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Poor relief in Tudor England

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Chapter I

Reasons for a relief program

In many respects the sixteenth century in England marks the beginning of a definite acceleration toward modern humanitarianism. It was an era characterized by the slow decline and definite disappearance of all aspects of manorial society. The progressive changes in institutions and the way of thinking reciprocally aided each other, hastening the rise of a new, more humane society. The reforms, at first hesitant and cautious, were by the end of the century confident and deliberate.

The progress toward public welfare is an excellent example of this. Previously the poor were cared for largely by their manorial masters. However with the breakdown of manorialism, the poor necessarily became less dependent and, for the first time, had to care for themselves. Their attempts were halting, often unsuccessful. Such circumstances gradually became apparent to the members of other classes. By the end of the sixteenth century, aid was offered them from wide and varying sources.

Poor relief would not have developed into the vast program that characterized Tudor humanitarianism had not destitution and the problems associated with it increased markedly in this period. The reasons for this increase are enormous and diversified.

The immense disaster caused by the decay of medieval society is the broad reason for the social and economic instability. Had the domestic institutions remained the same as they had been for centuries, the problems would not have become apparent then; however it is highly doubtful whether the manorial system could have continued indefinitely. This decay, aided by destructive wars, led to the steady

decline in the old institutions and social attitudes, especially the concept of manorial self-sufficiency. The once stable society was torn apart and masses of men, dispossessed and masterless, were forced to find a new life.

The Church, long concerned with the poor, was in the same process of decay. Until the 1350's the monasteries were an important guard against the spread of poverty, directing the administration of hospitals and almshouses and assisting the poor.[1] However this did nothing to decrease the problem. In some cases the Church was actually responsible for increasing the number of beggars. Because the monks distributed food, drink and coins to all the poor who came to the holy gates, there settled around the monasteries and churches a concentration of beggars, its numbers multiplying. This indiscrimination was not due to the Church's teachings but to the clergy's ignorance of the need for prudence.[2] An anonymous writer in 1591 denotes this indiscrimination when he states that

> Many of them [the monks] whose revenues were sufficient thereunto, made hospitals and lodgings within their own houses...besides the great alms they give daily at their gate to everyone that comes to it. Yea, no wayfaring person could depart without a night's lodging, meat, drink, and money, it not being demanded from whence he or she came, and whether he could go.[3]

Also the relief was unbalanced, each institution giving without considering the needs and donations of other areas. This was primarily because monks were not located advantageously for this purpose.[4]

The Dissolution of the monasteries made public the problems that the monasteries had sheltered. With the discontinuance of begging there, the beggars had to move elsewhere.[5] Pauperism now involved more people, not just those closed behind the religious gates; more now knew who died of starvation; more were troubled by wandering beggars.

Another important development of the Dissolution was the great

redistribution of Church land. The monks had been notorious for bad business management. Unknowingly they had created a large but unnecessary employment force. However the new proprietors were quite efficient, especially in reducing the employment rolls. Many lay officials, tenants and servants were forced to find new jobs.[6] By introducing enclosure, sheep farming and rent racking, these new owners increased the agrarian discontent.[7] As Becon elated, these men "'abhor the name of monks, friars, canons, nuns...but their goods they greedily gripe. And yet, where the cloisters kept hospitality, let out the farms at a reasonable price '", the new owners, do "'none of all these things '"[8]

However this had one positive consequence. Englishmen began to recognize the economic hardships of their fellow poor as humanly caused and humanly cured. They no longer depended on voluntary religious alms for poor relief. Feeling themselves capable, they accepted the responsibility for public welfare. As W.K. Jordan states, the period was characterized by a "steady secularization of men's aspirations."[9] Profoundly important, this gave direction to the poor relief programs.

Another cause of poverty was the steady, relatively sharp increase in population which began just prior to and continued throughout the Tudor period. This rise was apparent because the rural population was growing more rapidly than the harassed agrarian system provided for, faster than the transient population was admitted into the industrial economy. Jordan suggests that the population increased as much as 40% between 1500 and 1600. This increase was especially evident in the Southern and Midland counties which by 1550 were seriously overpopulated considering employment opportunities.

