some few instances of 4*s.* a week for a single person; I do not think there is an instance of more; we give families as much as 12*s.*

Do you know how many those families consist of?—Half a dozen persons at least; a widow with five or six children under ten years of age; when they come to that age, we take them into the house, or apprentice them out, or get the parents to provide for them.

In cases of application for relief from persons out of the house who have furniture, do you insist on their parting with it?—No.

Do the poor do their utmost to maintain themselves before they come to the workhouse?—I am afraid there are exceptions to that; there are some we cannot keep out of the workhouse, do what we will, and others are unwilling to come in; some if they are put out to-day, will get in in a few days time.

Are you burthened with poor that do not belong to you?—Considerably so.

What are they?—A great many Irish, more than any other country.

Do you continue to give them relief for a length of time often?



—Yes; unless they commit any act of vagrancy they cannot be sent out of the country; the Irish and foreigners have an advantage over the English, for they must be relieved where they fall.

Can you tell the amount of your law expences in the years you have spoken to?—I am not aware of that; they are not great.

Have you any Scotch poor?—Very few.

Have you any means of getting rid of them?—No, they can reside where they please, and are not removable without they commit an act of vagrancy.

Of the persons who go into the workhouse, do many go out and maintain themselves?—Yes, many make a practice of being in the house in the winter, and in the summer they work and maintain themselves; that makes all workhouses fuller in the winter than the summer.

Does the going into the workhouse make them profligate and disorderly, or has it a good effect upon their morals?—I cannot say much of that; whether in or out of the house, they will follow their own wishes; some are otherwise; there is good, bad, and indifferent.

Have you any means of separating the profligate from those well ordered and well behaved?—Not sufficient means; it is a difficult matter to say which are very bad, and which a little better.

Have you any chaplain to the house?—Yes, two; one for the house at Chelsea, and another for the house in Mount-street.

How often are prayers read?—There is a sermon of a Sunday at both places, and on the week days the chaplain of Mount-street is sent to the sick, and to administer the sacrament to persons who desire it.

What schools are there for the education of the children?—A school in South-street, supported by subscription; I do not know the number of children, but I believe 300, of both sexes; and there is another school, called General Steward's School, and I believe there the number is something under twenty boys.

Have you no school upon the national system?—This school that I speak of that has 300 children, is partly upon that system, I fancy, not entirely.

Is there any Saving Bank in the parish?—I believe not.

Have you any reason to believe that the Irish poor, who have this advantage over the English, shift their dwellings more than the English in consequence?—I do not know that they do shift their dwellings.

Do you know that they migrate from one parish to another, more than the English?—I do not know that they do; one of the overseers of Saint James's told me, that in consequence of a large subscription in their parish, His Royal Highness the Prince Regent having made a handsome present, it had brought a number of strangers to the parish.

That was not parish relief?—No.

Do you often remove many persons from your parish?—Yes, constantly.



Is that done by friendly removals?—No, we never accept them. Then it is by order of a magistrate?—Yes.

Do you remove frequently to any considerable distance?—Sometimes; in many cases we find it best to submit to temporary relief, rather than remove to a very distant place.

Do many servants come on the parish by residence?—Yes.

A considerable number?—Yes.

Both male and female?—Yes.

That is a considerable proportion perhaps of the persons who are chargeable on the parish?—I think so; I think a great number of the poor have gained their settlements by service.

Do you find many of those persons, persons who have been formerly in service?—A great many.

Do the young poor, in many instances, show a disposition to help their parents?—We do not know much of that.

How often are the poor, out of the workhouse, paid?—Once a fortnight, if they chuse to come for it; some let it go for a month or six weeks.

What class is that?—The 700 names I mentioned before; they are some of them old and infirm, single people, or natural children, or widows with families; or men with families: The other class come occasionally, but many of them very frequently.

Where they avoid coming for six weeks, do you conceive they are in very great distress?—We often ask the question; “I let it lie to pay my rent; my landlord trusts me, and when I receive the money I pay it to him.”

Do not they also get credit at shops?—Perhaps they may.

Those persons who receive assistance, do you inquire whether their situation is altered at all?—As often as we can.

How often?—Every day of our lives we inquire of some or other; but they are so numerous we cannot get satisfactory answers from all of them.

Do you pay them in money entirely?—Yes.

Is the parish defrauded to any considerable extent by misrepresentation?—No doubt there are many impositions.

Do you see any means of preventing that?—We prevent it as much as we can.

Are there any powers in your opinion expedient to be given, in order to prevent it?—No.

In the cases of those people who apply for casual relief, is there not a greater opening for abuse than among those resident?—Those casually relieved are residents in the parish; we do not relieve any that reside out of the parish.

And men sleeping in the parish one night, will be entitled to relief?—Yes; and some come the next day.

It is the custom of some of them to go from parish to parish? We cannot avoid that.

Do you receive removals into your parish, in the same proportion as you send them out?—I think we do; I do not know that we send away or receive more.



On a common calculation you receive as many as you send away ?  
—I think so.

From what hours do you give casual relief ?—There is no particular hours ; the governors meet at ten, and stay till their business is over ; which has been, this winter, many days, till four and five in the afternoon.

Have you, in any instance, rated the stock in trade of a tradesman ?—No.

Have you rated any other property than houses and land ?—No ; by our Act of Parliament it must be a pound rate, and that we conceive to be upon houses and land.

What is the amount of the private subscription raised in the parish ?—Between five and six thousand pounds.

Are shops rated higher than private houses ?—We rate them as near as we can obtain information, according to the annual rent.

In what way has that subscription been disposed of ?—By a very numerous committee, composed of subscribers, who have taken the pains to visit the poor at their own habitations, and given relief.

Has that reduced the applications for assistance from the rates ? No ; some of us think it has induced some persons to come to the parish, who would not have come without ; but, in other instances, it has kept some away, no doubt, or it has made them content with less from the parish than they would be otherwise.

Do you ask those that come, whether they have had assistance from this fund ?—Sometimes.

And what do you do if they have ?—If they have received from that fund, we give them a little less.

Has it afforded assistance to any persons in your parish, who, from pride, would be kept from applying for parochial relief ?—Yes ; I think those men have found some, and relieved them, that would have been kept from the parish through their own feelings.

And have therefore afforded great acts of charity ?—No doubt.

You say it has induced some persons to apply for relief who would not otherwise ?—We think so, because the number of applications is so considerable this winter.

Does not that arise from the distress of the times, rather than the assistance given by this fund ?—From both causes perhaps.

Could those persons who have received assistance from the fund, have subsisted without such assistance, according to your observation ?—I suppose a great many could not.

Then a great many must have applied to the parish ?—Yes ; but out of the increase we have had this winter, we only suppose some of them would not have come, if it had not been put into their heads by seeing their neighbours relieved.

You stated there were 700 names in April last, who had received relief once a fortnight ?—Yes ; a book is made to last for a year, it is ruled in 26 columns, and last April there were within ten over or under 700.

What are they now ?—They are a little increased, but not so much as the casualties.



Can you state the number of Irish and other poor, not having settlements, relieved in your parish?—No; but they are pretty numerous.

What are the numbers of casual poor relieved now in a week?—Our churchwarden took pains a few days ago, to count the number of persons that had been relieved upon a Tuesday and Wednesday, which are the two days the Board sit for that purpose, and there were upwards of 600.

What proportion does that bear to the former years?—Ten to one; I have known the time when there has not been sixty.

Within what time?—Within these two or three years back.

Then the casual poor are now increased within these two or three years, ten to one?—Yes.

Was the parish of St. George's in the habit some years ago of sending children to factories?—Yes.

Have you observed any operation since the passing of the bill, that restrained the sending of them, as to any effect upon the poor rates?—There has not been time for that yet, but it will have an effect; we cannot dispose of the parish children now, there will be more of them kept in the workhouse and brought up in the workhouse to be men and women.

Are the poor generally satisfied with the answers given by the overseers, or do they frequently apply to the magistrates?—Not very frequently; sometimes they will.

Are orders given simply, or are the overseers summoned?—They are summoned.

Your parish is divided into wards?—Yes, six; it used to be five.

You have six overseers?—Yes.

Does each overseer take a ward?—He resides in the ward, but he does not confine himself to that ward.

Does each overseer confine himself to one ward?—They perhaps inquire more in one ward than another, but do not confine themselves.

If a subdivision took place in the course of this inquiry, do not you think it would be more beneficial?—I think it would, if there were more persons to inquire.

If their inquiries were confined to a smaller district, would it not be beneficial?—Then it would require a greater number of persons in the whole, if the districts were smaller.

Can you state to the Committee what is the usual price of labour a healthy man would be able to earn in your parish?—Various trades have various wages; a common labourer, I believe, can get 15s. or 16s. a week; in the summer time something more.

Is that sufficient to maintain a man and his wife and child or children?—A man and his wife and child ought to live on that, as poor people; if a man was receiving 15s. we should refuse him, but they come to us, and say they have not work.

In the case of a man having three children and earning 16s. a week, should you think it necessary to give anything to him?—



I think if he was certain of receiving those wages all the year round, the board would refuse.

At the present time?—Yes, if they were certain he earned 16s.

What number of children should you think it necessary to give relief for, supposing a man has six or eight children?—No labourer's wages would relieve a man with six or eight children.

Will you state what regular wages will relieve a man with three children?—There may be other circumstances besides the wages, there may be ill health.

But supposing they are healthy children?—A healthy man, wife, and child, the man receiving 16s. a week, our board would not give relief to.

You reckon the wife would earn something?—Yes.

Is there any mode by which you are in the habit of compelling persons to work who are not in the house, and making that a condition of their relief?—No.

Could that be done?—I think not.

Supposing a man having no work comes for relief, and you do not take him into the house, can you compel him to work in any way?—We can only take him into the house to do such work as is done in the house, and it is merely an apology for work.

Do you know any means that could be devised to give him work before he comes into the house?—No.

What relief do you give to an aged person past work, supposing him to be out of the house?—There are various sums; I do not think any single person has more than 4s. a week, and many not that; some of them have a little dependence upon friends, and some have property of their own.

---

*Mercurij, 5<sup>o</sup> die Martij, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

*Joseph Fletcher, Esq.* was again called in, and Examined.

HAVE you any thing to add to your evidence on a former day?—There is one thing which I was not asked at the time, though the observation should have arisen out of the questions; Mr. Mellish brought it to my recollection in walking home; and it is due to the kindness of Government to state it. I answered, we had received no pecuniary relief from private bodies; but I should have added, that we had waited on Lord Sidmouth, who ordered us a supply of slops; the parish has received them, but no pecuniary assistance.

Is there any suggestion you wish to make to the Committee?—I was desired to prepare for the Committee two or three statements, which I have taken the liberty of doing. I was desired, in the first instance, to shew a comparison of the Expenditure of the different years; I have brought it. In the year 1808, the total paid in the year was 3,992*l.* 10*s.* 2*d.* In the year 1812, it



was 4,865*l.* 9*d.* In the year 1813, it was 5,149*l.* 18*s.* 11*d.* During the year 1812 (I should give, as a reason, why so large a sum was expended) the typhus fever broke out, a number of poor died; and to prevent the contagion spreading, part of the clothing and furniture were destroyed, which increased the charges in those years, as part of the bills were paid in 1813. In the year 1814, the total expense was 4769*l.* 10*s.* 2*d.*; and in the year 1815, the total expense was 4,508*l.* 12*s.* 2*d.*

From the year 1808, to the last year, 1815, can you tell the Committee, whether your population has been stationary or increasing?—I suppose nearly stationary; the Committee have the number from the census, and we have not taken any particular account since; sometimes there is an increase, and sometimes a decrease, so that perhaps it is nearly stationary.

Do you rely upon the accuracy of the census of 1801?—I was not a party to the taking it in 1801; I am satisfied the other in 1811 was perfectly correct, as nearly as it was possible to ascertain; it was taken under our own direction; much pains were taken in our parish, and I believe in the parishes generally. It was an order from Government to take it in one day, and I believe all the parishes did so. We took it all in four hours.

You know nothing to induce you to believe the former census was not correct?—No; but I cannot speak as to its correctness from my own knowledge.

[The witness delivered in an account, containing the number in the workhouse at several periods, with a distribution of parish relief to pensioners and casual poor; the rated rental of the parish taken in the year 1814, and also the heads of a plan, referred to the evidence of a former day, which were read.]

What is your opinion upon the subject of the Banks for Savings; is there any Saving Bank in your parish?—There is none in our parish; but I hear, with great pleasure, one is forming in Limehouse.

Do you believe that such establishments would have the effect of reducing the poor's rate, in proportion as they should succeed?—I think that such establishments, if general throughout the Country, would have the effect of abolishing the poor's rates; it would entirely alter the character of the poor; I think, with general education, Saving Banks, and such an equalization as I have stated, in a few years the rates would vanish of themselves.

The question is confined to the Saving Banks; are you of opinion that they would have the effect of reducing the poor's rate in proportion as they succeeded?—I think they would.

Do you believe that such establishments would have a tendency to improve the morals of the lower class of people?—In an incalculable degree.

If the principal sums of depositors should be subject to be called for before any parochial relief should be afforded to them, do you



think that would not discourage their becoming depositors?—Certainly; and I cannot see with what justice they should be so precluded, their being depositors to a large amount would prevent their applying, and their misfortunes preventing their being large depositors, why should they be excluded from parochial relief more than at present.

Are you of opinion they should have parish relief, while they have money in the Saving Banks?—Certainly; and if the interest in the Bank is not sufficient to maintain them, they ought to have an increased support, and by no means lose the principal; the interest might be taken by the parish officers; they might take it into consideration.

Do you think they would be likely to resort to the parish for relief, men who were of an economical character?—I think it would be impossible for them, according to the feelings which they would then acquire, to apply for parish relief.

Do you think that any considerable number of the lower classes in the present state of things, are likely to become voluntary subscribers to those Banks?—I believe it is found, where they are established, they do come in very rapidly; and I think they would come in more rapidly when they came to understand it better; if persons of respectability in the different parishes, known to the poor, were to interest themselves in favour of Saving Banks, and the property in the Banks was secured by Parliament, the confidence they have in the persons recommending, and the confidence they would acquire by the security they would obtain for the money, would induce them to come in. I have an opinion, that the poor would be very glad to save, but they have no means of doing it; where are they to deposit it? they consider the present day as all they have to look to; they have no means of hoarding their money, they cannot do it; while they have it they must spend. This arises from their bad habits, which the education of the children and the operation of the Banks would hereafter remove.

Do not you believe, in many instances, they are guilty of waste and extravagance, and drunkenness, not knowing how to dispose of their savings?—From carelessness; if they were once persuaded into a regular mode of depositing their money, and they knew they could do it safely, many, I have no doubt whatever, would contribute to the utmost extent of their ability, instead of spending in the wasteful way they do at present.

Do you believe, that some of the poorer classes subscribing may induce others, at present more thoughtless, to do the same?—The force of example would be very strong, and especially among themselves,

Do you believe, that workmen who have habits of economy, and are likely to subscribe to these Banks, are more valuable to their masters than those of a dissipated turn?—Of course; the more valuable he is to himself, the more so to society at large.

Have you ever known that the fear of bringing families upon



the parish has prevented other persons from prosecuting offenders against the law?—I have no doubt that fear has sometimes made a strong impression, and that persons would rather forego prosecuting offenders than bring the families chargeable on the parish.

*Joseph Sabine*, Esquire, called in, and Examined.

You live in Hertfordshire?—Yes.

Are you a magistrate?—No.

You are conversant with the poor laws?—I have acted for a considerable number of years as a parish officer in the parish of North Mimms, and had the direction of the poor there for some years.

Do you think any evil results, in the management of the poor, from the officers who have the government of them being elected annually, and going annually out of office?—Certainly, the overseers have too little knowledge of the paupers; and to save themselves trouble, frequently spend more money than they ought to do.

Do you think it would be an improvement to employ a permanent officer, paying him a salary?—Certainly, he would be entirely under control, and would not dare to spend money improperly; he would have a knowledge of the paupers, and the business of the parish, and would be under the direction of the officers of the parish.

The assessment and collection of the poor rates would still continue with the annual officers?—Yes; perhaps it would be advisable to have two overseers and two churchwardens as at present, and not to let this permanent overseer have a voice; he should be a servant.

Does it occur to you there would be any objection to doing away, in future, settlements acquired from hiring and service, from renting tenements, from services, from apprenticeships, and reducing the law of settlement to such as are derived from birth and parentage, or a certain number of years residence, say five years?—It never occurred to me till a few minutes ago to view this subject so extensively. I am of opinion it would be desirable to establish a new ground of settlement, namely, a *bonâ fide* residence for a certain number of years; it requires more time to consider the other points. Mr. Brand has stated to me, that he thought, should five years residence give persons a settlement, the landlords would turn them out at the end of four years; I think this would not often happen, for farmers interested in keeping down poor's rates hire servants by the year, and so fix them; they might hire them from the day after Michaelmas to the succeeding Michaelmas, which would not fix them; this is done in some instances, but not generally.

Can you suggest any alteration in the system?—I found, when I undertook the management of the parish of North Mimms, upon an average for five years the expenses had been near 600*l.* a year on the overseers account only; the first year I reduced them to



280*l.* and I think for the first five years I had the entire management of the business, the average was about 300*l.* per annum, being a reduction of 100*l.* per cent.

By what means did you effect that reduction?—By striking out the names of persons who were receiving allowance, and who did not want it; by reducing the expenses of the parish officers accounts and bills; our constable bills used to be enormous, these were reduced, but I never knew an instance of any bill being refused to be paid. We reduced the expense of our workhouse immediately, and we gave no allowance to any able men, nor has there been a single able man, however large his family, who for the last fifteen years has received relief, except on account of sickness, or to enable him to put out some of his children in service, by giving them clothes; we have not a single instance of a labourer, with a family, ever getting any relief for his family or himself when in health.

What are the wages of labour in your parish?—Twelve shillings a-week; but they mostly work by the piece, and they earn then near a pound a-week, a good workman does so.

Do you superintend the parish now?—Yes, I am churchwarden; by good management I am sure there is no reason why other parishes should not be reduced as much as ours is; our expense now may be about 600*l.* a year.

Your population is under a thousand?—Our population was 1,001, in 1811.

The first return was only 800?—838; but it was then very inaccurately taken.

At one time your poor were farmed?—Only those in the workhouse; we now pay our workhouse man five shilling per head per week; he maintains the paupers, and has the benefit of their labour; but we have none but old and infirm people in the workhouse.

That has been found to answer, has it?—Perfectly; twelve or fourteen years ago we gave four shillings; the increase of the price of bread induced us to increase the pay.

Are the people properly fed and clothed?—Yes, they are fairly clothed; the last vestry I attended in the parish, the clergyman, who is a very humane man, proposed that their food should be made something more comfortable to them, and that they should have beer, to which I objected, asking the farmers present, what would have been their style of living if they maintained themselves; they answered, not such as the clergyman proposed. I think a pauper in the workhouse should be kept rather below than above what his condition would have been, if not thrown on the parish.

Do you apprehend that they, generally speaking, get more than twelve shillings a week, working by the piece?—I am sure they do.

Upon the average what do they get working by the piece?—From 16*s.* to 20*s.*



Have you any men without employment at present?—I think there are four now employed upon the roads.

What do you do with men who say they are able and willing to work, but cannot find employment?—That very seldom occurs; but if it does, we send him from one farmer to the other, as a roundsman, rather at inferior wages.

Suppose that farmer refuses to take him as a roundsman?—Then they go to somebody else.

What wages do they receive in that case?—Ten shillings it used to be; I think it is seven or eight now.

Supposing that man to have a family?—We do not look to that.

Supposing the ten shillings is not sufficient to provide subsistence for the man and his family, how is it made up?—The case has not occurred.

How much do you give a single man?—The same as to a family man; we make no difference, and do not consider it necessary. I was about to state that in a parish a little distance from us, the parish of Shenley, which is inhabited by several gentlemen of fortune, exactly as in North Mimms, and being about the same acreage, and having the same population, the expenses are now 1,200*l.* a year, which is double that of North Mimms. I attribute the difference to want of management entirely; we carry on our business at four sixpenny rates per annum, whilst in the adjoining parish of Hatfield the rates amount to from four to six shillings in the pound in each year.

Your annual rate is two shillings in the pound?—Our rate at sixpence in the pound raises 156*l.*; in the years I reduced our expenses, two sixpenny rates carried us through the year.

What is the amount of the rate per annum at present?—Four sixpenny rates.

Two shillings in the pound?—Yes.

Is that at rack rent?—When the rate was first made it was not at rack rent, twenty per cent. was taken off from the actual value.

What is the extent of your parish?—4,500 acres.

What number of paupers are you supposed to have?—I think there are about two hundred families, rich and poor, in the parish; the paupers in the workhouse are only old and infirm people, and the number runs from eight to fourteen; they have never exceeded the last number, except by accident, and then only for a few days, and sometimes the number has been as low as eight.

You think in addition to the present parish officers it is necessary to have a permanent officer to look over the poor?—Yes, for the reasons I have stated, it will be his duty to attend to the expenditure of the money.

Under the control of the other officers?—Yes.

He having no power to relieve in their absence?—Perhaps it would be as well if his opinion was referred to; I should consult him if I happened to be there; when a person might come for relief, an overseer might not know the circumstances of the case, and might relieve the person improperly; the permanent overseer



would know whether the applicant did or did not belong to the parish, or whether he was under circumstances that did not entitle him to relief.

You say a hard-working man might earn 16s. to 20s. a week by the job, would that be earned by thrashing?—No, by hedging and ditching, or ground work, or wood work.

How much would they earn by thrashing?—I cannot tell; but their pay on thrashing is calculated to give them a certain profit above day labour.

How do you make up for the difference between the roundsmen's wages and the piece-work?—It never has occurred to me to give orders for a man with a family to become a roundsman; they are chiefly single men, disbanded soldiers, or unsettled wanderers belonging to the parish.

What do you give widows with children?—We have paupers on out-allowance; that is an allowance of weekly sums, which we term out-allowances; these are voted at every vestry, and altered if necessary; the persons receiving out-allowances are widows and infant children who cannot be supported otherwise; to the widows we give 1s. 6d.; 2s.; or 2s. 6d.; or 3s. according to circumstances, and the base-born children or orphan children have 2s. per week.

By what means have the men with large families preserved themselves from the parish?—By their labour and what they and their families have earned or made by their gardens; they are not in debt, and always conduct themselves with great credit and propriety.

Have you any friendly societies?—We have; but I am not friendly to them; for they are not registered. I have no doubt if registered they would be most advantageous.

Is there any Saving Banks?—There is one for the county, but that is of no use to our people, for unless gentlemen of the parish acted as trustees, the people would not place their money in a Saving Bank.

Before you came to the parish were those persons, whose industry you have described, in the habit of applying for relief?—I know they were in one winter; there was a general distribution all round the parish.

When you began this reform did you find the poor apply to the magistrates?—No; I do not think we have had three cases of applications to magistrates in the last fifteen years.

They readily acquiesced?—Yes; when they found we would not relieve them they did not apply.

What are your usual hours of labour?—In summer, from six to six; in winter time, from seven to five.

Do you find any difference in the time of coming in the morning of those who work by piece and those who work by the day?—They stay later at nights.

How do they come of a morning?—I do not think there is any difference.

You say there are some roundsmen in the parish; when a



farmer can get a roundsman at nine shillings a week has he turned off an efficient man?—No; he considers the money paid to roundsmen as nearly thrown away; when a pauper applies for labour, I endeavour to make it inconvenient to him, by giving him less wages than if he acted as a volunteer.

An Act was passed a few years back to enable the magistrates to make an order on overseers to grant money in aid; has that been acted upon in your parish?—No.

Do you consider that you have brought your parish back to the original intention of the statute of Elizabeth?—I did, during the first five years I acted; I think some few things have got into abuse now; I think the distribution of clothes at this time is more than is proper.

Have any of the labourers who get twelve shillings a week relief by fuel or paying rent by the parish?—We never pay their rents; the only relief we give to persons, except they are infirm or infants, is in clothes to their children or medical assistance; we have some charities, but not of great extent; we have bread distributed to all the parishioners every Sunday in rotation, and every parishioner by this means gets about ten half-quartern loaves per year.

When, in consequence of your interference, the paupers found a difficulty in obtaining money, did you observe they exerted themselves more to support themselves, that they were thrown back more upon their own exertions?—They exerted themselves, and they went on well.

They found the means of supporting themselves?—Yes.

But you believe, if they had received the relief for which they applied, they would not so have exerted themselves?—They would have spent the money given in relief, in addition to their earnings.

They would not have been a bit better off, nor so well as when they relied on their own earnings?—Not better, but more idle.

What is the rent paid for a cottage and garden?—From three pounds to five.

You have no mode of assessing personal property in your parish?—We did assess the shopkeepers, but gave it up in three or four years; it was troublesome, and they complained.

Did they appeal?—They did not appeal; but some how or other it was got off.

Had you any good means of ascertaining what they ought to pay?—No; that was impossible.

Have you many gentlemen of independent fortune residing in your parish?—Four large houses; but the parish of Shenley, as I mentioned before, is under the same circumstances.

Have the cottages any land beyond the gardens?—Very few; there may be four or five.

So that the cottagers do not keep cows?—Those who have cows we considered as small farmers, and they are rated as such.

Are there many of that sort?—Yes, twelve or fourteen; if a man holds a field of half an acre he is rated; the cottagers are set



down to the rate, but the rate on them is not collected; we have no case of a cottager keeping a cow where he has not land.

Have you any common?—Yes, but the cottagers have no right on it.

You state an allowance to old women and children; do they work at all?—In the stone picking time and in hay time, and at harvest they glean.

What do you pay the women?—Ten-pence a day, children from four-pence to six-pence or eight-pence.

Have you no cases of families of from six to eight children, the man earning only twelve shillings a week?—We have such.

Is that the whole earnings of the family?—No, the wife and children get something; we have no men who will keep at that twelve shillings through the year; there is a good deal of platted straw work done by the women, and all the children plat.

Do the women spin in your parish?—No, plat entirely.

Supposing a man and his wife and four or five young children, to earn only twelve shillings, should you consider that sufficient to maintain them?—If he had only twelve shillings he could not, but that cannot be the case; if I found a man in that situation, I should inquire how he conducted himself, and why he could not earn more, and why his children could not help.

Where the woman is confined to the house, the man is able to earn only twelve shillings, the children can earn nothing, being young; supposing the man to be industrious, and you have no reason to find fault with his conduct, would not you think it necessary to assist him?—I do not think he could maintain them in such a case; but I do not see why his receipts should be only twelve shillings; he could do piece work.

Suppose it is not the practice to employ them in piece work; suppose they are daily labourers, earning twelve shillings?—Of course he must come for relief.

What relief would you think it necessary to give him in such case?—Our general rule has been, if a widow and children has come, we should give the woman two shillings, and the children eighteen-pence. We should give the man nothing; we should consider his twelve shillings would support him and one or two of his children.

You have no regular allowance?—No; the allowance with respect to children who are left with their mothers is settled.

What is the food of the people chiefly, bread or potatoes?—Chiefly bread; they have potatoes and greens in their own gardens, and many of them have pork.

What is the price of flour now?—I cannot tell, not having attended to that matter for some weeks.

Have you any workhouse?—Yes; without a workhouse we could not have effected the reductions, because the paupers would have gone to a magistrate, and then we could not have protected ourselves.

Do you think it would be beneficial, not with reference to your



particular parish, but the whole agricultural part of the kingdom, to enable parishes to charge their rates with the purchase or rent of pieces of land, in order to enable them to employ the poor, on the account of the parish or on their own account?—I think the farming land would lead to great abuses, and I should prefer employing the poor who wanted work on the roads of the parish; if it turned out that there were people out of employment I would put them to work to improve the roads.

Where the poor are really unable to work and are in great distress, do they dislike very much going into this workhouse of your's?—The infirm people when they are not comfortable out ask permission to go in, and then they are more comfortable than on the out-allowance.

They do not show any reluctance to go into the workhouse?—No.

Have you any children in the workhouse?—Very seldom.

Are there enough of them to enable you to establish work for them?—There are spinning-wheels in the workhouse, but little used; the old men go about and do work for the workhouse men.

Have you any parochial schools?—No; I wish we had.

Do the poor generally rent their cottages in your parish?—Yes; I do not believe there is one who lives in his own cottage.

Have you ever made it your business to go into the cottages of those people to see how they were clothed and fed?—Of course, continually.

Those who were earning from fifteen to eighteen shillings a week?—They are very fairly clothed.

And how fed?—They all eat bread, many have pork; if wheat gets very dear, some use barley.

Do they appear to have a sufficiency of food and decent clothing according to the style of finances?—Yes.

What is your calculation for flour for a family, a man and wife and four children, the eldest ten years old?—I have not entered into the subject.

What do you suppose?—I have always rejected this sort of calculation, all calculations I have seen as to the expenditure of a cottager or labourer have put his expenses much higher than you can account for by his earnings in labour.

Can you tell the Committee what you suppose they ought to have for their maintenance?—No, I cannot.

How do they get their fuel?—There is wood which they purchase, and this year the clergyman has undertaken from a private subscription to retail coals cheap to them.

How do they purchase that underwood?—By the hundred for faggots.

Do they pay at the time or work it out?—They work it out with their masters; generally speaking, the women steal wood, that is go a wooding, as they call it. There is a circumstance from which I have found great inconvenience, and I do not see the reason why it should remain as it is. The summons for the non-payment of the poor rates requires the signatures of two magistrates; the sum-



mous for the non-payment of the church-rate requires the signature of one magistrate only ; it is very difficult to get two magistrates together ; if that could be altered it would be a great assistance to parish officers. In one of the parishes in Hertfordshire there has been much done towards diminishing the poor rates by the establishment of a parochial benefit club, which has existed some years ; it is the parish of Bushey. Mr. Vivian, the clergyman, has published some observations on Saving Banks, in which he has stated the benefits that have resulted from this plan.

Their poor rates were higher than yours in 1803 ?—There are only two six-penny rates, as I hear in Bushy, in each year.

Do not you think it will be a considerable advantage to separate the control and collection of the rates from the distribution of those rates ?—I think it would be useful, particularly if the person who collected was a regular official person, and there would not be the trouble there is now ; the overseer goes sometimes twenty times to an unwilling payer, and the parish are forced to get into debt from not receiving the money in due time.

Did the inhabitants meet often in vestry to deliberate on the alteration in the plan ?—No, I am not an advocate for frequent meetings in vestry ; they always give away more money than is prudent, and some people who attend are too fond of exercising their humanity at the expense of the parish.

How were you empowered to reduce those rates ?—I was churchwarden.

How long did you continue in office ?—I have continued churchwarden ever since ; there is a nomination every year ; the clergyman nominates one and the parish the other, and I have been always nominated by the clergyman.

Were you in office in 1803 ?—No, I think not.

Not till after that ?—I think it was after that ; if the Committee refer to the time of the return made to Parliament, I certainly was not in office then.

You are not overseer, but churchwarden, nominated by the vicar ?—Yes.

You said, in answer to a question put to you some time ago respecting powers being given to parishes to charge the parish with the purchase of land that would be subject to great abuse, what abuse did you allude to ?—I consider it would be very ill managed ; I think it would be a very good thing if the parish had the power of letting land to some of its paupers.

What is your opinion of work performed by paupers ?—Very little profit arises from it ; with respect to land taken by poor people, there is in Hertfordshire a remarkable instance of its advantage ; Sir John Sebright has four or five acres let out in gardens in the parish of Flamstead, every garden of which is well cultivated ; he takes a shilling for each garden, and gives a premium to the best gardener, and the gardens are admirably managed.

The question went to the propriety of enabling the parish to do that which you say has been done so beneficially by individuals ?



—If they were employed in any work to raise something profitable that would become a job.

You say it would be a good plan, to let a small portion of land to a poor man; suppose he would not pay his rent, how would you recover it?—Lose it, I suppose, as many persons do their cottage rents.

Do they pay their rents regularly?—They are very fairly paid, I think;—perhaps ten per cent. in the whole is lost, that is, lost by gentlemen; I am strongly impressed with the advantage that would arise from parochial benefit clubs, and if they were backed by Saving Banks, it would be more beneficial.

The Committee wish to know, whether such a plan as this would, in your estimation, be beneficial, that every individual under thirty-five years of age, should be called upon and asked whether he would become a member of a benefit society, paying two-and-a-half per cent. out of his wages; that upon that option being given, if he refused, he should be required to sign a declaration that he should look for no parochial relief, but under the strict construction of the 43 of Elizabeth, excluding that part which requires labour to be found?—I should highly approve of such a plan.

That into such an association, the parish should be required to pay one-half or one-third of the money subscribed by the individuals, the management of it to be under a committee elected from the labouring classes, the farmers, the shopkeepers, and the higher orders, who should have the power of forming rules for the management and distribution of relief, according as the circumstances of the parish or of the individual shall render proper; such rules to be registered at the Sessions, with a power to appeal to anybody who conceived himself aggrieved?—If I had had time to form a benefit club in my parish, such a plan would have been proposed by me, except that I should have proposed rather to make good any deficiency in the funds from the rates, than have taxed them to a fixed amount.

Do you apprehend, if an Act for such a purpose was to pass, it would be attended with beneficial consequences?—I have no doubt of it.

From your extensive knowledge of the labouring classes, what do you suppose has been the cause of the general increase of poor's rates, and the decrease of happiness among them?—Losing the feeling of independence they had, and their indifference about taking relief.

Do you believe there is any thing can effectually apply a remedy, but renovating those feelings?—By not paying those who are not entitled to relief, you will re-establish it.

Are you aware, that under the strictest construction of the statute of Elizabeth, and the word impotent which is used there, the children of a person not entitled to relief however idle and profligate the father?—If so, I think it had better be remedied; I would make a father maintain his children.

From your knowledge of the labouring classes, do you think that



if such a plan as has been stated, was proposed, it would be acceded to?—I have no doubt of it; If I had proposed such a thing in my parish, I have no doubt we should have had every parishioner almost belonging to it, and if I could have established a Saving Bank, which only wanted my personal attention to effect, we should have had much money deposited, and the only alteration, I should have made in the usual plan of Saving Banks, would have been, to look for some security to deposit the money upon, so as to repay the actual money advanced; the vesting it in the funds will destroy the credit of the Saving Banks with the lower orders, because it is impossible to make them understand that if a loss occurs, it is by the falling of the funds.

Do you think some instances of a gain would not countervail that?—No; they would think the gain a lucky circumstance, but that would be all.

That could only be remedied by a national fund?—I should have got the gentlemen of the parish to have guaranteed the money.

The parishes would, according to the plan proposed, be compelled to guarantee the money?—Very well.

How could the gentlemen of the parish guarantee it?—By engaging to make good any loss.

In what manner is any guarantee to be procured?—I should hope the gentlemen who live in the parish, from time to time, would be answerable for it.

Are you aware that the majority of the Saving Banks, already established, protect themselves by not permitting any such subscriber to keep in those Banks a sum greater than 25*l.*—50*l.*; I do not see any reason why the sum should be limited. . In an agricultural parish, the chief money that would be put into the Bank would be put in by young men; the regular ones calculate that before they marry they should save 40*l.* which buys the few articles of furniture they want.

Are you of opinion if there was a Saving Bank in your parish, and the gentlemen conducting it were known to the labourers, they would contribute to it?—I think I should have, in less than twelve months, four or five hundred pounds.

Why would you have both a benefit club and a Saving Bank?—A benefit club is to protect those who are sick; a Saving Bank is to secure their property. If I established a parochial benefit club, I should pay them, in case of sickness, 12*s.* a week; the common clubs give them but half a guinea.

Do you think it fit to give parochial relief to a person who has money in such a Saving Bank?—I think it would be very hard to refuse it, provided it was settled by the Legislature.

It is obvious the parish would have the benefit of the interest of the money, because the wants of the man would be diminished? Yes.

Should you think it necessary to limit the sum so secured?—I think it would be a protection against a claim upon the parish.

Do you think it would induce many persons who have not now put money into the Bank to do so?—I think it might.



Do you think it might not be advisable to make a distinction on that point, not to touch the money when a man is in sickness, but to require him to apply it if he wanted relief in consequence of want of work?—If my wishes were carried into effect, he should not have any relief at all if he only wanted work, and was not sick.

Have you had many removals out of your parish?—Not a great many; perhaps in the last fifteen years four, five, or six.

Were they to a considerable distance?—To no great distance; I think, none out of the county.

Have as many people been removed into the parish as out of it?—More, perhaps; but then they have not remained in the parish; we have come to some arrangement with them, and they have gone back to their own parish, we giving them some allowance.

You say men calculate on getting 40*l.* before they marry; what security must they have, and how will they raise this money?—The persons in an agricultural parish, who will contribute to Saving Banks, will be the young labourers who want to save a sum of money for marrying; they would invest their money in the Saving Banks; my only objection to the Saving Banks is the investing it in the funds, by which the money may be diminished, the cause of which you could not make them comprehend.

How would you obviate that?—I would get the leading gentlemen in the parish to guarantee it, and to act as trustees.

What if the parish was rated to make good that loss if any should arise by vesting it in the funds?—I do not think that would be objectionable.

Do not you conceive, that if every individual was called upon to subscribe towards a general fund for his relief, it would in a great measure tend to obviate any objection there could be to residence obtaining a settlement?—Certainly.

Then your general opinion of the plan stated is, that if it could be adopted in parishes, it would have a very beneficial effect?—It would reduce a very great part of the expenditure.

Do not you believe, that in a period of ten or twenty years, it would go in a great measure to afford a substitute instead of the poor laws?—I think it would: There is another point which much wants attention; there ought to be some stronger check upon improper expenditure; our overseer's accounts are very loosely audited every year.

The magistrate is ministerial; he has no right to examine an account brought before him; the Committee wish to know, whether you do not think it would be very important, especially in numerous parishes, that one or two persons should be appointed by the magistrates to audit the accounts of the overseers?—Certainly; I should highly approve of some plan of audit.

