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Yvonne Joyce Potter

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Yvonne Joyce Potter. B.A. Thesis.

Economic Change, Poverty and Poor Relief: The Able-bodied Pauper and the New Poor Law in North Yorkshire, 1834 - 1900.

ABSTRACT.

The framers of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 envisaged that, under the reformed relief system, with its tenet of 'less eligibility', the problem of able-bodied pauperism would disappear. The thesis investigates the relief of able-bodied poor in North Yorkshire, in the period c 1834-1900, and asks whether the New Poor Law, as it operated in this rural northern region, was successful in terms of the aims of '1834'. The interest of such a regional study lies in the unique problems of poverty, associated with de-industrialisation, which were typical of neither the rural south nor the northern industrial towns - areas which have received considerable attention from both contemporary poor law commentators and historians. The first chapter is concerned with the process of de-industrialisation - the timing and extent of the decline of rural industries, the size and distribution of their labour force, in addition to their rates of wages and employment. The interaction between central and local poor law authorities in the administration of able-bodied poor relief in North Yorkshire forms the subject of chapter two, while chapter three examines in more detail the pressure exerted on the poor relief system by different groups of able-bodied poor in the period of de-industrialisation. Finally, the relative importance of poor law relief in the lives of the able-bodied poor is considered. Concentrating on just one aspect of the New Poor Law and attempting to relate socio-economic developments to the administration of poor relief necessitated sifting through much primary poor law material for only a modest return and analysing de-industrialisation in more detail than is possible from secondary sources alone.

Economic Change, Poverty and Poor Relief: The Able-bodied Pauper and  
the New Poor Law in North Yorkshire, 1834 - 1900.

Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the Faculty of  
Social Sciences, University of Durham. 1980.

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ABBREVIATIONS

P.L.C.	Poor Law Commission
P.L.B.	Poor Law Board
L.G.B.	Local Government Board
W	Weaver
CW	Cotton Weaver
LW	Linen Weaver
WW	Worsted Weaver
HLW	Handloom Weaver
HLWC	Handloom Cotton Weaver
HLWD	Handloom Worsted Weaver
PLW	Power Loom Weaver
WC	Woolcomber
P.P.	Parliamentary Paper
B.G.M.	Board of Guardians' Minutes
V.M.	Vestry Minutes
S.V.M.	Select Vestry Minutes
L.B.	Letter Books
C.E.S.	Census Enumerators' Schedules
C.T.L.H.S.	Cleveland and Teesside Local History Society Bulletin
E.C.R.	Economic History Review
J.R.S.S.	Journal of the Royal Statistical Society
J.S.S.	Journal of the Statistical Society
N.Y.C.R.O.	North Yorkshire County Record Office
W.Y.C.R.O.	West Yorkshire County Record Office
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
B.M.	British Museum
C.U.P.	Cambridge University Press

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ECONOMIC CHANGE, POVERTY AND POOR RELIEF:  
THE ABLE-BODIED PAUPER AND THE NEW POOR LAW  
IN NORTH YORKSHIRE. 1834 - 1900.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis is not a general history of Poor Law administration in North Yorkshire after 1834: it makes no attempt to deal with most of the routine matters - bastardy, orphanage, sickness and old age - which occupied the day to day attention of the Boards of Guardians and their officials, throughout the nineteenth century. Rather it is an attempt to concentrate on one particular facet of the working of the New Poor Law - the way in which, in practice, it dealt with the special problems of the adult male 'able-bodied' pauper in one predominantly rural area of northern England. The study of 'able-bodied' pauperism in North Yorkshire seems worth undertaking for two reasons: first, because the chief interest of the framers of the Poor Law of 1834 lay in the eradication of this able-bodied pauperism and, second, because North Yorkshire's social and economic history after 1834 was typical of neither the rural south of England nor the urban/industrial north - areas which have received most attention from poor law historians in the past.(1) It was an area which, in the course of the century, became

- (1) H.E. Rose, THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE POOR LAW IN THE WEST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE 1820-25 (Oxford 1965-6. (Oxford))  
Laidwinter, PAUPER ADMINISTRATION IN THE EAST RYDING 1830-50, POOR LAW, PUBLIC WORKS AND SCHOOLS (Oxford 1966-7. (Oxford))  
P.J. Dunkley, THE NEW POOR LAW AND COUNTY DURHAM (1834-1871-2) (Durham)  
P. Dawson, POOR LAW ADMINISTRATION IN SOUTH SHIELDS 1830-1930 (Ed 1871-2 (Newcastle))  
A. Hood, SCANDALISED POOR LAW UNIONS 1834-1930 (Litt. 1975 (Newcastle))  
H. Caplan, 'The Poor Law in Nottinghamshire 1836-71' in TRANS. THORNTON SOC. LIV (1970)  
A. Kirby, THE OPERATION OF THE POOR LAW IN THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF NORTH-EAST ENGLAND (Ed. 1970-1 (East Anglia))  
A. Kirby, 'The Rural 'Poor Law' character?' and  
D. Ashforth, 'The Urban 'Poor Law' character?' in Fraser (ed) THE POOR

'de-industrialised'; the only notable growth within the region to compensate for the decline of mining and textile manufacture and other non-agricultural activity was in the service towns, particularly Harrogate and Scarborough, and several textile manufacturing towns in the south of the region. Moreover, North Yorkshire was sufficiently close to major industrial and urban areas to feel their influence strongly.

The area chosen for the study comprises twenty two Poor Law unions - fifteen in the North Riding and seven in the West Riding.(2) The choice of region was determined by two factors - the existence of records and its rural, as opposed to urban, character. Keighley, Wharfedale and Wetherby unions in the West Riding were omitted for several reasons; they were adjacent to the urban/industrial unions round Bradford and Leeds and had features of both rural and urban/industrial districts. Keighley and Wharfedale unions were described in the early twentieth century as consisting of "populous manufacturing districts ... all closely connected with heavy woollen and worsted manufactories."(3) Keighley marked the northerly extent of the influence of the anti-poor law movement in the 1830's and early 1840's. Moreover no poor law union records survive for Wharfedale and Wetherby unions. With the exceptions of Middlesbrough, Guisborough, Scarborough and Whitby unions, the North Riding was described as "purely agricultural" with the inhabitants "mainly employed in pursuits of an agricultural nature."(4) The two North Riding unions omitted from the study, Middlesbrough and Guisborough, became important industrial and mining centres in the second half of the

(2) See Appendix A

(3) PP.1209 (1526) XXXIX p.276

(4) Ibid p.552

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nineteenth century. Topographically North Yorkshire exhibited great diversity: the North Yorkshire Moors in the east, the Pennines in the west, drained by rivers - Swale, Ure, Midd, Wharfe, Aire, Ouse, converging on the central Vale of York, which ran the length of North Yorkshire. By and large, the unions in the lowland areas of the Vales of York and Pickering, for example, Malton, Easingwold, Thirsk, Richmond, Bedale, Great Ouseburn, were devoted almost exclusively to agriculture, while upland and coastal areas often had a more diverse economy, for example, leadmining and textile manufacture was mainly centred in the Pennine unions of Reeth, Aysgarth, Leyburn, Pateley Bridge, Settle, Sedbergh and Skipton, and shipbuilding and fishing in Scarborough and Whitby unions.

Because the concern of the thesis is with just one form of poverty and one aspect of the working of the Poor Law rather than with the operation of the law as a whole, the thesis has had to rely on many fragmentary sources, whose yield was scanty in proportion to their volume. This was especially true of the minutes of the Boards of Guardians' meetings, though their usefulness varied according to the amount of information and detail included in them by the clerks. Reasonably complete series for the nineteenth century exist for most unions, the most serious loss being the minutes for Settle, Skipton and Sedbergh unions. Several of the records have 'reappeared' only recently as a result of local government reorganisation. Most of the poor law union records are deposited at the North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton, though the minutes of Great Ouseburn and Knaresborough unions are at the West Yorkshire County Record Office, Wakefield, and those of Ripon union at The Archives Department, Sheepscar, Leeds. (4a)

(4a) Recently the Knaresborough and Great Ouseburn BGM have been transferred to the N.Y.C.R.O.

Enquiries at Skipton and Settle Branch Libraries and Craven District Council failed to produce any records, apart from some very late nineteenth and early twentieth century Skipton poor law records, kept in the basement of Skipton library. The poor law records for Sedbergh union, deposited at the County Offices, Kendal, included no nineteenth century minutes. Few other poor law union records, which would have thrown more light on the provision of relief to able-bodied persons, have survived and are mostly late nineteenth century. Moreover, such Letter Books as survive often duplicate the correspondence found in the central records of the Poor Law Commissioners. The Ministry of Health papers, classes 12 and 32, located at the Public Record Office, London, were found to be more useful as a source of information regarding relief to able-bodied poor, though again any reference to able-bodied pauperism, particularly after the early years of the New Poor Law, had to be sifted from a mass of correspondence on general administrative matters relating to the workhouse, poor law officials' salaries and appointments, medical arrangements, finance etc. Class MH12 includes correspondence between the central poor law authority and Boards of Guardians, parochial poor relief officials and others, 1834-1900. Class MH32 consists of correspondence between Assistant Poor Law Commissioners, Poor Law Board and Local Government Board Inspectors and the central poor law authority, 1834-1900, arranged alphabetically under the names of Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors. Some information regarding poor relief administration in the years between 1834 and the setting up of the new union (almost twenty years later in a few cases) is still to be found in the parish and township records, in particular the Vestry minutes and

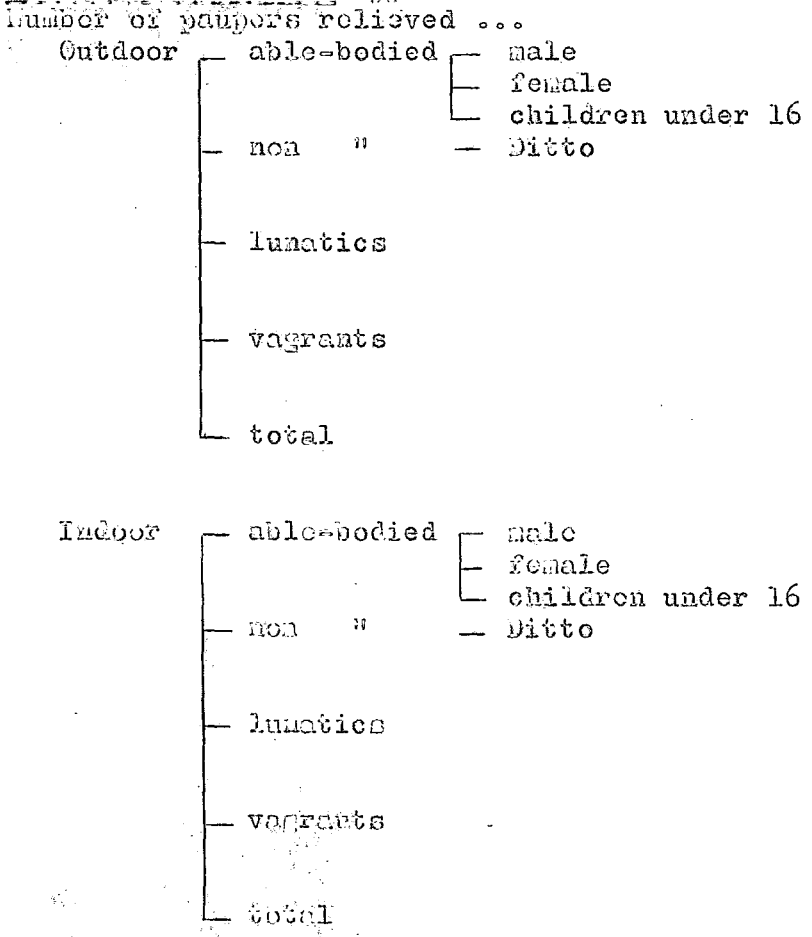
the records of the overseer of the poor. Such records for North Yorkshire, if not remaining in the custody of the parish vicar, have been deposited at either the North Yorkshire County Record Office, Northallerton or the Borthwick Institute, York. The records of Knaresborough and Scriven with Tentergate townships, until recently stored, uncatalogued, at the Council Offices, Knaresborough, and now at Northallerton, are of particular value since they cover the period of the serious decline in the town's linen industry in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, prior to the formation of the union in 1854. Other sources of information include parliamentary papers - Reports and Evidence of Royal Commissions and Select Committees and Accounts and Papers on the Poor Law and associated topics - and the Annual Reports of the Poor Law Commission, Poor Law Board and Local Government Board. With one or two exceptions newspapers were not a fruitful source of information; generally local newspapers did not appear in the area until the second half of the century, by which date the problems surrounding the introduction of the New Poor Law and the economic difficulties facing certain groups of rural workers had been largely resolved.

The plethora of statistics, compiled by the central poor law authority, would seem at first sight to facilitate a quantitative study of able-bodied pauperism. However, many historians of the Poor Law, struck by the apparent comprehensiveness of the statistics in the period of the New Poor Law, have, on investigation, found major deficiencies, preventing an accurate study of pauper numbers and more detailed analysis of pauperism. Many of the published returns give details of able-bodied pauperism in the county, and after 1857, in the union - county; for example, the returns giving the numbers of able-bodied males and females,

receiving outdoor relief on account of being out of work, insufficiency of earnings and other causes, not being sickness, accident or infirmity, are based on the county and, in the case of Yorkshire, the Riding. As the region being studied includes unions in both the North and West Ridings these returns are of little value. There are two problems relating to the union returns of able-bodied pauperism. The first is the vague definition of 'able-bodied'. 'Able-bodied' included persons temporarily unable, through illness or accident, to work, while aged paupers, though able to work, were often classed as 'non-able'. Therefore, "As evidence of prevalent destitution caused by want of employment or depression of trade, the number of [able-bodied paupers] ... is by no means a true criterion."(5) To 1885 the returns simply gave the total numbers of able-bodied adult males and females and children, receiving relief outdoors and in the workhouse.(6) In 1885 a distinction was made

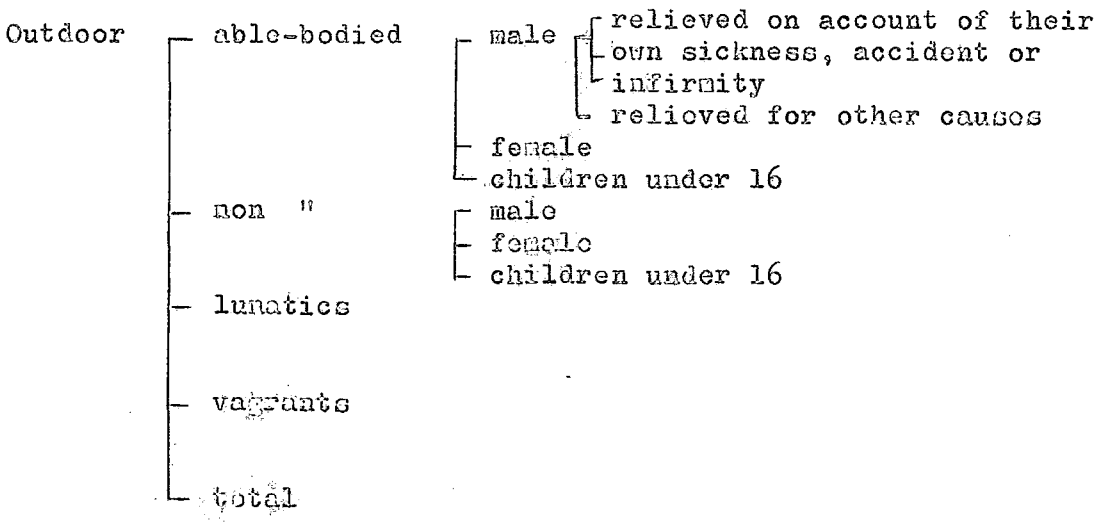
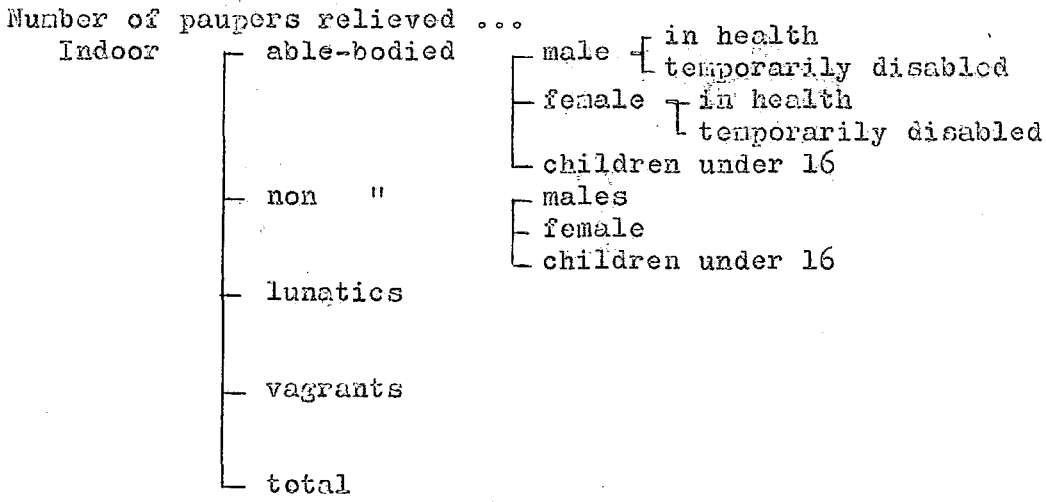
(5) 22nd Annual Report of the PLB 1869-70 p. xlviii

(6) PP. 1884 (217) LVII pp. 10-11



between able-bodied males receiving outdoor relief on account of infirmity, sickness, accident and other causes.(7) In 1890-1 the distinction between able-bodied in good health and temporarily disabled was applied to indoor as well as outdoor male paupers.(8) An additional difficulty is the fact that the entire family was classed as paupers and not just the person receiving the relief, whether it was the head of the family or a legal dependant. A second problem in assessing the extent of pauperism is that the returns give the number of paupers relieved on only two days of the year - January 1st and July 1st. Prior to 1848 there were quarterly returns of pauperism, which tended to overstate the number of paupers because the period, 25th December to 25th March was the heaviest quarter for pauperism and a pauper might be relieved on

(7) PP.1884-85 (302) LXVII pp.10-11  
 (8) PP.1890-91 (250) LXVIII p.10-11



perhaps four occasions in this time and be counted, not as one pauper, but as four.(9) The returns of pauper numbers on two days of the year were introduced as a more reliable measure of the annual total of paupers than the quarterly return. However, as pauper figures were not usually at their highest on January 1st, the day returns tended to understate the number of paupers. A count of paupers relieved during the year ending 30th September, 1907, was over twice as much as the average of the two-day returns.(10) While it is difficult to gauge the extent of able-bodied pauperism from the statistical tables, it is virtually impossible to do so using tables of union expenditure. In the period of the Poor Law Commission, returns of union expenditure were divided into two sections, only two of which were directly concerned with expenditure on poor relief - the amount "expended in relief and maintenance of the poor" and "medical relief". (11) After 1838 the first category was subdivided into Maintenance, Outrelief, Workhouse loans repaid and interest thereon, Salaries and rations of officers, Other expenses of or immediately connected with relief. In the Tenth Annual Report of the Poor Law Board, 1857, there was a new classification of the heads of expenditure, which was found in the Annual Reports of the Poor Law Board and Local Government Board to 1878-9, continued to 1884 in the Index to Accounts and Papers, under the heading 'Poor' and then under the heading 'Local Taxation'.(12)

- (9) 2nd Annual Report of the PLB 1849 p.8
- (10) PL 1809 (4499) XLVII p.16
- (11) Amounts expended in
  - a. relief and maintenance of the poor.
  - b. law charges.
  - c. payments under vaccination extension, registration and parochial assessment Acts.
  - d. census.
  - e. county rate.
  - f. county/local police.
  - g. for all other purposes.
  - h. total parochial rates expended.
  - i. medical relief.
- (12) A. Amount expended for relief of poor and purposes connected therein.  
 B. Amount expended for purposes unconnected with relief.  
 C. Amount expended for purposes some of which are connected and others unconnected with the relief of the poor.  
 D. was broken down into Maintenance; Outrelief; Maintenance of Lunatics in asylums or licensed houses; Workhouse loans; Salaries and rations; other expenses.

It was originally intended that the chapter on economic change in nineteenth century North Yorkshire be based on secondary sources. However, a full bibliography of the region's socio-economic history produced an uneven amount of information - some areas or towns and industries amply researched while others were scarcely mentioned. A discussion on the interaction of the Poor Law with social and economic life in North Yorkshire, therefore, required a more precise and comprehensive knowledge of the relative importance of the various industrial activities in the region's economy than could be obtained from secondary sources alone. Detailed study of the decennial census material rectified this problem, enabling the researcher to determine the regional distribution and the numbers engaged in particular industries. However, there are problems which make the findings less precise than might be expected in view of the plethora of statistical detail. The printed census personal occupation tables in the nineteenth century were based on different administrative units, thus making a comparison of the printed returns unviable.(13) It was necessary, therefore, to turn to the unprinted census enumerators' schedules for 1841, '51, '61 and '71, though again these vary in the amount of detail recorded. Though the schedules for 1851, '61 and '71 generally give the occupations of all adult men regardless of whether they were heads of households or not, the information contained in the 1841 census books is less comprehensive as a rule, only the occupations of the heads of households were recorded, though occasionally even these were omitted. The enumerators recorded the principal occupations of the populace and since much domestic textile manufacture and leadmining, for example, were secondary occupations the census returns greatly underestimate the size of the numbers involved. Likewise, the number of women and children

(13) See Appendix C

who were engaged in industrial activity was much larger than the schedules indicate. Nor were the enumerators consistent in giving the employment of females. In 1841 only females who were heads of households were ensured of an occupation description, while in subsequent censuses the occupation column for dependent females was occasionally left blank or inscribed for example, agricultural labourers wife/daughter. Thus, industrial activity was a factor in more people's lives than the occupational data, derived from the census enumerators' books, would indicate. Moreover, the imprecise occupational terminology used by the enumerators made the apparently straightforward task of calculating the number of workers engaged in a particular occupation more difficult. This is a problem in a coal and leadmining district where the enumerator merely wrote "miner". Similarly, enumerators did not consistently distinguish between weavers by power and weavers by hand. As the number of handicraft textile workers was already falling by 1851 the census returns do not demonstrate the full extent of the decline in the labour force. Unfortunately, as books later than 1871 are unavailable to the public, owing to the hundred year rule, a more detailed knowledge of the general and serious decline in, for instance, lead and iron mining and handknitting in the late nineteenth century is denied the present-day student. Despite these problems and the absence of information regarding fluctuations in the size of different occupation groups in the intercensal years, the census material does, nevertheless, enable the historian to study the various industries in terms of people rather than, for example, the movement of lead or textile prices and the opening and closure of mines or mills. Finally, the secondary material proved to be an inadequate source of information on the condition of those workers affected by the process of 'de-industrialisation'. A thorough search of the nineteenth century parliamentary

papers, particularly the reports and evidence submitted by Assistant Commissioners to various Royal Commissions and Select Committees, provided valuable supplementary evidence on the working and living conditions of these groups of workers.

The aim of the thesis is to determine whether economic changes affecting North Yorkshire and liable to increase able-bodied pauperism there created a strain for the New Poor Law and, if so, how it was resolved. The thesis examines poverty and pauperism specifically amongst the able-bodied male section of the population, being the most immediately and directly affected by economic changes and to whom poor law relief was most problematical for the poor law authorities. The first chapter examines economic change in North Yorkshire in the nineteenth century, focusing, in particular, on the problems facing various occupational groups, arising from 'de-industrialisation' of the region. Chapter two looks at the administrative machinery which was designed to tackle the problems of poverty amongst the able-bodied. The first section describes official policy on poor law relief to the able-bodied as embodied in the Report of the Royal Commission on the operation of the Poor Laws, the Poor Law Amendment Act and the subsequent regulations issued by the central poor law authorities, while the remaining sections explore the introduction of the New Poor Law - the reaction of North Yorkshire to the formation of unions and the implementation of the Orders relating to administration of poor relief to able-bodied - and the poor relief system in operation in North Yorkshire unions in the period 1834-1900. This chapter discusses the nature and extent of opposition to the New Poor Law and questions whether '1834' signified a decisive alteration in administration of

relief to able-bodied persons. In contrast with this chapter, where the main emphasis is on the administration of relief to the able-bodied and the interaction between central and local poor law authorities and between poor law policy and poor relief in practice, the third chapter considers the role played by the New Poor Law in the relief of those problems of poverty experienced by the different occupational groups. The bulk of this chapter is concerned with occupational groups that were most directly affected by the 'de-industrialisation' of North Yorkshire in the nineteenth century - the leadminers in section one, and the workers in the several branches of the textile industry - handloom linen weavers, handloom weavers of cotton and worsted, handknitters and factory workers in section two.(14) An attempt is made to relate the study of the New Poor Law more closely to the economic life of North Yorkshire by including sections on non-resident paupers, vagrants and agricultural workers; the last group provides an interesting and important comparison with the agricultural worker of south and south-east England, whose alleged ingrained pauperism was the occasion of the implementation of the New Poor Law. Alternative forms of relief to that of the New Poor Law available to the poor are outlined in chapter four. The thesis concludes with an investigation of the permanent solution to the economic problems inherent in de-industrialisation - that of migration of those workers out of North Yorkshire and the role of the New Poor Law in this process.

(14) I have not included a study of workers in the traditional industries of north-east Yorkshire in this chapter for several reasons. The information, derived from parliamentary papers, poor law material and secondary sources, is less even than that on leadminers and textile workers. Moreover, the picture of economic decline is complicated by the fact that new industries emerged at different times in the century while a statistical approach to the definite decline in non-agricultural activity that occurred in the last decades of the nineteenth century is not yet possible owing to the unavailability of census enumerators' schedules after 1871.

## Chapter One

### Economic Change in North Yorkshire

The nineteenth century witnessed a phenomenal increase in population and the polarisation of England into industrial-urban and agricultural-rural districts. The population of England and Wales, estimated at just less than nine million in 1801, had increased fourfold by 1911.(1) The population concentrated in the towns and cities, particularly in London and the coal mining and manufacturing districts; Clapham writes of the nineteenth century-

"Every traveller in Britain noticed the extraordinary way in which industry and population were being concentrated in or near the coal measures."(2)

Rural areas generally evinced a loss or stabilisation of population from about the middle of the century; there were many enquiries into the causes of rural outflow from the 1860's onwards and rural depopulation in the second half of the nineteenth century has been a popular subject for historical research.(3) In 1851 the proportion of the population

(1) B.R.Hitchell, ABSTRACT OF BRITISH HISTORICAL STATISTICS (1962) p.6

Population of England and Wales: in thousands.

1801	8,893,	1841	15,914,	1881	25,974,
1811	10,164,	1851	17,928,	1891	29,003,
1821	12,000,	1861	20,066,	1901	32,528,
1831	13,897,	1871	22,712,	1911	36,070,

However, as J.H.Clapham, in AN ECONOMIC HISTORY OF MODERN BRITAIN, The Early Railway Age 1820-50 (1926) p.54 points out - "the early census figures are of course subject to criticism in detail."

(2) J.H.Clapham, Op Cit p.42

(3) e.g. J.Saville, RURAL DEPOPULATION IN ENGLAND AND WALES 1851-1951 (1957)

P.A.Graham, THE RURAL MOVEMENT, THE PROBLEM OF THE VILLAGES AND THE TOWN (1892)

E.Lorrain Smith, CO-EXISTENCE FOR A PEOPLE: A STUDY OF RURAL MIGRATION (1932)

A.J.Bowley, 'Rural population in England and Wales' in J.R.A.S.S. LXVII 1914

S.D.L.Bruce, 'The alteration in the distribution of the agricultural population of England and Wales, between the census of 1871 and 1881' J.R.A.S.S. Series 2.21. 1885

F.Purdy, 'On the decrease of the agricultural population of England and Wales. 1851-61' J.R.S.S. LXVII (1864)

living in urban districts roughly equalled that in the rural areas; fifty years later, however, England was predominantly an urban nation:

"... the trend towards living in 'towns' had been firmly established by the end of the nineteenth century." (4)

The experience of North Yorkshire stands in marked contrast to that of the north of England as a whole. The phenomenal growth of Teesside in the second half of the century was exceptional, being based largely on iron-mining, iron and steel manufacture, port facilities, coal shipping and trade, engineering, shipbuilding and the chemical industry. Although in the period 1851-1901 the population of rural North Yorkshire increased from approximately 281,000 to 330,000, the increase was confined to a few larger towns; very few villages or sparsely populated townships expanded after the middle of the century. In nineteen of the twenty two poor law unions in rural North Yorkshire the population remained stationary or declined in the course of the nineteenth century. The market towns generally maintained or slightly increased their population to the detriment of the surrounding countryside. Even in the three remaining unions, Scarborough, Knaresborough and Skipton, where the population increased by about a third, a half and five-eighths respectively between 1851 and 1901, growth was limited to the towns of Scarborough, Harrogate with Pannal and several townships west and south of and including Skipton - namely Addingham, Cowling, Guisburn, Silsden, Bradleys Both, Carleton, Barnoldswick, Salterforth and Thornton in Craven. (5)

- (4) D.C.Marsh, The CHANGING SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF ENGLAND AND WALES 1821-1961 (1965) p.66  
 B.S.Rountree and Kendall, FOR THE LABOURER LIVES - A STUDY OF THE RURAL LABORING PEOPLE (1913) p.11

% of population living in -	Urban Districts	Rural Districts
1851	50.2	49.8
1861	54.6	45.4
1871	61.8	38.2
1881	67.9	32.1
1891	72.0	28.0
1901	77.0	23.0

- (5) See Appendix 1 tables 1 - 5

The population changes in North Yorkshire reflect in large measure the economic developments that took place in the nineteenth century. The decline of rural population was not due merely to a diminishing agricultural sector, which was a national trend in the second half of the century, nor to the diminishing number of village craftsmen, such as carpenters, wheelwrights, cobblers, millers, tailors, but to the decline or in some areas the loss of important - in both the local and national context - non-agricultural activities: industries such as the manufacture, by hand and machine, of cotton, linen, flax, worsted and woollen textiles, the mining and processing of lead, iron ore and coal, and, to a lesser extent, the alum trade, shipbuilding and fishing. Two main areas of growth - the health and resort towns of Harrogate and Scarborough and those textile manufacturing towns in Skipton union, mentioned in the previous paragraph, modify the overall picture of de-industrialisation in North Yorkshire. Scarborough and Harrogate had long been important as spa towns but their development was accelerated with the coming of the railways. The annual number of summer visitors to Harrogate increased throughout the century, with the exception of the late 1830's and early 1840's. In 1837 the permanent population was half that of the adjacent town of Knaresborough but in August and September the influx of visitors and seasonal workers increased the population fourfold.(6) The arrival of the railway in 1848-9 "launched Harrogate into an upward spiral of economic growth" and the town became the residence for retired and commuting business and professional men.(7) The opening of the York-Scarborough railway line in 1845 had a similar revolutionary effect on the development of Scarborough, which was already renowned as 'the Queen of Watering Places'(8) The remainder of this chapter, is devoted to a

(6) B.Jennings, (ed)A HISTORY OF HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH (1970) p.299  
 (7) Ibid p.312  
 (8) H.Edwards, SCARBOROUGH 966-1966 (1966) p.67-8

fuller examination of the more general process of 'de-industrialisation' elsewhere in the region, in terms of the contraction in both the geographical distribution of each industry and size of the labour force and the problems of low wages and reduced employment encountered by those workers.

#### 1. The Textile Industries

A study of the nineteenth century textile industry in North Yorkshire - a domestic, handicraft industry for centuries, reaching its zenith in the late eighteenth century, with the adoption of water-powered mechanisation - provides an interesting and diverse account of the process of de-industrialisation.

Four branches of the textile industry were found in North Yorkshire in the early nineteenth century - namely cotton, worsted, wool and linen manufacture. With the expansion of the United Kingdom cotton trade in the second half of the eighteenth century the cotton industry extended from Lancashire into Yorkshire - in Settle, Skipton and Sedbergh unions(9). The district was able to meet the demand for water power to drive machinery for spinning and, at a later date, weaving looms. During the eighteenth century wool textile manufacture became concentrated in the West Riding, with cloth manufacturing areas in the south - East Anglia,

- (9) A Raistrick, OLD YORKSHIRE DALES (1967) p.90  
 "... upper Airedale and Wharfedale ... along with lower Ribblesdale, became essentially cotton spinning areas."  
 See H.T.Wild, 'The Yorkshire Wool Textile Industry' in J.G.Jenkins, (ed) THE WOOL TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN GREAT BRITAIN, (1972) p.213

1851 Census:- No. of cotton manufacturers in -

1. Skipton union	1,158	males	856	females
2. Settle union	256	"	215	"
3. Knarossborough union	30	"	39	"
4. Sedbergh union	29	"	27	"
5. Pateley Bridge union	4	"	-	

PP.1052-5 (1891 - IX) LXXXVIII pp.708, 717, 710, 719

Suffolk, West Kent, Surrey, Hampshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire - declining in importance.

"By 1772 Yorkshire produced about one-third of the country's total output."(10)

"By 1850, 90 per cent of worsted goods were produced in the West Riding." (11)

Domestic worsted manufacture intensified in the area of Bradford, Halifax, Keighley, extending up the Aire and Wharfe valleys and "By the turn of the century the West Riding wool textiles belt had more or less reached its maximum geographical expression."(12) With the implementation of water-powered worsted spinning, c 1780-1800, the rivers Aire and Wharfe and their tributaries permitted the location of worsted mills in Skipton union. The centre of the wool cloth industry in the West Riding was Leeds and neighbouring towns; it too extended up the Aire and Wharfe valleys as far as Skipton union, where, in 1851, 545 male wool cloth manufacturers were recorded. Thus, textile manufacture was important in the economy of Craven, though geographically it was on the periphery of the Lancashire cotton area and the West Riding woollen district. The northern dales - Wensleydale, Swaledale, Dent and Garsdale - having connections with Richmond and Kendal, developed into worsted and knitting yarn centres. By the early seventeenth century this area of Yorkshire was one of the several centres in the country specialising in hand knitting - others included Norwich, Dorset, Hampshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Scotland.(13) Flax spinning and linen manufacture were again located in the dales and the foothills of the Pennines, in the

(10) J.G.Jenkins, (ed) THE WOOL TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN GREAT BRITAIN (1972) p.41

(11) Ibid p.41

(12) H.T.Wild, 'The Yorkshire Wool Textile Industry' in J.G.Jenkins op cit p.211

In 1851 there were 628 female and 580 male worsted manufacturers recorded in Skipton union.

(13) R.Martley and J.Ingilby, THE OLD HANDKNITTERS OF THE DALES (1951) p.11

unions of Knaresborough, Pateley Bridge, Settle and Ripon and also in the North Riding, in Northallerton and Stokesley unions.(14)

a. Textile Mill Workers

Localised geographical contraction of the textile industry in North Yorkshire, dating from c. second quarter of the nineteenth century, occurred as a result of the supercession of water-powered mills by steam-driven factories. The transfer from water to steam-driven machinery brought about two shifts in the location of the textile industry in the north. There was a movement away from the stream sites to the coalfields and the polarisation of the cotton industry in Lancashire and the woollen/worsted industry in the Leeds - Halifax - Bradford districts of industrial West Riding. The textile industry in North Yorkshire did not disappear entirely. Mills located nearer to the centres of population in Lancashire and the West Riding, particularly those in the west and south of Skipton union, or with access to railways and canals, enabling relatively quick and cheap transport of raw materials, coal being the most crucial, and finished products, were adapted to steam-power. A comparison of mill distribution in Craven in 1839 and 1849 revealed decay in the

(14) In 1851 the number of adult linen manufacturers in unions of

Pateley Bridge	487
Knaresborough	465
Northallerton	392
Settle	161
Stokesley	126
Ripon	110
Whitby	32
Thirsk	27
Skipton	5

pp 1852-3 (1691 - II) LXXXVIII pp.702-719

In 1861 4 North Yorkshire unions were amongst 15 unions where flax/linen manufacture was a principal occupation:

Northallerton	312 males	120 females
Pateley Bridge	237 "	155 "
Settle	152 "	176 "
Knaresborough	249 "	55 "

pp.1563 (221) LIII p.154 table 36

upper dales and increasing development in the less isolated areas around Barnoldswick and Skipton.(15) In the second half of the nineteenth century, although the number of new mills approximated closely to the number which closed, expansion was confined to the larger towns, chiefly in Skipton union, while the decline of textile manufacture in the remote upland townships was irreversible.

A list of textile mills operating in North Yorkshire in the 1830's is given in the Appendix D and is based on contemporary parliamentary papers.(16) As there are no subsequent comparable lists the researcher relies on diverse and often imprecise sources, such as newspapers, directories, nineteenth century local histories, for information about mill closures. The cotton mills at Birks, Millthorp and Howgill in Sedbergh union had ceased cotton production by 1874, probably closing down in the depression of the late 1840's.(17) Hobbloethwaite Hall Mill, Farfield Mills, Rash Mill, Stonchouse Mill and Dee Mills, also in Sedbergh union, were woollen mills, carding and spinning yarn for knitting and weaving coarse cloth but by 1874 the number of mills was reduced to two woollen and one worsted.(18) The disappearance of cotton mills, sited on the upper reaches of the Aire and Wharfe, in Settle and Skipton unions at Ingleton, Arncliffe, Litton, Kirkby Malham, Malham, Kettlewell, Grassington and Linton, was mostly complete by the middle of the century. (19) In Widderdale and the adjacent Washburn valley, Patricks (High)

- (15) D.Roberts, THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN THE WEST CRAVEN AND THE SKIPTON DISTRICT OF YORKSHIRE. (Pisc. 1956. (L.S.D.)) p.130
- (16) See Appendix D tables 1 and 2
- (17) H.Hartley and J.Ingilby, THE YORKSHIRE DALES (1956) p.164
- (18) MH12 Sedbergh 15/5/1874
- (19) A.Raistrick, OLD YORKSHIRE DALES p.91

Mill and Little Mill closed in 1838, a time of general trade depression; West End Low Mill closed in the early 1840's, was idle in 1846, commenced cotton spinning in 1847 but stopped completely in 1850. Westhouse Mill, which stopped flax spinning in 1844, restarted as a silk mill in the late 1850's but closed permanently between 1861 and 1871. Plompton Mill closed down as a flax mill in the depression of the late 1830's and early 1840's. By 1861 three flax mills at Bishop Thornton (Low and High Mills and Woodfield Mill) had closed.(20) The only cotton mill in Nidderdale, at Wreaks, Birstwith, closed in the early 1860's.(21) Railway transport up Nidderdale enabled several mills to diversify in the second half of the century as an alternative to closure, which had been the fate of several mills in the 1830's and 1840's. For example, at West End Low Mill in 1868, Fringill Mill in 1875 and at Pateley Bridge in the late 1870's there was conversion to the spinning of heavy yarns for making twine, cords and rope.(22) Flax mills elsewhere had a similar fate. In 1843 two flax mills in or near Stokesley were reported to have closed down (23) and between 1841 and 1851 a flax mill at Hutton Rudby ceased production.(24) Flax mills at Masham and Azerley closed between 1841-51 and 1851-61 respectively.(25) The linen mills at Bontham continued well into the second half of the nineteenth century, though diversification took place, with the manufacture of reaper and trusser twines, flax hose piping and linen driving belting, in addition to the spinning of hemp, flax and tow and linen bleaching.(26) Most of the woollen mills in Wensleydale ceased production in the second half of the century. Low Mill

(20) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF NIDDERDALE (1967) pp.218-219,  
252, 253, 260-2

(21) Ibid p.256

(22) Ibid

(23) PP.1843 (510) XII p.361

(24) PP.1852-3 (1832) XI p.81

(25) Ibid p.85

(26) Kelly's Directory of the West Riding of Yorkshire, 1889 p.72

at Askrigg was used as a saw mill in 1873.(27) Yore Mills at Aysgarth, which was a combined corn and wool mill, had probably ceased knit hosiery manufacture by 1870.(28) Hawes Mill continued until 1904, "when owing to competition from mills run by steam-power it had to close."(29) Haverdale Mill, in Swaledale, which produced yarn for knitting and carpets, closed c.1870.(30)

In their heyday the mills employed a substantial proportion of the local population; for example, in 1836 the number of hands employed at Hartlington and Skireholme townships, in Skipton union, and Langcliffe and Settle townships, in Settle union, formed 42.2%, 39.2%, 35.6% and 23.0% of the total 1831 population of those townships. (31) Shortage of work and unemployment were not uncommon experiences of textile factory workers in the nineteenth century. Localised factors such as the destruction of a mill by fire or drought and the consequent loss of power for mills dependent on water, (32) and more generally periodic slumps in the textile trade were among the principal causes of short working and temporary closure of mills. Reduced market demand for textile goods forced mills to work short time, and as the depression deepened, to cut

(27) M.Hartley and J.Ingilby, THE OLD HANDKNITTERS OF THE DALES p.35

(28) Ibid p.44

(29) Ibid p.49

(30) M.Hartley and J.Ingilby, THE YORKSHIRE DALES p.254

(31) See Appendix D table 1

(32) PP.1834 (187) XI For evidence of loss of time through water shortage see pp.71, 93, 96, 161, 205, 309.  
John Wilson, owner of a worsted spinning factory at Lothersdale, wrote in 1842 -  
"We are at present suffering severe losses at the mill for want of water ..."  
Quoted in K.Wilson (ed) THE HISTORY OF LOTHERSDALE (1972) p.147

cut the size of the labour force and even cease working until trade recovered. Water mills were more vulnerable than steam in a trade depression - indeed most of the permanent mill closures occurred at times of severe economic recession. In the serious depression of the late 1830's and early 1840's small mills in Widderdale closed temporarily while the larger mills were on short-time working; Darley High Mill, Fringill Mill and probably Folly Gill Mill were idle in 1841, three mills at Bishop Thornton had only two dozen workers in the early 1840's and there was also a reduced labour force at Glasshouses Mill.(33) In Barnoldswick, in 1842, the factories were working a three-day week.(34) Reductions in the number of hands employed at cotton factories in Linton parish occurred between 1851 and 1871. In 1869 Bailey J. Marker lamented the reduced number of hands employed at Linton Mill:

"About seventeen years ago it was a great boon to the neighbourhood, a large number of hands being employed and good wages given ..."(35)

Cotton mills in Settle and Giggleswick and the linen factory at Bentham temporarily stopped production in the late 1840's.(36) In 1851 the census authorities reported "diminished employ<sup>ment</sup> at the factories, several of which are unoccupied in (the) ... locality" of Addingham, in Skipton union. Mills in Skipton union were unable to employ their entire labour force in the 1854/5 and 1857 depressions; workers were kept waiting for work - "Each weaver has to wait about a fortnight."(37) At the beginning of the 'cotton famine', in November 1861, only one of two cotton mills in Settle union was working - a four-day week and "likely to

(33) B. Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF WIDDERDALE pp.219-220

(34) MH12 Skipton 29/5/1842

(35) A. Raistrick, OLD YORKSHIRE DALES p.159

(36) MH12 Settle 7/12/1847

(37) MH12 Skipton 7/12/1857

work less."(38) The cotton thread mills were working full time, though at Benthams linen workers were striking over a reduction in their wages. In Skipton union it was reported that several cotton mills were working a four-day week.(39)

#### B. Handicraft Textile Workers

The very existence of the textile factories discussed above, reflected an even more significant aspect of 'de-industrialisation' - the gradual extinction of handicraft work in textiles under the older 'outwork' system.

##### (i) Handloom Linen Weavers

Linen weaving was carried on in five Worth Yorkshire unions, namely Pateley Bridge, Stokesley, Northallerton, Knaresborough and Settle.(40) However, the linen industry at Benthams, in Settle union, has been omitted from the study since the records, by and large, do not make a distinction between linen and cotton weavers (cotton manufacturing employing a greater number of people than linen manufacturing) and, furthermore, linen weavers in Benthams were predominantly power-loom weavers. Linen weaving was not prevalent throughout the other four unions. In 1841 only five townships in Stokesley union, nine in Pateley Bridge and five in Northallerton had more than five adult male linen weavers. Thirty years later, with a reduction in the total number of linen weavers, the number of townships where linen weaving was carried out had dwindled correspondingly.(41) The most important centres of weaving in 1841 were Hutton Rudby in Stokesley union, Bishops side in Pateley Bridge union,

(38) MH32 Manuaring 54 12/11/1861.

(39) Ibid 13/11/1861

(40) See Appendix E table 1

(41) See Appendix E table 2

Brompton, Osmotherley and Appleton Wike in Northallerton union and Annesborough and Scriven with Fentergate.(42) Linen weaving declined rapidly in Nidderdale during the period 1841-71, the number of weavers falling from approximately 273 to 27.(43) The enumerations frequently failed to distinguish handloom from powerloom weavers but, as there is no mention in any records or secondary sources to powerlooms or powerloom weavers, it is reasonable to assume that all the linen weavers in Nidderdale were handloom. In Stokesley union, too, linen weaving was solely by hand and the number of weavers declined markedly between 1841 and 1861. The industry was centred in the south-west of the union, at Hutton Rudby, where, in 1851, there were almost twice as many handloom weavers as in the rest of the union. The number of weavers in Hutton Rudby fell from 87 to 13 in the space of thirty years, the most marked reduction occurring between 1851 and 1861, when the numbers fell from 64 to 13. The nineteenth century directories reflect the early decline of handloom weaving in the town of Stokesley. In 1854 the "manufactures of the town comprise linen, including damask weaving together with flax dressing and spinning."(44) By 1848 the manufacture of linen was started to be carried on "to a limited extent" by five principal manufacturers.(45) Nine years later no linen manufacturers were listed.(46) The decline of linen weaving between 1841 and 1871 was less pronounced in Northallerton union. In Osmotherley and Brompton, where there were powerlooms, it is

(42) See Appendix E table 3.

(43) The 1841 figure does not include the handloom weavers living in Dacre because the enumerators' schedules for Dacre are missing.

(44) Pigot's and Co. Commercial Directory of the Northern Counties, 1834 p.97

(45) Royal National Commercial Directory and Topography of the Counties of ... York ... 1848. Vol.11 p.1433

(46) Post Office Directory of Yorkshire. North and East Ridings. 1857 p.1504

impossible for the historian to determine the extent of the decline in numbers of handloom weavers due to the failure of the census enumerators to distinguish between hand and powerloom weavers. In other townships weaving continued to be done solely by hand. Northallerton was described in 1832 as the residence of many weavers but there were only 25 weavers in 1841 and 4 in 1851, out of a total population of 3,061 and 3086 respectively.(47) Although Appleton Wiske and Borrowby were handloom weaving townships the decline in numbers was less marked than in Nidderdale or Stokesley unions. In Appleton Wiske there were still 39 weavers in 1871, half as many as in 1841. Both 1861 census enumerators distinguished between hand and powerloom weavers in Osmotherley - there being seventeen of each. The 1851 schedules do not mention any powerloom weavers and it is probable that powered machinery was introduced sometime between 1851 and 1861. Brompton was the exception in the general decline in the number of linen weavers during the three decades 1841 - 1871, but the census books do not give any accurate information, regarding the number of handloom weavers. There were no powerloom weavers recorded in either 1851 or 1861, while the number in 1871 only totalled thirteen, of whom two were females and six males, aged nineteen and younger. However, in 1871, a "linen manufacturer by steam power" was stated to employ 53 men and 29 women. Since there was no flax spinning mill in Brompton it must be concluded that some of the 'linen weavers' were in fact powerloom weavers. The number of adult male linen weavers in Knaresborough in 1871 was approximately one third of the 1841 total.(48)

(47) PP.1832 (141) XI p.151. "The population [of the Parish of Northallerton] has increased since the Census of 1821; and this was stated to be owing to the greater number of weavers, employed at Brompton, but residing at

(48) See Appendix E table 1

Northallerton.

Powerlooms were first introduced into the town in 1850 by the firm of Waltons, though they continued to employ a large number of handloom weavers. There were only ten powerloom weavers enumerated in 1851 and it is probable that this number was accurate.(49) In 1861 and 1871 the majority of enumerators wrote "linen weavers" and therefore it can not be ascertained whether the people recorded as powerloom weavers - 26 in 1861, 19 in 1871 - represented the total number of powerloom weavers.(50) Finally, a word about female linen weavers. Although the census enumerators' schedules are an unreliable source of information concerning occupations of women, it appears that, in contrast with cotton weaving, linen weaving was predominantly a male occupation. However, it is interesting to note that the number of females employed in linen weaving was greater in the purely handloom weaving townships of Hutton Rudby and Appleton Wiske than in Osmotherley and Brompton. (51)

The economic fortunes of handloom weavers were affected by two factors - the state of the linen trade generally and the particular problems or features of individual linen weaving centres. The longterm

- (49) 2 PLW's were women - the other female weavers, with one exception, were HLM's. 4 PLW's were males, below the age of 20; the other male weavers in this age group were described as HLM's. In addition, 13 of the 14 enumerators distinguished between PLW's and HLM's, only recording 7 HLM's; 2 of the LW's were in their seventies and were most probably HLM's.

Source: Census Enumerators' Schedules.