From these and other areas, unabsorbed elements went to the large cities, primarily London, and helped create the large labor surplus.[10]

Though decreasing the population, the scourge of epidemics also caused great hardships. These plagues were problems to the entire European continent and all of England between the 1350's and the 1650's. They were local and periodic. The mortality rates in urban areas were higher than in the rural districts, retarding temporarily the economic activity. These plagues were deeply feared, particularly in times of dearth, when the scanty resources of the poor were needed to care for the sick. Thus the impact of the epidemics was doubly unfortunate, depriving the family of loved ones and workers, and of their foodstuffs.[11]

The rural situation was also aggravated by the great agrarian revolution which began in the 1400's and continued during the 1500's. The principle reason was a changing attitude toward land, the increased desire to exploit it as a form of capital. These landowners converted the land from arable to grazing and, where possible, reconstituted communal land. These economically realistic businessmen were the same ones who gained control of the monastic lands. The rapid spread of sheep farming led to regional unemployment and general dislocation. This was particularly bad because, having always been part of an agricultural economy, many families had land ties going back many generations. Suddenly these families found themselves dispossessed and landless.

The attitude of the peasants toward the local landlords is quite revealing. They were "petty tyrants"[12] who annexed slowly and deliberately, purchasing property and enclosing communal lands. These men demanded indecently high rents, maintained shamelessly high standards

of living, and were truly the "poor makers"[13] of the age. Some who lost their property found employment on the new estates; however few were needed to tend the sheep.[14]

There is a vast literature of social protest against these landlords and their irresponsibility. John Bayker in 1538 wrote to Henry the Eighth warning him of the decay of houses and villages. All could be corrected if the land was returned to tillage, if the landlords were forbidden to raise the rents and impose excessive fines, and if every miserable poor man might have "one little garden grown with all."[15] Thomas Becon of Cambridge denounced as devils the greedy landlords who

> not only link house to house, but, when they have gotten many houses and tenements into their hands, yea, whole townships, they suffer the houses to fall into utter ruin and decay; so that by this means whole towns are become desolate and like unto a wilderness, no man dwelling there, except it be the shepherd and his dog.[16]

Many poor Englishmen, forced to leave their villages, wandered somewhat hopefully into the cities. When they arrived they found industry, particularly the cloth industry, increasing in production. They also found a large amount of poverty. Inadvertently the wealth of industry had helped produce this poverty. The new urban workers now had to depend on recently acquired specialized skills and were subject to recurrent periods of severe economic depression. With the influx from the countryside, large portions of the population suffered from unemployment which, in a more stable rural economy, would have at least found partial employment. The plentiful labor supply caused workers to be discharged freely and rapidly. The condition of these seasonal employees was made worse by the dependence of large families. Thus these newly constituted industrial laborers found themselves often without employment, with large families to support, and with

the situation worsening.

These conditions were clearly illustrated in the rise of the cloth industry. In the early 1500's England shifted from a "wool exporting nation to a cloth exporting nation."[17] At that time the manufacture of woolen cloth was increasing tremendously; the wool prices were climbing.[18] This continued until 1551 when the export trade was violently reduced. Wool prices fell rapidly There was no substantial recovery during the next fifty years, it being the 1570's before prices reached even the 1550 level.[19] The clothier, heavily dependent on the export trade, now had to decrease his investment; particularly this meant that he had to drop many workmen.

> Hence it hat 'we do not hear of the poor merchant' or the ' oor cl thier' in the s vent en h c ntur , while, the poo spinner, weaver, resser, and so on, was a continual obje t of con ern.[20]

Dissatisfaction with the wages was another factor in urban discontent. The real wage actually tended to drop. This was due to the population influx which lowered the wage and to the rising prices.[21] J.D. Gould in his excellent article, "Price Revolution Reconsidered", suggests that the population rise exerted a positive influence on the price of "commodities in inelastic supply,"[22] such as grain. The demands were so great, especially in times of distress, that the costs rose upward, out of the reach of many rural unfortunates and town dwellers. Also the Spanish silver from the New World and the debasement of the English coins between 1543 and 1551 raised the prices still more.[23] Statistically it has been shown that the late sixteenth century wage earner received only 2/5 of the wage of the late fifteenth century laborer. Even if this figure is inexact, it proves that there was a definite decline in the real income.[24] Considering such factors, Eden and many others feel that "manufactures and

ommerce are the true parents of our national poor."[25]

As in other countries it was also true in England that agricultural crises tended to magnify the poverty and discontent they spread. Simply by creating more poor, the bad harvests and scarcity led to a greater realization of the country's problem. This scarcity and consequential high prices resulted from several factors:- the limited supply area, slow communication, and corruption such as hoarding and local monopolies.[26]