According to that plan of audit, every article of expenditure would be watched?—Yes; but it would be very severe to require accurate vouchers.

But in general, you think it would be beneficial that audi-



tors should be appointed to audit those accounts?—Certainly; I think if the overseer knew that there was a chance of some of his irregular expenditure falling upon himself, he would be much more careful in spending the money.

Would not such irregular expenditure fall on himself now, if the parishioners did their duty?—Certainly.

While you were in office, did you check the expenditure of the overseers?—I objected to bills; but bills I had objected to for three or four years have got into the accounts at last, and have been passed when I have been absent; four years ago I was not in the parish much; there was an overseer at that time who was very irregular, and he paid much money away most disgracefully and improperly.

Perhaps you know, if an overseer brings an item into account anybody may object to the paying him?—Certainly.

Therefore it is in the power of any individual in the parish to subvert and destroy the appointment of a distinct and permanent overseer?—The only way he could be appointed would be by Act of Parliament.

Then in the audit of those accounts, not only the vouchers of payment, but also the expediency and propriety of expenditure, would be considered by the auditors?—That would be carrying the regulation to great extent.

But supposing the law was to be so guarded, would it not extremely narrow the expenditure of multitudes of parishes?—Certainly.

Those auditors accounts might be decided, supposing they were not final, by two or more magistrates?—Certainly.

The consequence would be, that the auditors, though they could not pass the accounts, if there was no particular item that went to the propriety or expediency of the expenditure, it would be a matter cognizable by a magistrate?—Yes.

Would not that be a sufficient caution against anything that was done by the overseer or by the auditors?—Supposing that the overseer, under appeal to the magistrates, would be liable to pay the monies he improperly expended himself.

That would be no harder than it is in taking their accounts against executors or trustees, or other trustees, to keep them to a strict propriety of payment, not to the fact of the payment?—No, it would be very useful.

You think, that would materially save the expense in abundance of parishes?—Yes; but it would be difficult to find the proper persons to be assessors.

You think in a parish consisting of ten thousand persons, two or three persons might not be found to be assessors for the year?—I am not a judge of the case of such a parish.

Do you know that there are persons appointed to examine accounts by the vestries sometimes?—No, I know nothing of the management of large parishes; it has been stated to me, that a permanent overseer might be appointed for several parishes, be-



cause one parish could not afford to pay a permanent overseer; but the person so acting might perform other offices in the parish, and so be well paid.

And in cases of small parishes they might two or three of them join?—Yes.

Were the removals that you spoke of, litigated removals?—None of them; we have not had an appeal against a removal; we have appealed against two, in which we succeeded.

What did they cost you?—About 21*l.* a piece.

In the cases in which you set aside the orders of removal, on appeal, you had the paupers residing with you?—Yes.

Did they remain any time?—No; only till the next quarter sessions.

Had you to remove them far?—No; they were removed to us, and we kept them till the appeal was decided.

What is your opinion, that instead of a removal upon an order by two magistrates, the removal should not take place in cases of appeal, till after the appeal has taken place?—It would be an act of great kindness to the pauper.

Do you think there would be any good in the intermediate removal?—There would be probably a greater expense to the parish to whom he was removable, because the parish who applied to remove him, would be over liberal to him.

What would be the case if the law of removal was to be totally repealed, and the question then left between the pauper and the parish?—A man might be mistaken about his parish; that is, in fact, the question of removal; it would relieve the parish a good deal perhaps.

And give more liberty to the poor man?—Yes; the grand object is to lower the poor rates; it may save a large expense to the nation, by cutting off a certain part of the poor's rate.

Would it not better the condition of the poor men?—Yes, it would.

You have stated, that the only objection to the removal after appeal, would be the expense the removal would bring on the parish to which the pauper was removed; could not that expenditure be assessed, and so obviate the objection you have stated?—To have it assessed by the magistrate would be more expensive than the parish would like; the magistrates' orders are generally more expensive than a prudent parish officer thinks right.

Might it not be obviated by the parish paying the same as they pay to their own poor, and employing the person until removed?—That is what I should object to, because the parish removing might be more expensive and more liberal than they ought to be.

That may be the fault of a system in the parish?—Supposing every thing was correct and right, my objection would be done away.

Have you any certificate men in your parish?—No.

You grant no certificates?—No.



Do you think it would be of advantage to a parish to have certificate men?—The old objections to certificates I think were very valid ones.

*Lunæ, 10<sup>e</sup> die Martij, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

The Rev. *Richard Vivian*, called in ; and Examined.

You are the rector of the parish of Bushy?—Yes.

The Committee understand you can give some important information respecting the management of the poor in your parish?—I have interfered in it for a good many years.

How long have you been in the parish?—Nearly twenty years.

What was the amount of the poor rate at the time you first came into the parish?—900*l.* a year ; during the last twenty years of the last century it got from 100*l.* by degrees to 900*l.*

What has been its progress from the time you first came into the parish to the present time?—It has retrograded since, it has got from 900*l.* to 500*l.*

Has it ever been lower?—Very little, perhaps 450*l.*

Is 500*l.* the amount now?—It amounts this year to about 600*l.* from various circumstances, from the dearness of provisions and the trouble of removing persons.

Have you any persons out of employment?—We have had but few during the winter, and they have decreased.

What is your population?—It was about eight hundred, it has increased one-third.

Have you reason to suppose the first census was accurately taken?—I know it was ; I took it myself.

To what do you attribute the diminution in the amount of your poor rates within the twenty years last past?—Partly from management ; I have prevailed upon some of the gentlemen to be overseers instead of those we used to put in ; and to have the poor paid openly once a week, so that the overseer should have no partiality ; and also two benefit clubs.

What are the numbers in each of those clubs?—The men nearly 240, the women nearly 120.

Do you find that the members of both those clubs have not had occasion to apply to the parish for relief?—Hardly at all ; now and then a man with a heavy family has asked for something, hardly as a pauper.

You have no persons besides the annual officers concerned in the management of the poor?—None ; except any person who chuses to come to the open vestry and give information ; we encourage them to come.

You have no paid officers?—A vestry clerk, paid 10*l.* a year.

Is he employed to assist the overseers?—He is present at the payments.



Does he check the relief given to the persons employed?—Yes; whenever he happens to know.

You think some benefit is derived from his knowledge and attendance?—A great deal.

Do you think, generally speaking, advantage would be derived from having a permanent officer paid attached to the overseers?—If he did his duty there would.

Are there any other circumstances to which you particularly ascribe the diminution in your rate?—No, I do not know any thing in particular more.

Have you any particular employment for the poor when they apply for relief?—We send them to the farmers for employment at a reduced rate of wages, and in a few weeks they find relief for themselves.

They are sent to the farmers as roundsmen?—Yes, under our management; we have not given relief to persons in want of employment only when ill.

What is the pay of a roundsman?—About twelve shillings a week, and sometimes a little more for doing a little on a Sunday, but many work by grate, by job, or taskwork; men who have families are forced to do that, otherwise they do not think it worth while, they get enough without.

If the wages are not sufficient for themselves and families, what is the conduct of the parish in that instance?—We tell them they must get other modes of employment, and assist them in so doing if we can, and they get into taskwork and get enough.

Do you in any instance advance them money from the rate to make up the deficiency in their wages in maintaining their families?—We never bear them upon the books permanently as poor, we give them presents, generally in clothing, sometimes a little sum that they may rub on and not come again, and sometimes they do not come again.

It is not then the practice of your parish to advance regularly weekly a sum, in addition to the wages earned by your labourers?—Never; and to that I ascribe, as much almost as anything, the diminution of the rates.

Was it the practice heretofore to advance such money in addition to their wages from the rate?—When I came to the parish they were getting very fast into that custom, and I had a great deal of trouble to prevent it.

If a man has six young children, no one of which can maintain itself, you do not give any permanent relief beyond his earnings?—Never; occasional presents, and that very seldom.

How did you prevail on the parish to put an end to that practice?—By strong persuasion, and by desiring them to try the experiment, and it answered; they immediately got into taskwork, and got five-and-twenty shillings a week.

Have you any workhouse in your parish?—None; I ascribe the diminution of the rates partly to that; they voted a workhouse, and I succeeded in persuading them not to make one.



So that the poor are maintained at their own houses?—Yes; or their friends houses.

Have you any fixed allowance for them?—No; but we give them 4s. a week, and a great deal of clothes, sometimes all their clothes.

You are not troubled with casual poor in your parish?—Now and then we have a turnpike road, and now and then we have casual poor who are impostors, and some that really want relief; the passes are troublesome and expensive.

Have you any school in the parish?—A Sunday School for boys and girls.

And Sunday Schools only?—A Sunday School parochially only; some benevolent people put a number of children to schools.

Have you had much experience in law proceedings?—A great deal of trouble and sometimes expenses.

Do you think any inconvenience would result from reducing settlements to settlements derived from birth, from parentage, and from a certain number of years residence, say five?—Taking the poor throughout England, it would be the same thing; what one would gain another would lose; but we being popular at present would be hardly dealt with, because we have no workhouse in our parish, and other circumstances.

You think it would be objectionable in those parishes, which have any thing to allure the poor?—I believe none would suffer more than we should; and especially from this circumstance, we have a great facility in building cottages, and our neighbours prevent that almost entirely.

Would that objection be obviated by increasing the number of years necessary to give a settlement?—It would in proportion; but they gain settlements now very easily; a renting of 10*l.* a year, and if one cottage will not do they take two.

Do you think it would be more difficult to get a settlement, if five years residence were necessary?—They get a settlement easier now.

The advantages from simplifying the law you conclude would be great?—I can see one advantage, the removals would cost less, and we should be less in terror of an appeal to the sessions; we are afraid to remove paupers, for fear it should be in hands who would go immediately to the sessions.

Do you think it would put an end to the majority of those complicated questions of law and fact, on which you go to the sessions?—Certainly.

Are you apprehensive that persons towards the end of the term would be driven out of the parish, in order to deprive them of the settlement?—Out of some parishes certainly; but not in our parish, for the cottages are in hands who pay but little to the rates, and who look only to the rents.

Do you think it would be an improvement if the tenement, in order to gain a settlement, was necessarily to be an entirely instead of consisting of many parcels?—It would prevent coming into the parish to gain a settlement.

Would not it prevent many frauds?—Perhaps it would; but



two or three tenements could easily be called one; if a man rents two cottages adjoining in order to gain a settlement, the owner would make it one.

The renting is very often from different people?—That would prevent some fraud, I dare say.

What is the rent of your cottages?—From five to ten pounds a year.

Are they assessed to the poor?—Hardly at all; unless a man is a higgler, and keeps a horse, and has other modes of maintaining himself besides labour.

They are neither assessed to the tenant or the proprietor?—No.

Would it not be advisable the owner should pay a cess?—I think it would be very desirable indeed.

What are the weekly earnings of your labourers in general?—Twelve shillings they call it; they have a shilling or two or more sometimes.

Do you suppose fourteen shillings to be the average?—Perhaps hardly so much.

In what proportion are your members of the Friendly Societies, compared with those who are not members?—There are many more in the societies than those who are not.

Are they two-thirds?—I believe they are.

What is the amount of contributions to your male Friendly Society?—Two hundred and forty men.

How much do they pay a month?—Two shillings a calendar month.

Do you conceive that this establishment has had a material influence upon the character of the working classes of your parish?—Very great indeed.

What do you suppose would be the effect if Friendly Societies were general?—That there would be no occasion for this Committee.

Have you any Bank for Savings in your parish?—No; they are so near London, they go with their savings to the Bank themselves; they may carry ever so little there.

Have they carried any into the Bank in London?—Yes; I have known servants carry their wages.

Have you known any instance of a labouring poor man carrying any saving?—No, not the lower orders.

Do you pay cottage rent for the poor?—We take care of that; we should have them all to pay if we did.

Do you in any instance?—No; we give them money sometimes to do it themselves.

But not for the payment of rent?—No.

Do you give them fuel?—No, never parochially.

How are they supplied?—They buy what they can, and get as much wood as they can.

The 12s. a week is competent to the maintenance of a family?—No; a man with a family hardly ever is a day labourer unless he gets a good place; he does task-work.

What do you suppose an individual with task-work gets?—A



great deal frequently; frequently a guinea; it is difficult to tell what passes between them and their masters, but I have found frequently a guinea a week. The Friendly Society is made up in number from fourteen parishes.

In general, the individuals who are members of this society receive nothing from the parish?—No.

Is yours a purely agricultural parish?—Yes; there is a very little manufactory of cloth.

What family do you suppose a man can support upon 12s. a week?—I have a labourer to whom I give 15s. a week, who has six children, and none of them able to work, and I give them a little besides; help him with potatoes.

Is the man a member of the Friendly Society?—Yes.

Does he receive any thing from the Friendly Society?—No.

Would a man with 12s. a week maintain four in family?—That must be calculated on the price of bread, or potatoes rather, for they are cheaper; but few men with families try that, they get task-work.

Personal property is not rated at all in your parish?—No, there is none we can get at well.

In such a parish as yours would it be important it should be rated?—Not in our parish, it is all agricultural.

What is the amount of your poor rate in the pound?—I suppose the utmost is about two shillings.

What is the rental?—The rental of the parish sixteen or seventeen years ago was taken at four thousand pounds, and I suppose it is worth half as much again now.

Since you have been in the habit of withholding relief from labourers with large families, have not you found the benevolence of the families around extended to them?—Only to their own labourers, I should suppose.

Are the labourers capable of always finding task-work?—I believe always, if they look for it.

Among the farmers, in agriculture do you mean?—Yes.

Does this society make any provision to persons out of employment?—Never.

Under the present law of settlement, do you gain more parishioners in the course of a year than you lose?—Yes; they swear that they belong to Bushy; I have stopped three or four men of a morning, who have been about to take false oaths.

So that individuals not belonging to your parish make themselves parishioners?—Yes.

Have you many removals?—Yes, a great many.

Have many of the orders of removal been appealed from?—Sometimes; we take great care not to remove them to the wrong parishes, but sometimes we do.

In cases of appeals, have they oftener been quashed than confirmed?—Whenever we could we have hindered their going to the magistrates.

Do the poor appeal to the magistrates from the allowance made to them?—Never.



You say you hinder their going to the magistrates?—Yes; we always send to the parish to say the poor are coming; and I correspond with the overseers, to desire I may withdraw without going to the sessions; that succeeds, without some attorney has the management of the parish, and likes to go there.

Do you think, as a general question, that any benefit would arise from not removing paupers till the appeal had been determined, or the time for notice of the appeal had expired?—What we should wish most would be, to have no appeal at all, only to the same magistrates on better information.

The question applies to their not being removed till the appeal is decided?—We should gain only the expense of removal, but we should not save the expense of the sessions.

Supposing you cannot avoid the appeal, do you not think it would be beneficial to avoid an intermediate removal?—We should avoid the expense of carrying the man to his living, but we should have to support him during the time.

But suppose that a provision was made, that in the event of another parish being to be saddled with him, they should pay the expense?—That would be of no avail, unless we had a better power to make them pay the expense; I think it would be a trifling saving in comparison of the expense at the sessions.

How could you avoid that?—By appealing to the magistrates at their own private meetings; they can as well decide at their own weekly meetings as at the county town.

You mean without employing counsel?—Yes.

The great expense is in carrying witnesses?—No; our great expense is in keeping people in the parish for fear of removing; we have many families who do not belong to us, and we keep them there for fear of what a pauper will swear, for to belong to a parish he likes he will swear any thing.

But the expense will depend upon the number of witnesses?—It will depend on the lawyer's charges; an attorney and counsel, we should have none of that.

What is the usual expense of appeals?—That depends upon the number of witnesses, and the distance.

Have you removed to any great distance?—Seldom very great.

In point of fact, has any appeal ever been made to a magistrate from an allowance made by your parish?—Not for sixteen or seventeen years.

In no instance?—In no instance for that time; at first they used to threaten appeals, but now they are very contended.

Have you found that the persons employed in task-work, earning from 21s. to 25s. a week, have been brought to infirmities by great exertion?—Never; I never knew an instance. I have known a man get cold from mowing in the summer all day, but never in the winter.

What effect do you suppose a regulation would have, which would take away from individuals the right of claiming relief out of their own parish, except in the case of accident or casual sickness?—The effect would be, that he would immediately look for



task-work that will maintain him; and our practice is this, they do not come to the overseer to ask for relief, knowing they would be removed, but they come to the vestry clerk, or me, and say, "be kind enough to write to my parish, and desire relief to be sent from my parish."

That is, supposing the case of an individual wishing to remain in the parish, and therefore looking for taskwork, in order to preserve himself in the parish in which he is resident; but the question is, what effect do you think, upon the general mass of population, a regulation would have, to oblige a man to get back to his parish in case of want of work?—I think he could not get back to his parish but by the assistance of the parish in which he resides.

What is your opinion of the workhouses?—That they act two ways, one a little good, and a very great evil; the little good is, that they act as gaols to terrify people from coming to the parish; the evil is, that when they are, however loath they were to get there, they soon become used to it, and never get out again.

You conceive it corrupts the morals of the people?—Completely.

What is your opinion of the value of the work of paupers in a workhouse?—I cannot speak from my knowledge, but I believe very little anywhere; none that I ever heard of was worth reckoning.

Having no house, when parties apply to you you must either relieve them or find them work?—Yes.

What is your opinion of the alternative of finding work?—We send them as rounders, and in a few weeks they disappear.

Supposing persons have no habitation in your parish and you have no workhouse, what should you do for them?—We look for a lodging for them, and give somebody something a week to take them in.

Have you never had to maintain people in another parish, for whom you could not find a habitation in your own?—When we prefer keeping them in that other parish, lest we should take them off their employment.

What do you look upon to be the character of work performed by paupers?—A rounder does not stay long enough to make it of consequence.

What is the effect upon the individual himself?—I do not hear the farmers complain; I have known farmers take rounders on constantly.

Have you formed any opinion as to the population of a manufacturing parish on the same subject?—I am not much concerned with the manufacturing parishes, except the mining places in Cornwall.

The work of a miner in agriculture would not be of much value?—They are agriculturists in Cornwall also, they work part of the day under ground and part of the day above ground.

There are a good many persons purely manufacturing labourers to whom the farmer would not give a shilling for a month's work?—I suppose not, but fortunately the regular road is from agriculture to



manufacture, and not from manufacture to agriculture; they breed one for the other; I baptize three children almost to burying one.

A man who works piecework is able to gain more than by common daily labour?—Twice as much.

If a man who was working being paid by his parish, and was merely to do what he could, what would be the value of his work?—The farmer would keep them to work; generally they are not worth much, but we have very few of that description, and for very short times.

You think work of that kind is of inferior value to the work where a man works for himself?—A man is not working for himself properly when he does day work, he never works for himself but when he does taskwork.

Can you suggest to the Committee any improvement of the poor laws, with reference to the diminution of the rates or the equalization of the burden of them?—We reduced our's by paying openly; getting gentlemen, or as near gentlemen as you can, to act as overseers; having no workhouse, and never relieving men in good health, never putting them on the books generally, never making them paupers.

You have nothing on that head to suggest in amendment of the law?—Only that we should get rid of the sessions.

Can you suggest any mode of effecting the equalization of the burden of the poor rates?—In agricultural parishes it is well equalized as it is.

But in manufacturing parishes?—I have always wished if possible to make bachelors and people who have no children pay, but I am afraid it is impossible; it would fall on the persons who employ them in many instances.

You have said that you consider that if Friendly Societies were universal it would totally do away all the poor laws?—If they were universal it would not do away all the poor laws, you will have orphans.

Notwithstanding your present opinion as to workhouses, should not you think workhouses, which should be considered as hospitals for the aged and schools for the young, as beneficial to the individuals and economical to the parish?—Certainly not; as schools for the young nothing can be more shocking except a gaol; and as for the old, they are more comfortable a hundred times in private houses with their relations and friends.

When it is said as schools for the young, it is not to be understood as according to their present establishment, but when put on a foundation to obtain the effect of improving the morals of the young?—I believe it impossible to mix the lower orders of mankind without doing mischief.

Some years ago was not a workhouse applied to the use of the old and infirm, and not as a place of work?—I believe the poor never liked workhouses, they always avoided going there if they could.

Do you think it would be possible to accomplish by a general law the same degree of good management that may now exist in



certain parishes, in consequence of the exertion of individuals?—Individuals, if they exert themselves, may do it under the existing laws, but I think the laws might be made to encourage them more.

Do you think any law could be made that would enforce those practices, that would produce those effects?—Yes; I remember a clause in Mr. Whitbread's Bill, which is worth an Act of Parliament, if you made the vote in the vestry according to the amount he paid. I know some parishes where the lower orders of payers behave so ill to the gentlemen, they do not dare to shew themselves; whereas if they voted in proportion to their payments, they would then have the management of the parish.

Do not you think if the management of the receipt and expenditure of the parish was separated, it would induce many gentlemen to take part in the management of the poor who do not now do it?—The receipt is very simple; one overseer collects it from the farmers.

But it would induce gentlemen to become overseers, who would not like to be collectors of the money?—The way we have done is this, to put a gentleman and some tradesman or farmer; the farmer or tradesman takes the collection, or when there are two gentlemen they collect by their servants; therefore I do not believe it would have any effect.

But in large populous places gentlemen would not like to be the collectors of the money?—They send their servants.

Is there any other property in your parish that could be assessed that is not assessed?—I think not, unless it is the manufactory by and by, and it would be difficult to assess that.

The rate of wages is from 12s. to 14s.?—Thirteen shillings on an average.

And by taskwork a man may earn from 21s. to 25s.?—It is difficult to say.

Is the increased work done by that individual in proportion to the increased amount he receives?—I suppose so, or the employer would not employ him.

You suppose the pay is equal to the work done?—I suppose it always finds its level.

Do you act as a magistrate?—No, I am not in the commission.

Has it never happened to you that the labourers, who have complained that their earnings did not enable them to maintain their families, have gone to the magistrates upon your refusing them?—Never for nearly twenty years.

In short, the magistrates have not interfered with the practice in your parish?—Not at all.

You have said that when persons applying for relief were employed as roundsmen they soon found employment for themselves; do not you conceive, if they had not the poor fund to apply to, they would find means to support themselves?—Most certainly.

You think, therefore, the power of applying to the poor fund discourages their own exertions?—For a time, until they find they do not get any thing, and are forced to work.



As long as they can depend upon that, they do not exert themselves?—With us they do not; in many places they do, because the overseers are men lower in society than they ought to be.

You consider that they administer relief where they ought not?—Undoubtedly.

You then are clearly of opinion, that the poor fund operates as a discouragement to the individual exertions of poor persons?—In proportion as it is abused.

Do you think that the terror of removal operates as a check to improvident demand where a pauper is in a parish to which he does not belong?—Very much; we have seen sometimes in times of scarcity, persons almost starve rather than be removed, for fear of the workhouse in the parish to which they would be removed.

There you think that check operates improperly?—It makes a man strive to provide for himself more than he would otherwise.

You would not wish men to starve?—Nor to be so near starving as I have seen them.

But in other cases it operates to induce them to exert themselves?—Yes, and in that case they exert themselves.

Have you any fund arising from a private subscription?—No, very little; a few donations from charitable people, they give me to dispose of.

Do you know at all what amount of private donations is annually expended in your parish?—The private donations I cannot tell.

You cannot conjecture?—It must be subscription to come to my knowledge; it is only occasionally; in hard winters we subscribe for coals.

Do you find the poor destroy your hedges in plunder?—I hear of it now and then, but not to a great amount.

Do you find it more in your parish than in other parishes where they receive more out of the rates?—I do not believe any parish receives as much as our parish does.

Do you see any disposition in the young persons to help their parents, by giving them any of their earnings?—No, the poor rate prevents that, they must go to the parish.

Have you many public houses in your parish?—Yes, we have five, we had another, and I did all I could to make them scarcer.

Does much of the parish money find its way there?—A great deal; the publicans are so poor from being numerous, they are supposed to do any thing to get men into their houses.

Do you think limiting the number of public houses in parishes generally, would be a measure that would tend to diminish the poor rates?—I think very much; I think the difference between three houses and six would turn many drunken men into sober.

*William George Carter, Esq.* again called in, and  
Examined.

You are the secretary to the Association for the Relief of the manufacturing poor?—I am.

Have you any information to communicate to the Committee, as to the operation of the poor laws?—Understanding from one of the



honourable gentlemen present the object of my intended examination, I went through all the cases, and drew out this summary statement, which I have now the honour of presenting to the Committee. *[It was delivered in.]*

Can you state to the Committee any information respecting the places here named, except what appears on this paper?—Certainly.

From what materials is this information obtained?—From statements from the distressed districts, usually verified by the clergyman or a magistrate; when that has been the case that has been considered sufficient by the Association.

It appears by the return that the population of Halsted, in Essex, amounts to 3,279, and that out of that population no less than 2,012 are receiving parochial relief; and it appears also that their sources of employment are in agriculture alone; can you state the cause of their distress?—I believe the cause of their distress is, that formerly a woollen manufactory was established there, which has now ceased.

How long has it ceased?—I cannot state the number of years, but I believe not a very long period.

Those 2,012 persons were not in fact originally employed in agriculture?—I apprehend not.

It is stated that their sources of employment are agriculture; by that it is meant they have nothing else to look to at present?—I apprehend that is the meaning: I will give the answers as they are given by the distressed districts; the return from that district was signed by Thomas Baines, magistrate, acting in the district, and also by Dr. Adams, the vicar. *[It was read.]*

Do you conceive that with a limitation of wages in agricultural employment to the rate of 12s. a week, and a refusal to relieve any but those who are sick and infirm, it would be possible for the parish of Halsted to furnish relief to those persons who are now paupers?—I should think not, certainly; I have no local knowledge of the parish, I speak merely from general knowledge.

What is the amount now remaining in the hands of this society?—The balance is very small.

Can you state about what sum?—Somewhere about five or six thousand pounds perhaps.

What is your weekly expenditure?—That depends upon the nature of the cases coming; sometimes it is more and sometimes less.

What will be the amount of your expending for the next month or two months, do you expect?—Not expecting any accession to the fund, I should suppose the whole of that sum will then be expended.

What has been the amount of all the money subscribed?—About 47,000*l.*

It has been established how long?—Originally in 1812; but I am now speaking of the last subscription.

From the year 1812 to the present time, what has been the sum subscribed?—Rather more than 60,000*l.*

What was the expenditure in 1812?—About sixteen or seventeen thousand pounds.



In 1813 how much?—There have been but two funds; there was that in 1812, to which there was afterwards a small accession, and the present subscription.

What was the sum expended in 1813?—The whole sum was expended in 1812, except a small sum which was appropriated to buy fish.

—♦—♦—♦—

*Mercurij, 12<sup>o</sup> die Martij, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE in the Chair.

—♦—♦—♦—

*John Christian Curwen, Esq. a Member of the Committee,  
made the following Statement.*

I WISH to state to the Committee, that in the county of Cumberland, all the parishes adjoining to the sea coast, and the manufacturing towns, have for some years past laboured under the greatest hardships, occasioned by the number of Scotch and Irish who come into those parishes, and who are frequently maintained by their friends, who have been settled there before, for a few weeks; because when they become chargeable, without any power whatever of their being removed, we have no power by which we can remove them, particularly the Irish. With the Scotch that has been done; but we cannot get rid of the Irish by sending them out of the country; so that we are subject to any number coming there under any pretence, and we are totally incapable of getting rid of them. The town of Whitehaven has made a representation of their state, and it is filed. I hold in my hand an account of an agricultural parish near Carlisle, where the poor rates amount to 384*l*, the parish of Rockcliffe; out of which 182*l*. is paid to Irish, who have no settlement whatever.

[*It was delivered in, and read as follows:*]

Parish of Rockcliffe.

52	Eight Poor rates in the year, at . . . .	£48
3	A collection at 1 <i>s</i> . in the pound . . . .	8
156		
26	Annual collection . . . . .	£384
182	Scotch and Irish received last year. .	£182

*John Beaty, Overseer.*

Sir, Parish of Rockcliffe, March 3, 1817,

“We have forty paupers; and out of them, there are twenty-five Scotch and Irish, which is a very heavy burthen in our small parish, for there are only seventy inhabitants that pay to the poor rate.

*John Beaty,*

Overseer of the parish of Rockcliffe.”

“I believe it will be found in all the principal towns in the county, there is almost the same proportion of Irish and Scotch, pressing on the poor rates; so that we may assume one-third of the whole charge in the county of Cumberland is paid to Irish, who have no settlements, and who surreptitiously intrude themselves upon us.”



Have you employed those Irish and Scotch?—Certainly not generally; some have been employed; but the burthen generally, arises from those who have had no employment; there are a number employed undoubtedly, and very beneficially employed to the advantage of that county; but the evil arises from individuals who are tempted to come over and have no employment; they are tempted by some of their friends who have been previously settled in hopes of getting work.

How do they get their livelihood?—They come on the poor's rates immediately; they are, at the commencement, probably supported by their friends; the expense of supplying them with food is, in the first instance, very little, for they live mostly upon potatoes; and when they are cheap, their keep is not attended with great cost to those who maintain them for a short period.

Had they no occupation whatever?—Many of them no occupation whatever.

Do they come over at one time of the year?—Not at all; we have no demand for them at harvest. There are settled in Cumberland a number of Irish families, employed both in the mines and in the manufactories; and this tempts others to come, for whom there is no occupation.

Is this an agricultural parish?—It is; the Irish have been employed in great numbers during the war. When there was a great want of men, many of the Irish were employed as colliers and miners; but since the peace, men have been in such abundance there has been less demand for them.

Is the demand for coal lessened?—No; coals are considerably reduced in price, nearly a seventh part.

Do they come over now as they did formerly?—Every day.

In increased numbers, or in the same numbers?—I think, from the difficulties that now exist in Ireland, they come in greater numbers; we have no power of guarding ourselves; as it must be apparent to the Committee that those individuals are in an infinitely better situation than the English, because they can choose what parish they please, so that they settle wherever they suppose they will be best provided for. Some years ago, a Bill was brought in for the purpose of enabling the removal of these people from the county of Lancaster, and was thrown out; and a second Bill was brought in from my constituents at Carlisle. Neither of those Bills, under any circumstances, enabled the Irish to obtain a settlement. The injustice of the measure at once defeated it; and individuals particularly, I speak for the county of Cumberland, have since become sensible that this was an unjust principle, and now would be perfectly well pleased that any moderate number of years residence, without employment, without parochial relief, should obtain for the parties, a settlement, as it is undoubted that the county of Cumberland has received great and essential benefit from the labour of the Irish; and therefore it is generally felt: It would be most unjust and iniquitous to remove those people when there is no necessity for them.



Those Irish are chiefly in the parish of Rockcliff?—No; all over the county.

Those who reside in the parish of Rockcliff, work in an adjoining parish probably?—I am afraid not.

Would you give a settlement to those employed in an adjoining parish?—Yes, I think I would.

Would not that lead to fraud in many instances?—I think not, in a country where a great number of hands are required.

Take a parish where there were a number of cottages and poor people, those people may take in persons to sleep there, who work in adjoining parishes, in that case they would become settled at that place where they slept; would not that be bringing a burthen on the parish, be an encouragement to pull down such houses to prevent it?—I think not; undoubtedly frauds might be committed, but it would have an operation to reduce the price of labour, and increase the price of houses; and I think upon the whole no injury would arise, because if it had not been that a great number of these people had been resident in Cumberland during the war, it would have been impossible to bring into cultivation the 300,000 acres which have been cultivated; therefore, to a certain amount, I consider the residence of the Irish to be an advantage to us, and that it is only by bringing in hands when we do not want them, that an inconvenience arises.

Might it not be managed that they should get the settlements where they are employed?—The evil would be very little I think.

Do you propose to extend the settlement by residence merely to the Irish, or to all persons within this kingdom?—I should certainly say, to all persons.

The same evil is felt in other parts of the kingdom?—I know it to be equally felt in Lancashire, and a little in some of the great towns in Westmoreland.

You consider it proper that the Irish should be enabled to gain a settlement in England, would it not be equally just to be enabled to remove English from Ireland?—I think I would call on the justice of the House to place us in the situation to do as we should with the English; we have no power of removing an individual who has no right.

They have no settlements in Ireland?—They have no poor rates.

Then you could remove them to any part of Ireland?—No; I think to the nearest sea port we would send them. It is become dreadful; it is a common thing for old women to come over to some of their relations, who are settled; and in a few weeks we have them thrown on the poor rates, though they are of no value in work.

*John Bennet, Esq.* called in; and Examined.

WE have had a return from one of the parish officers of Hindon, in which he states, that they have paid 40 s. in the pound, and before the year ending the 25th of March it will be 50 s.; can you tell the cause of such an enormous poor rate?—It is a borough town,



sending two members to Parliament; and every inhabitant of the town that does not receive from the poor's rate has a vote, consequently they have had an interest in remaining in the town; that vote has been an inducement for them never to leave the town, and that has induced others to crowd as much as possible into the town of Hindon; the paupers at a former period have exerted themselves to the utmost to keep themselves off the parish books, but owing to the present circumstances of the times, they are thrown suddenly on the parish books from necessity.

Hindon is now oppressed with a superabundant population?—Yes; but still I do not consider it a hardship on the inhabitants or the owners of Hindon, because there are no vacant houses, I believe, of any description.

Do the houses very much belong to a few persons?—They belong to two proprietors, I believe.

Are they exonerated from the poor's rate?—I do not know the nature of the business of the parish, but as the houses are rented from year to year, the rent must be in proportion to the poor's rate; as long as there is any rent paid, there is no hardship on the owner, for the land of Hindon does not consist I believe of more than about 200 acres; but I can see no hardship sustained from the enormity of the poor rate, considering the advantages which the owners of the property derive from it.

In what parish do you live?—In Tisbury; a large parish about three miles from Hindon.

What is the population of your parish?—It may be found in the returns of population, I believe, somewhere about 2,000; I looked a few days ago into the return but I do not recollect.

You are not united with any other parish?—No.

Have you a workhouse?—Yes.

How many persons is it calculated to contain?—I do not believe there are more than from thirty to forty in the workhouse; it will contain perhaps a hundred.

Are the persons in it impotent persons?—Entirely; we do not admit any others; old men, orphans, children, widows and families sent there for a week or ten days by orders.

Are they maintained by the parish officers, or by contract?—By the parish officers.

Have you a great number relieved out of the workhouse?—A great number; I believe half the population are at this moment on the poor book.

What is the nature of the relief administered to those persons?—We have very many, I suppose to the amount of forty, strong able-bodied men doing very little on the roads, at 4 s. a week, which is enough to support them.

They are men without families?—Whether they have families or not they are put on the roads at 4 s. a week, and the rest is made up from the poor's rate; if we were to give them more, the single men would have no inducement to leave us.

Are there many persons wholly maintained out of the work-



house?—Very few, except those unable to work; there are a few old women and men living in houses of their own; we never force a man into the workhouse on any account, if we can avoid it.

Have you any persons whose wages will not maintain them and their families, to whom you give relief from the poor rate?—A vast number, I think three parts out of four of our labouring population.

What are the general rates of labour in your parish?—The present wages vary from seven to eight shillings a week; and I believe at this moment if I were to reduce my labourers to 5s. a week, they would not leave me; they could not get work.

In your parish a great many of the labourers receive pay from the parish?—Nearly all of them.

In addition to the wages from their employers?—If a man has two children he must receive parochial relief.

You have substituted this scale for the ordinary allowance in that part of England, of a gallon loaf a week for each head in a family, and a small sum over.—The regular allowance in the district in which I live, and for many miles round in the west of Wiltshire, has been a gallon loaf for maintenance, and three-pence for clothes per week, including earnings.

What is the weight of the bread?—It is a half peck loaf; that has been the allowance, without any discrimination as to the age or character, for I believe twenty years past; this scale has appeared to myself and my brother magistrates for a long time past, to be a very unfair mode of relieving the poor, and the scale now proposed was drawn by myself about ten days or a fortnight ago; I took it to the last meeting on the 5th of this month, and it was immediately adopted by the magistrates, and I believe will be adopted throughout the west of Wiltshire; the reduction to the poor rate occasioned by this scale, I worked out in several parishes, and it will save to us in Tisbury somewhat more than twenty per cent. in the poor rates; the difference is, to give a much higher relief to the industrious poor, and to sink the relief to the children, and those who force themselves upon the parish for work. I have divided the poor into five classes; and by having reduced three classes and increased two of them, we have made a saving of twenty per cent. and I am perfectly convinced the poor will be better satisfied with the new scale than the old one, notwithstanding this great saving in the poor rate, and the less allowance they will on the whole receive.

Do you find great difficulty at present, in providing employment for those persons?—Yes, we do.

Do you think it would be desirable for many parishes to be enabled to charge their rate with the purchase or rent of small parcels of land, on which to employ persons who want work occasionally?—No.

Do you think it would be advantageous, if they were able to let to an industrious man an acre of land to work on his own account?—No.

What are your objections?—You cannot find any man under the



present system of the poor laws, who would take the land, or attempt to take it; they have too perfect a dependence upon the poor's rate; it would be a public undertaking, and very ill managed; I am convinced the farm would produce nothing.

What is the amount of the sum raised in the last year, in your parish?—We pay I believe about 200*l.* a month, that is 2,400*l.* a year, and this new scale saves 40*l.* a month nearly; I have seen a Somersetshire scale, and a great many others for the relief of the poor, but this of mine is fifteen per cent. higher than the Somersetshire scale.

What is the amount and nature of the property assessed in your parish?—It is an agricultural parish almost wholly, except a few minor shopkeepers; but we assess their property, and strike off 40*s.* cottages inhabited by paupers.

How much does your rate amount to in the pound, on the rack-rent?—I think about 7*s.* 6*d.* in the pound; I do not speak with accuracy at all, but I believe that to be the fact.