- (50) Number of powerloom weavers in Knaresborough and Scriven with Tenbergat

	Males, aged 20+	Males, 19-	Females
1851	4	4	2
1861	8	5	13
1871	4	2	13

Source: Ibid

- (51) The number of female weavers in the census years 1841, 51, 61, 71:

Brompton	2	0	1	3
Osmotherley	0	1	2	3
Appleton Wiske	3	19	28	7
Hutton Rudby	14	1	0	0

Source: Ibid

decline of the linen industry in North Yorkshire, in the course of the nineteenth century, was punctuated by severe periodic slumps. Major depressions occurred in the years following the Napoleonic Wars, in the late 1820's and early 1830's (c. 1829-33), and in the late 1830's and early 1840's (c. 1837-44). In these years the weavers suffered a drastic reduction in both earnings and the rate of employment. Owing "to the depression of trade in the linen manufacture" in Pateley Bridge, the earnings of weavers fell from an average of 13/6d to 9/- a week, though it required long hours at the loom to earn this sum.(52) In Northallerton the weavers were one of the groups of workers in the early 1830's whose low rate of earnings and shortage of work rendered them liable to destitution.(53) The same was true of the workers connected with linen manufacture in Knaresborough, which "like every other trade, at present, is in a state of depression."(54) It was alleged that the "poor weavers obtain very little better than starvation wages" and "The family can not subsist on the produce of their labour."(55) Two years previously it was estimated that the depression in the linen industry in Knaresborough reduced the average earnings of five hundred and fifty families to six shillings.(56) Unemployment was rife. In 1830 many linen workers in Knaresborough "were entirely out of work, others obliged to lie in bed while their linen was washed."(57) The bulk of evidence relating to reduced wages and partial employment of linen weavers in the depression years, 1837-44, is contained in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Condition of Handloom Weavers.(58) The Assistant Commissioner for

(52) PP.1834 (44) XVIII pp.766-7

(53) PP.1834 (44) XVIII p.260 Q.30

(54) Yorkshire Gazette 18/2/1832

(55) PP.1834 (44) XVI p.263h Q.40

(56) Yorkshire Gazette 23/1/1830

(57) Ibid

(58) PP.1840 (43-I)(43-II)(217)(220) XXIII. XLIV

PP.1841 (295) Q.3 "...the weavers, exaggerating as almost all persons do, the power of the State to afford to every distress direct and immediate relief, were anxious to attract the interference of Government by making the picture as melancholy as possible." (From Report of the Commissioners)

Yorkshire, S. Keyser, reported that "the weavers suffer distress occasioned by low wages and scarcity of employment." (59) Although the comment applied specifically to the handloom weavers of Brompton, Osmotherley, Borrowby and Northallerton, the twin evils of low wages and shortage of work were characteristic of the situation of linen weavers elsewhere in North Yorkshire. Wages averaged less than seven shillings a week in Osmotherley, "with 12 hours per day labour", eight shillings in Brompton and nine shillings and sixpence in Hutton Rudby. (60) At Dacre, Darley, Hampsthwaite and other townships in Nidderdale "the weavers ... are in very great distress;" (61) their wages were lower than those in Knaresborough, which, according to a linen manufacturer, Mr. Thorpe, averaged about 7/4d a week. (62) Mr. Dewes, a former manufacturer and overseer of the poor in Knaresborough told Keyser:

"The situation of the weavers here is most deplorable; they are suffering much ... There are many able-bodied men, who, by working day and night, are not able to get a living, owing to the low rate of wages ..." (63)

The impossibility of obtaining a reasonable level of earnings by working longer hours was also stressed by Mr. Thorpe:

"The weavers are very badly off ... They are certainly the worst paid of any description of workmen. They could not, with the greatest industry and exertion, do as well as other workmen. (64)

In 1844 the poor of Knaresborough were reported to be "suffering from want of employment." (65) Many weavers and others whose incomes were reduced as a result of the poverty of the majority of the working population of the town, were unable to pay their rents or rates. In 1842

- (59) PP.1840 (43-I) XXXII p.488  
 (60) Ibid p.488-9  
 (61) Ibid p.483  
 (62) Ibid p.484  
 (63) Ibid  
 (64) PP.1841 (295) K p.9  
 (65) Harrogate Advertiser 8/6/1844

the Select Vestry of Knaresborough resolved that "In consequence of the difficulty of collecting the poor rates ..." the collector should call only twice at the houses for the money, while in 1844 the Select Vestry, upon examining the Rate Book, allowed £31.7.7d as "further leakage on empty houses and bad debts."(66) Wages from handloom weaving remained low in the second half of the nineteenth century. A newspaper account of 1880 mentions handloom weavers in Knaresborough earning 8s or 9s a week.(67)

However, the extent of the decline of linen weaving and of distress amongst weavers varied within North Yorkshire according to local factors, such as transport facilities and the type of cloth woven. Unlike linen spinning, which was mechanised in 1784 by two Darlington men, John Kendrew and Thomas Porthouse, weaving proved difficult to mechanise and weaving by hand continued to be the rule well into the nineteenth century.(68) Power looms were installed in West House Mill, Washburn Valley, (adjacent to Nidderdale) in the 1830's but were not introduced to Knaresborough, Brompton or Osmotherley until the middle of the century. During the first half of the nineteenth century, therefore, neither the distress of the handloom weavers nor the serious decline in their numbers in Nidderdale, parts of Stokesley union and certain villages in Northallerton union were a result of competition from powered weaving in North Yorkshire or even from Barnsley, where "Few power looms are as yet employed in linen weaving ..."(69) During this period the decline of Knaresborough as a linen manufacturing town was commonly attributed to the absence of quick and cheap communication with the coalfields and main markets for linen:

(66) B.V.M. Knaresborough township 30/9/1842 and 18/10/1844

(67) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH p.318

(68) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF NIDDERDALE p.209

(69) PP.1840 (43-1) XVIII p.464

"the progress of decay is irremediable unless facility of exit <sup>be afforded</sup> for their produce."(70)

In addition to competition from cotton products, which were cheaper to produce than linen ones, Assistant Commissioner Keyser attributed the depressed linen trade in Knaresborough to the expensive transport of coal eighteen miles over land in the absence of canal and rail transport."(71)

In 1800 a plan was devised to construct a canal from the river Ure to Knaresborough but this scheme was abandoned when proposals to build a canal between the rivers Tees and Ure (hence a direct route from Durham coalfield to Knaresborough) fell through. In 1818 a committee, which included seven linen manufacturers, investigated canal and railway schemes to Knaresborough but it was not until 1843 that a railway line was built from York to Knaresborough. The cost of coal fell from 81 to 10s or 12s a ton(72) Thereafter linen weaving in Knaresborough was more settled.(73) The annual sales figures of Walton and Co. the principal employer of weavers in the town, remained constant, from c.1854-6 to 1874-6, after which date the amount of cloth produced and the number of weavers employed declined.(74) Brompton remained an important linen manufacturing village at least into the 1870's and, in contrast with Knaresborough, its weaving population remained stable between 1841 and 1871. The reason lies principally in its concentration on the manufacture of 'fine' linens, made from lighter yarns. The handloom was suited to the weaving of fine linens and Brompton gained a notable reputation for the quality of its cloth.

- (70) Harrogate Advertiser 8/6/1844  
pp.1332 (141) XI p.192 "The inhabitants of Knaresborough feel sensibly the difficulty of access to the Coal Districts, and state the want of this mineral, and the consequent want of the Steam Engine as the principal drawback upon their commercial prosperity."
- (71) pp.1340 (15-1) XIII p.484
- (72) D.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH pp.269-273
- (73) Burniston's Northern Luminary July 1850
- (74) D.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH p.319

Brompton is noted for its linen weaving, and the best drills manufactured in this country are said to be manufactured here."(75) Knaresborough, however, manufactured more coarse cloth, including "low ginghams, low bedding ticks, sheetings," which were more susceptible to slumps in the linen trade.(76) The depression in the late 1830's was more severe in Knaresborough than in Barnsley or Leeds where there was greater diversification in the quality of linen cloth manufactured.(77)

(ii) Handloom Cotton and Worsted Weavers and Woolcombers in Settle and Skipton unions.

Handloom weaving in Settle union was predominantly of cotton. No handloom weavers were recorded in the four census years, 1841-71, in nine townships in Settle union - Ealton Gill, Hanlith, Hawkswick, Lawkland, Litton, Otterburn, Scothrop, Thornton in Lonsdale and Swindon. In seven townships, weaving, as a principal occupation, disappeared between 1841 and 1851 - for instance, in 1841, there were 9 cotton weavers in Malham, 18 in Horton in Ribblesdale, 2 in Stainforth, 3 in Airton, 12 in Tossido, 10 in West Halton and 22 in Hellifield. In several townships the number of handloom weavers fell between 1841 and 1851 and 'disappeared' entirely in the following decade - for example, Kirkby Malham had 4 weavers in 1841 and 1 in 1851, Ingleton 4 and 1, Rathmell 4 and 16, Burton in Lonsdale 8 and 1 and Wigglesworth 23 and 8, respectively. The townships with the largest numbers of weavers were Langcliffe, Giggleswick, Austwick, Long Preston and Settle and here the census enumerators' schedules reveal a substantial decline and almost total disappearance of

(75) Royal National Commercial Directory and Topography of the Counties of

(76) PP.1840 (43-1) XX111 p.485 ... YORK ... 1840. Vol.11 p.1275

(77) There was perhaps some attempt to improve the quality of linen goods manufactured in Knaresborough; a seamless shirt, made in Knaresborough, was exhibited at the Great Exhibition, Crystal Palace, in 1851. (B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH p.317)

weaving in the period 1841-71. The number of weavers in Long Preston fell from 84 in 1841, to 41 in 1851, to 12 in 1861 and none in 1871; the respective figures for Settle were 123, 171, 51 and 9: for Giggleswick 73, 53, 16 and none: for Austwick 82, 57, 79 and 6. No weavers were recorded in Langcliffe in 1861 and 1871, though there had been 63 and 59 in 1841 and 1851 respectively - however, it is possible that some of the people described as "cotton mill" in 1861 and 1871 were factory weavers. In the four census years, 1841-71, weaving in Preston and Austwick appears to have been entirely by hand whereas in Giggleswick, Langcliffe and Settle the majority of weavers were power loom.(78) Thus cotton weaving by both hand and machine in Settle union had virtually ceased by 1871.

The number of weavers, as a percentage of the total population in 1851, was higher in Skipton union than in Settle union but again, the use of the general term, 'worsted' or 'cotton weaver', does not permit an accurate count of handloom weavers in the period 1841-71.(79) Salterforth, Barnoldswick, Thornton, Cononley, Cowling, Guisburn, Carlton, Skipton and Addingham were important weaving centres in the mid nineteenth century, though the proportions of hand and power-loom weavers varied from township to township; (80) handloom weavers greatly exceeded power-loom weavers in Thornton, Cowling and Salterforth, were roughly equal in

(78) See Appendix W Table 1

(79) See Appendix F, <sup>table 2</sup> for the number of weavers and woolcombers in the townships comprising Skipton union in 1851.

(80) According to the 1851 census HM's formed approximately 33% of the population of Salterforth, c. 29% in Cowling, c.27% in Thornton, c. 7% in Cononley.

Cononley and Glusburn and in the minority in Carlton and Barnoldswick. Handloom weaving survived longer in Skipton than in Settle union due to the presence of worsted weaving in the former union, which was harnessed to water and steam power at a later date than cotton weaving.

Important determinants of the prosperity of the handloom cotton and worsted weaving and hand woolcombing sectors in the nineteenth century were the state of the textile trade generally and the degree of competition from alternative weaving and woolcombing methods.

Fluctuations in the textile market were frequent and pronounced. During severe depressions which periodically afflicted the textile industry there was considerable temporary poverty and distress, occasioned by wage reductions and widespread un- and under-employment. The effect of a depression on those workers employed in textile manufacture was summed up by the Skipton Board of Guardians -

"... where the earnings of a family are derived from manufacturing labour, and in this union great numbers are so supported, should the labour of the head of the family be reduced from full to only two or three days per week, or should some members of the family be altogether thrown out of employment, so that the earnings of the family should become inadequate for their maintenance (and the vicissitudes of trade render this of frequent occurrence) ..."(31)

Major slumps in the cotton industry occurred in the late 1820's and early 1830's (1829) in the mid 1830's (1837), again in the early 1840's (1841-2), in the late 1840's (1847), the mid 1850's and 1861-4, the period of the cotton famine.(32) Excepting the last depression, there was a similar pattern of cyclical depression and recovery in the worsted industry.

(31) PP.1653 (111) LXXXIV p.228

(32) M.Anderson, FAMILY STRUCTURE IN NINETEENTH CENTURY LANGLSHIRE (1971) p.23

Once handloom weaving and woolcombing were in competition with powered machinery, and longterm and permanent decline in the living standards of handicraft textile workers set in.(83) The powerloom was invented in 1785 by Revd.Edmund Cartwright but technical problems delayed large scale adoption of powerlooms in the cotton industry until the 1820's.(84) The powerloom was adapted for use in the woollen textile industry slightly later in the century:

"Powerloom worsted weaving was not widely practised until the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century."(85)

Powerlooms for wool were in use in large centres, such as Leeds, in the 1830's, but did not come into general use till the middle of the century. Woolcombing was mechanised in the 1840's -

"It was not until after 1840 that the woolcombing machine began really to threaten the woolcomber with extinction."(86)

The greater weaving capacity of the powerloom over the handloom and its rapid adoption once an efficient machine had been devised had the effect of lowering piece rates (the price paid to the weaver for a given length of cloth).(87)

So far, the implications of trade fluctuations and competition from powered machinery have been considered separately. However, in the period under review, cyclical unemployment and very low wages were superimposed onto more or less permanently depressed and uncertain earnings of handicraft textile workers. As a result, the distress of weavers in periods of economic recession was more serious and recovery incomplete

(83) D.Bythell, THE HANDLOOM WEAVERS (1969) pp.53, 105

(84) Ibid p.82

(85) H.F.Wild, 'The Yorkshire Wool Textile Industry' in J.G.Jenkins op cit p.215

(86) J.Burnley, HISTORY OF WOOL AND WOOLCOMBING (1889) pp.165-6

(87) D.Bythell op cit p.105

and slower than the temporary suffering of, for instance, factory operatives, for whom the years between depressions meant "high wages and high employment." (88) The particularly severe depressions during the 1830's and 1840's, punctuated by bursts of expansion in powerloom weaving, no doubt caused a more rapid contraction of the textile handicraft sector in the more remote rural areas of Lancashire and Yorkshire than would otherwise have been the case. In a trade recession the handloom weavers were more vulnerable than factory workers - being the first to be thrown out of work because in a situation where supply exceeded demand, the manufacturers were more likely to carry on using their machinery, which both produced cloth at a lower cost than the handloom and had been costly to implement. Despite recent studies modifying the traditional dismal picture of depressed living standards of domestic textile workers, "historians ... have been unanimous in concluding that the domestic weavers in the first half of the nineteenth century became a class who suffered, in the contemporary phrase, 'distress'. (89) Evidence relating to wages and employment of handloom weavers and woolcombers in Settle and Skipton unions, "derived largely from the poor law records, substantiates the general account of the deteriorating material condition of handicraft textile workers.

The information given by several townships to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1832-4, affirms the adverse effects of the trade depression of the early 1830's on the availability of work and the level of weavers' earnings. Several townships complained of "redundancy of labour" - for example, Settle, where

(88) M.Anderson, op cit p.23

(89) D.Bythell, op cit p.11

"The uncertainty of procuring work is so great ..."(90)

The poverty of the weavers is evinced from the following remark

"there is a good deal of handloom weaving in this neighbourhood, and none of that class can afford to deposit anything, but some of the spinners can and do contribute."(91)

The main effects of the "... general depression in trade ..." in Kettlewell were stated to be "... the want of labour, and sufficient remuneration for it." - a situation reinforced by the evidence of other township authorities.(92)

The textile industry was again in the throes of depression in 1837.

Alfred Power informed the Poor Law Commission:

"There has been an unusual degree of distress among the weavers in cotton and worsted on the side towards Keighley ..."(93)

The worsted weavers and woolcombers were working about half time and an "able-bodied man (was) weaving calico at 3s week, frequently 4/-, 5/-, 6/- scarcely that during the late pressure."(94) In the opinion of Haggeridge, the Assistant Commissioner appointed to the Royal Commission on Handloom weavers -

"Weavers wait for, or are out of work, about a quarter of their time, on an average of years."(95)

Skilled cotton, worsted and wool or handloom weavers could, with full employment and good material, earn 9/-, 13/- and 1/2/6d a week respectively; ordinarily, however, a more accurate estimate of wages was 6/-, 9/- and 15/-, though the worsted weavers wages were reduced to the

(90) PP.1834 (44) XXXVI p.626a Q.10

(91) Ibid p.750

(92) Ibid p.761, 762, 615a Q.10, 743, 627a Q.40

(93) HM12 Skipton 13/12/1837

(94) PP.1837-38 (157) XVII Q.2867

(95) PP.1840 (220) XXIV p.605

cotton weavers earnings.

"the worsted district blends with the cotton district at Steeton, Silsden and Addingham; consequence of this is that there is a similar blending of wages ... the worsted weavers north west of Keighley are reduced down to a cotton standard."(96)

The early 1840's was a "time of unexampled distress."(97) It was alleged that a good handloom weaver in Settle union could not earn more than 3s a week, mainly on account of the "little employment they have ..."(98) Assistant Commissioner Walsham wrote of "the very distressed condition of some of the townships comprised within ...[Skipton] union in which handloom weaving of the lowest description is the principal employment of the inhabitants -"(99) - the townships included Cononley, Cowling, Farnhill, Glusburn, Salterforth, Thornton and Barnoldswick. There was considerable distress at Barnoldswick -

"... the absolute misery of a great number of the inhabitants ... the handloom weavers of that place by hard and constant work can not earn more than from 3 to 4 shillings per week -"(100)

Handloom weavers, relieved by Skipton union in 1853, earned on average 7/- a week, though the individual amounts indicate the great variation in wages.(101) The wages were representative - "There is no want of application or industry nor are their wages below the usual rate."(102) Nor were the

(96) PP.1840 (43 - II) XXIII p.551

(97) PP.1842 (422) XXXV p.10

(98) Ibid

(99) MH12 Skipton 16/6/1842

(100) Ibid 29/5/1842

(101) Ibid 22/1/1853

2 weavers earned 10/- per week

5 " " 8/- " "

1 " " 7/6 " "

6 " " 7/- " "

3 " " 6/- " "

1 " " 5/- " "

1 " " 4/- " "

3 weavers earning 4/-, 6/- and 6/- were in a poor state of health, which would have reduced their earning capacity.

(102) Ibid 22/1/1853

weavers' wages unusually low as a result of trade recession. - "The majority of the cases reported are those where the heads of families are employed in handloom weaving and where wages will most probably ever continue to fall short of supporting a large family."(103)

A year or two later, in 1854-5, handicraft textile workers, especially those in the woollen industry, were suffering great privations:

"the worsted manufacture was much more depressed in 1855 than any other trade."(104)

Prior to the depression handloom weavers, employed by a large manufacturing firm in Keighley, were without work:

"Before there was any great depression of trade in the Bradford market, Messrs Cravens of Keighley, very large manufacturers, employing a great number of handloom weavers, dissolved partnership, and stopped their works in order to wind up their partnership. Their hands were given to understand that the partners were about to carry on business separately and would shortly require the services of their weavers ... This suspense continued till bad markets came and then was prolonged for a considerable time. Then with the continued bad markets almost every mill in the union ran for half time only. Several stopped, and are up to this time closed. Many of the mill owners became bankrupt."(105)

The mid '50's recession also persuaded manufacturers to utilize steam-driven machinery in preference to hand woolcombers, many of whom were thrown out of work as a result. Earlier, in 1840, the Bradford Woolcombers' Association detailed their grievances in an address to the manufacturers:

" ... previous to the reduction [in wages] it was scarcely possible for any of his woolcombers to obtain an honest livelihood by their own hand labour. But now that the reduction has taken place our sufferings are augmented and our lives have become miserable.... We are compelled to work from 14 to 16 hours per day, and with all this sweat and toil we are not able to procure sufficient of the necessaries of life wherewith to subsist on."(106)

(103) MH12 Skipton 31/1/1853

(104) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.B. 1855 pp.47-8

(105) Ibid pp.46-7

(106) J.Burley, op cit pp.176-8

Many hand weavers and combers were again without work or only partially employed during the trade recession in 1857. Thus, evidence relating to the plight of weavers is most abundant for the years of severe recession in the 1830's and 1840's. By 1850 there ceased to be any special mention of the distress of handloom cotton weavers in Settle or Skipton unions and a decade later the condition of woolcombers and handloom worsted weavers in Skipton union was no longer a subject of concern. Nevertheless, during the first twenty years or so of the New Poor Law the handloom weavers' earnings were extremely low and uncertain and as a class they were most vulnerable in trade depressions.

(iii) Hand Knitters

Despite the elaborate mechanisation of the Midland Knitwear industry by the nineteenth century handknitting still survived in parts of north-west Yorkshire - as a by-occupation for men and as a major source of employment for women, the elderly and children. The author, William Howitt, wrote about Aysgarth in 1844 -

"... the men still knit a great deal in the houses; and the women knit incessantly."(107)

The census schedules for the townships comprising Aysgarth and Sedbergh unions were consulted. In the former union there were 47 knitters in 1841, 199 in 1851, 188 in 1861 and 117 in 1871, the majority of whom lived in High Abbotside and Hawes. In Sedbergh union there were 54 knitters in 1841, 170 in 1851, 106 in 1861 and 37 in 1871. The census schedules indicate a definite decrease in the number of knitters in both unions in the period 1851-71, though more marked in Sedbergh union.(108)

(107) H. Martley and J. Ingilby, *op cit* p.78

(108) According to the 1851 census enumerators' schedules only 13 of the 199 knitters in Aysgarth union were male, of whom 5 were below the age of 15 and 3 over 75 years. 19 of the 170 knitters in Sedbergh union were male, of whom 13 were below the age of 15 and 5 over 60 years of age.

Number of knitters in the 3 townships comprising Sedbergh union:

	1841	1851	1861	1871
Cent	42	81	43	11
Barsdale	none	55	46	4
Sedbergh	32	34	17	22

The extent to which the census returns underestimated handknitter numbers can be gauged from a comparison with the number of employees of the principal knit-hosiery manufacturer in Hawes. In 1871 James Smith employed approximately 800 people who knitted in their homes while the number of knitters mentioned in the 1871 census schedules for Aysgarth union totalled only 117, 95 of whom resided in Hawes. Between 1871 and 1890 the number of handknitters employed by the firm of James Smith and Son fell by half, from eight to four hundred.(109)

Throughout the period 1834 to 1900, earnings derived from hand-knitting were extremely modest:

"... in the decline of the industry the pay became very low ..."(110)  
 Wages, averaging 2/- to 3/- a week in 1843, varied little from the rates in 1770, when Arthur Young wrote of the knitters of Aysgarth -

"... the poor women and children's employment is knitting and spinning by which the women earn about 6d a day and girls 2d or 3d."(111)

Only the fact that hand-knitting was a 'by-occupation' and that there was little alternative employment in this remote and impoverished area ensured the survival of hand-knitting in the nineteenth century.

23 Lead Mining

Textiles was not the only industry to dwindle away in North Yorkshire in the course of the nineteenth century. The mid-Pennine leadmines in Swaledale, Arkongarthdale, Wensleydale, Nidderdale, upper Wharfedale and Airedale contributed one of the major lead fields in the

(109) H.Hartley and J.Engilby op cit p.57

(110) Ibid p.19

(111) pp.1843 (510) XII p.286  
 (quoted in H.Hartley and J.Engilby, op cit p.50)

country, producing in 1856 approximately one eighth of the lead mined in Britain.(112) Leadmining in Yorkshire reached its peak in the 1840's and 1850's and a serious decline began in the 1870's and 1880's, in 1873 the tonnage of dressed ore was nearly 5,000 and by 1905 a mere 110.(113)

In 1851 the number of leadminers exceeded a hundred in four North Yorkshire unions - 826, 280, 188 and 137 in Reeth, Skipton, Pateley Bridge and Leyburn unions respectively.(114) The number of leadminers in Aysgarth union did not exceed thirty-eight - in 1861, - and in Settle union only three - one in Arncliffe and two in Malham - were recorded in 1851. Reeth union was the most densely populated with leadminers; in 1871 approximately 45% of its adult male population were leadminers, compared with 6% in Pateley Bridge, 3.5% in Leyburn, 2.5% in Skipton and 1.75% in Aysgarth. All the townships, comprising Reeth union, had leadminers - in 1851 approximately 16.5% of the total population of Melbecks, 14% of Arkengarthdale, 11% of Muker, 8.4% of Reeth, 9.6% of Grinton and 9.4% of Marrick were adult leadminers. In the other unions leadminers were confined to a few townships. In Pateley Bridge union, the mining community was largely confined to the township of Dacre cum Beverley; only two other townships, out of a total of thirteen, had more than five leadminers in 1851. Of the forty-eight townships and parishes in Skipton union only eight had more than five leadminers, forming three leadmining centres round Kettlewell with Starbottan, Grassington and Cononley. In Leyburn union, leadminers resided in the townships of

(112) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings, HISTORY OF LEAD MINING IN THE PENNINES (1965) p.281.

There were lead ore fields in the North Pennines, Peak District (Derbyshire), Lake District, Wales, Somerset and Shropshire.

(113) W.Page (ed) THE VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF YORK (1912) Vol.II p.575-6.

See Appendix G Table 1 for the yield of leadore from Yorkshire mines 1875-1900.

(114) See Appendix G Table 2

Redmire, Castle Bolton, Preston and West Witton parish.(115)

The only increase of any note in the number of leadminers was in Leyburn union, between 1841 and 1861. All the townships were losing miners by 1871; there were significant reductions in the number of miners between 1851 and 1861 in Muker, and during the following decade in Reeth township, Bewerley, Grassington, Cononley and the four above mentioned townships in Leyburn union. The decrease in the number of adult miners between 1861 and 1871 was generally accompanied by a more marked reduction in the number of miners below the age of twenty, thus suggesting that the movement out of the industry was most acute amongst the younger miners.

The factors that most seriously affected the economic fortunes of the leadminers were the state of the British lead market and the degree of productivity of a particular leadfield or mine. The usual system of paying leadminers, known as the 'bing system', served to aggravate the problems of reduced and uncertain earnings experienced by the miners. During a depression in the lead industry both the demand for lead and the price paid to the mining company and the miner fell. The consequences for the miner were unemployment and/or a sharp reduction in earnings. The closure of a local mine, preceded by diminishing output as the mine was worked out, had similar effects on the rate of employment and earnings of the miners. Ventilation and drainage difficulties and extreme weather conditions are examples of additional factors that affected the rate of employment and amount of lead mined.

The period 1800 to 1810 had been one of great prosperity for the lead industry. The trade had recovered from the post-Napoleonic War

slump by 1825, only to be plunged into a major depression in the late 1820's and early 1830's.(116) In 1825 the average price paid for a ton of lead was £27.5s; by 1832 the price had fallen to £13.10s a ton.(117) The overseer of Grassington estimated that a ton of lead, costing £40 in the early years of the century, was worth only £12 during the depression of the early 1830's.(118) Unemployment amongst miners was general. The following commentary on the situation in Swaledale was typical of conditions in most leadmining districts between 1829 and 1833:

"Now the mines are exhausted, the price of lead is low and miners are forced to obtain a living in other countries which they can not get here."(119)

Mining companies reduced their labour force. The London Lead Company, whose principal mines were in the northern Pennines, cut their workforce by 40% and wages by 20%.(120) In Eaker there were 313 males, aged twenty and above, of whom 46 were unemployed; although their usual occupation is not recorded, it is reasonable to assume that the majority were miners.(121) The earnings of leadminers in Widderdale fell from an average of fourteen to seven shillings a week.(122) The lead market recovered and despite minor fluctuations during the following fifty years there was not a comparable depression till the late 1870's, when the British lead market collapsed due to the importation of Spanish lead. In 1874 pig lead from the Grassington mines cost £22.63p per ton; by 1879 the price had fallen to £15.42 and in 1885 was £12.25.(123) Another estimate of lead prices per ton shows a similar drastic reduction towards the end of the 1870's:

1864	£21.12. 0	per ton
1871	18. 4. 0	" "
1873	23. 6. 0	" "
1877	20.11. 3	" "
1879	14.16. 6	" "

(116) J.N.Dickinson, LEADS AND LEAD MINERS (1972) p.74  
 (117) A.Haistrick and B.Jennings, op cit p.278  
 (118) pp.1854 (44) K.VIII p.764  
 (119) Extract from Edward Broderick's Diary, 16th October 1830, in B.Cooper MINES OF SWALEDALE (1960) p.34  
 (120) A.Haistrick and B.Jennings, op cit p.278  
 (121) B.Cooper MUSEUM, THE BLOCK OF A YORKSHIRE PARISH (1948) p.76  
 (122) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF WILDERDALE p.285  
 (123) J.N.Dickinson, op cit p.22

In 1884/5 the average price was less than £12 per ton.  
 In 1894 lead reached a record low price of £9.11.9 per ton.(124)

Evidence given to the Kinnaird Commission in 1863 suggests that average earnings were fifteen to eighteen shillings a week but they could fall as low as ten shillings in the poorer mines.(125) An increase in the 1870's, following rises in the price of lead and increased demand for labour in the coalmines and ironworks, served to emphasize the reductions in earnings a decade later. Pickmen, working for the Old Gang Company in Swaledale averaged less than nine shillings a week in the winter of 1884/5.(126) Due to the "unfortunate deterioration of the leadmining industry of Arkengarthdale and Swaledale ..." a miner could not earn more than eight shillings a week.(127) The significance of the following statement -

"In some areas like Wensleydale and Swaledale the fall in price finished off a declining industry." - (128)

is appreciated when one realises that in 1870 Swaledale and Arkengarthdale were producing two-thirds of the lead mined in Yorkshire. "Only major price movements like those of 1829-33 and post 1878 depressions were strong enough to leave mark on almost every mining area."(129) In the intervening years a more important influence on lead output and consequently levels of employment and earnings of miners, was "the extent and efficiency of development work and the distribution of ore deposits."(130)

The following is a brief account of the dates of closure of some of the Yorkshire leadmines. Production at the Cononley mines "ceased

(124) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings op cit p.283

(125) PP.1864 (1889) XVII Q.17809

"In some of the mines they will average about 10s a week, in some about 15s, and in others from 16s to 18s; ..."

(126) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings op cit p.296

(127) Ripon and Richmond Chronicle 19/7/1884

(128) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings op cit p.284

(129) Ibid p.281

(130) Ibid p.280

to all intents and purposes in 1860..."; twelve tons were raised in 1871 and twenty in 1874.(131) The Grassington mines declined from the late 1850's, producing only twenty tons in 1881.(132) Coniston Moor mines closed in 1876.(133) The exhaustion of the mines between Kettlewell and Buckden, in Wharfedale, dated from 1867; in that year 325 tons were raised but the tonnage had fallen to 72.5 in 1870, a mere 4.7 in 1874, 41 in 1875 and 19 in 1880, when the mines probably shut down.(134) In the 1850's the annual production of ore from the Hebden Moor mines averaged 253 tons; in 1867 only seventy three tons were raised, falling to forty tons in 1870.(135) The Appletreewick mines closed in 1874, reopened the following year and lasted nine years before finally closing in 1884.(136) By the mid-nineteenth century most of the workings in the Greenhow mining field had been exhausted. However, development work started in the mid 1850's, but by 1874, the field was almost at a standstill. Several new companies were formed and mining continued until 1895.(137) Wensleydale was represented by only a few mines after 1865; the lead output in the years 1869-71, was less than a third of that in 1860-2.(138) For many years prior to the final collapse of the lead industry several Swaledale mines had become progressively exhausted.

(131) J.L.Dickinson op cit p.5

(132) Ibid p.20

1853	2,127	tons produced		
1860	1,216	" "		
1867	582	" "		
1874	286	" "		
1881	20	" "		

(133) Ibid p.25

(134) Ibid pp.27-30

(135) Ibid p.32

(136) Ibid pp.36-37

1861	146	tons	1867	58	tons
1862	308	"	1868	469	"
1863	235	"	1869	368	"
1864	240	"	1870	1,183	"
1865	529	"	1871	495	"
1866	1,027	"	1872	45	"

(137) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF WILDERDALE pp.300, 307, 313

(138) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings, op cit p.282

George Robinson, manager of mines in Swaledale, informed the Kinnaird Commission, :

"The mines are poor." - an opinion endorsed by Sir G.W.Denys, proprietor of mines in the same dale.

"... the mines have been poor for several years ..." (139)

Ore production from the Swaledale mines declined rapidly in the 1880's. Mines became unprofitable and closed and by the end of the century, production was negligible.

Miners were generally paid for the ore they raised, according to the Bargain system or 'Bingtale'.

"... a partnership of miners would agree to work a length ... in a certain part of a vein for a certain time, usually one to three months, at so much per Bing ..." (140)

Sir G.W.Denys described the system, operating in Swaledale, to the Royal Commissioners in 1863:

"... when there is ore to be got, they make what are called ore bargains ... The agents go in and look at the forehead and see the nature of the vein, and judge pretty well how many bings of metal a man can get with his partners in a given time. Then an agent lets them a bargain of 20, 30 or 40 bings, or whatever it may be, at a certain price, and of course when they have got that bargain their endeavour is to take the metal out as quickly as they possibly can." (141)

The Duke of Devonshire's Mining Company, however, paid its miners by the fathom. Henry Daykin, underground agent for the Grassington mines, stated, "it is not the custom in this country to work by bing; not in Grassington." (142) This was the usual form of payment for the "dead-work men", who sank shafts and drove the levels. Dressers and smelters were normally paid by the day.

(139) PP.1864 (3309) XLIV Q.17809, Q.17838

(140) J.M.Dickinson op cit p.69 A bing was 8 cwt.

(141) PP.1864 (3309) XLIV Q.17367

(142) Ibid Q.18433

By the nineteenth century most minors were paid monthly, (143) though during negotiations for a renewal of a mining lease in Widderdale in 1837, assurance was required that miners would be paid at least once every six months! (144) Monthly earnings depended upon the amount of ore produced: "... a man may have a bargain that will last a year, but he is paid every month for what he has got during that month ..."(145) The price varied according to several factors, for instance, the hardness of the rock, distance of the working from the surface, the quality and quantity of ore. Thus, in 1863, a Swaledale company was "paying higher wages than any of the other companies, solely to induce the men to get into poor places."(146) Nevertheless, there was great variation in the amount of ore raised and the monthly earnings of leadminers. The average monthly earnings per man of one partnership in the Old Gang Company, in Swaledale, between 1860-5, varied from nothing to £3.12s.(147) In Swaledale, where the "proprietors of these mines do not pay their labourers stated wages by the week or month or by the piece, but, by what is styled amongst them trial bargains, that is one or two, or a gang of men take of their employers a length of ground out of which they are to raise so much metal,

(143) Ibid Q.17370, 17645, 17825, 18229.  
Q.17625 "... formerly they used to be quarterly. When they were made once a quarter, the men were over head and heels in debt, and on the pay days they would meet and they would drink for a week or a fortnight before ever they struck another bat."

Also A.Raistrick and B.Jennings op cit p.289.

(144) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF WIDDERDALE p.298

(145) pp.1854 (3389) KILV Q.17574

(146) Ibid Q.17593

(147) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings op cit p.288

Table illustrating variability of earnings - figures of highest, lowest, and average weekly earnings per man of a partnership mining the Old Gang Mine: shillings.

<u>Pickmen</u>	<u>Highest</u>	<u>Lowest</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Av.earnings of 'Loadmen'</u>
June 1872	35	3	17	15
August 1872	20	5	12	14
November 1872	103	9	21	16
February 1873	31	7	15	16
April 1873	87	6	18	17
June 1873	45	8	21	17

at as much a ing or given quantity ...", "... these trials after the men have worked at them for probably 2, 3 and 4 months together (I have known cases of six months and longer) frequently turn out entire failures, and the men receive nothing for their labor, ..."(148) Uncertain earnings, unemployment and poverty therefore were common features of a leadminer's life in the nineteenth century. A later chapter seeks to examine the extent to which these problems put pressure on the poor law administration.

### 3. Industries of North East Yorkshire

The late nineteenth century witnessed a contraction in the traditional industries of north-east Yorkshire. Following the discovery of extensive high grade iron ore, known as the Cleveland Main Seam, at Skinningrove, near Eston, in the early 1850's, north-east Yorkshire became the leading producer of iron ore in Britain.(149) Whitby, Stokesley and Pickering unions were on the periphery of the Cleveland iron ore field, with mines in the area of Grosmont, Glaisdale, Rosedale and elsewhere.(150) The success of new mines in north Cleveland caused speculation by smaller companies further south but many of these mines quickly proved unsuitable for large scale development. The fall in the population of these unions in the late nineteenth century was partly a result of the closure of the iron mines. Three blast furnaces at Glaisdale were blown out in 1875.(151) The Rosedale mines in Pickering

(148) MH12 Roeth 22765B/47 10/12/1847

(149) W.Page (ed) THE VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF YORK Vol.II p.404

(150) S.Chapman CLEVELAND IRONSTONE (1967)

(151) T.Bulmer and Co. HISTORY, TOPOGRAPHY AND DIRECTORY OF NORTH YORKSHIRE...(1890) p 941

union closed in the late 1870's.(152) The seams found near Stokesley were not extensively or profitably worked and mines near Ingleby Greenhow and Swainby had been abandoned by 1890.(153) At the beginning of the period coal was mined on a small scale in the Pennines, for example, near Ingleton in Settle union and at Tan Hill in Reeth union, and in north-east Yorkshire. Production of coal in the moorland pits in Bransdale and Farndale rapidly declined between 1770 and 1800.(154) By the nineteenth century alum mining in north-east Yorkshire was only a shadow of its former importance.

"The alum trade of Cleveland dwindled until by the end of the eighteenth century it had ceased to count as a factor of English trade;"(155)

As demand for jet products increased in the second half of the nineteenth century the jet industry, centred at Whitby, underwent a brief revival:

"1873 was the heyday of the prosperity of the trade"(156)

but by the early 1880's the numbers employed had fallen from 1500 to 400.

A Local Government Inspector reported:

"... at Whitby the total extinction, for all practical purposes, of the jet trade causes undoubted distress amongst those workers who have clung to a decaying industry;" (157)

As shipbuilding centres, Whitby and Scarborough were also overtaken in tonnage constructed by other ports. The "considerable shipbuilding activity" in Scarborough in the first half of the nineteenth century greatly diminished in the second half of the century as a result of the development of iron ship building and the increase in the size of vessels beyond the capacity of the harbour at Scarborough; shipbuilding was

(152) 8th Annual Report of the LGS 1878-9 p.144

(153) T.Dulmer and Co. op cit pp.146, 206, 226.

(154) A.H.Whittaker, 'Coal Mining in Bransdale and Farndale in the 18th Century.' in The Ryedale Historian, No.4.1959

(155) W.Page (ed) THE VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF YORK Vol.II p.329

(156) Ibid p.330

(157) 19th Annual Report of the LGS 1889-90 p.131

thereafter confined to "fishing yawls and cobles..."(158) Whitby was the last stronghold of wooden shipbuilding.(159) It is difficult to assess the extent of the decline of fishing as an occupation in the coastal towns and villages. In 1861 only seven unions in England and Wales contained a larger number of fishermen than Scarborough. In 1890 there was extensive fishing at Staithes while at Runswick a "very considerable fishing trade was formerly done here but it has declined in the late years, and now only a few cobles are so employed."(160) A report on the fishing trade in Whitby union stated:

"... a gradual impoverishment is taking place amongst those that in past times have been in comparatively well-to-do circumstances."(161)

#### 4.3 Agricultural Labourers

While 'de-industrialisation' provides the most dramatic example of economic change in North Yorkshire agriculture, nevertheless, was not immune to national economic developments in the nineteenth century and the rest of this chapter examines the factors influencing the level of wages and rate of employment of those, who, throughout the century, formed the largest single occupational group - the agricultural labourers.

Farming in North Yorkshire was chiefly pastoral. In 1727 Defoe vividly remarked on the lack of arable land in the West Riding -

"as for corn they scarce grow enough to keep their poultry."(162)

- (158) H.Edwards, SCARBOROUGH 936-1966 (1966) p.71  
 (159) W.Page (ed) on cit p.435  
 (160) T.Dulmer and Co. on cit pp.952-3  
 (161) 19th Annual Report of the LGB 1889-90 p.131  
 (162) W.Page (ed) THE VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF YORK (1912) Vol.III p.403

Cobbett drew similar conclusions from his 'Rural Rides' -

"there is not much corn grown in the North Riding of Yorkshire, ... and in the whole county of Durham as is grown in the Isle of Wight alone - all along the road from Leeds to Durham I saw hardly any wheat at all or any wheat stubble, the chief crops being oats and beans mixed with peas ... they are counties made for the express purpose of producing meat ..."(163)

The acreage devoted to corn production declined in the second half of the century whilst that of permanent pasture increased.(164) However, there was a distinction between upland and lowland areas; in the former - the Pennines and North Yorkshire Moors - farms were generally small and/or pastoral, relying chiefly on family labour, whilst greater diversity of farming activity, employing more non-family labour, characterised farms of the Tees Valley and Vales of York and Pickering. The lowland unions - Malton, Scarborough, Easingwold, Thirsk, Bedale, Richmond, Ripon and Knaresborough - therefore, had a proportionally larger agricultural labour force than the upland unions of Whitby, Askrigg, Reeth, Sedbergh, Settle, Skipton and Pateley Bridge; for example, male agricultural labourers formed a mere forty-ninth of the male population of Reeth union in 1851, compared with a fifth in Malton union.

Weekly wages of agricultural labourers have been calculated on a county basis at various dates in the nineteenth century, though there are problems inherent in a study of regional wage variations. In the first place, the agricultural labouring class, far from being a homogenous group, was composed of many occupational groups; for instance, there were

(163) W. Page (ed) op cit Vol. III p.434

(164) Ibid  
Acreage in North Riding devoted to:-

	<u>1867</u>	<u>1886</u>	<u>1906</u>
Corn crops	222,189	199,529	179,754
Permanent pasture	365,383	480,137	527,980

farm servants, generally hired by the year or half-year. Some men were employed by the week, others by the day - both groups could constitute either regularly employed or casual labour. Casual labourers were either 'unskilled' or specialists in a particular aspect of farm craft. Men who worked with animals were generally more highly paid than ordinary labourers - partly on account of the longer hours and Sunday work.(165) Surveys of average county wage rates did not always specify which group of agricultural workers the figures referred to - mostly they represented the wages of the outdoor day labourer. In North Yorkshire, however, this group was less common than in the more arable areas of England and there were proportionally more labourers working with animals. A second difficulty was that contemporary wage tables often gave just the basic wage rate and failed to assess the amount of payment in kind or by way of allowances and seasonal earnings from piece work. In Yorkshire, at the end of the nineteenth century "allowances of corn and meat were still given, the weekly labourers boarded in the farm house, milk and potato land were given free, coals were drawn and allotments ploughed, and beer was provided at harvest and threshing time."(166) Piece work, associated with field tasks on arable farms, though more common in the predominantly arable districts of south east England than in the north of England, did exist in parts of lowland Yorkshire. Tuke, reporting on agriculture in the North Riding in 1794 wrote:

"In the northern part of the Vale of York, and in Cleveland, where the practice of letting work by the piece by no means prevails ... In the southern part of the Vale of York, where the practice of letting work is more frequent ..."(167)

- (165) pp.1205 (2375) XCIII p.357 "men in charge of animals ... are ... speaking generally a higher paid class of farm servant than the 'ordinary labourer'..." p.385. The agricultural labourer's average weekly wages in the North Riding (including allowances) was 18/10d; the equivalent earnings of horsemen, cattlemen and shepherds was 20/5d, 20/8d, 20/7d respectively.
- (166) V. Hasbach, A HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH AGRICULTURAL LABOURER(1920)p.337
- (167) J. Tuke, GENERAL VIEW OF THE AGRICULTURE OF THE NORTH RIDING OF YORKSHIRE (1794) p.285

Allowing for great variation in wage rates for the different classes of agricultural worker and regional differences in piece work and non-cash payments, E.H.Hunt, in his book, 'Regional Wage Variations in Britain 1850-1914', nevertheless concludes that wide variation in regional farm wages did exist and that there was close correlation between the north as a high wage area and the south and south east as a low wage area. Hunt writes of agricultural labourers' wages in Lancashire, Cheshire and the West Riding -

"The overall position in agriculture was that wages in the region were well above the national average."(168)

whilst those in the North Riding "were moderately high, in most cases somewhere between the national average and rates in the highest wage areas."(169) Nineteenth century estimates of wages demonstrate that the differential between the north and south-east was maintained and that agricultural labourers in the North Riding were amongst the better paid throughout the century. Hunt estimates that, in the late 1860's, farm earnings in the Riding were c.20% above the national average and 50% above the rates of the lowest wage counties and that by the twentieth century, though the margin of advantage had been reduced, earnings were still above the national average.(170) Moreover, an examination of prices revealed no differences in standards of living, which would have

(168) E.H.Hunt, REGIONAL WAGE VARIATIONS IN BRITAIN 1850-1914 (1973) p.40

(169) Ibid p.36

(170) In 1851 J.Caird calculated that the highest rates of agricultural labourers' weekly wages in England were in the West Riding (14/-) compared with 11/- in the North Riding and, at the bottom end of the scale, 7/- in Suffolk, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. J.Caird, ENGLISH AGRICULTURE IN 1850-1 (1852) p.474. In 1902 the average weekly earnings of ordinary agricultural labourers (including the estimated value of allowances in kind) was 19s.10d in the West Riding (9th highest county rate in England and Wales) and 16s.10d in the North Riding (12th highest rate), compared with the lowest rate of 15s.4d in Warwickshire. J.P.D.Dunbabin, URBAN DISCONTENT IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITAIN (1974) p. 239

reduced the real gap between earnings.

"... the cost of living of rural workers did not vary significantly in different parts of the country; differences in real wages paralleled differences in money wages." (171a)

An important factor affecting agricultural earnings was the rate of employment, which was determined by the interplay of supply of and demand for labour. Obviously when demand failed to equal supply the result was potential or actual un/der-employment. A reduced demand occurred in the following circumstances - during an agricultural depression, when falling prices led farmers to employ fewer workers in order to reduce labour costs; when adverse weather conditions shortened the harvest and haytime in the summer and prevented outdoor work in the winter and when there was less work to be done on the farms in the winter months. In North Yorkshire several factors mitigated against the harsh operation of these influences and, as a result, employment was more regular and under-employment less prolonged and widespread than in some other regions of the country. The most important factor was the emphasis on pastoral farming. Whereas arable farming was characterised by "an extreme seasonality in the demand for labour," with a large labour force, required for harvest work, being made redundant in the winter months, pastoral farming did not have such a pronounced seasonal demand for labour.(171) In the mixed farming areas women, children, old people, living locally, and migrant workers, such as the Irish and industrial workers, were employed for seasonal tasks, thereby reducing the number of adult male labourers kept in reserve for peak seasonal employment. E.J.T.Collins writes:

(171) A.Digby 'The labour Market and the Continuity of Social Policy after 1834'. 'The Case of the Eastern Counties.' Ec.H.R. 2nd ser LXVIII (1975) p.70

(171a) E.H.Hunt, 'OF CIT' p.07

"In the early nineteenth century weavers and industrial workers were essential components of many harvest gangs in northern England and the Scottish lowlands."(172)

Poor Law Inspector Lambert was of the opinion that -

"In the extensive agricultural districts of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire there is no superabundance of labour, and were it not for the periodic immigration of Irish labourers the ordinary harvest and drainage work could not be done ..."(173)

The predominantly pastoral farming led to a large proportion of agricultural workers being hired for a term of one or half a year, living in the farmer's or foreman's house. The farmer paid wages for the whole of this period, regardless of unemployment due to bad weather or temporary sickness.(174) The significance of living-in as a factor preventing pauperism amongst agricultural labourers should not be over-estimated since the vast majority of these indoor servants were below the age of twenty.(175) Nevertheless, there were indirect ways in which the hiring system reduced the likelihood of poverty. E.H.Munt argues that it was a disincentive to early marriage (176) and allowed the young person to save before marrying. If a man failed to be hired he was faced with a definite choice of unemployment or moving away in search of work. The hiring system was therefore an important mechanism in regulating supply and demand. This can be seen in operation in the 1830's. According to a land surveyor, living in the North Riding, not quite half the servants were hired at a local Martinmas hiring and many, unable to get employment in the depression of the 1830's, migrated.(177) The type of farming also determined to some degree the impact of agricultural depressions on employment. For instance, in the depression of the late nineteenth century large-scale arable farming regions were

(172) E.J.F.Collins, 'Harvest Technology and Labour Supply in Britain 1790-1870' *Sc.H.A.* 2nd ser. XXii (1969) p.466

(173) 1832 Lambert 22 19/2/1858

(174) 18.1832-4 (1834) *HW* p.15

(175) 18.1832-3 (1831-11) *LEKIViii* Div IX North Riding

(176) *Munt*, op cit p.257

(177) 18.1833 (312) *V* 3.2524

more adversely affected than mixed or pastoral farming districts.

Hunter-Pringle, reporting on the agricultural depression in South Durham and North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, observed -

"In 1894 irregularity of work was chiefly confined to the eastern and midland counties which have been most affected by the agricultural depression."(178)

He adduced the less serious impact of the depression in the north to "the preponderance of pastoral farming, ..."(179)

Thus the northern agricultural labourer was more assured of regular employment than his counterpart in the south-eastern counties of England. Nineteenth century commentators on agriculture and the poor laws in North Yorkshire were agreed on the absence of a surplus agricultural labour force, though under-employment amongst a small section of the labouring class in the slack winter months was exacerbated in years of depression, particularly in the 1830's, 1840's and early 1850's. In the depression of the early 1830's farmers employed fewer labourers -

"he [the labourer] is frequently out of employ part of time."(180) In Settle, where a third to a half of the labourers were out of work in 1832-3, the township authorities attributed the distress in part to the "great scarcity of husbandry work" and round Sedbergh, in the early 1840's it was alleged that "our agricultural labourers ... are now often wanting work ...", though the primary reason for unemployment in both these districts was the decline of handloom weaving opportunities.(181) In 1842 appears to have been a particularly bad year for employment. In Great Ouseburn (and no doubt in other agricultural townships) the "surplus

(178) PP.1897 (8540) XV p.39

(179) Ibid p.6

(180) PP.1833 (612) V p.2593

(181) PP.1834 (44) XVIIii p.751

of able-bodied men out of employment this winter", 1842-3, was the greatest in the memory of the guardians.(182) Unusually high rates of un- and under-employment occurred again in 1849-50. Inspector Hawley reported on the effects of the depressed state of agriculture in the North Riding -

"This portion of the country is strictly agricultural ... complaints by the occupiers of low prices and their inability in consequence to employ the usual number of labourers are very general ..." "Labourers are more or less out of employment in every union in this part of the county ..." (183)

Despite North Yorkshire's high position on the ladder of wage levels there is ample evidence of permanent poverty. Even in the early twentieth century, following half a century of 'improvement' in agricultural workers' standard of living, Rowntree and Kendall reckoned that agricultural wages attained the minimum income required by a family of five (20/6d) in only five counties - Northumberland, Durham, Westmoreland, Lancashire and Derbyshire. However, their findings were based on the wage rates of 1907 but the 1913 cost of living. Adjusted figures, using 1913 wage rates would, argued one agricultural historian, also include Cumberland, Middlesex and the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire.(184) If the North Yorkshire farm worker was considered to be on the border line of poverty at the turn of the century then his position had clearly been worse fifty years earlier. In 1840 the Medical Officer of Malton union stressed the precarious state of the agricultural labourer's independence:

"... the agricultural labourer has no opportunity of providing beforehand for a time of scarcity ... his wages in the best of times never rise above his urgent wants so far as to enable him to lay anything by for the future ..." (185)

(182) PR.1843 (172) XLV p.39

(183) MH32 Hawley 41 13/6/1849

(184) R.Lennard, ECONOMIC NOTES ON ENGLISH AGRICULTURAL WAGES (1914) pp.90-91

(185) MH12 Malton 100257/1840

Inspector Mott equated the economic situation of the agricultural worker with that of the handloom weaver -

"To [the handloom weaver] ... as also to the agricultural labourer all of whom necessarily expend more than half their incomes in bread and potatoes an increase in the price of flour operates with great severity."(186)

In 1895 an Assistant Commissioner, reporting on Yorkshire, considered that the agricultural labourer with a young family was still hard pressed.(187)

(186) RH32 Mott 57 13/4/1839

(187) PR.1895.4 (304) MATT p.33

CHAPTER TWOThe New Poor Law and the Able-bodied Pauper1. National Policy.