The general depression lasted approximately seventy years beginning with the bad harvests of 1527-1536. By 1527 the prices of wheat and rye had suddenly doubled from six shillings per bushel to twelve shillings per bushel. Within the next five years the price of wheat, generally a good indicator of other costs, lingered between 8s and 10s. Rye rose extraordinarily one quarter to 16s/bushel.[27]

The next critical period was mid-century when discontent was expressed verbally and violently. In 1549 and 1550 there were peasant uprisings in the south, in Kent and Essex evidencing the stark reality of the agrarian poverty.[28] Several learned men, greatly concerned about high prices, made known their views. Sir John Mason wrote to Cecil on the high prices December4, 1550:

> 'I hear here a great bruit of the discontentation of our people upon a late proclamation touching cheese and butter; of a little thing we make here a great matter...I have seen so many experiences of such ordinances; and ever the end is dearth, and lack of the thing that we seek to make good cheap. Nature will have her course...[2]

Also in Norwich in 1551 William Mordewe, baker, reflected on the high prices, coming to his own startling conclusion:

> That divers folks being in his bakehouse that day among them had communication upon the great prices of grain and victual, the fall and loss of money, and he himself alledged among them that the fault thereof was in the men of the country for they would not obey the king's proclamations nor the king's proceedings, and confesseth ...that if it please the king to make him hangman he

would hang a sort of them that would not obey... 30

The last great depression of this period was during the 1590's. This decade began with five continuous years of scarcity;"'one year there hath been hunger; the second there was dearth, and the third there was a great cleanness of teeth...'"[31] The main cause, as seen in the literature of the times, was rain. According to a 1594 writer,

> 'The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,
> The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
> Hath rattled ere his youth attained a beard.'[32]

A York preacher suggested to his congregation that

> Our July hath been like a February, our June even as an April,...our years are turned upside down...our summers are no summers, our harvests are no harvests...For a great space of time scant any day hath been seen that it hath not rained upon us.[33]

In 1595 there were complaints throughout England of the deficiencies. At Barnstaple in Devonshire it was heard that "'but little cometh to the market, and such snatching and catching for that little and such a cry that the like was never heard.'"[34] In Leicestershire complaints were loud against the farmers and grazers who fed their sheep with "pease" which the poor substituted for corn in times of dearth.[35]

Although the favorable weather in late summer of 1596 brought assurances of improved crops, the rains later in the year drenched all optimism. With the scarcity, grain rose to the highest prices of the five year period 1594-1598. There was increased discontent and more cases of starvation and suffering. An Oxford preacher said of the famine that "'it maketh the poor to pinch for hunger and the children to cry in the streets not knowing where to find bread!"[36] The most serious food riot was the insurrection in Oxfordshire which, had it succeeded, would probably have done more harm than all others

of that year. Planned by "exasperated stupid men,"[37] Bartholomew Steere and twenty other laborers and artisans, the uprising involved killing the local gentry and marching on London. There these conspirators were to be joined by the discontented urban element. From this point the plan was vague. The Privy Council, gravely concerned about this matter, promptly had these men arrested and executed.[38]

This desperate situtation continued into 1597. The outcries were increasing; more poor were dying in the streets; food riots were multiplying and involving a larger number of peasants. The demands had to be answered.

Lastly, economic discontent was increased unconsciously through governmental policies in the latter part of the century. Although the government was trying to lower prices and bring about more equal distribution, its military commitments acted in the opposite direction. Grain, beef and bacon had to be provided for the troops and crews on the ships defending the coast, on the ships of the mammoth Spanish expedition, and for the garrisons of Ireland and the Channel Islands. These demands reached their height in the mid 1590's. In 1596 every county was ordered to supply large quantities of foodstuffs at below market prices. In January Devonshire officials had to supply 3200 bushels of wheat and 200 oxen. Similar orders to many counties led to widespread protest. The Privy Council, realizing these difficulties, made small concessions but the demands continued.[39]

Due to these various forces, the people's supplies were being diminished and jobs were infrequent and temporary. The common masses found that to survive they must resort to other means of living. A large majority turned to begging.