Is your contribution to the country rate, and your expence for other purposes payable out of the poor rate, considerable?—The country rate lately has been very heavy.

Can you state, in round numbers, the amount of it last year?—No, I cannot; our country rate is very unequal, not having been equalized for some years.

Is that intermediate class in your parish very numerous, which neither contribute to the poor rate, nor receive relief?—No, I do not think it is; certainly not.

Have your law expences been considerable?—I do not believe they have in my parish, because I reside in it, and keep them from law as much as possible; I take care they shall not go to law without very good grounds.

Do you conceive benefit would arise if parishes could appoint a permanent officer to assist the overseers, who should be paid?—We have had the office twice served by hired overseers, but they were both interested men, and paid largely to the poor's rates. Had they not been interested men, I am perfectly satisfied that the evil which the system creates would have been greatly augmented; considering the poor rates an evil, their liberality would make it much greater.

Do you think that any disadvantage would arise if the law of Settlement was so far altered, that in future no settlement should be derived but from birth, parentage, or residence for a certain number of years; say five?—Indeed I do; I would remark with respect to the residence for three or five years, I conceive that residence alone would cause the destruction of cottage houses: For instance, I have a parish very near the town of Hindon; if residence alone would gain a man a settlement, I should entirely destroy those cottages, which I am now exceedingly anxious to keep up; and I should employ labourers residing in the town of Hindon, which would crowd the town of Hindon worse than it now is. I consider that all places are nearly alike situated, because there are towns always where people would have more advantage in residing than



in country places. I think that residence and employment in the parish ought to gain a settlement, because those who work are valuable men, and deserve to have a settlement.

You are aware that persons must have been able to maintain themselves during the term, whatever it might be?—Certainly; but the effect would be the destruction of the cottages, from the cause I have mentioned; it would fill those parishes now in the hands of various proprietors fuller of poor, where the poor could easily get residence by hiring houses at a very low rent; they are now too full of poor, and they would still be fuller: wherever one landholder held the whole parish, he would entirely destroy all cottages, to prevent the possibility of residence.

Would it not tend to increase the rate of wages, if all the cottages were destroyed?—No; I will state the reason; I speak locally, but it may be taken as applying more generally than to my district. I have a parish where I am exceedingly anxious to keep up the cottages, and where I take men of good character from various other parishes, and fill my cottages with them; those men cannot gain settlements, because they were married men before I took them into the cottages.

Do you take any means to prevent persons gaining settlements in those parishes?—Indeed I do; were residence to give those poor men settlement, I should turn them out, and pull down the cottages.

Without pulling down those cottages, would it not answer your end by giving them notice to quit previous to the period that would gain a settlement?—You may give a pauper notice to quit a long time before he will go out; I have been three years getting a man out. I have another instance, and a very strong one; I have a pauper in my parish that I cannot get rid of; this man has made no less than three parishioners, though he is a pauper himself, by taking men in as pretended servants to himself, and he has made those men parishioners; so that it would give those men the power of letting lodgings, and making paupers in our parish.

That is upon the assumption, than an illegal holding over will be construed into a constant residence?—No; because the pauper who occupies my house, I cannot turn out.

The person holding over illegally after notice to quit, would not be resident in such sense as would gain him a settlement?—It would not give a settlement to that individual person, but his power of letting lodgings and taking in other residents would produce the same effect; we cannot prevent his letting the lodger in.

Do you think it unjust, that a man who has lived in the parish five years, maintaining himself, should be, in case of infirmity, maintained there rather than in another parish?—If his labour has been used in that parish, I think he should be maintained there, but not on account of mere residence, where the labour has been in another parish.

What would be the effect, if the labourers had two miles every morning to come to your farm?—None at all; I have many



labourers come three miles to my farm, every morning during the winter.

Do you think a man who has three miles to come in a morning, and three miles to return at night, can perform the same quantity of labour as a man constantly on the spot?—I am sure he could perform his labour sufficiently well to induce our farmers to pay his wages; my parish is seven miles in length, and for a good master they will go five miles.

What are their hours?—From six to six, and they are the most punctual persons we have.

With how much time for dinner?—An hour for dinner.

In summer?—Twelve hours, with half an hour for breakfast, and an hour for dinner; ours are all farm labourers; in the winter-time, they work from day-light to dark.

Do you usually hire your men by the year?—Never; we hire men in our own parish by the year, but never out of the parish; the only sure way to prevent a young man gaining a settlement in your parish, which I can devise, is to hire him for a fixed time short of a year, by which means we avoid the implication of a yearly hiring; if we do not hire them absolutely for a short period with a service for a year, hiring is presumed, therefore we limit the time.

And you avoid having apprentices taken in your parish?—Of course we wish it.

Do you do much grate work in your country?—Yes, we are obliged to do a great deal, as much as we can.

Have you ever made any calculation what would be the difference in the labour of a farm of 100*l.* a year within half a mile of a town, and one that was two miles from it, if the labourers were to come from the town?—I am perfectly convinced there would be no difference at all; the reason is, that our men do as little as they possibly can to get their wages; the real work of one of our labourers is by no means severe.

If he did fairly that portion of work he is capable of, would not the difference be essential?—It would make a difference, if he worked by task-work.

If the work was to be let, would it not be cheaper done within half a mile of the town than where the men had to go two miles?—It would not make any difference I am convinced, and I will tell you why; if I had work to let to-morrow, persons who would undertake it would come from Hindon or Shaftsbury, or some town where they have no work for them, four or five miles off probably.

Will not a man, to work for a twelvemonth, perform a larger proportion of work within half a mile of his residence than four miles off?—There is no doubt it will be so, if he performs his duty; but he does not do so.

Do you find the labourers all keep the same hours, or do they come earlier to do grate work?—A great deal earlier; but they go away earlier at night by two hours.

Then, in point of fact, they work fewer hours than if they worked by the day?—Yes, three or four hours short generally.



Have you reason to believe that working those fewer hours, they effect a greater portion of work than by day-work?—They do.

In a proportion equal to the increase of work?—Yes, I have gone to that extent in grate work, in farm work, that there is scarcely any thing that can be done by measure, that I do not do by measure; ploughing, and carting, and almost every work that can be measured.

In those parishes in which you are so much interested, and in which such pains are taken to avoid new settlements, in what way have the present persons who have settlements acquired them?—By perjury, some of them. I have a family now settled upon me in a most extraordinary way, in one particular parish: a family were carried into my bailiff's house in the evening; the father, whom I am convinced, was perjured, sailed the next morning from Portsmouth to the East Indies, and the wife and family are on my parish now.

From whence do they derive their settlements?—They are natives of the parish, generally.

Are early marriages frequent in your parish?—Certainly.

Have you any friendly society in any of those parishes?—Yes, parish clubs; two in Tisbury.

Have they a good many members?—No; they had formerly; they were very good clubs.

What is the cause of their decline?—The total dependence the pauper has upon the poor's rates; the parish can take advantage of the club money.

Does it not arise in part from the people having low wages?—The whole of the misery of my parish, and I believe of my county, is occasioned by the lowness of wages.

Do you think the morals of the lower classes have been much deteriorated of late years?—Very much.

Is not the mode of hiring the labourers by the year, calculated to injure their morals?—No, I do not think it is; the best labourers are those who are willing to hire themselves by the year.

Do you consider yourself obliged to make an allowance to the pauper, agreeably to the scale delivered in?—I am bound as a magistrate, to give such relief as will support the pauper.

And you go by that scale?—Yes.

May you deviate from it?—Yes, it does not bind me by any means, further than that I conceive, under the pressure of the poor's rates at present, that scale is absolutely necessary for the sake of instruction to young magistrates and overseers.

Do you not think it would be much better to pay the labourers the entire value of their labour, rather than out of the poor's rates?—Undoubtedly.

As to the part paid out of the poor rate, the farmer, so far as he is charged, gains as much as he pays?—Certainly.

You have stated, that the objection to making residence constitute a settlement, was, that you could not possibly dispossess a pauper of his house, that he has remained two or three years



after you have given him notice to quit; supposing the farmers to refuse to employ that person, would not that compel him to quit the house?—Not at all; those persons know how to obtain subsistence without any employ at all; I can point out several men in the town of Hindon, who never were seen to do an hour's work.

That is, supposing a designing man comes into the parish to obtain a settlement?—Certainly.

As a general principle, would not notice, a year or half a year before the expiration of the period which would constitute a settlement, and the farmers refusing to give employment to that person, compel him to leave the parish?—Perhaps that is not the strongest part of the answer I gave just now; when I spoke of Hindon, I spoke of other places as well. When a tenant is quitting a farm, he would often give no notice, because he would be indifferent whether the pauper had a settlement or not; the tenant, when he knows of the termination of his lease, might sometimes hire servants, and gain settlements for them purposely; there are instances now, I believe, at this moment, where tenants are bound, under penalties, not to take paupers.

Do not you conceive, if settlements were facilitated in the way now mentioned by residence, it would be a perfectly give-and-take business; that the parish would get rid of as many as they got?—Those who have none cannot get rid of them; they would pull down their cottages.

Would they not still continue to refuse them to any tenant who was likely to become burthensome?—Yes, if little farmers held their own estates there would not be many settlements made; but where the estates are let there will be many paupers made.

Upon the whole, would you rather the law remained as it is?—The law is so bad it had better be altered in any way. I cannot see any sort of inconvenience in making residence and labour in the parish give a settlement; it is not necessary he should have laboured for one man only.

If the poor who should be produced by an agricultural parish, and having their birth settlement from the agricultural parish, should become manufacturers and entitled to a settlement by a number of years residence, do you believe, or do you not, that the manufacturing parish would eject them before they get a settlement there?—Perfectly sure of it.

Do not you therefore think it would throw back the pauper in his old age, and perfectly exhausted, on the agricultural parish?—I am perfectly sure of it; if labour and residence give a settlement, a man may work for twenty masters and have a settlement.

In attaching labour to residence, do you consider that the man must be actually employed, or that he does not become chargeable in any way upon the parish; if he does not become chargeable, do you consider that labour?—If he does not become chargeable to the parish, and is not known to work in another parish, if he



lives upon the means he acquires in my parish, he ought to gain a settlement there.

Supposing the period to be fixed five years, and a man works four years and a half, and is not employed the next half year, and is not chargeable on the parish, he ought you think to gain a settlement?—Most undoubtedly.

Is the custom altered in your country at all amongst farmers, of hiring their labourers short of the year?—Yes, we never hire by the year now; we hire to evade the settlement, for six months, nine months, and ten months, any thing short of the year; for if we make no hiring there is an implied hiring.

Can a man in your parish, working by measure, earn sufficient to keep himself and three children off the parish?—Certainly he ought; it depends on his master, one man will give more than another.

What would he earn?—It totally depends upon the strength of the man, and the agreement he makes; if he worked for me he would earn probably ten shillings; ten shillings will not keep a man and three children; twelve shillings would.

How much will a man earn in a week, by measure?—One man may earn six shillings, and another double that sum.

But generally in your neighbourhood?—The weekly wages are seven or eight shillings; and therefore I should suppose he would earn twelve shillings.

Every person in your parish that has a family receives parochial relief?—Yes, nearly so; the scale will shew you.

Is not this the effect; that though in the first instance, the weekly rate of labour is only eight shillings in the week, yet as all the families are paid out of the poor rates, that is also a payment for labour?—It is a payment for maintenance.

Should you conceive that the present payment for labour in your parish, plus the amount of the poor rate, would be more than adequate for labour, if it were put into the direct shape of a payment for labour?—I am perfectly convinced the price of labour at present, and for the last three years, has never been repaid to the farmer, including all other things; the farmer has never received a remuneration for the labour, generally including poor rates, taxes, and all other things.

In your parish, is the payment for labour, which is in the shape of poor rates, and the weekly payment, apportioned not according to the labour performed, but to the necessities of the individuals who perform it and their families?—Yes.

If the Committee understand you rightly, the profits which a man makes of his farm only enable him to pay at the rate of seven shillings a week to the labourers?—I believe that the farmer's produce has not repaid him the amount of his expenditure for the last three years in my neighbourhood.

Do you see any remedy for the state of things described in your last answer?—The remedy to me is very evident; which is, to create an increase of demand for labour, which can alone increase its price.



How can you increase that demand?—By removing the disabilities under which the uncultivated land now labours, to enable us to cultivate our waste lands.

You expressed an opinion, that were a settlement to be gained by a certain number of years residence in a manufacturing place, that residence would be gained in spite of any individual wishing to defeat it, because if one man would not employ such a manufacturer, another would; do you not conceive, that in such manufacturing places the masters, if they wished to avoid burthening the parish, would agree among themselves not to let the man reside there above a certain time?—It would depend upon the state of the manufacture and the value of the man.

Speaking generally?—Speaking generally, they would be glad to get rid of persons likely to become paupers; the general effect would be bad.

Speaking generally, would not they endeavour to defeat such settlement gained by residence, by turning out the persons before the period at which they would gain their settlement would expire?—Yes.

Then they would be thrown back to their birth settlement?—To a certain extent.

Are not the present circumstances of the country such, that the capital, though employed in agriculture, is not employed to advantage?—That capital is employed to advantage which is already employed; but there is a great deal of dormant capital that would be employed on the waste land, if the disabilities were removed.

Is not the trade of farming considered bad?—It has been for the last three years; but, I believe, to use a fashionable phrase, a re-action has taken place, and that it will be a flourishing trade again.

In point of fact, under the present situation of agriculture, is there any inducement to throw a fresh capital, in bringing waste lands at present uncultivated into cultivation?—There are inducements; the extreme low price of labour, and money is becoming more plentiful than it was; and I am convinced a great deal of land would be cultivated if the disabilities were removed. I am convinced that non-cultivation has taken place to a much greater extent than the importation for the last three years.

What are the disabilities to which you allude?—The chief disabilities proceed from the tithe system, and the taxes that affect the cultivation; the acreable taxes are the same on the poor land as on the rich land. The acreable expense of cultivation is probably higher on an acre of poor arable land, which shall give a net rent of ten shillings, than upon an acre of good arable land that would give a net rent of forty shillings; consequently the indirect taxes, such as the taxes on malt, salt, shoe leather, &c. for I will take it as low as that, that the labourer consumes, falls in a tenfold proportion on the poor land to what it does on the rich. These things check the cultivation of the poor land.



# SCALE FOR REGULATING PAROCHIAL RELIEF

*Adopted in the HINDON*

		When the standard wheaten Gallon or											
		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
		3 4	3 3	3 2	3 1	3 0	2 11	2 10	2 9	2 8	2 7	2 6	
<i>Weekly income, including the earnings.</i>													
<b>CLASS I.</b>													
A labouring Man in employment (not found for him by the parish), or in temporary Sickness.													
Maintenance .....		3 4	3 3	3 2	3 1	3 0	2 11	2 10	2 9	2 8	2 7	2 6	
Clothes .....		0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	
Additional Allowance in consequence of his finding himself in Employ		1 8	1 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 7	1 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 6	1 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 5	1 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 4	1 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 3	
Total income....		5 4	5 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	5 1	4 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 10	4 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 7	4 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 4	4 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	4 1	
<b>CLASS II.</b>													
Men (not included in Cl. I) Women, Children above the age of 12 years, and Boys of any age, whose earnings (in employment not found by the parish) shall amount to 2s. a week													
Maintenance...Gallon Loaf		3 4	3 3	3 2	3 1	3 0	2 11	2 10	2 9	2 8	2 7	2 6	
Clothes .....		0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	0 4	
Total income....		3 8	3 7	3 6	3 5	3 4	3 3	3 2	3 1	3 0	2 11	2 10	
<b>CLASS III.</b>													
Children not included in Class I. and between the ages of 8 and 12 years.													
Maintenance...34-40ths of Gallon Loaf .....		2 10	2 9	2 8	2 7 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 5	2 4	2 3	2 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Clothes .....		0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	0 3	
Total income....		3 1	3 0	2 11	2 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 8	2 7	2 6	2 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	
<b>CLASS IV.</b>													
Children between the ages of 4 and 8 years.													
Maintenance...30-40ths of Gallon Loaf .....		2 6	2 5	2 4 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 3	2 2	2 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 0	1 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	
Clothes .....		0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	
Total income....		2 8	2 7	2 6 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 5 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 5	2 4	2 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 2 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 2	2 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	
<b>CLASS V.</b>													
Children under 4 years of age.													
Maintenance...26-40ths of Gallon Loaf .....		2 2	2 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 1	2 0	1 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 11	1 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 9	1 8 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 8	
Clothes .....		0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	0 2	
Total income....		2 4	2 3 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 3	2 2	2 1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 1	2 0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 11 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 11	1 10 $\frac{1}{2}$	1 10	

Only half the Earnings of married Women, having *two* Children under 4 years of age, should be taken into account.

None of the earnings of married Women, having *three* Children under 4 years of age, should be taken into account.

No Person, in employment and having only *one* Child, should receive any parochial assistance.

The order of a Magistrate made in his or her case.



# THE PRICE OF STANDARD WHEATEN BREAD.

VISION, 5th March, 1817.

14-Peck Loaf is sold at

If Peck Loaf is sold at																		
d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
5	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	11	1	10	1	9	1	8
5	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	11	1	10	1	9	1	8
4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4
2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	11	0	11	0	10	0	9
11	3	10	3	8	3	7	3	5	3	4	3	2	3	1	2	11	2	10
2	5	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	11	1	10	1	9	1
0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0	4	0
2	9	2	8	2	7	2	6	2	5	2	4	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
2	0	2	0	1	11	1	10	1	9	1	8	1	7	1	6	1	5	1
0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
2	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2	0	1	11	1	10	1	10	1	9	1
1	10	1	9	1	8	1	7	1	6	1	5	1	4	1	4	1	3	1
0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
2	0	1	11	1	10	1	9	1	8	1	7	1	6	1	6	1	5	1
1	7	1	6	1	6	1	5	1	4	1	4	1	3	1	3	1	2	1
0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
1	9	1	8	1	8	1	7	1	6	1	6	1	5	1	5	1	4	1

Old Men and Women quite unable to perform any labour, and who have always sustained good characters for honesty and industry, who will rank in the second class, should have one-fourth addition under the title "maintenance."

Sixpence per week should be deducted from the allowance to a family occupying a parish house except it be the Work-house] on account of rent.

The wages of Men working by task should only be taken at the average rate of wages in the parish



*Mr. William Robins* was called in and Examined.

The committee understand that your object is to oppose the Bill now passing through the House of Commons, to enable the parishes of Birmingham to rate the owners of houses, rather than the tenants and occupiers?—Yes.

Does your objection go to this being a partial law, affecting Birmingham; or do you object to it as a general provision of the law of the land?—As a partial one.

If it was a general provision, you would not object to it?—Certainly not.

You do not think the thing objectionable in itself?—We take it as a local objection.

It has been submitted to the Committee, that in all towns it would equalize the poor rates?—I think, from my experience, just the reverse; it would be proper to say, here are two gentlemen here on the other side of the question.

What is your situation in Birmingham?—I am not a resident in Birmingham; I am a manufacturer in the neighbourhood.

Have you any houses in Birmingham?—I have eighteen.

Are they small houses?—Yes, under 10*l.* a year; I have other large houses. We find that the average income of the proprietors of the small houses of Birmingham is not more than 70*l.* a year, and we consider, that persons of that description are not those that at such a time as this, are liable to be called on to support the poor; that is the average rental, but the real produce is considerably less.

How many houses are there in Birmingham?—Eighteen thousand in the whole, fourteen thousand small houses, under 12*l.*

And those fourteen thousand are exempted from poor's rates, from the value being under 12*l.* a year?—Yes, or rather because the occupiers are too poor to pay.

Will you state to the Committee your objections to this law, supposing it a general one?—I think the objection would be materially lessened, and I do not know that we should have any objection to allege, but the law is partial; to the greater part of the proprietors of houses in Birmingham it appears that the present Bill is intended to charge the proprietors of houses with poor rates upon their rental. I have the payment of an annuity to half the amount of my rental, and it does not appear upon the present Bill that I shall have any exemption.

*Mr. John Welshman Wheatley*, called in and Examined.

The Committee wish to know what information you have to give them?—The total number of houses in Birmingham is 18,082.

Are those all in one parish?—Yes; Birmingham is one parish for parochial purposes; it is divided into two parishes for ecclesiastical purposes; of those houses only 3893 contribute to the maintenance of the poor, leaving 14,189 houses that do not contribute to the poor rates: the annual rental of the whole parish is 210,170*l.*; the annual rental of the premises paying the poor rates, 114,665*l.*;



the annual rental of the property that does not contribute to the poor rates, 95,905*l*. I will also beg to state to the Committee, that of the 3893 houses that pay the poor rates, many pay only one rate in two, or one rate in three; and recently many of the occupiers, when summoned before a magistrate, have been excused altogether. I would also add, that no person is excused the payment of the poor rates, except by order of the magistrates of that place; there are only 2236 houses in the parish above the annual rent of 20*l*. a year; there are 15,846 under 20*l*. a year; there are 13,871 under 12*l*. a year; there are 13,072 under 10*l*. a year; and there are 9218 under 7*l*. a year, which the Committee will observe is more than one half of the whole number; there have been 1770 houses under the annual value of 10*l*. 10*s*. built within the last two years in the town of Birmingham: all these are weekly rents.

Do you conceive the landlords receive a proportionately higher rent?—That has been ascertained; that has come to the knowledge of the magistrates repeatedly, that houses have been let by the landlords exempted from the payment of the rates, and therefore they have demanded a higher rent on that account.

Has that difference of rent been equal to the poor rate?—In many instances as much, and more I believe; I cannot speak with accuracy to that; an additional burthen has been imposed on the persons paying the poor rates, on account of the equalized county rate under the Act of the 55th Geo. III.; the Committee are aware, that under that Act the magistrates, at their quarter sessions, are directed to assess every parish according to the annual value of the rateable property within the parish; the whole of those houses therefore, whether contributing to the poor rates or not, are certainly rateable property; they have been so held by the magistrates at the last Warwick sessions, upon an appeal to the county rate; Birmingham is directed by the rate, to pay more than one-fifth of the whole county rate. I mention that to show, that inasmuch as that is paid by the 3800 occupiers who pay the poor rates, it is an additional hardship.

What is the amount of the whole rate on the rack rental of the parish?—Six-pence in the pound, I believe.

What does your poor rate come to in the pound, for the whole year?—There have been 25 rates in the last year; I believe the amount is eight or nine shillings.

Your object by this Bill is to get a further property rateable, in aid of your present assessment?—Certainly.

In the time that the 1770 houses have been built under the value of ten guineas annually, what number of other houses have been built above that value?—I am not prepared to answer that question correctly.

Can you tell in what proportion?—Not to the same proportion certainly.

Have those houses been built for the occupancy of the manufacturers?—They have not been built by the owners of large manufactories for their workmen to reside in.



Are they, in point of fact, occupied by the manufacturers?—  
By labourers of all descriptions.

The population is increased?—The disbanding the army and navy has brought a great influx into the town.

Fresh inhabitants who were not there before?—Yes, I believe so.

Of the 3893 houses that you state to be now rated, what number of those have been recently built?—I cannot answer that question with correctness.

*Veneris, 14<sup>o</sup> die Martij, 1817.*

The Rt. Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

*Thomas Sewell, Esq.* called in; and Examined.

You reside in the Isle of Wight?—I do.

How many years have you resided there?—I have been twenty-five years there.

You act as a solicitor?—Yes; as solicitor to the guardians of the poor.

You also act as land agent and steward for a great part of the landed proprietors there?—A considerable part; nearly one-third of the whole island.

The parishes in the island were incorporated in the year 1771?—They were.

The Act that passed in that year, was afterwards amended in the year 1776?—It was.

The House of Industry that was erected in consequence of that Act, was erected near Newport?—Yes; within half a mile of it.

How much land is there attached to it?—There were originally about eighty acres; there are about seventy, or between sixty and seventy acres of land now.

You had the advantage of having that quantity of land granted by the crown?—Yes.

The House of Industry is governed by twenty-four directors?—Yes; they are styled acting guardians; twelve are considered directors, and twelve of them guardians.

They form themselves into committees: do they not?—Yes.

And meet once a week?—Yes; two directors and five guardians.

With a view of inspecting and regulating the house?—Yes; and granting the necessary weekly relief wanted by paupers out of the house.

By whom is the relief, ordered out of the house, paid?—It is paid by the overseers of the poor.

Paid by the overseers of the parish to whom the paupers belong?—They do not consider on casual reliefs, that the order must be given always to the parish to which the pauper belongs; but it is given to the parish officers nearest where the relief is granted, because it comes into one general account in the end.

How are the poor employed in the house?—There is a manufactory to a very small extent, and very little profit; the poor in the



house are principally old persons and children; some poor men have been taken into the house who can work, but what they do is very little, with the exception of what they do in the garden: there is a garden of seven acres, and it employs a certain number of people.

How is the rest of the land cultivated?—There are fifteen or twenty acres of it laid down to grass; and the remainder is in ploughed land, with the exception of what is taken up in courts where the children play.

Are persons who want employment ever sent to work on that land?—Yes; whatever labour is necessary on the land is done by the paupers in the house.

And the paupers in the house are enabled to do all the labour that is wanted there.—Yes.

How many is the house calculated to contain?—It contains at present 841, and it certainly is nearly fully occupied; it might perhaps contain 100 more if we were obliged to find room for them.

How many parishes are there in the island?—Thirty.

The population of the island is between twenty-three and twenty-four thousand?—Yes, I believe it is so.

Can you state to the Committee what the amount of the sums collected by all those parishes for the poor rate was, before the establishment of the House of Industry?—I understand that when first the House of Industry was established, the average was taken for seven years preceding the passing of the Act, and it amounted to 5,150*l.* for the whole island; the rental of the island must have been about 70,000*l.* a year at that time, as far as I have been able to obtain information.

Was any provision made as to the amount of money raised for the relief of the poor being increased, or kept at a certain sum, after the establishment of the House of Industry?—I believe there was no alteration made after the passing of the first Act of Parliament, except by the general law, which enabled the incorporated districts to increase their rates when necessary.

Before that Act passed, do you apprehend you could not have increased your rates, whatever the demand for relief had been?—Before the Act passed I conceive that the overseers might have obtained from the magistrates whatever was necessary to maintain the poor.

What was the sum raised in the last year?—I have taken the average from the books for the last seven or eight years. I can state it from the year 1803; in that year there was 5,657*l.* raised; in 1810, there was 9,381*l.* in 1811, 8,320*l.*; in 1812, 9,668*l.*; in 1813, 13,120*l.*; in 1814, 12,091*l.*; in 1815, 11,635*l.*; and in 1816, 12,896*l.*

Are these all the accounts you have?—Yes.

Are you aware of any particular cause which has contributed to increase your expenses so much?—The number of paupers has materially increased in the course of this time.



The Isle of Wight having been made a dépôt for troops, may that have occasioned some increase?—It has, certainly.

In the year 1812, it was 9,668*l.*; and in 1813, 13,120*l.*; what was the occasion of that increase?—The increased price of provisions, and the increased number of poor in the country to be maintained.

Were there in 1813, more than there are at present?—There were not a greater number; but the price of corn was higher in 1813 than it was in 1816.

What classes of poor were they that increased so much in this year; had you more casual poor, or had you more illegitimate children, or what description of poor increased so much?—In the year 1812, there were 544 persons in the house in the month of August; and in the month of August 1813, there were 620; in 1812, in the month of March, there were 330 persons relieved out of the house; in 1813, there were 241 relieved out of the house in the month of March weekly.

Have the casual poor, those who do not belong to you, in the Isle of Wight, increased?—Yes.

From what time particularly?—They have increased most in the years 1815, 1816, and up to the present time.

Of what description are they?—A great many of them are labourers out of employ, who have been obliged to be relieved for the support of their families, not being able to find labour.

Those belong to your island, do they not?—Yes.

Have you many Irish and Scotch?—We have not so many as we had four or five years ago, because the number of soldiers and sailors is not so great as at that time.

You have stated the supposed amount of the rental in 1771; what is the rental now?—126,000*l.* was the value of it under the property tax returns.

Your population has increased since the first census, about two thousand?—Yes, from 1801 it has.

Have you any means of judging of the population in 1771?—When Sir Richard Worsley's History of the Island was published, about the year 1780, the population was estimated at about 18,000.

What are the ordinary wages of labourers in the island, at this time?—The average of wages I should think, at this time, is from nine to ten shillings; some few so low as eight.

Can you tell the Committee what it has been for some time past?—I have made the best inquiries I could, and from that I learn, that in 1774, the price of labour was seven shillings a week; it remained with little variation till 1784, it then rose to about eight shillings; in 1794 it was about nine shillings; and in the year 1810 there were some as high as fifteen shillings a week, but very few.

At present do any labourers who have families receive any assistance from the poor rates, in addition to their wages?—Yes, I believe many.

Are there constantly applications of that sort to the guardians at the house?—Yes.



Is any such relief given without the sanction of the guardians?  
—Or magistrates.

Do you know what the average rate of maintenance of those in the house is per head?—In the year 1813 there were 524 persons in the house, and the total expenses incurred in the house at that time was 4,200*l.* which made an average of about 8*l.* per head; this included not only their maintenance in provisions, but their clothes, and the expenses of repairs, and whatever was done in the house, excepting the salaries to the surgeon, chaplains, and other officers; that upon the average is about 8*l.* per head to the whole; in 1810 the average was 528 persons, and the average expense 13*l.*; in 1812 there were 544 persons in the house, and the average expense was considered at 16*l.* 1*s.*; In 1813 the number of paupers in the house was 620, and the average expense was 14*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*; in the year 1815 the expense was 7,109*l.* and the number of paupers was 606, making the average 11*l.* 5*s.*

Are any persons wholly maintained out of the house?—No, none.

Do you know whether there is any difficulty in collecting the rates in the island now?—I believe none whatever.

In your opinion, has this incorporation of the parishes saved money in the island, that would otherwise have been raised by poor rates?—I think it has.

Do you think it has done so considerably?—I think it has.

From what do you form that judgment?—From the present low rate of the poor rate, compared with the expense of maintaining the poor in other parts of the kingdom; our poor rates, on what would be termed a fair rack-rent last year, were at about two shillings in the pound.

How much did they amount to, previous to the incorporation?  
—Taking it in the year 1774, it would come to nearly 1*s.* 6*d.*; taking it that they raised 5,000*l.* and the rental of the island was 70,000*l.*

Your law expences, it appears from the returns, have not been very considerable?—They are very trifling; I have taken them for eight years: in the year 1791, the law expenses were 47*l.*; in the year 1798, 32*l.*; in the year 1805, 47*l.*; in the year 1812, 79*l.*; in the year 1813, 170*l.*; and in the year 1814, 212*l.*; this additional expense was incurred in consequence of being obliged to defend two or three expensive appeals which we had; in the year 1815, they were 64*l.*; and in the last year 65*l.*

Have the sums you have stated to have been raised at those various times, been all expended on the poor, or do they include the county rates and church rates?—No, the poor only.

From your professional knowledge do you think, that if in future, settlements were only to be derived from birth, parentage, and residence, say for five years, the expense of litigation would be much diminished?—I have no doubt of it.

Are you aware of any inconvenience that would result from such an alteration of the law of settlement?—None whatever.



You have hardly any friendly societies in the island?—I do not know of any.

In 1803 there were two?—Yes, but on a small scale.

Have you any saving banks?—Not yet; there is one in contemplation.

Do you think you have been incumbered with a greater number of illegitimate children than you used to be?—I think we have.

Have you any account of the numbers in different years?—We make an entry in the office, when the examinations are taken of the names of the parties, and from that account I have extracts from the year 1799 to 1816: in the year 1799 there appeared from the returns nearly twenty in the whole island; in the year 1800, forty-two; in 1801, twenty-nine; and in the year 1810, there were sixty-three; in 1811, seventy-five; in 1812, forty-four; in 1813, seventy-two; in 1814, forty-nine; in 1815, seventy-eight; and in 1816, eighty-two.

At what period did the island become a dépôt?—I think it was about the year 1796 or 1797 that the dépôt was first begun to be built; we had had for two or three years before that a very considerable number of military in the island, from the year 1793 or 1794.

From that time do you think the morals of the lower orders of the people in the island have suffered?—I have no doubt they have.

Do you conceive that there has been any alteration in the general character of the labouring classes of the island, since the erection of the House of Industry?—I have heard that when first the house was established, there was a very great objection indeed among all the poor to go into the house, or even to come for relief. I think that objection is now completely done away, and that they now rather court to come into it.

Do you mean, that you apprehend that the spirit of independence has been considerably broken among the poor, in the period you have alluded to?—I think it has.

Do you observe any considerable alteration in the classes of paupers which have been admitted into the house, as to whether they consist of men or women, or what?—I think there are a greater proportion of men now than they were originally.

Do you attribute that alteration, in any considerable degree, to the cause which you have just alluded to?—I think it is attributable to that.

Do you apprehend that the present poor rate, levied from the Isle of Wight, is a greater burthen to you, considering the present rental and other circumstances, than the original rate was before the House of Industry was erected?—I think, if you consider the increased value of the property, since the time the house was first established, that it is a great deal more.

Then are you of opinion that the establishment of a house of industry has had the effect of preventing the poor being more burthensome in the Isle of Wight, than they would otherwise probably have been?—I have no doubt of it.



Do you consider the Isle of Wight, from its local situation, to be capable of being better managed in those instances than many other parts of the kingdom?—I think it is.

From what causes?—I think from these causes: we have only one market town, Newport; the house of industry is situated near to that town, the gentlemen and the guardians who are to attend and examine and regulate the house, while they come to do that (the farmers particularly) have an opportunity of attending the market and doing their own business; the consequence is, we have scarcely any non-attendance of a sufficient number of guardians and directors to attend and examine the house.

The guardians are gentlemen of consideration in the island?—The directors are gentlemen of property, and some of them magistrates.

Have they made it a point to attend regularly since the erection of the house?—Two every week always, and five guardians.

Do you apprehend that a reasonable degree of attention is paid to procure as much labour to be performed in the house, as can be without inconvenience?—They have done as much as they could, without success; the small manufactory they carry on is very trifling indeed; they manufacture their own clothes and a certain quantity of sacks: the paupers make their clothes, their shoes, and linen.

Exclusive of making their clothes and doing the garden work, what appears to be the total amount of the net profit upon the labour of the paupers?—Upon the balance of the account of the manufactory, it appears upon the average to have been from 150*l.* to 200*l.* a year.

What are the articles which are principally sold from the house of industry?—Sacks.

Is the land cultivated with the plough or the spade?—Whatever is cultivated is cultivated with the plough; the garden is cultivated with the spade.

Do those seventy acres furnish the food that is consumed in the house?—Whatever corn is produced from the farm is sold, not manufactured.

Then the produce of the farm is sent to market like the produce of any other farm?—Yes.

Would it not be expedient, instead of purchasing any articles of food for the house, as far as the farm would furnish them, to make the produce of the farm in the first instance applicable?—The house being supplied always by contract, I doubt whether they could bring that into account, because the quantity produced is so unequal to the quantity expended.

If the house was not supplied by contract, do you think it would be an uneconomical arrangement to let the farm supply the food in the first instance directly to the house, without carrying the profits to market?—I think you would get very little by it, taking into account that you sell the produce and buy the article you want, because there would be some articles produced that you could not



consume in the house; if you were to manufacture your wheat you would not have occasion for all your bran, and the refuse of the wheat would be to be disposed of; and by selling it in grain, and by buying the article as you want it for the consumption of the house, you gain as much and perhaps rather more.

The labourers that work on that farm, are furnished from among the persons in the house?—Always.

If that farm was reduced to a garden cultivation, of course it would employ a greater number of hands?—Yes.

Might not a garden cultivation be made applicable to the supply of the house?—The garden already there being seven acres, produces abundance of vegetables for the use of the house; and if you were to extend it to make it a market garden, you would not find a consumption in the market to take the produce.

Has it been found easy in the house of industry to procure from the paupers there maintained, any proportionate quantity of labour to the advantages they receive, and which they would have been able to have performed in other situations?—No; I do not think it has.

That appears to have been the general observation?—Yes; of the persons having the management of the house, that they could not employ the poor in the house to greater advantage than the little they obtained from them.

Either by working the land, or any manufacture they could establish?—No; and for a very many years they kept the land in their hands; but four years ago they found it so unprofitable, they let part of it; they let about thirteen acres of the arable land, and some of the meadow.

Who is it that labour in the garden?—Generally the old men.

Are they paid any thing for their labour?—I believe nothing.

Then they have nothing to excite them, by any little remuneration, to be more active than those who are doing nothing at all?—No, I believe they take it in turns; so many men work at particular periods in the garden.

But none of them receive any pecuniary remuneration for their trouble?—Not that I am aware of.

Do the labourers attached to the farm of this house of industry, receive any thing?—I do not know that they do.

If this grant of land had not been made to the public, would not a considerably larger rate have been brought on the island, for the support of the poor?—Yes, there would have been some increase.

You cannot form any conjecture of how much that would have been?—No; I cannot.

Have you a diet roll here, of this house of industry?—Yes; I have it here; (*producing it.*)

The description of persons you mentioned to be in the poor-house, were they infirm and old, and the very young?—Principally the greatest number is composed of them.

Have you any able-bodied men capable of working, and in what number?—We have a few who come from sickness.



What are the number of those persons?—There may be thirty or forty men capable of working in the house, not having any residence.

Do not you think this appropriation of land might be very serviceable in workhouses, where able-bodied men are sent, who are capable and willing to work, and the reason why it has not answered so well and effectually the purpose with you, is, that the persons sent to you cannot work?—If they had persons able-bodied in the house to work the ground, they might, I think, turn it to more profit.

Should you think it an advisable thing to be adopted generally in the country?—Yes, I should.

Do you think it would answer?—I should think it would answer.