The New Poor Law of 1834 provided the basis for the statutory treatment of poverty throughout a century of fundamental social and economic change in England. Since this thesis is concerned, not with the poor law as a whole, but with its treatment of the able-bodied pauper, we must now examine changes in national poor law policy towards the relief of the able-bodied in the period 1834-1900. A Royal Commission was appointed in 1832 to enquire "into the administration and practical operation of the Poor Laws", which, two years later, after a detailed survey of the poor relief system in many parishes and townships throughout the country, produced a report, criticising the administration of poor relief and proposing major changes. (1) Parliament, accepting in the main the recommendations of the Report, passed the Poor Law Amendment Act; the poor relief system, established by the 1834 Statute, became known as the New Poor Law. (2) The Act, "to alter and amend the laws relating to the relief of poor persons", did not stipulate poor relief policy, setting up instead the administrative machinery, whose function was to formulate policy decisions and put them into practice. It is proposed to examine,

(1) PP1834 (44) xxvii

There is no printed report, compiled by an Assistant Commissioner, for the North Riding in the appendices to the Report, as there is for the West Riding.

There are two possible reasons - either the report was in Appendix A part iv which was never printed or the Riding was not visited by an Assistant Commissioner.

"... different accidents, which prevented several [assistant commissioners] from proceeding ... in some cases forced us ... to leave some altogether unvisited ..." PP1834 (44) xxvii p1.

## (2) Act for the amendment and better administration of the laws relating to the poor in England and Wales. 4 &amp; 5 Wm. iv c.76.

firstly, the Report, which outlined the principles of the New Poor Law, secondly, the Act, which established the machinery to administer relief, and thirdly, the rules governing relief to able-bodied paupers, known as Orders.

a. THE REPORT

The 1834 Report was primarily concerned with the problem of pauperism among the able-bodied. Though set against a background of dissatisfaction with the poor relief system, occasioned by soaring expenditure on poor relief and contemporary economic theories, critical of the old poor law, the immediate impetus behind the appointment of the Royal Commission was rural unrest in southern and eastern England in 1830-31. The ruling classes attributed the riots and other manifestations of rural discontent to abuses in the poor law system; the Commissioners' investigations therefore concentrated on the effects of the poor relief system on the agricultural sector. (3) Urban and industrial workers figured in the Report principally to reinforce the Commissioners' arguments respecting administration of relief to agricultural labourers; the problems peculiar to the relief of this class of pauper were not considered. Other aspects of the poor laws such as rating, settlement, removal, and the treatment of other groups of paupers, children, aged, sick, disabled, mentally afflicted and vagrants, received scant attention from the Royal Commissioners. (4) The Report grouped all the above-mentioned paupers, with the exception of vagrants, under the heading "not

(3) PP1834 (44) xxvii p.28. "It appears ... that in every district, the discontent of the labouring classes is proportioned to the money dispensed in poor's rates or in voluntary charities." p.29. "during the agricultural riots, many of the inhabitants [of Newbury and Reading] were under strong apprehensions of the rising of the very people amongst whom the poor's rates and charities are so profusely distributed."

(4) M.E.Rose, THE RELIEF OF POVERTY. 1834-1914. (1972) p.12

able" or "impotent". The Commissioners were so dismissive of or uninterested in this class that the outlines of the proposed relief afforded them are vague and even ambiguous. On the one hand, the Commissioners contemplated separate workhouses, offering specialised treatment for 'unable' paupers -

"At least four classes are necessary - 1. The aged and really impotent; 2. The children; 3. The able-bodied females; 4. The able-bodied males ... It appears to us that both the requisite classification and the requisite superintendance may be better obtained in separate buildings than under a single roof." "Each class might thus receive an appropriate treatment; the old might enjoy their indulgences without torment from the boisterous; the children be educated and the able-bodied subjected to such courses of labour and discipline as will repel the indolent and vicious." (5)

Elsewhere in the Report, however, the Commissioners implied that there would be one workhouse only, in which the impotent would be subject to the same restrictions as the able-bodied -

"...to the aged, the feeble and other proper objects of relief, the regularity and discipline render the workhouse a place of comparative comfort." (6)

The Report alleged that the great source of abuse in the maladministration of the poor laws were "The outdoor relief afforded ... to the able-bodied on their own account or on that of their families ..." (7) Although relief in kind was the most common form of assistance the Commissioners identified five types of outdoor relief in money.

1. Relief without Labour.

"By the parish giving to those who are or profess to be without employment a daily or a weekly sum, without requiring from the applicant any labour." (8)

(5) PP1834 (44) xxvii p.172.

(6) Ibid p.129.

(7) Ibid p.11.

(8) Ibid p.11.

2. Allowance.

"By the parish allowing to labourers, who are employed by individuals, relief in aid of their wages."

"In some places allowance is given only occasionally, ... In others it is considered that a certain weekly sum ... is to be received by each member of a family ... The latter practice has sometimes been matured into a system, forming the law of a whole district ... under the name of Scales." (9)

3. Roundsman System.

"By the parish paying the occupiers of property to employ the applicants for relief at a rate of wages fixed by the parish, and depending not on the services, but on the wants of the applicants, the employer being repaid out of the poor rate all that he advances in wages beyond a certain sum ..." (10)

4. Parish Employment.

"By the parish employing and paying the applicants for relief." (11)

5. The Labour-rate System.

"By an agreement among the ratepayers, that each of them shall employ and pay out of his own money, a certain number of labourers who have settlement in the parish, in proportion, not to his real demand for labour, but according to his rental or to his contribution to the rates ... or according to some other scale." (12)

The escalation of pauperism and poor relief expenditure and the depressed agricultural economy were attributed to the interrelation of poor relief with the labour market - the practice of giving outdoor relief to able-bodied men in employment, described as "the master evil of the present system." (13) Much of the Report was devoted to an analysis of the way in which outdoor relief affected pauperism and the economy.

(9) Ibid p.12

(10) Ibid p.18-19

(11) Ibid p.21

(12) Ibid p.24

(13) Ibid p.156

The "tendency of [outdoor relief] to constant and indefinite increase, independently of any legitimate causes" was attributed to the ease with which the poor could obtain relief and the effects of a pauperised labour market on the independent labourer. (14) The system was open to fraudulent claims because the administration did not distinguish between bonafide applicants and imposters; the receipt of relief required no sacrifice on the part of the pauper and the administrators were considered inadequate to discriminate between deserving and non deserving applicants. A distinction was more commonly made once they were paupers; the deserving were compensated with extra allowances, which added to the poor's rates. In the absence of a deterrent form of relief the pauper labourer was in a more favourable economic position than the independent labourer. The farmer employed labour at the lowest wages possible; the pauper-labourer, supplemented as his wages were out of the poor's rates, was ensured of work in a surplus labour market. The independent labourer was unable to compete in a pauperised labour market and he too was eventually forced to have recourse to poor relief. However, the Commissioners claimed that the interference of outdoor relief with the labour market had wider repercussions than the mere pauperisation of labour. It was a fundamental cause of the deteriorating and depressed condition of the great mass of society. The Report listed the problems as they affected four sectors in the agricultural economy:

1. The owners of property.

It was alleged that the poor relief system reduced income from the land, leading, eventually, to the dereliction of estates.

"Our Evidence ... contains many [instances] in which the pressure of the poor rate has reduced the rent to half, or to less than half, ... and some in which it has been impossible for the owner to find a tenant." (15)

(14) Ibid p.147

(15) Ibid p.36-7.

## 2. Employers of labour.

The Report described how a demoralised labour force impoverished the farmer.

"... the tendency of the allowance system is to diminish, we might almost say to destroy, all these qualities [skill, intelligence, honesty, diligence] ... in the labourer."

"... the evidence shows, ... that ... [the labourers] are becoming not merely idle and ignorant and dishonest, but positively hostile; actually desirous to injure him." [the farmer] . (16)

## 3. Independent labourers.

The Commissioners itemised the ways in which "he is a loser".

His virtues "are often the cause of absolute loss ... the income from the parish for easy or nominal work ... exceeds that of the independent labourer; and ... in those cases in which the relief only equals ... the average rate of wages, it is often better worth having, as the pauper requires less expensive diet and clothing than the hard working man." (17)

The independent labourer is sometimes "refused permission to work ... [or] only a given number of days in each week, ..." (18)

## 4. Pauper labourers.

"No man's principles can be corrupted without injury to society in general; but the person most injured is the person whose principles have been corrupted." (19)

Outdoor relief had the effect of "disconnecting each member of a family from all the others; of reducing all to the state of domesticated animals, fed, lodged and provided for by the parish, without mutual dependence or mutual interest." (20)

Although the validity of the Royal Commissioners' evaluation of the prevalence and implications for the labour market, and agricultural economy generally, of outdoor relief - and the allowance system in particular - has come under scrutiny, the careful selection of evidence to create a logical and indisputable case against outdoor relief does

(16) Ibid p.39.

(17) Ibid p.44.

(18) Ibid p.46.

(19) Ibid p.49.

(20) Ibid p.53.

testify to the Commissioners' conviction that outdoor relief was "the master evil" of the present system.

Under the reformed poor laws the poor rates were to be used for the relief of indigence only -

"... the state of a person unable to labour, or unable to obtain, in return for his labour, the means of subsistence. It has never been deemed expedient that the provision should extend to the relief of poverty; that is, the state of one, who in order to obtain a more subsistence, is forced to have recourse to labour." (21)

In order to distinguish between the able-bodied poor and the able-bodied indigent, applying for relief, the Report proposed to make the condition of the pauper less eligible than "the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class," so that only the really destitute would prefer poor relief to independence.(22) The most efficient way of enforcing the policy of less eligibility was by restricting the dispensation of relief to the able-bodied in the workhouse, where "the strict discipline ... restrictions ... in respect to the use of acknowledged luxuries ..." and, most important, the setting of the able-bodied to work would be "intolerable to the indolent and disorderly."(23) Thus, the first recommendation of the Report was -

"That, except as to medical attendance, and subject to the exception respecting apprenticeship hereinafter stated, all relief whatever to the able-bodied persons or to their families, otherwise than in well regulated workhouses ... shall be declared unlawful ... and that all relief afforded in respect of children under the age of 16, shall be considered as afforded to their parents."(24)

The Commissioners envisaged the complete suppression of the practice of giving partial relief to the able-bodied within two years.(25)

A larger administrative unit than the parish was essential if a well regulated workhouse and a more professional and impartial relief administration were to be provided. The Report recommended that the parish be replaced by a union of parishes as the unit of poor law administration.

- (21) Ibid p.127
- (22) Ibid
- (23) Ibid p.129
- (24) Ibid p.146
- (25) Ibid p.167

5th Recommendation: " ... that the Central Board be empowered to incorporate parishes for the purpose of appointing and paying permanent officers, and for the execution of works of public labour." (26)

The effectiveness of the policies depended upon a uniformity in the administration of poor relief throughout the country, which would, in the Report's opinion, only be secured by the withdrawal of all local discretionary power and the control of the administration of the poor law by a central board.

"the legislature should divest the local authorities of all discretionary power in the administration of relief." (27)  
 2nd Recommendation: "We recommend therefore, the appointment of a central board to control the administration of the Poor Laws, with such assistant commissioners as may be found requisite ..."(28)

b. THE ACT

No attempt was made in the Act, which followed from the Report, to legislate against "the practice ... of giving relief to persons or their families who, at the time of applying for and receiving such relief, were wholly or partially, in employment of individuals ..." (29) Parliament recognised the great difficulty of implementing such an "immediate and universal remedy." (30) Policy decisions regarding outdoor relief were therefore left to the Poor Law Commission.

"... it shall be lawful for the said Commissioners, by such Rules ... as they may think fit, to declare to what extent and for what period the relief to be given to able-bodied persons or to their families ... may be administered out of the workhouse ... by payments in money, or with food or clothing in kind, or partly in kind and partly in money, and in what proportions, to what persons or class of persons, at what times and places, on what conditions, and in what manner such outdoor relief may be afforded." (31)

- (26) Ibid p.183.  
 (27) Ibid p.165.  
 (28) Ibid p.167.  
 (29) 4 & 5 Wm iv c.76 s.L11.  
 (30) Ibid  
 (31) Ibid

All relief, given by the elected guardians and other local poor law administrators, contrary to the Poor Law Commission's rules was deemed unlawful, though the Act did make provision for delaying the implementation of the orders in a union and departure from the Orders.

"... in the case the overseers or guardians ... shall ... be of opinion that the application ... would be inexpedient, it shall be lawful for such overseers or guardians to delay the operation of such orders ... or any part thereof, for any period not exceeding ... thirty days from ... the day of the receipt of such orders ... and such overseers and guardians shall [within] twenty days ... report ... special circumstances to the said Commissioners;" (32)

"if overseers or guardians shall depart from the order "in any particular instance or instances of emergency, and shall within fifteen days ... report ... [the departure] ... and the said Commissioners shall approve of such departure ... [in] such cases, the relief granted, ... if otherwise lawful, shall not be unlawful ..."(33)

c. THE ORDERS

There were two types of Order - the particular Order, most frequently used in the early years of the New Poor Law and issued to individual parishes or unions, and the General Order, of universal applicability, requiring the approval of the Secretary of State. (34) Though the prohibition of outdoor relief to able-bodied paupers formed the first recommendation of the 1834 Report and was the main object of the Poor Law Amendment Act, no such Order was ever issued. As anticipated in the 1834 Act the prohibition proved a more complex task than Chadwick, the author of the Report, had imagined.

In the first year of the New Poor Law, parishes or townships, separately maintaining their own poor, were directed to "continue in the accustomed course ... until the rules, orders and regulations ...

(32) 4 & 5 Wm. IV c.76 s.111

(33) Ibid

(34) Ibid s XVI

shall have been duly prepared and promulgated." (35) The Commissioners first proceeded to form unions in the south, issuing five regulations, relating to the relief of the poor. Outdoor relief to able-bodied men was only prohibited in the case of financial relief in aid of wages; by implication relief in kind to able-bodied men in private employment was still allowed. There was no restriction on relief to able-bodied females, save that at least half should be in kind. Relief to non resident paupers (those living outside the union in which they had their settlement) was forbidden except in certain circumstances. (36) Although the Commissioners, writing about pauperism and relief in Nottingham, were of the opinion that "... the system established under the Poor Law Amendment Act is peculiarly applicable to the case of a manufacturing district during a period of distress "they deemed it inexpedient to issue the regulations to the unions in the northern manufacturing districts, in view of the violent, organised opposition to the New Poor Law, exacerbated by trade depression. (37) In the industrial unions of the West Riding and Lancashire relief continued to be administered as before -

"... the Board of Guardians will have the entire and absolute authority of deciding, whether a person should receive outdoor relief, or should be relieved by admission in any of the poorhouses or workhouses of the union." (38)  
 "The Guardians shall administer relief to the poor according to the provisions of the statute 43. Eliz.c2. and all other statutes ... in force ..." (39)

In 1839 the Commissioners reported the continuation of "partial relief ... to those who have 'some means' to maintain [and] ... to those who are able to work and who do work." (40) The number of unions operating under a particular Order regulating outdoor relief to the able-bodied gradually increased; in autumn 1840 the Order was sent to unions in

(35) 1st Annual Report of the P.L.C 1835-6 p.41  
 (36) Ibid p.52  
 (37) 4th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1838 p.23  
 (38) Ibid p.115  
 (39) Ibid p.110  
 (40) 5th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1839 p.8-9

Cornwall, Devon, Northumberland and Durham (41) and in August 1841 the Order, reissued in the form of a General Order, was introduced for the first time to unions in the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, Northumberland, Westmorland and Cumberland. (42) This Order, known as the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order of 1841 and 1844, (amended slightly according to the statute of 7 and 8 Vict. c.101) directed that all relief to able-bodied persons, male and female, or to their families, should be in the workhouse. (43) There were circumstances in which the prohibition of outdoor relief could be relaxed; able-bodied men could receive outdoor relief on account of "sudden and urgent necessity", "sickness, accident or bodily or mental infirmity, affecting such person, or any of his or her family," and for defraying funeral expenses. All relief to non-resident persons was prohibited, but again a number of exceptions were specified. It was illegal to give outdoor relief, contrary to the Order, as a loan. There was scope for guardians' discretion in considering individual applications. Departure from the Order was allowed, providing the case was reported to the Poor Law Commissioners within fifteen days.

However, the poor law administrators discovered that the 'workhouse test' was neither universally nor, in every union, permanently applicable. The 'labour test' was accordingly devised in 1841 as an alternative method of assuring that the receipt of poor relief was so unpleasant an experience that only those genuinely destitute would apply. The Outdoor Labour Test Order was sent to those unions which had not been issued with the Prohibitory Order of 1841 or where the Prohibitory Order was temporarily inapplicable. (44) This new Order was intended to prevent three principal

- (41) 7th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1841 p.1
- (42) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1842 p.3
- (43) 11th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1845 p.46-49
- (44) 9th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1843 p.2

abuses of poor relief, namely the payment of rents from the poor rates, relief to able-bodied persons while in private employment and in the receipt of wages, and "imposture by able-bodied paupers who may continue on poor rates while able to maintain themselves by proper exertion." The Labour Test Order differed from the Prohibitory Order in three important respects. Firstly, outdoor relief was only forbidden when it was relief in aid of wages and the able-bodied paupers were to be set to work by the guardians, though they were not living in the workhouse. Secondly, the prohibition of outdoor relief applied to both sexes in the Prohibitory Order whereas there was no rule in the Labour Test Order, prohibiting outdoor relief, even in aid of wages, to women. Thirdly, the Prohibitory Order did not permit outdoor relief to any of the family of an able-bodied pauper, while the prohibition in the Labour Test Order applied to the male head of the family only.

In August 1852 the Poor Law Board finally issued a General Order, regulating outdoor relief, to those unions not already operating under the Prohibitory Order. (45) A modified version of the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order was issued in December 1852 following protests by Boards of Guardians, supported by a large section of the House of Commons. (46) The guardians could give outdoor relief to able-bodied men, providing they were put to work, unless the relief was to supplement wages, to pay towards rent or for travelling expenses (unless ordered to an institution by the Board), to recover or buy tools or to establish a person in trade or business. There were the usual exceptions - 'sudden and urgent necessity', sickness, accident, infirmity etc - to the prohibition of relief in aid of wages and the setting to work of able-bodied male

(45) 5th Annual Report of the P.L.B 1852 p.17

(46) Ibid p.24

paupers. The restrictions on the granting of outdoor relief to able-bodied men were further eroded by the Instructional letter, accompanying the revised Order, in which the commissioners explained that they would consider suspending Article 6 (the setting to work of paupers) if there was mass unemployment. Furthermore, relief in aid of wages was so defined as to allow outdoor relief to "a man working for wages on one day and being without work the next, or working half the week and being unemployed during the remainder ..."; Article 5 was "intended ... actually to prohibit ... the giving of relief at the same identical time as that at which the person receiving it is in actual employment ..."

Thus, from 1852, the "practice of the Poor Law Commissioners with regard to outdoor relief settled down into two distinct streams of regulations ... the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order of ... 1852 and ... the Outdoor Relief Prohibitory Order of ... 1844." (47) Though the Prohibitory Order approximated more closely to the principles of the Report than the Regulation (though, as has been demonstrated, even here there was scope for evading the prohibition of outdoor relief to able-bodied men) the proportion of unions in which the Prohibitory Order operated diminished in the course of the century.(48)

2. The Introduction of the 1834 Poor Law in North Yorkshire.

a. Formation of the unions.

Prior to the sending of the various Orders regulating poor relief policy, to local poor law administrators, the Commissioners' initial

(47) S & B Webb ENGLISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ENGLISH POOR LAW HISTORY.  
Pt.II Vol.I (1929) p.149

(48) Ibid p.149-50  
In 1847 39% unions acted under the Prohibitory Order. (in 81 other unions the Prohibitory Order and Labour Test Order were jointly in force).  
In 1871 30% unions acted under the Prohibitory Order.  
In 1905/9 27% unions acted under the Prohibitory Order.

task was to replace the old poor law administrative unit of the parish or township by the union. The Poor Law Commission turned its attention first to the formation of unions in those counties of southern England, which were most seriously pauperised. (49) Assistant Commissioners moved north in 1836. During 1836 and 1837 thirteen unions were formed in North Yorkshire. (50) With the exception of Sedbergh, the remaining unions were formed later as a result either of separation from another poor law union or the dissolution of the older Gilbert Incorporations.

The creation of those 'additional' unions after 1837 came about as follows. In 1836 the parish officers of Bedale failed in their attempt to memorialise the Poor Law Commission against inclusion in the Northallerton union; three years later however the Commissioners acceded to the demand of twelve townships to be separated from Northallerton union and form part of a union centred on Bedale. (51) The predominantly leadmining townships of upper Swaledale separated from Richmond union to form Reeth union in 1840. (52) The formation of Kirkby Moorside union in 1848 followed the Poor Law Board's approval of a Board of Guardians' committee report, proposing the division of Helmsley union. (53) Requests by the towns of Whitby, Harrogate and Scarborough to be detached from the Whitby, Knaresborough and Scarborough unions and form separate unions were, however, rejected by the central poor law authority at various points in the course of the nineteenth century. The ratepayers of Pannal

- (49) S & B Webb. ENGLISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT English Poor Law History Pt. II Vol. I. p.112.
- (50) See Appendix II
- (51) 5th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1839 p.112
- (52) 6th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1840 p.425  
Arkengarthdale and Harrick townships memorialised the Poor Law Commission for the formation of Reeth union, comprising five townships formerly in Richmond union, and two townships, not previously in a union (MH12 Reeth 30/5/1839)
- (53) 1st Annual Report of the P.L.B 1848 p.5  
Helmsley union BGM 2/10/1837

contended -

"... that the increasing importance of Harrogate, both as regards wealth, intelligence, population and respectability, demands that it should be placed beyond a secondary position in the district which derives much of its prosperity from its source."(54)

The memorial from Whitby, dated 1842, was a result of dissatisfaction with increased poor rates in the town since the introduction of the New Poor Law. (55) In 1894 the country parishes, belonging to Scarborough union, objected to paying for the relief of Scarborough poor and the guardians resolved "that an application be made to the Joint Committee of the East and North Riding County Councils to form a union consisting of the rural parishes of Scarborough union, leaving the Borough of Scarborough a union of itself." (56) The formation of a union at Ripon was delayed until 1852 by the existence of a Gilbert Incorporation in the area. Three more unions, Knaresborough, Great Ouseburn and Aysgarth, were formed consequent to the dissolution of two Gilbert Incorporations, Great Ouseburn in 1854 and Bainbridge in 1869.(57)

As poor relief in many townships of the West Riding and Lancashire was administered efficiently and along lines similar to the New Poor Law even before 1834, the Poor Law Commission was unprepared for the extent and hostility of the resistance to the introduction of the New Poor Law from the Northern manufacturing districts. (58) Elsewhere in the north, however, the formation of unions was generally straightforward, meeting only localised opposition to the loss of parochial autonomy in poor relief

(54) Harrogate Advertiser 9/8/1856 16/8/1856

(55) MH12 Whitby 15/12/1842

(56) Scarborough union BGM 21/6/1894

(57) 7th Annual Report of the P.L.B. 1854 p.10  
21st Annual Report of the P.L.B. 1860-9 p.22

(58) M.E.Rose 'THE NEW POOR LAW IN AN INDUSTRIAL AREA' &  
R.M.Hartwell (ed) The Industrial Revolution (1970)  
N.C.Edsall 'THE ANTI-POOR LAW MOVEMENT' 1834-44 (1971)

affairs. (59) Opposition in North Yorkshire usually took the form of petitions to the Poor Law Commission against inclusion in a particular union and non-cooperation by townships once in a union. For example, there were petitions from twenty nine townships against inclusion in Ripon union; the Mayor of Ripon wrote -

"... the universal feeling of this District is most strongly opposed to the contemplated measure..." (60)

The clerk of the newly formed Richmond union complained to the Poor Law Commission that certain townships persisted in the idea that they could maintain their own poor and would not forward their relief lists for revision. (61)

In the case of only two West Riding unions - Sedbergh and Skipton - did opposition to the formation of the union amount to more than isolated parochial protest, requiring the special attention of the Assistant Commissioner. The "intrusion of a mob" at Sedbergh prevented the formation of a union by Assistant Commissioner Vaules in 1837. When attempts were made to form a union in 1840 the townspeople "... determined to resist the introduction ..." The parish officers refused to give the required notice of the election of guardians and produce the township books. Resistance collapsed after the overseers were taken to court and found guilty of illegally withholding the books. (62) In 1837 twenty three guardians of Skipton union supported a move to adjourn the Board for six months. The move was defeated by the combined attendance at the Board meeting of the Assistant Commissioner, Alfred Power, and the Magistrates, who were "disposed to act in execution of the law" (63)

(59) P.J. Dunkley. 'THE NEW POOR LAW AND COUNTY DURHAM' (MA 1971-2 (Durham))  
R. N. Thompson 'POOR LAW IN CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND' (PhD 1976  
1834-71 (Newcastle))

(60) MH12 Ripon 7/2/1851

(61) MH12 Richmond 8/5/1837

(62) 6th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1840 p.4  
MH12 Sedbergh 15/1/1840 31/1/1840 13/2/1840 9/3/1840

(63) PP 1837 (167) xviii 32977  
MH12 Skipton 1/9/1837

The Chairman refused to forward the motion, having been informed by Power of the illegality of the proposed resolution. Power attributed the activity of the opposition to the influence of one guardian, Sir Charles Tempest, "an acknowledged opponent of the law." (64)

The most prolonged resistance to unionisation in North Yorkshire was made by the Gilbert Incorporations of Bainbridge and Great Ouseburn. The 1834 Act gave the Poor Law Commission no power to dissolve Gilbert Incorporations without the consent of at least two-thirds of the Board of Guardians. (65) The Giggleswick and Lawkland Gilbert Incorporations voted to dissolve in 1836 thereby enabling the formation of Settle union. (66) However, Bainbridge and Great Ouseburn refused to dissolve despite several attempts by Assistant Commissioners to persuade them to do so. The Great Ouseburn Board of Guardians was visited once by Alfred Power and three or four times by Mr. Revans. (67) The following is an account of one spirited meeting between Revans and the guardians:

"... he (Revans) was hurling his thunderbolts; he was an excellent tactician, and he rather made some of the guardians tremble,..."

"I said, "Gentlemen, do not be afraid; it is all sheet lightning, there is no electric fluid that can hurt us;" and when he had got calmed down, I said to him, "I will put down 1,000 £, and you shall put down another, and it shall remain as long as you like, and you shall put your best house against ours, and I will engage that ours shall beat yours as regards the comfort of the paupers, the convenience of the poor, and the satisfaction of the ratepayers," and he backed out by saying that he did not come there upon such a mission as that. I told him that I was no gamester. One guardian a very prudent man said that I had gone too far, that I had not the authority of the Guardians, but immediately a cloud of hands were held up, and the guardians said, "if you double the money, you shall have it." (68)

(64) MH12 Skipton 19/5/1842

(65) 4 & 5 Wm iv c.76 xxxii

(66) MH12 Settle 21/12/1836 22/12/1836

(67) Yorkshire Gazette 19/11/1836  
PP.1845 (409) XIII Q.1817

(68) PP.1845 (409) XIII Q.1811

The Incorporation was finally dissolved by the Poor Law Board in 1854 following the discovery that it was not legally constituted. (69) There is, filed in the central poor law records, a letter from the Clerk of the Peace of Northallerton to the Poor Law Board, stating -

"I can not find that any such agreement [for the formation of the Great Ouseburn union under 22.Geo.3.c.83] was ever registered in this office." (70)

One wonders, however, if the dissolution by the Board was itself illegal since in 1842 Assistant Commissioner Clements mentioned an agreement between various townships, filed at Pontefract Sessions in 1828, the same year that Great Ouseburn Incorporation was formed. (71) Despite Revan's optimism in 1836 that the Bainbridge Incorporation would voluntarily dissolve, it was not dissolved until 1869, when an Act, 31 & 32 Vict. C122. s 4 gave the Poor Law Board the power to dissolve Incorporations without the guardians' consent.

Thus only in Sedbergh and Skipton unions did overt opposition pose a threat to the introduction of the New Poor Law. In 1838 Assistant Commissioner Revans, whose district included the North Riding, reported that the "ill feeling towards the amended system ... has decidedly decreased both amongst the Ratepayers and the Poor." (72) and that with the exception of three or four unions, not a quarter of the guardians would be willing to dissolve the union and return to the former system. (73) In future the opposition was to be directed against specific poor law policy rather than the New Poor Law itself.

(69) 7th Annual Report of the P.L.B 1854 p.10

(70) MH12 Knaresborough 13/10/1852

(71) MH32 Clements 11 14620/42

(72) MH32 Revans 65 30/9/1838

(73) Ibid 11/12/1838

b. Relief Policy before the Introduction of the Orders, 1837 - 42.

This section examines briefly the policy adopted by the central authority towards able-bodied relief in North Yorkshire in the period between 1834 and the issuing of the General Orders regulating outdoor relief.

The Poor Law Amendment Act, 1834, empowered the Poor Law Commission to direct relief administration in all unions and parishes; thus the Commission had the authority to stipulate policy, regarding relief to the able-bodied even in the Gilbert Incorporations and parishes, still operating under the Act of 1601, 43 Eliz. c 2, and the Select Vestry Act, 59 Geo III c 12, 1819. However, there is no evidence that the Commission interfered in the relief administration of either the Gilbert Incorporations or the individual parishes in North Yorkshire, even though it was a well-known fact that gross mal-administration of the poor law existed there; for example, Assistant Commissioner Tweedy, in 1832-4, and Keyser, in 1839-41, reported the practice of supplementing the wages of low paid linen workers out of the poor rates in Knaresborough. (74) Writing about the West Riding Gilbert Incorporations in the Fourth Annual Report, the Commissioners stated that they "do not tend to the prevention or even the discouragement of the pauperism of the able-bodied..." (75) There is no correspondence between the Commissioners and parish officials on relief administration in the MH12 records and, in 1852, Poor Law Inspector Austin reported that relief administration in the West Riding Incorporations "is practically beyond the supervision or control of the Board - The Townships are without regulation from the Board." (76)

(74) PP 1834 (44) xlvii p.15  
PP 1840 (43-1) xxiii p.484

(75) 4th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1838 p.4

(76) MH12 Ripon 16/8/1852

The Poor Law Commission did not make a concerted effort to seek out abuses in poor relief administration in the newly created unions during the years 1837-41, relying more on the voluntary co-operation of the guardians. There were many instances of the guardians enquiring of the Commissioners the correct course to take when dealing with applications from able-bodied persons. The Commissioners invariably discountenanced outdoor relief to the able-bodied, taking the opportunity to elaborate on the principles of poor law policy. The following is part of the Commissioners' reply to a request from Richmond Board of Guardians to allow married able-bodied labourers and their wives outdoor relief, while admitting only the children into the workhouse:

"... the Commissioners can only recommend one method of affording [relief to able-bodied labourers] ... that is, the offering to receive the man, and all who are dependent on him into the workhouse. The Commissioners feel assured this course is not only the most advantageous for the union but in the end most kind and considerate for the Poor themselves." and the letter goes on to explain the demoralising effects of outdoor relief on the labouring poor and the good results that followed its discontinuation. "... Whilst acting upon these principles, if any individual cases shall arise, where the labourer from the great number and tender age of his family, shall be compelled to apply for relief, the guardians may if they deem it to be absolutely necessary, treat any such case as one of emergency, and afford relief by admitting one or more of the elder children into the workhouse." (77)

Several unions did pass bye-laws or regulations relating to outdoor relief to the able-bodied. (78) The resolutions are very similar and it is likely that they were suggested to the Boards of Guardians by the Assistant Commissioner. (79) They prohibited outdoor relief to various

(77) MH12 Richmond 10/7/1837

(78) MH32 Revans 65 6/2/1840  
 Richmond union BGM 25/5/1837  
 Pickering EGM 12/6/1837  
 Helmsley BGM 18/3/1837  
 Bedale BGM 9/4/1839  
 MH12 Malton 15/12/1838 22/2/1840  
 MH12 Leyburn 25/3/1837  
 MH12 Thirsk 20/3/1837

(79) MH12 Thirsk 28/8/1837 Clerk to PLC "...Guardians resolved at suggestion of Assistant Commissioner that ..." certain classes of women with illegitimate children do not receive outdoor relief.°

classes of paupers, namely able-bodied men with fewer than six children, (80) single women with more than one illegitimate child, widows with a bastard child born after the husband's death, able-bodied women with no children (81) and, in three unions, able-bodied women with one child. (82)

c. The Introduction of the Prohibitory Order.

It was originally intended that one order, prohibiting outdoor relief to able-bodied persons, should be uniformly applied throughout the country. However, as shown in the previous section, the Prohibitory Order, a modified version of the policy recommended in the 1834 Report, was never issued to some unions, which instead received the Regulation Order, nor in those unions which administered relief according to the Prohibitory Order, was it uniformly introduced in 1841 and 1844. The Act empowered the Poor Law Commission to exercise discretion as to when and to which unions the Order was to be issued. Their decision was based on local considerations as assessed by the Assistant Commissioners. The criteria upon which the Assistant Commissioners judged the suitability of a union for the introduction of the Order were sufficient workhouse accommodation, effective as a test of destitution; relatively full employment and a low rate of able-bodied pauperism; and the co-operation of the Guardians. (83)

In 1841 nine of the seventeen unions received the Prohibitory Order-

- (80) Northallerton union stipulated that the children should be under 10 years of age. Thirsk union prohibited outdoor relief to able-bodied unless they had more than 7 children under 12 years of age.
- (81) In Bedale union this applied to able-bodied women under 50 years of age. In Thirsk union this class was allowed 1/6d a week during the winter.
- (82) Northallerton, Richmond, Bedale.
- (83) M32 Hawley 40 27/8/1844  
M12 Ripon 27/2/1855

those exempted were the four West Riding unions, Pateley Bridge, Sedbergh, Settle and Skipton, and four unions in the North Riding, Helmsley, Northallerton, Richmond and Stokesley. The reason given for exemption of six of the unions was insufficiency of workhouse accommodation except in Pateley Bridge, where the Regulation Order remained in force, the Prohibitory Order was issued soon after the completion of a new, improved workhouse. (84) In 1842 Richmond union built a new workhouse to replace the old one, which did "not afford sufficient accommodation in regard to numbers (nor was) ... in any way adopted to carrying the ... law into effect." (85) The old workhouses of Stokesley, Northallerton and Helmsley unions, which astonished and disgusted Walsham, on his first visit as Assistant Commissioner to the North Riding in 1841, were in use till 1852, 1858 and 1860 respectively. (86) In 1837 Power found the workhouse at Pateley Bridge "in a worse state of management than any I ever entered" and eighteen years later it was still "a most inadequate and ill-contrived building, capable of accommodating only 32 inmates;" a new workhouse was not ready till 1863. (87) A new workhouse for Sedbergh union, to replace the two poor houses, one of which was "merely a farmhouse", was completed in 1855. (88) In the five unions formed after 1841, the Prohibitory Order was issued soon after the acquisition or building of new workhouses, though the introduction of the Order to Knaresborough was delayed for four years by the 'Guardians' reluctance to build a new workhouse to replace the two defective houses in use. (89)

(84) See Appendix II

(85) MH12 Richmond 14/5/1838

(86) MH32 Walsham 79 22/5/1841

(87) MH32 Power 63 27/7/1837  
8th Annual Report of the PLB. 1855 p.51

(88) MH12 Sedbergh 20/1/1852

(89) MH12 Knaresborough 25/5/1854

In two of the unions, Settle and Skipton, however, the main reasons for the exemption from the Prohibitory Order in 1841 were not the absence of workhouses but pressure on the poor relief system from a distressed manufacturing population and the antagonism of the Guardians towards interference with their relief administration by the central poor law authority. The inexpediency of a general rule prohibiting outdoor relief to the able-bodied in textile manufacturing districts, which were subject to sudden, severe and widespread under-employment and unemployment in times of trade depression, had been noted by Power in 1837. (90) In 1840 he advised the Poor Law Commission that the manufacturing districts of the West Riding and Lancashire were not yet ready for the Prohibitory Order, but, in 1842, Assistant Commissioner Hott recommended the issuing of an Order regulating outdoor relief to Settle and Skipton unions to check the "alarming spread of clamorous able-bodied pauperism." (91) In both unions relief to the able-bodied was contrary to the principles of 1834 - "irregular and mischievous," "giving relief without any efficient test," (92) and the guardians were hostile to any suggestion of restriction on their discretion in poor relief administration -

"... the guardians imagined that any restraint on their proceedings would lead to mischief and doubted the propriety of the Commissioners' interference." (93)

Although Walsham recommended the offer of the workhouse to all single persons and married able-bodied man with one child, applying for relief, the Commissioners issued instead the less rigorous Outdoor Labour Test Order. (94)

(90) MH32 Power 63 21/10/1837

(91) MH12 Skipton 19/5/1842

(92) Ibid

(93) MH12 Settle 17/5/1842

(94) MH12 Skipton 4/1/1842

The initial reaction of the Boards to the Prohibitory Order varied from union to union, depending largely on the extent to which it conflicted with the relief administration currently operating in the union. The Commissioners' report in 1842 noted -

"The Boards of Guardians in the northern unions ... exhibited considerable reluctance in some instances to depart from their existing practices." (95)

but in the majority of unions the Prohibitory Order was accepted without overt opposition. The Guardians of Malton, Easingwold, Sedbergh and Knaresborough, however, demanded the withdrawal of the Order from their unions, while Reeth and Bedale, though anxious to carry out the provisions of the 1834 Act and the regulations of the Commissioners and "ready to acknowledge that the principle of the Prohibitory Order is generally good", were opposed to the application of specific clauses of the Order in their union. (96) The guardians usually went no further than registering their protest with the Commissioners but in both Sedbergh and Easingwold the Board of Guardians resigned. The attendance of the ex-officio guardians of Sedbergh union, on the advice of the Poor Law Board, rendered the guardians' action ineffective and the Board resumed administration according to the Order. (97) The Easingwold guardians declined to carry out the Order. (98) The Poor Law Commission attempted conciliatory reasoning and, after a meeting with the Board in October 1841, the Assistant Commissioner was optimistic of their eventual acceptance of the Order. (99) Two months later, however, the guardians resigned in opposition to the Poor Law Commission's refusal to sanction a case of outdoor relief to a single woman, having two illegitimate children. (100) The Commissioners and Assistant Commissioner reiterated

(95) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1842 p.3.

(96) Reeth union BGM 17/9/1841  
MH12 Bedale 12/1/1842

(97) MH12 Sedbergh 22/9/1855 4/10/1855

(98) MH12 Easingwold 10/9/1841

(99) Ibid 25/10/1841

(100) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1842 pp 3-4.

the "very extensive and unrestricted exercise of power in the administration of relief" still remaining with the guardians and, informed the Board of the illegality of their action. (101) The resumption of relief administration was, for a while, conducted by only three guardians, one of whom was ex-officio. (102) This abdication of the Easingwold Board of Guardians was later referred to by an Assistant Commissioner as the "Easingwold Mutiny".

Our concern here is with the attitudes prompting the petitions against the Prohibitory Order and not the validity of the Boards of Guardians' objections. Although the guardians were concerned that the Order would cause great hardship to deserving poor -

"... the order will affect and oppressively injure all the aged able-bodied paupers ... [and] widows ..." (103)

"... the order ... will have an injurious effect upon many deserving poor ..." (104)

the order will result in "... the unfortunate paupers the disgrace of entering the workhouse." (105) -

their opposition was primarily based on the effect it would have on them as administrators of poor relief and as rate payers. Opposition to the Order represented a conflict of practice and principle - of relief administered according to the guardians' knowledge of the applicant's situation and of relief that had as its criterion the 'able-bodiedness' of a person, with no regard for the deserving or non-deserving character of the applicant. A relief system that treated the diverse needs of different areas uniformly, in order to pursue long term benefits, had no positive meaning for most of the local administrators, who could only conceive a relief system closely related to local needs and circumstances.

(101) MH12 Easingwold 1/2/1842

(102) 8th Annual Report of the PIC 1842. p.4

(103) MH12 Easingwold 10/9/1841

(104) MH12 Knaresborough 17/6/1858

(105) MH12 Malton 18/11/1841

The Prohibitory Order, devised by the Poor Law Commission, whose knowledge of the applicants' immediate needs was necessarily more limited than that of the guardians, was therefore regarded as inadequate. The guardians thought that the Order, by substituting the more costly relief in the workhouse for outdoor relief and by pauperising the poor for an indefinite period, would actually increase poor relief expenditure and the poor rates.

The protests do not entirely substantiate the Poor Law Commissioners' report that the principal difficulties in the "way of the introduction of this Order into the northern counties have arisen from the relief of mothers of bastard children and of persons not resident within their union ..." (106) While it is true that one of the controversial issues in Malton, Bedale and Easingwold unions was the prohibition of outdoor relief to able-bodied single women and widows having one illegitimate child, the prohibition of outdoor relief to able-bodied men with families was a major concern of most of the protesting unions. Not a single protest referred directly to non-resident poor, though they may have been implicitly included in the class of able-bodied men and their families. According to the clerk of Malton union the Board wished the Order to be rescinded because -

" ... it is frequently the case ... there are able-bodied labourers with large families ... who cannot ... support themselves and families ..." (107)

Similarly, in Knaresborough, it was alleged that -

" ... the Order ... will have an injurious effect upon many deserving poor families who are reduced from want of employment or from other temporary causes ...", (108)

while in Reeth union the guardians hoped -

(106) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.C 1842 p.3.

(107) MH12 Malton 30/11/1841

(108) MH12 Knaresborough 17/6/1858

"that a somewhat enlarged discretion may be allowed to them ... in respect ... of many individuals who although able-bodied ... are yet unable without parochial assistance to maintain themselves and their families." (109)

Walsham stated that the reason for the opposition of Easingwold union was the effect the Order would have on unmarried mothers -

the "Guardians ... have one of the most injudicious and singular Byelaws I ever met with ... that all women under twenty two and having only one bastard child shall have outrelief ..." (110)

However, the Chairman informed him that -

"I for one should not perhaps have been quite so determined in my opposition were the bastardy cases the only ones in question - I think the article ... refusing relief to able-bodied labourers out of the workhouse - " too oppressive. (111)

Walsham also thought it likely that the guardians, in particular the Chairman, "a vain and conceited Ultra-Tory", were encouraged in their resistance by the example of its neighbouring union, York, and the support and acclaim they received from the York newspapers. (112)

The Poor Law Commissioners claimed that the introduction of the Prohibitory Order into the northern unions was "not attended with serious difficulties ..." (113) Walsham took a less favourable view of its reception: urging the Commissioners not to yield to the demands of Easingwold union, he was of the opinion that "the very existence of Boards of Guardians in almost every part of Yorkshire depends on the issue of this struggle..." (114) Walsham's estimation of the feeling of the guardians was probably more reliable since he was actually "on the job", meeting the Boards, while it would not have been politic for the Poor Law Commission to draw attention to the full extent of

- (109) Reeth union BCM 17/9/1841
- (110) MH12 Easingwold 13/9/1841
- (111) Ibid 26/1/1842
- (112) MH12 Easingwold 13/9/1841
- (113) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1842 p.3.
- (114) MH12 Easingwold 29/1/1842

opposition to the Order in their Annual Report.

d. The Introduction of the Regulation Order, 1852

In 1852 the new Regulation Order was issued to Settle, Skipton, Pateley Bridge and Northallerton unions. In spite of its less rigorous rulings each of the four unions petitioned the Poor Law Board against the Order. (115) The Commissioners, however, refused to withdraw the Order. Settle Board of Guardians resigned, directing the Relieving Officer to relieve the paupers as before the Order, but scarcely a month later, having been persuaded by the Assistant Commissioner to resume administration, the guardians wrote to the Poor Law Board, expressing their satisfaction with the working of the Order. The guardians of Skipton union were only reconciled to the Order after its modification in December 1852.

The objections to the Regulation Order, similar to those made to the Prohibitory Order, were directed against the denial of guardians' discretion, increase in poor rates and hardship to the poor. Skipton union, for example, objected to -

"an arbitrary and unbending law ..." "...to be enforced in all cases instead of leaving ... the application of such a test to the local administrators."  
and "the manifest assumption ... that local Boards of Guardians are unfit to be entrusted with power to dispense relief to the poor..." (116)

Pateley Bridge union claimed that -

"the order ... can not be carried out in this union, without entailing ... great additional expense on the union ..." (117)

(115) PP 1853 (111) LXXXIV p 166, 187, 217, 227

(116) Ibid p. 229

(117) Ibid p. 137

while Northallerton argued that the provisions of the order -

"are harsh and inexpedient, being calculated to inflict great hardship upon the poor recipients of relief ..."(118)

Skipton and Settle regarded the prohibition of outdoor relief in aid of wages as inexpedient and inapplicable in their unions. In Skipton union this class of able-bodied paupers constituted the manufacturing poor, particularly those with large, young families, whose rate of employment and consequently earnings, fluctuated according to vicissitudes of trade and were not dependent on their own efforts or industry. During trade depressions the reduced earnings of an able-bodied man and his family were inadequate for their maintenance. It was envisaged that in such circumstances, large numbers of applicants would be compelled to relinquish all independent labour, thereby creating permanent pauperism and increasing the amount of relief required to meet the distress. The guardians thought it impossible to find sufficient work for all the male paupers. The Settle guardians anticipated great problems in implementing the Order with respect to non resident textile manufacturing poor for not only would their removal involve the loss of employment and housing, but, in view of the shortage of work and housing in Settle union, they would be compelled to enter the workhouse. The guardians concentrated on the immediate difficulties of stopping relief in aid of wages. There was no acknowledgement of the long term advantages to the poor, claimed by the Commissioners; in fact, in 1842 Settle union, petitioning against the Outdoor Labour Test Order, argued that competition from the power looms and not the relief in aid of wages was the chief cause of the small earnings of the handloom weavers.

3. The Orders in Operation in North Yorkshire

The protests against the Orders were short-lived; within a few months all the Boards of Guardians were acting under one or other of the Orders. However, relief continued to be given to able-bodied persons who did not come under any of the exceptions listed in the Orders. This was done either by (illegally) ignoring the Order or (legally) suspending the Order. Alternatively other methods of relief were devised to evade poor relief altogether.

a. Illegal Relief.

In North Yorkshire, few instances of 'illegal' relief, that is outdoor relief given to the able-bodied, contrary to the Order and not reported to the central authority for sanction, are recorded. It is, however, likely that the incidence of illegal relief was more common than the records indicate, especially in the early years of the New Poor Law. There would be verbal warnings from the Assistant Commissioners about the illegality of this relief, which would never appear in the records. It was also possible for poor law officials and guardians to relieve able-bodied paupers as cases of 'sudden and urgent necessity' because it was very difficult to prove them otherwise. The guardians appointed their own auditors till 1847 and it is improbable that they would be scrupulous in surcharging the Boards for relief given contrary to the Order.

The feeling in the north was generally opposed to the prohibition of outdoor relief to mothers of bastard children and unions, otherwise adhering to the Prohibitory Order, were tempted to evade the law in this matter. (119) In 1842 Walsham found the Whitby guardians ignoring the

Order, as regards relief to able-bodied women with illegitimate children; the guardians promised to adhere to the regulations in future. (120) In 1847 enquiries into the Assistant Commissioner's report of relief by way of loans to unemployed able-bodied men in Reeth union revealed the practice of relief in aid of wages - the giving of loans out of the poor rates to destitute miners. (121) It was a clear conflict of poor law principle and local expediency, with the Poor Law Commission insisting that -

"to persons situated as the lead mines are such relief can only legally be given in the workhouse ... " (122)

and the guardians claiming that -

"it is ... impossible but that the union must in such cases infringe the rule against outdoor relief to able-bodied paupers.." (123)

The Commissioners, looking to the long term, believed that the prohibition of outdoor relief would lead to improvements in the employment and payment of miners, while the guardians were motivated by consideration of the immediate hardships to the poor and the ratepayers -

"... the expense of bringing them and their families into the workhouse ... would be ruinous as well to the townships to which they respectively belong as to the paupers themselves who would thereby in all probability by being obliged to leave their working, lose any benefit they might derive from their long labor. " (124)

The guardians failed to report cases of outdoor relief to able-bodied men within fifteen days and were duly surcharged by the auditor. As a result they refused to sign any more cheques for poor relief, but, following a warning from the Poor Law Board that it was illegal for the guardians to retire from poor relief administration, resumed the business of the union. (125) There is no further mention in the poor law records

(120) MH12 Whitby 20/1/1842

(121) MH12 Reeth 25/6/1847

(122) MH12 Reeth 7/7/1847

(123) Ibid 10/12/1847

(124) Ibid

(125) Ibid 9/10/1848

of illegal relief in Reeth union. This seems to have been an isolated case of illegal relief to able-bodied men on a large scale.

The intention of the Orders was to stop relief in aid of wages - the giving of outdoor relief to persons in private employment. However, all the unions contravened a strict interpretation of the Orders in respect of the aged poor, who were, nevertheless, able-bodied and capable of working. Although the Commissioners alleged that relief to aged paupers was open to abuse and that many of them could, in fact, support themselves, the central poor law authority never defined the policy regarding aged paupers.(126) The guardians were, therefore, at liberty to relieve as they chose. Unions, particularly in rural areas preferred to relieve the aged out of the workhouse. Inspector Culley suggested that the reasons for this were the inadequate workhouse accommodation and the guardians' knowledge of the individual applicants - but, as with so much of poor law administration, financial considerations were uppermost. The maximum weekly relief out of the workhouse to an adult was three shillings in 1871 compared with three times this amount in the workhouse. (127) The reduction of relief to this class of pauper was one of the main objects of the campaign for a "general tightening up" of the administration of relief by Boards of Guardians in the 1870's. (128) Local Government Board Inspectors put pressure on the unions to adhere more strictly to the Prohibitory Order, but the

(126) 6th Annual Report of the P.J.C. 1840 p.17  
"We entertain no doubt that, if Boards of Guardians would require .. that they [aged and infirm paupers, partially able to work] ... come into the workhouse or ... be employed on account of the parish or union, or ... abstain from all employment, a large proportion ... would be found capable of supporting themselves..."  
3rd Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1873-4 p.69 Report by Inspector Culley  
"... rural guardians are often sorely tempted to grant outrelief to applicants ... in cases where no relief should be given."

(127) MH32 Hedley 45 9/8/1871

(128) S & B Webb, ENGLISH POOR LAW POLICY (1910) p.153

absence of any powers of enforcement and the preference of both rate-payers and paupers for outdoor relief ensured the continuance of outdoor relief to aged persons.

b. Exceptions to the prohibition of outdoor relief.

Apart from special groups like the aged, provision was made for the suspension of the Orders in the case of both individual paupers and unions. If the guardians considered an individual applicant, not coming under any of the listed exceptions, deserving of outdoor relief, they could request the Commissioners' sanction to relieve. The Boards of Guardians' minute books and correspondence files (MH.12) contain many such requests from unions acting under the Prohibitory Order, in addition, the Assistant Commissioners sanctioned departures from the Orders but records of these have not survived. Requests for the sanction of the Poor Law Commission were most frequent in the early 1840's when the guardians were unsure of the exact meaning of the Order. There are several examples of unnecessary applications, which did not require the Commissioners' sanction. (129) At least three unions misunderstood Article IV of the Prohibitory Order and requested the Commissioners sanction for outdoor relief to a class of paupers, rather than to individual paupers; for example, Reeth union asked the Poor Law Commission to sanction outdoor relief to women with only one bastard child, to which the Commissioners gave the usual reply, that they could give no general sanction but would consider individual cases. (130) In the 1840's and 1850's applications mainly comprised relief to deserted wives, mothers of illegitimate children, non resident persons and able-bodied men. Poor relief was requested for the last group

(129) eg MH12 Richmond 19/5/1845 MH12 Thirsk 3/10/1846

(130) MH12 Reeth 21/2/1842 Also MH12 Bedale 23/2/1849  
MH12 Scarborough 23/2/1849 Scarborough union BGM 17/12/1846

in order to supplement inadequate wages, relieve destitution resulting from unemployment, to enable the pauper to buy furniture, tools and travel to a place of work or go in search of work. In the second half of the century the majority of applications were for men out of work on account of inclement weather.