> The roads swarmed with uprooted folk on the march, in spite of all the whippings; fairs and country markets were the hunting ground of many an Auto-

> lycus; London teemed with cutpurses and cony-catchers, rogues and harlots, and in fact gave birth to a vivid literature devoted to their pretty ways.[40]

Aurdeley, a London printer, published an extraordinary account of the Fraternity of Vagabonds in 1561. A few years later in 1566 Thomas Harman, a Kent Magistrate, published a similar but more detailed work entitled Caveat an Warening for Common Cursetors. This was designed to show the Englishman the true character of the beggars. The result was a very remarkable and graphic description of widespread evil. The "'rowsey ragged rabblement of rakehelles;"[41] as Harman termed the beggars in a letter to the Countess of Shrewsbury, were highly organized, even with an order of precedence. They had had a slang dictionary for over thirty years. Harman discussed their daring robberies. Most vagrants broke into houses and took pigs or pountry, forcing the owners to give them their money. The more clever passed hooks through windows and actually, as the story goes, took clothes off the unfortunate sleepers.[42] A nursery rhyme well reflected the general anxiety caused by such activities:-

> 'Hark! Hark! the dogs do bark; the beggars are coming to town.
> Some give them white bread, some give them brown,
> And some give them a good horse-whip, and send them out of town.'[43]

Chapter II

Non-national efforts to relieve the poor

Wanderers were a continual threat swarming the country in droves, feared by all elements of society and treated harshly everywhere. They were all thought to be only idle, listless men whose poverty was the result of moral laxity.[44]

Slowly however this view yielded to the realities of the sixteenth century. People came to realize that poverty was not so much a moral as a social and economic problem. This concept did not develop at any one time but at various times in different localities. However by the end of the Reformation, this conclusion was generally accepted. Then the people were more aware of the acute need of the poor and saw no help coming from the Church. This created a dynamic drive toward private charity. Society assumed not only the social and economic responsibilities the Church had held for centuries but also the duty of rehabilitation.

This "secularization of men's aspirations"[45] was ironically aided by the eloquence of the new preachers. Latimer, the great spokesman of the Reformation, while setting high moral and social standards for the Protestants, denounced both the force of poverty and Roman Catholocism. The preachers who followed the Reformation, though more moderate than their predessors, still strongly emphasized the Christian obligation of charity. There were many tracts and sermons on this subject. The Certaine Sermons of 1563 indicated that charity was inseparable from Godly love. Several prominent ministers emphasized charity, among them Thomas White, Vicar of St. Dunstan's in the West, Richard Turnbull, Samuel Byrd, minister of St. Peter's,

and the Puritan Henry Smith. All magnified the covetousness of the period to evoke giving.[46] An anonymous divine in 1596 said that

> in our time the charity of most men is frozen up, so that it is now high time to blow up the dead sparkles of love, and to kindle the cold coals of charity... [and] riches cannot make a man good but men may do good with them.[47]

Religious thinkers were not the only individuals concerned with charity. There were many outspoken laymen who made known their opinions on social responsibility, principally through pamphlets and books. The Puritan George Whetstone wrote in 1584 A mirour for the magistrates of Cities in which he reflected on the social irresponsibility of the time and the needs for reform.[48] Robert Hitchcock in the 1580's constructed a grandiose solution to this every increasing problem. He would create a great fishing fleet on which all the poor would be employed.[49] Another solution was suggested by John Easte in his Discourse on how the poor may be relieved. A mixture of practicality and idealism, this manuscript called for work for all who desired it.[50] Henry Tripp, a London clergyman, translated the ideas of Andreas Gerandus into English. It was Gerandus who felt that poor relief was the responsibility of both the religious and secular powers, the secular being dominant. Before definite progress could be achieved, he saw the need for a distinction between the worthy poor and vagabonds.[51]

This humane outlook, this growth of pity for and comradeship with the poor, was clearly indicated by the many forms of private charity. Richard Greenham is an excellent example of personal giving. Representing the finest form of Puritanism, he sold grain to the needy at below regular prices; he inspired the nearby village tenants to build a common granary and store grain for the poor. Riding through the country, he looked for sturdy beggars to whom he gave money. It is

even said that he distributed so much money that his wife often could not pay the farm laborers.[52]

London was a city abounding in private donors whose generosity focused the attack on the evils of poverty. At first outright gifts were made to the poor. Later massive endowments and a large variety of enterprises were attempted to destroy all aspects of the poor problem.[53] The capabilities, aggressiveness and evident concern shown by the Londoners were impressive models to the rest of England.

Almost all instances of private benevolence were found in the wills of well-to-do Londoners. Most bequests to the poor were therein established as capital sums under a form of trusteeship.