The reason it has not answered with you, is, that the persons are not capable of working?—At that time, when the lands are given up to be let, we had not hands sufficient to cultivate it by the spade. You stated, that in the year 1812, the sum expended was 9,668*l.*; and in 1813, it was 13,120*l.*; what was the reason of that increase?—It was the increase of price, I think, of the articles upon which the paupers were kept; and likewise, in the year 1813, there were some expenses incurred in buildings, and in procuring iron bedsteads for the paupers, and all those were charged and came into expenses of the current year.

It does not appear that the number of paupers had increased?—In the year 1813, there were 300*l.* laid out in building a place for lunatics; there were likewise 129*l.* for iron bedsteads; and there were other incidental expenses incurred that year.

Were not the prices of provisions, in 1814, as high as in 1813?—I do not recollect now.

In 1813 it appears that each pauper in the house cost you 16*l.*; and in 1814 only 14*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.*?—In 1813, from Midsummer 1813 to Midsummer 1814, the expenses of bread came to 2,079*l.*; from Midsummer 1814 to Midsummer 1815, 1,320*l.*

What was the cost for bread from 1812 to 1813?—Three thousand and ninety-six pounds.

What property is assessed to the rates of the Isle of Wight?—Land and houses; no personal property.

No other property but land and houses?—No.

Who are exempted?—I think that poor persons, who occupy property at 3*l.* 4*l.* and 5*l.* are generally exempted from the rate.

You have stated, you have pasture land as well as arable land?—Yes.

Does the house keep a cow?—Six cows.

In the diet-roll there is no milk at all mentioned?—A great deal of it is used by the infant children. This diet-roll applies to the larger children of three or four or five years old, and the men and women.

Do they make the cheese consumed in the house?—No.

Do they make their own bread?—Yes, I believe they do sometimes.



Because, by the diet-roll, it appears that every thing is applicable to a garden cultivation except your mutton?—Yes.

You have stated, that the poor who formerly used to have a great objection to going to the poor-house, had got rid of that objection; to what do you attribute the change of feeling?—I think it is from the necessity they feel that the price of labour will not enable them to maintain themselves; and having once had relief, they do not feel the repugnance at going to the house they did formerly.

You do not attribute any part of it to the want of independence they formerly possessed?—Yes, I do.

Do you take men of that description into the house, who cannot maintain themselves by labour out of it?—No, we give them relief out of the house.

Have you any rule about that?—They generally proportion their relief to the number of children, or the number in family who claim relief.

But no fixed rule?—No.

By the Act it is provided, that the sums to be assessed upon any one parish shall not exceed the sum assessed on that parish, on the average of the seven years preceding to the Act 1771?—There was a general Act of Parliament, which gave relief to incorporated districts, enabling them to increase their rates.

Were you under any difficulties before that Act passed?—It was in contemplation at that time to apply to Parliament to give them this power, when it was discovered this Act was in force.

Can you state how long you went on before you found a necessity for this alteration?—It was two or three years.

And there is therefore now no limit to the assessment on any of the parishes?—No; they act under that Act of Parliament, and raise what they want; it was acted upon in the year 1802 to a very great extent for one year, for at that time the corporation were indebted to the treasurer, and they likewise had expended the sum of 1,000*l.* which they had laid by to pay their debts; and at a meeting in 1802, it was proposed to raise a sum of money equal not only to pay the treasurer, but to raise all the sum necessary for the purposes of the year; they raised their average rate from five thousand one hundred and odd pounds, to 18,000*l.* in the year; the year afterwards it was reduced to 5,600*l.*

From your experience among the poor, do you conceive that if the poor had not to look to the poor rates, speaking generally, they would contrive the means to support themselves?—I think that they would, but not at the present price of labour.

Speaking generally?—If they could get the means of obtaining sufficient to maintain their family by labour, I think they would.

Would they not, if they had not the poor rates to resort to, lay up to provide against times when they could not find employ?—I think the facility of obtaining relief makes them incautious in the expenditure of their money.

And do you conceive that makes them less cautious of doing all the labour they can, and therefore that they obtain less money than



if they were obliged to maintain themselves they would?—I think so.

You mean, that the labourer should receive an adequate value for his labour, that no part should be paid out of the poor fund?—Certainly.

Do not you conceive it is very injurious, that any fair part of a labourer's work should be paid out of the poor rate?—Yes.

Do you conceive it impossible to avoid that, while the labourer's work is not adequate to maintain him and his family?—I do not know how it is to be done.

Would it not, if there was no power to resort to the poor fund, be necessary to pay him what the labour was worth?—Yes; I think so.

Do you think that the farmers in your neighbourhood pay their labourers a smaller price for labour than they otherwise would do, knowing that in the event of families of any size, they can fall back upon the poor rate?—I think we have at present so many labourers in the country that there is a competition for labour, and therefore the farmers, if there were no poor rates at this time, would be able to get the labour done for perhaps a little more than they pay at present; we have more labourers in the country at this moment than the farmers find employ for.

The overseers of the poor continue to assess and collect the rates in their parishes?—Yes; and I believe one of them attends the directors and guardians at the weekly meetings, to report the state of the poor receiving relief out of the house or standing in need of it.

They do not judge of the relief necessary?—No; they distribute the relief ordered by the guardians.

Have they no power to administer immediate relief if necessary?—Yes; and they get it confirmed by the guardians and directors.

Your treasurer's accounts are audited at a special sessions?—Yes.

How often is that?—The accounts are made up annually at Midsummer, when there is a general meeting of all the directors and acting guardians, who examine the quarterly accounts; they meet once a quarter to make fresh contracts, and look over the accounts; and at Midsummer the general meeting look into the state of the institution, and examine the quarterly accounts.

They are examined quarterly by the guardians, and finally audited at the special sessions annually?—Yes.

There is hardly any manufacture carried on in the island?—There is a thread lace manufactory just established near Newport; a person has bought some property, where he intends carrying on a thread-lace manufactory.

You have expressed an opinion, that the poor rates of the island have been in a considerable degree increased in consequence of its having been made a military dépôt; are you of opinion, that the island, generally speaking, has derived from that circumstance any proportional pecuniary benefit in other instances?—Yes; I think



the advantages derived to the island, have been greater than the disadvantages from the casual poor.

Has it increased the value of land in the island?—I think it has.

Are you at all conversant with the management of the poor out of the island?—No.

There is no extra-parochial place in the island?—No; there is no extra-parochial place, except part of the forest.

Do many undeserving poor receive relief?—I think, taking those generally out of employ now, they are the most idle and profligate of the poor, they are the worst characters.

Do you think by increased vigilance in administration of the poor laws, any considerable reduction might be made in the amount of your rates?—I do not know that there could in the island; I think there is as much attention paid as there possibly can be.

Have you any suggestion to make to the Committee?—None.

Is there a school in the house of industry?—There is.

What number of children are taught in the school?—About 339 now.

Are they taught to read and write?—To read and write; and the girls to work.

What is the system, Doctor Bell's?—Doctor Bell's.

Are they also taught any weaving, or any work?—The girls learn to spin; they spin the articles they manufacture into sacks.

Are the boys taught any work?—Yes; they are taught the same with the girls.

Have you any chaplain?—The chaplain does duty in the chapel twice on the Sunday, and twice in the week, Wednesday and Friday.

What is the average profit upon the manufacture?—From 150*l.* to 200*l.* a year.

Are there many small houses in the town of Newport exonerated from the poor rate?—Not many, I think.

Has the house of industry upon the whole been found healthful?—Very.

Do you recollect what number of sick are in the house, exclusive of lunatics?—Between 50 and 60.

Has any observation been made respecting the number of lunatics in the island for a course of years past?—The medical gentleman who attends informed me, a few days before I left the island, that it had increased of late years in the island.

How long has this gentleman been there?—Upwards of twenty years.

What is the total amount of the expense of the establishment of the house of industry, exclusive of the surgeon's expenses?—About 340*l.*

What are the medical expenses?—300*l.* salary, and some allowance for vaccination, and attending women in difficult labour, which may amount to about 20*l.* per annum.

And what is the duty which the surgeon is expected to perform



for that salary.—To attend and visit all the sick in the house, and all the sick poor in the island.

Can any one man perform that duty?—I think not; but there are three partners who undertake the business.

Are the poor properly attended to; have they proper medical assistance?—Yes, I think they are very well attended; the surgeon visits the house every day, and the out-poor are visited whenever it is known a person is ill.

Would you give 300*l.* a year if there was but one medical man?—Yes, I think he would have the same salary.

Do you know the number of square acres in the island, or the number of square miles?—No I do not; it is about sixty miles in circumference.

---

*Martis, 18<sup>o</sup> die Martij, 1817.*

The Rt. Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

*John Turner, Esquire called in; and Examined.*

THE Committee understand you are high bailiff of Birmingham?—I am.

What communication do you wish to make to the Committee?—My communication arises out of the situation I have filled as a guardian to the poor for about ten years; in the course of that time I have had an opportunity of judging very accurately of the increase that has taken place as respects the maintenance of the poor. For about nine years preceding the present year, the expenses of the poor of Birmingham have been from twenty-four to twenty-nine thousand pounds per annum, except the year 1812, which was thirty-four thousand; the present year the expenses of the poor will amount to 50,000 *l.* to Easter next, exclusive of 5,500 *l.* that have been collected for the purposes of soup, clothing and coal, making a total of 55,000*l.*; the number of persons in and out of the house have of course increased in the same ratio.

What do they amount to?—The amount of the whole in the house in January 1816 was 585; in January 1817, 1,152; in February 1816, 451; in February 1817, 1,177. The out poor or casual cases in those same months, January 1816 was 2,800; January 1817, 5,000; February 1816, 2,700; February 1817, 5,300; and I am sorry to understand to-day, that in the present month the out cases are 5,400, making an increase of 100 from the last month.

How many do you suppose is the number of paupers entirely?—21,624.

Your whole population what?—90,000; the present weekly expenses are 1,300 *l.*; were we to have a rate per week, which usually produced 1,600*l.* in the year 1815, it would produce now but 1,000*l.* therefore we are incurring a debt of about 250*l.* per week, in addition to a debt already contracted in the course of the last nine months, of 12,000*l.* We should have applied to the Legislature or to Government in some way or other long before this, but we had



hoped that as the winter had subsided, and the spring opened upon us, the improvement of the country with the return of the foreign trade, would have relieved us from our present difficulties; but those difficulties now, instead of decreasing, are increasing, and were the Committee to see on a Friday, the day on which we relieve our poor, the number of persons collected together, it has more from their numbers the appearance of riot than persons coming to receive relief; from their numbers only I mean. The annual rental of the parish is 210,170*l.*; the annual rental of property paying poor rates 114,665*l.* leaving an annual rental of 95,505*l.* not rated. Exclusive of the expenses I have taken notice of for the maintenance of the poor, we are under expenses, such as highways, paving, lighting, and church levies, which amount to 13,000*l.*; I mention this previous to the remark I have to follow it up with, that we have 18,000 houses in Birmingham; the average of the expenses from last Easter to the present time is 10*s.* 4*d.* in the pound, but at the rate that we are now paying it is 17*s.* 4*d.* but then out of the 3,500 houses that contribute to the maintenance of the poor, there are now not more than 1,500, and a little more perhaps that contribute every rate, and out of that number a great many of our best payers are going out of the parish, shutting up their houses, so that it will eventually fall upon a very small portion in conclusion. I wish to press upon the minds of the Committee, I may say the awful situation we stand in, because if our poor have not bread, I need not state what must be the result of it, and what will be the situation we shall then be placed in.

Have you any expedient, by way of remedy, which you can suggest to the Committee, independent of that of rating the landlord instead of the occupier?—We have an intention to apply to His Majesty's ministers; we have an appointment for Thursday with His Majesty's ministers; and it is our wish to borrow money to relieve us *pro tempore*, till we can pay it again.

You are aware the poor laws generally are referred to this Committee, and their operation, and the Committee would listen very readily to any expedient you could suggest?—I was prepared more to speak from facts, than to give any suggestion.

Do you think any inconvenience would arise from this alteration of the law of settlement; that in future settlements should be derived only from birth and parentage, and a certain number of years residence, be it three or five?—I have no hesitation in saying, it would be a very desirable thing to the nation at large to avoid those litigations which are brought on the country at large, and our parish to a great extent. I should be very sorry to give any opinion without I had something like data to go on, because I should be sorry to mislead the Committee; I could have ascertained the number of our parishioners in other parishes, and seen where the balance laid, and then I could answer the question; but I apprehended a short period would operate against manufacturing towns, because a number of persons have been induced to come from agricultural districts into manufacturing towns, and if they could get half a living, half



a loaf is better than no bread at all; therefore I think it would be against manufacturing towns: I may be wrong.

Has it ever occurred to you at Birmingham to apply to the magistrates to rate the other parishes in the hundred in aid?—It has occurred, but we found the difficulties very great; unless we could declare ourselves paupers, we could get no relief.

If you were to increase your nominal rate on the individuals, the amount raised would be increased?—As you raise the amount of the rate, you diminish the amount of the collection.

You have not a sufficient ground to apply to the magistrates to rate other parishes in aid?—No.

What difficulties do you suppose would impede that application?—We have understood that so long as we have money left in our pockets to pay the poor, it will be unavailing to call in the aid of other parishes, and till we are all bankrupts we shall have no success.

And in consequence of that you have not made any application to the magistrates?—We have not.

Your opinion seems to be, that the making the residence short, would be attended with injury to towns?—Yes.

Does it not appear to you, that by making it a short period, when workmen that have been called by a demand from one town, ceased to have that demand, they would not endeavour to seek other places of settlement, and by the shortness of the period become there resident?—I apprehend, that for the last three years, arising from the goodness of trade in Birmingham, there were more came into Birmingham than went out.

But now that there is not that demand for labour, do not you conceive that by making the period short, if the individuals were, as they may be, tempted to go to other places where there is a demand, you would be more likely to get rid of them by the period being three rather than five years?—I think at a former period or a future period, three years may be better than five; but for the last three years, it would have operated against our town, I apprehend.

You are aware, as the law stands at present, an apprentice is settled after forty days residence?—Yes.

You have a good many apprentices in Birmingham?—We have had a great many.

What friendly societies have fallen off to that degree, that has compelled a great many of them to be broken up.

They were unable to keep paying?—Yes; and in other cases where they have paid the weekly supplies, those supplies have been reduced in proportion to their funds.

So as not to afford relief without parochial assistance?—Certainly not.

Is it your opinion, that if any mode could be adopted to renovate those societies, and make them adequate to their first purposes, it would be attended with benefit?—If they are carried to too great an extent, I think they are rather injurious, because they induce old persons to join them who are too old for the purposes of the so-



ciety ; but if they are kept subordinate to the supplies of labour and parochial relief, I think that hundreds would have been starving if they had not been supplied by the parish, to a considerable extent, had it not been for these societies.

With the present low price of wages, can those societies be maintained there now ?—No, they cannot ; the price of our labour does not vary in any thing like the proportion that it does in Lancashire, but it varies in the quantity of work.

Birmingham is situated in Hamelsford Hundred, which consists of a vast number of parishes ?—Yes.

Are they, generally speaking, opulent parishes ?—I am not acquainted with the extent to which the hundred goes.

There is the Atherstone division, the Birmingham division, the Sollyhull division, and the Tamworth division ?—They are mostly agricultural ; they are all so except Atherstone, which is chiefly in the hatting and coal trade, which are much distressed at this moment.

Do you apprehend the others are in a tolerable state of opulence ?—No, because the land is of an inferior quality, which has suffered more than land of a superior quality.

*John Welshman Wheatley, Esquire, again called in.*

Stated,—That on a former day he had been asked the number of houses in Birmingham above the annual value of ten guineas, which have been built within the last two years ; that the number was 176, and during the same period, 1,800 houses had been built under that value.

*Richard Spooner, Esquire, called in.*

Stated,—There was one circumstance which made it peculiarly necessary that wherever there were large towns, some alteration in the mode of assessing houses to the payment of the poor's rates should take place, which was the plan which had generally been adopted lately by the Quarter Sessions, of equalizing the county rate ; that the Committee were aware the county rate is ordered by Act of Parliament to be collected out of the poor rate, and that in equalizing the county rate, the magistrates in general have taken the property tax as the data upon which they have made their valuation ; that the town of Birmingham stands assessed for its whole rental, a rental which under the property tax, was returned at 42,000*l.* a year ; but the county rate made on that calculation is afterwards collected from those houses assessed to the poor rates, therefore the 3,000 houses paying poor rates pay their own county rate, and the county rate on the other 15,000 houses, and the late addition upon the alteration of the county rates of Warwickshire, has raised the county rates in Birmingham from 150*l.* to upwards of 1,000*l.* per rate ; that the value of the property in the town of Birmingham assessed to the poor rates, is estimated by a regular surveyor at 114,665*l.* and that the present rate of expenditure is 66,770*l.* a year, to be paid by a property of 114,665*l.*



Do you conceive, that if a residence for a certain number of years, say five, was to gain a settlement, a large number of persons working in the manufactories in towns would gain settlements?—I have no doubt they would; I perpetually see, acting as a magistrate, the frauds practised to gain a settlement; and if they were to reside three years in a place without getting relief, and that would give a settlement, but if they received relief during that time it would not; I conceive frauds would be practised; a man can throw himself out of work for a short time, and he may, with a view of losing his settlement gained before, apply for relief for a week; how then are the magistrates to decide?

Do you think any inconvenience would result from the change which has been before stated?—I doubt your getting rid of litigation; that arises from persons wishing to make their election where their settlements shall be, and that point of their receiving relief or not receiving relief, leaves the same possibility of fraud with the same temptation perhaps, and more ease to the pauper than under the present law.

Are you not of opinion, that the great source of litigation is from the hiring and service, and the hiring of tenements; and do not you conceive that would be taken away?—The more sources of settlement there are, the more there are for fraud; but there would be a door kept quite open enough for fraud.

Do you think the alteration proposed would be attended with any inconvenience?—I should rather say, I do not think it would be attended with any benefit as to litigation.

There is at this time probably more than fifty individuals who belong to Birmingham that are employed in the North of England; if this law takes place, is there not a great probability that Birmingham will be freed from those persons, and that they will gain settlements where their labour is now useful?—I should think very likely Birmingham would be relieved; there is no doubt it would make a great change; those persons, if they served three years, would no longer belong to us.

Do not you conceive the same thing would take place to a very great degree, that individuals would remove where they could find labour, and obtaining that labour would become settlers there, and no longer look to Birmingham for support?—No doubt, and an equal number would come to Birmingham, and get support there.

You presume Birmingham must be in a very different state, from what it is now, before they can gain labour?—Yes.

Then to towns where that opportunity does not exist, do not you think that this alteration would afford great relief?—No doubt it would.

You say that many of these settlements are defeated by the desire of paupers not to be settled where they reside; does not your experience show, that in general paupers wish to be settled where they do reside?—I stated, it was owing to their making election where they should be settled; I have seen it perpetually.



If they were so to make their election, would not that election be generally made where they reside?—I should say, that in the course of my experience I have seen as much that would tend to make me believe the contrary, as to believe the facts supposed in the question.

You are a magistrate for the county of Warwick?—For the county of Worcester.

Can you recollect what is the expense of the litigation of Birmingham?—I cannot give an answer to that question; I am not in possession of the amount.

*Mr. William Rankin*, called in; and Examined.

You reside at Bocking?—Yes.

The Committee have understood your parish is in a very bad state at present;—The burdens of the parish are very great at present.

The parish was once a manufacturing parish, was it not?—It was.

How many years has it ceased to be so?—It has not entirely ceased to be a manufacturing parish; but it has declined considerably for the last twenty years I think.

It is now nearly an agricultural parish?—It has become agricultural, with a burden of manufacturing poor upon it.

What is the amount you have raised the last year for the relief of the poor?—The amount which we shall raise within this year, as nearly as I can estimate, is about 5,000*l*.

What is the rental of the whole parish?—I do not know that I can tell the rental of the parish, because it struck me it would be better to frame our petition on the charge per acre, than upon the rental, because it is impossible to know the rental: and the rental on which persons are assessed is so various, it is not a general criterion; our charge per acre this year will be from one to two-and-twenty shillings.

Upon how many acres?—About 4,000 acres.

What is the value generally per acre?—I think the general value is from five and twenty to thirty; certainly not more.

What have you in houses?—Our houses produce about 800*l*. a year; about 200*l*. upon the quarter's rate.

You say the amount this year will be about 5,000*l*.—Yes.

In the year 1803, you raised 4,781*l*.—At that time corn was extremely dear, much beyond what it is now, which accounts for it.

Have you any difficulty in levying your rate?—We have a great deal of difficulty in raising it, for many people find it extremely inconvenient to pay; and the overseer told me last week that the difficulties were very great.

Are your demands increasing or diminishing?—Our demands are increasing.

How do you account for that at this season of the year?—They are not increasing at this moment, certainly; but they will return



to us in the winter. Now the persons who have been employed upon parochial work merely, will diffuse themselves in the country, and we shall get relief from the last quarter from the nature of agricultural employments.

If you had raised the assessment, do you apprehend you should have obtained more money?—I do not conceive we should; we are now under the valuation of the parson, which was formed during the dispute with the dean of Bocking and the parishioners; he appointed one surveyor, and the parishioners another.

Supposing you are raising 5s. in the pound at present, if you proposed to raise 6s. would the amount collected become larger, or would persons be unable to pay?—I do not think it would produce any effect either way.

You have at no time applied to the magistrates to rate other parishes in the hundred, in aid of you?—Undoubtedly not.

The parishes are numerous in the hundred; are they opulent?—Many of the parishes are opulent from their extent; and they are larger parishes than Bocking many of them.

Have you any expedient to suggest to the Committee, that they might recommend for your relief?—We have none whatever to recommend; if the land only is to maintain the poor in future, I conceive the districts ought to be enlarged. We have stated in our petition, that enlarging the district would not be attended with the injustice that is sometimes conceived; and that, from the circumstance of the money gained from the manufactory being taken from the place, and being by no means answerable to maintain the poor it has produced.

What is the rate of wages in your parish?—Eleven shillings in the week to labourers in husbandry; those who work by task-work do not work for so little; I suppose it is from twelve to fourteen shillings.

Are they as much in the neighbouring parishes?—I rather think we exceed our neighbours; part of my property lies in the adjoining parish, and there we do not give so much.

Is there much of the wages of labour spent at the alehouse?—I do not think it is a striking feature with us, no more than in other places; our poor are honest; as a body we have very few prosecutions for petty thieving, or any thing of that kind.

Your parish has not been in a flourishing state for the last twenty years?—The manufactory has been declining for the last twenty years; when corn was at such a great price the farmer could maintain his ground. Our relief was very considerable from the number of men we had serving in the militia of the county, from which we derived for several years to the amount of 700*l.* a year, and for a number of years 500*l.* We maintain the wives and children, and receive the county allowance.

Do you conceive, that if a residence for three years or five was to give a settlement, the number of the poor who are the remnants of the manufactory who now burden you, would go to other parishes and get a settlement there, and relieve you?—The relief



must be very slow; and the state of the poor is so low, that if they are to receive no relief during that time, I think it will have but very little effect upon us.

Do those remnants of manufacturers that still remain with you, without finding adequate employment, many of them go to other places and find employment in other manufactories of the same sort?—We have our poor scattered throughout all the manufacturing districts of England: we are paying for them in Norfolk, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, and Nottinghamshire.

Have you paid to any of those persons for a great length of time?—We have been paying to them since the manufactory has been standing still there, otherwise they supported themselves by work.

You will have to support them while they remain there?—I think we shall.

They do not many of them get settlements anywhere else?—The children frequently do.

In what way?—By being apprenticed, or by servitude.

Does it ever happen that any of the parents get settlements in other places, by renting a tenement of 10*l*.?—There are instances, but very rare.

In many parts of England you contribute to the maintenance of your own poor?—Yes.

Are they residing there under certificates, or do you contribute to prevent their being removed?—We conceive we can maintain them cheaper with the work they can find there, than by having them removed.

Are the labourers handy at agricultural labour?—Many of the manufacturers have become not the best, but very good labourers; but our greatest evil is with the young men who have been in the army; they were taken young into the army before their habits of labour were formed, and they have returned to us very little inclined to labour.

Are many poor brought back to you by orders of removal?—We find it a very heavy expense; our legal expense, and the expense of litigation on removals, is very heavy.

Have you occasion to appeal very frequently against orders of removal?—We very frequently have done so.

What has generally been the result of that appeal?—It has been various, but in general our appeals have been successful.

Then a pauper brought to you under an order of removal, you have had to carry back to the place from whence he is brought?—No, the pauper is taken to the sessions, and turned over there to the officer who has litigated with us.

Sometimes your paupers are removed to a great distance?—We this year carried a family to Norwich, a distance of seventy miles; and wherever they are situate they are liable to be brought to us.

Can you tell what the annual account of removal has been?—I cannot.

Upon the order of removal has the pauper in general, in point



of fact, been removed to you till the point is determined?—He is removed before any proceeding takes place

Then supposing the order of removal to be quashed on appeal, how do you get rid of him?—It is a part of the business I have never had to attend to; but I know in the case of a pauper brought to us from Bury St. Edmunds, he was taken to the sessions, and he was left in the hands of the officer who came to attend the appeal on the part of the other parish.

Suppose the family came with the man, what became of them?—I believe in that case, the parish to whom they belong are obliged to take them from us, but I am not certain of it.

You say the amount of the poor rates during the last year is about 5,000l.?—Yes.

What was the amount of the rates during the preceding year?—I think they were about 4,200l. I am not speaking correctly, but I think I am very near; the rate that year was 18s. nearly in the pound, this year it is 23s.

Can you tell whether you have advanced out of your rate in many instances, sums of money to labourers who are earning wages of 11s. but who have large families and find that sum not sufficient to maintain them?—When the price of corn came so high as it is now, we allowed every individual who had three children, sixpence a head in each of his family.

Without inquiry into what they earned?—By no means; we gave no relief without inquiring what they earned; there is a committee sits every Friday, and I have attended from ten o'clock in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon.

So that if a man has a larger family than his wages will maintain, the course of the parish is to make an allowance in money, according to the number of the family, and not to take the children into any house of industry?—Always to make an allowance to the father, and allow the children to be with the family.

Are your removals generally from distant places, or from places near?—More generally from places near, because we have more poor near us.

Do you recollect any instance of poor being removed from distant counties to you?—We this year carried a family to Norwich.

Not further?—Yes, we have, but I cannot speak to them in general; where we can ascertain the family belongs to us, we wish to indulge, and never urge them to go through the process of removing, but receive them without an order, to save expense.

Does it generally happen, that before the paupers are removed under the order of removal to you, the parish officers of the parish where they are, send you a communication that they are about to do so?—We often have that communication, and then we receive them in the manner I have stated, without putting them to any other expense than the expense of removal.

Sometimes you have paupers brought to you without any notice whatever?—Yes, and they are left at the door of the person who does the business.



And you are left to find out the ground of the order?—Yes, I believe always; the orders are brought when they deliver the pauper.

Is the rate upon the tythe charged upon the parson or on the individuals?—I would wish the Committee clearly to understand, that the full amount of the rate upon the tythe is constantly paid; in those instances when the dean agrees, the former pays his proportion of rate upon the tythe in addition to his assessment upon his house; when the dean does not agree, he pays it himself. I am charged I think full 50*l.* for my rate. The rate is charged upon the clergyman, but as the clergyman agrees with the parishioners, they apportion the rate among themselves and pay it.

That makes the rate higher, than if the clergyman paid it himself?—It makes it higher upon the land, but still it proceeds from the land.

The clergyman receives just as much less rent as is equal to his share of the poor rate?—He makes his contract with the parishioners, they paying the poor rate.

He takes so much less of the tythe?—Yes, he does.

With respect to rating the houses at Bocking, and the land, what is the proportion in which you rate them; the land is rated about twenty-two?—The houses and land are rated all under the valuation, but a great number of the houses from the poorness of the inhabitants cannot pay.

Is there any proportion of rating the houses at three quarters, and the land at so much?—No.

Is the business of your parish managed by the parishioners, or a committee?—The parish being so large, the principal inhabitants thought it would be better to manage it by a committee; one of the magistrates told us we might take advantage of the Act for incorporating hundreds, and do it by acting as guardians of the poor; which has been adopted several years, otherwise the principal owners of land must be perpetual officers, because if the distribution of the poor rates were to rest in the tradesmen in the town, there would be different interests.

You are not incorporated with any parish?—No; but we understand we are allowed to take advantage of that Act, and by that means it is managed now by guardians.

Is the parish of Braintree managed in a similar way?—It is not.

---

*Jovis, 20<sup>o</sup> die Martii, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

Mr. *Thomas Lacoast*, called in, and Examined.

You belong to the parish of Chertsey?—Yes.

Are you in office at present?—No.

Are the poor of your parish managed under any local Act, or under the general provisions of the law?—Under the general provision of the law.



How long have you been in the parish?—Forty years.

Within the last ten years have your rates much increased?—Yes.

Have you any account of them with you?—Yes; I should conceive the rates have increased with the population.

You think they have not increased in a greater proportion than your population?—Except the last year, I think they have not.

Have you a workhouse in your parish?—Yes.

How many is that calculated to contain?—I do not think it is calculated to contain more than eighty; we have 114 in it now.

Do you know any thing of the mode in which the first census was taken of the population in your parish?—No.

Have you any reason to believe it was not correctly taken?—No.

The population in the year 1801, it appears was 2,819; in the year 1811 it was 3,629; can you give any reason for such an increase in your population?—The reason I attribute the increase to, is, that we have given rather more wages than they have in other parishes, indeed considerably more than they have in the parishes to the south of us.

Has that been by any agreement of the vestry, or from what cause?—No; it has been the practice, without any reason.

What are the wages?—From twelve to fifteen shillings a week; but in the year 1802, when corn was dear, we gave as high as eighteen or nineteen shillings a week, and that brought a great many people into the parish; and another evil I would beg to state, is, that the magistrates have been rather more liberal to our poor than in the neighbouring parishes, and that has brought people into the parish; they have endeavoured, and have obtained settlements. We have had several instances where a man has refused a house at 8*l.* a year, and taken one at 10*l.* not so good, for the purpose of making himself a parishioner; that is the reason of the increase of our population, in my opinion.

Do any of the labourers who are earning the wages you have stated, procure relief in money from the overseers?—Yes.

On what ground do they obtain such relief?—We had a scale sent by the magistrates to the overseers and the committee, desiring that we would allow every man, woman, and child, that there were in family, to make up their wages equal to two quartern loaves per head per week, all at 3*s.* a week as nearly as possible.

You mentioned a committee, what committee do you allude to?—The committee of the parish.

A committee appointed by the vestry of the parish?—No, a committee of the parish,

A committee of the chief landholders?—No, of the parishioners who choose to go on a Friday evening.

What do that committee do?—One of the family who want relief attend on the Friday to receive alms, or to receive from the officers what they think proper to give them; and they have been obliged to give according to the order of the magistrates.

Do that committee assist or control the overseers?—They assist them.



But the overseers exercise their own judgment finally, do they?—Yes, they do; we thought that the poor people, many of them, were allowed too much money, and the committee conceived there was not a distinction made between the labourers who worked from day-light to dark, and the men who worked for twelve shillings a week only, for seven or eight hours a day, and we made an alteration according as we thought they deserved it; to some we gave more than the magistrates ordered, and some less; and we received an order the next morning, that the money should be made up immediately to those who received less.

Where do the magistrates live; in the parish, or out of it?—In the parish; the principal magistrate who does it, does it from the best of motives, I am sure.

You have the statement of the amount of your rates; will you read it?—The poor's rates, from Easter 1814 to Easter 1815 (the time we make up our accounts) was 3,310*l.*; from 1815 to 1816, 3,192*l.*; and from 1816 to the present time, 3,355*l.* 2*s.*

How are the poor maintained in your workhouse; are they maintained under the direction of the overseers, or are they farmed?—They are farmed under the inspection of the overseers and magistrates, and inhabitants.

At a certain sum per head?—No; at a certain sum for the whole number, in and out of the house.

How many are in the house?—About 114.

How many receive relief out of the house?—About 350 persons.

None of those are wholly maintained out of the house?—Yes, a few of them are.

Have you any notion how many?—No, I do not know; a great many widows.

What is the sort of allowance for each person who is wholly maintained out of the house?—Three shillings a head to a widow; and a single man has from five to six shillings a week.

How is that managed with the contractor?—He pays it; he pays whatever the overseers and magistrates order.

What does he undertake to maintain the whole of your poor, in and out of the house for?—2,425*l.*

How long has he contracted with you?—The lease is let from the 31st of May in every year.

It is a new contract every year?—Yes.

How long has the present contractor held the contract?—This is the third year.

Can you tell the Committee, under what head of settlement the generality of your poor are fixed with you?—Of late years it has been by rental principally; the inclosure has made a great many more inhabitants.

Have you in any instance appealed against a settlement by rental, such as you have stated, where a man has given 10*l.* for premises not worth the money?—Yes, we have appealed and had redress from it; but they do not actually give the 10*l.* for a thing not worth it, but they will take two houses and let them out in lodgings,



and pay the rates themselves, and play manœuvres of that kind to make themselves parishioners; in the middle of harvest or hay-time we never feel a want of men.

Is your parish wholly agricultural?—We have trades, but no manufactory; we have some iron-works, but they do not employ many men.

What is the amount of your rental?—The last time a valuation was taken, four years ago, it was 16,682*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*; that we valued ourselves.

Do you consider that is too high a valuation for the present time, or not?—No; we think that about a fair value.

Are houses and lands rated in the same proportion in your parish?—They are rated the same, after you get the rental.

Do you attempt to rate any stock in trade, or personal property of any sort?—No.

When was the scale by which the paupers are paid, first fixed?—I should think about four months since.

Was application made to the committee, in consequence of that?—Yes.

Had you an increased number of applicants, in consequence of that scale?—Yes, we think we had.

Can you state at all the effect that it had?—No; I know an instance myself where a man was at work and earned 1*s.* a week, and another man who lived next door to him was at work, and had 12*s.*; and after the scale was settled by the magistrates, the man did not go to work in the usual way, but worked easier, and the money was made up by the parish.

Then the effect that it had was making men less industrious?—We think so.

Has it actually had that effect?—Yes.

Are the rates easily collected now?—No, they are not; it is difficult to get them in.

You state that the contractor, in the first instance, was called on to pay the paupers by this scale?—Yes.

Did he complain of it?—Yes, he complained, and a vestry was called in consequence, and he stated, he could not go on with his contract.

Did he endeavour to employ the persons who made application to him for relief, instead of giving them money?—Yes, and did employ most of them in some way or other; they earned him very trifling.

Then he did not comply with the scale, and pay those men money; but when applications were made to him, he did his utmost to find them work, and pay their wages?—He is a farmer; and when those men came to him, he was obliged to pay them, and he thought they might as well do something; and the committee recommended him, rather to employ them to carry the dirt from one field to another and back again, than let them do nothing; and he said they earned him no more than seven or eight shillings a week.



So that the men who were earning seven or eight shillings a week, he was paying sixteen or seventeen shillings to?—If they had families.

Has there not been a committee appointed to carry those orders of the magistrates into execution?—It is an open committee of the whole parish; no select committee.

There was a wish expressed by the magistrates, that some of the most respectable of the inhabitants should form a committee?—Yes; and I went down with some of the larger renters of the parish, and made an alteration and reduced some and added to others; but the magistrates ordered they should have so much per head, whether they worked or not.

Is the scale you speak of used in other parishes besides yours?—I believe not.

Framed for your parish specially?—I believe the magistrates framed it for the whole hundred; but the other parishes refused to comply with it, and have not done it. Some of the magistrates that attend our bench did not agree with the scale, but were overruled by the majority; therefore when the overseer of Thorp applied to the magistrate there, he did not compel them to give that sum, but left it to the discretion of the overseer.

Are any of the poor out of work?—A great many; frequently twenty-five or thirty.

Then you have more able-bodied labourers than the work of the parish will employ?—A great many.

With the present funds of the farmers?—Or at any time; in the time of harvest, or getting the hay in, if I want men I can always get them.

Have you any land allotted to the poor in your parish?—Yes; allotted to the poor cottages.

For Turbary?—Yes.

But no land in cultivation allotted to the poor?—About five acres for the use of the poorhouse; but it was so far off from the workhouse, that the parish thought it better to let the land than to keep it.

Then there is no land, in fact?—No; that four or five acres of land they let to General Taylor at twelve guineas a year, and give the money away to the poor in coals.

Is there any work done in the poorhouse?—There is no manufactory; the poorhouse is much too small for it.

How long is it since your wages have fallen?—The wages have risen lately: fourteen or fifteen months ago, when corn was cheap, we gave twelve or thirteen shillings, now we give fifteen.

But you formerly gave eighteen?—That was in the year 1802, I think, when bread was so dear: the great evil we have found, is, that of so many people making themselves parishioners.

What does that arise from?—Because the poor of our parish are better off than in the neighbouring parishes.

By adopting the scale?—Yes; there are a great many of those people receive little allowances from their own parishes to prevent



their returning home, and therefore they are enabled to offer their labour at far less than our parishioners.

And you cannot remove them?—No; we have about 94 persons who do not belong to the parish.

Who receive pay from your parish?—I do not know that that is the case; but they work and live in the parish.

If the land was nearer your poorhouse, and instead of letting it, you kept it in your hands, would you be able to employ the poor to grow the food for the house?—Not on that small quantity of land, there are only five acres; though there are 120 poor people in the parish, there are 29 of them from 64 to 89 years of age; there are 51 children and 32 women; so that there are not more than eight strong able men fit for agricultural service now in the workhouse.

Your scale is not for all, only for your own parishioners?—Certainly.

Are your wages now higher than in neighbouring parishes?—They are; on the Guildford side of us they give from ten to twelve, in the parish of Woking adjoining us.

They are near the heath, are they not?—Yes.