The Poor Law Commission's sanction of relief given contrary to the principles of the New Poor Law depended upon consideration of two factors - special circumstances of the individual case and the general standard of administration of poor relief in the union concerned. The Commissioners' decision depended to a large extent on the opinion of the Assistant Commissioner, who was more conversant with the state of the union. Nevertheless, there were several occasions on which the Assistant Commissioner took a harsher line than the central authority. Hawley advised the Poor Law Commission to disallow relief to two non resident able-bodied handloom weavers because otherwise "they will cease to exert themselves to find employment ... and if refused they will either find work or return to their own parishes thereby reducing pauperism in the suffering districts;" the Poor Law Commission however disregarded the counsel and sanctioned relief.(131)

There are numerous examples of relief allowed because of mitigating circumstances. Widowers with large, young families were usually treated favourably. The Commissioners sanctioned outdoor relief in kind for three months to a widower with six children in Thirsk union. (132) They allowed relief to the legitimate children of a widow, with an illegitimate child, so that they could be looked after by the grandparents, and to a

(131) MH12 Thirsk 1/7/1842 See also MH12 Thirsk 11/1/1845

(132) Ibid 23/10/1847 Also MH12 Northallerton 28/2/1849

single woman, with an illegitimate child, in order that she could care for her aged parents. (133) Relief was often permitted when it enabled the pauper to go into service, (134) though in Ripon union in 1857, the Poor Law Board forbade relief in clothing to an illegitimate child, about to go into service, whose mother was of weak intellect, on the grounds that relief to able-bodied women was contrary to the Prohibitory Order. (135) The Commissioners were inclined to allow outdoor relief to non resident paupers if there was no work available in their union of settlement. (136) The central authority took a surprisingly lenient stand with the rare cases of a pauper refusing the relief offered by the guardians. In Bedale union a widow, who was offered the workhouse on account of the illegitimacy of one of her six children, refused to enter the house; the Commissioners, reluctant to admit the children into the workhouse without the mother, thereby leaving her 'at liberty to continue her immoral course of life and relieve her of responsibility of maintaining the children', allowed the guardians to relieve in kind if she continued to refuse to enter the house. (137) However, the Poor Law Commission refused to approve relief when the reasons given by the guardians were those of economy. Richmond union wanted to discharge two women, both having illegitimate children from the workhouse and give them a weekly allowance because it would be a "considerable saving to the township, which is heavily burdened with poor rates ...", the Poor Law Commission believed that, if allowed, it would encourage immorality, the number of applicants and consequently the poor rates would increase, thus undermining the attempt to economise. (138) Nor did the

- (133) MH12 Thirsk 10/10/1842      MH12 Reeth 26/9/1842  
 (134) MH12 Thirsk 23/11/1844  
 (135) Ripon union BGM 3/3/1857  
 (136) MH12 Reeth 20/9/1841      MH12 Richmond 2/5/1853  
       Richmond union BGM 4/2/1860  
 (137) Bedale union BGM 8/11/1881  
 (138) MH12 Richmond 10/7/1843      Also MH12 Reeth 1/9/1849

Commissioners consider the great demand for labourers in Whitby union sufficient reason for discharging two able-bodied widows, with illegitimate children, from the workhouse and allowing them outdoor relief. (139)

The administration in the union also influenced the Commissioners' decision as to whether to sanction relief. They were more willing to grant outdoor relief in the period immediately following the introduction of the Prohibitory Order. In 1841-2 "considerable latitude [was] ... advisably extended by the Commissioners to ... North Riding unions ..." in order to facilitate the introduction of the Order. In Bedale union, in January 1842, the Commissioners sanctioned an "undisguised application for relief in aid of wages", which would have been disallowed in a union, where the Order had been in force for a longer period. (140) In 1860 the Clerk of Knaresborough union requested the Board sanction outdoor relief to able-bodied men out of work; although "the mere circumstance of an able-bodied man being out of employment is not of itself an adequate reason for relaxing the order ...", Inspector Lambert recommended the relief be sanctioned "... as the Order has not been long in force in this union ..." (141)

The Commissioners were prepared to sanction relief if they were confident that it would not be treated as a precedent, by the Boards of Guardians. Thirsk union was permitted to give outdoor relief to able-bodied, non resident handloom weavers because the "confidence which the Commissioners repose in the discretion of the Board ... leads them

- (139) MH12 Whitby 9/1/1860  
 (140) MH12 Bedale 19/1/1842  
 (141) MH12 Knaresborough 21/2/1860

to anticipate that no attempt will be made to establish so mischievous a practice as the relief of non resident handloom weavers."(142)

Assistant Commissioner Mawley advised the Poor Law Commission to sanction an allowance of clothing to a destitute weaver, "feeling satisfied that the Thirsk Board would not have made the application unless they considered the case one of great urgency ..."(143)

Whitby had a reputation as "an excellent and discriminating Board," standing firm during the 'Easingwold Mutiny'; the Commissioners accordingly allowed relief to a mother of two illegitimate children, despite there being "so much danger in point of principle, in asserting to the exception of this case from the Prohibitory Order ..."(144)

The Poor Law Commission sanctioned relief given by Scarborough union to an able-bodied, non resident weaver, out of work, because the union was well regulated and the Board very careful in refusing relief to able-bodied paupers. (145)

The 1834 Act empowered the Commissioners to alter or rescind rules, providing it did not constitute interference in individual cases of poor relief. (146) When the Prohibitory Order was temporarily inapplicable, usually because of overcrowding in the workhouse as a result of an increase in able-bodied applicants for relief, the Commissioners issued the Labour Test Order, permitting the guardians as an alternative to set able-bodied men to work and relieve them outside the workhouse. In 1848 the Poor Law Board informed the guardians of Whitby union that the Prohibitory Order "ought ... to be adhered to so

(142) MH12 Thirsk 23/4/1842

(143) Ibid 11/10/1845

(144) MH12 Whitby 14/3/1842

(145) MH12 Scarborough 19/4/1843

(146) 4 & 5 William IV c 76.s XV



long as there is room in the workhouse.", (147) and in 1868 the Poor Law Board refused to issue the Labour Test Order to Scarborough union "on the grounds that workhouse accommodation is at present sufficient for the relief of the able-bodied poor." (148)

Pressure on the poor relief system from able-bodied men occurred when work was halted or earnings diminished as a result of trade depressions or severe weather conditions. Although the Labour Test Order was more commonly found in the large urban and industrial centres, it was used at different times in some North Yorkshire unions. The Order was issued to Pickering union in 1879 when a large number of men were thrown out of work owing to the closure of Rosedale ironstone mines."(149) It was used in Whitby union in 1848, in 1879, a time of depression in the Cleveland iron trade, in 1886, when there was great distress amongst the labouring population in Whitby as a result of the depressed state of the industries, and in the early 1890's, when work in the ship building and jet trades was slack.(150) The Commissioners issued the Order to Scarborough union in the severe winter of 1879.(151) The Order was issued to rural unions, usually during inclement weather, which prevented outdoor labour; the Poor Law Board sent the Order to Masingwold union in 1850, because of increased applications for relief from able-bodied labourers during a storm, and to Richmond union in 1855.(152) With the exception of Whitby in March 1886, when there were 230 applications for relief under the Labour Test Order, the

- (147) MH12 Whitby 13/11/1848
- (148) Scarborough union BGM 30/1/1868
- (149) 8th Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1878-9 p.143
- (150) MH12 Whitby 13/11/1848, Whitby union BGM 21/6/1879 9/3/1886  
23rd Annual Report of the LGB 1893-4 p.140
- (151) Scarborough Express 20/12/1879
- (152) MH12 Masingwold 15/2/1850 Richmond union BGM 9/6/1855

available records do not give the numbers involved. (153) The work normally provided was stone-breaking, for which men in Scarborough union in 1879 received 1/6d a ton. (154)

c. Unofficial Methods of Relief

The existence of private rates to relieve the poor was widespread in North Yorkshire, associated, in particular, with the 'close' parishes, owned by a single proprietor or a small group of landowners. By their very nature, private rates often escaped the notice of the Poor Law authorities:

"... it is an exceedingly difficult thing to find out the particulars with regard to these private rates." (155)

Inspector Lambert described how he discovered the existence of private rates in Helmsley union purely by accident:

"after examining the overseers on oath, I met accidentally in an omnibus a man who told me that he had made out the private rates himself in five or six parishes in the union." (156)

In 1841 Walsham reported the existence of private rates to be almost universal in the North Riding. (157) It is not known exactly who paid these private rates, nor how they were used to relieve the poor.

A common form of unofficial relief to the unemployed able-bodied labourer was the provision of work at wages sufficient to tide him over till weather or trade and the demand for labour improved, thereby avoiding the necessity of applying for poor relief. Men were given work by a system known as houserow or roundsman. The employers of a

- (153) MH12 Easingwold 15/2/1850 Richmond union BGM 9/6/1855  
 (154) Scarborough union BGM 18/12/1879  
 (155) PP 1860 (520) XVII Q 169  
 (156) Ibid Q 169 Q170 Q148  
 (157) MH32 Walsham 79 31/5/1841

township, usually farmers, arranged amongst themselves to provide work for unemployed able-bodied labourers. The following is an account of the roundsman system as it operated in the parish of Great Ouseburn and in townships in Thirsk union -

when able-bodied persons apply for work "we first divide the men as much as we can among the farmers, and if there is surplus after that, they go by house-row ... from one farmer to another, according to his rental; - they put their names in a bag and draw them out, and a man draws out a ticket with so many days on it ... he goes in rotation."

"The men under the houserow system receive about 2s per week below the general average of wages."(158)

To prevent applications from able-bodied men "the principal farmers in a township meet together and agree to a scale of wages on the principle of paying so much a day to each man according to his family - each ratepayer to give employment or pay the wages fixed by the meeting to the labourer sent to him and that whether he has profitable employment for him or not ... The scale of wages fixed is miserably low varying from 8d to 14d a day ..."(159)

The practice usually differed from the roundsman system criticised in the 1834 Report in that no payment was made out of the poor rate in aid of wages.

"... the plan resembles the old Houserow system except that no payment is made out of the poors rate in aid of wages."(160)

"in the southern counties system of paying headmoney out of the parish rates: we do not such thing ..."(161)

As with private rates, roundsman or houserow seems to have been general practice in North Yorkshire unions. The visitor of the Great Ouseburn Gilbert Incorporation workhouse stated that his parish was "obliged to adopt this principle in self defence, as all the parishes

- (158) PP.1845 (409) XIII Q.1687 Q.1688 Q.1693
- (159) MM12 Thirsk 12/12/1842
- (160) MM12 Thirsk 12/12/1842
- (161) PP.1845 (409) XIII Q.1870

around us were doing the same ..." (162) and Assistant Commissioner Clements reported that the practice is "as general in the agricultural parishes of unions as in those of any Gilbert Incorporations ..." (163) The practice of roundsman, which, though not illegal providing the poor rates were not used to pay the labourers, was regarded with great disapproval by the Poor Law Commission. When suspecting the employment of men in this way the Assistant Commissioners normally attended a Board of Guardians meeting and held an enquiry or persuaded the guardians to investigate the case. An enquiry into the practice in Thirsk union "has had the effect of breaking it up in this township, the Board of Guardians however have reason to apprehend that the same practice prevails in some of the other townships, which they will use their best endeavours to discover and put down ..." (164) It is doubtful whether such co-operation with the Commissioners in putting a stop to the practice was typical, as Thirsk union in this period, under the influence of its vice chairman, Mr. Smith, "one ... of the most painstaking and intelligent men in matters of business ...", was one of the best administered unions. (165)

Private rates and the roundsman system tended to disappear in the second half of the century, when changes in the financial basis of poor relief and the virtual absence of an agricultural labour surplus removed the incentive or pressure on parishes to devise means of evading poor law relief. In contrast with official poor law policy regarding roundsman the schemes of work provided by the town authorities had the full support of the poor law authorities. Entries in the guardians' minute

(162) Ibid Q 1868

(163) PP1843 (172) KLV p.34

(164) MH12 Thirsk 18/6/1842

(165) MH32 Walsham 79 8/10/1841

books give the impression that the guardians, anticipating distress or inundated with applications for relief from unemployed men, were instrumental in establishing public works. Newspaper reports, however, indicate that the incentive also came from other interested groups. In 1879 the Charity Organisation Society in Scarborough recommended that a wood yard be set up to employ poor people at a small wage until they got better employment and, in the same year, the Mayor of Scarborough convened a meeting to consider steps to be taken to relieve distress.

(166)

CHAPTER THREEPauperism amongst selected groups of the able-bodied in North Yorkshire

It is necessary to point out the limitations of the poor law records when applied to a study of an occupational group. The minute books do not give any information about applications or orders for relief, with the exception of relief requiring the permission of the poor law commissioners. Such applications for relief are generally mentioned in the minute books and the replies are contained in the MH12 records but often the entries merely recorded 'an able-bodied man', not specifying the occupation. Hardly any relief order books, workhouse admission and discharge books or relief application books have survived and where they do again it usually proves impossible to identify the pauper's occupation. The amount of outdoor relief expended weekly or fortnightly, recorded in the minutes, form a consistent set of statistics but, as there is no indication of the proportion received by able-bodied persons, as opposed to the elderly, children, widows, mentally ill etc., the value of such statistical information is extremely limited. Able-bodied paupers received relief in three ways - in the workhouse and out of doors, either under one of the exceptions to the Prohibitory Order or with the permission of the central poor law authority. The records are silent regarding the first two - only in the last case is there recorded evidence. Thus, the historian relies upon two kinds of information - requests for permission to depart from the Orders and incidental reference to able-bodied men (who, in a predominantly leadmining or textile area, for example, may be presumed to be miners or textile workers), arising in guardians' meetings and in correspondence between the unions and the central poor law authorities.

1. Lead Miners

Under the 'old poor law', prior to 1834, parochial authorities were unrestricted in the form of relief they gave to able-bodied persons. Miners were relieved, both in money and in kind, on account of inadequate earnings and unemployment. Relief often took the form of a loan because of fluctuations in the amount of earnings and infrequent wage payments.

During the depression in the lead industry c1829-33, pressure on the poor rates in the leadmining townships increased. In 1830, a Swaledale diarist, Edward Broderick, wrote:

"Now the mines are exhausted, the price of lead is low ... The independence of spirit is gone. The man who formerly scorned to be troublesome to the parish now seeks every opportunity to throw himself upon it." (1)

Coinciding as the depression did with the Royal Commission, appointed specifically to enquire into and recommend changes in the relief of able-bodied men, the appendices to the Report substantiate the evidence found elsewhere of a greater number of applications for poor relief from destitute leadminers. J.D.Tweedy, the Assistant Commissioner for the West Riding, reported that in Midderdale the depression in the lead trade, which reduced average wages to seven shillings a week, had resulted in an increase in the incidence of relief to able-bodied miners.(2) In Bishopside, where seventeen men were described as leadminers in the 1841 census, "many [able-bodied persons] are relieved in degree, when the wages they earn are not sufficient; it is reckoned that one shilling and nine pence per head for each member of the family is necessary, except for infants ..." (3) Approximately £200 a year were paid in paupers'

(1) E.Cooper, MEN OF SWALEDALE (1960) p.34

(2) PP 1834 (44) XXV111 pp 766-7

(3) Ibid p.732

rents in Bishopside; the same amount was expended in the predominately leadmining townships of Dacre cum Bewerley.(4) (This extraordinary scale of rent payments in Dacre cum Bewerley is evident when one compares it with £260 expended in Knaresborough, a declining linen town, with a population five times that of Dacre cum Bewerley.) (5) The depression in the leadmines accounted for the increase in poor rates in Grassington, where earnings were made up to one shilling and sixpence a week. (6) In Kettlewell, where, in 1841, there were forty adult leadminers, and its neighbourhood the parish made up the weekly earnings of a family to one shilling and sixpence for an adult and one shilling and threepence for children, while twenty pounds a year was also expended as rents.(7) In Reeth, too, allowances were made to able-bodied men from the poor rates. As in Grassington, the increase in poor rates was attributed to the depressed wages of the mining community.(8) The following examples are of outdoor relief granted to able-bodied men by the Select Vestry of Muker:

- 5/5/1825 "Michael Hutchinson to have a peck of meal per week until his earnings improve."
- 18/8/1830 "Jam Jack to have 4s per week until an improvement in their earnings." (9)

It was common practice in Swaledale to grant relief as a loan:

"We frequently grant an allowance to the miners and receive their earnings." (10)

- (4) Ibid p.766
- (5) Population of Knaresborough tp 1831 5,296 )  
 Population of Scriven with Tentergate tp 1831 1,598 ) 6,894  
 Population of Dacre cum Bewerley tp 1831 1,310
- (6) PP 1834 (44) XXVIII p.764
- (7) Ibid p.761
- (8) PP 1834 (44) XXVII p. 601c Q 36
- (9) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings, A HISTORY OF LEAD MINING IN THE PENNINES (1965) p.299
- (10) PP 1834 (44) XXXI p.601 Q 24

Paupers were occasionally given large sums of money, twelve shillings, fifteen shillings, even twenty five shillings, and the parish officers recovered the amount from the subsequent earnings of the whole family. The same system existed at Wycliffe, near Barnard Castle,

"It is not uncommon to grant relief to miners, whose earnings are precarious, and the payment of whose wages is sometimes distant and uncertain ..."(11)

but I have found no mention of relief given by way of a loan elsewhere in the North Yorkshire leadmining districts.

The reaction of the parochial authorities to increased pressure on the poor rates took two forms - a more critical examination of the paupers' circumstances and needs and efforts to find a more permanent solution to the problem of pauperism. In Reeth township allowances were not systematized - the amount depended more upon the general circumstances of the applicant than family size.(12) In 1851 the Select Vestry of Muker decided to visit paupers' houses and remove and auction all "excess" goods and furniture; (13) the indignation and bitterness caused by this measure has been preserved in a popular verse.(14) Seven years later, in an attempt to equate the amount of relief with the requirements of the pauper, every member of the Vestry was asked to declare "clearly and candidly the state and condition of his neighbour, if a Pauper ..."(15) In the early 1830's paupers were given parish assistance to leave the township of Muker in order to find work elsewhere and it is probable that this attempt at a permanent solution to pauperism was repeated elsewhere.

"...for the last few years we have been in the habit of removing families to different situations, as factories, coalmines etc (since the failure of the leadmines with us) which families we are glad to state in general have done well. So that in consequence it makes our poor at home more limited ..."(16)

(11) PP 1834 (44) XXXIII p.604d Q 41

(12) PP 1834 (44) XXXI p.601 Q 24

(13) E.Cooper, MUKER (1948) p.94

(14) See Appendix I Table 1

(15) E.Cooper, 'TOP CIT' p.95

(16) MH12 Reeth 14587/1834

The policy continued to be pursued in 1836, when the Select Vestry resolved that "the overseers inspect the situation of the Paupers and see how many children there are who are receiving Assistance and report thereon this day fortnight, in order that the same above 9 years of age may have situations procured from them in the Factories." (17)

The order prohibiting outdoor relief to able-bodied persons was not introduced into Reeth and Leyburn unions till 1841, though Leyburn and Richmond Boards of Guardians passed bye-laws prohibiting outdoor relief to able-bodied men; for example, in 1837 Leyburn Board resolved that

"no outdoor relief to able-bodied men having less than six children if in private employment but offer of workhouse - opinion of meeting that able-bodied men can maintain five children on wages which on the average of the year he can earn." (18)

In Skipton and Pateley Bridge unions there were no orders regulating the administration of relief until the Regulation Order of 1852. Aysgarth was not unionised till 1869, though several townships formed part of the Bainbridge Gilbert Incorporation. Thus, in Reeth and Leyburn unions to 1841, Aysgarth to 1869 and in Skipton and Pateley Bridge to 1852 it was theoretically possible for relief to leadminers to continue as before. However, there is no mention in the poor law records of any of these unions, with the exception of Reeth union and one entry relating to Skipton union of applications from or relief to leadminers, nor of poverty and distress amongst the miners.(19)

In Pateley Bridge union fifteen cases of outdoor relief to able-bodied men were referred to the central authority between 1852 and 1902. In the 1850's three of the four cases were able-bodied weavers; the occupation

(17) E.Cooper, 'OP CIT' p.92

(18) MH12 Leyburn 23/3/1837

(19) MH12 Skipton 19/7/1853

of the fourth was omitted. Ten cases occurred between 1879 and 1887, mostly on account of the stoppage of work as a result of severe weather, but the minutes do not specify the usual occupations of the able-bodied paupers. (20) No cases were reported to the central authority for sanction, by the Leyburn Board between 1841 and 1859. There were no requests from Aysgarth union for the sanction of relief given contrary to the Prohibitory Order in the three years after the introduction of the order. Sixteen cases of outdoor relief to able-bodied male paupers were subsequently referred to the Poor Law Board for sanction. The minutes specify the occupation of only one pauper - a discharged quarryman unable to obtain work - the remainder are described as able-bodied paupers or able-bodied men. (21)

It is impossible for us to know whether the absence of any mention of leadminers in these records is because they did not apply for relief, or they were relieved under one of the exceptions listed in Article One of the Prohibitory Order, or, being confined to just a few townships they formed only a small proportion of the total number of able-bodied paupers in the union and were not of large enough numbers to warrant special mention in the records. Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude that the leadminers in the unions of Pateley Bridge, Skipton, Leyburn and Aysgarth, faced as they were with declining production and falling prices in the second half of the century and uncertain and irregular wages, did not pose any particular problems for the poor law authorities.

The situation of the leadminers seems, however, to have been more serious in Swalcdale, where there was conflict between the relief of

- |      |                          |           |           |           |           |
|------|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| (20) | NH12 Pateley Bridge      | 31/1/1855 | 14/3/1853 | 12/8/1857 |           |
|      | Pateley Bridge union BGM | 29/9/1869 | 22/2/1879 | 10/1/1880 |           |
|      |                          | 5/3/1881  | 30/1/1886 | 12/2/1887 |           |
| (21) | Aysgarth union BGM       | 25/2/1880 | 24/1/1881 | 5/2/1883  | 18/1/1886 |
|      |                          | 1/2/1886  | 15/2/1886 | 1/3/1886  | 3/9/1894  |

miners as administered by the Reeth Board of Guardians and the rules imposed by the New Poor Law and enforced by the central poor law authority. In 1837 Arkengarthdale, Reeth, Grinton, Marrick and Ellerton Abbey were included in the newly formed Richmond union. The Board passed bye-laws, prohibiting outdoor relief to several classes of pauper -

"Resolved that no outdoor relief be given to able-bodied men till that Period ("between this time and the end of October next...") but the workhouse be offered to such applicants and their families." (22)

However, the Board was obliged to grant outdoor relief in many cases because of the insufficiency of workhouse accommodation. For example:

- 22/4/37 Able-bodied man and wife, 9 children under 16 years. Weekly relief reduced from 7/- to 4/6d.
- 13/5/37 Able-bodied man, wife and three children, residing in Darlington. Thrown out of employment on account of the failure of the Master. Allowed 3/- a week for a month.
- 30/10/37 Able-bodied man, wife and 3 children, two of whom were illegitimate. "not being able to get work" - 2 children ordered to workhouse and 1 stone of meal allowed. (23)

Nevertheless, the mining townships of Upper Swaledale resented the limitations on the administration of relief, imposed by a predominantly agricultural Board of Guardians and memorialised the Poor Law Commission for separation from Richmond union on the grounds that the population of Marrick, Reeth, Grinton and Arkendale "is principally composed of persons working, or otherwise dependent on leadmines..." "...the majority of Guardians are necessarily perfectly ignorant of the nature and extent of the parochial assistance necessary to be allowed." (24) Another cause of discontent may have been a financial one. The five western townships contributed more than a third of the establishment charges, which were based upon the average of three years poor relief expenditure prior to the formation of the union. In 1839 an enquiry into union expenditure

(22) Richmond union BGM 25/5/1837

(23) Richmond union BGM

(24) MH12 Reeth 30/5/1839 Memorials of Marrick and Arkengarthdale.

revealed that "the [five] parishes ... have considerably decreased their expenditure ... the greatest saving has been effected in these five parishes." (25) The Poor Law Commission accepted these arguments and agreed to the formation of a separate Reeth union in 1840, with the result that the problems of poverty among the leadminers came to be uniquely concentrated in this union.

In 1841 many of the paupers in Reeth union were "individuals who although able-bodied and no part of their families labouring under bodily or mental infirmity are yet unable without Parochial assistance to maintain themselves and their families."(26) Undoubtedly they were leadminers. In 1837 Assistant Commissioner Revans had noted,

"The condition of these people varies greatly from time to time. Their earnings on some occasions being very considerable and at others scarcely worth having. They at times press heavily upon the Rates." (27)

The Poor Law Commission, however, refused to agree to the guardians' request for greater discretion in the treatment of able-bodied paupers, merely expressing its willingness to consider all cases reported under Article IV of the Prohibitory Order. (28)

Between 1841 and 1847 only eight cases were reported to the Poor Law Commission for sanction, all of which occurred in 1841 and 1842. Three cases involved relief to women. (29) The Board of Guardians requested the sanction of relief to two pauper families, removed from the manufacturing districts to enable them to buy furniture and other necessaries and maintain themselves while they sought work. (30)

- (25) Richmond union BGM 9/11/1839
- (26) MH12 Reeth 19/9/1841
- (27) MH12 Richmond 23/1/1837
- (28) MH12 Reeth 19/9/1841
- (29) Reeth union BGM 10/9/1841 1/10/1841 15/7/1842
- (30) Reeth union BGM 19/11/1841

The other three men had been in the workhouse "for some time past in consequence of their being out of work", having obtained employment they applied to the Board for loans to enable them to move to their work. (31) There was no further correspondence on the subject of the Prohibitory Order until 1847, when Assistant Commissioner Hawley discovered that the Board was giving relief to able-bodied men in contravention of the Order.

"The guardians have for some time past been allowing relief by way of loan to several leadminers who have been thrown out of work by local circumstances connected with the mines..."(32)

Thus the Board had either continued or revived the system of granting loans to miners, which was prevalent before 1834 but expressly prohibited in the Order of 1841.

The extent of relief-by-way-of-loans is not known. Several loans were given in the period before the introduction of the Prohibitory Order (33) but only one is mentioned in the minute books between October 1841 and 1847:

"a pauper of Frinton, having a large family and his earnings being very small, applied for a loan of £1.10.0 which was allowed."(34)

The Auditor replied to the Poor Law Commission in 1847:

"...I do not remember any items for relief by way of loan coming under my notice." (35)

In October, 1847, the clerk informed the Poor Law Board:

"The leadmines in the District of Reeth Union have latterly been very unproductive great distress has consequently arisen amongst great numbers of the able-bodied men working therein..."(36)

(31) Ibid 7/10/1842

(32) MH12 Reeth 25/6/1847

(33)	Reeth union DGM	29/5/1840	5/- loan	8/5/1849	£1.18s
		12/6/1840	£1	26/3/1841	£3
		19/6/1840	£2	28/5/1841	£3
		11/6/1841	£1.5s		

(34) Ibid 9/1/1846

(35) MH12 Reeth 10/7/1847

(36) Reeth union DGM 9/7/1847

In this situation the miners applied to the union for assistance and the guardians were willing to give relief. The Board of Guardians regarded loans as the most suitable form of poor relief in the circumstances peculiar to a mining district. In the first place, relief was essential - the miners were experiencing great poverty, "in many instances amounting to starvation." (37) Moreover their destitution was a result, not of idleness, for the "men are generally willing to work"(38) and are an "industrious" and "careful class of people" to whom "anything more than 'bread' alone was far beyond their expectation." (39) Secondly, the fortunes of the miners fluctuated considerably according to the productiveness of the trial bargains and distress, therefore, was often temporary and not symptomatic of a permanently declining industry. The guardians were usually assured of the repayment of the loans:

"Upon the years labor however and then and also in the case where loans have been made pending the months or by monthly payments the men repay the money advanced and in all cases on receiving the loans give authorities to their Masters to retain and pay the amount to the Relieving Officer of the union." (40)

Thirdly, the Board argued that any other system of relief would work against the interests of both the miners and the ratepayers, who were themselves, poor, being mostly miners and "but very slightly better off than the paupers..."(41) If the money was given as a gift, reported to the Poor Law Board within fifteen days, the townships would be subject to "great and unnecessary expense", (42) while admittance of paupers and their families in the workhouse would increase the poor rates..." to an

(37) Ibid

(38) Ibid

(39) MH12 Reeth 6/11/1852

(40) Reeth union BGM 9/7/1847

(41) MH12 Reeth 6/11/1852

(42) Reeth union BGM 9/7/1847

alarming extent and "be ruinous as well to the townships to which they respectively belong as to the paupers themselves who would thereby in all probability by being obliged to leave their working, lose any benefit they might derive from their long labor." (43) The Poor Law Board, however, insisted that the Board of Guardians relieve the miners in the workhouse since such cases did not constitute "urgent necessity" and any departure from the Prohibitory Order such as loans, would encourage the perpetuation of a faulty system of employing and paying the minors.(44) The Commissioners had previously shown a determination to prohibit loans to the leadminers. They refused to sanction a request from Thirsk union for further outdoor relief to a miner at Reeth because

"This relief is illegal ... the pauper ought to get an advance from his employer instead of throwing himself on the rates."(45)

For several months Reeth Board of Guardians ignored a demand from the Poor Law Board for a list of the cases of leadminers, receiving loans, for their approval. In December 1847, the clerk eventually forwarded a list of loans advanced mostly in June 1847, to eleven able-bodied persons "all, or the very much greater majority of them, miners ..."(46) The Commissioners refused to sanction the relief as it had not been reported within fifteen days. In October 1848, the clerk reported that the guardians refused to administer poor relief for fear of further surcharge following the Poor Law Board's earlier refusal to sanction the relief given to able-bodied paupers. (47) The Poor Law Board replied that it was legally binding on the guardians to administer relief and the guardians appear to have returned to their duties.(48)

(43) MH12 Reeth 10/12/1847

(44) Ibid 14638 B/1847

(45) MH12 Thirsk 30/3/1837

(46) MH12 Reeth 10/12/1847

(47) Ibid 9/10/1848

(48) Arkengarthdale Vestry Minutes 26/4/1849 Resolved that the surveyors pay 35.15.10d to the Guardians of Reeth Union, being the sum "... expended by their orders in outdoor relief but not allowed by the Auditor of the Union."

From 1847 to the end of the century only eight cases of relief to able-bodied persons were reported to the Poor Law Commissioners for sanction. Three of these were women with illegitimate children.(49) In 1848 two able-bodied but non-resident spinners were relieved on account of unemployment and insufficient wages.(50) In the same year an able-bodied pauper, removed from Salford, was given relief to enable him to seek work. (51) There was only one definite case of departure from the Prohibitory Order on account of a leadminer. In 1848 an able-bodied leadminer from Arkengarthdale, with a wife and six children, had been employed on a trial bargain which proved a failure. The Board refused his application for outdoor relief and offered the workhouse instead, which the applicant declined. A week later, "in an actual state of destitution and starvation" the Board gave him twelve shillings for one week. The Poor Law Board sanctioned the relief already given but forbade "further relaxation of the Prohibitory Order on his account."(52) Over thirty years later, ten shillings a week outdoor relief was allowed an able-bodied man, his wife and four young children "in consequence of the severe depression of the times and the absence of any employment." Since the reference is undoubtedly to the depression in the lead industry it is probable that the man was a leadminer. In spite of "the present evil times" the clerk told the Local Government Board, "I do not think the Reeth union will have many cases like this case." (53) It is improbable that the guardians blatantly contravened the Prohibitory Order after 1847. In 1849 Poor Law Inspector Hurst reported that there was no illegal practice or departure from the Commissioners' Regulations in Reeth union.(54)

(49) MH12 Reeth 9/1/1849 1/9/1849  
Reeth union BGM 12/6/1835

(50) MH12 Reeth 18/2/1848 15/8/1848

(51) Ibid 10/4/1848

(52) Ibid 3/1/1848

(53) Ibid 27/1/1879

(54) Ibid 15/6/1849

The Assistant Commissioners seem to have been more vigilant of the Board's administration and it was less likely, therefore, that relief by way of a loan <sup>would</sup> pass unnoticed. In 1853 Inspector Hurst investigated the guardians' order of outdoor relief to an able-bodied pauper, suspecting it to have been given illegally - the auditor, however, explained that the pauper was relieved under Exception 2, article 1.(55)

The minute books contain only one entry that suggests concern about the rate of pauperism in the union after 1847. In the late 1860's there was an increase in outdoor relief expenditure, which rose from £929 in 1863 to £1,155 in 1869, after which date it fell.(56) The cause of the increase is not known and there is nothing to suggest that it was connected with a depression in leadmining. Inspector Hedley, commenting on the increase in expenditure in the decade 1860-70, advised the guardians of the need to offer the workhouse instead of outdoor relief.(57) In 1868 the Board of Guardians examined the parochial lists of paupers "with a view of ascertaining the number of paupers whose parents had been miners compared with those who had followed other occupations," (58) it is not known if the enquiry was in response to increased outdoor relief nor the reason for the enquiry.

Although after 1847 the poor law authorities were not 'troubled' with pauperism amongst able-bodied miners, there were other problems associated with leadmining for the poor law administration. 'Miners' asthma caused the health of many miners to fail at thirty or forty years of age. Very few miners were able to work in the mines after the age of fifty.(59) Unable to work and in the absence of other employment,

(55) Ibid 30/3/1855 28/4/1855  
 (56) See Appendix I tables 2 and 3  
 (57) Reeth union BGM 4/10/1872  
 (58) Ibid 20/11/1868  
 (59) PP1864 (3389) LIV Q 17121, Q 17246

"The prevailing diseases throughout the whole district are bronchial infections and rheumatism..." J.W.Harland to Assistant Poor Law Commissioner Talsam in E.Cooper, HISTORY OF STALEDALE (1973) p.78

miners frequently became outdoor paupers. Robert Lowes, agent for the West Swaledale mine, replied to the question "How do the miners support themselves after they have been obliged to leave off work?" - "They get parochial relief."

"Do they not take to other employment?" - "Sometimes; they will get day work now and then where they can."

"They get outdoor relief, so much a week?" - "Yes." (60)

As there were no sick clubs belonging to the mining companies, sick and disabled miners applied to the guardians for medical assistance and poor relief.

"... the population of Melbecks are engaged nearly entirely in leadmining and its paupers consist of persons rendered destitute by the dangers institute to their calling." (61)

Poor Law Commissioner Walsham, in a report on the state of the dwellings of the labouring classes, drew attention to the early age at death of leadminers who, in many cases, left destitute families, dependent on poor relief. (62)

The decline of leadmining in North Yorkshire presented no insuperable problems for the New Poor Law. With the exception of Reeth union in the first half of the nineteenth century there was no pressure on the poor law from destitute leadminers. In contrast with the depression in the lead market in the late 1820's and early 1830's, when miners resorted to poor relief, there is no evidence that a similar recourse characterised the second major depression half a century later.

(60) Ibid Qs 17784 17785 17786

(61) Reeth union BGM 2/4/1877

(62) MH32 Walsham 79 10/1/1842

No. of miners who died in previous 7 years and their average age:

Harrick	15	47 3/5th years
Arkendale	70	45 19/35 "
Muker	39	45 29/39 "
Grinton, Reeth, Melbecks	40	50 39/40 "

E. Cooper, HISTORY OF SWALEDALE (1973) p.92. gives the average age at death of leadminers and smelters as 46.67 years, compared with 60.79 years of other occupations.

Of course, the New Poor Law did not prohibit outdoor relief to able-bodied men entirely - for Skipton and Pateley Bridge unions administered according to the Regulation Order (though not on account of any difficulties involved in the prohibition of outdoor relief to leadminers) and the exception clauses of the Prohibitory Order were capable of wide interpretation. However, the half yearly workhouse reports of the Assistant Commissioners make no note of any increase in the number of able-bodied male inmates nor is there any evidence in the records of applications for poor relief from distressed leadminers. In the first few years after the introduction of the Prohibitory Order to Reeth union the guardians continued outdoor relief in aid of wages, though they ordered the workhouse for men wholly out of work and gave financial assistance to enable migration in search of work. Local fears, in the late 1840's, that relief administration, in strict accordance with the Prohibitory Order, would cause great hardship to both ratepayers and leadminers in Reeth union were unfounded. Following the prohibition of loans, no dissatisfaction was voiced by guardians or paupers, there were very few applications for outdoor relief under Article IV of the Prohibitory Order and weekly expenditure on outdoor relief steadily declined in the second half of the century, corresponding with the decrease in the population of the union. (63)

(63) See Appendix table 4

2. Handloom Linen Weavers.

The Poor Law Commission, 1832-4 had found much to object to in the persistent outdoor relief to the able-bodied in the linen weaving districts of North Yorkshire. Most common of the 'abuses' was the allowance system, the subsidisation of weavers' wages, which would otherwise have been insufficient to live on. At Bishopside wages were made up to 1/9d per head for each member of the family. (64) In Northallerton allowances, on a scale of 2/6d for adults and 1/6d for children under the age of ten, were "occasionally given where the families are large and the Fathers' cannot earn sufficient for their support." (65). Instructions to the overseers that they "have a discretionary power to alter and reduce weekly pensions according to the earnings and circumstances of the different paupers" indicate that the Select Vestry of Brompton was compelled to supplement inadequate wages out of the poor rates. (66) As at Northallerton, an effort was made to restrict relief to families with a large number of children.

16/12/26 "Resolved that Christopher Bell making application for his rent. That he shall provide for himself his family being small ..." (67)

Knaresborough was condemned as one of the four places in the West Riding to "afford instances of the operation and malloiciency of the allowance system. (68) There were two types of paupers - pensioners, who received a regular weekly sum and comprised mainly the "aged, or infirm or young children", of whom there were seventy nine in September 1834, and casual paupers, who received temporary or occasional relief.

(64) PP1834 (44) XXVLLI p.732

(65) PP1834 (44) XXVLI p.260h Q.30

(66) Brompton SVII 24/6/1820

(67) Ibid 16/12/1826

(68) PP1834 (44) XXVLLI p.726

Knarborough township estimated the average annual number of able-bodied men, receiving occasional relief in the early 1830's to be about one hundred and fifty. (69) The paupers were "chiefly weavers of linen, and flax dressers." (70) Allowances were granted to unemployed men:-

"if they are wholly out of work, the rule is to allow a man and his wife six shillings a week, and nine pence for each child; a single man three shillings a week; this rate is allowed because the magistrates allow it, but in fact, in many cases it amounts to more than a man, when trade is flourishing, could earn."

"Immediately that a man is out of work, now, he comes for relief." (71)

However, relief was also given to men who were only partially employed or whose wages were so low that the "family can not subsist on the produce of their labour." (72)

"... if a man has partial work, they give him 1/6d or 2/- a week, or as little as they can satisfy him with ..." (73)

Pateley Bridge and Knarborough were also places cited by Assistant Commissioner Tweedy as examples of the "extraordinary scale of practice of rent paying." - £200 pa in Pateley Bridge, £260 - 270 in Knarborough (£40 of which was paid to paupers living outside Knarborough), £70 in Scriven (of which £20 was paid to paupers living in the adjacent township of Knarborough). (74) Relief by way of rent payment prevailed in Brompton:

9/5/1823 Resolved that "the sum of 7/6d be allowed to Robert Smith weaver towards his rent." (75)

Relief was sometimes given in kind, for example equipment to enable a pauper to take up employment. Although the following is an example of a refusal to assist a pauper in this way, it does nevertheless suggest

- (69) MM12 Knarborough 923/1834  
pp.1834 (44) XXXVI p.263h Q.33
- (70) pp.1834 (44) XXVIII p.733
- (71) Ibid
- (72) pp.1834 (44) XXXVI p.263h Q.40
- (73) pp.1834 (44) XXVIII p.779
- (74) pp.1834 (44) XXVIII p.728
- (75) Brompton SVN 9/5/1823 Also 2/12/1826 24/2/1827

that such relief was granted on other occasions:

6/4/1822 "agreed ... that no other Loom be purchased for Thomas Nixon."

In contrast with the New Poor Law, which aimed to restrict all able-bodied relief to the workhouse, the parochial authorities reserved the workhouse for the non able-bodied poor, preferring instead to put paupers to work.

22/7/1820 Overseers are "authorised to alter and reduce the other weekly pensions, according to the earnings of the paupers, and that no idle or disorderly person be allowed to take refuge in the workhouse."

Brompton sent its paupers to work for private employers, usually farmers; the wages received from the employer were made up from the poor rates.(76)

In Knaresborough it was resolved that a field belonging to the town "be taken into the hands of the Parish Officers in order to give employment for such paupers as are destitute of work." (77) In 1829 Knaresborough and Pateley Bridge reacted to increased pauperism amongst able-bodied poor by providing employment. Paupers in Pateley Bridge cultivated land taken from the moors, (78) while Knaresborough Select Vestry resolved "That the unemployed poor shall be employed on the highways, in reducing the hills in the neighbourhood of Knaresborough and such other improvements..."(79) However, when confronted with increasing pressure on the poor rates during a depression in the linen industry the township authorities, even before 1832, took special measures to reduce pauperism in both the short and long term. All aspects of the administration of relief were scrutinised and made more efficient, thus reducing the opportunity for abuse. In 1813 enquiries were made into expenses

(76) Ibid 28/10/1820

(77) Knaresborough SVM 14/12/1819

(78) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF NIDDERDALE (1967) p.367

(79) Knaresborough SVM 26/10/1829

incurred by Knaresborough workhouse and in 1832 the Select Vestry ordered monthly statements of workhouse expenditure. (80) The Vestry ordered all bastardy payments to be investigated and settled. (81) Overseers were instructed to ensure that only the minimum amount of relief necessary was given, for example, the "overseers are empowered to add or diminish the weekly pensions as they may judge most conducive for the safety of the industrious poor, and to the suppression of idleness and extravagance." (82) In Knaresborough the discretion of the overseers in granting relief was curtailed:

Resolved "that no Pensioners be allowed any discretionary relief, except in cases of application." (83)

Resolved "that all casual relief in future be paid by Mr. Frost at the workhouse and not by the overseers as heretofore." (84)

Efforts were made to reduce and even stop rent payments -

"in order to alleviate the great burden on the township (of Knaresborough) by the amount of rents annually paid a committee... [shall] fix upon an eligible piece of ground for the erection of cottage houses..." (85)

In 1822 and again in 1833 Knaresborough Vestry resolved to cease rent payments. Rather than pay rents the Vestry was prepared to remove paupers to their place of settlement.

19/5/1823. Resolved "to remove Charles Wood and family to Armley near Leeds, if Mr. Fothergill enters up the distress for rent tomorrow."

More stringent investigations of the paupers' circumstances were made to combat rising poor relief expenditure. Two Brompton men were refused poor relief until their daughters went out to work:

- (80) Ibid 27/4/1818 4/5/1832
- (81) Ibid 28/8/1821
- (82) Brompton SVM 23/12/1822
- (83) Knaresborough SVM 7/12/1818
- (84) Knaresborough SVM 16/3/1821
- (85) Ibid 22/2/1819

28/6/1821 "It is agreed that Edward Pearson and George Pearson are not objects of the public charity, and the overseers are ordered to forbear giving them relief until they put forth their daughters as servants with some farmer or other master ..."(86)

Unnecessary furniture belonging to paupers was sold:

21/11/1823 "It is further resolved that Barth<sup>v</sup> Shettings house furniture be sold by auction, except a bed ... and other necessaries as will be sufficient to furnish a room for his own use ..."(87)

In 1833 expenditure on occasional and <sup>casual</sup> relief in Knaresborough township declined significantly.(88) The Vestry accounted for this "By making a successful stand against profligate pauperism ..." but the Vestry minutes do not state exactly what measures were taken. (89) The township authorities gave financial assistance to paupers to enable them to move elsewhere, presumably to obtain work.

"It is further agreed that the sum of 12s be allowed to Mary Martin to take her and her family to Darnsley ..."(90)

Brompton township wished to prevent future pauperism by deterring young people from working at the handloom:

13/12/1824 Resolved "that no journeyman weaver be allowed to take any apprentice and that every lawful means be used to prevent the same." (91)

In spite of the increasing emphasis on 'economy' in the townships before 1834 the framers of the New Poor Law aimed to remove the diverse practices of poor relief administration under the Old Poor Law and implement a rigid policy of restricting all able-bodied relief to the workhouse, thus prohibiting the allowance system, which had been the

(86) Brompton SVM 28/6/1821

(87) Ibid 21/11/1823

(88) See Appendix J Table 1

(89) MH12 Knaresborough 1834 According to B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH (1970) p.279, trade started to improve in 1835, which would have accounted for the reduced number of applications for poor relief."

(90) Knaresborough SVM 2/2/1822

(91) Brompton SVM 13/12/1824

principal form of relief to handloom weavers in the past. Yet the passing of the 1834 Act brought no immediate alteration in the administration of able-bodied relief. Initial requirements, such as the formation of unions and the building of adequately classified workhouses, delayed the implementation of the prohibition of outdoor relief in linen weaving districts. The unionisation of Knaresborough was delayed until 1854 by the presence of a Gilbert Incorporation in the area, whilst the Prohibitory Order was not issued until 1858, upon the completion of a new workhouse. Stokesley and Northallerton unions, though formed in 1837, did not receive any orders regulating outdoor relief until their workhouse accommodation was improved. Stokesley received the Prohibitory Order in 1852. Northallerton and Pateley Bridge withstood constant pressure from the central poor law authority to improve their workhouses until 1858 and 1863 respectively. The Poor Law Board issued the Regulation Order to Pateley Bridge and Northallerton in 1852, which replaced the outdoor Labour Test Order, issued to Northallerton in 1847, and was the first order issued to Pateley Bridge, where it remained in force throughout the nineteenth century. Northallerton received the Prohibitory Order in 1862. Thus, in Knaresborough until 1858 and Stokesley, Northallerton and Pateley Bridge to 1852, it was possible for outdoor relief to be given to the able-bodied in much the same way as before 1834. Even in Northallerton union, from 1852 to 1862, and Pateley Bridge union the restrictions on outdoor relief to able-bodied men were less stringent than in unions operating under the Prohibitory Order.

Weavers in the unions of Stokesley, Northallerton and Pateley Bridge resorted to poor relief during the depression in the linen trade in the early 1840's. Most of the relief was in the form of outdoor relief. In December 1837 the guardians of Stokesley union were compelled to relax their byelaw, prohibiting outdoor relief to able-bodied men and allow

outdoor relief in kind to men of good character, with a large family, on account of insufficient workhouse accommodation.(92) Poor workhouse accommodation in Northallerton invalidated a similar byelaw - "no relief to an able-bodied man being in private employment out of the workhouse having a family of less than six children, under ten years of age."(93) Between April 1848 and April 1859 only fifteen able-bodied men were admitted into the workhouse on account of being "out of Work".(94) The Guardians of Pateley Bridge union did not heed the Poor Law Commissioners' advice to relieve the aged out of doors and send the improvident able-bodied to the workhouse, "a mere cottage on the top of a moor."(95) Assistant Commissioner Clements complained:

"The whole system of relief in this union is as bad as possible -" and "All the vices of the old system prevail here."(96)

In 1842 many applications for poor relief were received from weavers in the township of Hutton Rudby in Stokesley union. The overseers and churchwardens wrote to the Poor Law Commission, requesting permission to replace a deceased guardian, it being "impossible to do without one without doing a great injury to the parish ..." "in consequence of the depression in trade ours being chiefly weavers with a population of about one thousand."(97) The evidence of J.Reynard, a weaver from Midderdale, testified to the continuation of the allowance system in Pateley Bridge union -

"frequently in slack times they (the weavers) must apply to the parish." (98)

The poor relief administration did not always give relief gratuitously but exacted work. In the early 1840's unemployed men in Bishopside were

- (92) MH12 Stokesley 31/3/1837 23/12/1837  
 (93) Northallerton union BGM 22/3/1837  
 (94) Northallerton poor law union workhouse Admission and Discharge Books 1848 - 1867  
 (95) MH12 Pateley Bridge 17/12/1842 3/2/1843  
 (96) Ibid 23/12/1842 31/3/1843  
 (97) MH12 Stokesley 13/6/1842  
 (98) PP.1840 (43 - I) EX111 p.488

put to work, enclosing and digging up waste land, for which they received a shilling a day.(99) The Guardians of Northallerton union gave, as one reason for not building a new workhouse, the "prevailing depression of trade and agriculture"(100) However, the pressure on the poor rates from distressed weavers appears to have been a problem in only one township of the union - Appleton Wiske. All the five cases of relief to individuals in Northallerton union, reported to the Poor Law Commission, were to linen weavers residing in Appleton Wiske. In the first case, that of a destitute weaver with a wife and one child, the overseers were prepared and able to find him work and set him up in his trade, spending £2.12.3d from the poor rates on furniture, a loom and work tools.(101) The township appears to have become less tolerant of relief to handloom weavers. Three subsequent pauper-weavers were described as "very troublesome and insolent to the overseers of Appleton Wiske." (102)

"the pauper had been very troublesome to the overseers of Appleton Wiske."(103)

"very troublesome and idle."(104)

The township discouraged children from following their fathers into handloom weaving. The overseers had placed two daughters of a pauper-weaver in service, but the elder had been removed by the father "to weave linen of which the inhabitants of Appleton Wiske greatly disapprove."(105) In another case the overseers placed the son of a lame outdoor pauper on a farm. The father brought the boy home to learn to weave linen, "which

(99) Northallerton union BGM 2/11/1842

(100) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF NIDDERDALE (1967) p.370

(101) MH12 Northallerton 10/5/1841

(102) Ibid 30/6/1845

(103) Ibid 26/3/1849

(104) Ibid 11/4/1844

(105) Ibid 30/6/1845

neither the guardians nor the inhabitants of Appleton Wiske approved of particularly ...". The father's relief was consequently stopped - the "guardians ... being of opinion that by continuing the father's allowance of outdoor relief, they were enabling him to defeat their better judgement as to the bringing up of the son ..."(106) Thus, in contrast with their willingness to find a pauper work as a weaver in 1841, three years later the overseers were trying to discourage the same. The change in attitude was perhaps a result of an increase in the number of applications and rising expenditure, as the depression in the linen industry deepened, influenced by the Poor Law Commission's disapproval of relief of this kind to handloom weavers. Assistant Commissioner Walsham advised the Poor Law Commission that handloom weaving was "the most pauperising and profitless business to which a working man can resort ..." and "that most miserable and unprofitable of trades ..."(107) The Poor Law Commission duly replied to the Northallerton Board of Guardians that they were "unable to concur in an expenditure for the purpose of furnishing an able-bodied pauper with the means of employing himself as a Handloom Weaver," and that he should be employed at "stone breaking by piece work." (108) The Poor Law Commission refused to sanction the continuation of six shillings a week relief to a nonresident linen weaver by Scarborough union on the grounds that the man "would be able to remain where the supply of labour is already beyond the demand, and that the money paid to [him]... from Scarborough, will enable [him] ... to compete, for employment, on terms, which are wholly to the disadvantage of those who may not be similarly

(106) Ibid 20/1/1844

(107) Ibid 10/5/1841

(108) 40 MH12 Northallerton 10/5/1841

allowed outdoor relief in aid of wages in the place in which they are resident and legally settled." (109) Unemployed men, applying to the townships for relief, were increasingly given work on local farms. One unemployed handloom weaver, applying to the overseers of Appleton Wiske for relief, was refused both out and in-door relief - instead he and his wife were sent "A Bout by house Row."

"... I applied to #him [the overseer] for work for my family then he Cauld a metin and the parishners agreed for me and my wife to go about by house row and they give me one shilling a day and my wife eighpence a day so Il allow you to judg wat I shall ave to spare wen my vitils and close is got out of six shilling and wat will spard out of four shilins when my wife is fed and cled for my five childer then wen my wife comes in to her famley at night thair is one night a weke she as to sit hup to wash and A nother night a weck to bake ..."(110)

Discretion in poor relief affairs remained solely with the two township authorities in Knaresborough until 1854. Neither the Poor Law Commission nor the Poor Law Board attempted to interfere in the administration of relief by the townships of Knaresborough or Scriven with Tentergate, though the provisions of the Poor Law Amendment Act empowered the Commissioners "to make and issue all such Rules, Orders and Regulations for the Management of the Poor" in all parishes not incorporated into poor law unions.(111) Giving evidence to the Assistant Commissioner for the Royal Commission on Handloom Weavers, a Knaresborough weaver argued that the distress of handloom weavers was partly a consequence of the New Poor Law -

"I consider the new poor law affects the interest of the weavers very considerably. Sooner than go into the workhouse, they will work for anything." (112)

(109) MH12 Scarborough 15/6/1843

(110) MH12 Northallerton 3/6/1844

(111) 4 and 5 William IV 1834 c.76 s.XV

(112) PP1840 (43 - I) vol. XX111 p.486

It seems strange that he blamed the New Poor Law which was not yet in operation in Knaresborough. While he may have been talking generally - indeed the most hostile and vociferous anti-poor law propaganda was expressed in the weaving districts of the West Riding and Lancashire, at a time when the prohibition of the outdoor relief to the able-bodied had not yet been introduced - the townships may, on their own initiative, have made greater use of the workhouse in relieving able-bodied paupers and such measures may have been mistakenly attributed to the New Poor Law. In 1834 the administrators of poor relief in the township of Knaresborough were already adopting a more discriminating stand with poor relief applications. The Poor Law Commission was told

"the committee have been more scrupulous in complying with applications for relief." (113)

Several references in the minutes to able-bodied inmates suggest that the offer of the workhouse, in preference to outdoor relief, was occasionally resorted to (there is no mention in the pre 1834 minutes to able-bodied inmates); for example, in 1837, the Select Vestry of Knaresborough ordered

"That all able-bodied men in the house be set to work in sweeping and cleaning the streets and such other work as can be got for them" (114)

Able-bodied paupers were also relieved in the workhouse of Scriven with Tentergate; in 1848 pauper inmates were working outside and their wages paid to the master of the workhouse. (115) In 1848 the Vestry reduced the relief to a Richard Ellice from 5/- to 4/- a week, "with the alternative of coming into the workhouse if he chuse." (116) Nevertheless during

(113) MH12 Knaresborough 10/10/1834

(114) Knaresborough SVII 11/12/1837

(115) Scriven with Tentergate VII 4/9/1848

(116) Ibid 16/8/1848

slumps in trade, when the price paid to the weavers for a piece of cloth fell sharply, the supplementation of wages out of the poor rates, unhindered by the central poor law authority, continued to be practised.

Assistant Commissioner Keyscr was informed -

"We have 68 poor persons on our pension list, not one of whom is an agricultural labourer, they are all weavers of flax dressers; also about 30 having casual relief, all weavers." (117)

Further evidence for the continuation of the allowance system comes from a newspaper report of 1849 concerning a proposed reduction of nearly 25% in weavers' wages.

"... it was generally thought that the prices were at the lowest point that poor fellow could keep himself saying nothing of his family ... But the poor rates will, of course, have to make up the deficiency; in fact, the town has for years been taxed to aid the profits of the manufacturer by making up the defects of the operatives wages ..." (118)

The Vestries periodically attempted to provide alternative work for the able-bodied weavers rather than simply supplementing their existing meagre wages. In the winter of 1842 the large number of applications from able-bodied men caused Knaresborough Select Vestry to seek alternative employment to that of working on the roads:

(117) PPI840 (43 - I) KK111 p.484

(118) Burniston's Northern Luminary 22/8/1849

In Knaresborough township, in the period September - December 1848, there were 54 paupers receiving casual relief, whose names identify them as weavers in 1841 or 1851 and 60 casual paupers, who were not weavers in 1841 or 1851.

In the three months, January - March 1849, 61 'weavers' received casual relief and 73 casual paupers were not weavers in 1841/1851 13 weavers and 20 non-weavers received casual relief in the period, April - June 1849.

It is possible that some of the men classed as non-weavers were in fact weavers who were not working or living in Knaresborough in 1841 or 1851. The 1848-9 figures may have been augmented as a result of the cholera outbreak in 1848 (Harrogate Advertiser 28/10/1848)

Sources See Appendix J table 2 Number of applications for relief made to the Select Vestry of Knaresborough 1842-50.  
1841 and 1851 C.E.S for Knaresborough and Scrivon with  $\text{\textcircled{D}}$  Tontorgate.

25/11/1842 Resolved that the churchwardens, overseers and Surveyor of the Highways "be authorised to sett out the plot of ground ... and to proceed to bring the same into cultivation for the benefit of the public as early as possible".

In 1851 Scriven with Tentergate proposed "renting a portion of land for the purpose of giving employment to the Poor of the Township ..."(119) Knaresborough Select Vestry contemplated hiring out able-bodied paupers to the Railway Company building the line to Knaresborough.

Resolved "That the overseers endeavour to make some arrangement with the Contractors of the East and North Yorkshire Railway for the employment of such able-bodied persons as apply to the Vestry for Relief." (120)

Many applications for "relief or work" were received -

17/12/49 Thomas Broadworth's wife applies for 4s week or work for her husband.

15/12/51 John Connor applies to be allowed to work 4 days per week instead of 3. Allowed.

The Vestries also attempted to reduce the rate of pauperism both actual and potential by removing non-settled paupers to their place of settlement and assisting poor people to move elsewhere. Both methods were costly but the townships must have considered the long term savings would outweigh the immediate expense. (121) The large number of applications for poor relief in the first half of 1843 induced Knaresborough Select Vestry to take measures to reduce poor relief expenditure; a committee was appointed "to act with the overseers for the purpose of assisting them with the Orders of Removal and other business connected with Settlements" (122) and overseers were ordered to visit paupers monthly "in order to ascertain their real circumstances." (123)

(119) Scriven with Tentergate VII 2/3/1851

(120) Knaresborough SVM 24/12/1847

(121) Ibid 3/6/1842 6/7/1842 14/10/1842 30/12/1842  
21/6/1844 9/5/1845 26/11/1846

(122) Ibid 28/4/1843

(123) Ibid 21/7/1843

Between 1849 and 1852 Scriven with Tentergate assisted twelve families to move elsewhere with grants of money ranging from 2/6d to £5. (124) One man was allowed 21/- on condition that he "will go away and trouble us no more for twelve months." (125) Of the four cases of assistance to emigrate, three were women, presumably widows, with families, who, if they had stayed in England, would no doubt have remained a burden on the poor rates.

The Prohibitory Order of 1858 forbade relief in aid of wages, which was given in Knaresborough at least until 1854, and though there is no evidence of it between 1854 and 1858 there was no legal obligation on the township to cease the practice. Opposition to the Prohibitory Order from the Knaresborough union Board of Guardians might suggest that destitution amongst the able-bodied, in particular handloom weavers, was still a problem for the poor law authorities. The Board wrote -

"... the Order ... will have an injurious effect upon many deserving poor families, who are reduced from want of employment or from other temporary causes, ..." (126)

Two years later the board petitioned the Poor Law Board -

"The Boards of Guardians to have the power of granting outdoor relief to able-bodied poor without the necessity of reporting the grounds thereof, or requiring the sanction of the Poor Law Board." (127)

However the former petition (of 1858) was proposed and seconded, not by Knaresborough guardians but by those of Harrogate and Pannal. Moreover, of the fifteen cases of outdoor relief to able-bodied men on account of unemployment, subsequently reported to the Poor Law Board between 1858 and 1871, none were to weavers or anyone connected with the linen industry.

(124)	Scriven with Tentergate SV Memorandum Book	2/2/1849	27/3/1849
	16/4/1849	10/9/1849	14/1/1850
		27/1/1850	25/2/1850
	11/3/1850	7/10/1850	10/2/1851
		19/5/1851	8/3/1852

(125) Ibid 25/2/1850

(126) MH12 Knaresborough 17/6/1858

(127) Knaresborough union BGN 5/7/1860

A corollary of declining linen production in Knaresborough during the 1870's might have been unemployment amongst linen weavers; there is however no evidence that weavers resorted to poor relief during this period. In 1883 the Board of Guardians told the Central Emigration Society that "occasionally persons do apply for relief, alleging in consequence of being unable to obtain employment -" but there is no record of their occupation or place of residence. (128)

(128) Knaresborough union BGM 25/7/1883

### 3. Handicraft Textile Workers in Settle and Skipton unions.

The plight of the cotton and worsted workers under the New Poor Law is unfortunately less well documented than that of the linen weavers considered earlier. The following account of poor relief in Settle and Skipton unions relies largely on the correspondence between the Poor Law Commissioners and Boards of Guardians, found in the MH12 class of records, since no union records for the nineteenth century have survived.

The Prohibitory Order of 1841 was not introduced into either union, which received instead the Outdoor Labour Test Order. This was replaced by the Outdoor Relief Regulation Order in 1852. Widespread opposition to specific clauses in the Regulation Order resulted in the allowance of relief on account of under-employment, as opposed to unemployment.

"... relief given ... a man working for wages on one day and being without work the next, or working half the week and being unemployed during the remainder, and being then in need of relief, is not prohibited by this Article." (129)

Just how this applied to these handloom weavers, whose pauperism in normal times was a result - not of shortage of work - but of low remuneration is not clear. However, as with the exception clauses, interpretation of Article 5 of the Regulation Order, with respect to relief to handloom weavers, rested with the Boards of Guardians. In 1856 Inspector Farnall wrote of his intention "to suggest to the [Poor Law] Board the propriety of issuing the Prohibitory Order to the unions of Skipton and Settle," but there is no evidence that his suggestion was implemented. (130) The Boards of Guardians were therefore under no legal obligation to relieve able-bodied men in the workhouse. Men requiring relief on account of insufficient earnings or lack of work could be relieved out of doors in return for the performance of task work,

(129) 5th Annual Report of the PLB 1852 p.24

(130) MH12 Settle 2/2/1856

though it was possible to avoid this rule without actually contravening the Order. Legal constraints on relief to handloom weavers in Settle and Skipton unions under the New Poor Law were therefore very limited throughout the period during which such workers constituted a significant element in the population.

In 1834 it was envisaged that outdoor relief to able-bodied persons would be prohibited within two years. In Settle and Skipton union, as in all northern unions, the Poor Law Commission did not introduce general orders relating to the administration of able-bodied relief until the early 1840's. Meanwhile the Boards of Guardians continued to administer relief to the able-bodied in very much the same way as the separate townships had before 1834. Visiting his northern district in 1836 and 1837 with a view to forming Poor Law unions, Assistant Commissioner Power found that the allowance system existed to a greater or less extent in many parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire. (131) Weaving townships, later incorporated into Skipton union, paid "a certain weekly allowance" to able-bodied men. (132) There was little variation in the subsistence level agreed upon in the different townships - at Skipton and Farnhill weavers' wages were made up to 1/6d per head, at Conicton and neighbouring townships to 1/6d for adults and 1/3d for each child. One exception was Bentham, a linen manufacturing township in Settle union, where a family - a man, wife and four young children, earning 12/- a week, was entitled to 2s or 3s extra from the poor rates. (133) Outdoor relief to able-bodied men in the form of rent payments was also widespread in the handloom weaving districts. Power observed "a confirmed practice of

(131) PP, 1837-8 (174) XV111 Q.3284

(132) Ibid

(133) PP, 1834 (44) XXVI p.607 Q.24

paying rents" in the cotton and worsted weaving townships of Skipton union. (135) In Skipton no rents were paid until "a sale takes place under a distress of execution, we buy a few articles of absolute necessity to set them out again." (136) Similarly in Settle, most rents were paid "in cases where a distress for rent is either actually upon the pauper's goods, or is expected immediately to follow." (137) In 1834 the township of Cononley was stated to be burdened with a great number of rents. The overseers explained the procedure for rent payments.

"As soon as a man has two children he gives over paying any more Rent ..."; their goods were sold and the family then applied to the overseer for relief, and if refused, to the magistrate, who ordered the overseer to find him "a house, purchase him looms and necessary furniture;..." (138)

Unemployed weavers were either given financial relief or work, depending upon the availability of work in the township. In Buckden "Relief is paid in money to able-bodied when out of work" (139) Employment was found for men in Skipton, but in the depression of the early 1830's there was insufficient work for all the applicants.

"We have often some twenty young married weavers out of employ, for whom we cannot find work out of the workhouse." "We employ as many as we can on the roads ..." (140)

"The scarcity of work generally and the greater scarcity of husbandry work compelled Settle Vestry to abandon their usual policy of finding the paupers work, "... breaking stone, mending fences, draining ..." and to give cash relief instead. (141) In the absence of any change in the principles upon which relief was administered between 1834 and 1842 the Boards of Guardians continued to pay allowances and rents to

(135) NH12 Skipton 13/12/1837

(136) PP1834 (44) XXViii p.741a

(137) Ibid p.749

(138) NH12 Skipton 30/9/1834 . 11/4/1836

(139) PP1834 (44) XXViii p.763 a

(140) Ibid p.743

(141) Ibid p.751

able-bodied weavers, just as the parish officials had done before 1834. Assistant Commissioner Mott noted the unsatisfactory state of both unions "with reference to the mode of granting relief." (142) Settle was "giving relief without any efficient test either from labour or the workhouse," (143) while in Skipton union "several irregularities have been encouraged which it is highly necessary should be put a stop to..."

"The Guardians I find occasionally relieve the poor in their separate townships ... It is true the Guardians do not imitate the neighbouring unions of Keighley and Settle by paying directly the rents or the labourers but it is indirectly practised by way of a loan - when a person is in arrear for rent the Guardians very frequently assist them with a loan to the amount which they know will never be repaid." (144)

Assistant Commissioner Walsham also commented on the prevalence of outdoor relief to the able-bodied -

"... the inability of the Local Boards to act effectually in relieving real destitution and correctively in checking the alarming spread of clamorous able-bodied pauperism is precisely in proportion either to the ignorance and neglect of sound principles, or to the contempt of your authority..."(145)

The Labour Test Order was eventually sent to Settle and Skipton unions in 1842, at the height of the depression. Settle Board of Guardians immediately petitioned the Poor Law Commission, urging reconsideration of the expediency of administering relief according to the Order in their union. The Board objected to any change in the existing relief administered to handloom weavers, particularly one that involved them relinquishing what little weaving work they had in order to be set to other work by the guardians. However this strong suspicion of the practicality of the Order was overcome and the guardians resolved to find work for the young able-bodied male paupers in their respective

- (142) MH12 Skipton 19/5/1842
- (143) MH12 Settle 17/5/1842
- (144) MH12 Skipton 19/5/1842
- (145) MH12 Skipton 4/6/1842

townships. Three months after the introduction of the Order the clerk reported that most of the townships were now finding work for young able-bodied paupers, remunerating them for work done according to family size. Following the refusal of Hellifield and Long Preston to comply with the Order the Board resolved "that a competent person be sent down to these townships to find work for such paupers ..."(146) Only one request for relief, contrary to the Order, was made to the central poor law authority; there are no references to applications from or relief to handloom weavers in the ten years 1842-52. (147) The records do not indicate whether all able-bodied paupers were required to work, though the fact that work was exacted in each individual township and not at one or a few centres in the union suggests that the labour test would, on the grounds of economy alone, have been allowed to lapse in many townships. Certainly facilities for setting paupers to work were inadequate for the large number of people thrown out of work in 1847 and 1848.(148) The reaction of Skipton union to the Labour Test Order is less clear. As the union had a large number of handloom weavers one would expect similar objections to those voiced by Settle - yet there is no record of any protest. As in the case of Settle the records are relatively silent about poor relief in the years of the Labour Test Order. There is no reference to the provision of work for able-bodied outdoor paupers; On the other hand, the Assistant Commissioners did not make any written complaints to their superiors or the Boards of Guardians about the administration of relief in either Skipton or Settle unions.

However, the continued prevalence of relief in aid of wages is suggested by the protest against the Regulation Order in 1852.

- (146) MH12 Settle 8/9/1842
- (147) MH12 Settle 7/11/1850. A cotton weaver was receiving an allowance on account of insufficient wages (8s for a family of 7 children) The guardians wanted permission to allow £3 to enable the family to remove to Cullingworth where the pauper had obtained work.
- (148) MH12 Settle 15/8/1848

"... an able-bodied man having a family or not, whose partial earnings may be insufficient for his or their support, will have to relinquish all independent labour, in order to obtain maintenance from the poor rates." (149)

After initial opposition to the Regulation Order Settle union appears to have complied with the terms of the Order, (150) occasionally, though, the Poor Law Board had to insist on the granting of relief for a definite period of time and on the enforcement of the work clause.(151) Skipton claimed that the Order was inoperable on account of the expense and the impossibility of finding work for the large number of able-bodied men who received relief in aid of wages but four months later the Poor Law Board was informed -

the guardians "feel disposed to acquiesce in its provisions and are desirous at once to put it into operation." (152)

It appears that initially the guardians were not fully conversant with the exception clauses of the Regulation Order and erred on the side of caution. (153) Nevertheless there was resistance to the erosion of the guardians' discretion in the administration of outrelief to able-bodied men. In January 1853, the Poor Law Board insisted that the guardians specified a definite period of relief. The guardians replied that they preferred the period and amount of relief to be left to their discretion entirely, at least for three months, until the end of the half year, which was allowed by the Poor Law Board. (154) The Board of Guardians replied noncommittally to the Commissioners' suggestion that one or two of the children of outdoor paupers be placed in the workhouse - "where

(149) PP1853 (111) LXXXIV p.228

(150) Three months after the introduction of the Order the clerk informed the Poor Law Board "... our Board are now acting under the Order to the very letter, with, I must say, a beneficial result ..."  
MH12 Settle 17/11/1852.

(151) MH12 Settle 28/1/1853 3/2/1862 9/2/1865 23/12/1869

(152) MH12 Skipton 31/12/1852

(153) 12 of the 35 cases reported to the Poor Law Board in January 1853 did not require the Board's sanction because one or more members of the family were sick or disabled.

(154) MH12 Skipton 31/1/1853

practicable [it] will be acted upon." (155) - but eight months later Inspector Farnall considered instructions to place children in the workhouse useless because "the guardians have rejected similar advice." (156) Faced with an increase in pauperism in 1854 the guardians resolved to give employment to all able-bodied paupers who were receiving relief on account of shortage of work. (157) In a similar situation in 1857 they also wanted outdoor relief to be at the complete discretion of themselves for a period of four months - but the Commissioners refused the request and reminded the guardians of their obligation to employ all able-bodied male paupers. (158) There is no evidence that thereafter the guardians encountered difficulty in adhering to the rules of the Order nor is there any evidence to suggest that they acted illegally or contrary to the Order. There is no reason to doubt the truth of the replies of Settle and Skipton unions to accusations from an M.P. "that poor rates in aid of wages are levied in manufacturing districts -"

Skipton "stated positively that it had never there been the practice to give relief to persons employed for wages."

In Settle, between 1860-5, the "Guardians have relieved only one able-bodied resident pauper when at the same time in receipt of wages." (159)

So far I have considered the type of relief given to able-bodied weavers under the New Poor Law in Settle and Skipton unions. I turn next to a consideration of the extent of pauperism amongst handicraft textile workers and ask two questions - first, what proportion of able-bodied paupers were handloom weavers and woolcombers and secondly, what proportion of handloom weavers were paupers? The limitations of the

(155) Ibid  
 (156) Ibid 23/8/1853  
 (157) Ibid 6/2/1854  
 (158) Ibid 7/12/1857  
 (159) NH32 Corbitt 13 24/4/1865

144  
records, both the poor law records and the census occupational data preclude a precise and detailed analysis of the relationship between the poverty of the handloom weavers and woolcombers and their resort to poor relief in the several decades after 1834. In the absence of regular lists of relief applications and orders or a breakdown of poor relief expenditure before 1847 it is not possible to make a systematic analysis of poor relief afforded to handicraft textile workers in the period 1834-52. Information is derived from two principal sources - the findings of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1832-4, and the correspondence between the various poor law administrative bodies. It should be borne in mind that such inquiries and comments tended to occur during years of increased pressure on the poor rates.

During the 1830's and 1840's the group of workers most prone to destitution in Settle and Skipton unions were handtextile workers - cotton and worsted weavers and woolcombers. Much of the evidence substantiating this statement is inferred from comments on able-bodied pauperism by the poor law authorities. The administrators of poor relief in several townships, later incorporated in the Skipton union, made specific mention of the condition of and relief afforded to handloom weavers - no other occupation received similar attention though in Settle union there does seem to have been considerable shortage of work amongst the labouring classes generally but able-bodied pauperism was not a major problem in townships where handloom weaving was insignificant. The propensity of handloom weavers in the West Riding and Lancashire to experience poverty and destitution was one of the subjects of Alfred Power's evidence to the Select Committee on Poor Relief Administration in 1837. On his visit to Skipton union in the same year Power noted the numerous applications for relief from worsted

and cotton handloom weavers. (160) In Cononley the "greatest part of [the] Poor [were] employed in the weaving and woolcombing branch of stuff manufacture." (161) Handloom weaving was the one occupation in Settle union specifically mentioned by the guardians in their protest against the Labour Test Order in 1842 and the petition is clear proof that handloom weavers formed a substantial and perennial problem for the poor law administration at this date.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, as handloom weavers and woolcombers comprised a diminishing proportion of able-bodied pauperism, there are correspondingly fewer references to this class of worker in the various poor law records. In contrast with the protest ten years previously, the memorial of 1852, drawn up by Settle Board of Guardians in opposition to the Regulation Order, did not make any special reference to handloom weavers, thus suggesting either that able-bodied pauperism amongst this group of workers had diminished and was no longer such a drain on the resources of the union or that pauperism amongst handloom weavers as a proportion of total able-bodied pauperism had diminished. The rate of pauperism generally was still high in Settle union in 1856 - 5.5% of the population were paupers, compared with 3.8% in Inspector Farnall's district, which comprised Lancashire and the West Riding. (162) However, in 1860 the reduced number of applications for relief led the Board to resolve to hold fortnightly, instead of weekly, meetings.

- (160) ME42 Skipton 13/12/1837  
 (161) Ibid 11/4/1836  
 (162) ME32 Farnall 22 12/1/1856

"The Board will observe there is a reduction in paupers in this union." (163) Between 1852 and 1859, of eighty nine individual cases of outdoor relief to able-bodied men, reported to the Poor Law Board for sanction, nine were for weavers; the last application for a weaver was made in 1861. The majority of cases, forty seven, were for 'labourers', most of whom were agricultural labourers, though this term only came into use after 1832. Thus the evidence suggests that between 1842 and 1852 the handloom weaver in Settle ceased to exert an inordinate amount of pressure on the poor relief system. Nevertheless, the decline in handloom weaving may have indirectly contributed towards pauperism in other occupational groups. The able-bodied may have depended on part time weaving, by himself or members of his family, to bring the family income to subsistence level. For instance, in 1863, the wives of two agricultural labourer - paupers were hand weavers, who could normally earn 5/6d a week but at the time of applying for relief were uncertain of obtaining work at weaving; the loss of this income may have 'tipped the balance' and forced the family to turn to poor law relief. (164) Thus, though by the mid nineteenth century handloom weavers in Settle union no longer formed the bulk of able-bodied male pauperism, nor attracted the particular attention of poor law authorities, the decline in hand weaving continued to contribute indirectly towards able-bodied pauperism.

In Skipton union handicraft textile workers formed a substantial proportion of the total number of able-bodied paupers to a later date than in Settle, explained by the large numbers in Skipton union employed in worsted manufacture, compared with the concentration on cotton in Settle,

(163) MH12 Settle 15/2/1860

(164) Ibid 25/2/1863

and the earlier supplementation of the handloom by power in cotton than in worsted weaving. In depressed times factory workers increasingly featured in the ranks of able-bodied paupers, along with handloom weavers and woolcombers. According to the petition of 1852 able-bodied pauperism in Skipton union comprised those engaged in "manufacturing labour" - that this included handicraft workers as well as factory workers is evident from the reference to pauperism amongst "able-bodied men with insufficient earnings ...". There were one hundred and forty nine applications to the Poor Law Board for out-relief to able-bodied men during the first five years of the operation of the Regulation Order in Skipton union, just over half of which were for handloom weavers and woolcombers.(165) In the absence of any further reference to able-bodied pauperism in Skipton union after 1857, it is not known when handicraft workers ceased to form a major part of able-bodied pauperism but certainly after this time their numbers no longer caused concern to the poor law authorities.

Who, amongst the handloom weavers and woolcombers, received allowances? Old people and widows were obvious recipients of relief and probably formed the largest proportion of pauperised hand textile workers - most would have been paupers regardless of whether they were handloom weavers or not - indeed, in spite of diminishing returns from hand weaving, the benefits of this low paid and uncertain occupation probably outweighed the disadvantages to such people. The evidence points on the other hand to the permanent inability of men to maintain large, young families on wages derived from hand weaving without supplementation from the poor rates.

(165) 43 handloom weavers and 36 woolcombers. 31 were engaged in power loom weaving and a further 12 employed in textile factories.

"a weaver must work hard to earn 7s; this would be sufficient for a man's own maintenance, and for a wife, but not for that of a family also; ..."(166)

In 1837 Alfred Power found that allowances to male heads of families were "limited in extent" and "confined chiefly to the lowest and worst paid class of handloom weavers, ..."(167) The ratepayers of Cononley cited as "one great evil" "the payment of so much money in weekly relief to young able-bodied married men with two, three or four children. When any little difficulty appears they are immediately clamorous ..."(168) During depressions the net of pauperism spread wider and smaller families were forced to apply for relief. The vicar of Barnoldswick alleged that disturbances in the town in 1842 were caused by able-bodied paupers, nearly all unmarried men.(169) The pauperisation of weavers, other than those with large young families, is supported by a comparison of lists of weavers receiving outrelief in aid of wages in Settle union in 1842 and Skipton union in 1852, the former being a year of severe depression; the second list, in 1852, contained no weavers with families of fewer than three children. (170) However, even in times of depression

(166) PP1834 (44) XXVIII p.748

(167) MH32 Power 63 21/10/1837

(168) MH12 Skipton 30/9/1834

(169) Ibid 29/5/1842

(170) At a certain date in 1842 there were 45 handloom weavers in Settle union in receipt of relief in aid of wages:-

3	had	6	children
6	"	5	"
10	"	4	"
10	"	3	"
8	"	2	"
4	"	1	child
4	"		no children

At a certain date in 1852 there were 25 handloom weavers and woolcombers in receipt of relief in aid of wages in Skipton union:-

1	had	9	children
2	"	8	"
1	"	7	"
6	"	6	"
11	"	5	"
3	"	4	"
1	"	3	"

in the 1830's and 1840's, witnesses attested to the small percentage of weavers who were in fact paupers.

"...numbers of the labouring people, particularly during the last year, [1836-7] who have suffered great distress without applying for poor relief." (171)

"there is no doubt that great privations are frequently endured at such times [of depression] by large numbers of persons without their making even an application for relief." (172)

4. Hand-knitters

Did the decline of hand-knitting place a burden on the poor relief system? In the case of many old and disabled people, widows and unmarried mothers it might be argued that knitting actually forestalled destitution or, if the knitter became chargeable, reduced the amount of relief required. - a Board of Guardians was more likely to grant outrelief than order the workhouse to a pauper who showed him/herself willing and able to work. A brief examination of pauperism in Sedbergh and Aysgarth unions shows that factors other than the decline of hand-knitting were responsible for able-bodied pauperism and that during the second half of the nineteenth century, when knitting occupied a diminishing proportion of the population, pauperism in both unions was inconsiderable. There is not a single reference in the poor law records to pauperism amongst distressed hand-knitters nor any suggestion that pauperism was in part attributable to the decline of hand-knitting; conversely, I found no contemporary comment attributing low rates of pauperism or poor relief

(171) PP1837-8 (183) XVIII Q.3390  
(172) MH32 Power 63 21/10/1837

expenditure to knitting.

Prior to 1869 townships in Wensleydale were either incorporated in the Bainbridge Gilbert Incorporation or else administered relief according to 43 Eliz.c2. Relief administration was effected without direction from the Poor Law Commissioners but the Poor Law Inspectors made no comment on any aspect of relief administration in the townships in the period 1834-69. Upon the formation of Aysgarth union in 1869 the chief characteristic of pauperism in the union was its insignificance. Mr.Hedley, the Poor Law Inspector, told the Poor Law Board:

"The number of paupers in this union is so small..."(173)

The newly appointed Board of Guardians did not expect the total number of paupers to exceed 300, and, as a result of the low rate of pauperism, were permitted to hold fortnightly instead of weekly meetings and combine the offices of workhouse master and relieving officer.(174)

In contrast, Sedbergh union was described in 1855 as a "pauperised district."(175) Under the Old Poor Law Dent and Sedbergh townships exhibited the 'abuses' of outdoor relief to the able-bodied.(176) No orders regulating relief were introduced into the union for twenty years and the guardians were therefore under no legal obligation to alter their administration. The able-bodied continued to be relieved out of the workhouse; in each of the weeks in January 1845 there were 54, 53, 48 and 51 outdoor able-bodied paupers and 5,5,5 and 6 indoor able-bodied paupers. (177) The high rate of poor relief expenditure in Sedbergh

(173) MH12 Aysgarth 547a/1869

(174) Ibid

(175) MH12 Sedbergh 11/4/1855

(176) PPL834 (44) XXVIII p.732a

"Again at Dent ... relief to the able-bodied is afforded by payments of a weekly or monthly sum, in the name of a pension, the amount of which is regulated according to the number of a man's family..."

(177) MH12 Sedbergh 19/3/1845

January 1846 no: 37, 41, 39, 41 & 2, 2, 2, 2

union in the 1830's and 1840's would seem to substantiate the description of the union as a pauperised district.(178) However, in the same year that this description was made, the Poor Law Board was informed by the union clerk,

"The Order affects none of our paupers here but women with bastard children at present." (179)

There is no evidence that the guardians objected to the Order's prohibition of outdoor relief to able-bodied men. A study of the 1851 census returns, which state whether a person was a pauper, does not uphold the view that vast numbers of able-bodied men were receiving outrelief - twenty four of the thirty one paupers in Sedbergh township were aged sixty years and over, four more were widows with young families, two were single with illegitimate children. In Garsdale four were elderly and the fifth a widow with eight children. In Dent there were seven old people, two orphans, two widows and three men below the age of sixty.(180) There is no further reference to pauperism until 1881 when Local Government Inspector Davy, full of praise for poor relief administration in the union, wrote -

"The relief returns of this small country union are remarkable. At the present time there are only thirty six persons in receipt of outdoor relief ... of these, five are boarded out children ... number of inmates in workhouse is 26 ... The administration of the guardians is excellent, and ... it is consciously directed by a recognition of sound Poor Law principles, ..." (181)

(178) Poor relief expenditure in Sedbergh union. 1840-48:

1840	£1,739	1844	£1,912
1841	1,544	1845	1,723
1842	1,971	1846	1,606
1843	2,093	1847	1,575
		1848	1,613

(179) MH12 Sedbergh 20/9/1855

(180) Retired woolcomber, widower, aged 57  
Coal miner, 49, wife and 6 children.  
Farmer, aged 47.

(181) MH12 Sedbergh 10/12/1881

The reduction of pauperism and adherence to the Prohibitory Order is reflected in the diminishing annual expenditure on outdoor relief.

The decline of hand-knitting in the 1830's and 1840's exacerbated distress resulting from depression in agriculture and the decline of the local factory and handicraft textile industry. In the second half of the century people escaped distress by moving away - the population figures, for Dent and Garsdale in particular, indicate the extent of migration. (182) Generally, hand-knitting, by providing even a pittance, enabled many elderly people (who formed the majority of paupers) to survive without recourse to poor relief or on a smaller weekly sum than would otherwise have been required.

##### 5. Textile Mill Workers.

There is not a single specific reference in the surviving poor law records to pauperism amongst the factory population of Sedbergh, Pateley Bridge, Ripon, Knarcsborough, Leyburn, Bedale, Northallerton or Stokesley unions. (183) In Settle union, however, the closure of cotton mills in the late 1840's threw many mill hands out of work. Although the number of applications for relief from this class of person is not known, it was sufficiently large to cause the poor law authorities to instigate changes in the normal administration of poor relief. The clerk

(182) See Appendix B table 6 Population of townships in Sedbergh union, 1801-1901

(183) Except in Ripon union Letter Book, 20/4/1853, ref: to nonresident relief to a millhand and her four children, residing in Pateley Bridge.

informed the Poor Law Board that the very serious decrease of earnings as a result of inclement weather and the stoppage of the principal cotton mill in Settle had increased pauperism to an enormous extent"(184) The Board was compelled to appoint an extra relieving officer to cope with the increase in pauper numbers, and a special meeting was called and a committee appointed "to devise some means for employing the outdoor able-bodied paupers so as to have a return in labour for the relief given them individually." (185) Some of the factory hands applying for relief were removed to their union or place of settlement in an attempt to reduce the pressure of pauperism on Settle union.(186) Poor relief expenditure jumped from £5,107 in 1846 and £4,244 in 1847 to £6,617 in 1849 and after the depression expenditure on outdoor relief fell from £3,952 in 1849 to £2,848 in 1850. However, there was little comparable pressure on the poor rates during the cotton famine in the early 1860's, the guardians were confident that any resultant destitution could be adequately dealt with by admission to the workhouse or by the provision of employment, breaking stones in the outdoor able-bodied yard. (187)

In Skipton union, too, applications for poor relief were made by factory operatives, thrown out of work or partially employed in the recurrent trade depressions of the 1840's and 1850's, but the only reference to the relief of factory workers, other than those with large, young families, was in Barnoldswick (and probably elsewhere) in 1842.(188) Outdoor relief expenditure increased in the early 1860's thereby suggesting that there was pauperism amongst the cotton factory workers during the "famine". However, pauperism was not on a large enough scale to stretch

- (184) MH12 Settle 7/12/1847  
 (185) Settle union L.D. 8/8/1848  
 (186) Ibid 23/11/1848  
 (187) Ibid 12/11/1861  
 (188) MH12 Skipton 29/5/1842

the resources of the union; the clerk informed the Poor Law Board that union funds were sufficient to meet extraordinary demands. (189) There is no reason to suppose that temporary pauperism of factory operatives was limited to Settle and Skipton unions. The lack of evidence in other unions undoubtedly stems from the fact the factory population was small and confined to just a few townships in the unions (Sedbergh and Pateley Bridge excepted). A second reason for the absence of any reference to relief afforded to destitute factory hands is that, in most cases, the Prohibitory Order was not issued to the unions until the middle of the century; free to relieve able-bodied persons, there was little likelihood that able-bodied pauperism would be the subject of correspondence between the various poor law authorities.

The age and sex structure of the factory labour force was an important influence on the propensity of the 'hands' to apply for poor relief. A large proportion of the factory workers were female and young people, though the proportion of men varied according to the textile and branch of industry. (190) As the bulk of the labour force was supplementing family income (as wives or children) the overall pauperising effect of the loss or reduction of factory earnings was less than it would have been had heads of families comprised a large proportion of the labour force. Only in Settle and Skipton unions, where a sizeable proportion of the working population were engaged in textile manufacture, did applications for relief from mill workers require certain extra-ordinary measures in poor relief administration.

(189) NH32 Manwaring 54 18/11/1861

(190) See Appendix D table 2

6. Agricultural Labourers.

The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws, 1832-4, concluded that pauperism amongst able-bodied males in rural districts was widespread - a permanent feature in some parishes, incipient in others - and attributed this to the abuse of the poor relief system, notably to the unrestrained granting of outrelief to agricultural labourers on account of insufficient earnings, be it a result of low wages, large families or un- and under-employment. However, the appendices to the Report, relating to the North and West Ridings, do not bear out the general conclusions of the pauperised state of the farm workers. In J.D. Tweedy's report on the operation of the poor law in the West Riding the problem of able-bodied pauperism was scarcely referred to by the purely agricultural townships in the northern part of the Riding, in marked contrast with handloom weaving or leadmining townships. In 1825 relief was given to farm labourers in aid of wages in all but one of the North Riding Wapentakes, though it was not prevalent throughout each Wapentake; in Birdforth, for example, it was confined to "some few townships." (191) However, in 1832 none of the North Yorkshire townships, with the exception of weaving and leadmining centres, replied in the affirmative to question 24 of the Rural Queries -

"Have you any, and how many, able-bodied labourers in the employment of individuals receiving allowance or regular relief from your parish ...?" (192)

Reports on proposed poor law unions, compiled by Assistant Commissioner Revans, in 1836, testify to the absence of a pauperised agricultural labour force in North Yorkshire. Referring to pauperism in the North and East Ridings of Yorkshire, he stated -

(191) PP1825 (519) XLK pp.48-9

(192) PP1934 (44) XCEL

"... the able-bodied labourers being nearly all independent of parish relief." (193)

His reports to the Poor Law Commission on pauperism in the proposed unions of Scarborough, Malton, Whitby, Thirsk, Richmond and Leyburn do not indicate any major divergencies from this general impression.

"Pauperism [in Malton and Scarborough unions] is very similar to that which generally exists in the East and North Ridings." (194)

In Thirsk and Malton unions, with the exception of the market town of New Malton, no able-bodied labourers were in receipt of a weekly allowance.

"And of able-bodied men there is not one receiving relief in the townships" [in Thirsk union] (195)

"Excepting the town of New Malton I do not think there is a single able-bodied labourer receiving a weekly allowance however great his family may be." (196)

Even in Richmond and Leyburn unions, where the rates of pauperism were higher than Thirsk union (1:17 and 1:10 compared with 1:40), Revans did not attribute the higher rates of pauperism to the prevalence of relief to the able-bodied. Of Richmond union he wrote -

"But a very small number of able-bodied persons are at present receiving." (197)

Further confirmation of the absence of entrenched pauperism amongst the agricultural labouring class in North Yorkshire is derived from subsequent Reports written by Assistant Commissioners for the area.

"The system of giving outdoor relief to able-bodied men in employment had never been prevalent in these counties..." (198)

Revans, advising the introduction of the Prohibitory Order into North Yorkshire, wrote -

(193) MH32 Revans 65 14/12/1836

(194) MH12 Scarborough 5/11/1836

(195) MH12 Thirsk 20/1/1836

(196) MH12 Malton 8/11/1836

(197) MH12 Richmond 23/1/1837

(198) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1842 p.3

"... in many of these unions (particularly those of the North and East Ridings) the amount of able-bodied relief without the Prohibitory Order is inconsiderable - it seems therefore safe to infer that the Prohibitory Order might be issued to several of these unions without inconvenience." (199)

The Select Committee on Agriculture in 1833 made the following observations -

"... Northern Counties of England, where able-bodied men still maintain themselves and families on wages without the aid of the poor rate; and the great abuse would seem to be more prevalent in the Southern Counties, where wages are paid out of the rate, where the system of roundsman has been longest established, where the father of the family receives an increased allowance on the birth of each child, where the supply of labour is redundant, and where a premium is thus indirectly offered to improvident marriages and to an increase of population."(200)

Thus, enquiries and observations on the administration of the Poor Laws in the 1830's were in general agreement on the relatively unpauperised state of the agricultural labourer in North Yorkshire, as compared with his counterpart in the southern and eastern parts of the country.(201)

In the course of the nineteenth century the attention of the central poor law authority focused increasingly on the urban and industrial able-bodied pauper and less on the able-bodied male in rural areas. Agricultural districts generally became associated with low rates of able-bodied pauperism; thus, Easingwold, replying to the Local Government Board's circular on Pauperism and Distress, seems to have connected the absence of distress in the union to the fact that it was an agricultural rather than an urban union:

"There not being any unusual amount of distress in this union, which is purely agricultural there is no material increase of applications for relief and the guardians find no difficulty in dealing with the cases arising in this union."(202)

(199) MH32 Revans 65 7/11/1840

(200) PP1833 (612) V p.vi

(201) Most of the 'Extracts from the Information received by his Majesty's Commissioners', printed in 1833, referred to poor law administration in southern counties.

(202) Easingwold union BGM 26/3/1886

In the early 1870's relief from the poor rates, in aid of wages, still existed in the north - though reports of Poor Law Inspectors suggest that wage supplementation in North Yorkshire was confined to aged or disabled persons, only partially able to work, and very rarely extended to agricultural labourers.

"In my district, at the present time, there are very few able-bodied persons who receive relief. There are scarcely any able-bodied persons now in the workhouses. Old age, infirmity, and sickness are the causes."(203)

"The case of an able-bodied man applying for relief on account of inability to find work is of the rarest possible occurrence in any union in my District in which the Prohibitory Order is in force ..."(204)

the agricultural labourer "rarely becomes a pauper until he is quite done for work. He does not throw himself onto the relief list a day or two after he receives an injury ... (as I am sorry to say many of the town labourers do) ... [he] will struggle on for weeks, often months, before he applies."(205)

The appendices to the 1905-9 Royal Commission Report on the Poor Laws and relief of distress reflect the over-riding concern with destitution of able-bodied males in urban and industrial centres and the virtual absence of pauperism amongst able-bodied in rural districts.

"... the increase of adult pauperism, both male and female, has wholly occurred in London and the other urban areas."(206)

The appendix to Inspector Bagenal's report on the West Riding mentioned in detail only the major towns, whilst the Commissioners, questioning Lowry, Inspector for the North East Counties, were mainly interested in poor relief administration in the mining and industrial centres; Middlesbrough was the only union in the North Riding discussed by the Commissioners.(207) Clearly the evidence of contemporaries attests to the low rate of pauperism amongst the agricultural labouring class in

(203) PP1860 (520) XV111 Q.471

(204) MH32 Hedley 45 9/8/1871

(205) 17th Annual Report of the LGB 1887-8 p.80

(206) PP1909 (4525) XXIV11 p.34

(207) PP1909 (4525) XXIV1X pp.333-347  
PP1909 (4525) XXIV1X pp.365-371

North Yorkshire in the period of the New Poor Law, 1834-1900. However, many of the statements are meaningful only as comparison with the commentators' experience of pauperism in other areas. Thus the rate of pauperism amongst agricultural workers in North Yorkshire was low in the early years of the New Poor Law when compared with agricultural districts in the southern and eastern parts of the country, and similarly, towards the end of the nineteenth century, when compared with urban and industrial centres.

Returns of pauperism testify to the relatively unpauperised state of the agricultural labourer in the North Riding. The Poor Law Commission printed annual returns giving the number of males in each county (and Riding in Yorkshire), relieved on account of want of work, insufficient earnings and other causes, not including sickness, accident or infirmity, in the quarter ending Lady Day. The numbers in the North Riding, in the period 1839-46, remained fairly constant, reaching a slight peak in 1842, a year of "prevailing depression of trade and agriculture." Obviously a total of 219 able-bodied male paupers relieved in January, February and March, 1842, out of total population of 180,527 represents an insignificant rate of pauperism.(208) Moreover, the rate of pauperism amongst agricultural labourers was even less since the returns included unions containing a substantial non-agricultural population, for example Whitby and Reeth. Further confirmation of the low rate of pauperism amongst able-bodied men is contained in a return showing the number of persons relieved in seven unions in the North Riding during the half years ending Lady Day, 1844, and 29th September, 1844.(209) One exception was Malton union, where, although only 20 and 27 able-bodied males were

(208) See Appendix K, Table 1

(209) See Appendix A, Table 2  
 PP1847 (100) A.L.L. p.6

relieved in the workhouses in winter and summer respectively, the numbers relieved out of doors in the corresponding periods were 1,098 and 724 respectively. The contrast between Malton and Easingwold, where a mere 25 able-bodied men were relieved in 1844, can only be accounted for by different methods of arriving at the figures. Both were agricultural unions and there was no concern expressed by poor law administrators about the apparently high rate of pauperism in Malton union. There is no discrepancy in the numbers of applications for relief from agricultural labourers between Malton and other North Riding unions in the period from Lady Day to 31st December, 1849 (210), the numbers formed approximately the same proportion of the total populations of Malton, Bedale, Easingwold, Helmsley, Richmond and Thirsk. A random return showing the number of persons receiving outdoor relief in aid of wages and on account of want of work in one week in autumn, 1852, testifies to the low rate of able-bodied pauperism in North Yorkshire. (211) There were no such persons relieved in nine unions - 86 in Easingwold, 18 in Malton, 13 in Pickering, 5 in Thirsk, (all relief in aid of wages) and 7 in Northallerton on account of want of work. However these figures included every member of the family. Thus, in Northallerton union only one unemployed man was in receipt of relief - the other six paupers were his family. In the second half of the century the central poor law authority printed returns showing the numbers of able-bodied male paupers (excluding vagrants) relieved in each union on two days of the year - 1st January and 1st July (212). However, these numbers included men who were in receipt of relief because of temporary sickness, accident or infirmity. Only in 1885 do the returns

(210) See Appendix K Table 3  
MH32 Hawley 41 24/1/1850

(211) See Appendix K Table 4  
PP 1853 (533) LXXXIV p.11

(212) See Appendix K Table 5

start to distinguish between outdoor male paupers temporarily unable to work and others, who required relief on account of unemployment and/or insufficient wages. As these later returns indicate the great majority of able-bodied male paupers were relieved on account of temporary ill-health. Thus, the general conclusion to be drawn from the statistics of pauperism amongst able-bodied males in North Yorkshire is that, throughout the period of the New Poor Law in the nineteenth century, the rate of pauperism amongst agricultural labourers was extremely low. The propensity of labourers to apply for poor relief was higher in the 1830's and 1840's and declined to insignificance in the second half of the century.

We must now examine poor law administration in the wholly agricultural unions of North Yorkshire in more detail in order to assess the impact of the New Poor Law on the relief of agricultural labourers. Several of the newly formed unions anticipated the Prohibitory Order, issuing bye-laws which prohibited outdoor relief to certain classes of paupers. At a meeting of the Thirsk Board of Guardians in 1837 it was resolved that no relief be given to an able-bodied man in private employment unless he had more than six children under ten years of age. Similar rules were passed by the Boards of Leyburn, Helmsley, Stokesley, Northallerton and Richmond unions, and possibly others. (213) Richmond Board of Guardians appears to have been discriminating in the relief it afforded to able-bodied men, despite the absence of Orders, regulating relief, from the Poor Law Commission. Revising the pauper lists early in 1837 the majority of cases of able-bodied male paupers were discontinued or continued at a

(213)	MH12 Thirsk	20/3/1837	MH12 Leyburn	23/3/1837
	Helmsley union BGM	18/3/1837	Richmond union BGM	25/5/1837
	MH12 Stokesley	31/3/1837	Northallerton union BGM	22/3/1837

reduced rate of relief:

eg. West Layton - Able-bodied man, aged 36, with 6 children 5/- reduced to 3/9d a week. (214)

Scorton - Able-bodied man, aged 57, with wife and 7 children. Earnings 9/- a week. 4/- allowance discontinued. (215)

Applications for poor relief on account of insufficient wages from two labourers with large families were dismissed.

8/7/37 Walburn township. Able-bodied labourer, wife and 6 children under 15 years. Earnings 9/- week. Unable to maintain his family - dismissed.

Two days after this case the clerk wrote to the Poor Law Commission requesting permission to admit the children into the workhouse, without the parents - suggesting that, although the guardians had originally acted in accordance with union policy, not to allow outdoor relief, they were not prepared to admit the entire family into the workhouse. (216)

It seems probable that some relief was found to be necessary and the guardians wished to compromise by admitting children only into the workhouse. Several applications (the causes of which were not specified but presumably on account of shortage of work or insufficient earnings) were refused because the applicant was considered "able-bodied".

eg. 4/11/37 Gardener, aged 60, considered ablc. Dismissed. Married man, aged 26, wife and one child. Relief refused "both being able-bodied".

The severe winter, 1837-8, increased the number of applications to such an extent that the guardians were compelled to give outdoor relief, though they generally ordered the relief to be in kind and scrutinised the character of the applicants; for instance, the board agreed that a man, with a wife and two children, who had been earning 13/- a week regularly before the storm and had been out of work for two weeks, "was

(214) Richmond union BGM 13/4/1837

(215) Ibid 15/4/1837

(216) MH12 Richmond 10/7/1837

not a proper object for relief -"(217) In Reeth an able-bodied man, his wife and three children were refused outdoor relief and offered the workhouse - "Both having very mean characters".(218) When taking the earnings of applicants into consideration the guardians placed the subsistence level very low: for example,

21/7/38 Man and wife, aged 35 and 38. Very ill. Receives 6/- week from the Earl of Zetland. Application refused.

20/9/38 Married man, aged 42. Able-bodied, earns 9/- week. 3 children. Wife very ill. Refused.