Is there any alteration in the poor law, that you think would be for the advantage of the parish?—We think it would be a great advantage to our parish, if the men could not gain a settlement by a rental under twenty or thirty pounds a year, instead of ten pounds; we conceive it would keep the people from going from one parish to another, because the better a parish behaves to the poor the greater increase you have of them; there has been a great deal of pains taken to get into our parish: I heard a man say the other day, he wished he could get made a parishioner, he thought it would be as good as 20*l.* to him.

Do you think it would be advantageous to have a person, that the parish should be empowered to pay as a permanent overseer?—I am certain of it; in our own parish we see that every year, because the overseers before they know their business go out; and the man who has a business, and has his time taken up, cannot attend to the poor as he ought to do. When I was overseer, I am sorry to say, I did not pay the attention I ought, my business would not allow me to do it. I think it would be a great thing to our parish, and we have had some very intelligent gentlemen in our parish who advised it, a workhouse for the whole hundred, that would be very much to the advantage of every parish in the county; they would be enabled then to establish a manufactory, and give the poor employ; but it is a wretched thing in our place, that we have no employ for the poor children and women.

Yours is an agricultural parish?—Yes.

Are many settlements gained in your parish, by hiring and service?—Very few men servants; women gain settlements so.

Do not masters hire their servants in agriculture, by the year?—I do not think there are ten or five, who are so hired in a year.



How do they hire them?—By the week; even the single men, and they find their own lodgings.

Not lodging in the farm-houses?—No; not one in a hundred.

What is the motive for that?—Because they do it cheaper.

Is it to prevent the workmen getting settlements?—No; I do not think that is thought of.

Do they find it cheaper to let them find their own board and lodging?—Yes; I employ forty myself, and have only one man in the house.

Do you conceive the labourers are equally good in their moral character, while they are not under the control of a master and mistress, and lodged under their roof?—I do not know.

Have you ever made any observation upon that subject?—No.

In your early practice, the hiring for a long period and keeping them in the house, was the general practice in the parish?—Thirty years ago.

Can you judge what their morals and conduct were then, as compared with what they are now?—I hardly know how to speak on that.

Among the reasons with the farmers to discontinue that practice, has not the alteration in their manners, and their being more insubordinate and less contented with their food, operated?—I am sure of it; my own reason for doing it was, that I had five or six men in my house, and eight or ten day-labourers; and I continually found the men in the house carrying my bread and cheese to the other people.

And the same species of fare they were formerly contented with, they now make complaints of from house to house, and frequently to a magistrate?—Yes, they do; I remember such an instance at Woking, where the bench at Guildford committed a man, as his complaint was unfounded, for five or six months to Horsemonger Gaol; and he came afterwards and lived five or six years, and was a most excellent servant.

Do not you conceive the labourers, if they were provided for in the house of a farmer, and under the superintendence of a master and mistress, would be more capable of doing work, and at the same time live cheaper than if they provided for themselves?—I certainly think it would be better for the labourers; I am sure that a man who does not live well cannot do the work so well as a man who does. I have a man who is very honest and works very hard, and I pay him long wages for doing it, and he has been at my house not less than nineteen hours out of the twenty-four; and I found he complained that he was not able to do the work, and I gave him his dinner afterwards every day, and since that he had been able to do the work.

Do not you think that the discontinuance of the practice of hiring servants into the houses of farmers, has compelled the labouring poor to form earlier establishments than they would otherwise have formed?—I am quite sure of that.



For want of a home they married?—Yes.

Have you many removals either to or from your parish?—Not a great many.

Is not it quite clear these men could live much better at the same expense when boarded in the farmer's house, than they could by providing for themselves?—I should think they could.

What do you think ought to be, at the present price of things, the weekly wages for a man, his wife, and three children?—I think a man, with his wife and three children, cannot exist well under 15s. a week; but then the fault we find with this scale is, that I know two brothers who went out to work, one worked from day-light to dark, and earned 18s. a week; the other worked, and had 12s. a week; for that he did not do half the work the other did; and when Saturday night came they were as well off, one as the other, because they had the same number in family.

What is the price of bread in your parish?—The same as in London; 18d. all but a farthing for a quartern loaf.

How would you remedy the scale?—I would never enter into what a man earns; I think if a man has got a wife and five or six children, his master is at the committee or ought to be there, and knows what he earns, and ought to relieve him according to what he deserves; if a man is out of work, it is a different thing. But the men in our parish are impudent and will not work, and they tell us so.

You think a man ought to be paid according to his deserts?—Yes; I think a man who works hard, ought to be paid accordingly.

Have you any certificate men in your parish?—Only two or three.

Have they families?—They are very old people; I believe their families are out of the way.

Do you not think, that the reliance upon the poor rate induces poor persons to exert themselves less than they would otherwise do?—Yes, I have no doubt of it.

Have you observed of late years, that reliance to increase?—Yes.

But they could not find employment now, if they were so disposed?—No; there are more labourers than can find employment.

If ground were given gratuitously for cultivation, by the spade, would that assist the person who manages the poor of the parish in providing for those poor?—If that person was to continue in the parish for two or three years I think it would, but not for one year; in fact, the poor people had better be employed, if they do no good, than be idle.

*Mr. James Tillyer, called in; and Examined.*

WHERE do you reside?—At Hardmondsworth.

Do you hold any office there?—I am churchwarden and surveyor.

Your parish is principally agricultural?—Nearly the whole of it; we have about 203 families in our parish; 150 families in agricultural, 45 in trade, and eight not in trade.

Have you a workhouse?—Yes.

Do you know the number in the workhouse?—There are thirty-



five in the house; eighteen are able to work, and earn about 3*l.* a week.

What are they employed in?—Chiefly in farming; they do not earn so much in the winter time as that.

Are they let to farmers?—Yes; the workhouse is farmed at so much a year.

A man rents the house?—Yes; and he takes the earnings of the poor in the house.

Do they have any benefit from it?—Sometimes they have two-pence in the shilling; to our young men we do not allow any thing; there are some boys in the house who could get there living if they would try, and we do not allow them any thing.

Are they children of parents living in the village?—One of them is, the other is not.

Where would they live, if they did not live in the workhouse?—They might take lodgings, and get work if they were to try; I would not have given them an order to go into the house myself.

Have you any families relieved out of the house?—We have twenty-five out-pensioners paid in money, by the contractor.

What description of persons are they?—Chiefly widows and illegitimate children, and some old people, who behave themselves well; we do not wish to send more into the house than we can help.

An old person who has behaved well, you allow relief to, out of the house?—Yes; a man and his wife, and sister, we allow now, out of the house, 9*s.* a week for the man and wife, and his sister half-a-crown: the sister kept her place for thirty years: she lived with a master who did not keep on his business, and she never received any wages, I believe, for the thirty years.

Do any families receive parochial relief in money?—There are about four or five do now, who have large families; we give some of them with large families, meat for fourteen weeks in the winter, from December to March.

To enable them to maintain their families, in preference to giving them money?—Yes.

That has been the general practice of the parish?—Yes; the magistrates ordered them money, and I was at the bench and requested they would let us give them meat instead of money; I was satisfied it was better: they do not make the use of money which is intended.

What is the rate of wages?—Some of us give 15*s.* a week: we give 12*s.* in the winter.

Those are for agricultural labourers?—Yes.

And to a man who earns 15*s.* a week, with a wife and three children, what quantity of meat do you give him?—He was not to have any thing according to the regulation of the magistrates; he was supposed to be capable of maintaining himself and family.

To what sized family do you grant any meat?—We do not altogether comply with the requisition of the magistrates; we found we should do a great injury by allowing it indiscriminately in that way:



we give more to some than others, from four to twelve pounds of meat, according as the family requires it.

You exercised your own judgment, and administered such relief, in meat and other articles of food, as they stood in need of?—Yes; we thought it would be a check to a poor man trying to get on by working hard.

Have you had any instances where families have refused the meat?—Yes, one only.

Can you state that?—He had a large family, and he had had money before, and when the meat was put on, he made a complaint to the magistrates, and said the meat was not good, which was a great falsity, and they ordered him money instead of meat; the man could earn a guinea a week now, if he had a mind to try. He asked the overseer the other day, if he were to earn more money, if he was to have less from the parish. I have had men earn a guinea a week, and this man could earn the same; I do not know that he could not earn more; it would depend on the weather.

What was he earning when he refused to take the meat?—I think he had 15s. but I am not certain.

Was his wife or any of his family earning any thing?—Not then, I believe.

Does that man receive money now?—I believe he receives a little, about three or four shillings, not more; he has a large family of young children.

Does that make any of the other labourers dissatisfied?—Yes, I think it does. We can hardly get at the bottom of his situation. Last summer I saw him get off a coach dressed better than some people who occupy land in the parish, with white stockings and a good blue coat, with his mother, with a black velvet spencer, a shawl, and a bundle of things, and a basket of fish. I asked him how long he had kept holiday, and he told me he should tell me when we were before a magistrate: his mother was receiving alms at that time from the parish.

What is your population?—I think it is not twenty over or under one thousand; we have increased sixty or seventy since last census.

How do you account for that?—By the enclosure which took place eight or nine years back; we have more work in the parish.

That draws labourers into it?—Yes.

Have they got settlements in the parish?—Yes.

By what means?—By servitude most of them; my brother and myself hire about fourteen yearly servants every year, from that to sixteen or eighteen.

You hire them by the year?—We have three fairs, and we generally attend those fairs and hire them there.

Do you board them?—I find them lodging; they find their own victuals; I have it dressed for them, and find them garden-stuff and lodging and beer: the reason I find beer, is, that they should not go to a public house.

Where do you dress the victuals for them?—At our own houses.



We dress their victuals three days a week, garden-stuff every day and they have potatoes the other days, if they like to dress themselves.

They buy their meat?—Yes; the young men have more money I think than they want.

You allow them so much a week board wages?—Yes.

Do you find any advantage in hiring them by the year?—If we were not to hire them by the year we should have many of them leaving us; we should have no tie to keep them in the summer, they would draw money in the winter part of the year; at this time and the summer part of the year, they do not mind leaving with a pound or thirty shillings in hand.

Unless you had that tie upon them, they would desert you at that period when their services are most necessary?—That has frequently occurred; I have been many times served so.

Do not you find, that being yearly servants you have more control over them in other respects?—Certainly.

They may be punished by a magistrate if they behave ill?—Certainly.

Does it ever operate upon your mind to induce you, if it were not for those inconveniences, to avoid hiring them for a year, in order that you may avoid settling them in the parish?—We never think of that; we take our chance.

Does it occur to your mind, that the evil of being settled is liable to be counteracted by the facility with which they are likely to gain a settlement in another parish, in the same way?—I do not know.

Do not a large number of those who gain a settlement with you in your parish, by hiring and service, afterwards go to other services, and relieve your parish from that settlement, by going and gaining settlements elsewhere?—Yes, I think we rather gain in settlements with respect to hiring, because we want labourers; and if a young man behaves well, and likes his master, he stays with us. I have men who have been with me fifteen or sixteen years; and those are the best men we have who have been brought up in our own way.

What is your opinion, if a settlement could not be gained unless the service was for three years?—I think there are many wish to come into our parish, because we pay high wages and give them coals in the winter; they wish to get a settlement in our parish if they can, sooner than the adjoining parishes.

Do you think that masters would continue them in their service for three years?—Yes, but I think three years hiring would be too long; one year is often too long.

With a renewal of the hiring from year to year, for three years?—I think it would be better than it is.

Do you think the same number of people would gain a settlement in your parish?—I do not know, I think it is very likely they might; in that case, I think we should have rather more.

And that would frighten you from continuing them?—We should not think of that.



Would you in that case?—It is likely we might.

If yours is a favourite parish, it might occur to you that they would not be likely to gain a settlement any where else?—I do not think they would.

Would you part with a good servant a little before the expiration of three years, lest he should get a settlement?—No; I wish to encourage a good servant in the parish, to keep him with us.

Are you a proprietor, or only occupier?—Both.

In point of fact, a considerable number of your agricultural labourers gain a settlement, by hiring and service?—Yes, we gain more in that way than any other.

Do many gain a settlement by apprenticeship?—I do not think I ever knew five gain a settlement by apprenticeship: we have no manufactory but a calico ground.

What is the amount of your poor's rates?—About three shillings in the pound. I do not think we have averaged three shillings for the last seven years.

Do not you think the object of getting good farming servants, paramount to every other consideration?—I think it is the best thing we can do to get good servants. The best plan I find, is to pay the servants according to what they deserve, and not to give all men alike; we now give from nine shillings a week to seventeen.

And you have had several men at work for several years?—The man I give seventeen shillings to, I had a boy; and ten or twelve have work from six to fourteen years.

Is he settled in your parish?—Yes.

He was hired at one time by the year?—He gained a settlement by living with me.

Have you many day-labourers who have been long resident in your parish, who have not a settlement in it?—I think we have several; and in giving coals we give them the same as we give parishioners. I had a great deal of trouble to gain that point. When the inclosure took place, there were fifty acres allotted to the poor. When the coals were first given, I undertook to see them distributed, and it has fallen on me ever since, for nobody else will take the trouble of it; and I had a great deal of difficulty to get them to take in the whole poor. My argument was this, that by the Act of Parliament, the land was given for fuel for the poor in the parish; and after some trouble it was agreed to: we do not give them coals, but let them have them at nine-pence a bushel this year.

You give that liberal interpretation to the Act, to encourage persons to make exertions to support themselves by their labour, and not to fall on the parish, and to keep good labourers about you?—Yes; I believe we have at this time as many as three, four or five large families, who will not ask for relief for fear of being sent home to their parishes.

You have stated, that you had difficulty in getting the parish to consent to letting the persons not belonging to the parish have coals?—Yes, there was a difference of opinion.



But had it been a question of money, do you think you could have carried it with the parish?—I think I could; I should have tried it very hard.

You would have had more difficulty perhaps?—The Act empowers us to give money.

Not to poor out of the parish?—To poor in the parish.

Then you think it is desirable to keep those poor persons in the parish, because they are useful labourers?—Yes.

Of course were they necessitated to ask for relief, it would be an evil you would deplore, that you would be under the necessity of removing them?—Yes; but I had sooner relieve some of them myself, than they should leave us: I have relieved many this winter with soup.

In point of fact, has it happened that any people of that description having been necessitated to become chargeable, have been removed?—Yes; there is a family now that have been removed to Fulham.

Was that a family of good character?—No.

They applied for relief?—It has been a very expensive family to our parish.

Why were they not removed before?—We did not know that they belonged to any other parish; we do not wish to go to law if we can avoid it.

Has it happened to you, in point of fact, that you have been obliged to appeal against orders of removal?—Yes; and this is a family we sent home, and they have appealed against the order.

Is the order confirmed?—It was put off till next sessions.

Where were they removed to?—Fulham.

That is but a few miles?—About ten or twelve miles.

They have got the pauper now to support?—Yes.

What are the wages those respectable families receive?—Fifteen shillings; and one I give 16s. to.

In what respect are they less well off, than your own parishioners?—We give our own parishioners meat in the winter.

And the others only have coals?—Yes; I give them soup at my own expense.

Do you think the fear of removal operates to prevent their asking for relief, when if they were parishioners they would ask for it?—Certainly, they would ask for it if they were parishioners.

Therefore, under that check they exert themselves more than they would, if they had the means of calling upon the poor rate?—I think they do. I do not know that they have had any relief from their parishes at all, either of them.

Then it strikes you, they are a more industrious class of persons, than persons settled in your parish who have no such check?—No, I do not think that; we have some very good labourers in our parish, I think quite as good as those. I think, taking our parish altogether, they are a very respectable set of labourers. I do not think I have lost a bushel of corn for these three years.

What do you think has contributed to give them that character?



—Hardly any of us in the parish discharge a man if there is want of a few weeks work; we continue them; and if a man goes away for a fault we mark him, and do not employ him for a time.

The owners of land in your parish, in general, are farmers?—Yes; most of us have land of our own.

There are few resident gentlemen in the parish?—Only one.

Or tradesmen?—We have about 45 adults and children employed in trade, and they are very small trades.

What is the number of acres?—About 3,020.

What is your rental?—About 5,300*l.* a year. At the time of the inclosure we got the commissioners to value the parish; some of us having land of our own, we thought we should not agree upon the value, and we gave the commissioners, I think, sixpence in the pound to value the land, and it has since been at that valuation.

Have you any men out of work in the parish?—No; nor have not had during the winter: we had an order come from the trustees of the road to set on some men to work on the road at 6*s.* a week, and the parish to make it up 12*s.*; there was four or five immediately. I ordered the foreman of the road not to employ them, for the parish would not pay them; that I would employ them myself, or find others to employ them at 12*s.* a week.

You have said your single men earn more money than they have need for?—A farmer pays those who are in his house 7*s.* a week, and finds them garden stuff, and board and lodging and small beer.

Have you any benefit society in the parish?—Yes.

Have you a saving bank?—No; the way we do with a man in the benefit society is, that we do not look to his property there, we wish him to receive the money exclusive of what the parish would give him.

The benefit society is to protect a man when sick?—Yes.

There is a saving bank at Uxbridge?—I think there is.

Do any of your men contribute?—No.

What do they do with the surplus money you pay them?—It generally goes to a public house; that is one of the worst evils we have.

You are a good deal in communication with the men, and deal liberally with them, have you endeavoured to turn their attention to the saving banks?—Never; I could not quite make up my mind to think it was a good thing, and therefore would not mention it to them.

Can you state any objection to it?—I thought the men had better go into a benefit club, close to where they were; I never looked at any of the regulations.

A benefit society grants relief in case of sickness?—Yes.

But a man who being single, subscribes to a saving bank, and as you are paying him a surplusage of wages, would be able while single, to build up a little stock, that would, when he married, put him on a more comfortable footing than a man who saved nothing?—When they found they had a little sum of money, I think they



would take it out and spend it, and that would be the ruin of them; I have a man working with me, who saves his 10*l.* or 20*l.* a year, and has a wife and one child.

What does he do with it?—I asked him about three or four years ago, whether he was not saving some money; he hesitated to tell me. I told him if he was not, he was not doing as he ought to do; he acknowledged to me he was. I told him if he had 5*l.* and put it out to interest for fourteen years, it would be doubled; and I told him if he would give it me, I would give five per cent. for it, till he could make a better use of it; and I believe now he has got 120*l.* or 130*l.*; he generally deposits with me from 10*l.* to 20*l.* a year; and when he receives his harvest money. I pay him his interest upon it.

Do not you think the rest of your labourers had better do the same, than subscribe to the benefit society?—If they would do that, and feel confident in it, but they would not feel that confidence that is necessary; and I do not think it generally would be a good thing, because in the case of the woman who lived in a place for thirty years, she did not receive any wages, from her master's misfortune.

If her money had been left in the hands of a saving bank, that event would not have happened?—Certainly not; I believe her master found her clothes out of the money, but I do not know what.

Have you any other labourers that save any money, that you are aware of?—There are none who deposit money in my hands; I think some others are saving money.

Have you seen any manifestation of an inclination on the part of those labourers, to spend money in an extravagant degree?—I have one in the same situation with this man in point of wages; but he has a larger family, and cannot save money.

Do you observe any extravagant ideas about him who has saved money?—No.

Do you think the subscriptions to the benefit clubs have fallen off lately?—They have increased, because there is an increased population.

In spite of the times?—Yes, men when they are single, go into those clubs.

The poor rates are increasing?—We keep on about the same as we have done for twenty years.

What is the amount of them?—The poor rate with us collects from 250*l.* to 260*l.*; for the last seven years they have not run 3*s.* in the pound.

Are any of the labourers in your parish in the occupation of land?—No, they have good-sized gardens, some of them.

What is the rule by which you distribute the poor rates; have you any reference to wages?—No, we give the workhouse-man so much money to take all those in the workhouse; and the regular pensioners and the rest are relieved by the overseers.

The labourer to whom you give 9*s.* has the difference between



his rate of wages and the common rate, made up by the parish?—No, he is a single man; he lived with me as servant, then he went for a soldier, and came back, and said he could not find work; I do not think he had looked after it much. I told him he should not want work, and my brother told him he would give him a shilling a day; and as he went on better, I increased his wages; and last week I gave him 9s.; and I think, if he goes on mending, he will make a fair servant, not so good as some of them.

Does any material alteration in the poor laws strike you as necessary?—I think the thing that does our poor most harm, is the illiterate poor going to complain to the magistrates, and getting relief, when they ought not to have it; the other labourers in the parish, in the same situation, will not go and ask for it: the saucy fellows get relief, and make the others dissatisfied.

What remedy would you propose for that?—I think the overseer ought to relieve them at his discretion; I pledged myself to the magistrates, that no person in our parish should want work or relief during the winter, nor did they.

You think it should be left to the discretion of the overseers?—I do not think it should be left altogether to the discretion of the overseers; because I think some overseers would not relieve where the case required it; I think if one man could hold the office of overseer in our parish, it would be much better.

A permanent overseer?—Yes; I recollect about five or six years ago, or rather more, we had a baker as an overseer, and he kept on paying the poor the same in the spring as he did in the winter; I was surprised at it; he was paying nearly 5*l.* a week.

You attributed that to his ignorance?—I do not think he was an ignorant man; perhaps he had a motive in doing it.

Were the poor much indebted to him?—Yes, I have understood so.

Then you would have such permanent overseer to be under the controul of some other persons in the parish?—Yes, I think so; and the magistrates likewise. Frequently it occurs that an overseer will not act liberal, as he ought to do, to the respectable poor.

If the permanent overseer was a person not paying himself much to the poor rates, would he not in many cases be profuse?—It should be a particular man fixed on as a permanent overseer.

Would you expect that man to have any property in the parish?—I think it would be as well if he had, and better too.

It must be a man who had no other business?—That is not necessary; it is not much trouble to serve the office in our parish, except collecting the rates, that is the chief trouble. We had one family this winter ordered 1*l.*s. a week by the magistrates; there was a man, his wife, and one child: the overseer paid one week, and said he would not pay it any longer; he did not, and now they live without any thing; he said he would give them an order to go into the workhouse, and he told me yesterday they had not any thing from the parish.

They would not come into the workhouse?—No; and the woman and child would not work for me at 6s. a week.



How do they support themselves?—The woman is a strong hearty woman, and can work very well; I wanted them to come into the house, and let the poor man educate the poor in the house gratuitously.

Therefore by ordering him into the house, you protected the parish against his being chargeable?—Yes.

Have the cottages in your parish any gardens?—Most of them; a few have not.

Gardens large enough to grow a supply of potatoes for a year?—No, I do not think they are; they have potatoes at a low price.

What effect would it have, if a part of the land allotted to the poor was to be let out to large families, who have not gardens to their cottages, large enough to maintain their families?—I think it would do them more harm than good, because the land is at the extremity of the parish; if the men were to work for me, while walking backwards and forwards, they would get more money than they would by the occupation; the land is let by public auction, according to the Act of Parliament.

Your objection arises from the local situation of the land?—Yes.

Do you think a cottager having a little land of his own, would induce him to habits of industry?—I do not think it would; I never saw a case of his doing any good with us; it is necessary for a man to have a small quantity of land to grow vegetables.

Do you keep cows for any of your labourers?—No.

Do not you think that the profits of a cow would very much help them to support their families?—It would always be a trouble.

You have stated, you have a very good description of labourers in your parish?—Yes.

From your knowledge of the country, are not the labourers in the surrounding parishes very inferior in point of conduct to those of your own?—I do not consider them so good.

You do not consider them as honest?—Not many of them.

Nor as hard-working?—No; many small farmers discharge their labourers; we do not.

Have you any observation to make to the Committee, respecting the poor laws?—I think if the facility of applying to magistrates were reduced, it would be a good thing. Some years back the magistrates would not suffer a woman to attend the bench; but when I was overseer, I found the women came, and I could not tell the wages of the men, but they made a good story and got relief. I think it would be desirable, instead of giving the poor families money, to give them food, and work, and clothing if they wanted it.

There is nothing to prevent your doing that?—If we had known that, several families would not have come to us for relief at all.

As you found no difficulty in carving out work for those who applied for relief, do not you believe, that other overseers doing their duty, would be able to carve out work for those applying?—Not always; I think many of them might. In the adjoining parish to us they have had labourers out of work, and they have got a



a shilling a day, and the parish make up the other shilling; there have been some employed on the turn-pike road at a shilling a day, and the parish paid the other shilling, when they might have set those men to work opening a watercourse between the two parishes, which blocked us up this year.

Speaking of agricultural parishes, do you not think that some work might easily be found in improving the agriculture of the parish?—I think that would depend on the occupiers, whether they had capital; there are always improvements to be made in a parish.

Could not human labour be so applied to the land, as to make a proper return for the labour expended?—In a great many instances it might.

In the major part of the instances?—Any where in my neighbourhood; it is the worst thing that is done to give money, and not make them earn it. I really believe that if it goes on in that way, they will be much more idle than they are; they know they are to have their money whether they work or not; they cannot be discharged.

Might not any farmer be tempted, by the parish contributing to pay a part for the labour, to cultivate his farm in a higher degree than it is now?—I think it would be a very bad plan.

Assuming that this would tend to the farmer's abusing the parish funds, if there was a parish farm to which such labour could be applied, might not that be useful?—I think the difficulty would be in the management of the parish farm, who should have the management of it.

In one of your former answers you have stated, that if the practice of giving money to the poor goes on, in a very short time it will very much increase pauperism throughout the kingdom; do you know, or does it occur to you, by what mode relief could be given to the paupers, otherwise than in money?—With respect to the neighbourhood where I live, it would be much better to give them meat and bread, than money and clothes, if necessary. I had a case this year, about six weeks back; where a man was earning 13s. a week, and his boy earned 5s. and he had a stone of meat given him by the parish. He came to the vestry, and said his wife was about to lie in; and they ordered him 10s. not to be received at once, but the overseer to give it him at twice. The overseer being out, and the next day not going to give the man the 5s. he came to my house in the evening in liquor, and behaved in a very abusive manner, and he went to the overseer's house in the same way. I went to the overseer, and found he had been there; I then went to his house, to see whether the wife was in distress; he said she was ready to starve. I went there about nine o'clock, and asked the child whether they had had any victuals and she said they had. I asked, if they had any bread in the house; and she said there was a bit of loaf. She was gone a long time to fetch it; and when she came back, she said, we have a loaf and a bit, and my mother had white bread for breakfast



this morning. I took him to the bench for his abuse; and when I told him I would take him there, he said, "Oh, I will take *you* to the bench." When I took him there, I made my complaint; he immediately pulled a beef-bone out of his pocket, and asked if that was fit meat to give a poor man to eat. It was a bone out of the meat he had had; he was not reprimanded by the bench for getting in liquor and his abuse.

The farmers at this time being in great distress, do not work their farms so well as they would if they had more capital?—No; more capital to many would be useful.

Then might not they be tempted to do so, if the parish contributed a something towards the wages by which it might be done?—I think it would be a very bad precedent; because the farmer who could pay his labourers would apply for aid, in all probability, the same as he that could not.

Would it not be better than not employing the people at all?—I think the remedy would be worse than the disease.

Do you think that the farmers had better pay their labourers full wages, and all those persons who could not find employment by the farmers should be employed by the parish in works, unconnected with any individual?—I think that is the best way, not to let any labourers that are paid by the parish work for other people; but then something would be wanted, for the man that would not work should be punished, because one perhaps affects three or four, or all the rest of them.

Is it your opinion, that such persons as work for the parish, should be paid in food and clothing, and not in money?—Yes, it would be the best way, I think.

How often do the overseers pass their accounts?—Only once a year.

Suppose the overseers were to pass their accounts half-yearly or quarterly, would there be any advantage?—It would be much better; and I think no small shopkeeper, or baker, or publican, should be overseer.

Is there any body that has a power of checking the overseer in the parish, in the course of the year?—The principal proprietors always have, or any occupier in the parish.

They have no lawful right to do it?—No, not that I know of.

You think it would be advantageous to pass the accounts quarterly?—I think it would be better.

Do not you think it would be advantageous for two or three of the great payers to audit those accounts quarterly?—Much better.

Two of the great payers would have no objection to audit those accounts, without being paid?—I think they ought not to wish to be paid.

Those auditors might be appointed by the magistrates, if the law were so, might they not?—Yes.

Is there any settled mode in which the overseer of the parish keeps his accounts?—No, he keeps them in his own way; in our parish it is not every person who serves the office of overseer that is an accountant.



If then you had a standing overseer, who was paid, and was conversant in accounts, and an intelligent man, do you think he could improve upon the present plan?—I think he might.

If the overseer is annually appointed in your parish, he must come to it without the knowledge of many things an overseer ought to know to manage the parish well?—It is frequently the case, and frequently the gentlemen do not like to serve the office of overseer.

A man therefore gets rid of it at as little trouble and expense as he can?—Yes; I think if the overseers were chosen in a different way, it would be better; if one new one were to serve with an old one, it would be better.

In passing the accounts quarterly, might it not be advantageous to give the auditors not only a power of insisting on the vouchers, but also a power to control the expenditure itself?—I think it would be much the best way.

If a man has made an improvident contract, or has gone into expense that ought to be stopped, they would have a power of stopping it?—I never knew any expense incurred in that sort of way by our overseer, only in one instance, where a baker served the office of overseer.

Then would it not be desirable to give to the auditors a power, not only of calling for vouchers, but of laying down rules for the future; objecting to items which they think objectionable from error of judgment, and directing in future what shall be done?—It would much assist the overseer, if we were not accustomed to it.

If they were to be checked by some appeal to two magistrates in a special sessions?—That should be.

If there was such a check, would it set right or correct any error in the overseers accounts, from want of judgment or otherwise?—Yes; and if the overseer did not give relief to persons who deserved it, I think they ought to have it upon applying to certain persons in the parish, before they went to a magistrate.

You think it would correct the expenditure in the parish, to audit the accounts quarterly, and to have the judgment of the auditors corrected on appeal to two justices at petty sessions, if there was any thing wrong?—Yes.

And the two justices to be at liberty to correct any improper head of expense, or to interfere in the future management of the overseer?—Yes.

By that means they would pass their accounts quarterly, instead of yearly?—Yes.

Do you think it would be advantageous if, as far as possible, a certain column of expenditure should be arranged for the different parishes in the kingdom, or that any particular overseer should keep his accounts in a particular form applicable to his parish; that every parish should keep its accounts in such manner as directed by the overseer?—Yes.

Do you farm your poor, and do you find any advantage in it?—Yes, I think we do.



You find that advantage, comparing it with the present mode in which your parish would otherwise be conducted?—Yes.

You choose your overseers annually?—Yes.

And you find it is more advantageous to contract for the poor, than to go on with the old system?—Yes; and we never send any to the workhouse we can help.

Under those other regulations, supposing the overseer to be appointed, who should be paid, and who should transact the business for years, and that he was to pass his accounts quarterly, do you not think it would be better than farming the poor?—No, I do not think it would. I do not think our poor would be managed so well as they are now, and with so little expense to the parish.

Do you not think the advantages you have derived from farming the poor, arise from the knowledge which the man who does it has of the paupers?—Yes, certainly; if a man knows how to manage poor, he will do it much cheaper than other persons can. I do not think any man would manage a workhouse well till he gets used to it.

Is there any person who has the superintendence of the workhouse, that can hold a hand over the master of the workhouse?—All the parish officers; we have not had a complaint against the master for three years.

---

*Lunæ, 14<sup>o</sup> die Aprilis, 1817.*

JOHN CHRISTIAN CURWEN, Esq. in the Chair.

*Mr. Edward Langley*, Secretary of the Dorking Provident Institution, called in; and Examined.

HAVE the goodness to state what is the extent of your parish?—Between five and six thousand acres.

What is the supposed rental?—Ten thousand pounds per annum.

And the population?—Three thousand, two hundred and fifty-nine.

What is the general nature of the employment of the labouring classes?—Generally agricultural.

What is the amount of the poor rates?—Eight shillings in the pound upon the rack rent.

What is the average of wages?—It varies from 9s. to 15s. per week.

Can those parties who receive 15s. per week maintain a family of five children?—I should think they could.

Does it often happen that persons having such wages become chargeable to the poor rates?—I think they do.

In instances where they do, does it arise from any improvidence or want of conduct in the parties?—I think it is likely it may.

Were the poor rates in the parish of Dorking extremely burdensome?—They were.

Did they lead to any and what measures to reduce them?—A minute investigation took place, under the auspices of the late



Earl of Rothes and other gentlemen, into the actual condition of the resident poor throughout the parish; and such was found to be the distress and extent of pauperism, and the natural anxiety it produced for the consequences from the approach of winter, that a serious determination was formed on the 4th of June, 1816, to make an effort, differing from the usual mode of administering relief parochially, for alleviating the great and widely extending distress of these unhappy people.

In what manner was this carried into effect?—A society was formed, having the title of “The Dorking Provident Institution,” for the purpose of aiding the labouring classes to supply themselves with bread, meat, and fuel, and all other necessities, during the winter season, under the following regulations: “That the more affluent inhabitants do pay at the rate of one penny per week for themselves and each resident member of the family, not exceeding in amount six-pence per week: That donations to a greater extent than the above resolution requires, will at all times be thankfully received from those who are inclined to aid the benevolent purposes of this institution: That every person, for himself and his wife, do pay one penny per week; if he has one child, two-pence; if two or more, three-pence; which is not to be exceeded; this resolution will extend to a widow, widower, or any other head of a family: That boxes, with locks and keys, for the purpose of receiving the weekly subscriptions of the labouring classes, be placed in the several shops to which they generally resort: That the shopkeepers be requested to receive subscriptions as they are made; and no one will be entitled to benefit from this institution if he should have neglected to pay his subscription with regularity, it being intended that this institution should operate as a premium to industry, and not as an encouragement to idleness or improvidence.”

What effect has it produced?—To afford complete satisfaction to the labouring classes.

What number of subscribers have you had to this?—Two hundred and sixty-three in the year 1816.

How many in the present year?—We have three hundred and five.

Has there been a punctual co-operation of the labouring classes?—I can say upon that head, that their payments were perfectly regular, and on their part faithfully executed.

What appear to be the feelings of the people in the parish in general with respect to the institution?—Generally they are pleased with it.

What effect do you apprehend it has had upon the moral conduct of the people?—I think it has been extremely beneficial.

Do you think the parties, who have been members of it, have been less disposed to a wasteful spending of their money?—I think they have.

Do the people seem to feel that their interest is deeply concerned in this plan?—Completely so.



What was the amount of the sum received from the labouring classes in the first year?—Eighty-five pounds in thirty-nine weeks.

How much in the present year?—The prospect in the present year is 250*l*.

Does it appear to you likely, that you can carry this principle to subscription on the part of the people to other purposes beyond that of an immediate provision for their present wants?—Of that I have no doubt.

Do you apprehend people will be likely to subscribe something towards those accidents of ill health or inability to work, to which they are subject?—I have no doubt of it.

How many families were prevented being chargeable to the parish by this institution?—Eighty families.

*John Smith*, called in, and Examined.

WHAT are you?—One of the beadles of Saint Giles's parish.

Is it the duty of the beadle to attend the administration of relief of the poor?—It is; we attend all boards.

By whom is the relief given?—By the overseers and one of the churchwardens, four days in the week; I attend two days in the week, and one day as beadle of the day.

What description of persons receive relief?—I firmly believe, speaking within compass, nineteen out of twenty cases are Irish, the other twentieth including English, Welsh and Scotch.

By whom are the Irish relieved?—They are relieved by the officers of the parish.

Are there any orders made by magistrates for their relief?—It frequently happens that a person will come into the parish only for one or two nights, and then apply for relief; a beadle is sent immediately to inquire, whether they have been in the parish the length of time they state, and it frequently happens that they have not slept in the parish at all; but they will go to a magistrate sometimes, and state that they have been in the parish, and the magistrate upon that will make an order; but we appear upon those orders, and the magistrate immediately dismisses the summons when he finds they have not been in the parish.

What is the amount of relief?—When I first came into the office, the 19th of February last year, the sum then amounted to 29*l*. each board-day, there being four in a week, and we thought it a very heavy payment at five-and-thirty; the second week after I was in my situation it amounted to 35*l*. which was on a Saturday; within the seven months it has got up from five-and-thirty to seventy, and as much as seventy-six; seventy upon the average, four board days in the week.

Describe the kind of persons who receive this?—I am sorry to say, in my own opinion a number of them are persons who do not deserve relief; but from the abject state in which they appear, the gentlemen feel inclined to allow them something, though they are not entitled as claimants on the parish by means of having lodgings of four shillings a week, but merely as casual poor.



Has it fallen under your observation to see what use those people make of the sums they receive?—I am extremely sorry to say, that it is more applied to drinking than any thing else; they have no economy; I have known instances where I have been sent out on an inquiry, and found the objects who had been relieved at the board, lying in the kennel completely intoxicated, and I have taken them down to the watch-house till they have been sober.

Would it be a great relief to the parish of Saint Giles, if there was a power of sending the Irish to their own country?—There is not the least doubt of that; from my own observation, I do not think there is any parish in this kingdom so much imposed upon.

What creates the facility with which these people seem to be relieved?—I am sorry to say there are a number of cheap lodging houses that let out lodgings at two-pence, three-pence, and four-pence a night. When standing on duty at St. Giles's Pound, I have had them come up to me and say, "Master, which is the way to St. Giles's?" I have replied, "What do you want? why, good man, you are in the parish now." They did not know the street; some called it Buckram-street instead of Buckridge-street, and Beveridge-street instead of Bainbridge-street, and so on: they do not know the names of them. Then they have gone into those places, and gone to one of those lodging houses, where they have been accommodated if they had money, the people taking very good care not to do it if they had not. Then the next day they will send them down to the board. If they have no more money, "Go down to the workhouse, and you will get relieved." It is possible the beadle is sent to inquire into the circumstances: if he goes to the landlord, the landlord will coincide with the man if he says he has been in the parish a fortnight or a month, though he has not been there a night; and all the information we get is from other people.

Great frauds are practised in consequence of those people vouching for the residence of their lodgers, in order to their obtaining the parish money?—Yes; when they have run a week's rent, and are not able to pay their lodgings, they are sent down to the board; if eighteen-pence or two shillings is given, the landlord is ready to take it: the poor people are not the better for it, except by being allowed to stay a week longer. The money is all mortgaged before they come for it.

Do they prefer the parish of St. Giles for this purpose?—It has come before the board that they have travelled, some from Liverpool, some from Bristol and different parts, up to London. They would not stay in the other parishes in the outskirts, but would come into St. Giles's, hearing that was a liberal parish.

Great frauds are practised by the casual relief?—Speaking generally, it is done by a great number of them. The wife will come on the board day; she will get her money regularly at the board, and the husband will come afterwards and get relieved too. They have regular days. We pay alphabetically, and they ought to come on certain days; but they think it worth while to come on



another day and try, and perhaps they get a shilling. They ought not to interfere with other boards, but they practise every sort of deception.

You are of opinion that there are great frauds practised on the part of the Irish?—There are.

How much is paid to the casual poor?—Seventy pounds per day on four days of the week. Then we have what we call respectable people, who have gained a settlement by paying so much a week, and we have some decayed housekeepers; these the gentlemen do not wish to intermix with the other sort of people. We make it a monthly payment, so much per month; that amounts from 250*l.* to 300*l.* a month.

The money given is above 14,000*l.* a year?—It is more than that.

Do you conceive it would be a great relief if the Irish could be sent to their own country?—It certainly would. They wander into the parish, and gain no settlement there, but stay as long as they can get a shilling. Some of them will hardly move about to look after work. I am sorry to say, that among the casual poor there are some who practise these deceptions, who get double and treble what other respectable people do. If we go to inquire, we may find a bed of straw, and their clothes all rags; all appearance of distress. Saturday night comes, and the husband brings home a guinea, and the wife perhaps will get five or six shillings a week more, but it is all gone on the Sunday in making merry; and then by Monday morning they have nothing left, and they live upon a potatoe and a herring or any thing during the week, and the children are deserted.

If there was a power of removing these people, on their becoming chargeable, would not that get rid of a great weight upon the parish?—I have no doubt of it; but I have found that a woman has been drawing relief from our parish who has been living at Bow, and her husband has been receiving money for working at a soap manufactory at Bow at a guinea a week. Many cases of that kind have occurred. I always make my report to the gentlemen; and we have found some of them using forged passes, and begging upon them. One was sent to prison for 14 days last Saturday for using a forged pass.

A large portion of those people can gain a livelihood if they were disposed, in your opinion?—They might live very comfortably, and we should not have the parish burthened in the manner it is.

Are not inquiries always made before relief is given, where they have worked?—Yes; but they have just strolled from Bristol or Liverpool or other parts, a great many will come out of the City into St. Giles's; the poor black sailors and others are coming to us perpetually.

State the mode in which the application is made to the board for relief?—There are a great number of old respectable people who have cards given to them to come in at the front door; those persons come in at two o'clock; the moment the board begins sitting, then after we have finished relieving those



with cards, the women with their children are let in first who are standing under the shed, they are let in before the men, that there may be no confusion; about half-past three the men are let in; the regular hour was three, but the number increasing so much, we could not let them all in; the men are kept separate from the women; and after the women have all been relieved, they come up one flight of stairs, and go down another, and out through the front door; then the men are relieved last; those are the only persons who stand any length of time; the board now is over about half-past seven in the evening; the sum distributed being also reduced to about 61*l.* or 62*l.*; during the winter the time has been as late as half past eight and nine o'clock.

Do you happen to know whether any accidents have occurred from the crowds which have applied for relief?—It has frequently happened that they have been fighting among themselves, and some of them have come in with their clothes very much torn, and some of them have been struck in the face and blood has flowed from them through the ill usage of others, but that has originated entirely with the casual poor in Saint Giles's. To show the habit of the poor in obtaining relief, I would state the case of Hannah Ragen: I happened to be standing promiscuously, and she had been to the parish for relief, she came up to another woman, not seeing me, and made use of a very bad word, and said she had got that from her parish, showing her eighteen pence, and then added, but never mind, we will melt some of it in gin; she went into a gin shop immediately; I took the liberty of more minutely looking after her, and found her a woman of the most abandoned description; she has got a room which she rents, and she lets out that room to a parcel of poor unfortunate young creatures from thirteen to fourteen years of age; as soon as they bring in a man or two she retires from the place, and leaves them together. I went to her lodgings a few days ago, to take two women out of her lodgings, for robbing a soldier of his military great coat; the house in which she lodged is kept by a man of the name of Danser, who is clerk to Bedford Chapel, and who keeps two other houses, in one of which he lives; he lets the house out by rooms, and goes himself to collect the rents.

Is your parish now visited by divisions as it was some time ago?—I am not aware that it is at the present moment; it was some time ago, by the parish officers; when we go to inquire after the husband of a woman stated to be in Ireland, we have frequently spoken to the man himself, and received an answer from himself that he was in Ireland; we are very much deceived by them; it is a great chance that he is in the room; there are frequently forty in a cellar.

Do you find a great many really deficient of employ?—I do not believe that there are a great proportion; there are a great number of them who are well known to be bad characters, and while they can get any thing to drink, they have got an unfortunate girl perhaps that furnishes them with money, and then they will not work;



there are a great many hard-working men, but generally speaking those that work have not economy to use what they get, and it is gone directly; if we go into the room to inquire after any of them they begin talking Irish; I have found so much imposition in consequence of that, that I immediately take them to the board, and the board will not relieve them where they see a disposition of that sort.

Have you ever been obstructed?—I have been, but not lately; it has been from men who have been very much intoxicated, who have not known what they were about, but I never received any injury there, though the whole of that place belongs to my division, and I am round there all hours of the night.

Are there respectable houses which furnish lodgings in that parish?—There is a difference; there is such a person as Mrs. Kelly, who will immediately inform me if they have told a falsehood at the board; and there is another of the name of Jones, who keeps a lodging house, on whom we can depend.

It appears necessary to accommodate that description of population, that there should be houses of that description?—If there was not so much accommodation, our parish would not be so much burthened; there is hardly one of these Irish people who has got any thing comfortable for a person to lie down upon; some have a bed of rags, and some a bed of straw; cases have occurred of their coming from Saffron-hill and Whitechapel, and all parts of London, to impose upon our parish; it is a common phrase among them, "that it is no harm trying, they will be sure to give you something."

Did you make inquiry, in consequence of the subscriptions raised the last winter, into the character and circumstances of those who applied?—I did, and I found very few whom I could recommend; there was one house, I recollect, from which there were numerous applications, and there was only one whom I considered as deserving of relief.

---

*Mercurii, 16<sup>o</sup> die Aprilis, 1817.*

JOHN CHRISTIAN CURWEN, Esq. in the Chair.

Mr. John Vaizey, called in; and Examined.

WHERE do you reside?—In the parish of Halstead, in the county of Essex.

Will you be so good as to describe the situation of your parish; what is the extent of it?—By the census that was taken in 1811, it contained 3,279 persons.

What is the extent of the parish?—The number of acres is 4,698.

What is the rent do you suppose of the parish?—The average assessment I believe is as near as may be 14s. 6d. an acre; the rental of houses and lands is 4,207l.

What was the amount of the poor rates at any particular period?



—I have the amount of the poor rates in my pocket for thirty years, and can state any period the Committee wish to have; for ten years, from 1786 to 1795 inclusive, the poor rates were 9s. 11½d. per pound, which is about 7s. 6d. an acre upon the land; and for the next ten years, from 1796 to 1805 inclusive, they were 18s. 6d. in the pound, about 14s. an acre on the land; from 1806 to 1816 inclusive, they were 18s. 4d. about 13s. 10d. per acre.

Then they are rather less than they were?—Yes; that needs a little explanation; the parish of Halstead had, twenty-five years ago, a flourishing woollen manufactory of says and baize; that manufactory about the year 1800 almost entirely ceased; and in the year that followed the harvest of 1800, corn was very dear, we had a large population out of employment; we paid in that year four successive quarters 37s in the pound to the poor; in the following year, 1801, we paid 28s.; and those two years account for the average being swelled.

Have you had any subscriptions in aid for the last year?—In the quarter ending Lady-day 1817, we paid a rate of 7s. 6d. in the pound; it collected 1,578*l.*; 1,323*l.* of it came from the land, and 255*l.* from the houses. In the course of the winter half year, including that quarter and the quarter preceding, 400*l.* was distributed from permanent public charities belonging to the place, and 266*l.* from other benevolent sources of collection; it is necessary to state also on that point, that a considerable sum was expended by the surveyors of the highways to men that would otherwise have been totally destitute of employment on the public roads, for the sake of labour; we had from thirty to forty men employed a considerable part of the time, from the ceasing of the harvest till Lady-day.

Has the extreme pressure of the poor rates operated to reduce the value of the land in and about Halstead?—In that parish it is unquestionably of less value from this cause.

Does it appear to you, that without some extraneous assistance, your parish will be unequal to the support of the poor?—It does appear to me, that a very little increase would render the land productive of no rent at all.

In that case probably a considerable part would be thrown out of cultivation?—Yes, it must of course be abandoned in that case.

Has it occurred to you to suggest any remedies to better the condition of the poor?—If I might be allowed to suggest, I should think that an extension of the bearing of the expense would be beneficial; and not only beneficial, but it strikes me it would be very equitable.

The parishes in your neighbourhood are equally burthened with yourself?—The parishes of Bocking and Coggleshall are pretty much in the same situation.

Was it in contemplation once in Parliament to render you some assistance?—In the very difficult year I have referred to, following the harvest of 1800, there were several opinions taken from counsel eminent at that time, on the means of carrying into effect the



provision of the law of Elizabeth, to tax other parishes in aid; and the result of those opinions was, that we could not put that into effect; the case was represented at that time with some other parishes to a Committee of Parliament, and two gentlemen, on what authority I am not able to say, came down to Halstead, and inquired into our circumstances, and we had then so far as I understood it, at that time an offer of money; the facts being of a public nature, are more likely to be understood accurately here than I can state them.

Did the parish accede to the offer?—We did not; we thought it could do us no good; we considered it a thing we could not accept.

Have you any friendly societies in your parish?—A good many. What is the effect of them?—Very good.

Are you of opinion, that by the extension of them, the parish would be benefited?—I am; and not only the benefit societies, but every thing on that principle; because I think, that generally speaking, the character of the poor in the district where I live is very good, and I think that they would be very much improved by any system that was calculated to promote a tone of independence and self-support, so far as it was practicable.

Do you apprehend, if a general plan of that sort was proposed to your parish, they would be disposed to concur in it, in which with the working classes, other persons should be called in to contribute?—As far as my opinion goes, I think it would be very likely.

Was it your opinion in regard to the law of settlement; are they as they exist, found to bear hard upon your parish?—I think that much improvement might be introduced into the law of settlement, particularly in the matter of yearly service; the matter of settlement is a source of a great deal of trouble, and the occasion of a good deal of expense.

Are the small tenements charged to the occupier or the landlord to the poor rates?—We have nothing rated but what is inhabited by persons whom we consider in a state to pay; but the pressure is so heavy, that a great number of those persons are as badly off as the paupers; our parish rate contains about 194 names; 96, or thereabouts, of those assessments are of 5*l.* a year, and under; 32 of them are from 5*l.* to 10*l.*; 17 from 10*l.* to 20*l.*; and only 49 above 20*l.*

What is the number of poor?—We had in 1811, 803 families; 288 of those families were engaged in agriculture, and 290 of them have been engaged in manufacture and trade, and 255 otherwise; at the present moment, 434 of those families are paupers, and are receiving relief from the parish.

Are you burthened at all by Irish people, who become chargeable, and have no settlements with you?—But in a small degree; some few military cases. I should beg permission to state, in reference to the circumstances of our parish, which would apply to all parishes of the same character, that our burthen of expenses happen from a surplus population that a lost manufactory has left



upon the land; during the period of the war, a great many of those men went into the public service; during that period also, when labourers were thinner in other parts of the county and of the kingdom, many of them migrated to husbandry, and to other descriptions of employment at a distance, and then we had no useful hands out of employ; but the parish of Halstead had at that time to support the sick and aged, and those who were helpless.

Had you a great many men also serving in the militia?—Yes, and in the army and navy.

And you received money from them in aid?—As far as they were substituted for men of other parishes; that is particularly hard upon us; while these men were employed, we had to support the helpless; now the army and navy are disbanded, we have the whole of this surplus population to maintain; according to a common estimate, I reckon that our population is just about double what the land of the parish requires; we have just about a double population of working men, all of which are of course confined to us; now I should submit as a suggestion, in respect to the services of that part of these men that were in the employ of the country as soldiers and sailors, who are no longer wanted, many of whom are unacquainted with husbandry, or any business, and some incapable from infirmity, that they should have a national bearing, inasmuch as their service was rendered to the nation, if they had a settlement on the country they might be allowed to live where they pleased; it would be an advantage, perhaps, to their getting their bread, that they should be relieved in those parishes in all respects as other paupers are relieved, and the expense, under due examination, to insure the correctness of it, to be repaid to the parishes out of the revenue received from the different counties; that struck me as it regards the military poor; as it concerns the other poor, it ought to have a wider bearing, and probably it might be advantageous, it should have a bearing on the property of the county, or on funded property.

Is there any thing else you wish to state?—As to the matter of settlement, parishes, not only our parish, but every parish finds it occasions them much trouble and expense, and I should think a large proportion of that happens from settlements by a year's servitude; I should question whether advantage might not occur from regarding the qualification of masters, who were to settle the persons by a year's service; they are at present very casual, a man who chuses, in one parish, may settle a great many men: in another parish none are settled, and in small agricultural parishes, for that reason there is great inequality of population. I know an instance where one parish has double the number another has in proportion to the quantity of land.

You are of opinion a residence for a certain number of years would be a fair criterion for gaining a settlement?—Yes; I think a longer period than a year.

You would think three years perhaps a fair period for gaining a settlement?—I should think it more reasonable than one; but I



would not give a decided opinion; I think, as it concerns the circumstances of the master who hires, which I did not explain in my answer just given, a man who pays little or nothing to the poor rates, ought not to settle a servant; perhaps a man not charged to the poor rates 20*l.* a year in husbandry, should be prohibited from settling a servant, because a man of that value has some interest.

Are you aware of what the nature of the difficulty was, that prevented the recurrence to the adjoining parishes to relieve your distress?—I was a young man at the time, and may be mistaken; but as far as I understood it, it was that we could not declare we were unable, as long as there was any person or property in the parish that was rateable; we had opinions from eminent counsel at that time, which opinions I believe are in existence at this moment.

Your surplus population has arisen you conceive from the decay of the manufactures?—Yes.

How long have they ceased?—In the year 1785, as far as we could ascertain; from an investigation made in 1800, there were about 13,000*l.* paid in the year for work; I cannot say what is paid now, but a very small sum.

You say you think you have a surplus population in a much larger proportion than is necessary for the cultivation of the land?—Yes, about double.

Do not you conceive, that that law of settlement which confines persons to one place, after the demand for their employment has ceased, is an evil?—I do; in a certain point of view, it is an evil to us; but as the law stands at present there is no possible means of these men living long from us, unless they could find employment elsewhere.

If the fact be, as it is clear that it is in your parish, that the population far exceeds the number necessary for the cultivation of the land, and at the same time you have no manufactures to employ them in, you must think that law is an evil which confines them to one parish, after the means of employing them have ceased?—I think my answer to that question will seem a contradiction to the answer to a question, as to having the terms of settlement enlarged; I wish the means of settlement to be altered as it regards hiring and service, only to avoid the litigation that happens from it, and do not mean any thing to hinder any means of settlement that can improve the condition of the poor.

Do no part of the poor who formerly gained a settlement in your parish, while the manufactures were flourishing, now obtain settlements in other parishes, so as to relieve you from the burthen of them?—As it applies it to single men, some do.

But the people themselves?—The parents themselves of course do not.

The change of circumstances has not relieved you from the burthen of those people?—No, by no means, as will appear from the population; our population is probably not more than two or three hundred less than it was when the manufactory



brought 13,000*l.* or 14,000*l.* a year for work, and of this two or three hundred, many belonged elsewhere, and were drawn by the manufactory.

Do not you support, at least aid in supporting, a number of those persons who belong to your parish, by contributing money to them out of the parish in places where they are resident?—We do some, but not very considerable.

Are they generally brought home as soon as they become chargeable?—As the law stands, that is a natural consequence; we agree to allow them out where we think there is a chance of their being better off than at home.

Is that considerable?—Not very, I think; I cannot state the amount.

Then a large number of paupers are brought home to you from parishes where they happen to be, in consequence of becoming chargeable to those parishes?—I cannot say a great number; if the question is confined to the last year or two, we have had more than usual; we have not had a great number, because we have not had a great number go out of the place.

Of those who have been brought to you upon orders of removal, have you had occasion to appeal against many of them?—It often happens that we have appealed; but whether it would be a fair answer to say, we appeal against *many* of them, I do not know; we have appeals.

Can you say whether the majority of the cases of orders have been confirmed or quashed?—Perhaps about equal; but I cannot give a decided opinion; it has as often happened I should think, that we have gained as lost the cause, but I cannot give a positive opinion upon the exact proportion.

When you have gained a cause, you have to remove the pauper back to the parish from whence he came?—He went back as a matter of course. As a general observation, I should have suggested, that my idea of the whole subject is, that there wants a radical remedy to correct what I should call the present degenerate state of the operation of the poor laws. I think that the tone of independence and the desire of self support that the poor perhaps felt formerly, and ought to feel, seems to have been lost by the effect and operation of the poor laws; and therefore I should, if I might be allowed to submit as a general opinion, that whatever was calculated to produce the opposite was good. I should mention among a number of things that lead that way, in the first place, diligent attention to moral instruction, on establishment of habits is a great thing; I should recommend every thing upon the principle of benefit societies in all manner of shapes and varieties, saving banks or whatever they may be termed; another thing as to agricultural poor, would be the enclosure of small pieces of waste land, that every poor man should have a garden; I think, generally speaking, the character of the agricultural poor, as far as I am acquainted with it, is moral and good, and I think that, as a general opinion



also, that they are well inclined to fall in with any measure of that sort which could be brought into practice.

They would struggle for themselves if they were assisted?—I think so; if something is not done, the parish where I live and some others in the country in the same situation, must under their surplus population ere long have the whole value of their land absorbed.

*Mr. Robert Pierce Cruden*, called in ; and Examined.

Your residence is at Gravesend?—Yes, I reside in the parish of Milton, which is contradistinguished from another place of that name in the same county, by the denomination of Milton next Gravesend. The town of Gravesend consists of the two parishes of Gravesend and Milton.

Will you have the goodness to state to the Committee the particular circumstances of your parish, and any hardship you suffer from the operation of the poor laws?—The poor rates of the respective parishes have encreased of late years, but not to that alarming amount to which they are reported to have risen in other parishes; and on that point we have no ground of complaint; but taking advantage of the contemplated revision of the poor laws, it has been thought expedient to submit in a petition prepared for Parliament, that we sustain much inconvenience and loss from the present law of settlement. Many persons who come into the town in search of employment gain settlements by a very short residence in the occupation of small tenements, or by hiring apartments in small tenements; thus although the superior tenant who is assessed may not gain a settlement, yet the under tenants or inmates may. Another evil has arisen from the difficulty of recovering the sums assessed upon the occupiers of that class of tenements which have conferred so many settlements. In the three years ending at Easter 1816, the deficiency in the collection of the poor rates for the parish of Gravesend, amounted to twenty per cent. annually on the gross assessments; the parishioners applied for and obtained a local Act in the last session, to render landlords liable for parochial rates; since which in the collection of four rates as much more was collected than heretofore, as has already defrayed the proportion of the expense which the parish incurred in obtaining the local Act.

Does it extend to both parishes?—No, not for parochial rates; for the recovering of rates for paving, lighting, watching and cleansing the town, it extends equally to the two parishes. The first paving rate is not yet entirely collected, and a committee is appointed to recover it, before whom the cases of 350 defaulters have been investigated, in order to ascertain what occupiers have not the means of paying, before the landlords are required to pay for them; and of these I believe the greater part have not usually paid their parochial rates, but more than 150 of whom have paid the paving rate, since urged by the committee, a circumstance which I mention for the purpose of showing that the amount of uncollected poor rates did not arise wholly from incapacity to pay,



but also from the inadequate means of enforcing payment. Many of the usual defaulters inhabit small tenements at an exorbitant rent, which is very rigorously collected, and in many cases by the week, from which it may be inferred that such landlords have received payments for rent, which compared with the rent given for other tenements, should have been applied to parochial taxes as well as rent, so that the landlords have got what the parish should have had. This class of landlords, when called upon for rates, have raised their rents, whereby the law of settlement has countervailed the local Act for recovering payment of just and moderate assessments.

Do you hold any parochial office?—I do not.

What is the state of the parish where the private Act does not extend?—The amount of uncollected poor rates is increasing very seriously. When it was proposed to the parishioners of Milton to concur with the parishioners of Gravesend in the application to Parliament for the local Act, to render landlords of small tenements liable for the rates, they declined so to do; but two of the persons very conversant in the detail of parish affairs, who most vehemently opposed such co-operation, have concurred in the petition which I had the honour to deliver to a Member of this Committee to-day, to be presented to the House of Commons, to represent the advantage enjoyed by the parish of Gravesend in this respect.

Are you of opinion that it would be of great advantage to extend the rating of proprietors of small property, instead of the occupiers?—Most unquestionably.

Has any and what inconvenience occurred in your parish from the settlement of Irish and Scotch, or from their coming amongst you?—An increase of expenditure, by the relief casually given to them; the town of Gravesend is a point of attraction for them, on account of its situation; there is an easy conveyance from London to Gravesend by the river.

Are you much burthened by the residence of Irish and Scotch people with you?—We only incur an expense by the relief casually given to them in passing; a great number of females have applied for relief, particularly during the war, when their relatives embarked from the ports on the coast of Kent.

Does much of your poor arise from apprentices to the sea?—A considerable proportion of it arises from settlements gained by persons employed in fishing vessels.

Have the vessels to which they belonged ever been rated?—No, there is a disposition to rate them in consideration of the great expenses they entail; but it has been stated by the vestry clerk, that in that case all other personal property must be rated, which would cause dissention, and probably vast expense of litigation.

Is there any thing further which you wish to state?—I should state, when I say, vessels employed in fishing, that such vessels are not employed beneficially for Gravesend; they are many of them vessels owned by persons living at Harwich, Greenwich, London,



and other distant places, and the apprentices who navigate in them and eventually become chargeable, have been bound from distant parishes, and are only at Gravesend between the voyages, where they remain to send their fish to the London market.

Is there any thing else which occurs to you to state?—There has been much litigation between the two parishes in point of settlements; and I suggested to a Committee lately assembled, that part of this expense might be saved if we had a resident authority to whom to appeal; the witnesses, however numerous, must now be taken to Maidstone, sixteen miles distant; I ventured to suggest, that if the Recorder (the two parishes being a town corporate) or some other person learned in the law, could be brought to Gravesend to decide cases between the parishes, the expense of removing witnesses would be saved.

What do the questions principally turn upon?—Settlements.

What point of Settlement?—Generally as to servitude, and sometimes as to occupation.

How does it happen that the litigation is between those two particular parishes?—Because they constitute one town; there is a main street runs north and south, which divides the two parishes, so that there is a perpetual interchange.

It arises from living and service a good deal?—Apprenticeship sometimes; the two parishes equally avail themselves of any technicalities.

Are all the settlements from the craft gained in one parish?—The parish of Gravesend exclusively; I am not aware of more than one person engaged in the fishery, being settled in the parish of Milton.

A great number of those cases go to Maidstone; do they?—Yes.

You have continual appeals?—I cannot say continual, because many sessions there are none.

But in a number of years those appeals cost a good deal of money?—Yes, they do.



April, 1817.

SIR EGERTON BRYDGES delivered in to the Committee, a Statement from the Rev. *John Toke*, jun. a magistrate of Kent; as follows:

A STATEMENT of the Total Amount of MONEY raised by POORS RATES, in the respective Parishes, Villes and Places, within a District of the County of Kent, called, "The Home Division of Saint Augustin;" in the Years ending respectively at Easter 1813, 1815, and 1817: together with a Statement of the POPULATION and RENTALS thereof.

NAMES OF PARISHES, VILLES, AND PLACES.	Total Po- pulation thereof in the year 1811.	Money raised by Poors Rates.			Rentals as Assessed to the County Rate.
		IN	IN	IN	
		1813.	1815.	1817	
	No.	£.	£.	£.	£.
Beaksbourne .....	257	155	154	154	1,377
Blean .....	479	393	295	327	1,726
Bridge .....	397	273	359	363	1,575
Chislett .....	912	1,715	1,698	2,264	5,886
Hackington .....	323	473	498	487	2,585
Harbledown .....	608	355	537	402	2,465
Hardres Upper .....	237	327	327	349	1,360
Hardres Lower .....	202	338	296	267	900
Hearne .....	1,442	2,210	1,990	2,110	4,755
Hoath, Borough of .....	296	444	234	351	1,007
Nackington .....	129	261	261	393	1,418
Patricborne .....	239	490	527	380	2,181
Petham .....	451	632	582	643	1,885
Reculver .....	265	559	309	412	1,183
Saint Dunstan .....	695	423	414	526	1,885
Saint Gregory, Ville of .....	236	200	88	104	386
Part of Saint Paul's Can- terbury .....	N.B. This part of Saint Paul's is assessed to the Poors Rate for the Parishes within the City of Canterbury, wherein the other part of the Parish of Saint Paul's is situate.				
Seasalter .....	536	442	552	548	2,177
Staplegate, Borough of .....	224	134	123	160	329
Stourmouth .....	230	248	248	497	1,723
Sturry .....	709	1,006	1,092	1,231	3,342
Swalecliffe .....	89	374	374	248	899
Thannington .....	297	607	551	600	3,214
Precincts of Archbishop's Palace .....	150	131	133	129	438
Precincts of Christ Church	248	283	286	228	1,191
Waltham .....	476	585	638	692	1,875
Westbere .....	179	200	208	310	1,352
Westgate .....	728	428	427	560	1,555
Whitstable .....	1,249	1,240	1,240	1,550	5,095
TOTALS in the whole..	12,283	14,625	14,44	16,294	55,759

Average amount of the Poors Rates for the whole District, upon the total rentals .....	In the Year 1813		In the Year 1815.		In the Year 1817.		} in the pound.
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	
	5	2½	5	2	5	10½	



*Particulars relating to several Workhouses within the District, from Lady-day 1816 to Lady-day 1817.*

PLACES wherein each respective WORKHOUSE is Established, and for what Number of Parishes, &c.	Total Population of the several Parishes & Places for which each respective Workhouse is established.	Average Number of Persons kept in each respective Workhouse.	Average Amount per Week, of each Persons' subsistence, in each respective Workhouse.		Total Amount of all other Charges attending each respective Workhouse, except for Clothes and Medicines.	The Net Receipts from the Earnings of Persons kept in each respective Workhouse.	Total average Charge per Week of each Person kept in each respective Workhouse, exclusive of Clothes and Medicines.	
Workhouse at Staplegate, for the Poor of 9 Parishes and Places, all of which are situate within this District, except one.	No. 2,442	No. 46	s. 4	d. 1	£. 73	£. 44	s. 4	d. 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
Workhouse at Harbledown, for the Poor of 5 Parishes, two of which are situate in another District of the County of Kent.	2,589	46	3	7 $\frac{1}{4}$	106	60	3	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
Workhouse at Waltham, for the Poor of 12 Parishes, seven of which are situate in other Districts of the County of Kent	3,474	96	3	0 $\frac{1}{4}$	312	172	3	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
Workhouse at Whitstable, for that Parish only.	1,249	25	4	4	63	33	4	9 $\frac{1}{2}$
Workhouse at Hearne, for that Parish only.	1,442	58	3	10	—	86	—	—
Workhouse at Chisleth, for that Parish only.	912	65	3	5 $\frac{1}{4}$	117	101	3	6 $\frac{1}{4}$
Workhouse at Sturry, for that Parish only.	709	28	4	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	118	22	5	5 $\frac{1}{2}$



*Jovis, 24<sup>o</sup> die Aprilis, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

Mr. *George Moncrief*, Examined.

I LIVE at Edinburgh, and am a merchant.

Can you give the Committee any information of the mode by which the Poor are relieved at Edinburgh?—There is a general assessment on all the heritors; I believe their assessment varies every year, and varies also in the different parishes.

On what property is the assessment made?—On all houses and land.

Is there any assessment on personal property?—None whatever.

Are there many friendly societies in Edinburgh?—A great many.

State the number of members of such societies?—Artizans and labourers comprise most of them, and all the industrious part of the community.

Do any of the members of such societies receive at any time aid from such assessments?—They do not receive it.

Does the existence of such societies diminish very much the amount of those assessments?—Most essentially.

Is the aid they afford in case of sickness or accident, such as to make any other aid from the assessments unnecessary?—It depends on circumstances; I can state two cases which will explain that: one happened some years ago; he was a carpenter, and met with an accident, which rendered him unable to work, and he drew from the societies 18s. a week; not from one society, but from several: the other was the case of a gunsmith who died last year; he was only a member of one corporation, and I think he drew 7s. a week, besides other expenses: but in the last instance the gunsmith was not an industrious man.

Have you the means of stating to us the amount of the assessment in any one year in the city of Edinburgh?—No.

Are the houses rated to the owners or the occupiers?—In the parish in which I live the assessment varies from 4d. to 8d. in the pound; the one half is paid by the owner, and the other by the occupier.

*Mercurij, 3<sup>o</sup> die Aprilis, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

The Rev. *John William Cunningham*, called in, and Examined.

You are Vicar of Harrow?—Yes.

The Committee understand you have some communication to make respecting Friendly or Benefit Societies?—In wishing to make a communication to the Committee, the object I have in view



is two-fold; in the first place, I wish to take the liberty of stating to the Committee, some facts I have been enabled to collect, from pretty extensive observation, of the effects of Benefit Friendly Societies, and an observation certainly felt by the public in some degree, that there was a disposition on the part of the Committee to give certain legal advantages to Saving Banks, which were not designed to be given to Friendly Benefit Societies; and I wish to take the liberty of stating, in the next place, that among the country poor there is extremely little power, especially in the neighbourhood of London, of availing themselves to any great extent of the Saving Banks, and particularly in one case, which has been often stated, that the labouring poor, before marriage, had the power of saving that which would constitute a fund on which they might draw at a subsequent period; now generally throughout Hertfordshire and the part of Middlesex in which I reside, the practice is almost general for the agricultural poor before marriage, to be hired servants; in my own parish that is universally true; and in that case they never receive such wages as would allow them to lay by more than a shilling a week at the utmost; but although I am sure I am very ill-qualified to state principles, yet there is one which has occurred to me as a distinction between Benefit Societies and Saving Banks, which I would take the liberty of stating, as I have not seen it stated elsewhere. I conceive it is the object of the Committee to cherish rather a benevolent than a selfish principle in the poor of the country; now it seems to me that the Benefit Societies have a very superior tendency on that ground; the tendency, as far as I have observed the operation of each, is in the Saving Banks to cherish a principle which is distinctly selfish, but in the Friendly Benefit Societies, the operation evidently is to make every man a contributor to the benefit of others, if he does not want the assistance himself; and the result corresponds with it; a strong man derives no benefit from the Friendly Society, but the weak one does; so that you gain the object, and a most important one it is, of making the healthy contribute to the infirmities of the weak. But in taking the liberty of saying any thing that would go to advocate the cause of Friendly Societies, I confess I have one circumstance to state, which does seem to myself of great importance, and to bear against them: I have had an opportunity of knowing perhaps sixty or seventy Friendly Societies, pretty accurately, and the general state of those I have observed is of this kind: They are all held at public houses, their principle universally is either to forfeit one-eighth of the whole savings for the benefit of the public house, to spend it in beer, or else one-fourth among these sixty or seventy; I do not know a single exception to that case; they drink for the benefit of the house a pot or a pint of beer; the general plan is in my own neighbourhood to pay two shillings a month to the society, of which sixpence is drank in beer; in all the other cases threepence is forfeited; the other is the predominant case; that is a small part of the evil; in every one of those societies the plan is this, that



this sixpence or threepence is to be drank in beer, whatever be the number of members who attend. This morning I was examining into the case of two in which there were sixty members; a member told me there were very rarely twenty who attended, therefore in each of those cases they drank sixty pots of beer, and of course got to a state in which, if they could, they would drink sixty more; and that principle I believe to be almost universal; it certainly is in my own neighbourhood; in a large number of those societies now, I need hardly say, that the demoralizing effect of Benefit Societies under their present constitution is perfectly enormous; it totally removes the power of checking the abuses of public-houses, because although I can plead with the publican, that he ought not for the sake of a man's pleasure to allow him to stay there a certain length of time and to get drunk, both the publican (who is the treasurer in general) and the person who is drinking, plead the necessity of business; "It is my business, I must attend my duty there;" and I venture to state as a fact, that although I have been able to secure tolerable hours in public-houses in most instances on club-nights, it is totally impossible. I get them away at ten in general, but on club-nights not before twelve universally, and I do not know how to remedy it. Another feature of those clubs is this; the publican is very often the treasurer of the club, and of course has considerable facility, either in lending that money to his friends, or in borrowing for himself; the effect of that, out of seven clubs in my own parish and hamlets has been, that several are almost in a state of bankruptcy, and two have in the space of five years become bankrupts. There is only one single point of a remedial nature, which has occurred to me, which I would take the liberty of stating: I conceive it might be possible to apply this sort of remedy, for Parliament only to suffer those clubs to be enrolled (for without enrolment there is no legal remedy against the club) which either did not meet at public-houses, or which did not allow any part of the savings to be spent for the benefit of the house where they met; and I should also take the liberty of saying, with regard to the Saving Banks, without some such check as that is applied in the first instance, I conceive very much the same sort of effect will arise as to them. I think that the Saving Banks, although at first they meet in private rooms, will eventually meet at public-houses. I know of several instances, where the Saving Banks appoint a specific hour on Saturday morning, from eight to nine, at which time the labourer is supposed to be unemployed, where they are all to meet to pay their deposits; now I conceive, that in that instance, although it may not begin it will end in those deposits being paid at those times at some public room, which may be at a public-house.

Do you act as a magistrate?—No.

You are not aware of the sort of complaints which are sometimes made from the Benefit Societies, respecting the conduct of the society towards the different members?—I have heard a great deal of it at different times.



They are not always conducted with a great deal of that benevolence which you apprehend to belong to them?—No, certainly not; but the society with which I am connected, is strictly speaking a Friendly Society, with one peculiar principle, that it was never to meet at a public-house, and that any number of members who adjourned from its ordinary place of meeting to a public-house were liable to expulsion; its principle is to subscribe eighteen-pence a month, and to pay twelve shillings a week when sick; and hoping that the morality of the people will be improved by this, I think I shall be able to pay more.

Twelve shillings a week, for how long?—Till the illness becomes permanent, then we pay six shillings a week; that must be left to the discretion of the club.

Do you happen to know whether the members of any of those Benefit Societies which you have spoken of, have been among the number of applicants for parish relief?—Certainly; this society was instituted October 1810, and I have saved 270*l*. I impute that great saving partly to the saving of this sixpence, and partly to the moral habits induced thereby.

How many subscribers have you?—Ninety; I found one of the evils was permitting individuals to borrow the money of the society, and therefore one of the rules is, that it shall be laid out in the funds, or on landed security.

Do you attend any of the meetings?—Frequently.

Do you not think it might be of advantage to them generally, if some gentlemen would take an active part in them, as in the Saving Banks, and control and superintend the conduct of them?—Of the greatest possible benefit; I have been able to prevent, by personal attendance, what I deemed acts of the greatest injustice on the part of the club to many of its members.

In the instances in which members of those clubs have applied to the parish for relief, has the circumstance of their belonging to such societies been taken into consideration in the amount of the relief that has been given to them?—Not avowedly; but it has always influenced the parish officers.

In what way?—By diminishing the relief.

Would the aggregate amount of the receipt of such person from his society and his parish, amount to more than would otherwise have been made up to him by the parish, if he had not belonged to that society?—I think the operation I have perceived is this; the vestry sets itself to consider the real wants of the individual applying; they know that he is in a club, and justly conclude, therefore, that he only wants a certain addition to the sum he derives from his club, to supply his actual wants; they then, very often I think, conceive themselves justified in saying to that man, take this small addition or else go into the house; and the man willingly takes the small addition rather than go into the parochial house.

The benefit of those clubs then is not forfeited by receiving parochial aid? In no instances with which I am acquainted; but I would not vouch for it, as I have not inquired into it.



Have you ever proposed to the societies to commute the fines for the benefit of the club, to add them to the stock?—I urged it upon a considerable number of individuals before I instituted my own club, because I was unwilling to do by a new instrument what might be done by an old one, if approved.

Do you know whether the proposition was ever made to the societies?—It was made to individuals.

Was it ever publicly proposed?—The plan I took was to ask those persons to propose it to their club.

Was it or not proposed?—Certainly; and without any success in any instance.

In what manner are the funds appropriated?—Either to be funded, or else laid out upon landed security.

At whose option is that?—The treasurers and the officers for the time being.

Have you not from your experience found that the Friendly Societies upon their former plan, were productive of a very unfriendly disposition in the poor, the one towards the other?—I cannot say that that has struck me.

In making them feel hard and disposed to be severe one towards the other, when one applies for relief, to act with severity towards him?—I have found acts of individual justice, but not acts of kindness refused generally. I confess the object I had in view, in taking the liberty to address the Committee, was upon the single point, to suggest, whether it was not possible to arrive at some check to the abuse arising from their meeting at public houses, and the not enrolling those that did.