Thus, even before the introduction of the Prohibitory Order Richmond union was attempting to prohibit outdoor relief to able-bodied men and when a severe storm put pressure on the poor rates the guardians maintained strict control over the type and amount of relief afforded. Unfortunately, it is not known how far this pre-Order administration by Richmond Board of Guardians was typical of other unions in North Yorkshire, since the Richmond minutes are the only ones to contain details of relief applications and their outcome. However, a resolution made at a local agricultural society meeting in 1830 suggests that there was general agreement on the need to prevent regular outrelief to the able-bodied from becoming an established feature of poor law relief -

a discussion on the "best method of maintaining the agricultural poor."-

"... it is unquestionably most desirable that the married or settled poor shall be employed in a regular and stationary way, in preference to the house-row system, and that on all occasions the independence of the poor ought to be protected from pauperism by having no parish allowance, if possible to be avoided, ..."(219)

As has been demonstrated earlier resistance to the Prohibitory Order from agricultural unions in North Yorkshire was minimal and was mainly

(217) Richmond union BGM 27/1/1838  
(218) Ibid 3/2/1838  
(219) W.T.Swainc REGULAR GUIDE TO BOROUGHERIDGE AND THE SURROUNDING DISTRICT (1895) p.64

directed against the clauses dealing with single women, with bastard children and non resident poor. However, not all the unions acquiesced in the prohibition of outdoor relief to agricultural labourers. The most outspoken protest was from Malton union, which requested that that Poor Law Commission rescind the Prohibitory Order in their union. The guardians were accustomed to giving outdoor relief to able-bodied labourers, and their families, who were out of work or whose earnings were insufficient, on account of reduced labour demand in the winter months. The Poor Law Commission's response was to state the abuse to which outdoor relief to the agricultural labouring class was liable and refuse to rescind the Order. (220) Easingwold union also protested against the Order. The chairman's comment -

"I think the article relating to widows much too oppressive and also the one refusing relief to able-bodied labourers out of the workhouse."(221)

suggests that there was apprehension that the Order would effect major changes in the administration of outdoor relief to able-bodied labourers. In two other unions, Leyburn and Bedale, after a short period of poor relief administration according to the Order, there were objections to the insistence on the workhouse for agricultural labourers applying for relief. In January, 1842, Bedale Board "...agreed... to apply to the Commissioners for a discretionary power to grant outrelief in certain cases and under certain circumstances."(222) The request was probably in response to applications from agricultural labourers since early in the following month the Board was requesting the Poor Law Commission's sanction to relieve five agricultural labourers. The Commissioners, refusing the request, pointed out the consequences of

(220) MH12 Malton 10/12/1841  
 (221) MH12 Easingwold 26/1/1842  
 (222) MH12 Bedale 12/1/1841

"... relief to agricultural labourers in aid of wages, according to the system formerly prevalent in the Southern Counties ... no long time would elapse before the great part of the agricultural labourers of the union would be thrown upon the rates during the winter."(223)

In Leyburn union, where "able-bodied and industrious agricultural labourers", unable to obtain sufficient employment, occasionally applied for temporary relief, the protest against the Order's insistence on the workhouse came, not from the Board but a magistrate residing in the union.(224) Hostility to the Order from the Boards of Guardians was short lived and relief to agricultural labourers does not seem to have caused any strain on the poor relief system. Although the Order "admit(ted) of the granting of outdoor relief under almost every contingency that can befall a man or his family"(225) the guardians appear to have acted correctly, either sending able-bodied men to the workhouse or reporting the cases to the central poor law authority. There are no recorded instances of illegal relief, given contrary to the Order but during the severe winter, 1849-50, Easingwold union waived its usual insistence on the workhouse for able-bodied paupers and requested permission to relieve 25 unemployed agricultural labourers out of doors.(226) The Poor Law Board reluctantly sanctioned the relief, believing,

"The farmers in many places are taking advantage of the alleged depression in the value of agricultural produce to turn their labourers out of employment to be supported out of the rates.."(227)

but the Labour Test Order, issued to the union, was not required because the weather improved and the men returned to work. Outdoor relief granted to able-bodied men in Malton union in the 1840's was a result of inadequate workhouse accommodation.(228) There is no evidence that trade

(223) Ibid 9/2/1842

(224) MH12 Leyburn 25/12/1843

(225) A. Digby 'The Rural Poor Law' p.157 in D. Fraser (ed) THE NEW POOR LAW IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (1976)

(226) MH12 Easingwold 9/1/1850 9/3/1850 7 of the 12 men, relieved on 9/1/1850, had never received poor law relief before and the relief given amounted to only £1.1.6d.

(227) MH12 Easingwold 9/1/1850 The only subsequent request to give outdoor relief to agricultural labourers destitute on account of inclement weather was in 1855.

(228) MH12 Malton 29/12/1846 30/12/1846

depressions or adverse weather conditions in the second half of the century increased the number of applications for poor relief.

Although outdoor relief to agricultural labourers in the form of weekly allowances was little practised in the North Riding, relief in the form of rent payments and by way of provision of work, either labouring on the roads or going out to farms, were more common under the Old Poor Law. For example, the overseers at Cayton, in Scarborough union, paid the rents of several small cottages, occupied by able-bodied labourers. (229) Pauperism amongst able-bodied in Scarborough union in 1836 was, by and large, due to the payment of house rents -

"The few able-bodied men who receive relief are men with large families ... the parishes pay house rent." (230)

Similarly in Malton and Helmsley unions -

"The majority of able-bodied labourers named in the schedule have no other relief than their house rents ..." (231)

"The only extensive relief given to able-bodied ... is the payment of the rents of men with larger families than ordinary." (232)

In all the cases referred to them the Poor Law Commission prescribed the payment of rents, though conceding that extra temporary allowances would be required; for example, the Poor Law Commission wrote to the overseer of Ripon:

"Rent applications are 'wholly inadmissible'". (233)

"The Commissioners ... recommend that notice should be given both to the landlords and the occupants that the parish will soon cease to pay house rent for able-bodied labourers although relief in this way may still for a time be continued to aged and infirm paupers..." (234)

(229) MH12 Scarborough 27/1/1835

(230) Ibid 5/11/1836

(231) MH12 Malton 8/11/1836

(232) MH12 Helmsley 20/1/1837

(233) MH12 Ripon 21/11/1835

(234) Ibid 23/5/1839

The New Poor Law did not eliminate rent payments entirely - for example, as late as 1853, in Sheriff Hutton, -

"There are ten cottages for which the overseers pay a shilling a year each to the Lord of the Manor ... and which have hitherto been occupied by persons rent free."(235)

However, no other reference to rent payments has been discovered in either the Minutes or MH12 correspondence and indeed the evidence suggests that the boards were willing to comply with the law; Leyburn union resolved to require the overseers to charge rents for all houses belonging to or rented by townships and several unions included the prohibition of rent payments in their bye-laws of 1837 and 1838.(236)

Labourers applying for relief on account of unemployment were often given work on the roads or farms in the township, and in some cases their wages were made up from the poor rates.

"The township [of Sutton on the Forest] having a redundancy of Agricultural Labourers and no adequate means of employing them, otherwise than sending them to labour on the roads, and the usual way of paying their wages for this kind of labour having been to pay a portion of their wages out of the poor rates ..."(237)

It appears that in the majority of cases the men were inferior labourers -

"those who are advanced in life ... or ... from want of skill or from being sickly are less desirable labourers than the rest."(238)

The numbers of truly able-bodied labourers increased in severe winters and at times of general depression, when non resident families returned to swell the numbers of unemployed able-bodied.

There is no evidence that Boards of Guardians discountenanced attempts by the central poor law authority to suppress the practice of

- (235) MH12 Malton 13/2/1853
- (236) MH12 Leyburn 23/3/1837
- (237) MH12 Easingwold 6/4/1836
- (238) MH12 Scarborough 5/11/1836

roundsman. On the contrary, there are indications that the 'evils' of the roundsman system were generally recognised by the township. In 1836 the overseers of Scalby, later incorporated into Scarborough union, enquired about the advisability of paying a money allowance to roundsmen and, acting on the advise of the Commission, stopped the allowances, as a result of which, they claimed, the men "now ... look for work themselves and find plenty."(239) Independent attempts were made to disassociate the poor rates from the 'roundsman'. In Coxwold the assistant overseers were responsible for an agreement, which "has been a means of partially diminishing one of the greatest evils, that of sending a labourer on the Roundsman, paying a part of his wages from the Assessment, the labourer too frequently considering himself only bound to earn that part of his wage which he receives from the individual, in whose employ he is, the other given as relief to his children ..."(240) With one exception, the poor law records after 1841 contain no mention of the continuation of paying roundsmen out of the poor rates.(241)

(239) Ibid 9/4/1836  
 (240) MH12 Easingwold 13/12/1834  
 (241) MH12 Northallerton 19/8/1848

## 7. Non Resident Poor.

Also included in this chapter are two sections on non resident poor and vagrants, whose relief constituted a not insignificant portion of the poor relief expenditure of the North Yorkshire unions. However, unlike the occupational groups examined in the previous sections, their poverty can not be attributed to the economic changes in the unions, associated with 'de-industrialisation' - (though, as will be shown in the next chapter, migration out of North Yorkshire, in consequence of restricted or diminishing employment opportunities, contributed to the size of the non resident population). This section on non resident pauperism - that is, the relief of persons who lived outside the union but remained chargeable to that union or one of the townships constituting the union by virtue of having their legal settlement there - examines, firstly, the laws regulating the chargeability of non resident persons, in particular the statutory changes that occurred in the course of the nineteenth century and the implications for rural unions and, secondly, the attitude of the central poor law authority to non resident pauperism as embodied in the several Orders. Having set out official policy relating to non resident relief the chapter investigates the extent and administration of relief to non resident paupers by the North Yorkshire unions.

In 1834 legal responsibility for the relief of a destitute person rested with the parish or township in which the pauper was settled - i.e. his place of settlement. The first legislation fixing the principles of settlement was the Poor Relief Act of 1692; settlements could be gained by forty days' residence, the renting of a tenement, valued at a minimum of £10 p.a. or the ability to give security. (242) The law was amended

(242) 13 & 14 Car II c.12 See G.W.Oxley, POOR RELIEF IN ENGLAND AND WALES 1601-1834 (1974) p.19

twenty three years later, making it more difficult to obtain a settlement; forty days' residence then applied from the date that written notice of the person's intention to obtain a settlement was given to the overseer.(243) The 1691 Act required that notice of intention to gain a settlement by residence be read out in church and entered in the overseer's account book; in addition, settlement was automatically given if the person had served in public office for a year, paid public taxes or had been bound an apprentice.(244) Settlement could be obtained by unmarried servants who were hired for a year.(245) Minor changes were made to the Law of Settlement in 1834. The Royal Commissions on the Poor Laws, 1832-4, sought to restrict the ways in which a settlement could be obtained, recommending that

"settlement by hiring and service, apprenticeship, purchasing, or renting a tenement, estate, paying rates, or serving an office, be abolished."

"the settlement of every legitimate child born after the passing of the intended Act, follow that of the parents or surviving parent of such child until such child shall attain the age of sixteen years, or the death of its surviving parent, and that at the age of sixteen, or on the death of its surviving parent, such child shall be considered settled in the place in which it was born." (246)

These recommendations were enacted by the Poor Law Amendment Act, though the clauses were not retrospective. While recognising the advantages of settlement by residence, namely the prevention of the 'unfair' financial burden on parishes of aged paupers, who had left the parish when young, and of the inhumane uprooting of the old, away from family and friends, back to their place of settlement, the Royal

- (243) 1 James II c.17 Ibid p.20
- (244) 3 & 4 Will & Mary c.18 Ibid
- (245) 8 & 9 Will III c.101 Ibid
- (246) PP1834 (44) XXVII p.193 14th and 15th Recommendations

Commissioners rejected the implementation of settlement by residence on account of the adverse effects it would have on the labour market.

"It will be seen that we do not recommend the introduction of settlement by residence."(247)

It was believed that settlement by residence would result in " one of the worst consequences of the existing law, the separation of master and man ...", the demolition of cottages, the forcing of labourers into towns and the non settled labourer, "now superior, both in morals and in industry ... fall[ing] back into the general mass."(248) There was no further alteration to the Law of Settlement until 1876 when the Divided Parishes Act declared three years' residence sufficient to gain a new settlement.

However, although the Settlement Law remained unaltered until 1876 the financial responsibility for non resident paupers underwent profound changes as a result of modifications in the law defining irremovable and removable paupers. In 1834 the only circumstance in which a pauper residing in a parish, in which he had no settlement, could not be removed to his place of settlement was if the pauper was unfit to travel. In 1846 it was enacted that a pauper could not be removed from a parish if he had been resident there for five years.

"no Person shall be removed ... from any Parish in which such Person shall have resided for Five Years next before the Application for the Warrant."

"no Warrant shall be granted for the Removal of any person becoming chargeable in respect of relief made necessary by sickness or accident.", unless the justices are satisfied that sickness or accident will result in permanent disability.(249)

(247) Ibid

(248) Ibid pp.193-4

(249) 9 & 10 Vict. c.66 s.1 & 1V

Irremovability of non settled paupers was further extended in 1861 and 1865. The 1861 Act reduced the period of residence to three years and enlarged the area of residence to include the whole union.(250) In 1865 one year's residence rendered a pauper immovable.(251) M.Bruce in The Rise of the Welfare State, claims that "each of these concessions left unchanged the legal settlement, and therefore the financial responsibility ..."(252) Contesting this statement and arguing that a pauper, resident in a different union from the one in which he was settled and rendered 'irremovable' by the above Acts, was chargeable, not to the settled township or union, but to the township or union in which he resided, I would draw attention to the statements of the Poor Law Commissioners relating to the changes in chargeability in consequence of the 1846 Act.

"The relief of this class of poor, having been stopped by the unions in which they were settled, the unions in which they were resident showed in many cases a disposition either to refuse them relief altogether, or to give them insufficient relief, or merely to offer them relief in the workhouse."

"We have received a few complaints with regard to single cases of hardship under the Act arising from the stoppage of relief, at the moment of the change of chargeability."

"These however, and other similar inconveniences, were the temporary consequences of the adjustment necessary in order to carry the Act into effect; and could scarcely fail to arise under any alteration creating an extensive transfer of pauper chargeability from one to another set of parishes." "... the Boards of Guardians ... relieve the settled and non settled, but immovable poor in the same manner, and they continue the relief to their non resident poor who have not become immovable." (253)

The laws, by progressively reducing the length of residence required in order to achieve the status of irremovability, transferred the charge of many non resident paupers from the settled union to the union of residence.

(250) 24 & 25 Vict. C.66

(251) 28 & 29 Vict. C.79

(252) M.Bruce, THE RISE OF THE WELFARE STATE (1973) p.5

(253) 14th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1848 p.32

As demonstrated in chapter one, there occurred in nineteenth century England a polarisation of urban and rural districts; in such a situation the net effect of the legal changes after 1834 was to ease the burden of non resident relief on rural unions from which migration was taking place. However, even in the late nineteenth century non resident relief was still a significant feature of rural pauperism though less so than in the first half of the nineteenth century. (254)

Under the old poor law relief was frequently granted to non resident paupers, although legally they were liable to be removed to the place of settlement.

"There had grown up a custom under the old Poor Law, by which, in order to save the expense and hardships of removal, parishes agreed to grant outdoor relief to persons belonging to them by settlement, who were residing elsewhere." (255)

Under the new Poor Law the decision whether to grant non resident relief or require the pauper's return to the village or union of settlement did not rest entirely with the Boards of Guardians. Their discretion was circumscribed by certain rules issued by the central poor law authority. The Commissioners were opposed to non resident relief in principle:

"... it is difficult, and often impossible, for a Board of Guardians to ascertain the wants and means of a person residing at a distance from their Union, ..."

"... it is difficult ... to ensure the conveyance of relief to a non resident pauper, ..." (256)

Uncontrolled non resident relief was seen as a threat to the beneficial effects of the reformed poor relief system on the labour market and the condition of the labourer and employer. The Commissioners reasoned that if

(254) 3rd Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1873-4 p.70

"Non resident relief is given in almost all the unions" - (in Northumberland, Durham and the North Riding) "greatest in agricultural unions in which the population has been decreasing." For example - 16% of outdoor paupers of Glendale union (a rural union in Northumberland) were non resident, compared with 2% of Newcastle union.

(255) S & B Webb ENGLISH POOR LAW POLICY (1910) p.53

(256) 7th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1841 p.69

relief were given to able-bodied non resident men they "would be able to remain where the supply of labour is already beyond the demand, and that the money paid to them ... will enable them to compete, for employment, on terms, which are wholly to the disadvantage of those who may not be similarly allowed outdoor relief in aid of wages in the place in which they are resident and legally settled."(257) The General Orders, regulating the administration of poor relief therefore contained sections on the non resident poor. The Prohibitory Order states - "No relief shall be given from the poor rates of any parish ... to any person who does not reside within some place within the union." Provision was made for departure from the Regulations, conditional upon the individual cases being reported to the Poor Law Commissioners within fifteen days. However, the guardians were allowed to grant non resident relief in certain specified circumstances, without having to report the case to the Poor Law Commission. The exception clause most likely to apply to non resident able-bodied persons was the second, which allowed relief to be given on account of "any sickness, accident, or bodily or mental infirmity, affecting such person, or any of his or her family."(258) The Labour Test Order made no reference to non resident poor. The Regulation Order of 1852 contained the same restrictions on non resident relief as the Prohibitory Order, with one exception - non resident relief for six months was not permitted to widows, who had no children.(259)

In the early years of the new Poor Law non resident paupers constituted a sizeable proportion of total pauper numbers in North

(257) MH12 Scarborough 15/6/1843  
 (258) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1842 pp.70-71 Article III  
 (259) 5th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1852 pp.17-20

Yorkshire.

"The agricultural districts are relieving to a considerable extent and in a great proportion, poor residing at a distance, who have gone to the manufacturing towns, but they still keep their settlements in the agricultural parishes from which they have migrated, ..."(260)

Alfred Power, giving evidence to the Select Committee on Poor Law Administration, commented on the great extent of non resident relief in Lancashire and Yorkshire, compared with the south of England.

"In the North ... to a very great extent the parties relieved did not reside in the township in which they were settled; it would frequently happen that all the paupers receiving relief from the township were residing elsewhere, and generally a very considerable proportion, particularly as regarded the smaller townships, throughout both the counties."(261)

Data regarding non resident pauper numbers and expenditure is fragmentary.

In the township of Skipton, from April to October 1832, total expenditure on poor relief amounted to £958.12.4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, a third of which, £319.8.1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d, was money paid to non residents.(262) In 1839 it was estimated that

"35% of the whole number of paupers [in Skipton union] are non resident, being located in Halifax and other neighbouring manufacturing towns,"(263)

and in 1845 Commissioner Clement noted "The number of non resident cases belonging to this union is very great -"(264) In Settle union too

"about one-third [of paupers] ... are not resident within the union."(265)

The union had two relieving officers; in the first district the number of cases belonging to the townships and resident in the union was 172, while the number belonging to the townships and not resident in the union was 78. In the second district there were 143 resident and 48 non resident paupers.(266) In 1842 non resident paupers chargeable to Settle union

(260) PP 1837-8 (167) xviii Q.2984

(261) Ibid Q.2903

(262) PP 1834 (44) xviii p.746

(263) MH12 Skipton 20/3/1839

(264) Ibid 16/8/1845

(265) PP 1837-8 (191) xviii Q.3676

(266) PP 1837-8 (191) xviii Q.3676

formed a similar proportion of the total number of paupers - the number of heads of families residing out of the union was 297 and the total number of pauper heads of families was 831.(267) In Thirsk union the proportion of non resident paupers was "about one fifth of the whole amount of our chargeable poor."(268) The minute books of several unions give half yearly expenditure on non resident poor relief, as distinct from outdoor relief and innaintenance to resident paupers, for a period of several years, mainly in the 1860's. The information denotes substantial non resident relief though less than in the 1840's, when, for example, in Thirsk union non resident relief varied from one fifth to a third of total relief expenditure.(269)

Considering that non resident relief constituted a high proportion of total pauperism in the North Yorkshire unions one would have expected some opposition from the local administrators to the restrictions imposed by the Poor Law Commissioners on the administration of relief to this class of pauper. The Poor Law Commission, in their eighth Annual Report, stated:

"The principal difficulties in the way of the introduction of this Order [the Prohibitory Order] into the northern counties have arisen from the relief ... of persons not resident within their union."(270)

but, with one exception, I did not come across any overt hostility to the orders relating to non resident paupers in either the minute books or the M12 records.(271) There were numerous requests for permission to depart from the Order prohibiting non resident relief and it would seem that this concession, along with the various exceptions, meant that the Orders were not inimical to the wishes of the Boards of Guardians. Indeed in the

(267) PP.1848 (422) HCV p.10

(268) PP.1847 (135) X1 Q.1676

(269) See Appendix L

(270) 8th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1842 p.3

(271) Settle was the only union to protest strongly to the central poor law authority against the clauses relating to non resident poor relief in the Labour Test Order in 1842 and the Regulation Order in 1852.

PP.1342 (422) HCV p.10

PP.1352 (111) HCV p.216

early years of the New Poor Law a number of unions issued bye-laws prohibiting further cases of non resident relief, except in cases of sickness or accident.(272) Later in the century several unions attempted to discontinue non resident and non settled poor relief. In 1879 Great Ouseburn resolved not to advance any relief to non resident poor on account of any other union. (273) Pickering Board of Guardians wrote to Malton union expressing its opposition to Malton's decision to discontinue relief to non settled poor.(274) In 1856 a meeting of the Board of Guardians of Ripon union resolved that

"all relief to paupers who do not reside within this union be discontinued ... no further relief allowed to non resident paupers."(275)

The decision became a major issue in the municipal election. Apparently the resolution had been passed by a very small attendance of guardians without prior notice of the proposed resolution being given. At a subsequent meeting the resolution was rescinded by eight votes to five and non resident paupers continued to be relieved as before.(276)

The decision of some unions not to pay relief to non resident and non settled poor clearly caused contention between unions. In 1899 Stokesley union memorialised the Local Government Board, asking them to make it compulsory for unions to relieve non settled paupers resident in the union. It is probable that this request arose as a result of a recent decision by neighbouring Middlesbrough union (which would have a large proportion of Stokesley's non resident paupers) to discontinue the payment of non settled poor relief.(277)

- (272) eg. Helmsley 18/3/1837 Northallerton 22/3/1837
- (273) Ripon union BGM 24/4/1879
- (274) Pickering union BGM 18/4/1859
- (275) Ripon union BGM 20/10/1856
- (276) Ripon union BGM 30/4/1869 14/5/1869
- (277) Stokesley union BGM 17/6/1899 26/8/1899

In 1873-4 Inspector Cullcy, reporting on outdoor relief in the district comprising Northumberland, Durham, York (North and East Ridings), stated:

"Non resident relief is given in almost all the unions ..." and is "greatest in agricultural unions in which the population has been decreasing." (278)

He could only recollect two unions, those of York and Hull, where non resident relief was not given. In the case of the union where the pauper resided, refusing to give relief, which would be repaid quarterly by the chargeable union, the latter union had to arrange for the relief to be transmitted to the pauper by private channels.

As demonstrated earlier, the central poor law authority was mindful of the potential abuse in the administration of non resident relief. According to the findings of Alfred Power, the northern parts of the West Riding, as indeed all the townships in Lancashire and Yorkshire, where non resident relief was rife, were guilty of lax administration.

"That fact has been communicated to me by many ratepayers, that had great difficulty in ascertaining the circumstances of the parties resident at a distance."

"I think that there has been a great abuse of relief prevailing in various parts of that district, from want of proper information respecting the parties who received it."

"I should say that complaints on that subject chiefly arise within the unions where the townships are the smallest; in the northern part of the West Riding, and in some parts of Lancashire ... those townships have contributed for a long period past their population to the large manufacturing towns, and as applications are made from the parties residing at a distance, they had very great difficulty ... to find out the circumstances of these parties so resident at a distance." (279)

It became common practice for Boards of Guardians to order their Relieving Officers to investigate the circumstances and needs of non resident paupers.

(278) 3rd Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1873-4 p.70

(279) PP 1837-8 (167) XVlll Q.2945, 2947, 2949

For example, in 1866, in an attempt to reduce the amount of non resident relief, Settle Board of Guardians resolved that non resident paupers be visited.(280)

The overall impression from the available evidence is that the burden of non resident pauperism was greatest in the unions in the northern part of the West Riding, Settle, Skipton, Sedbergh and Pateley Bridge, in particular. Large scale migration from these regions occurred in the first half of the nineteenth century. Migration from purely agricultural townships was numerically less than from centres of declining manufacturing or mining importance. Moreover, the redundant mining/manufacturing population tended to migrate to manufacturing towns in the same area either because it was adjacent or they chose to remain in the same occupation or jobs were obtained through family and personal contact. In agricultural unions the destination of migrants was more diverse.(281) Therefore a local or occupational depression would have more adverse effects on the non resident poor relief expenditure of those unions, where a particular economic activity was in decline and the redundant population was migrating, than purely agricultural unions, where the migrating population was both smaller and not engaged in a predominant industry. These reasons would apply equally to the manufacturing and mining regions in the North Riding, for example, Whitby and Reeth unions. With the growth of Teesside there was greater migration from the rural North Riding in the second half of the nineteenth century, but changes

(280) Settle union Letter Books 17/4/1866  
 Also Ripon union BCM 4/11/1856  
 Reeth union BCM 30/5/1845 20/6/1856

(281) PP 1847 (135) K1 Q.1677  
 "Where were they [non resident paupers] generally resident; in the manufacturing districts?"  
 "Some were, but not so generally there; they were residing in the neighbouring unions; in various parts of the country."

in the Settlement Laws and improved living standards prevented non resident relief from becoming a problem for the poor law authorities. During periods of depression, particularly in the 1840's, non resident pauperism did prompt minor changes in the relief administration in all unions. Owing to the settlement and removal laws the effects of depression were not confined to the manufacturing towns. In 1842, a year of severe trade depression, rural unions received many applications for relief from non resident paupers. Inspector Hawley declared

"In the unions which I have been visiting during the last fortnight I have --- innumerable applications for relief from non resident paupers in the manufacturing districts." (282)

In the early 1840's, in Great Ouseburn township, (no doubt typical of agricultural townships in North Yorkshire) the pressure on the poor relief system from destitute families returning from the manufacturing districts caused the parish officers to send men to work as 'roundsmen' and farmers to dismiss non settled labourers. (283) Thus, non resident pauperism is a critical element in any discussion of able-bodied pauperism in North Yorkshire unions - albeit largely temporary and confined to the early years of the New Poor Law.

(282) MH12 Whirak 1/7/1842 (word illegible in text)

(283) PP 1845 (172) XIV p.39

8. The Relief of Vagrancy in North Yorkshire.

The vagrant pauper, known variously as casual, tramp, mendicant - "one who is here today and gone tomorrow" - constituted a special case among the able-bodied poor.(284) The poor law authorities identified two categories of pauper vagrants - the wayfarer, genuinely in search of work, and the professional mendicant whose livelihood was tramping. The guardians were generally of the opinion that the overwhelming majority of vagrants were of the second type. Vagrant paupers formed only a small proportion of the total number of wayfarers and the guardians regarded those that had to resort to poor relief as inferior in moral character. In Thirsk union workhouse 1,539 vagrants were relieved in 1846 but police reports indicated that 12,227 vagrants were accommodated in low lodging houses in the town in the same period.(285) Thomas Smith, chairman of Thirsk union Board of Guardians described the vagrants as

"young, idle and lawless, totally wanting in habits of providence;"(286)

"most of them are doubtless ... men who ... find it difficult to meet with employment at full wages and are tempted to travel where their character or capability is unknown ... it is ... only in comparatively few instances that the wandering poor ... can be termed of the industrious class." (287)

Farnall reported that workhouse officials in his district, which included the North Riding, believed that only five or six per cent of vagrants were actually looking for work.(288) Reeth Board of Guardians, for instance, believed -

"that vagrants almost without exception gain their living by infringement of the law ..."(289)

However, the changes in vagrant numbers in North Yorkshire invariably coincided with fluctuations in the economy. The huge increase of vagrancy

(284) PP 1847 (32) K1 Q.1763

(285) Ibid Q.1766

(286) PP 1847-48 (642) L111 p.93

(287) PP 1847 (82) K1 Q.1768

(288) M32 Farnall 24. 4/12/1867

(289) Reeth union BCh. 23/2/1872

in the late 1840's comprised mainly Irish, who had left Ireland as a result of the famine to seek work in England, and men thrown out of work by the stoppage of railway construction in parts of the north.(290) There were increases in vagrancy in the depression years of 1867/8,(291) the late 1870's,(292) 1885/6/7,(293) 1892/3/4,(294) and the early 1900's (295) The fall in vagrant numbers, coincident with the upturn in the economy, can be attributed more to the greater demand for workers than the success of the Poor Law Commission's deterrent measures.

Vagrancy was a problem in those unions which either had work available and therefore attracted people in search of employment or were on the main routes from one part of the country to another, along which the migrant population tramped. Irish labourers flocked to the northern manufacturing towns in the late 1840's. In Skipton union the number of Irish relieved in the March quarter, 1847, was 399, compared with none in the same quarter of the previous year.(296) Many men travelled in search of employment on railway construction and other major building projects. In the early 1860's Knaresborough union was described as swarming with vagrants and, attributed to the construction of railways in the neighbourhood.(297) The Local Government Board

- (290) MH32 Hawley 41. 27984/48 'Observations on the present state of Vagrancy'  
MH12 Sasingwold 19/2/1848 "... the greater part of the vagrants are undoubtedly Irish"  
similarly in MH12 Bedale 16/2/1847
- (291) 19th Annual Report of the P.L.B. 1866-7 p.22
- (292) 7th Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1877-8 pp.XXvi - XXvii  
Scarborough Express 12/4/1879 31/5/1879
- (293) 15th Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1885-6. p.335  
17th Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1887-8 p.XXIX  
18th Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1888-9 p.135
- (294) 22nd Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1892-3 p.99  
23rd Annual Report of the L.G.B. 1893-4 pp.136-7  
Whitby union BGI. 26/5/1894
- (295) Scarborough union BGI 10/12/1903
- (296) 13th Annual Report of the P.L.C. 1847 p.118
- (297) MH12 Knaresborough 5/6/1861 19/3/1862

Inspector anticipated a large increase in the number of tramps in Pateley Bridge union once the building of Bradford Water Works commenced.(298) Seasonal farm work in the north was highly dependent on cheap, migrant Irish labour.(299) Large numbers of vagrants were attracted to the spa towns of Harrogate and Scarborough by both the demand for labourers during the busy summer season and the charitable activity of the wealthy classes frequenting the spas. In 1879 the Chief Constable of Scarborough stated that the town "had obtained a reputation as a working place, and that tramps frequently came here with a view of obtaining employment."(300) The unions, through which the Great North Road (the main route from London to Scotland) passed, had a constant stream of travellers. The problem of destitute travellers was particularly acute in North Yorkshire, situated as it was between the manufacturing towns of the West Riding and Lancashire and the industrial and mining centres of the north-east. In 1888 Bedale and Northallerton unions relieved the fourth and sixth highest numbers of vagrants respectively in Inspector Knollys' District of Durham, Northumberland, parts of Cumberland and the North Riding.(301)

The 1834 Report took the view that vagrancy comprised chiefly professional tramps and would cease to be a burden if relief, administered to the destitute only, was of a deterrent nature.(302) The details of how this was to be effected were left to the discretion of the Poor Law Commission.(303) Reform was piecemeal. There was no General Order regulating relief to vagrants till the 1870's. In 1843 the Poor Law Act, 5 & 6 Vict, c.57, enabled guardians to prescribe task work, to last not longer than five hours on the morning after admission.(304) A Poor Law Board Minute, in 1848, urged the refusal of relief to all vagrants who

- (298) Pateley Bridge union BGM 26/7/1890  
 (299) PP 1854-55 (300) Mitt. O.342  
 (300) Scarborough BGM 12/4/1879  
 (301) 18th Annual Report of the IGB. 1888-9 p.135  
 (302) PP 1834 (44) p.190-1  
 (303) Ibid p.191 11th Recommendation  
 (304) 9th Annual Report of the PLB. 1843 p.4

were not destitute.(305) A circular letter in 1868-9 again stressed the importance of relieving destitution only and proposed a suitable dietary and task work and recommended the bathing of vagrants.(306) This was consolidated in a General Order of 1871-2.(307) The Commissioners advocated a separate cell system for vagrants. The Casual Poor Act of 1882 empowered guardians to detain vagrants for two nights, though a circular letter, later sent to all unions outside London, recognised the desirability of allowing vagrants to leave early in the morning in order to have a good chance of obtaining work.(308) An Order was issued in 1892-3, allowing a casual pauper to request permission to leave the workhouse at 5.30am in the summer and 6.30am in the winter.(309)

Policy was formulated largely in response to petitions or resolutions from Boards of Guardians, urging action by the central authority to deal effectively with the increases in vagrancy. Both the Act of 11 & 12 Vict c.110 and the Commissioners' Minute on the administration of vagrant relief followed representations from various parts of the country regarding the increase in vagrant numbers.(310) Similarly, the circular letter of 1868 was in response to many complaints about vagrancy from Boards of Guardians.(311) Several North Yorkshire unions anticipated the circular letter of 1868-9, moderating the detaining powers in the 1882 Act. The Northallerton Board of Guardians felt so strongly about the need to discriminate between wayfarer and professional tramp that it sent to many North Riding unions a circular

- (305) 1st Annual Report of the PLB 1848 p.22  
 (306) 21st Annual Report of the PLB 1868-9 pp 74-6  
 (307) 1st Annual Report of the LGB 1871-2 pp XX-XXI  
 (308) 12th Annual Report of the LGB 1882-3 p.49  
10th Annual Report of the LGB 1889-90 p.72  
 (309) 22nd Annual Report of the LGB 1892-3 p.lxxxv  
 (310) 1st Annual Report of the PLB 1848 p.6  
 (311) 21st Annual Report of the PLB 1868-9 p.22

suggesting that the police apply the detaining powers of the 1832 Act to the latter group only. The 'Northallerton scheme', as it was known, was adopted by several unions. (312)

The administration of vagrant relief varied considerably from union to union. There was an unwillingness by some Boards to relieve vagrants in the workhouse:

"The Guardians have not provided a vagrant ward and they are of the opinion that such provision has a tendency to encourage vagrancy." (313)

"To admit mendicant vagrants into the workhouse ... would have a tendency to diminish the comforts of the inmates." (314)

However, the main reason was financial; not only was there the cost of building vagrant wards but, until 1847, the cost of maintenance was charged to the parish where the vagrant was relieved. There was much dissatisfaction with the financial basis of poor relief, particularly from those townships, most heavily pressed with vagrant expenses:

"...Settle ... is put to an enormous expense by vagrants or trappers and though a vagrant ward is fitted up at the workhouse [in Giggleswick] ... the vagrants are not sent there as the other Guardians wish to throw the whole expense on Settle ..." (315)

The reluctance to relieve vagrants in the workhouse diminished after 1847 when the cost of relieving vagrants was transferred to the Common Fund. In 1871 though, four unions - Pickering, Aysgarth, Malton and Pateley Bridge - still had no vagrant wards. (316) Just as the provision of vagrant wards varied from union to union so did the exaction of task work and the nature of the relief. Union policy towards vagrants was constantly changing; work was often suspended when the numbers fell and it was not

- (312) Northallerton union BGM 18/10/1882  
 Easingwold union BGM 24/11/1882  
 Kirkby Moorside union BGM 13/12/1882
- (313) MH12 Northallerton 23/2/1848
- (314) MH12 Malton 20/2/1841
- (315) MH12 Settle 23/12/1843 Also MH12 Easingwold 28/4/1848  
 MH12 Wharfedale 6/1/1837  
 PP 1347-48 (642) 1711 p. 95
- (316) MH52 Ledley 45 19790/71

worth the expense of employing a superintendent of labour.(317)

Alternatively, there were difficulties in exacting work when the union was inundated with vagrants.(318) The guardians felt that the requirement of work encouraged vagrants to stay around the workhouse instead of getting on their way.(319) In some cases vagrants refused to work, intimidating and assaulting workhouse officials and damaging union property.(320)

Vagrancy had traditionally been associated with crime. Tudor legislation dealt harshly with the vagrant; for example, 27.Henry VIII. c.25 (1536) stated -

"A sturdy beggar is to be whipped the first time, his right ear cropped the second time, and if he again offend, to be sent to the next gaol ... and if convicted shall suffer execution of death as a felon and an enemy of the commonwealth."(321)

The unions reported many cases of insubordination and actual violence by vagrants on poor law officials and property, particularly in the 1840's. There was a strong body of opinion in favour of removing vagrants from the province of the poor law to control by the police. In 1872, for example, Reeth union forwarded to the Local Government Board a resolution recommending that the management of vagrants be handed over to the police.(322) Easingwold, in 1848, and Skipton, in 1855, appointed policemen as assistant relieving officers, and in 1861 the Chief Constable of the North Riding offered to all the unions the services of police officers to act as assistant relieving officers, whose duties

(317) MH12 Ripon 16/9/1867 23/6/1870

(318) PP 1847-48 (642) L111 p.94

(319) Richmond union BGM 22/8/1868

(320) MH12 Leyburn 8/2/1848

MH12 Bedale 19/1/1848

(321) PP 1854 (44) XXVii pp.4-6

(322) MH32 Farnall 24 4/12/1867

Reeth union BGM 23/2/1872

included giving tickets to "those applicants whom on examination he may find fit subjects for relief ..."(323) The Ticket System, whereby vagrants were issued with tickets, stating their identity, place of origin, destination, reason for travelling, which guaranteed relief at workhouses along the journey, was rejected by most North Yorkshire unions, when suggested to them by the North Riding County Council in 1894. Whitby guardians thought the system had meant "tramping made easy." (324)

At the turn of the century the North Yorkshire unions, in common with many throughout the country, were dissatisfied with the existing administration of relief to vagrants. Minute books frequently refer to petitions and resolutions urging changes in the system. The following are the recommendations forwarded to the Local Government Board in 1895 by Northallerton union -

- 1) insufficient uniformity in unions regarding the treatment of vagrants.
- 2) inadequate distinction between tramp and wayfarer.
- 3) Medical officer should inspect vagrants daily.
- 4) relief of casual poor should be paid for out of the taxes and not the rates, as the vagrants come chiefly from the larger towns.(325)

Unions also held independent investigations into the problem of vagrancy. A conference on vagrancy, attended by representatives of Boards of Guardians from Durham and the North Riding, was held in 1894 and in 1902

(323) MH12 Easingwold 14/10/1848  
 MH12 Skipton 28/1/1856  
 Reeth union BGM 11/1/1861

(324) Whitby union BGM 26/5/1894

(325) Northallerton union BGM 6/3/1895

Scarborough union set up a committee to consider the problem of vagrancy in the East and North Ridings, recommending that "some more deterrent and uniform system should be adopted for the suppression of this existing evil ..."(326) Vagrants, therefore, differed from other groups of able-bodied paupers in that theirs was an apparently intractable problem for the poor law authorities throughout the nineteenth century. Attempts by unions to arrive at a regional solution to the vagrant problem testify to the failure of the central poor law authority to deal effectively with the migrant unemployed. Such 'co-operation' between the Boards of Guardians was peculiar to this class of pauper. Whereas the poverty that existed amongst the resident population reflected economic change in the unions and was acknowledged to be the sole responsibility of individual poor law unions, the guardians did not regard vagrancy as 'their own problem'.

(326) Whitby union BGM 26/5/1894  
 Scarborough union BGM 21/8/1902

CHAPTER FOURAlternative Sources of Relief

It has been shown that in certain parts of North Yorkshire lead miners and textile workers came to constitute a depressed group within the population, especially during the first twenty years of the New Poor Law. Similarly the agricultural labourers, though not constituting a declining occupational group nevertheless experienced low and uncertain wages. The previous chapter examined the different ways in which the early Boards of Guardians, responsible for the implementation of the new law, actually coped with the problems which these groups encountered. It should not be forgotten, however, that there were other forms of relief, in addition to that available from the 'official' poor law sources, which had the effect of mitigating the poverty of these groups of workers.

1. Secondary Occupations and Supplementary Earnings.

Of the secondary occupations that of farming was the most common. In a rural environment, where traditional industries evolved over centuries, often closely linked with the agricultural economy it is not surprising that work allocation in these areas still remained diverse well into the nineteenth century. In the more highly organised less individual based rural industries - in the leadmining hamlets of Wharfedale as opposed to those in Swaledale and in the mill villages as opposed to areas of domestic handloom weaving - the prevalence of agricultural activity was less important a factor in tiding men over periods of reduced employment. However, farming interests, though enabling the retention of men in industry to a later date than would

otherwise have been possible, could not halt the fall in rural population as the loss of income from rural industry forced farmers of small, unviable acreage and members of farming families to leave the area in search of alternative work.

Many miners owned or rented land and worked it as a small-holding. In the seventeenth century the fragmentation of farms in Upper Swaledale had stimulated the development of mining by creating an under-employed labour force.(1) By the nineteenth century the position was reversed, with leadminers engaged in part-time farming. Various sources refer to the farming activities of Swaledale miners:

"The great mass of Ratepayers ... being mostly miners ... and occupying an acre or two of land each."(2)

"the miners and those who are married especially are fond of a little land, and have one or two cows."(3)

Comparing the 1831 census returns for Grinton, Reeth, Melbecks and Muker with the tithe collection for 1832, A.Raistrick wrote:

"... It is reasonable to conclude that one-third or rather more of the miners in these four townships had some sort of agricultural holding, usually with one or two cows."(4)

In Wensleydale, too, "a great many of the miners have a small portion of land, and keep a cow or two."(5) In the 1871 census enumerator's schedules for Bowerley, in Pateley Bridge union, sixteen miners were also farmers; ten miners specified the acreage - with the exception of a farmer of 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres, they farmed between 8 and 22 acres. However, few of

(1) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings, A HISTORY OF LEAD MINING IN THE PENNINES (1965) p.312-13

(2) MH12 Reeth 6/11/1852

(3) PP.1864 (3389) XLV Q.17728

(4) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings op cit p.314

(5) PP.1864 (3389) XLV Q.18063

the Grassington miners had gardens or land attached to their cottages.(6)  
 In the eighteenth century Arthur Young noted that the short working hours of leadminers enabled them to work their small-holdings.(7)  
 Although an eight-hour day became common practice in the nineteenth century, in Yorkshire the "normal working hours for miners were ... six days of six hours each," while "Partnerships of pickmen ... were often left to decide their own hours, and not infrequently worked an hour or two less than the standard ..."(8)

In 1871 twenty of the thirty six leadminers in Hurst hamlet, in Beeth union, were also occupiers of land, ranging from 2 to 96 acres - fifteen with less than 20 acres. The figures suggest that part-time farming was an important factor in retaining men in a declining industry. The leadmining companies recognised the value of the small-holdings in staving off destitution. Giving evidence before the Select Committee on Enclosures in 1844, Mr. Roper, a landagent in Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire, described how, especially during the previous twenty years, the small proprietors of land had been driven off the extensive common belonging to Arkengarthdale:

"there are constant disputes as to the right they have to put stock upon it [the common], and they are continually dogging sheep, and having fights and broils; there is no end of the mischief that is going on upon that common, constant quarrels, everyone wanting to put on a larger portion than he ought to do..."(9)

"... the miners being the small occupiers of land, have felt it so impossible to contend with the larger ones, that they have taken their sheep off the common, and have given it up altogether."(10)

(6) PP.1854 (5389) XXIV Q.18481

(7) E.Cooper, A HISTORY OF STALEDALE. (1973) p.50

(8) C.J.HARR, DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTHERN PENNINES IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES (1970) pp.47 - 50  
A.Haistrie and D.Sommings, op cit p.287

(9) PP.1844 (503) V Q.4875

(10) Ibid Q.4876

The landagent's proposal to stint the common land, so that the miners could turn out their stock with a certainty of getting an advantage from it, had the support of the mining companies:(11)

"I have been applied to by the lessees of the leadmines in that district to carry out such an arrangement, for the purpose of enabling the miners to keep cows to supply milk for their families."(12)

In contrast with the leadminers the census returns note very few linen weavers who also farmed small-holdings or had another occupation, unconnected with the linen industry.(13) However, many country weavers and mill workers probably owned a cow. The managers of New York Mill in Nidderdale started a cow club in 1843 "... for such of our work people and neighbours as keep one or two cows and could ill afford to lose one by sickness or accident."(14) The evidence, regarding occasional work, in the Report of the Royal Commission on Handloom Weavers, is rather contradictory. Keyser wrote:

"The weavers [in Nidderdale] ... would be worse off than those in the town, but that they occasionally obtain harvest and other field work ..."(15)

whereas a Nidderdale weaver commented:

"... country weavers ... are not so likely to ... earn a trifle occasionally by odd jobs of work."(16)

It seems feasible that country weavers were more accessible to seasonal and part-time farm work. Moreover, it is unlikely that Knaresborough, whose economic life, dominated by the state of the linen industry, and frequently declared to be declining in the period 1815-50, could afford much occasional employment for weavers - certainly not sufficient to

(11) Ibid Q.4803 "The meaning of 'stinted pastures' in that county is, that a certain portion of land is devoted to the keeping of stock, and each person in the township is entitled to turn so many cattle upon it ..."

(12) Ibid Q.4814

(13) 1861 C.E.S. For example, in Nidderdale only 2 weavers had additional occupations while in Knaresborough there were no linen weavers recorded as having other employment. The 1851 and 1871 census returns show a similar absence of small holding or other part-time occupations by

(14) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF NIDDERDALE(1967) p.339 linen weavers.

(15) PR.1840 (43 - I) p.488

(16) Ibid

maintain a family.

In a survey on farming in the North Riding in 1848 H.W. Milburn wrote:

"... the allotment system is very prevalent from one end of the Riding to the other." (17)

Their potential for alleviating distress of agricultural labourers was widely recognised. The overseers of Norton, in Malton union, where there was "an exceedingly large number of small freehold cottages, chiefly occupied by agricultural labourers, without any allotment of land to them ...," requested permission to rent eight acres of land to be let to poor people, according to the size of their family for the express purpose of "fill[ing] up their time when work is scarce and prevent[ing] them in many instances from resorting to the parish for relief." (18)

In the late nineteenth century it was found that "allotments for cows ... generally approved of ..." by labourers and employers in North Yorkshire. (19) One labourer considered:

"that the land does him good, and has materially helped him to bring up a large family, has not saved as yet, but when the children are in service, he hopes to do so and thus provide for old age." (20)

Part-time agricultural work was sometimes available to other members of the family, as well as to adult men. Generally, however, there was greater opportunity of employment of women and children on the lowland farms than upland grass farms. On arable land such work included clearing land of weeds and stones, hoeing, at harvest, hay and threshing times, picking potatoes and turnips etc. Although Assistant Poor Law Commissioner,

(17) Yorkshire Agricultural Society Transactions. No. 11 1848 p.206

(18) MS 12 Malton 7/12/1847

(19) PP. 1891 (2770 - II) XVI p.147

(20) Ibid

Sir F.M.Doyle, in 1843, stressed the partial and uncertain nature of female employment in field work in Yorkshire, except round Goole and possibly on the Wolds, the historian, E.H.Hunt, finds no significant difference in family earnings between the south and the rural districts in the north.(21)

Outside agriculture hand-knitting was a major occupation of women, children and the elderly in Svaledale and Wensleydale. Doyle, reporting on the employment of women and children in agriculture, in 1843, wrote - in the absence of arable farms in the North Riding dales:

"... the people ... seek subsistence by indoor occupation, viz. by knitting stockings, jackets, sailors' caps etc ... A clever knitter might perhaps earn 5s in any given week by incessant toil; but on average it would require industry and skill to realise 2s.6d in that period; a child, according to its age and proficiency, earns 3d, 9d, up on to 1s0d in the same time."(22)

Most of the resident outdoor pensioners, comprising the elderly and infirm, listed in a return sent by the Vestry Clerk of Muker to the Poor Law Commission in 1835, were occupied in hand-knitting.(23) In the course of the nineteenth century, as the knitting trade in the dales waned, the earnings from hand-knitting provided only a pittance for "shopping money"(24) A similar decline in handloom weaving reduced family income from this source.

Supplementary work and wages could sometimes be available for women and children even in the predominantly male-employing industries. In contrast with the leadmining districts in the northern Pennines, when,

(21) E.H.Hunt, REGIONAL WAGE VARIATIONS IN BRITAIN, 1850-1914(1970) p.122

(22) PP.1843 (510) X11 p.295

(23) MH12 Reeth 6/4/1835

(24) M.Hartley and J.Ingilby, THE YORKSHIRE DALES (1956) p.143

in 1832-4, no women were employed at washing or dressing leadore, (25)  
 Reeth township replied to the Rural Queries of the Royal Commission on  
 the Poor Laws:

"many women and children are employed in washing lead ore" (26)

In Marrick, in 1843, "A considerable number [of women] are employed in  
 washing leadore all the year." (27) Giving evidence before the Kinnaird  
 Commission, Mr. Coates, who was in charge of the Arkindale and Fell End  
 Mines, replied to the question, "Are there any women employed at the  
 surface?":

"Yes, at the washings, chiefly women; the men's labour is too dear;  
 but nothing like so many women are employed as there used to be;  
 some will not go to the washings at all, they will rather go to  
 service." (28)

No women were employed at the surface in the Grassington mines. (29) In  
 Swaledale and Arkengarthdale boys started work in the mines when they  
 were ten or twelve years of age.

"... If a goodish man has a lad, and he is badly off, and has a  
 large family and only his own hand labour, we generally let him  
 take him when he will; but we generally like them to be about  
 twelve." (30)

In the Keldheads Mine, Wensleydale, and the Grassington mines, boys did  
 not go down the mines till they were eighteen years old, before which  
 time they were generally employed dressing ore.

"We consider that they are better out of a mine while they are  
 young and growing." (31)

The income of the minor's wife and children alone could not support the  
 family for more than a very temporary period. In 1847 the clerk of

(25) C.J.Hunt op cit pp.97-8

(26) PP.1854 (44) XLV p.601 Q.11

(27) PP.1845 (510) XLV p.352

(28) PP.1854 (3509) XLV Q.17252

(29) Ibid Q.16122

(30) Ibid Q.17258

(31) Ibid Q.18029

Reeth union described the earnings of miners' "wives and larger children ... [from] knitting and occasional days at washing the metal..." as "trifles". (32)

During the depression in the late 1830's handloom linen weavers utilised all the family labour. The Royal Commission, 1839-41, heard that,

"A man having many children is likely to put them to the loom as soon as he can get anything by their labour." (33)

"Our general inclination is to send the children to schools, to Sunday schools, but in the week they must be employed at work." (34)

The only income relatively unaffected by the depression in the linen trade was from children working away and sending their wages home and of members of the family engaged in occupations unconnected with the linen industry, though many of these, such as service trades, also suffered in the recession of the local economy. The importance of assistance from relatives and friends in allaying destitution is suggested by the evidence of Richard Dewes, a Knaresborough weaver,

"All the workmen remaining at Knaresborough are such as are kept there by ties of family or connection, or they would certainly leave ..." (35)

While such assistance was readily available at times of individual hardship, during a severe and general depression in the textile trade, resources dwindled, especially in areas almost exclusively dependent on textile manufacture.

(32) NK12 Reeth 10/12/1847

(33) pp.1840 (43 - 1) NK111 p.465

(34) Ibid p.487

(35) Ibid p.465

## 2. Credit and Subsistence Payment, Benefit Clubs and Charity.

Even when alternative work was not available to the more impoverished groups there were still other possible sources of income before they need<sup>d</sup> to seek poor relief from the guardians. The private resources of employers, workers and the community at large - in the form of shop credit, subsistence payments from benevolent employers, small savings and charity - could also help, though they were better suited to cases of individual hardship and temporary distress than to times of prolonged and general depression. For example, the variability of factors governing the fortunes of the miners induced tradesmen to supply provisions on credit. The period of credit, however, was limited; in 1847 the Clerk of Reeth union described how the miners "after a long continued and apparently unsuccessful trial, their credit at the small provision shops becomes exhausted, must apply to the union..."(36)

Subsistence money, paid by the mining companies, prevented many applications for temporary relief being made to the Board of Guardians:

"This [subsistence money] was paid to a miner or partnership usually every month and was meant to provide him with enough money to live on until the pay was made, when of course his total subsist was deducted."(37)

Raistrick and Jennings in their book on leadmining in the Pennines, writes:

"When there was a long interval between pays, some form of subsistence advance in money or kind seems to have been a common practice."(38)

As we have seen, in the 1830's and 1840's mining companies in Swaledale were relieved to a certain extent of the obligation to pay subsistence

(36) LH12 Reeth 10/12/1847

(37) J.K.Dickinson, HILLS AND MINERS (1972) p.71

(38) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings op cit p.289

by the payment of loans and outdoor relief from the poor rates. Various expedients were devised to relieve the hardship of minors employed on 'hard bargains'. The Old Gang Company, in Swaledale, "used to make small cash allowances, £1 to £3 per month per partnership in the 1860's, or increase the bing-tale rate, or cancel the usual deductions."(39) Companies sometimes charged the miners more than the cost price for provisions in order to enable "the masters to give the cost of the candles and powder to such of the miners as do not make wages and are unfortunate in their trials."(40) There is evidence that the Knaresborough linen firm of Waltons also advanced subsist money to weavers, though how common a practice and on what sort of occasions is not known.

"Thomas Fletchers wife applies for 5/- to keep her husband and family until they get their wages. allowed 2/6d if Mr. Walton do not allow them to have any subsist money."(41)

Clothing and benefit clubs were forms of self help common to most communities in the nineteenth century. A regular subscription enabled the family to purchase clothing and bedding and receive money in the case of illness or accident. The success of benefit clubs was dependent upon a stable membership, assured of reasonably full employment. The larger mining companies, if they did not provide medical services, often started or subscribed to benefit funds. At Grassington, the largest of the Duke of Devonshire's leadmining concerns, the company contributed annually towards a club and, in the case of an accident to a miner, gave money in addition to the amount received from the club.(42) In Swaledale,

(39) A. Raistrick & B. Jennings, A HISTORY OF LEAD MINING IN THE PENINES  
 (40) PP.1064 (1902) IV. Q.17307 (1905) p.207  
 (41) Scriven with Pontergate S.V. Memorandum Book 7/6/1852  
 (42) PP.1057 (241) III Q.2349  
PP.1054 (44) VIII p.764 "There is [in Grassington] a benefit society called the Miners Society, which is very useful, ... the annual payment is 11s, and when a man is sick he has 6s a week for one year, and if no change, 6s a week afterwards, it has been established many years, and many young men have joined it this last two years; occasionally the payments have been made out of the poor rates."

too, though there were no medical funds belonging to the smaller mining companies the managers agreed that

"if a man should happen to receive any little accident we assist him." (43)

However, a Local Government Inspector found that friendly societies, giving sickness benefit, were little known in those purely agricultural areas of North Yorkshire, where a high proportion of agricultural labourers were hired by the year.(44)

Finally, the upper classes engaged directly in charitable activity to relieve temporary distress, examples of which proliferate in the nineteenth century local newspapers. In January, 1867, inclement weather suspended nearly all outdoor employment in Grassington - "the sympathies of some of the more wealthy gentry, resident in the locality, have been called into benevolent and active operation ..." and a soup kitchen was set up and clothes provided for the poor. (45) In Knaresborough, as one of the weavers commented:

"Much good is done here by private charity, but there is much demand for it."(46)

In 1830 a public meeting, called to consider what action should be taken to relieve the distressed linen weavers, decided to apply to the Society for the Relief of the Manufacturing Poor for aid (the outcome of the application is not known) and to raise a subscription, which, within one week, amounted to £400. (47) Private subscriptions were even raised to assist weavers on strike in 1849. A local newspaper reported:

- (43) PP.1864 (3389) XLIV Q.17, 726
- PP.1857 (241) XL Q.532
- (44) 3rd Annual Report of the LGE 1873-4 p.74
- (45) Craven Weekly Pioneer 28/1/1867
- (46) PP.1850 (43 - 1) XLIII p.484
- (47) Yorkshire Gazette 23/1/1830 30/1/1830

"... near three hundred individuals are now floating on the waves of charity but the tide of charitable silver which now flows is scarcely able to support them, ... The local gentry, tradesmen, and working classes of the town, aid them as much as can be expected, but what is this as compared with plenty of work and good wages." (48)

The importance of charity in minimising resort to poor law relief was recognised by Inspector Culley, who did not anticipate any serious strain on poor law administration "unless private charity should fail." (49) Nevertheless, the availability of private charity could vary markedly from district to district and it was, at best, an uncertain resort. The amount of charity was probably less extensive in the dales than in the lowland agricultural districts, where there was a larger gentry class. In Huddersdale ... "there are many very poor ratepayers ... the farms are small and the rents in many cases much too high ..." (50) and in Busleghale, too, the "great mass of ratepayers are ... very poor ..." (51) It was, for instance, argued that the absence of a substantial, resident gentry class in the neighbourhood of Barnoldswick was a contributory factor in the great distress there in 1842. (52)

### 3. Political and Industrial Action

In the twentieth century measures to solve regional unemployment resulting from declining economic opportunities have become a major concern of political and trade union organisations. In nineteenth century North Yorkshire, however, organised protest by working men was spontaneous, short lived and infrequent, and, from all accounts, largely

(48) Burniston's Northern Luminary October 1849

(49) 6th Annual Report of the BGM 1878-9 p.XXVI

(50) Pateley Bridge union BGM 24/5/1861

(51) MR12 Reeth 6/11/1852

(52) MR12 Skipton 29/5/1842

unsuccessful. The textile workers in the south west of the region, adjacent to the industrial centres of the West Riding and Lancashire, were accessible to Chartist influence in the 1830's and 1840's and Chartism was alleged to be much on the increase in the textile manufacturing townships of Skipton union in 1842. Riotous proceedings at Barnoldswick during the distribution of poor relief by the Relieving Officer were attributed to the violent behaviour of a Chartist faction, who threatened to seize the poor relief funds and ~~form~~<sup>form</sup> their own committee to distribute the money at a rate of two shillings per head. Begging gangs made "a common practice of visiting the houses of the more respectable class of inhabitants in great numbers and behaving in a most disorderly manner till relieved - they expect money." (53) Estimates of the number of men varied - between thirty and forty to "some two or three hundred." Chartist weavers, mainly young, single men, subscribed to a London daily newspaper and The Northern Star and hired a room where nightly meetings were held. In August, 1842, at the height of the plug-drawing riots, in Skipton was "invaded by a Lancashire mob of some 3,000 persons who stopped the mills, and put the inhabitants into a state of terror ..." (54) Apart from a farcical imitation by 30 to 40 young men from Skipton there is no indication that Chartism found much active support elsewhere in the union. The Knaresborough linen weavers were also more politically active than their counterparts in the North Riding. Several of the weavers giving evidence to Keyser in 1839 expressed Chartist sentiments, for instance, attributing the depression in the linen trade to the loss of the French market, in retaliation to

(53) MH12 Skipton 29/5/1842

(54) W.H. Dawson, HISTORY OF SKIPTON (1882) p.285-8

the Corn Laws. During an election meeting in Knaresborough the weavers mobbed the farmers,

"It is some time since now; during an election some misunderstanding took place between the weavers and the farmers, and they were very violent."(55)

Possibly a rise in the price of corn exacerbated ill-feeling. Thorp, a linen manufacturer, stated:

"We find ... that wages do not always rise or fall in proportion to the price of corn."(56)

One weaver advocated universal suffrage,

"if they [the working men] were fully and properly represented in Parliament, they would have laws made for their benefit."(57)

Chartist activity amongst the weavers was probably exaggerated at the time, though the Harrogate Advertiser, reporting on a Chartist meeting, no doubt played down the extent of Chartism in a town only four miles away, for the sake of Harrogate's reputation as a genteel spa town.

"Two chartist delegates called a meeting of the friends at Knaresborough. Very few attended, and all would have passed off flatly and quickly, had not a few respectable parties foolishly interrupted the proceedings, which led to some tumult, and caused a large crowd to congregate in the neighbourhood."(58)

The Chartists were clearly not welcome in Osmotherley, a North Riding bleaching and weaving village.

"the inhabitants were so excited that a general hissing and hooting took place ... it will be long ere the peace of Osmotherley be disturbed again by any of the party."(59)

Finally it remains to be seen to what extent the poor engaged in various forms of industrial activity in order to improve their lot. The historian, C.J.Hunt, gives two reasons why the leadminers in the Northern

(55) PP.1335 (400) Xiii Q.1796

(56) PP.1340 (43 - 1) Xiii p.486

(57) Ibid p.487

(58) Harrogate Advertiser 6/7/1839

(59) Leeds Mercury 10/8/1839

Pennines failed to create permanent trade unions.

"The leadmining areas were characterised by a stable population and a low proportion of immigrants."

"... the leadminers were not orthodox wage earners. They were selling, not their labour, but its proceeds. Strikes were a last resort."(60)

Strikes were even less likely in Yorkshire where the absence of large mining concerns resulted in an identification of interests between the company and the miners. The histories of leadmining in Yorkshire mention only two strikes in the nineteenth century, though Sir G.W.Denys informed the Kinnaird Commission that the men would strike if the mining machinery was ineffective.(61) There was a strike by miners in Swaledale in 1841, in protest against a long delay in the payment of wages.(62) In 1873 a strike in Arkengarthdale, lasting twenty two weeks, arose over the maximum price to be paid to miners.(63) A prolonged strike occurred in the previous year in Teesdale, resulting in an increase in the subsistence money paid to miners, but there is no evidence to suggest that there was any connection between this and the Arkengarthdale strike.

In a deteriorating economic situation, such as the rural textile workers found themselves in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, where one method of manufacture or one region was competing with another, the withholding of labour and the finished product was an ineffective weapon in the battle against poverty. The linen weavers of

(60) C.J.Munt op cit p.136

(61) PP.1864 (3389) XLIV Q.17378

"As far as you can judge ... the appliances of machinery ... are always effectual?"

"Yes; in fact, the men would not work without it, they would strike."

(62) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings op cit p.289

(63) M.Hartley and J.Ingilby op cit p.274

Knareborough went on strike on two recorded occasions in the nineteenth century in order to prevent a reduction in their earnings. Both strikes demonstrated a degree of solidarity between linen weavers of Knareborough and Barnsley, though there is no evidence of weavers elsewhere in North Yorkshire taking similar industrial action to improve their declining economic condition. In May 1823 the Barnsley weavers struck in protest against the withdrawal by the masters of a perquisite, known as the font. Some of the weavers sought work in Knareborough. Soon after their arrival the five largest linen firms in Knareborough announced a reduction in the wage rates. The weavers reacted by holding processions and public meetings and finally striking in July. The strike, which showed great solidarity amongst the weavers, lasted until December, when "many no doubt compelled from absolute want;" returned to work on the masters' terms.(64) Secondly, in 1849 the handloom weavers employed by Walton and Co "resolved to make a strike rather than to submit to a threatened reduction in their wages, amounting to nearly 25% ..."(65) Barnsley weavers recommended them to resist the reduction and the men contributed 3d a week each and the women and boys 1½d in support of the striking weavers.(66) The strike lasted fourteen weeks, at the end of which "an amicable arrangement" was reported to have been effected between weavers and employers, although the details are not known.(67) According to the Leeds Mercury the wages varied little from the amount received before the strike. However, there is uncertainty as to whether the reduction in wages was actual or threatened - and therefore whether

(64) B.Jennings (ed) A HISTORY OF HARROGATE AND KNARESBOROUGH (1970) pp.274-5  
 (65) Burniston's Northern Luminary 22/8/1849  
 (66) Ibid  
Leeds Mercury 11/8/1849  
 (67) Burniston's Northern Luminary 19/12/1849

the strike failed or succeeded in its object. Neither the Select Vestry Memorandum Book of Scriven with Tentergate nor the Minute Book of Knaresborough Select Vestry make any specific reference to the strike, nor does an examination of applications for work or relief from able-bodied men in Scriven with Tentergate reveal any increase in these months. The number of applications for relief to Knaresborough Select Vestry in October November and December, 1849 were less than in the corresponding months of 1848 (though the number of applications in 1848 were perhaps unusually high because of an outbreak of cholera). The weavers therefore endured fourteen weeks of unemployment without mass recourse to poor relief.

Unlike his counterpart in southern and eastern counties there is no evidence that agricultural labourers in North Yorkshire attempted to improve their condition by violence or threats or through unions. The North Yorkshire townships escaped the rural riots and arson that erupted in south-east England in the early 1830's, while in 1837 Revans declared that:

"... nothing can exceed the order of tranquillity which exists throughout my district ..."(68)

which was in contrast with the discontent and state of unrest in, for example, Cambridgeshire in 1846, where -

"Every parish in this neighbourhood is ... ripe for any outbreak."(69)

The only reference to agricultural workers' unions was in 1877, when Joseph Arch, replying to a meeting held at Staindrop in South Durham, promised to go to, or send a representative to Darlington to discuss the

(68) MH32 Revans 65 24/10/1837

(69) A.J.Peacock, 'Village Radicalism in East Anglia 1800-50' in J.P.D.Dunbabin (ed) RURAL DISCONTENT IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITAIN (1974) p.60

formation of a union for South Durham and North Yorkshire, to be affiliated to the National Union.(70) But there is no mention of the outcome and in the absence of further information it must be assumed that unionisation was a dead letter in North Yorkshire.

This chapter has illustrated briefly several of the means, other than that of poor law relief, by which the able-bodied poor were provided with an alternative or supplementary income to that obtained from their principal employment. However, in the declining industrial areas of rural North Yorkshire, the permanent solution to the twin problems of diminishing employment opportunities and falling financial rewards came, not from the poor law nor the various alternative sources, outlined above, but from the most adventurous measure of self help - that of migration.

(70) A.J.Peacock, 'Village Radicalism in East Anglia 1800-50' in J.M.P. Ambabin (ed) THE DISCOVERY IN NINETEENTH CENTURY (1974) p.150.

## CONCLUSION

In the face of de-industrialisation workers seeking to improve their living conditions migrated out of the region in search of work elsewhere for, in periods of unemployment in the lead and traditional textile industries, there was little alternative work in the upland districts of North Yorkshire. The description of Reeth union as "very wild and mountainous containing many thousand acres of waste and moorland not at all inhabited ..."(1) could be applied equally to the upper regions of Nidderdale, Wensleydale and Wharfedale. The valley farms were generally small, comprising mainly grassland and requiring only the labour of the farmer and his family.(2) Railway construction in the dales provided only temporary employment though there was potential for the absorption of redundant miners with the development of quarrying.

As shown in a previous chapter the poor law authorities financed the migration of unemployed paupers in the 1830's and 1840's as a means of reducing pauperism in the leadmining districts. However, there is evidence of considerable voluntary migration throughout the nineteenth century. The reduction in the population of Arkengarthdale from 1512, in 1821, to 1446 in 1831, was attributed to the absence of miners in search of work. Substantial numbers of leadminers and their families left the townships of Kettlewell and Starbotten in the decades 1841-51 and 1861-71, from Grassington and Hebden 1861-71, from Malham 1841-51 and Cononley 1851-61, following the failure of the leadmines. Similarly,

- (1) Reeth union BGM 17/5/1861  
 (2) PP.1867-8 (4038) XVII p.94

the unproductiveness and closure of the leadmines in Reeth union - resulted in the migration of miners at various times throughout the century - from Grinton 1831-41, Marrick 1841-51-61, Muker 1851-61-71, Reeth 1861-71, culminating in the 33% reduction in population between 1881-91, consequent upon the collapse of the lead trade. Falls in population in Down Stonebeck, Aysgarth, Carperby cum Thoresby and Burton cum Walden were attributed to the migration of miners following the failure and closure of the mines. In the period between the two major depressions in the lead trade, when the main cause of unemployment was the exhaustion of local mines, miners often moved to another mine or field. In 1843 a half yearly report on the leadmines of Greenhow Hill stated:

"a greater number of men being employed, who have flocked to the mine from others in the neighbourhood, most of them being poor."(3)

There was little immigration into the leadmining region of Yorkshire in the nineteenth century. The Kinnoird Commission heard that upper Swaledale had a declining population:

"People have left the district?" - "Yes."

"And none have come to it?" - "None have come to it."(4)

West Witton, in Leyburn union, was the only township where an increase in population was attributed to the opening of a leadmine. In times of general depression in the lead trade and increasingly in the second half of the century, as the number of mines diminished, many miners left the industry altogether, either migrating overseas or to the manufacturing and coal/iron ore mining districts. Nearly thirty houses in Grassington were unoccupied as a result of the depression in the

(3) Backhouse MSS p.1 21/12/1843

(4) PP.1864 (3389) KLV Q.17389 Q.17390

leadminers in the 1830's -

"Many (of the miners) went off to America ..."(5)

A Swaledale diarist, James Alderson Clarkson, reported that fifty individuals from the dale had passed through Hawes on their way to Liverpool in one week in spring 1845. (6) During the depression forty years later, in Swaledale -

"A large number of the leadminers, who have been thrown out of employment by the closing of the leadmines, have emigrated ..." and "For many years past the leadmining industry of Swaledale has been on the wane, and numbers of families have emigrated from that district, going in search of other employment."(7)

According to A.Raistrick, writing about the 1830's:

"The main movement from the Yorkshire fields ... was into the textile or mixed textile-coal districts of Lancashire and the West Riding."(8)

while M.Hartley and J.Ingilby found that many of the leadminers of Arkengarthdale in the last decades of the century -

"left ... to go to Durham, where the connection still remains rather than with the industrial West Riding or Lancashire."(9)

- (5) PP.1834 (44) XXViii p.764
- (6) E.Cooper, MEN OF SWALEDALE (1960) pp.32.33
- (7) Ripon and Richmond Chronicle 6/9/1884 18/12/1886
- (8) A.Raistrick and B.Jennings, A HISTORY OF LEAD MINING IN THE PENNINES (1965) p.324-5
- (9) M.Hartley and J.Ingilby THE YORKSHIRE DALES (1963) p.274

A brief account of a leadminer's working life illustrates the variety of ways in which a miner coped with the problems of unproductive mines and the final collapse of the lead industry in the 1880's. The miner belonged to an old Swaledale family, dating back to the early 17C. Starting as a coal miner in Tan Hill, in Muker chapelry, he was for many years employed at the Boldi Hill Leadmines. In 1864 he went to Sardinia with a Newcastle leadmining company. Two years later he was back working at the Mukerside mines. In 1869 he mined for a short time in Wensleydale, then worked as a labourer on the construction of the dale's railway. When completed he returned to mine at Muker but scarcity of work led him to move to Westmoreland in the employ of the London Lead Company. His final move was in 1881 - to work in the cotton mills in Lancashire.

Source: A Raistrick, MINES AND MINERS OF SWALEDALE (1955) pp.12-13

Migration, combined with diminished entry into handloom weaving, enabled the contraction of the industry in the second half of the century to occur without causing undue distress in the handloom weaving sector. Prior to c.1850, however, though the migration of handloom weavers in the years of depression was on a sufficiently large scale to be noted by several enumerators in their returns to the central census authorities, it could not relieve the problems of the declining handloom weaving sector entirely. The substitution of power for handweaving was blamed for the decrease in the populations of several cotton manufacturing townships in north west Yorkshire. Falls in the population of Dent, Arncliffe, Marton, Cowling, between 1841-51, and of Dent, Marton, Salterforth, Cowling, Cononley, Bradleys Both, between 1841-61, were attributed specifically to the decline of handloom weaving. In several other townships in Settle and Skipton unions 'want of employment', which forced families to move away, probably reflected the declining state of the handloom weaving sector; their destination was invariably the 'manufacturing districts'. Handloom weavers and their families were stated to have left linen centres in Worthallerton and Stokesley unions between 1841 and 1851 "in search of employment" in "more prosperous localities". The number of empty houses in Knaresborough was indicative of the extent of migration from the town in the 1830's and 1840's; in 1833 about 400 houses were estimated to be empty and in 1839 150, (10) while it was reported in 1844 that "empty houses are numerous". (11) The Assistant Commissioner, enquiring into the condition of linen weavers in Knaresborough was told:

(10) RP.1334 (44)xxviii p.728  
RP.1340 (45)xi xxlii p.485

(11) Harrogate Advertiser 8/6/1844

all

"Many weavers ... are daily quitting ... to seek employment as weavers elsewhere."(12)

"This falling off [in population] is attributed to the weavers leaving Knarborough, and going to Barnsley and other places."(13)

As the above quotes suggest the weavers retained their usual occupation and moved principally to the "more congenial clime of Black Barnsley".(14) However, with the general decline of the linen industry and the expansion of industrial, urban centres in the north, weavers increasingly left the industry altogether.(15) Several families from Hutton Rudby went to Middlesbrough, while in spring 1848, "the tide of emigration" was reported to be "flowing throughout Widderdale, Within the past month, numbers of artisans and farm labourers have left the scene of their nativity in this romantic vale in hope of bettering their condition in the 'far west'."(16)

Nor was migration confined to the industrial sector of North Yorkshire. After 1851 the population of many agricultural townships, which had been steadily increasing in the previous half century, fell; the loss of population was generally attributed to the agricultural depression, emigration and movement of families to manufacturing districts in search of employment.(17) In the 1860's and 1870's migration of

(12) PP.1840 (43 - I) KK111 p.488

(13) Ibid p.485

(14) Eumiston's Northern Luminary March 1850

W.C. Limmer, LASHBILLS OF LEEDS. FLAX SPINNERS (1960) pp.214-5  
In the mid 1840's "Barnsley engaged an additional two hundred weavers who had left Knarborough in search of more regular work."

(15) See Appendix II Also PP.1852-3 (1632) LXXV1 Div.1X  
Registration Districts of Stokesley and Northallerton.

(16) Harrogate Advertiser 6/5/1848

(17) PP.1852-3 (1632) LXXV1 Div.1X

In Registration District of Knarborough - Marton, Little Ouseburn, Thorp Underwoods.

Ripon - several townships

Scarborough - " "

Malton - Westow sub-district; Hovingham

Easingwold - Easingwold sub-district:

Newburgh, Huby.

Thirsk - Sutton, Knayton, Popcliffe.

Leyburn - Healey W. Sutton, Bollerby

Colmestrey & Kirby Mousdale. Pickering - Eastingham, Pickering

agricultural labourers was in response both to reduced demand for labour locally and higher wages that could be earned elsewhere.(18) One destination was the Cleveland iron mines:

"The better wages, as compared with the agricultural wages have brought a very respectable class of agricultural labourers ..."(19)

With the decline in the population of rural North Yorkshire, in the course of the nineteenth century, the population became a more aged one. Again, the change in age structure was more marked in the former leadmining and textile unions; for example, in Keeth union the proportion of the population under 15 years = 40.6% in 1851 - had fallen to 32.4% by 1891 - while the proportion of the population aged 60 and above had risen from 7.6% to 10.9%. This is in contrast with the agricultural union of Malton, where, in the same period the proportions changed little - the under 15 years formed 36.3% and 35.5% of the population in 1851 and 1891 respectively and the over 60's - 9.2% and 9.9%.(20)

- (18) PP.1862 (3056) I Div.1X  
PP.1872 (676 - I) LXVI Div.1X  
 1871. Registration District of Great Ouseburn - Norton le Clay, Upper Dunsforth, Branton Green, Boroughbridge.  
 Ripon - Baldersby, Dishforth.  
 Scarborough - Folkton, Gristhorpe, Lebberston, Willerby, Sherburn.  
 Helmsley - Ampleforth St.Peter.  
 Northallerton - Subdistrict Appleton upon Wiske, Northallerton.  
 Malton - Knapton, Wintringham, Thorpe Bassett, Scagglethorpe, Thirkeloby, Leppington, Westow, Nennethorpe.  
 Easingwold - Huby, Stillington, Craike, Raskelf, Flawith, Tholthorpe, Oulston.  
 Thirsk - Topcliffe, Pickhill W.Roxby, Maunby, Newby Wiske, subdistrict of Sutton.  
 Dedale - subdistrict Masham.  
 Leyburn - " Middleham.  
 Aysgarth - Bainbridge.  
 Richmond - Scorton, Uckerby, Bolton upon Swale, Gayles, Dalton, Ravensworth.

(19) PP.1857 (241) XI Q.4700

(20) See Appendix II Table 1

The following is a more detailed examination of the process of deindustrialisation as reflected in the changing labour force of the linen weaving industry. In the course of the nineteenth century there was both reduced entry into and increased movement out of the industry by younger men. The number of weavers with young families diminished and the number of older men, with no dependents, save perhaps a wife, increased.(21) The earnings from handloom weaving, often insufficient for the maintenance of a large, young family, were more likely to be adequate for the needs of a single man or aged couple, especially if supplemented by a grown up family or poor relief. It is possible to conclude that, apart from the depressions of the 1830's and 1840's, migration enabled a balance to be maintained between the financial returns from handloom weaving and the financial requirements of the workforce. In the course of the nineteenth century, as the number of handloom weavers declined so their average age increased.(22) The trend was most marked in Nidderdale; the number of weavers fell from 240 in 1841 to a mere 27 in 1871 - the corresponding increase in their average age was from 41.9 to 68.0 years. In Bishopside, however, where approximately half of the Nidderdale weavers resided, the average age was slightly lower - 38.1 in 1841 and 61.5 in 1871. There was a similar rise in the average ages and reduction in the numbers of weavers in the handloom weaving townships of Appleton Wiske and Hutton Rudby, though the lower average age in 1841, compared with Nidderdale, suggests that the decline of hand weaving in Nidderdale had started earlier and progressed further in 1841. The increase in the average age of weavers in Drompton and Knaresborough was less marked than in the smaller,

(21) See Appendix O

(22) See Appendix M Table 2

exclusively handloom weaving townships. This was partly due to the presence of powerloom weavers, whose average age tended to be lower than that of handweavers.(23) Owing to the failure of enumerators to consistently distinguish between power and hand loom weavers an accurate count of the average age of hand weavers can not be made. I counted all male weavers in Knarborough in five-yearly age groups excluding those specifically described as power loom weavers; the most numerous age group was 15-30 years in 1841, 35-50 years in 1851, 40-55 years in 1861 and 55-70 years in 1871. The results obtained in this way indicate a more marked ageing weaving population between 1841 and 1871 than do the average of all male weavers.(24)

The poor law material would suggest that, once the resources of self-help and charity had become exhausted, - except in the years of depression in the 1830's and 1840's "when widespread unemployment existed side by side with low wages", (25) - the poor migrated before the need to apply for poor relief became imperative. Even though the various communities in the region retained an optimism in the future fortunes of their industry and so opposed migration - (the textile manufacturing districts for example, argued that distress was caused by the low price of the finished product and not over production and that the industrious weavers would migrate, leaving behind "the idle and impotent", (26) and without weavers "we must give up the trade" - and - "joy go with it".(27)) - many weavers still opted to move to other employment outside North Yorkshire. The extent of distress relieved

(23) In 1861 in Osnotherley the average age of handloom weavers was 58.4 years while that of powerloom weavers was 29.8.

(24) See Appendix H Table 3

(25) G.D.H.Cole and R.Postgate, THE COMMON PEOPLE, 1746-1946(1964) p.304

(26) PP.1834 (44) XXXIV p.627 Q.46

(27) PP.1834 (44) XXXIII p.627 Q.40

by the guardians gradually diminished, until by the second half of the century, able-bodied pauperism was minimal, not only in the agricultural unions but also in areas of declining industrial activity. The gradual disappearance of able-bodied pauperism, as market forces were allowed to operate without interference from poor law relief in the form of allowances in aid of wages, would seem therefore to represent a vindication of the principles of '1834'. That the workhouse deterred applications for able-bodied relief and encouraged men to seek work rather than accept inmaintenance as the only form of relief available can not be denied. The abhorrence of the workhouse, shared by all classes of the poor, is clearly illustrated in the case of an elderly, outdoor pauper in Reeth union, who

"lays in a most miserable and neglected condition",  
 having "had hitherto that horror and dread of the Union House  
 that he refused to go in ...". "He having all along decided  
 he would rather die than go." (28)

Yet as the preceding chapters have shown, the New Poor Law, as envisaged by the advocates of 'less eligibility', can not take the entire credit for the reduction in and eventual absence of an underemployed, subsidised labour force in North Yorkshire. Orders compelling the administration of indoor relief were not implemented for several years after 1834 and, indeed, in a number of unions, outdoor relief to the able-bodied was never disallowed. Nevertheless, by the late nineteenth century, able-bodied pauperism was as rare in these unions as in those operating under the Prohibitory Order. Even in these declining industrial areas, during the early years of the New Poor Law, outdoor, able-bodied relief was not a permanent feature of poor law administration but coincided with periods of depression in the economy generally, when work elsewhere was similarly restricted, thereby both putting a brake on migration out

(28) Reeth union. BGM 8/1/1864.

HM12 Leyburn 17/1/1843. Of 28 unemployed men in Bolton parish, some of whom applied to the overseer for relief, not a single one applied to the Board of Guardians for relief, following the Poor Law Commissioners' refusal to allow the parish to raise outrelief from the rates and their insistence on the workhouse for these men.

of the declining areas and causing a proportion of non-resident families to return to their place of settlement and so swell the number of unemployed. Moreover, though it was originally intended that responsibility for the abolition of outdoor relief would rest solely with the central poor law authority, in practice, much discretion as to the form of relief remained with the local authorities. Even if the policy of 'less eligibility' had been fully implemented, with none of the loopholes that did exist, the supplementation of labourers' wages by voluntary agreement amongst ratepayers would still have been possible - yet there is no indication that it was resorted to except on isolated occasions in the worst years of economic depression. It was circumstances peculiar to the region rather than implementation of the principles of '1834', that realised the aims of '1834'. Unlike the expanding urban districts and the agricultural counties of the south and east, dependent on seasonal employment of labour, the poor law authorities were not faced with a seemingly intractable problem of pauperism amongst the able-bodied. Reduced entry into the declining industries, combined with movement out, resulted in a diminishing reservoir of able-bodied pauperism in North Yorkshire. As it became clear that the process of deindustrialisation was irreversible the objectives of the guardians corresponded with those of the central poor law authority; there was little temptation to spend ratepayers' money in order to retain a surplus population, particularly since alternative employment was readily accessible within relatively short migrating distance from traditional industrial areas. The workhouses can therefore be regarded as irrelevant to and, as non-able paupers formed an increasing proportion of the total, inappropriate for the problems of poverty in North Yorkshire. The success of the New Poor Law lay in the gradual introduction and incomplete implementation of the

law, reflecting an ability and willingness of the central administrators to compromise and adapt to local conditions, while retaining a limited but persistent degree of coercion and persuasion, without which undoubtedly, outdoor relief and the retention of men in declining occupations would have continued longer.

## Appendix A - A map showing the unions of North Yorkshire



- 1- Reeth
- 2- Richmond
- 3- Northallerton
- 4- Stokesley
- 5- Whitby
- 6- Aysgarth
- 7- Leyburn
- 8- Bedale
- 9- Thirsk
- 10- Helmsley
- 11- Kirkby Moorside
- 12- Pickering
- 13- Scarborough
- 14- Easingwold
- 15- Malton
- 16- Sedbergh
- 17- Settle
- 18- Skipton
- 19- Pateley Bridge

- 20- Ripon
- 21- Knaresborough
- 22- Great Ouseburn

- a- Middlesbrough
- b- Guisborough
- c- Keighley
- d- Wharfedale
- e- Wetherby
- f- Tadcaster

— County/Riding Boundaries

— North Yorkshire

APPENDIX B - Table 1. Population of North Yorkshire unions, 1831-1901

Union	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Aysgarth	-	-	-	5,649	5,472	4,482	4,746	4,506
Bedale	8,348	8,596	8,972	8,650 <sup>a</sup> (9,115)	8,430	8,270	8,228 <sup>b</sup> (8,932)	8,436
Easingwold	8,010	11,323	11,450 (10,211)	10,148	10,011	9,533	8,857 <sup>c</sup> (10,494)	9,909
Helmsley	11,207	12,010 <sup>d</sup>	6,832	6,093	6,056	5,919	5,626	5,176
Kirkby H. side	-	5,932 <sup>e</sup>	5,624	5,739	5,661	5,514	5,093	4,791
Leyburn	10,497	9,957	10,057	10,104 <sup>f</sup> (9,640)	8,705	8,323	7,635	6,748
Malton	20,951	21,949 <sup>g</sup>	23,129	23,482	22,882	23,027	21,662	20,454
Northallerton	16,459 <sup>h</sup>	12,575	12,460	12,174	11,626	11,884	11,272	11,590
Pickering	9,473	10,251	9,978	10,547	12,737	10,678	10,474	10,059
Reeth	7,020	6,758	6,822	6,195	5,370	4,717	3,217	2,520
Richmond	17,927	13,475	13,843	13,456	13,555	13,458	12,635	11,726
Scarborough	17,920	21,305	24,611	30,424	36,556	43,265	46,049	51,110
Stokesley	9,618	9,046	8,665	10,381	10,750 <sup>k</sup> (11,344)	12,009	11,119	11,247
Thirsk	12,013	12,639	12,760	12,299	12,168	12,840	12,183 <sup>l</sup> (13,016)	12,710
Whitby	19,882	20,100	21,595	23,634	25,791	26,409	24,407	21,743
Gt. Ouseburn	-	-	12,167	11,532	11,698	11,955	12,064 <sup>m</sup> (9,418)	9,574
Knaresborough	-	-	15,473	17,176	19,078	22,634	27,158	40,504
Pateley Br.	7,686	7,999	7,580 <sup>n</sup> (9,334)	9,534	8,686	8,944	7,761	8,040
Ripon	-	-	15,993	15,742	15,967	16,447	16,058 <sup>o</sup> (15,635)	15,529
Seabrogh	4,711	4,836	4,574	4,396	4,990	4,079	4,040	3,935
Settle	14,322	14,096	13,762	12,529	15,134	13,802	14,071	14,319
Skipton	25,283	28,736	28,764	28,398 <sup>p</sup>	32,400	37,094	38,948	45,261

cont'd

Appendix B - Table 1 - cont'd

The decennial figures must be treated with caution - account should be taken of changes in the size of the union. When union boundaries were altered the central poor law authority made the necessary changes to the population statistics in their Annual Reports by subtracting or adding the population of the detached or annexed township from or to the union total. Thus, by comparing the population figures in the Annual Returns it is possible to locate the year and the extent of the changes in population as a result of alteration in union size; these changes are marked from a to p, in the Table. There were several insignificant differences in union population in the intercensal years in the second half of the nineteenth century, which have been omitted from the Table. Where population changes occurred in the intercensal years, but there is no evidence of any corresponding alteration in union size, it is probable that the union boundaries were altered as a result of the Divided Parishes Acts, 1876, 1879 and 1882, Local Government Acts of 1888 and 1894 and the inclusion of extra-parochial places following the Act of 1868, 31 and 32, Vict. c. 122.

- a - In 1869 Bedale gained several townships - Burton upon Ure, Burrell with Cowling, Clifton upon Ure, Rookwith, Thirn, Carthorpe.
- b - 1895 Union Boundary Alterations (UBA)
- c - 1895 UBA
- d - In 1848 Helmsley lost Kirkby Moorside, Great and Little Edstone, Fadmoor, Farndale (low quarter), Gillimoor, Bransdale West, Muscoates, Newton, Northolme, Skiplam, Welburn, Wombleton, Hutton, East and West Farndale, Nunawington.
- e - In 1849 Kirkby Moorside gained Appleton le Moors, East and West Ness, Normanby, Salton, Thornton Riscborough.
- f - In 1869 Leyburn lost Burrell, Burton upon Ure, Thim, Rookwith, Clifton upon Ure.

Appendix B - Table 1 - cont'd

- g - In 1849 Malton lost Salton, East and West Ness.
- h - In 1859 Northallerton lost Langthorne, Bedale, Aiskew, Crakohall, Firby, Ranc Grange, Ainderby Myers, Mackforth, Kilerby, Thornton Watlass, Kirkby Fleetham, Scruton.
- i - In 1849 Pickering lost Appleton le Moors, Thornton Riseborough, Normanby.
- j - In 1840 Richmond lost Arkengarthdale, Ellerton Abbey, Grinton, Marrick, Reeth.
- k - In 1875 Stokesley gained Picton, Yarm, Castle Leavington, Kirk Leavington, High and Low Worsall, and lost Hemlington and Barton.
- l - 1895 UBA
- m - 1895 UBA
- n - In 1854 Pateley Bridge gained Dirstwith, Clint, Bishop Thornton.
- o - 1895 UBA
- p - In 1861 Skipton gained Silsden.

Source: Dictionary of Unions, Parishes, Townships,  
Hamlets in England and Wales (2nd ed)  
London, Knight & Co. 1881.

APPENDIX B - Table 2. Population of some of the major towns in North England. 1831-1901. (in 1,000s)

	<u>1831</u>	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	<u>1881</u>	<u>1891</u>	<u>1901</u>
Bradford	44	67	104	106	146	183	216	230
Halifax	22	28	34	37	66	74	90	105
Huddersfield	19	25	31	35	70	82	95	95
Leeds	123	152	172	207	259	309	368	429
Blackburn	27	37	47	63	76	101	120	128
Dolton	42	51	61	70	83	105	115	168
Liverpool	202	286	376	444	493	553	518	685
Manchester	182	235	303	339	351	341	505	544
Oldham	32	43	53	72	83	111	131	137
Preston	34	51	70	83	85	97	108	113
Wigan	21	26	32	38	39	48	55	61
Middlesbrough	-	6	8	19	40	55	76	91
Newcastle	54	70	88	109	128	145	186	215
Sunderland	39	43	65	78	98	117	131	146

Source: B.R.Mitchell and P.Deane,  
Abstract of British Historical  
Statistics (1962) pp.24-6

APPENDIX B - Table 3. Population of the town and union of Scarborough, 1831 - 1901.

	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	
Scarborough T (with Falsgrave)	8,760	10,048	12,915	18,377	24,259	30,504	33,776	38,161	
Scarborough union	17,920	21,305	24,611	30,424	36,556	43,265	46,449	51,110	

APPENDIX B -- Table 4 Population of the townships and parishes in  
Knaresborough union, 1801 - 1901

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Bilton with Harrogate	1,195	1,583	1,934	2,812	3,372	3,434	4,563	6,775	9,279	13,143	19,283
Pannal	789	914	1,314	1,261	1,413	1,376	1,587	1,893	2,547	3,335	7,300
Knaresborough	3,388	4,542	5,283	5,296	4,678	4,879	4,848	4,818	5,065	5,331	7,730
Killinghall	462	485	519	545	559	569	746	654	678	671	809
Scriven	814	833	1,373	1,598	1,435	1,413	1,426	1,360	1,431	1,411	1,656
Breaton	146	175	226	248	201	241	235	184	162	130	155
Burton Leonard	352	433	518	553	455	457	507	460	431	374	363
Farnham	139	142	141	169	170	137	165	146	155	118	129
Felliscliffe	424	397	382	351	363	382	347	321	326	278	311
Ferensby	86	96	110	133	112	122	86	106	117	100	98
Flaxby	66	59	78	96	102	117	76	81	81	53	53
Follifoot	273	322	293	327	353	367	419	404	496	487	593
Goldsborough	177	177	195	167	239	246	260	210	211	225	177
Hampsthwaite	439	418	490	445	455	461	513	448	457	390	471
Haverah Park	71	76	87	96	101	103	100	84	64	71	272
Nidd	114	120	86	110	114	114					
Plompton	191	190	208	221	229	207	219	173	166	171	178
Ripley	270	273	251	270	283	283	330	260	291	253	236
Scotton	220	297	297	312	298	297	321	306	291	230	287
Sth. Stainley	217	216	232	243	226	247	259	242	215	188	190
Walkingham	-	17	24	25	24	21	28	27	23	32	20

APPENDIX B - Table 5. Population of the townships and parishes in  
Skipton union. 1801 - 1901

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Skipton	2,305	2,868	3,411	4,181	4,842	5,044	5,454	6,078	9,091	10,376	11,986
Barnoldswick	769	892	1,334	1,682	1,849	1,938	2,810	3,187	4,028	4,131	6,382
Thornton in Crayen	1,202	1,546	1,829	2,246	2,354	2,202	2,112	2,053	2,322	2,770	4,411
Silsden	1,323	1,608	1,904	2,137	2,346	2,508	2,582	2,714	3,329	3,866	4,304
Glusburn	533	654	787	987	1,052	1,320	1,475	1,570	1,629	1,942	2,397
Addingham	1,157	1,471	1,570	2,179	1,753	1,558	1,859	1,838	2,163	2,225	2,144
Cowling	1,140	1,449	1,870	2,249	2,458	2,305	1,815	1,928	1,901	1,828	1,925
Carleton	845	1,002	1,218	1,265	1,242	1,333	1,506	1,678	1,691	1,644	1,605
Salterforth	398	503	686	725	675	573	423	396	391	487	615
Bradleys Both	385	412	506	614	557	571	442	487	514	542	609
Appletreewick	244	309	312	425	467	305	354	358	281	229	250
Bank Newton	68	102	139	125	129	120	106	87	100	90	92
Barden	191	206	219	214	212	208	371	382	391	173	153
Beamsley	276	310	312	279	235	239*	264	209	215	195	235
Bolton Abbey	120	105	127	112	127	109	112	122	142	169	142
Bracewell	173	185	176	160	153	157	140	115	105	130	115
Brogden	189	158	233	229	219	179	122	105	110	120	98
Buckden	280	326	382	309	387	304	335	333	297	239	236
Burnsall	289	272	329	242	284	251	253	206	188	155	142
Calton	98	89	76	79	79	75	56	52	59	75	54
Coates	45	108	97	88	101	138	122	131	99	70	98
Cold Coniston	342	257	345	336	242	289	238	266	337	392	279
Coniston	182	151	137	162	172	178	160	186	179	116	141
Cononley	-	-	-	-	1,159	1,272	905	1,012	829	881	786
Cracoe	191	162	179	150	153	159	139	135	127	91	117
Draughton	173	246	279	223	211	188	178	178	178	204	205
E. Halton	152	170	141	144	120	91	94	78	277	85	102
Elslack	-	-	-	-	188	132	112	80	82	92	80
Embsay	623	692	861	891	962	948	1,028	1,104	1,167	940	1,022
Eshton	84	63	69	82	74	84	81	60	64	76	93
Farnhill	-	-	-	-	459	581	464	490	561	655	626

cont'd

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Flasby	120	150	134	143	140	124	113	110	120	163	98
Gargrave	728	897	972	1,062	1,176	1,214	1,103	1,291	1,287	1,296	1,267
Grassington	763	892	983	1,067	1,056	1,138	1,015	830	617	480	494
Hartlington	105	120	141	118	96	76	107	95	82	61	71
Hazelwood	181	208	209	221	220	202	185	181	173	173	148
Hebden	341	402	377	491	480	460	435	362	313	209	199
Netton	172	212	180	176	191	187	155	164	142	142	119
Kettlewell	634	361	663	673	685	607	646	498	378	313	283
Kildwick	208	216	175	190	189	206	170	161	160	145	146
Linton	186	294	313	343	303	352	284	179	127	117	158
Nesfield	101	179	210	206	210	229	188	211	177	145	127
Marion	322	348	382	443	381	341	256	237	235	270	234
Rilston	177	192	145	115	121	123	107	118	130	136	123
Stirton	134	149	168	170	132	182	127	180	157	163	194
Threshfield	201	184	237	212	221	271	177	186	167	119	124
Broughton	-	-	-	-	219	203	162	188	177	165	165

APPENDIX B - Table 6. Population of the townships in Sedbergh union,  
1801 - 1901

	1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901
Sedbergh T.	1,639	1,805	2,022	2,214	2,268	2,235	2,346	1,983	2,268	2,374	2,430
Garsdale T.	571	648	679	657	681	709	618	911	602	535	429
Dent T.	1,773	1,663	1,782	1,840	1,887	1,630	1,427	2,096	1,209	1,131	1,076

APPENDIX C. A Survey of the printed census occupation tables.

There are problems in making a quantitative analysis of regional changes in occupational structure in the nineteenth century because of the absence of a consistent set of statistical abstracts. As the North Yorkshire region includes parts of the North and West Ridings the relevant tables are those based on unions but these exist only for the census years, 1851, 1861, 1871, and give the occupations of men and women, aged twenty and above. The occupation abstracts are based on the County/Riding and Boroughs in 1841 and, on the Riding and Urban Sanitary Districts in 1881 and Registration Counties in 1891 and 1901. The 1871 occupation abstracts are not as detailed as the two previous census abstracts. In 1851 and 1861 the occupations listed are:-

- Class 1. Persons engaged in the general or local government of the country.
2. Persons engaged in the defence of the country.
3. " " " " learned professions.
4. " " " literature, fine arts, science.
5. " " " domestic offices.
6. " " " entertaining, clothing and performing personal services for man.
7. Persons who buy, sell, keep, lend money, houses, goods of various kinds.
8. Persons engaged in conveyance of men, animals, goods, messages.
9. Persons possessing or working the land and engaged in growing grain, fruit, grasses, animals and other products.
10. Persons engaged about animals.
11. " " in art and mechanic productions.
12. " working and dealing in animal substances.
13. " " " " " vegetable "
14. " " " " " mineral "

Appendix C - cont'd

- Class 15. Labourers and others. Branch of labour undefined.
16. Persons of rank or property not returned under any office or occupation.
17. Persons supported by community and of no specified occupation.

In 1871 the occupations listed were only six.

1. Professional class.
2. Domestic.
3. Commercial.
4. Agricultural.
5. Industrial.
6. Indefinite and non productive.

APPENDIX D. - Table 1. Textile mills in the North Yorkshire (the West Riding) unions in 1836.

Union	Township	Cotton	Worsted	Wool	Flax	No. of 'Hands' employed	Population 1831	%
Settle	Arncliffe Parish	1				31	213	14.5
	Bentham				2	270	2,179	12.5
	Ingleton	3				132	1,228	9.0
	Langcliffe	1				197	550	35.6
	Settle	3				380	1,627	23.0
Skipton	Addingham Par.	2	3			389	2,179	18.0
	Skireholme	1				95	242	39.2
	Hartlington		1			52	115	42.2
	Barnoldswick	4				142	1,632	9.0
	Gargrave	3	1			247	1,062	23.7
	Airton	1				38	179	22.1
	Kettlewell	1				22	673	3.2
	Grassington		1			139	page torn	13.0
	Linton	1				24	" "	7.0
	Skipton	2	1			458	4,131	10.9
	Embsay c Mastby	4	1			212	891	24.5
	Sedbergh	Sedbergh	3		1		189	2,214
Dent			1			8	1,840	
Pateley Bridge	Henwith c Darley				2	23	742	3.0
	Thornton c Padside				1	75	304	24.7
	Fountains Garth				1	18	413	4.3
	Hartwith				3	167	943	17.7
	Beverley				2	44	1,310	3.3
	Bishopside				3	125	1,843	6.8
	Bishop Thornton				3	123	614	3.7
Knares- borough	Scotton				1	69	312	22.4
	Birstwith	1				91	747	12.1
	Knaresborough				1	209	page torn	3.9
	Plompton				1	64	221	28.9
Great Cuseburn	Staveley				1	18	330	5.4
Ripon	Galfay				1	11	-	
	Hickley				1	75	-	
	Bishop Monkton				2	38	576	6.3
	Bishopton				1	85	113	72.9
	Winksley				1	59	259	22.6

Source: PP.1035 (138) ALV

The percentages are based on the estimates of the numbers of mill workers and the 1831 populations, both of which are cited in the table (with the exception of three townships where the population was torn out). However it should be borne in mind that all the workers did not necessarily reside in the township in which the mill was situated.

APPENDIX D - Table 2. The number of textile mills and the size and age structure of the factory labour force in North Yorkshire parishes in 1839.

Textile Manufactured	Union	Parish(1)	No. of Mills	Mill Workers				Total	
				Under 21 yrs		Over 21 yrs			
				Male	Female	Male	Female		
Cotton	SKIPTON	Linton	1	5	26	2	9	42	
		Burnsall	2	36	49	15	15	115	
		Kettlewell	1	6	5	3	1	15	
		Kirkby Malham	3	53	60	49	23	185	
		Gargrave	1	8	7	16	4	35	
		Skipton	(2)4	185	240	83	83	591	
		St. Mary leGell							
		Barnoldswick	4	49	26	22	7	40	
		SETTLE	Bentham	1	21	41	12	9	83
			Thornton	1	11	26	9	4	50
	Arnccliffe		1	9	10	-	-	19	
	Giggleswick		6	159	161	90	83	493	
	SEDBERGH	Sedbergh	2	52	73	23	36	184	
	KNARESBOROUGE (3)	Hampsthwaite	1	10	36	9	34	89	
	Worsted	SKIPTON	Burnsall	1	13	13	3	8	37
			Linton	2	43	116	2	72	233
			Gargrave	1	11	22	15	3	51
Skipton			1	5	17	1	3	26	
Woollen	SEDBERGH	Sedbergh	3	14	4	11	1	30	
	ATSGARTH(3)	Aysgarth	2	14	4	10	5	33	
Flax	STOKESLEY	Stokesley	1	45	49	22	23	139	
	WHITBY	Whitby	1	1	45	3	12	61	
	NORTHALLENTON	Darby	1	2	12	2	5	21	
		Osnotherley	1	7	10	-	6	23	
	SETTLE	Bentham	2	69	152	33	54	308	

cont'd

Appendix D - Table 2 - Cont'd

Textile Manufac tured	Union	Parish(1)	No.of Mills	Mill Workers				Total
				Under 21 yrs		Over 21 yrs		
				Male	Female	Male	Female	
Flax cont'd	RIPON (3)	Kirkby	7	73	130	29	66	298
		Malzeard						
		Bishop Honkton						
		Ripon	8	148	159	45	83	435
	GREAT OUSEBURN	Staveley	1	4	1	3	8	16
	KNARESBOROUGH	Knareborough	2	39	67	12	24	142
		Spofforth	1	11	20	4	15	50
		Hampsthwaite	1	7	9	3	4	23
	BEDALE	Nasham	1	32	41	20	29	122

Source: PP.1839 (41) AL11

- (1) Parish boundaries were not always coterminous with union boundaries.
- (2) 3 mills not working.
- (3) Unions of Ripon, Knareborough, Great Cuseburn and Hysgarth were not formed until 1852, 1854, 1854 and 1869 respectively.

APPENDIX E - Table 1. The number of male weavers, aged 20 years and above, in the unions of Stokesley, Pateley Bridge, Northallerton and in the town of Knaresborough in 1841, '51, '61 and '71.