---

*Veneris, 16<sup>o</sup> die Maii, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

Mr. *William Morgan*, called in; and Examined.

You are, I believe, actuary in the Equitable Insurance Society?  
—Yes, I am.

How long have you been in that situation?—For forty years.

I think you are nephew to Dr. Price?—Yes, I am.

I believe you published an edition of Dr. Price's book on Reversionary Payments?—Yes, three editions.

You recollect the tables which are published in the appendix of that work?—Yes, I do.

I refer now to the edition published in 1805?—That is the second edition; there is a third edition published by me.

I wish to ask, whether your subsequent observations and experience have induced you to make any alteration in the opinion you then expressed in print?—None at all.

With respect to the tables, can you speak as to the correctness with which they have been collected?—All the experience I have had, confirms in my mind the accuracy of these tables.



You are then of opinion, that these tables would answer in practice as nearly as can be expected?—I am constantly consulted upon them, and the societies have flourished wherever the plan I have recommended has been adopted; I have recommended the use of it in many societies, and they have universally flourished in consequence.

You mean benefit societies?—Yes, I do.

In the book you hold in your hand, there are four distinct tables, I believe?—Yes, there are.

The first is against casualties and sickness; the second provides an annuity for old age; the third combines the former; and the fourth provides for the fines to be paid by persons coming in, in a later age; the sums to be returned to persons removing from one place to another: is it not so?—Yes, it is.

Table three combines the two former provisions?—These tables, I believe, were collected and compiled for the Bill in 1789?—Yes, those printed by Maseres were collected for the Bill in 1773.

Those then differ from the present?—Yes, I believe they do.

The tables printed by Maseres, I believe, are for granting annuities in particular?—Yes, I believe they are.

The Bill that was brought in, I think, had for its foundation the purchasing of annuities by poor people, in which the poor rates were made chargeable?—Yes, it was; it was opposed by Lord Camden, on the ground that it would have affected the land.

I wish to know whether the promiscuous admission of all kinds of trades, healthy and otherwise, would not make a difference in the tables?—Possibly it might; but I do not know the nature of trades. We object to some trades in our office, particularly to painters, publicans and bakers; the latter because they sleep over their ovens.

Do you object to any other trades?—We object rather to plumbers.

I wish to inquire, whether if masons, miners, sailors and such trades, which are subject to great casualties, were to be admitted into parish insurances, it would not require a greater bonus on their admission?—I do not know that it would, because the table is calculated from mankind in general, and does not distinguish particular trades; these are people in a higher situation in life than usually we have to deal with.

I will suppose that 400 persons are employed in a mine; how many do you suppose would become chargeable in the course of twelve months?—In Sir Henry Vane's mine, there were two in 200 who died by accident, exclusive of sickness.

I would wish to ask, whether in most of the tables, if not in all of friendly societies, there is not a bonus paid on admission: and whether they are not restricted from receiving any assistance for the first 12 months after their admission into the society?—Yes, generally; the bonus, however, which is paid, is so trifling that it is scarcely enough to pay the expenses of the club. In general, these clubs have been so badly conducted, that they have been obliged to break up; and I advise them continually to do so.



I wish to know, whether the breaking up of these clubs has not arisen from the payments being inadequate to the receipts?—Entirely; there was one in particular this week exactly in this situation: they had agreed to give an annuity of 25*l.* to a widow for 8 shillings a month, and 2,000 members belonged to it.

That never happened when the system of Dr. Price was adopted by these societies?—No, never. The best way is to divide the stock, and begin a new when Dr. Price's system is not adopted.

I would ask, whether in forming a national society upon this principle, it would not be most desirable to have a considerable aid from the parish, to secure such funds keeping pace with the different engagements?—I think there would be no harm in doing so for a few years, to see how the society went on.

Do you know, whether in the friendly societies in general they do require different rates of contribution from different trades?—I never found that; they except some trades, and particularly sailors.

Do they not except other trades?—I think not.

With respect to sailors, I believe you make some difference with regard to them in your society?—If they go to sea, and die there, they lose the advantage they otherwise would have, if an extra premium is not paid.

You do not conceive, that when Dr. Price calculated these tables, that they were made upon the supposition of any exclusion of any particular class?—No.

They were calculated for all the poor together?—Yes.

I would ask, whether in the admission of persons to societies of this nature, it would not require a great deal more care and attention, by what has already been stated, than is customary, to make it answer?—I think so; it acts both ways. If a man has bad life you get by it.

But would it not require great care and attention in the admission?—To be sure; they would not admit a man who was known to be always sickly.

These tables to which you have referred, are calculated upon great numbers of mankind taken together, sick and well without distinction?—Yes.

And therefore in proportion to the care taken in the admission of subscribers, to exclude those who are sickly, these tables are more charitable than necessary?—I do not know that they are more charitable than is necessary.

If I understand you rightly, Dr. Price's tables, or any opinion you have given, were not formed upon any experience as to the number of persons becoming chargeable as sick, but only upon the probability of life, from which you think you can form an approximation to an opinion as to the period of their lives during which they would be sick?—Exactly so.

If then you had the experience of a considerable number of clubs instituted in different parts of the country, you could from



that form a table more accurately than by any other means?—No doubt.

Can you specify to the Committee, any particular friendly societies which have been formed under Dr. Price's system?—I cannot specify many of them, but there is one at York and another at Leeds, and they both flourish very much.

The tables you now advert to, used by these societies, are those printed in your last edition of Dr. Price's work?—Yes, these tables are found to answer very well.

In the societies which have been formed under your directions, are you aware what restrictions they have as to the highest age at which members are admitted?—I do not advise them to go beyond the age of 50 or 55 at the outside, because he then becomes a burthen to the society.

Do you recollect that you were consulted by a society at Bushey in Hertfordshire?—I do not recollect that I was consulted by that society; but I well remember that there was one at St. Alban's which consulted me.

And in London also?—Yes.

Are these societies situated in great towns or in country parishes?—Chiefly they are placed in towns.

I wish to ask, whether these tables are calculated upon the supposition that the weekly payments are confined to persons when sick as in health?—Yes, they are.

Supposing a contribution to take place upon the whole population at per head, from the day of the birth for every age, including the whole population, would that make a difference in the tables?—Yes, it would in that case; it would make the contribution less.

It would make the contribution greater?—No, less; because so many infants die.

If then I understand you rightly, these tables are calculated upon the supposition, that the earlier a person contributes, the larger will be the sum contributed on his account?—Yes.

If then the earlier he contributed, the sum that is contributed is larger, it will naturally follow that a larger sum would be raised by taking the contribution at per head of the whole population, than excluding all under the age of twenty-one?—Certainly.

I wish to know, whether the general character of the persons entering into these societies is thrifty and industrious, or idle and profligate?—I believe the profligate and idle never enter into them at all.

Supposing a contribution to be paid on account of children from the earliest age, to entitle them to this benefit, would you not demand a less sum for persons above the age of 21?—No.

If you commence from birth it would be diminished?—Yes.

What would be the value of 10*l.* annuity paid to a child of one year old?—The value of an annuity of 1*l.* would be worth between 8*l.* and 10*l.* but they improve continually.

Your calculations are made upon the average of a considerable number of persons; and in proportion to the smallness of the num-



ber from which the calculation is made, so is it less accurate — Yes, exactly so.

How small a number could a society of this nature safely consist of?—If the society consisted of between 200 and 300 persons, I think it would be sufficient.

You cannot, I suppose, answer for the positive safety of any calculations formed on any smaller number of persons than you have mentioned, unless there was some general guarantee?—No, certainly; if you buy an annuity of a man for 10 years purchase, it may be worth 10/, but he may lose it to-morrow.

You say, that you have been consulted by many persons as to benefit societies; have you found in your experience, that there is any reason to believe that these societies, when they have failed in consequence of injudicious relief given under circumstances which the tables did not admit of?—The societies that I have observed to have failed, have universally begun upon a bad system, giving large annuities for a trifling remuneration, and receiving 8 shillings where they ought to receive 10.

Then from your experience, if these societies were formed upon accurate tables, which they strictly adhered to, they would flourish, and there would be no difficulty in judging of the cases in which persons were entitled to relief?—Those societies which have begun upon a right principle have universally flourished.

Then I am fit to understand you, that all the societies of this kind who have come within your knowledge, have failed because they had made wrong calculations?—Precisely so.

In your opinion, do our great towns maintain their population by recruits from the country or without?—London is maintained by recruits from the country, but other towns are not so.

Do not manufacturing towns require it?—I think not.

The deaths, I think, still exceed the births?—I believe they do, but not among the better sort of people; it is among the infants of Spitalfields and other places of the same kind, that so many deaths take place; we do not find more people die in our office in London than elsewhere.

Do you not think that in large manufacturing towns in the country, the same comparative mortality takes place there as in London?—No, I think not; as in Birmingham, for instance, people work in their gardens, which prolongs their lives very much.

In Manchester, what is your opinion about that town?—I believe that increases in its population.

In the Birmingham tables there is a distinction made between the males and the females?—Yes, there is.

Has it been calculated, that there are more casualties among the females than among the males?—No, fewer.

The result upon the tables is otherwise, I observe two males give six shillings, and two females give only five shillings?—I do not know upon what principle those tables go.

In any calculations you have made upon common annuities, do you calculate more casualties in males or in females?—In our tables we make no distinction.



*Martis, 10<sup>o</sup> die Junii, 1817.*

The Right Hon. WILLIAM STURGES BOURNE, in the Chair.

*John Carter, Esq.* called in, and Examined.

ARE you in any official situation in Coventry?—I am town clerk of Coventry, and one of the directors of the poor for the present year.

Are your poor maintained under any local Act, or under a general law?—Under a local Act.

Are the officers who have the management of the poor annual officers?—Annual.

All annual?—All annual, except some clerks, who collect the rates, and inquire into the state of the poor; in point of fact, they are annual, but they are re-appointed every year.

How many of them are there?—There are three now; the directors serve for two years; there are eighteen directors, nine of whom go out annually.

Is there any other person besides those eighteen directors?—There are the clerks.

Is there any person denominated guardian, a sort of superior to them all?—No; all persons who are rated at 20*l.* a year and upwards, are called by the Act of parliament guardians, and they meet once in the year and choose nine directors.

From what rank in society are the directors chosen?—They are chosen from out of the guardians; the tradesmen of the town generally; some professional men.

Are they, generally speaking, the largest contributors to the rate?—In a general sense they are.

They are of all classes in the town?—Most undoubtedly they are.

What is the aggregate amount of the rate per month on houses and land in Coventry?—In the parish of St. Michael 17*s.* in the last year, and in the parish of the Holy Trinity 11*s.* 9*d.*

How many parishes are there in Coventry?—Two; they are united by that Act of Parliament under which the directors are appointed.

Do you speak of rack rent?—I speak of a valuation made within the last few years upon land, and four-fifths of the rent upon the houses.

What has been the amount of the rate in the pound for the last four months?—Eight shillings; one of four months was eighteen-pence, another half a crown, and the others two shillings each.

That would be at the rate of 24*s.* in the pound?—Yes.

Are there any other burthens on houses and lands?—There are; there is a tithe of five shillings per acre, paid to the impropiators who are the corporation of Coventry, upon the land; and in the parish of Saint Michael a church rate, which is at eighteen-pence in the pound upon the actual value of the land; and also a highway rate of nine-pence in the pound, and upon houses a rate for lighting and cleansing of the town, of eighteen-pence in the pound upon rack rent; a vicar's rate of one shilling in the pound upon



the rack rent, and the church rate also attaches upon the houses and the highway rate. In the parish of the Holy Trinity there is no church rate.

What proportion does the rent of land bear to the rent of houses in those two parishes?—I can hardly tell that.

How many acres are there in two parishes?—There are 4,099 acres of several land, and 772 acres of lammas, making an aggregate of 4,871.

Can you tell the average annual value of that land; how much an acre it is worth?—About 40s.; the parish of Saint Michael extends three miles from Coventry, and therefore it may be taken at an average of 40s. I think some land near the town is rated at a high rate for accommodation, and it is rated to the poor on the accommodation rent; there is land rented at 6*l.* an acre, and that pays upon that rent to the poor.

Do you know the rental of the houses in Coventry?—No, I cannot tell, there are so many not rated at all to the poor; I cannot tell at this moment.

What number of parishes and townships are there in the city and county of Coventry?—Nine; there are two within the city, and seven in what we call the county of Coventry.

Do each of them support their own poor separately?—The parishes of the Holy Trinity and Saint Michael unitedly support the poor, and the others distinctly from each other.

Are they nearly equally burthened?—Very unequally.

From whence does that arise?—From the circumstance of there being but little population in the country parishes?—Do any of the poor of the country parishes become burthensome to the city?—No; several of the poor residing in the country parishes are virtually maintained at the expense of the city, for they are employed by the manufacturers of the city.

Are there settlements in the city?—No; in the other parishes.

In the city of Coventry are there many houses divided into small tenements, and let to poor persons who are not rated to the poor?—A great number; there are 3,510 houses in Coventry, and 1,110 only at this time rated.

Has it been long that a rate has not been levied from small tenements?—Very long in a great many instances, owing to the poverty of the occupier.

Are they usually let by the year, or for a shorter space of time?—Those which are let into small apartments are let by the week; but there are a great many small houses let by the quarter and the year, on which no rate attaches, owing to the poverty of the tenants.

Have you reason to believe, that the landlords receive more rent, in consequence of those houses paying to the poor rate?—I know it of my own knowledge: the magistrates, for the relief of the poor people of Coventry, hold a special sessions, in which they hear the appeals in those light cases, and the poor people constantly and uniformly state, that they are unable to pay the rates, because



of the great rent the landlord puts on the houses, and that the landlords uniformly tell them the houses have not been rated to the poor, and will not; and therefore they can afford to pay a higher rent. This is constantly the report made by those poor people to the magistrates.

Do you mean to state, that in making their agreements with their landlords, the rent was fixed at a higher rate avowedly because those tenements did not pay to the poor?—The occupiers of those tenements state that, almost every time they come to appeal against the rate.

Most positively?—Most decidedly.

You have mentioned that lands were very disproportionately rated; can you give an instance of it?—On land in the parish of Stiviehall, one of the parishes in the city of Coventry, the rate in respect of the poor is one shilling in the pound; and in the adjoining parish of Saint Michael, for the last four months it has been at the rate of four-and-twenty shillings in the pound.

Does the one parish contain a great many more houses than the other?

—There are scarcely any houses in the parish that are so low rated; there are not ten in the whole parish, I believe, and many of their labourers are residing in Coventry; I may add with great truth, that the land in the parish of Stiviehall lies very considerably nearer to Coventry than that in the parish of Saint Michael, taking the bulk of it.

What sum was expended last year in Coventry for the maintenance of the poor?—I will hand in this account.

*[It was delivered in, and read as follows.]*



Audited by *Edward Cherry, Edward Phillips, Thomas Harris, George Stott*: Directors.  
use of Industry,  
May 3d, 1817.

It appears by this account, that a large sum is due from the directors to the treasurer?—Yes, they are in advance; the account is made up to the 10th April last, and they are still in advance. Here is a list of the out-poor made out in March last [producing a list of the out-poor, consisting of three classes, casual poor, permanent poor, and orphan and illegitimate children.]



What was the object of printing this?—For the purpose of giving information to the parish of the names of poor persons, that they might discover if any persons were imposing on them, and obtaining more relief than they ought.

You mean by casual poor, persons who want only occasional assistance?—Yes; and the permanent poor are the lame and impotent; the third class are orphan and illegitimate children.

Have you any school of industry for such children?—There are a great number of such schools in Coventry, and we have a school-master within the workhouse.

Supposing a man applies for relief who is earning certain wages, but those wages are not enough for the maintenance of his family; in that case do you give him money, or do you take his children to a school of industry?—We generally give him money; but in many instances we take them into the house of industry, where they are taught to knit, sew and read, the female branch of them.

In this list of the casual poor, are there not many able-bodied persons who are earning wages that are deemed insufficient for the maintenance of their families?—Certainly.

Are they principally persons of that description?—They are now principally out of employ.

Are some of them in employment but not earning enough as it is supposed for the maintenance of their families?—Certainly.

Are you, on the part of the directors of the poor, able to suggest any remedies for alleviating your present difficulties?—The directors beg to submit, that the poor should be considered as the poor of the nation at large, and supported out of a rate embracing real and personal property.

A national fund?—Yes, a national fund, embracing real and personal property, or else that the district should be enlarged.

Has any attempt been made to rate the other parishes in the county, in aid of those that have been distressed?—No, we have made no attempt; which is, because we have been told we cannot avail ourselves of the provisions of the statute of Elizabeth, there being no district called a hundred with us.

You have mentioned that the directors are of opinion that the district should be enlarged for the maintenance of the poor?—Yes; that if the Legislature should not adopt the plan of a national fund, that the district should be enlarged, and embrace all the parishes which receive a benefit from the place which is distressed.

You mean that it should contain all the parishes in the county and city of Coventry, or to go even beyond that?—Yes; and extend beyond the county of Coventry: it is also the opinion of the directors that the landlords of the small houses should be rated to the poor upon some proportion of the rents they receive.

Are the owners of those small houses generally resident in Coventry and its neighbourhood, or do they live in other parts of the kingdom?—In Coventry almost all of them; there are very few of them, to the best of my recollection, who live out of it.

Are you burthened with the maintenance of any Scotch or Irish families?—Many Irish, and some Scotch.



Has that usually been the case?—It has, for many years.

Can you speak to the number of Irish or Scotch?—No, I cannot; but there are a great number.

Have the generality of them worked for some time in your parish, or have they lately come into it?—The generality of them have worked there some time in the ribbon branch.

Have they acquired settlements there?—None of those that we consider as a burthen; the persons we complain of are not those who have settlements, but those who have none.

Casual poor?—Yes.

Have any of them been removed under the Vagrant Act?—No; we cannot remove them under the Vagrant Act, because they have been for a time resident in Coventry, and consequently not guilty of acts of vagrancy, and therefore we cannot remove them.

Have you many Scotch?—Not so many as Irish; I do not think there are a great many; there are some I know.

What is the prevalent mode of gaining settlement in Coventry?—By apprenticeship and hiring and service; they are very desirous of being bound apprentice in Coventry, because the right of election lies in persons having served seven years apprenticeship, and in that class of persons only.

Probably persons are not desirous of taking apprentices for that reason?—Yes, they are very desirous of taking them.

Has each parish in Coventry a workhouse?—There is one common workhouse for the two parishes.

How are the poor employed in the workhouse?—We employ a very few in the twisting or throwing of silk.

Do you admit into the house the impotent and children only, or do you admit able-bodied persons?—Able-bodied persons as well.

Is the house at present full?—Nearly full; on the twenty-ninth of last month there were two hundred and eighty-one in the house.

Was the house calculated to hold that number?—It will hold a greater number than that.

The proportion of your out-poor is much greater than your in-poor?—Clearly so. Our out-poor is very nearly 6,000; I think one-third of our population.

Have you any friendly societies in Coventry?—A great many.

Are they able to maintain themselves at present?—It is no objection at all to a man continuing a member of a society, that he has received parish relief.

They continue to make deposits?—They do.

Have you any saving banks?—We have not; the directors at Easter, at their meeting, recommended them to be established, and steps are now taking that I hope will have the effect of producing one.

Supposing the demands for relief should increase, have you any means of increasing your assessment?—No; I am afraid there would be a total failure of means if they were rated higher than they are now. We are bound to make an equal rate by law; we



cannot rate the rich higher than the poor, we must rate them all in the same proportion on the property they occupy. Lord Hood is an inhabitant of one of the parishes; if we rate Lord Hood 46s. an acre for his land, his land being of as good a quality only as his neighbours, we cannot rate him higher than the other; if he occupies, as he does, 250 acres of land, we must rate his neighbour who has about the same quantity in the same proportion, and who has not perhaps equal means of paying it.

Have you any means of ascertaining the comparative rental of the houses that do contribute to the rate, and those which do not?—By a reference to the property tax assessment, and taking out the names of course.

But you have not done that?—I have not; I can furnish the Committee with it by writing home.

Is the trade at Coventry in a particularly distressed state at present?—One part is particularly bad, the watch trade, and one branch of the ribbon trade.

Have either of them improved within the last two or three months?—One branch of the ribbon trade is very much improved, the manufacturing of broad ribbons; it is called the fancy trade, it is the making of the embossed or figured ribbon; that branch has certainly been much improved; but the wages paid for the work in this branch are exceedingly low, and not sufficient for the maintenance of even a small family.

Is it for the home market, or for foreign exportation, that increase of demand has taken place?—Principally the home market.

Have you been able to find employment for those able-bodied men who have applied to you for want of work?—We have sent them as supernumeraries upon the roads, merely for the sake of giving employment to them, and in the cleansing of the streets we have employed them.

Do you give money to any persons of that description, without requiring work to be done for it?—We do to some who have large families.

Without requiring any work?—It is over and above the value of their work.

If a man comes and says he is an able-bodied man, and cannot get work any where, do you give him money without sending him to the road, or any where else?—If we find him fit and able, we send him to the roads, or give him some labour.

In giving money to persons with large families, in addition to the sum they earn by their labour, do you consider that as a relief for the children or a relief for the parent?—Both parent and child we consider; we take the number of the family, and we make up their earnings at least to half-a-crown a week per head, if they are in health.

That depends upon the price of bread?—Yes; the price of bread is high with us, the meat is low, and so are coals.

What statute do you believe describes the persons to whom relief is to be administered?—The statute of Elizabeth; but we have not



conformed to it, certainly, strictly ; I think throughout the kingdom at large they have not.

Is there any other statute which you interpret as describing persons who are entitled to relief?—Not to the best of my recollection.

Does not the statute of Elizabeth direct the children to be set to work?—It does ; the statute of Elizabeth directs that the poor, shall be set to work.

What is there in that, or any other statute, which authorizes you to give money to children, or to parents for children?—I should think we are bound under those words to do it ; we are bound to raise competent sums for the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old blind, and such others among them, being poor and not able to work, and also for the putting out poor children apprentices.

You have stated in your evidence, that there is a workhouse for the two parishes ; is that under Mr. Gilbert's Act?—No, under a local Act.

Have you found it succeed?—It has been attended with considerable benefit to the town.

Does your governor under that Act find employment for the poor ; by sending them out to work at different places, or employ them in the house?—Such of them as are employed for the benefit of the parish are employed in the house of industry, but they are very few in number.

And you find, in regard to the care of the old and impotent and children, that answers your purpose?—It has been much better for the parish, I think, and also for the poor persons residing in the house ; they were not so well taken care of previously to the erection of that house of industry.

You relieve the casual poor?—We do.

You prefer relieving them to removing them to their parishes?—We remove all those who are not settled with us ; we only relieve our own poor.

It appears that there are three parishes in Coventry?—No ; the parish of Saint John the Baptist has long supported its own poor with the parish of Saint Michael ; and is considered, for all judicial purposes, the parish of Saint Michael ; there is no distinction between the two parishes, and if a person has a settlement in the parish of Saint John, he is considered as having a settlement in the parish of Saint Michael. The rate for supporting the poor is very unequal in the parishes of Coventry ; the Holy Trinity pays only one-third, and the Saint Michael's two-thirds.

Is the mode of rating the same in both parishes?—If we want a sum of 900*l.* to be raised for the support of the poor for a month ; the parish of Saint Michael raises 600*l.* and the Holy Trinity 300*l.* ; so that the Holy Trinity would raise it by a rate of sixpence in the pound, and Saint Michael would be obliged to have recourse to a shilling. I beg to state to the Committee, that it is the opinion of the directors, that unless some relief be afforded, by considering the poor as the poor of the country, and supported out of one com-



mon fund, or by enlarging the districts for the maintenance of the poor, and by rating the landlords of small and divided houses, which do not at present contribute, the city of Coventry will be unable much longer to maintain its poor.

What is the population of Coventry?—The population was 17,923, according to the last census.



## APPENDIX.

### Appendix, (A.)

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE of the General Assembly, Edinburg; on the Letter to the Moderator by the Right Hon. William Sturges Bourne.

SIR,

Edinburg, 17th June, 1817.

I DULY communicated to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Letter of the 29th of May, with which you, as Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons, have been pleased to honour me.

In answer to this Letter, I have it now in my power to transmit to you such a Report as the Committee of the Assembly, expressly appointed for the purpose, has been enabled to draw up from information to which it had immediate access; but I have, at the same time, the honour of informing you, that the Assembly has directed its Committee to collect information more generally throughout the Church, which will enable me hereafter to transmit to you a fuller account of the management of the Poor in Scotland.

I have the honour to be respectfully,

Your most faithful and obedient Servant

*Gaven Gibb*, Moderator.

W. Sturges Bourne, Esq.

Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons.

THE COMMITTEE REPORT, That with the assistance of the Returns made to Mr. Kennedy's Inquiries, they have been able to prepare a Statement of the Management of the Poor in upwards of one hundred parishes in Scotland, which is ready to be laid before the Assembly; that there are still a very considerable number of additional Returns, amounting nearly, perhaps, to another hundred parishes, which it has not been possible within the time allowed them to arrange; and that the Committee take the liberty of suggesting the following Remarks, which have occurred to them, on the Returns which they have already arranged.—They remark,

1. That the Scotch have uniformly proceeded on the principle, that every individual is bound to provide for himself by his own labour, as long as he is able to do so; and that his parish is only bound to make up that portion of the necessaries of life, which he cannot earn or obtain by other lawful means.

2. That even in cases of extreme poverty, the relations and neighbours of the Paupers have a pride in providing for their necessities, either in whole or in part.—That this circumstance will account for the small number of Paupers in some very populous parishes; and serves at the same time to explain a fact, which is obvious in so many of the Returns in the country districts, that the sums given to the Paupers appear to be so disproportioned to what their real necessities require. A small sum, given to aid their other resources, affords them the relief which is necessary; and it would be both against the true interest and the moral habits of the people, if a more ample provision were made for them by their parishes.



3. That the distinction made in a great proportion of the Returns between the Poor in the regular parish roll, and the *industrious* Poor who receive only occasional supply, is of equal importance to the morals and the best interests of the country. Those of the first class receive a constant supply from the parish funds; those of the second are only assisted when they are laid aside from work by sickness or accidental causes; and especially during that season of the year which chiefly affects their health or suspends their usual labours. They receive at that time such assistance as their immediate necessities demand, for the limited period when they are in this situation: but when the cause which occasioned their demand ceases to operate the parish assistance is withdrawn, and they return to their labour, under a conviction, which they never relinquish, that both their subsistence and their comfort must ultimately depend on their personal industry.

4. That it appears from the Returns which have yet been examined, that in a great porportion of the country parishes in which legal assessments have been introduced, they have been afterwards abandoned; either because it has been found by experience that whatever addition the ordinary funds required might be found at much less expense by means of voluntary contributions, when any urgent pressure on the Poor should render it necessary; or because a regular assessment in those parishes have very generally been observed to produce an influx of Paupers from other parishes, who in three years (by the decisions of the courts of law for the last forty years) can acquire a legal settlement, if during that time they have supported themselves by their own industry; aggravating in this way the parochial burden beyond all reasonable proportion. It is clear, from the Returns examined, and the remarks contained in them, that this observation applies to no inconsiderable number of parishes, though the experience may be different in other situations which have not yet fallen under the view of the Committee; and that the voluntary contributions which are substituted in place of legal assessments, though in some instances they are unequal and partial, from the inattention or disinclination of individuals, have in general been found to answer the purpose, relieving those parishes of a much greater and more permanent burden, and as effectually providing for the real necessities of the Poor.

5. That it appears to the Committee, that in those districts to which the Reports they have considered relate, the weekly collections at the churches, in parishes in which there are few Dissenters, go far to provide for the support of the Poor; that collections at the churches have been in use from the earliest periods of the Scotch ecclesiastical establishment, and are recognised in the Acts of Parliament both as an ancient and *legal* resource for the maintenance of the Poor.—That every encouragement ought to be given to the continuance of the weekly collections; and that those parishes have not judged wisely, who appear to have abandoned them to make way for regular assessments.—That though it is true, that where there are legal assessments established, an unequal burden is laid on the inhabitants who attend the parish church, and give their weekly contributions there, independent of what they pay to the assessment; it is also true, that the apostolical rule of making such collections on the first day of the week, adopted by our church, and sanctioned by the Legislature, should not be hastily departed from; and that the discontinuance of such collections has obviously a most pernicious influence to render Poor's Rates both oppressive and perpetual.

6. That it is clear to the Committee, that in almost all the country parishes which have hitherto come under their notice, where a regular assessment



has been established, the wants of the Poor, and the extent of the assessments have gradually and progressively increased from their commencement; and that it does appear to be a matter of very serious interest to the community at large, to prevent as far as possible this practice from being generally adopted; to limit the assessments as much as they can be limited, where the circumstances of particular parishes render them unavoidable; and whenever it is practicable, to abandon them.

7. That it appears to the Committee from the Returns before them, that the weekly collections at the churches are a very efficient resource for the Parochial Poor, in every case in which there are a few Dissenters, or persons who absent themselves from their parish church; it is equally clear, on the other hand, that in those parishes in which the accommodation provided for the inhabitants in the parish churches bears no proportion to the population, a legal assessment seems to be inevitable, as long as this continues to be the situation of those parishes; that in such of these cases as have fallen under the view of the Committee, it is manifestly the ultimate interest, both of the landholders and the parishioners, to their respective parishes divided, and a sufficient number of churches provided, equal to the number of inhabitants; and that if this were done to the full extent, it is certain that the Poor might be supported without any necessity of having recourse to parochial assessments.—That at present the gradual increase of property in some of those parishes, by adding to the funds from which the assessments are raised, serves to keep down the amount of the charge on the parish at large; and that from this circumstance the amount of the assessments there has increased in a much less proportion, than the assessments in parishes in which the funds for assessment or the property assessed, has remained in a great measure stationary.

8. That where legal assessments are resorted to in Scotland, the provisions in the law which regulates the manner of imposing them are uniformly and strictly observed; that the law has given the power to assess a parish to a joint meeting, consisting of the minister, the heritors, and the elders of the parish, who are authorized to meet for the purpose on the first Tuesday of February and the first Tuesday of August in each year, when the assessment is imposed *half yearly*; or on either of those days, when it is fixed for a whole year.—That the practice in general is, to hold this meeting only once in the year, and most frequently on the first Tuesday of August, and at that time to assess for a whole year.—That the heritors in general, who are the persons chiefly interested, are accustomed to attend this meeting, and have the chief influence in determining the amount of the assessment, have it always in their power to keep it within reasonable bounds.—That in former times it was, and in parishes chiefly landward it still is imposed according to the *valued* rent of the lands; but that where a great part of the most valuable property consists in houses, this has been found to be an unequal rule, as it evidently lays on landed estates a very disproportioned part of the burden; that in these situations, therefore, the practice which prevails, and has been sanctioned by the decisions in the courts of law, is to impose the assessments according to the *real* rents of property both in houses and lands.—That the assessments thus imposed are laid on heritors and tenants by equal portions, the heritor paying one half of the assessment and the tenant the other, and both proportions being paid by an heritor who occupies his own property; with this exception, that a deduction is given of one fourth or the half of the assessment laid on the heritor of houses in name of reparations.—That at the annual meeting, at which such assessments are imposed, the heritors are



accustomed to attend, and have always the power of determining what is done; so that it rests in a great measure with themselves to prevent the assessment imposed from rising beyond what the fair necessities of the parish require.

9. That the statements on the management of the Poor within the city of Edinburgh and the parish of Saint Cuthbert's, show in what manner the Poor are provided for in the parishes of the largest population; in the first, where there is a legal assessment, which has been but very lately resorted to, and at the same time a parish workhouse; and in the second, which comprehends the suburbs of Edinburgh, and a larger population still, where there has been a legal assessment for upwards of fifty years, and also a parish workhouse.

10. That in the Schedules taken from the Returns of the country parishes, in order to render their statements uniform, the Committee have in general satisfied themselves with inserting an average of ten years, both with regard to the number of Paupers, and the Funds which are employed in supporting them.

WITH THESE REMARKS the Committee conclude this Report; humbly submitting it to the Assembly, to be transmitted, if it shall be approved of, to Mr. Stourges Bourne.

*H. Moncrieff Wellwood,*  
for the Sub Committee.

## APPENDIX (B.)

### PETITION FROM WOMBRIDGE, IN THE COUNTY OF SALOP, Respecting Poor Rates; read 26th March, 1817.

To the Right Honourable the Commons of Great Britain in  
Parliament assembled.

WE the Minister, Churchwardens, Overseers of the Poor, and all the Inhabitants and Occupiers of the Lands and Mines of the parish of Wombridge, in the county of Salop, who pay Poor Rates, beg leave humbly to represent to your Honourable House;

THAT this parish, wherein have been gotten for upwards of thirty years, considerable mines of coal and ironstone, is small, but very populous, containing about 1,900 Inhabitants (of whom only 33 pay Poor Rates,) and about 420 dwelling-houses, some of which are void:

That the number of Poor who receive pay from, and are actually chargeable to the parish, now consist of 620 persons, being nearly one-third of the population, which number is daily increasing by removals from other parishes, and want of employment:

That this parish also contains about 660 acres of land, 400 acres whereof only are cultivated, and that the remaining 260 acres being more than one-third of the whole, have been spoiled and rendered unfit for agriculture by the working and getting of the mines. And that the property of the parish is rated to its actual value, the greater part being held at a rack rent and rated accordingly; and the other portion is rated at the rent that might be had for it, and not according to the low rent paid:

That the annual value of the parish so ascertained is £2,390. 19s. 7d. including the royalties paid for the mines; but there are 389 houses which are not rated to the Poor, being occupied by persons who are not able to pay



any rate, and many of whom receive pay from the parish. The rents of the said last-mentioned houses are valued at £785. 16s. which being deducted from the total annual value, leaves only £1,605. 3s. 7d. rateable to the support of the Poor:

That the expenditure for the last three months was £602. 7s. 4d. and will consequently at the present rate amount to £2,611. 3s. 6d. per annum, which is £1,066. 19s. 6d. more than the yearly value, being thirty-three shillings in the pound:

That the parish officers, in the expectation of obtaining assistance from some other parish or parishes, have repeatedly applied to the proper authorities for relief under the 43rd of Elizabeth, by a rate in aid; and that they have from time to time borrowed divers sums of money, amounting in the whole to the sum of £200, in the hope and under the expectation of receiving such assistance, or rate in aid, towards enabling them to support their Poor, who are at present in a most wretched and destitute condition for want of clothing and other necessities; but that such relief has not yet been obtained, and the magistrates give them no reason to expect any, so that most of the occupiers of the land in the said parish who have for the last three years paid 15s. in the pound Poores Rate (consequently were possessed of but little property previous to the commencement of the present year) are now from the excessive burden of the Poor Rates reduced nearly to insolvency, and that in some instances warrants of distress have been issued and their goods sold, and at the present time the farming stock of the largest farm in the parish is about to be sold up to pay the Poor Rates. It will therefore appear to your Honourable House evident, the annual value of the lands, mines, and houses in this parish, is not sufficient to maintain the numerous and increasing Poor even if the same were to be set free of rent; and that these circumstances will inevitably compel the occupiers of the lands and mines to relinquish them, and that the Poor will be without relief, and without any known mode of obtaining it, unless some assistance is speedily afforded them:

We therefore humbly pray, that you will be pleased to take these circumstances into your serious consideration, and make such additional or explanatory laws, for the purpose of enabling parishes overburdened with Poor to obtain assistance from other parishes not so burdened, as to your Honourable House shall seem best.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray.

#### RENTS.

£. s. d.

— Charles Richard Cameron - Minister.

120 — — George Shepherd - }  
70 — — Edward B. Padmore - } Churchwardens.

45 — — John Bourne - }  
— George Shepherd - } Overseers.

1 — — James Clayton - }  
13 — — John Teague - }  
40 — — Thomas Teague - } Inhabitants who pay  
3 — — John Sherwood - } Poor Rates.  
6 — — Lancel Purcell - }  
7 — — Edward Howels - }  
10 — — Roger Dunning - }



£.	s.	d.			
10	—	—	John Dunning	-	-
5	12	—	Lydia Cadman	-	-
10	—	—	William Bannister	-	-
10	—	—	Benj <sup>n</sup> . Parker	-	-
60	7	2	James Onions	-	-
3	—	—	John Fletcher	-	-
9	10	—	George Ellis	-	-
17	—	—	John Mackay	-	-
—	6	—	Thomas Jervice	-	-
10	3	7	Joseph Picker	-	-
12	—	—	Martha Sillitoe	-	-
1	10	—	John Tratt	-	-
}					
Inhabitants who pay Poor Rates.					
4	—	—	John Ison	-	-
772	16	4	William Reynolds & Co.	-	-
52	—	—	Richard Mountford	-	-
77	16	6	Henry Williams	-	-
12	12	—	Thomas Pearce	-	-
110	—	—	Thomas Grice	-	-
6	—	—	Frances Picken	-	-
30	—	—	William Carfield	-	-
58	—	—	John Pickering	-	-
3	4	—	Samuel Morley	-	-
4	16	—	William Charlton	-	-
}					
Occupiers of Lands and Mines, but Non-residents.					
<hr/>					
£ 1,605	3	7			

### Appendix (C.)

#### FARM TO EMPLOY POOR; CRANBROOK, KENT.

SIR,

Swifts, Cranbrook, 24th March, 1817.