	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Stokesley	171	101	19	13
Pateley Bridge	240	133	68	27
Northallerton	366	314	253	236
Knaresborough	359	242	184	121

APPENDIX E - Table 2. The number of male linen weavers, aged 20 years and above, in the townships comprising Pateley Bridge, Stokesley, Northallerton union and the town of Knaresborough, in 1841, '51, '61 and '71. (1)

UNION.	Township	1841	1851	1861	1871
<b>PATELEY BRIDGE</b>					
	Dishopside	155	61	35	15
	Kenwith with Darley	34	22	13	5
	Dacre	-(2)	25	13	3
	Thruscross	18	4	3	1
	Birstwith	15	7	2	1
	Hartwith	18	6	7	7
	Thorntwaite	10	3	0	0
	Bishop Thornton	6	5	0	0
	Stonebeck Down (1841-3)	Fountains	Earth (1841-1)		
	Hampsthwaite (3)	28	19	4	0
	Felliscliffe (3)	5	0	-	-
<b>STOKESLEY</b>					
	Hutton Rudby	84(4)	64	18	13
	Stokesley	30	15	-	-
	Gt. Doughton and Doughton v B. Side	31	13	-	-
	Ayton	15	2	-	-
	Whorlton	8	3	-	-
	Rudby	3	3	1	0
	Crathorne (1841-4)	Gt. Faceby (1851-1)			
<b>NORTHALLERTON</b>					
	Brompton	192	183	162	170
	Appleton Wiske	78	70	52	39
	Osmotherley	53	43	29	17
	Borrowby	10	8	4	5
	Northallerton	25	4	-	-
	Queldable	-	2	3	2
	Nest Rounton	3	1	1	1
	Hornby	4	1	0	1
	Salbury	-	1	2	1
	Ellerbeck	1	1	0	0
<b>KNARESBOROUGH TOWN</b>					
	20 years and over	359	242	184	121
	Below 20 years	35	32	22	12
	Total	394	274	206	133
	Number of adult males with no recorded occupation in 1841	46			

- (1) The number of adult male linen weavers as a % of the adult male population has not been given as the printed census returns do not give the number of males, aged 20 and over, in individual townships.
- (2) 1841 census schedules for Dacre are missing.
- (3) Joined Knaresborough union in 1854.
- (4) Includes 14 weavers, who could have been linen weavers of either linen or sailcloth.

APPENDIX E - Table 3. Adult male weavers as a percentage of the total population of the principal linen weaving townships in 1841.(1)

<u>Towaship</u>	<u>No. of male weavers aged 20+</u>	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>%</u>
Hutton Rudby	87	1,037	8.4
Bishopside	135	1,937	6.9
Drompton	192	1,535	12.3
Appleton Wiske	78	559	13.9
Osmotherley	53	1,029	5.1
Scriven with Tentergate and Knaresborough	359	6,113	5.8

Obviously the actual size of the weaving population was much higher; the 1841 schedules generally recorded the occupations of heads of households and adult men only, though even these were occasionally omitted.

(1) The 1841 census abstracts do not give an age/sex breakdown of the populations of individual townships.

APPENDIX F - Table 1. The number of weavers - both sexes, all ages - (distinguishing where possible, cotton and worsted weavers) in the townships comprising Settle union, in 1841, '51, '61 and '71.

Townships	1841	1851	1861	1871
Lawkland	N	N	N	N
Litton				
Otterburn				
Halton Gill	N	N	N	-
Hawkswick				
Thornton in Lonsdale				
Swinden	N	N	-	-
Hanlith				
Scosthrop				
Stainforth	2 CW	N	N	-
Airton	3 CW	N	N	N
Malham	9 CW	N	N	-
West Malton	10 CW	N	N	-
Tosside	12 CW	N	N	N
Hellifield	22 CW	N	N	-
Horton in Ribblesdale	18 (1W.17CW)	N	N	-
Arncliffe	22 cotton labourers	1 PLW(C)	N	N
Kirkby Malham	4 CW	1 CW	N	N
Ingleton	4 W	1 CW	N	N
Rathmell	4 CW	16 HLW(C)	N	N
Burton in Lonsdale	8 W	1 CW	N	-
Wigglesworth	23 CW	8(2HLWC) (5CW.1W)	N	N
Clapham	14 (13CW.1W)	6 (5CW.1W)	4 CW	N
Kappa	9	1	5 (3Wd.1CW)	-
Austwick	82 W	57 (20 HLWC) (32 CW)	79 (33 CW. 43 Wd. 3 Wd & CW)	6 CW
Long Preston	84 CW	41 (34 CW. 5 Delaine)	12 (11 CW.1Wd)	N
Langcliffe	63 (50CW.5PLW)	59 (45 PLW. 14 CW)	all cotton mill	all cotton mill
Giggleswick	73 (40CW.33W)	53 (45HLWC) (10 HLWC)	16 (9 CW.2Wd. 5 PLW)	2'former HLW' 2'former PLW'
Settle	123 (105CW.4PLW 16 W)	171 (135 PLW. 22 HLW.14CW)	51 (12PLW.35CW. 4 Wd)	9 (6CW.2PLW. 1 HLC)

(1) Abbreviations: N - none W - weaver C - cotton Wd - worsted  
HLWC - cotton handloom weaver PLWC - cotton power  
loom weaver

APPENDIX F - Table 2. The number of weavers and wool combers - both sexes, all ages - in the townships comprising Skipton union in 1851.

SKIPTON UNION	Hand loom weavers	Power loom weavers	Weavers	Wool Combers
	2,065	1,452	223	565
		3,738		
Thornton in Craven	602	176	N	1
Cowling	669	46	N	3
Cononley	174	186	2	23
Skipton	1	112	154	63
Carleton	61	241	11	3
Barnoldswick	91	263	N	N
Gusburn	115	130	N	37
Salterforth	197	14	N	N
Addingham	75	69	N	156
Bradleys Bath	2	13	15	141
Farnhill	3	N	N	121
Lesfield	N	N	N	39
Gargrave	N	N	15	13
Droghda	29	N	N	N
Elslack	3	N	22	N
Kildwick village	N	2	N	18
Coates	9	6	N	N
Kettlewell	N	13	3	N
Bracewell	15	N	N	N
Embsay	2	N	N	13
Harton	12	N	N	N
Dunsall	N	1	N	5
Appletreewick	N	N	N	3
East Malton	3	N	N	2
Barden	N	N	N	3
Hirton w Thoraby	1	1	N	N
Beamsley	1	N	N	1
Broughton	1	N	N	6
Bolton Abbey	N	N	1	1
Hartlington	N	1	N	N
Haze Wood	N	N	N	1
Kilston	1	N	N	N
Hetton	N	N	N	1

No weavers or woolcombers recorded in Flasby with Winterburn, Carlton, Ashton, Buckden, Coniston Cold, Bank Newton, Coniston with Milnsey, Broughton, Graceo, Boardley.

APPENDIX C - Table 1. Total tonnage of dressed lead ore produced at Yorkshire mines, 1873 - 1900.

1873	4,986
74	4,901
75	4,049
76	4,199
77	5,011
78	5,918
79	5,132
1880	6,975
81	4,171
82	4,513
83	3,264
84	2,621
85	3,129
86	3,767
87	3,170
88	2,629
89	2,056
1890	1,685
91	1,499
92	1,282
93	1,293
94	1,155
95	675
96	479
97	716
98	1,158
99	1,059
1900	855
(1910)	( 197)

Source: Victoria History of the County of York. Vol. II pp. 272-6

APPENDIX C - Table 2. The number of leadminers, aged 20 years and above, in the unions of Reeth, Skipton, Pateley Bridge, Leyburn, and Aysgarth in 1841, '51, '61 and '71.(1)

UNION		1841	1851	1861	1871
REETH	No:of leadminers 20+ yrs	703	826	703	649
	No:of males, 20+ yrs	-	-	-	1435
SKIPTON	No:of leadminers 20+ yrs	248	280	318	217
	No:of males, 20+ yrs	-	-	-	8923
PATELEY BRIDGE	No:of leadminers, 20+ yrs	-(2)	188	201	135
	No:of males, 20+ yrs	-	-	-	2249
LEYBURN	No:of leadminers, 20+ yrs	50	157	159	73
	No:of males, 20+ yrs	-	-	-	2290
AYSARTH	No:of leadminers, 20+ yrs	14	37	38	27
	No:of males, 20+ yrs	-	-	-	1568

- (1) The totals of leadminers are approximate because, as 1851 (1861 in Leyburn union) was the only census year that the census enumerators' schedules for all the townships in each union were examined, any leadminers in 1841, '61 and '71, in townships having no, or only a few, leadminers in 1851 (1861 in Leyburn union), will not be included.
- (2) The enumerators' schedules for the principal mining township in Pateley Bridge union are missing.

APPENDIX G - Table 3. The number of leadminers, aged 20 years and above, in the principal leadmining townships of Reeth, Skipton, Pateley Bridge, Leyburn and Aysgarth unions in 1841, '51, '61 and '71.

(the bracketed figures in 1841 relate to the number of men, aged 20+, who were not given an occupation by the enumerator. The bracketed figures in 1851, '61 and '71 indicate the number of leadminers below the age of 20.)

<u>Poor Law Union Townships</u>			<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
REETH						
Melbecks T.	A	Total Population No: leadminers 20+ yrs	1,633 (38)	1,661 (122)	1,622 (125)	1,437 (95)
Arkonarthdale P.		Total Population No: leadminers 20+ yrs	1,243 (45)	1,283 (69)	1,147 (76)	1,018 (57) (1)
Luker Ch.	B	Total Population No: leadminers 20+ yrs	1,241 (34)	1,321 (46)	1,005 (28)	913 (18) (2)
Reeth T.	C	Total Population No: leadminers 20+ yrs	1,343 (16) (3)	1,344 (41)	1,299 (32)	1,077 (13)
Grinton T.	D	Total Population No: leadminers 20+ yrs	594 (18)	598 (12)	611 (12)	469 (22)
Harrick P.	E	Total Population No: leadminers 20+ yrs	648 (23)	555 (21)	462 (21)	412 (7)

- (1) Includes 18 miners  
 (2) Includes 8 miners  
 (3) Includes 25 miners

- A Township of Melbecks includes hamlets of Blades, Barf End, Fectham, Gunnerside, Kearton, Lodge Green, Low Row, Puting, Wintersing, Wintenna, Garth, Smarber.  
 B Chapelry of Luker includes hamlets of Angram, Birkdale, Calvert House, Frith, Ivelet, Meld & Thoms, Luker, Oxnop, Rampsholme, Rash, Ravenseat, Saliron, Spring End, Stonedale, Thwaite, Pt of Tan Hill.  
 C Reeth Township includes hamlets of Fremington and Healeaugh.  
 D Grinton Township includes hamlets of Harkerside, Cogden, Whiteaside, Crackpot.  
 E Parish of Harrick includes hamlet of Hurst.

Appendix G - Table 3 - cont'd

<u>Poor Law Union</u> <u>Townships</u>		<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
SKIPTON					
Grassington T.	Total Population	1,056	1,138	1,015	830
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	115 -	87 (33)	100 (30)	59 (9)
Hebden T.	Total Population	480	460	435	362
	No: leadminers, 20+ yrs	27 -	37 (11)	58 (29)	45 (9)
Appletreewick T.	Total Population	467	305	354	358
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	30 (3)	22 (4)	32 (13)	50 (9)
Kettlewell T.	Total Population	685	607	646	498
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	40 (6)	52 (8)	47 (17)	32 (13)
Starbotton	Total Population	(1)			
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	9 (5)	9 (0)	10 (2)	6(2) (0)
Cononley T.	Total Population	1,159	1,272	905	1,012
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	22 (4)	49 (7)	40 (10)	12(3) (0)
<p>(1) Total population is for Kettlewell with Starbotton township.  (2) 3 were <u>miners</u>  (3) All 12 were recorded as <u>miners</u></p>					
PATELEY BRIDGE					
Dacre cum Beverley T.	Total Population	1,329	1,265	1,297	1,137
	No: leadminers, 20+ yrs	-(1) -	166 (52)	159 (23)	112 (16)
Bishopside T.	Total Population	1,937	1,862	2,052	2,167
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	17 -	8 (3)	16 (5)	12 (1)

(1) No census enumerators' schedules survive.

## Appendix G - Table 3 - cont'd

<u>Door Law Union</u> <u>Townships</u>		<u>1941</u>	<u>1951</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1971</u>
DITWORA					
Admiral P.	Total population	200	373	440	300
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	12 (10)	45 (8)	47 (47)	29 (0)
Castle Bolton J.	Total population	230	240	259	191
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	15(1) (17)	26 (7)	27 (3)	10 (1)
Preston P.	Total population	315	407	454	408
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	9 (3)	33 (14)	33 (15)	18(2) (3)
West Witton P.	Total population	494	550	579	391
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	0 -	26 (9)	42 (7)	19 (5)

(1) Includes 9 miners(2) Comprises 4 leadminers and 14 miners

A18GARDU					
Cargherby P.	Total population	354	342	345	263
	No: leadminers 20+ yrs	9	19	18	7

APPENDIX H. Dates of formation of North Yorkshire unions and introduction of the Prohibitory Order and Regulation Order.

<u>UNION</u>	Date of <sup>(1)</sup> <u>Formation</u>	Date of <sup>(2)</sup> <u>Introduction of Prohibitory Order</u>	Date of <sup>(3)</sup> <u>Introduction of Regulation Order</u>
AYSCARTH	2. 2.69	1869	-
BEDALE	28. 3.39	1841	-
BASINGWOLD	20. 2.37	1841	-
GREAT OUSEBURN	8. 6.54	1855	-
HELMSLEY	18. 2.37	1852	-
KIRKBY NOORSIDE	6. 3.48	1852	-
KNARESBOROUGH	25. 3.54	1858	-
LEYBURN	22. 2.37	1841	-
MALTON	12. 1.37	1841	-
NORTHALLERTON	23. 2.37	1862	1852
PATELEY BRIDGE	12. 2.37	-	1852
PICKERING	10. 1.37	1841	-
REETH	27. 4.40	1841	-
RICHMOND	4. 2.37	1842	-
RIPON	25.10.52	1855	-
SCARBOROUGH	10. 1.37	1841	-
SEDBERGH	11. 1.40	1855	-
SETTLE	20. 1.37	-	1852
SKIPTON	14. 1.37	-	1852
STOKESLEY	27. 2.37	1852	-
THIRSK	21. 2.37	1841	-
WILBY	9. 1.36	1841	-

(1) Dictionary of Unions, Parishes, Townships, Hamlets in England and Wales. (2nd ed. 1861) London, Knight and Co.

(2) 8th Annual Report of the P.D.C. 1842 p.  
 MH12 Aysgarth 25/6/1869                      MH12 Northallerton 21/5/1862  
 MH12 Sedbergh 5/8/1855                      MH12 Great Ouseburn 27/2/1855  
 MH12 Knaresborough 13/5/1858              MH12 Stokesley 6/1/1852  
 MH12 Richmond 9/9/1842                    Helmsley union BGA 18/7/1852  
 MH12 Ripon 1/8/1855                          Kirkby noorside BGA 16/1/1889

(3) 5th Annual Report of the P.D.C. 1852, p.10

Appendix I - Table 1. Popular verse attacking the poor relief policy of Inker Select Vestry, 1862.

Come all honest men who have cosses to pay  
 Let your care be attention to what I shall say,  
 Your wise Vestry Law, restrictions and rules  
 Are left a parcel of asses and fools.

Nay worse than all that the intent upon evil.  
 Their works prove they are in league with the Devil.  
 These human infernals, their masters surpass  
 In planning out evil while drinking the glass.

Yet who could have thought it could enter their brains  
 As only such men as had hold of the reins,  
 This business most surely has hatched in hell  
 To take from the paupers, their prayer books to sell.

Old Nick was diverted their tricks to behold  
 While gathering the trapsticks, or heaps, to be sold  
 And Renny, that sly fox along with his cub  
 Seized hold of their fury, the poor people to rob.

These hard-hearted monsters pursuing their plan  
 Seized clocks, sir, and cupboards and frying pan,  
 Fire-irons, hand-irons, kitchen table and all,  
 With various articles they made up the whole.

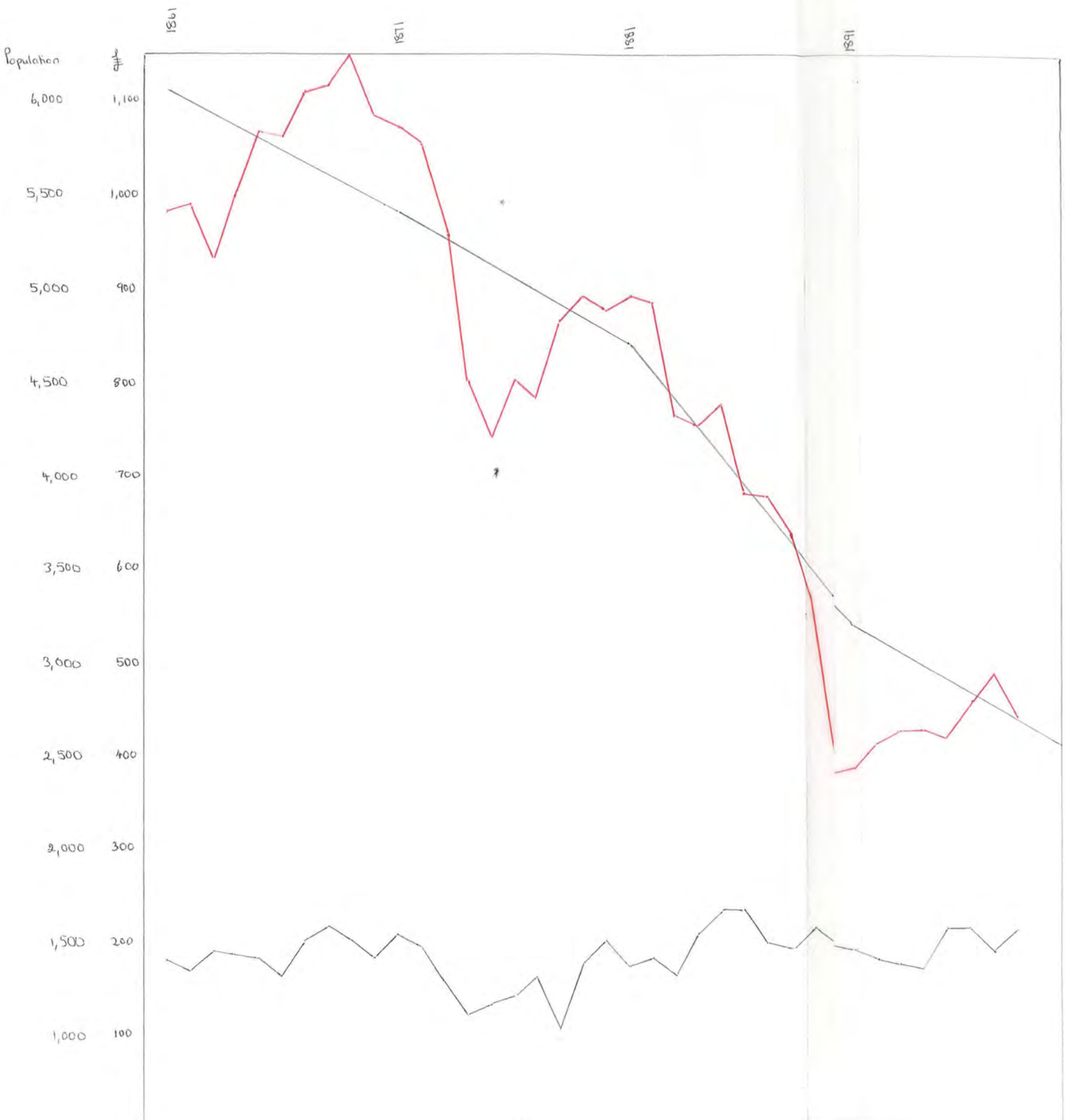
'Tis strange, sir, indeed, that all these wiseacres  
 Themselves should demean, and so be partakers,  
 Churchwardens and members of Vestry combine  
 To accomplish an object that was not divine.

Source: G. Cooper, A History of Swaledale (1975)  
 pp. 74-5

APPENDIX I - Table 2. Annual poor relief expenditure, 1860-99, in Keeth union.

	Total cost of Relief to the Poor	Outdoor Relief	Innaintenance
	£	£	£
1860	1,618	1,052	148
1861	1,613	931	180
1862	1,581	990	170
1863	1,587	929	187
1864	-	-	-
1865	1,662	1,064	178
1866	1,692	1,060	162
1867	1,720	1,110	199
1868	1,820	1,116	215
1869	1,775	1,155	200
1870	1,651	1,079	181
1871	1,715	1,070	203
1872	1,695	1,055	193
1873	1,496	967	156
1874	1,246	799	119
1875	1,227	742	131
1876	1,366	803	142
1877	1,366	777	157
1878	1,472	867	102
1879	1,732	888	173
1880	1,615	876	200
1881	1,473	887	171
1882	1,443	884	177
1883	1,443	762	159
1884	1,210	751	206
1885	1,494	773	230
1886	1,541	676	228
1887	1,233	676	193
1888	1,359	634	190
1889	1,137	559	209
1890	1,056	361	196
1891	952	384	190
1892	1,057	414	179
1893	1,023	426	173
1894	1,045	425	172
1895	1,092	415	214
1896	1,134	453	211
1897	-	-	-
1898	1,197	436	186
1899	1,161	441	208

Appendix I. Table 3. A graph showing the amount expended in outrelief and in-maintenance, 1861-98, in Reeth union.



APPENDIX I - Table 4. Fortnightly sum expended in outdoor relief (to nearest £) in select years in Leeth union.

<u>1860</u>	<u>1870</u>	<u>1880</u>	<u>1890</u>	<u>1900</u>
40	40	31	15	15
40	44	30	13	14
41	42	45	13	12
41	42	30	13	12
43	39	36	13	13
39	41	30	13	13
40	42	40	14	13
40	42	30	12	13
40	40	37	13	16
39	41	44	14	14
38	41	39	12	16
38	41	32	12	14
36	41	41	13	13
36	42	41	14	14
35	40	28	14	14
35	40	36	12	14
36	40	30	14	13
34	41	35	13	14
34	39	34	15	15
36	42	34	13	13
35	41	28	13	14
35	39	28	12	13
35	40	36	12	14
35	42	31	22	13
37	42	27	13	13
38	40	43	12	11

APPENDIX J - Table 1. Monthly expenditure on occasional and casual relief in Knaresborough township from April 1831 to August 1834 (to the nearest £).

	<u>1831</u>	<u>1832</u>	<u>1833</u>	<u>1834</u>
January		69	64	17
February		59	60	14
March		45	53	15
April	44	41	51	16
May	33	32	42	13
June	33	33	21	13
July	39	29	17	15
August	40	24	12	11
September	27	29	9	
October	33	40	12	
November	47	35	11	
December	53	44	13	

Source: M12 Knaresborough 923/27

APPENDIX J - Table 2. Number of applications for relief made to the Select Vestry of Knaresborough, 1842-50.

	<u>1842</u>	<u>1843</u>	<u>1844</u>	<u>1845</u>	<u>1846</u>	<u>1847</u>	<u>1848</u>	<u>1849</u>	<u>1850</u>
Jan - March	155	325	293	89	60	97	174	134	57
April - June	281	253	135	81	36	34	24	123	
July - Sept	191	203	49	44	15	26	72	131	
Oct - Dec	307	201	78	63	124	68	266	134	

Source: Minute Book of Knaresborough Select Vestry. 1842-54.

APPENDIX K - Table 1. The number of resident, adult males in the North Riding and Norfolk, relieved on account of want of work, insufficient earnings and other causes, not sickness, accident or infirmity.

Three months ending Lady Day:	Want of Work		Insufficient Earnings		Other causes, not sickness, Acc <sup>dt</sup> or Infirm <sup>ty</sup>	
	North Riding	Norfolk	North Riding	Norfolk	North Riding	Norfolk
	1839	69	188	114	269	14
1840	47	47	87	21	38	105
1841	66	114	105	140	21	88
1842	93	45	107	73	19	98
1843	96	66	98	80	10	37
1844	84	120	123	176	26	30
1845	66	95	95	143	28	68

Source: Annual Reports of the Poor Law Commission.

Population in 1841 - North Riding: 180,527  
 - Norfolk: 343,277

Norfolk was one of the south-eastern counties noted for the prevalence of aid in relief of wages - a practice which continued unabated after the introduction of the New Poor Law. This return, particularly columns one and two, do not substantiate the much commented upon difference in poor relief administration between the North (the North Riding) and the south-east (Norfolk), though, as A Digby has shown, in her study of the New Poor Law in Norfolk, there was considerable able-bodied pauperism, on account of insufficient earnings, in the guise of relief on account of sickness and accident.

APPENDIX K - Table 2. A return showing the number of able-bodied adult males relieved in North Riding unions during the half years ending Lady Day, 1844, and 29th September, 1844.

UNION	Males destitute through sickness and accident.		Males destitute through other causes (not old age or infirmity)	
	Lady Day 1844	29th Sept. 1844	Lady Day 1844	29th Sept 1844
Relieved in <u>WORKHOUSE</u>				
Basingwold	2	2	15	27
Helmsley	0	0	10	3
Malton	2	3	20	16
Northallerton	7	6	22	16
Pickering	3	2	4	7
Stokesley	5	4	7	7
Whitby	20	3	11	7
Relieved <u>OUT OF DOORS</u>				
Basingwold	72	51	10	7
Helmsley	28	27	20	17
Malton	67	151	1,098	724
Northallerton	155	154	142	117
Pickering	15	14	53	41
Stokesley	12	22	90	85
Whitby	10	11	9	14

Source: PP.1847 (100) ALK

APPENDIX A - Table 3. A return showing the number of applications for relief from able-bodied men in North Riding unions from Lady Day to December 31st, 1849.

Bedale	23
Basingwold	34
Belmsley	17
Leyburn	3
Malton	88
Northallerton	14
Pickering	3
Richmond	42
Stokesley	13
Thirsk	59
Whitby	3

Source: MS2 Lawley (41) 24/1/1850

## APPENDIX K - Table 4.

A return showing:

1. the number of persons receiving relief on account of want of work.
2. the amount of such relief.
3. the number in receipt of relief in aid of wages.
4. the amount of such relief.

during the tenth week of the Christmas quarter, 1932, in the unions of the North Riding.

UNION	1	2	3	4
Masingwold	-	-	86	£3.18.6
Malton	-	-	18	£1.15.6
Northallerton	7	9/-	-	-
Pickering	-	..	15	9/0 <sup>d</sup>
Thirsk	-	-	5	5/3 <sup>d</sup>

none in Bedale, Leyburn, Kirkby Moorside, Keeth, Richmond, Scarborough, Stokesley, Whitby, Helmsley.

Source: PP.1852-5 (535) LXIII

APPENDIX K - Table 5. The number of able-bodied, adult males relieved in four North Riding unions on January 1st and July 1st in select years.

(1)	1866/7				1870				1875				1880			
	Jan1st		Jullst		Jan1st		Jullst		Jan1st		Jullst		Jan1st		Jullst	
	WH	OD	WH	OD	WH	OD	WH	OD	WH	OD	WH	OD	WH	OD	WH	OD
Malton	18	(702)	17	(692)	24	(745)	23	(734)	13	(526)	7	(515)	17	(556)	16	(554)
Masingwold	6	(461)	3	(445)	4	(405)	4	(410)	8	(401)	2	(330)	9	(321)	5	(283)
Thirsk	1	(382)	7	(388)	4	(361)	2	(338)	3	(297)	3	(298)	6	(348)	5	(326)
Bedale	9	(350)	9	(361)	10	(366)	7	(359)	5	(261)	4	(257)	2	(237)	0	(252)
(2)	1885				1890				1895				1900			
	Jan		July		Jan		July		Jan		July		Jan		July	
	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b	a	b
Malton	7	9	4	12	5	7	8	8	9	6	1	7	9	0	9	0
Masingwold	7	0	5	0	2	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
Thirsk	9	0	8	1	6	0	9	0	10	0	11	0	7	1	8	3
Bedale	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0

WH - Workhouse      OD - Out of Doors

(1) Total number of able-bodied males relieved in workhouse and out of doors

(2) Numbers of able-bodied males relieved out of doors only

(3) a - number of able-bodied males relieved on account of sickness, accident, infirmity

b - number of able-bodied males relieved on account of other causes

APPENDIX L. Half yearly accounts of three North Yorkshire poor law unions, showing the expenditure on non-resident poor relief.

UNION		<u>In Maintenance</u>	<u>Out Relief</u>	<u>Non-Resident Poor Relief</u>	<u>Common Charges</u>
PICKERING	1859 Oct	95	622	67	309
	1860 April	100	652	62	376
	Oct	108	642	63	286
	1861 April	98	608	78	357
	Oct	96	605	85	286
	1862 April	120	622	80	397
	Oct	126	595	82	261
	1863 April	142	606	70	571
	Oct	140	587	57	443
	1864 April	140	555	65	569
	Oct	131	545	59	507
	1865 April	150	522	67	569
	Oct	145	540	70	485
	WHITBY	1859 Oct	253	924	103
1860 April		265	842	87	1,150
Oct		279	970	86	1,047
1861 April		321	892	96	1,138
Oct		310	965	114	1,175
1862 April		319	899	127	1,291
Oct		324	962	129	1,705
1863 April		354	828	104	1,795
Oct		312	873	92	1,795
1864 April		278	860	85	1,825
Oct		233	960	85	1,504
1865 April		246	824	80	1,837
Oct		199	739	84	1,813
1866 April		220	740	78	1,811

cont'd

## APPENDIX L - cont'd

UNION		<u>In Maintenance</u>	<u>Out Relief</u>	<u>Non Settled Poor</u>	<u>Non Resident Relief</u>	<u>Common Charges</u>
KNARESBOROUGH	1855 April	338	1,284	97	163	661
	Sept	291	1,222	61	201	595
	1856 April	339	1,291	68	179	820
	Sept	296	1,350	64	203	610
	1857 April	286	1,318	62	177	691
	Sept	297	1,299	65	182	607
	1858 April	254	1,248	72	178	896
	Sept	254	1,217	68	177	785
	1859 April	264	1,116	58	146	745
	Sept	291	1,230	67	137	650
	1860 April	267	1,298	66	112	789
	Sept	291	1,296	64	117	725
	1861 April	292	1,275	62	111	842
	Sept	294	1,343	36	130	731
	1862 April	280	1,291	73	116	826
	Sept	291	1,373	66	125	890
	1863 April	298	1,411	62	123	1,171
	Sept	321	1,439	68	125	1,042
	1864 April	297	1,309	54	127	1,047
	Sept	297	1,358	56	126	959
	1865 April	316	1,447	50	116	1,060
	Sept	291	1,421	53	103	1,004
	1866 April	374	1,435	55	102	1,188
	Sept	384	1,421	48	94	2,411
	1867 April	397	1,500	60	68	2,609
	Sept	404	1,493	-	100	-
	1868 April	519	1,661	-	80	2,908
	Sept	509	1,704	-	88	2,953
	1869 April	524	1,758	-	79	3,009
	Sept	481	1,773	-	70	2,902
	1870 April	474	1,732	-	67	2,979
	Sept	494	1,718	-	58	2,906
1871 April	557	1,683	-	58	3,071	

APPENDIX B - Table 1. The age structure of the population in each of the unions of Malton, Reeth, Sedbergh and Pateley Bridge in 1851 and 1891.

UNION	Age	% of Population	
		1851	1891
MALTON	Under 15 years	36.3	33.5
	15 - 30	25.6	25.4
	30 - 45	17.5	17.2
	45 - 60	11.3	12.0
	60 +	9.2	9.9
REETH	Under 15 years	40.6	32.4
	15 - 30	24.3	24.3
	30 - 45	17.7	18.1
	45 - 60	9.5	14.5
	60 +	7.6	10.9
SEDBERGH	Under 15 years	39.2	34.0
	15 - 30	22.3	25.3
	30 - 45	17.5	17.1
	45 - 60	11.2	11.7
	60 +	9.8	11.9
PATELEY BRIDGE	Under 15 years	37.2	34.6
	15 - 30	24.8	24.5
	30 - 45	16.2	17.7
	45 - 60	12.7	13.3
	60 +	9.1	9.9

APPENDIX H - Table 2. The average age of linen weavers, aged 15 years and above, in several townships in North Yorkshire, 1841, '51, '61 and '71. (1)

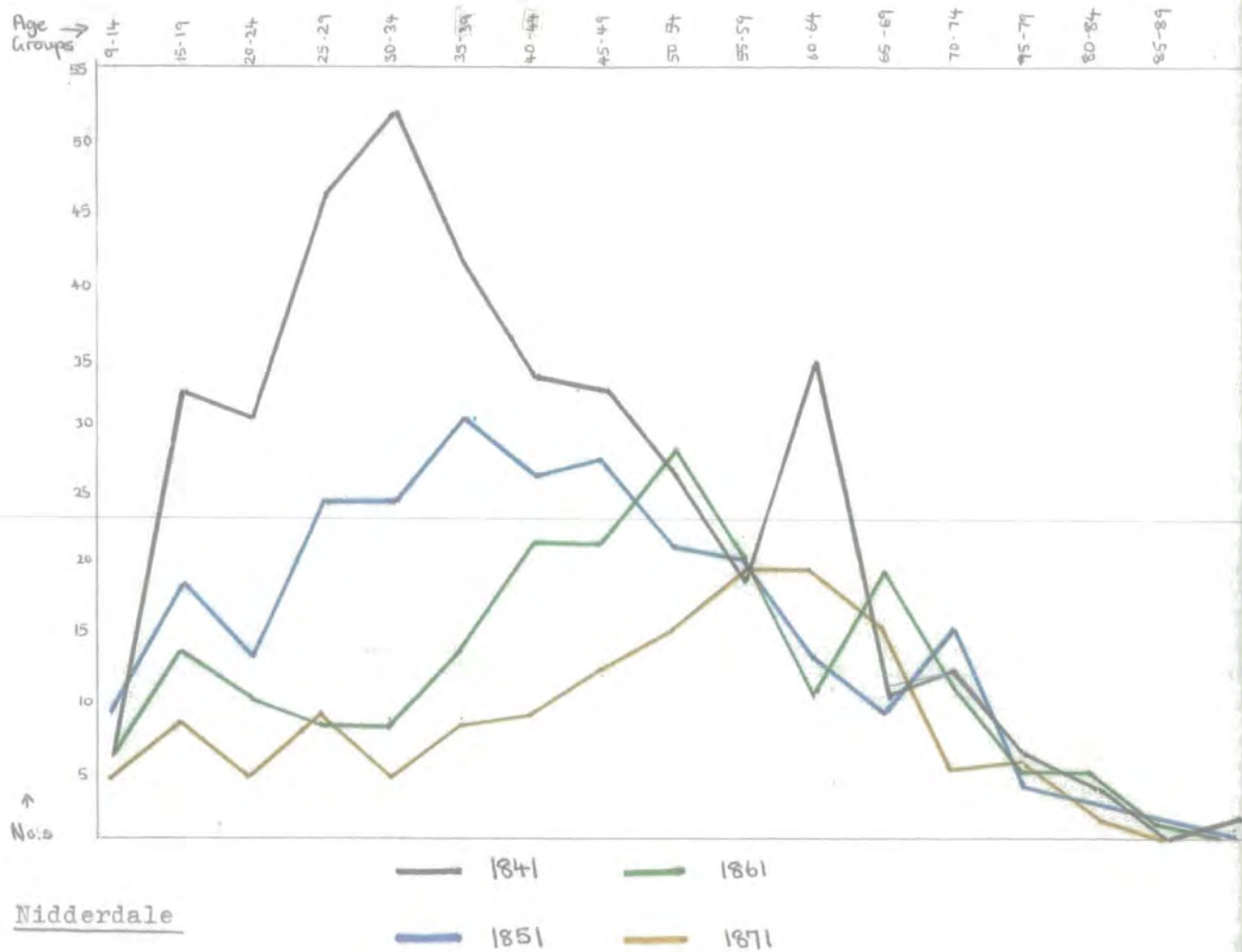
	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>
Appleton Wiske	35.6	38.2	39.4	49.4
Osmotherley	33.1	40.3	45.0 <sup>(2)</sup>	56.4
Brompton	35.0	37.4	39.6	41.8
Hutton Rudby	36.6	43.5	49.1	53.7
Widderdale	41.9	49.8	55.3	68.0
Bishopside	38.1	46.3	54.8	61.5
Knarborough	44.7	46.1	43.8	50.0

(1) In Knarborough the figures represent the average age of male weavers aged 20 years and above.

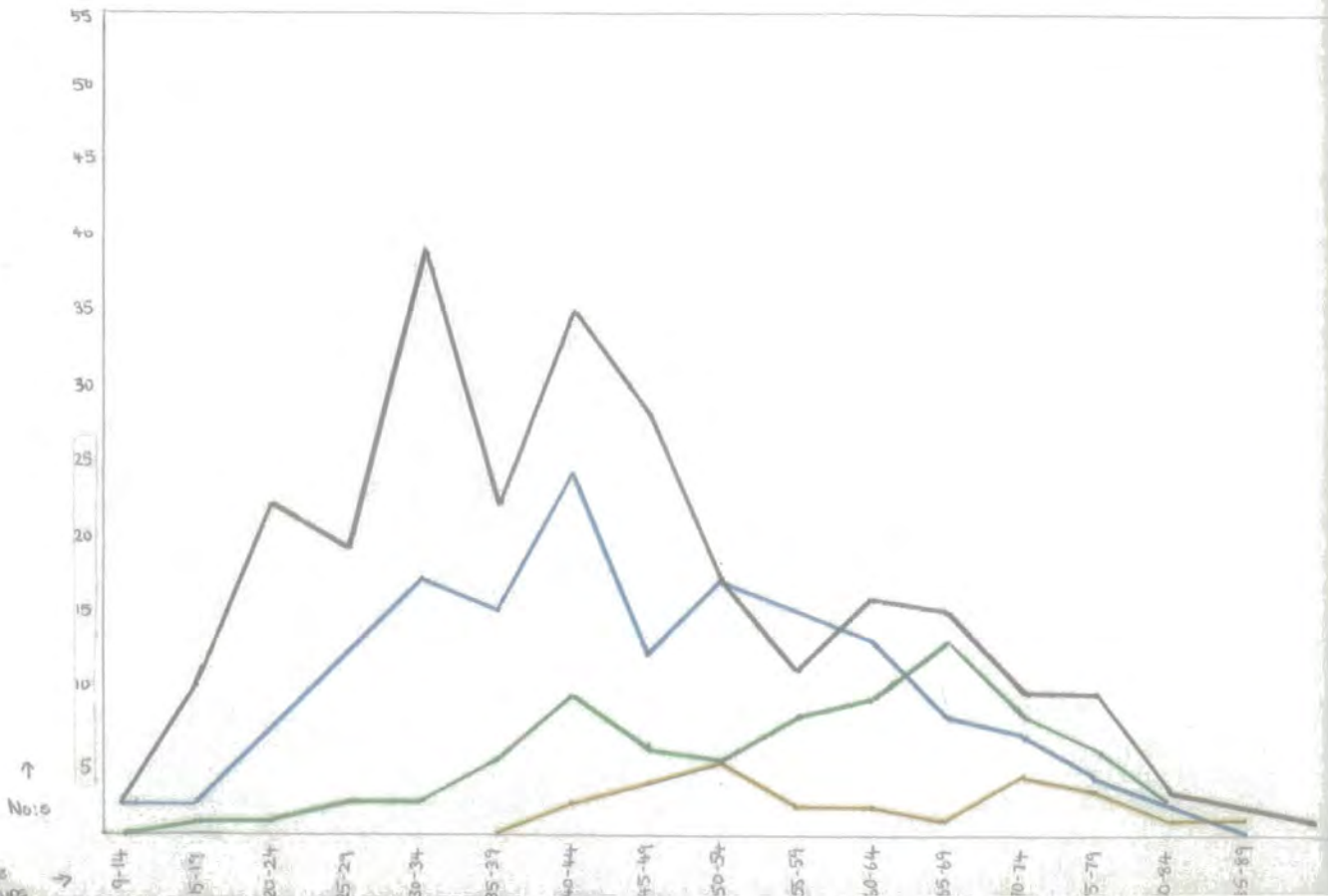
(2) Average age of handloom weavers in 1861 - 56.4  
Average age of power loom weavers in 1861 - 29.8

Appendix M, Table 3, Three graphs showing the age structure of male linen weavers (excluding powerloom weavers) in Northallerton union, Nidderdale and the town of Knaresborough in each of the census years, 1841-71.

Knaresborough

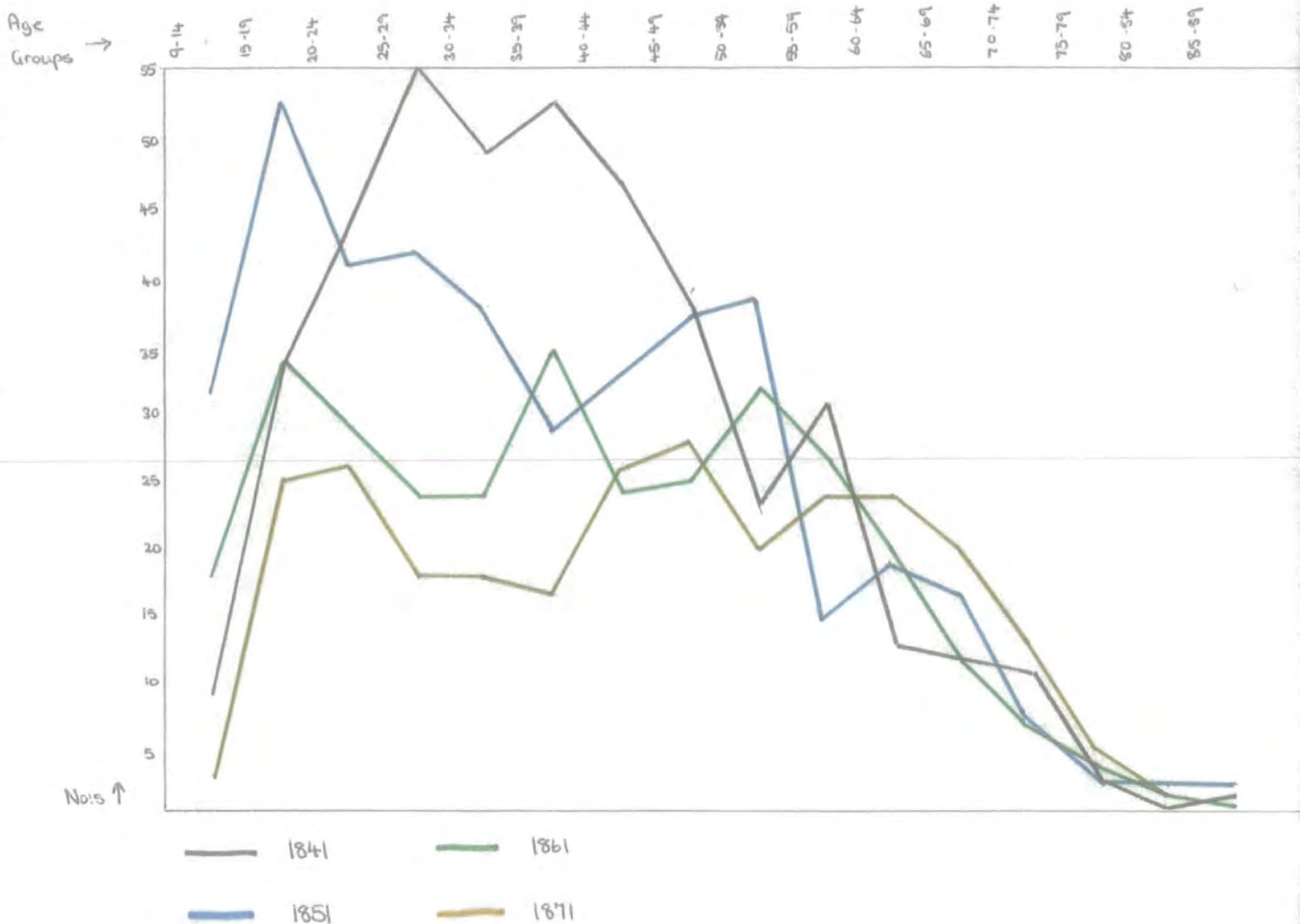


Nidderdale



Appendix M, Table 3 cont'd

Northallerton union.



APPENDIX N. A survey of migration by the linen weavers of Knaresborough between 1841 and 1851.

Despite a diminishing weaving population in Knaresborough between 1841 and 1871 the numbers of weavers in 1851, '61 and '71, who had not been weavers in the previous census year, was surprisingly high. There were 53 weavers, aged 30 and over, and 41 below this age who appeared in the 1851 but not the 1841 census schedules and had apparently started weaving at some date between 1841 and 1851. Obviously many of the weavers below the age of 30 would not have appeared as such in the previous census because of their youthful age. In the case of the older men it is reasonable to assume that their absence from the previous census denotes either their absence from Knaresborough or participation in another occupation. Although the number of weavers fell from 274 to 206 between 1851 and 1861 a high proportion were 'newcomers' - 58 weavers, over the age of 29, were not weavers in Knaresborough in 1851. In 1871 the number of 'newcomers' had fallen by more than half, though it still represented just under a fifth of the total male weaving labour force. In the majority of cases it is impossible to deduce from the census schedules how many were absent from Knaresborough or were engaged in different employment at the previous census. The large number of elderly weavers in this group would suggest that handloom weaving was sometimes taken up in old age when the usual occupation became impossible. The birth places of children, especially in large young families, can indicate to a certain extent, the movements of the father, though there is no knowing who were step-children, born to the mother by a different marriage. A study of family birth places points to frequent migration by linen weavers - eg.

1851. John Corker - age 44 - born Knaresborough  
 children - aged 11 b. Harrogate  
               "      9 b. Leeds  
               "      7, 2, 3 months b. Knaresborough

Appendix E - cont'd

1871. John Dixon - age 54 - born Knaresborough  
 children - aged 17 b. West Heslerton  
           " 9, 6 b. Barrow  
           " 5, 2 b. Hunslet  
           " 1 month b. Knaresborough

Several men were weaving in 1841 and 1861, or in 1851 and 1871 and were absent in the intervening years, but it is not known how many moved away temporarily. The study of family birth places show men, born in Knaresborough, moving away, largely to other linen centres (whether as adults or children is not known) and returning to Knaresborough. There is also evidence of men, not born in Knaresborough, coming to the town, especially from Barnsley. In 1851, of the 12 weavers, for whom it is possible to trace some of their movements, 7 came from or near Barnsley and 5 from Leeds. In 1861 6 of the 9 weavers were from the Barnsley area. This pattern of migration amongst a weaving population is probably peculiar to Knaresborough, where, as we have seen, decay in the 1830's and 1840's persuaded many to move but, despite the contracting size of the workforce, the stabilisation of the industry and the introduction of powered weaving in the second half of the century encouraged migration into the town. There are very few instances of weavers coming to Knaresborough from declining handloom weaving areas in North Yorkshire.

The number of weavers in 1851, '61, '71 who did not appear in the census returns of 1841, '51, '61 respectively:

	Total No: <u>Male Weavers</u>	<u>Weavers aged 30+</u>	<u>Weavers 29- yrs.</u>
1851	274	53	41
1861	206	58	34
1871	133	22	19

APPENDIX O. Family structure of the linen weaving population in  
Knaresborough, 1841 - 71.

I examined the family structure of linen weavers in Knaresborough in order to ascertain whether the destitution of weavers in the 1830's and 1840's was a direct consequence of a labour force comprising a high proportion of large, young families. Linen weaving in Knaresborough underwent prolonged and serious decline in the 1830's and 1840's, recovering c.1850, when linen production was maintained at a constant level for about twenty years. In each of the four census years approximately half the total number of male weavers were single, widowed or married, with no resident dependents. The proportion of weavers who had families consisting of children aged 14 and younger was only slightly larger in 1841 than in succeeding census years. Thus, although the total number of weavers steadily fell in the period 1841 - 71 the proportions of weavers with and without dependents remained fairly constant. However, the study applies to all weavers since the enumerators' books do not distinguish between hand and power loom weavers. It is therefore possible that a family structure study of handloom weavers only would produce different results.

cont'd

## APPENDIX Q - cont'd

	<u>1841</u>	<u>1851</u>	<u>1861</u>	<u>1871</u>	
Number of male linen weavers, aged 20 +	359	242	184	121	
Number of single men	103	44	34	18	
Number of married men, with wives, no children	91	55	40	27	
Number of married men, no wife living with him	-	7	7	3	
Number of widowed men, with no children	-	16	20	11	
Total of weavers, with no family	194	122	101	59	
% of male weavers, who were single, married or widowed with no children living at home	53.8	50.4	54.5	48.7	
% of weavers who had children below the age of 14 only:					
Number of children	1	8.0	6.6	5.9	6.6
	2	8.3	7.4	7.6	9.0
	3	6.6	7.0	4.8	4.1
	4	4.1	4.1	2.1	1.6
	5	(4)	(2)	(4)	(3)
	6	(4)	(4)	(0)	(0)

I have not calculated the number of weavers having five or more children as a % of the total number of weavers.

MANUSCRIPTSManuscript SourcesA. Public Record Office, London.

1. Ministry of Health Papers. Class 52. (H.M.52): Correspondence of Central Authority with Poor Law Commissioners, Poor Law Inspectors and Local Government Inspectors.

Power	1834 - 37	(Vol. 53)
	1838 - 47	(64)
Evans	1836 - 48	(55)
Mott	1833 - 43	(56)
Malsham	1840 - 42	(73)
Mawley	1837 - 42	(33)
	1843 - 46	(40)
	1847 - 52	(41)
Clements	1836 - 51	(11)
Justin	1843 - 55	( 7)
Hanwaring	1846 - 54	(53)
	1855 - 55	(54)
Gane	1855 - 71	( 9)
Hurst	1847 - 57	(47)
Farnall	1843 - 52	(22)
	1853 - 55	(23)
	1856 - 71	(24)
Lambert	1858 - 71	(30)
Corbitt	1862 - 76	(13)
Smith	1835 - 75	(87)
Hedley	1857 - 76	(45)
Knollys	1877 - 92	(43)

2. Ministry of Health Papers. Class 12. (H.M.12): Correspondence of Central Authority with Poor Law Union and other local authorities.

Ayscote	1839 - 74
Bedale	1835 - 53
Basingwold	1834 - 71 (1843 - 47, 1854 - 66 missing)
Great Ouseburn	1833 - 39
Harzesborough	1834 - 71
Hoyburn	1834 - 65
Malton	1836 - 41
Northallerton	1839 - 56 (1837 - 8 missing)
Wateley Bridge	1835 - 64
Wickering	1835 - 75
Wether	1833 - 79
Widmond	1837 - 55 (1846-7 missing)
Wipon	1835 - 58
Scarborough	1834 - 60
Bedburgh	1837 - 36
Bettle	1835 - 71
Skipton	1834 - 70
Stokesley	1834 - 54
Thirsk	1834 - 47
Whitby	1834 - 61

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		1852 - 58
		1874 - 97
BG/B.W.1/1-12	Easingwold B.G.M.	1844 - 1904
BG/HML	Helmsley B.G.M.	1837 - 1904
BG/KMO 1/1-7	Kirkby Moorside B.G.M.	1848 - 1903
BG/KN.1/1-10	Knaresborough B.G.M.	1854 - 91
BG/NO	Northallerton B.G.M.	1837 - 1905
BG/RO	Northallerton Workhouse Admission and Discharge Books	1848 - 67
BG/PAT.1/1-18	Pateley Bridge B.G.M.	1837 - 47
		1853 - 1902
BG/PI.1/1-13	Pickering B.G.M.	1837 - 1903
BG/PI 6/3	Pickering Workhouse Admission and Discharge Books	1861 - 67
BG/RSE	Reeth B.G.M.	1840 - 1900
BG/RIC.1/1-18	Richmond B.G.M.	1837 - 1905
BG/SC.1/1-15	Scarborough B.G.M.	1837 - 1905
BG/BMF.2/1/1-6	Settle Letter Books	1841 - 66
BG/STY	Stokesley B.G.M.	1889 - 94
BG/WH.1/1-22	Whitby B.G.M.	1837 - 1904 (1845-55 missing)

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