ON my return from attending our county assizes, Mr. Tye, one of the overseers of the Poor of this parish, brought me a letter, which he had received from you, relative to the management of the Poor of this parish, and particularly as to the management and good effect the parish feel from a farm which is rented and used for the benefit of the parish. I answer the letter myself, as I have taken much trouble to ascertain the good effect the parish derive from the farm.—The farm consists of nearly four hundred acres; and a certain number (eight) of the principal inhabitants in the parish, of which I am one, hire the farm as trustees for the parish; the landlord choosing to have permanent people answerable for his rent, which could not be the case were the overseers to be named. I conceive, and I have taken some pains to ascertain it, that the farm lessens the Poors Rate from 4s to 5s in the pound. The farm-house answers for the workhouse; the master of the workhouse has nothing to do with the farm; a bailiff is kept to manage that, under the direction of the trustees. The poor, old and young, are generally about one hundred in the house, all who are able to work, are employed on the farm in common works of agriculture; they work under the direction of the bailiff, as other farmers servants do, not having



any pay, except a few pence per week, as an encouragement. The master of the house finding food for them, the people work very willingly, and are anxious to remain in the house. We avoid keeping able hearty men in the house; if men want work for a short time, the overseers send them with a note to the bailiff, who employs them at common labourers wages per day, but does not board or lodge them in the house. If a mechanic applies to the overseers for subsistence or work, he is sent to the farm, and immediately set to agricultural work, which they are always willing to do; he may not be able to do nice and minute agricultural work, but there is always such as he can be employed on. We relieve many who do not live in the Poor House, viz. such as have large families but must be relieved; their earnings cannot support them; our labourers have generally 13s per week in winter, and 15s in summer; a man with 15s per week may support himself, wife and three children. I cannot say how much each Pauper costs for maintenance per week, as it is so blended with the produce from the farm. Our farm consists of corn, pasture, and hops, and considerably of wood; the farm finds the greater part of wheat for flour for the house; in general have sufficient. This year the wheat is short, owing to the crop being a bad one; wood for firing, the produce of six or eight cows, about 400 stone of pork fed by the farm, and some sheep are killed; our hops bring us a good deal of money. We have also a brick-kiln on the farm, which gives employment to many people. Had we not a farm to employ the Poor, our Poor would be nearly useless, as this is not a manufacturing county. I conceive a very material benefit arising from the farm is, that the children are early learnt agricultural labour, and of course are ready for farmers service.

We have lately had so many men out of employ, that we have employed them on the parish roads, and such-like, making it a rule never to give relief money but in the shape of work, or provisions. When the parish officers are obliged to find the labourers work, they give less than the usual wages, that they may take pains to find work for themselves. I have had the overseers with me this morning, and given them my advice in what way to answer the printed queries, and will soon send them to you. I should say more on this subject, but those queries anticipate the necessity. The high price of cottages are very hurtful to the poor, and the parish are necessitated to assist very much in the payment of the rents, or the poor man's goods would be sold, and he be turned destitute on the parish. Few of the cottages let for less than £5 per annum, and many more than that. We are labouring, I believe, like most parts of England, under a too abundant population, owing to the increase in early marriages, and the farmers keeping few labourers or workmen in their houses, which drives the labourer to hire a house; or, what is worse, live as a lodger at a public house. I have been many years resident in this parish, and acting as a magistrate, of course am pretty conversant with the poor. I am sorry I was not aware of the information you now wish for when I was in London a fortnight ago. I should have been happy to have conversed with you on the subject, and shall be happy to answer any inquiries you may address to me.

And am Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

J. AUSTEN.

*N.B.*—We build Cottages for the parish, being cheaper than paying rents, as we have mostly our own materials, and employ our Poor.

THOMAS FRANKLAND LEWIS, Esq.

Albemarle-street, London.



## Appendix (D.)

ON the Practicability of employing the Poor in the Labours of Agriculture, and the utility of renting "Parochial Farms" for that purpose. By the Rt. Honourable Sir JOHN SINCLAIR, Bart.

SIR,

THE difficulty of finding employment for the Poor, has necessarily attracted the attention of the Public at the present moment. It was therefore with much pleasure I learnt, that a system had been adopted in Kent (the hiring parochial farms, and employing the Poor in working them) which was attended with such success, that it might probably be advisable to extend the plan to every other district in the kingdom, where any difficulty in finding employment for the Poor was experienced.

In order to be satisfied of the practicability and the utility of the system, I resolved to visit the farms of two parishes, in whose neighbourhood I happened to be, and where the plan has been tried for some years; and I now propose to lay before the Public, the substance of the information thus obtained.

The first farm I saw, was that of Beaconhill, in the parish of Benenden, which has been occupied as a parish farm for ten years. The extent is about 86 acres; the rent £62 16s but some other fields being also hired by the parish, the whole rent is £111 16s. On the farm of Beaconhill, one team of four horses is kept. Fifteen acres are in wheat, and as much in spring corn; six acres in hops. The farm is at some distance from the Poor House, and is cultivated, not as subservient to that great object, the furnishing of healthy employment to the Poor, but in the style of common farming, with the view of diminishing, by means of the profit it yields, the burden of the Poor Rates. It is proper, however, to remark, that till of late there was rather a scarcity of labourers, than of work, in that neighbourhood; and since that circumstance has been reversed, some extra hands have been employed on the farm.

The following is an Account of the Net Profits arising from the farm of Beaconhill, for three years, ending at Michaelmas 1816:

Profit anno 1814, carried to the credit of the Poor Rates	-	£200
Ditto, anno 1815	- - - - -	200
Ditto, anno 1816	- - - - -	160
Average		£116 13s 4d
		£560

In the parish of Colnbrook, which is situated about 50 miles from London, on the road to Tenterden, the plan of parochial farming is undertaken on a much greater scale, two farms being hired, contiguous to each other, the extent and rent of which are as follow:

	Extent in Acres.	Rent.
Sissinghurst Castle Farm	- - - - - 360	- - £318
Brickkiln ditto	- - - - - 139	- - 130
		429 - - £448

There are on these farms, three teams, consisting of eight horses, and eight working bullocks; also eight milch cows, eight fatting beasts, one hundred sheep, and hogs capable of furnishing 400 stone of pork for the



use of the Poor House. This year the arable land was cultivated in the following manner:

Wheat	-	-	45 acres.
Lent Corn	-	-	70
Hops	-	-	23
Potatoes	-	-	4
Turnips	-	-	2
Fallow	-	-	35

Total - 179

About twenty acres are in permanent meadow; the rest of the land is in pasture, or in woods attached to the farm, which not only supply the house with fuel, but with poles for the hops.

Sissinghurst Castle is an old mansion house, which furnishes accommodation capable of holding above 100 poor persons; but with that number it is rather crowded. There are now in it about 88 paupers, of which 24 are children. It is necessary to purchase some butcher meat and malt, but the farm supplies most of the other articles necessary for the subsistence of the people. Mr. Epps, the overseer of the Poor House, who seems to be an intelligent person, assured me, that so far as he could judge, the plan of renting parochial farms was by far the best system to be adopted for the advantage of the Poor in country parishes; the girls being taught to milk cows, and the boys to plough and drive the team, and other operations of husbandry, and that in consequence of these acquisitions, they get into service at an earlier age than would otherwise be the case: both young and old also enjoy an excellent state of health, from the pure and wholesome air they breathe, and the other advantages of a country life.

The farm of Sissinghurst has been, for above 21 years, in the occupation of the parish; and a new lease to that extent has been lately entered into. It is managed by a bailiff under the direction of a committee of the neighbouring gentlemen, in whose names the farm was taken, and who are responsible for the rent.

The accounts of the farms, and the general expenses of the parish, are so blended together, that it was impossible to obtain an accurate statement of the profit arising from the land thus occupied; but the parish officers informed me, that the Poor Rates in the parish of Cranbrook were only at the rate of 8s in the pound; whilst in the neighbouring parishes, they were, in several instances 14 or 15s and in some parishes, at no great distance, even still higher. They had no doubt, however, that had it not been for the profits of the farm, the Poor Rates would have at least been 12s in the pound. The total amount of those Rates in the parish of Cranbrook amounts to £ 3,300; consequently, by the Poor Rates being kept down to 8s. there is a saving to the parish of £1,650 per annum.

It may be said, that though such a plan may answer in Kent, owing to the culture of hops, which employs a number of hands, and, in particular seasons, yields great profit, yet that it may not succeed so well in other places. That culture, however, is attended with great expense, is occasionally extremely unproductive, and the profit arises from the crops being short (which was the case for the last three years) and consequently a higher price was obtained for the article. But the culture of hops can by no means be considered as essential for such establishments, and by far less as a *sine qua non*; more especially if the farm were cultivated as much as possible by manual labour and in the garden style.

At a time when so many farms are likely to be unoccupied in several parts of the kingdom, and when their buildings must of course go to decay;—when such numbers of industrious labourers, also, complain that they



can find no work, it is well worth consideration, whether the plan of parochial farms might not be undertaken in other counties besides that of Kent. This is a favourable time to try the experiment, when the rent of land is low, and the expense of stocking a farm might be accomplished by a moderate capital. The plan might be executed under the direction of an active and intelligent committee, whose time could not be more usefully, or more satisfactorily employed; and it would appear, from the facts above detailed, that under such a system, the expense of one half of the Poor Rates, that would otherwise be necessary, might be saved, and the Poor furnished with a healthy and useful employment.

I am Sir, your very obedient Servant,

235, Oxford-street, October 1816.

JOHN SINCLAIR.

\* \* In the Suffolk Report, 3d edition, p. 234, there is an account of "The Houses of Industry" erected in that district, several of which have land attached to them, to the extent of from five to forty-five acres, generally in pasture; but in one case, that of Wangford Hundred, twenty-seven acres are arable. There does not seem, however, to have been any idea of renting farms for the benefit of the Poor Rates, or the employment of the Poor.

## Appendix, (E.)

### ON COTTAGE FARMS;

A Statement made by T. G. ESTCOURT, a Member of the Committee.

AT Lady-day 1811, a Cottage Farm was instituted by a private individual, in the parish of Bishop's Cannings, in the county of Wilts; it is situated at about half a mile from the residence of the occupiers; the soil is a sandy loam, well calculated for cultivation by the spade, and for the production of garden vegetables, but requiring the aid of manure to render it very fertile: the quantity of land occupied by each tenant is from a quarter to half an acre: the rent is at the rate of two guineas per acre, the landlord paying tithe and taxes of every description: the tenure is from year to year and the only conditions are, first, that the tenant shall receive no parochial relief: and secondly, that he shall, on the appointed day in November in each year, pay the year's rent due at the preceding Michaelmas.

The effect of this plan has been, in the opinion of the overseers and of those most competent to form a correct judgment, highly beneficial, inasmuch as by this means many industrious individuals have been enabled to relinquish the parochial relief to which the maintenance of large families had obliged them to have recourse, and others have entirely escaped the painful necessity of becoming dependants in any degree on the Poor Rate.

There are at present thirteen tenants, each of whom occupies half an acre; and nineteen, each in the occupation of a quarter of an acre.

Three tenants have, since 1812, relinquished their allotments in consequence of their becoming farmers or gardeners upon a much larger scale, and two have been obliged to quit in consequence of their having failed to comply with the conditions upon which they were, however, immediately filled as the vacancies occurred.

Of the thirty-two families, consisting of one hundred and fifty individuals, at present in occupation, and thus creditably and laudably maintaining themselves, none have failed in the strictest observance of either of the conditions upon which they took their land; and it may be as satisfactory to the Committee to be informed, as it is gratifying to the individual making the communication, to state, that the conduct of these industrious people has been, during the whole period of their tenancy, altogether unimpeachable.

February 1, 1817.







## Appendix, (G.)

## MEMORIAL of the Magistrates of the County of Suffolk, respecting Poor Rates.

WE, the undersigned Magistrates of the County of Suffolk, beg leave respectfully to submit to the Committee for the Revision of the Poor Laws, the following Observations on a subject intimately connected with that of their present labours, and which we hope may be found not undeserving their attention:—

In the present alarming state of the Poor Rates it must be obvious to the Committee, that there must have been some very unexpected and extraordinary alteration, either in the situation of the Poor or in the management of the funds for their relief, when, in no very great space of time, these Rates are swelled to an amount not only unprecedented, but beyond what any actual change in the situation of the agricultural population might appear to warrant.

We are perfectly aware, that in an institution embracing such a variety of objects as the Rate for the relief of the Poor, the sudden and enormous increase of this assessment is not to be ascribed to any *single* cause, but to the co-operation of *many*, concurring to produce a joint effect: nor would we be understood to affirm, that what we are about to suggest is the most general, or even the principal cause of its rapid and astonishing augmentation; but we trust it will appear to the Committee, that it is *one* amongst many others; that it has actually added very materially to the burthen of the assessment; and that it is indefensible in every point of view, as being at once unjust, impolitic and cruel.

The circumstance to which we allude is a practice which has prevailed, if not generally, certainly in a considerable part of this county, of giving reduced and sufficient wages to labourers in husbandry, and sending them to the Poor Rate for the remainder of the sum necessary for their support. Thus, the labourer, whose family requires eighteen shillings a week for their maintenance, receives perhaps nine shillings (in some parishes not more than six) from his employer, and the remaining nine from the overseers. It will be evident to the Committee, that a practice like this must necessarily raise the Rate far beyond its usual amount; that it is thus made subsidiary to wages; and that it becomes an assessment, not so much for the relief of the Poor as for their employers; a great proportion of whose agricultural labour is paid for by the Public, though the immediate benefit is exclusively their own.

The Committee will not fail to observe, that the evil does not stop here, but accumulates and gathers strength in its progress. If the farmer can reduce his wages to eighteen-pence or a shilling a day, he can, by the same authority, reduce, them to sixpence, to three pence, or to a penny, and throw his labourer upon the parish for the rest; and if this discretionary power is permitted to the farmer, we do not see how it can be withheld from the carpenter, the bricklayer, the blacksmith, or in short, from any person exercising a trade and employing the labour of others. By which means the wages of the whole of the labouring Poor will be thrown upon the Rates, and this most useful and industrious class of the community will become at once eleemosynary and dependent.



We beg to remind the Committee, that if we do not follow up our conclusion to the manufacturing Poor, it is because Suffolk is principally an agricultural county, and because we wish to confine our suggestions to what falls immediately within our own cognizance. And we also beg to state our conviction, that the situation of the farmers is not such as disables them from paying for their labour at a fair and reasonable rate of wages. If, indeed, the Poor Rates were levied *solely upon those who employed labourers*, the evil, though great, would be less oppressive. But when it is recollected that the small occupier, who cultivates his little farm by his own labour and that of his family; that the tradesman, the mechanic, and (where cottages are rated, or where a little land is attached to them) *even the labourer* is compelled to pay to this assessment, the hardship and partiality of this practice is most evident and striking.

In large villages and country towns, where a considerable proportion of the inhabitants are subject to the payment of the Poor Rate, although not occupiers of lands, the injustice of this system is also very apparent. The professional man, the annuitant, the shopkeeper, the artisan, all are taxed for the payment of labour, from which they derive no immediate benefit, and in the profits of which they have no participation.

We forbear to enlarge further upon the subject, as we trust enough has already been said to satisfy the Committee, that such an appropriation of what ought to be the *Poor's Rate* is *unjust*,

It is also *impolitic*;—For it tends to debase the industrious labourer to the class of the Pauper; it habituates him to the reception of parish relief; it teaches him to look to the Rate for his usual maintenance, instead of applying to it reluctantly in sickness or old age; and it saps the vital principle of industry, and obliterates the little remaining honest pride of independence.

It is *cruel*;—Because the burthen of the wages of labour, the immediate profit of which is to others, is thus thrown upon that part of the community which is already borne down by the weight of public taxes, and of the necessary parochial assessments.

We beg to submit to the Committee, that for the evil thus detailed, the existing laws, in our apprehension, furnish no relief. If the labourer, whose earnings are insufficient for his support, applies to a magistrate, the magistrate, *having no power to fix the rate of wages*, MUST, however reluctantly, ORDER relief from the Poor Rate; and, *as this order is final and conclusive*, the several classes before mentioned as aggrieved by this unequal assessment, are *precluded from the benefit of appeal against the overseers account*, and left without remedy against this glaring act of injustice and oppression.

Such being our view of the subject, we hope we may be allowed to call the attention of the Committee to the necessity of putting a stop to this pernicious practice of *mixing the wages of labour with the relief of the Poor*; and, intreating their indulgence for the freedom of these suggestions, we leave the matter in their hands, in the full confidence that they will adopt such regulations as in their wisdom they shall think advisable and expedient.

Rous.

T. S. Gooch.

D. E. Davy.

F. Hotham.

Geo. Turner

E. Barlee.

F. Capper.

W<sup>m</sup> Browne.

W<sup>m</sup> Carthew.

Ed. Moor.

Cha<sup>s</sup> Brooke

Charles Davy.

Sam. Kilderbee.

John Gibson.

Henry Denny Berners.



## ADDENDA.

---

*BY THE LORDS COMMITTEES appointed to consider of the Poor Laws, and report to the House; and who were empowered to report the Evidence taken before them from time to time to the House; and to whom several Petitions on the Subject have been referred.*

### ORDERED TO REPORT,

THAT in applying themselves to the important subject referred to their consideration, the Committee have felt it their duty in the first instance to direct their attention to the laws which are to be found upon the Statute Book at an early period, the provisions of many of which were afterwards embodied in the act of the 43d of Elizabeth, and laid the foundation of the present system. The statute of labourers of the 23d of Edward III. appears to have been enacted in consequence of the melancholy effects arising from a pestilential disorder that had prevailed at that period, and which caused so great a scarcity of labourers in husbandry, that an Act was passed containing the following provisions: "That every person under sixty years of age, able to work, and not deriving any fixed maintenance from trade, handicraft, or personal property of his own, nor possessing land requiring his own labour, and not being already engaged in other service, should, if required, to engage in a service fit and suitable to his station, he held to be so engaged to the person so requiring him; and should receive the usual wages of the part of the country in which he should serve, on an average of the last twenty, or six, or five years."

There are other provisions to prevent a greater number of labourers being employed by any one person than are necessary for his service; and also for the punishing of those who shall refuse suitable service and employment, by imprisonment, unless proper security shall be given.

There then follows a series of Acts of the same year (23d Edw. III.) to prevent agricultural labourers from quitting their service before the time agreed upon, without licence or reasonable cause; and against the giving or receiving of higher than the accustomed wages; under pain of imprisonment in the case of the artificers or workmen, and of the forfeiture of treble the value in the case of the lord of a town or manor offending against the statute.

The 2d. of Rich. II. confirms the above acts, and in the 12th of Rich. II. other statutes were enacted, restraining labourers and servants from leaving the hundred, rape, or wapentake in which



they had resided and were employed, without a certificate of the cause of their departure, and specifying the time of their return (12 Rich. II. Cap. 2.)

The 12th of Rich. II. Cap. 4. prohibits the giving or taking of more wages than are limited by statute.

The 5th chapter of the same year directs, that no person who has been brought up to the occupation of husbandry to the age of twelve years, shall be afterwards put to any other trade; and that all covenants of apprenticeship contrary to this act shall be null and void. At the same period a law was passed for the punishment of itinerant mendicants who were able to work; and for providing for such beggars as were impotent, in the towns and cities in which they might be resident at the time of the proclamation of the statute; and providing further, that "if the people of the above cities and towns were unwilling or unable to maintain them, they should be conveyed to other towns in the hundred, rape or wapentake,"\* or to the towns where they were born, in forty days after the said proclamation. It further provided, that all those who went in pilgrimage as mendicants, being able to work, should be treated in the same manner as the aforesaid servants and labourers, unless they had letters testimonial of their pilgrimage, under the seal of the ordinary. Clerks of the university, who go about begging, are also required by the act to have letters testimonial from their chancellor, under the same penalty.

The 12th of Rich. II. cap. 9, ordains, that the act relating to servants and labourers begging and wandering, shall have force and be executed as well in cities and boroughs as in other towns and places of the kingdom.

By the 13th of Rich. II. cap. 8, it is accorded and appointed, that the justices of peace in every county, at their sessions held between Easter and Michaelmas, shall make proclamation at their discretion according to the price of victuals, how much every mason, carpenter, tyler, and other artificers and workmen, and also labourers by the day, as well in harvest as in other times of the year, shall receive daily, either with or without meat and drink, during that period, between the aforesaid sessions.

The 15th of Rich. II. cap. 6, directs, that in every license from thenceforth to be made in the chancery of the appropriation of any parish church, it shall be expressly contained and comprised, that the diocesan shall ordain a proper sum of money, according to the value of such churches, to be paid yearly, of their fruits and profits, to the poor parishioners of the said churches, in aid of their living and sustenance for ever; and that the vicar be well and sufficiently endowed. Other statutes were passed in the reign of Henry VI. and Henry VII. for continuing the statutes of

---

\* Et si les gentz des ditz citees ou villes ne voillent ou ne poient suffir de les trover, qe les ditz Mendinantz soi traihent aus autres villes dans le hundred, &c. &c.



Richard II. concerning the wages of labourers, to which reference has been made; and also for preventing persons wishing to change their service from leaving their employers without sufficient notice to enable them to provide other servants in their place.

Some of the early statutes which have been already cited, and particularly that of the 2d of Rich. II. refer to the principle of settlement by residence; but appear to have been enacted rather in the view of providing against the scarcity of labourers in husbandry (which was occasionally felt in those times), than to have had any reference to the claim of individuals to relief from particular districts; but they provide for the aged and infirm, and those unable to maintain themselves, who were therefore compelled to subsist by begging; the statutes having for one of their object to prevent itinerant mendicity.

The first law in which any imperative words are used in respect to the relief of the poor, is the 27th of Henry VIII. cap. 25, by which provision is ordered to be made by "all governors of shires, cities, towns, hundreds, &c. by way of voluntary and charitable alms, for the finding and keeping of every aged, poor, and impotent person, who was born or dwelt three years within the same limit." It also contains provisions for the prevention of begging, and for putting to service in husbandry and other crafts or labours all children above five and under fourteen years of age, who live in idleness, and are taken begging.

The 28th of Henry VIII. cap. 5, contains some very humane regulations for the protection of apprentices against the exaction of fees, to which they had been subjected "by the acts and ordinances of divers wardens and fellowships, contrary to the meaning of an act of the 19th of Henry VII.; and also to prevent their being restrained by oath or bond from keeping or setting up any shop after the expiration of their apprenticeship."

The 3d and 4th of Edward VI. relates to the punishment of rogues and vagabonds; revises the statute of 22d Henry VIII. cap. 12. for the relief of impotent and aged persons; and directs that maimed, sore, aged, and impotent persons shall be relieved and cured, and habitations provided for them, by the devotion of good people of that city, town, or village where they were born, or had dwelt three years.

The 5th and 6th of Edward VI. cap. 2. and the 2d and 3d of Philip and Mary, cap. 5. relate to the same object of relief: the latter providing a "remedy where a parish is not able to relieve the poor therein, and where a town surcharged with poor standeth in or near two counties."

The next act which appears upon the statute book, is the 3d of Elizabeth, cap. 3, which provides, that the poor and impotent persons of every parish shall be relieved of that which every person will of their charity give weekly; and that the same relief shall be gathered in every parish by collectors assigned, and weekly distributed to the poor; for none of them shall openly go or sit begging. And if any parishioner shall obstinately refuse to



pay reasonably towards the relief of the said poor, or shall discourage others, then the justices of the peace at the quarter sessions may tax him to a reasonable weekly sum, which if he refuse to pay, they may commit him to prison. And if any parish have in it more impotent poor persons than they are able to relieve, then the justices of the peace of the county may license so many of them as they shall think good, to beg in one or more hundreds of the same county.

The object of this act was probably to encourage private charity by providing for its proper distribution; as well as to prevent begging, either by itinerants or persons placing themselves by the way-side for that purpose.

It is also the first statute that is absolutely compulsory in respect to an assessment for the relief of the poor.

The very next statute of the same year, the 5th Elizabeth, cap. 4, entitled "An act containing divers orders for artificers, labourers, servants of husbandry, and apprentices," relates to so great a variety of regulations upon this subject, that your committee will merely give an abstract of the preamble, to convey an idea of the act itself.

"Although there remain and stand in force presently, a great number of statutes concerning the retaining, departing, wages, and orders of apprentices, servants, and labourers, as well in husbandry as in divers other arts, mysteries, and occupations; yet partly for the imperfection and contrariety that is found in sundry of the said laws, and for the variety and number of them, and chiefly for that the wages and allowances limited and rated in many of the said statutes are in divers places too small, and not answerable to this time, respecting the advancement of prices of all things belonging to the said servants and labourers, the said laws cannot conveniently without the great grief and burden of the poor labourer and hired man, be put in good and due execution: and as the said several acts and statutes were in the time of the making of them thought to be very good and beneficial for the commonwealth of the realm (as divers of them are), so if the substance of as many of the said laws as are meet to be continued shall be digested and reduced into one sole law and statute, and in the same an uniform order prescribed and limited concerning the wages and other orders for apprentices, servants, and labourers, there is good hope that it will come to pass that the same law (being duly executed) shall banish idleness, advance husbandry, and yield unto the hired person, both in the time of scarcity and in the time of plenty, a convenient proportion of wages."

The above act appears to proceed upon the presumption that persons who could find employment would earn sufficient for their support; and the 43d of Elizabeth was undoubtedly formed upon the same basis; the consequence of which would necessarily be, that it was only such as could not find work themselves, that the parishes were obliged to employ.



The 18th of Elizabeth gives power to the justices in respect to the mothers and reputed fathers of bastard children, who were to be charged with the weekly payment of money, or assist in providing of other sustentation for their relief; and in default thereof to be committed to the common gaol.

It also contains provisions for the conveyance of rogues from one parish to another; for providing a stock to set the poor on work in every city and town corporate: for establishing houses of correction in every county; and providing also that lands holden in socage, may during twenty years, be giving towards the maintenance of houses of correction, and stock to the poor.

The 31st of Elizabeth, cap. 7, though not referring to the employment or relief of the poor, is so much connected with the subject, that it seems proper to refer to it in this place. It provides, that for the avoiding of the great inconveniences which are found by experience to grow by the erecting of great numbers and multitudes of cottages, which are daily more and more encreased in many parts of the realm, no person shall erect any manner of cottage for habitation or dwelling, unless the same persons do assign and lay to the same cottage or buildings four acres of ground at the least, to be occupied and manured therewith, so long as the same cottage shall be inhabited. There are exceptions for cottages in cities and market towns; and for the habitations of workmen in mines and quarries; and also for cottages within one mile of the sea; for cottages on forests, chases, warrens, and parks; and for dwellings of herdsmen and shepherds.

The probable object of this act was to enable the labourer to maintain himself partly by the produce of the land under his own management, and partly by working for others; thus raising a middle class of labourers between the farmer and the mere day-labourer.

The 39th of Elizabeth directs who shall be overseers of the poor, by whom and when they shall be appointed, their office and duty, their accounts, their forfeitures, &c.

The committee did not conceive they should have performed the duty entrusted to their charge, if they had not endeavoured to bring under your lordships' view a short summary of the laws preserved on the statute book upon this subject, from the periods at which the different parts of the system appear to have been first established. That summary is now brought down to the 43d of Elizabeth; in which the different laws and provisions that had previously existed for several years, are united and consolidated. From lapse of time, and a departure from the true spirit of the above act, arising frequently from the humane exercise of its supposed powers, abuses have undoubtedly been introduced into the general administration of the poor laws of England; but the committee are nevertheless decidedly of opinion, that the general system of those laws, interwoven as it is with the habits of the people, ought, in the consideration of any measures to be adopted



for their melioration and improvement, to be essentially maintained. It is under this act that the fund for employing the poor who are able to work, and for maintaining those who are unable to do so, is raised at this day, with several modifications and alterations however, that have been enacted by subsequent statutes.

It must be obvious to any one who considers the general scope and probable view of many of the statutes which have been enumerated, that at the period of their enactment, the state of the country was extremely different from that in which it is now placed, in many important instances; and that consequently, though in the opinion of the committee the system of the poor laws ought to be maintained, yet it must be admitted that some of their provisions are less applicable, and perhaps more difficult in the execution under present circumstances, than at the time of their original establishment. At that period the population of the country was chiefly agricultural; and from the tenor of some of the early laws to which reference has been made, it appears that apprehensions occasionally existed of a deficiency, even in that population, for the necessary occupations of husbandry. The progressive encrease which has since taken place in the general population of the kingdom; and the great proportion of that population which during a long series of years has found a constant and advantageous employment in the occupations of trade, handicraft and manufacture, and in attendance upon the more opulent members of the community, (whose numbers have also encreased in a great proportion) have produced important changes in the operation of the poor laws; for upon the sudden failure of demand for some of those manufactures which had so long afforded the greatest encouragement and most ample means of subsistence to the population of entire districts, the most serious distress has ensued. The consequence has been that those classes of persons upon whom the assessments are made for the necessary maintenance and relief of the manufacturer and artisan, when suddenly deprived of their accustomed means of support, have, in some instances, been exposed to a degree of pressure and embarrassment which has probably never been experienced to so great an extent at any former period. At the same time, however, that the attention of the committee has been drawn to the distress which has existed in some of the manufacturing districts, they think it material to observe, that considerable distress likewise appears to have prevailed in many parts of the country which are exclusively agricultural.

In the prosecution of this important and extensive enquiry the committee have examined a variety of witnesses, several of whom have attended voluntarily, without summons, for the purpose of offering such information as they possessed respecting particular districts. From the general result of the evidence, it has appeared to the committee, that though in some of the districts and in some country parishes, not containing any large or populous towns,



the encrease in the rates has not been of any great amount, and in some less than might have been expected under all the circumstances of the present time (referring more particularly to the effects of the unfavourable harvest of last year throughout Europe and also to the want of employment, which has been severely felt in many parts of the country), yet in other districts, which are almost exclusively agricultural, the committee have reason to believe that very great distress has prevailed, and that the rates have been considerably augmented. In the manufacturing districts, as has been already observed, where the population has of late greatly exceeded the demand for labour, the burthen of the rates has been particularly severe, notwithstanding the large subscriptions which have been raised by private benevolence, and (as will appear from the evidence annexed) a very general and meritorious attention to the administration of the funds, on the part of the overseers and other persons appointed to superintend the management of the poor in some of the great manufacturing towns.

In the course of the evidence many details are enumerated of the actual amount and comparative encrease of the rates in different places and at different periods; and information has been also collected of the manner in which relief is given, and of the description of persons who partake of it in different parts of the kingdom. In many parishes a system has been adopted, in consequence of the decrease in the demand for work, of employing labourers in rotation amongst the farmers; and in some places this practice has been carried to such an extent that fewer regular labourers have been employed than the necessary works in husbandry would have required upon each farm; those works having been performed by (what are called) roundsmen, at less than the usual rate of wages. Wherever superfluous labourers have been employed in works, not of absolute necessity, but which have been undertaken and executed by individuals for the sake of affording relief and furnishing employment to those who could not otherwise have obtained it, this practice must have afforded an important though temporary relief; but in the case referred to, as stated in the evidence, the effect of the system of roundsmen has been to throw upon the general rates of parishes in which the system has prevailed, in the most direct and obvious manner, a very considerable proportion of the wages of that labour, the charge of which ought to have been defrayed by the inhabitants for whom it was performed.

The committee have also observed, in the course of their enquiry, that a practice, which appears to have commenced at the period of scarcity in the year 1795, and which was continued in the years 1800 and 1801, of making up to labourers with families the insufficiency of their usual wages by aid from the poors rates, has been regularly continued in many parts of the kingdom; a practice which, though it may have prevented for some time the rising of the direct price of labour, has been in a certain degree



attended with the injurious effect of taxing those who have no interest in it with a proportion of the expence.

Independently of this indirect addition to the poors rate, the general amount of it receives a still further encrease by other charges of a public nature, in no way applicable to the maintenance or relief of the poor. Of this description are the various charges connected with the militia, and whatever sums are expended in the building and repairing of gaols, of county bridges, of shire halls, the expence of criminal prosecutions, of indictments for roads, and fines in consequence of such indictments; as well as other charges which are of a public nature, and defrayed out of the county rates.

The committee have therefore felt it an important part of their duty to enquire into the mode of assessing property to the poors rate: and into the construction that has at any time been put upon those words in the statute of the 43d of Elizabeth, which, in describing the persons on whom the rate is to be levied, appear to raise a distinction between the inhabitants of a parish and the occupiers of land and houses.

It appears that in different instances personal property has been assessed to the poor rates, though in some cases appeals have been made against such a mode of rating. From the decisions of the courts, the principle of rating other property than land and houses appears to have been generally admitted to be consistent with law; but the difficulty has consisted in describing the sort of property which is liable to assessment; as it has been deemed essential that it should be some local and visible property within the parish for which the assessment is made.

Upon the subject of the general mode of assessment for the relief of the poor, the committee are of opinion, upon the fullest consideration, that nothing can tend to keep the present system of the poors rates within reasonable bounds, but that the assessment should continue to be levied upon those who are immediately interested in the disbursement, and who, from personal knowledge of the character and situation of the individuals, are best enabled to judge of the justice of their claims and the extent of their wants, in cases of application for relief.

The committee have thought it right to examine evidence respecting the management of the poor in Scotland; where, though a power exists by law to impose a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor, recourse has seldom been had to it, except under particular circumstances, and in populous and manufacturing towns. Considerable sums are raised by regular collections at the churches, which are applied to the purpose of relieving the poor at the discretion of the minister and elders, composing (what is called) the Kirk Session. By means of these collections, and of further voluntary contributions on the part of the heritors and other inhabitants, the necessity for a compulsory assessment is generally avoided, except in times of particular distress. Upon



this subject a report received from the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, on the management of the poor in that part of the United Kingdom, having been referred to the committee, together with some interesting details contained in other documents, they subjoin them for your lordships information.

It would have been gratifying to the committee, in the discharge of the important and arduous duty imposed upon them by your lordships, if they could have suggested any measures that would have produced a diminution of those burthens which have pressed so heavily of late years upon the occupiers of land and houses; and in this view they have endeavoured to collect the opinions of those witnesses who from their general knowledge and experience were most likely to afford information as to any alterations that might be suggested in the present laws, as well with a view to the interests and comfort of the poor, as to an alleviation of the pressure upon those who are liable to the rates.

It must be evident to your lordships that the subject is in its nature so extensive and difficult, that little more can be expected, especially in the first instance, from any exertions that can be made by individuals, or perhaps from the collective wisdom of parliament, that such alleviation of the burthens, as may be derived from an improved system of management and from rendering the laws more simple in their execution. The great encrease in the amount of the rates of late years, has arisen not only from the causes which have been enumerated, but from the general disposition to resort to that species of maintenance on account of the facility with which it has been frequently obtained; which has tended to weaken amongst the poor that disposition to economy which formerly existed in many parts of the country, and which it is highly desirable, on account of their comfort and independence, to encourage and revive.

Though there is reason to believe that the general amount of the expence of litigation arising from appeals has been at all times rather exaggerated, yet it is undoubtedly desirable, not only in the view of lessening the charges, but for the sake of those who may be the objects of removal, to make some alteration in the law of settlements. The committee, therefore, submit to the consideration of the House, whether it might not be expedient to provide that every person residing for three years in any parish without being chargeable (and who has been employed during the above period in the said parish), shall obtain a settlement; and that, in case that mode of settlement should be adopted after a time to be fixed, no person shall acquire a settlement by hiring and service, or by apprenticeship; and the committee think they may safely recommend that no settlement shall be acquired in any parish by renting a tenement, unless it shall consist of an house or land, or of an house with land, and shall be held under one landlord and in the same parish, at an annual *bonâ fide* rent of twenty pounds, and for not less than one year.



The committee likewise submit, particularly from the evidence which they received from Manchester and Birmingham, that a power should be given to remove persons belonging to counties not within the operation of the poor laws, who shall become chargeable to any parish, to their respective homes. It has also appeared to the committee, that great advantage would arise (particularly in large parishes) from the appointment of permanent overseers and surveyors of the highways, with salaries, and from the union of small parishes for a similar purpose: and that it is adviseable to give a power to parishes, in certain cases, to occupy land with a view to the employment of the poor.

It might likewise be proper to regulate the right of voting in vestries, on all questions relating to the management of the poor, according to the proportion in which the individual is assessed to the poor rates.

In addition to the above suggestion of the appointment of a permanent overseer, the committee are of opinion that great advantage would arise, in various ways, from procuring, by means of regular and periodical returns to be made to the magistrates of counties, a clear and systematic account of the state of every parish in respect to the management of the rates imposed for the relief of the poor, and the employment and relief of those who are entitled to the care and attention of the overseers; such accounts to be returned once in the course of the year to the quarter sessions; to be regularly preserved and accessible to the inspection of any person applying to examine them.

It is unnecessary to dwell upon the advantage of publicity in all accounts of public concern, and particularly on the advantage that might be expected to arise from it in accounts of this description, partaking both of general and individual interest; and involving questions on which many of the persons to whose observation they would be regularly submitted, are not only competent to judge, but interested in forming a correct and impartial judgment.

The committee are also decidedly of opinion, from every information they have received, that it is expedient to recommend the adoption of Provident or Saving Banks, as likely to encrease the comforts and improve the condition of the poor, and to render them less dependent on parochial relief; which, under the best and most considerate administration of it, can never be so satisfactory to the person who is the object of it, or so consistent with those honourable feelings of pride and independence which are implanted in the heart of man, as that resource which is the result of his own industry and the produce of his own exertions.

The committee cannot conclude this report, without endeavouring to impress upon your lordships, and upon all persons of weight and influence throughout the country, the great importance of a just, correct, and vigilant administration of the laws relating to the poor; and of recommending in the most earnest manner, to



all who have the opportunity, the most unremitting attention to improve their general management, and to correct those evils which may have arisen from a negligent or mistaken administration of them.

The advanced period of the session will, of course, preclude the possibility of any immediate alteration in the present laws; but so far from considering this circumstance as a matter of regret, the committee are of opinion that more advantage will ultimately arise from affording time for deliberation upon the different suggestions which have been made, than from hastily adopting alterations, which, however useful they may at present appear, might possibly hereafter in the detail be found inconsistent with a more general plan of improvement in the system itself.