In 1545 Sir John Allen, a rich merchant and twice lord mayor of London, left £914 6s 8d for poor relief which was distributed in a curious manner. Not only would it be given to all poor within the city, but his customs would be continued of distributing woolen gowns, and feeding fifty poor on all fish days with bread, pottage, and red herring.[55]

The greatest benefactor of the Reformation period was Sir John Gresham whose gifts have been conservatively totaled at £7873 17s. During his lifetime he built up an endowment of £2000 invested in land which was for the poor Bristol clothiers. His 1556 will included £30 for coal for his native parish poor, £120 for the poor London clothiers, £240 for the London poor in general. The rest of his estate, valued at £2500, was left for general charitable needs. Gresham was particularly important because he established a pattern to be followed by other great merchants.[56]

During the Elizabethan age a great many merchants and political dignitaries followed this example, giving a total of £63,137 3s. In

1562 Sir Humphrey Browne, Justice of the Common Pleas, left his real estate in St. Sepulchre to the needy. A year later, Dame Anne Packington, a judge's widow and merchant's daughter, left contributions totaling £516. In 1567 Robert Harding, a rich salter, left £319 17s and endowments for the care of the poor of the Fishmonger, Butcher and Salter companies. William Lambe, another of the greater Elizabethan philanthropists, left £5695 for charities, of which £984 was for poor relief. He also contributed shoes, woolen gowns and 120 pails in which poor women might carry water.[57]

The Elizabethan contributions reached their height during the Armada decade when more than £20,000 was given. These generous donors were persons who, having reached maturity during the Reformation years, represented in their hopes the secular ideal of the age.[58] Such men were Robert Hilson, merchant, who gave £382 3s, Barnard Randolph, Commons sergeant, John Lute, clothworker, and John Heydon, a rich mercer.[59] Blanche Parry, one of the gentlewomen of the Queen's Privy Chamber, graciously gave £400. The exceptional contributions of Sir Thomas Ramsey and his wife Dame Mary attested to their immense hearts and incomes. Over a twenty year period, they gave £14,317 16s to carefully chosen charities; to the poor alone they gave £5567. Their beneficiaries included hard-pressed London parishes, London soldiers, the general poor of London, and the poor of Kent and Surrey. They also instituted loan funds and several endowments.[60]

Besides individual donations, there were other ways to express private charity. Many Londoners contributed toward the formation of almshouses or alms foundations. These were permanent havens for the incompetent and helpless poor. Such institutions were founded during the Middle Ages; ten to fourteen in London alone offered shelter,

food and care for the season. However due to fifteenth century decay and corruption, this number was reduced by 1480 to eight, these being in grave condition.[61] With the beginning of the sixteenth century, people began to provide substantial gifts for their improvement and the addition of others. During the Reformation as much as £10,263 16s was given. With each succeeding generation, the total increased until the last decade of the century when £9421 12s was contributed.[62]

There were innumerable examples of this form of private charity in the period extending from the 1530's until the end of the century. Sir John Milbourne was one of the greatest benefactors of the Reformation. In 1534 he and his wife bought some church land on which they built thirteen almshouses costing £400, besides providing £600 as income for these institutions. In 1536 Nicholas Gibson, a London grocer, had erected in Ratcliffe, Middlesex both an almshouse and a school. Besides giving £250 for quarters for fourteen persons, Gibson supported them entirely until his death in 1540. His wife Anice continued his work until her death.[63]

Between the years 1541 and 1560 the large amount of £10,263 was received for the founding of new and the restoring of old institutions. In 1542 the will of William Dauntsey, merchant, created a trust to found an almshouse and school in Mr. Dauntsey's native West Lavington. An income from properties worth over £900 was to be divided between the two institutions and to provide for the construction of suitable accomodations for five poor men and two old women.[64] In 1544 George Manox built living quarters for thirteen with room for a school and schoolmaster. He also provided for the use of two acres nearby as gardens and a recreation area.[65] In the same year Henry the Eighth generously established an almshouse in Westminster for seven old men, endowing

it with resources valued at £742. He also endowed the unstable royal College of Windsor, giving the Dean and Chapter church properties in eleven counties worth £666 6s 8d yearly. This amount was for the support of thirteen poor knights ruined by "'decayed-wars and suchlike service of the realm.'"[66]

During the Elizabethan period there were a great many donors, most from the higher and middle gentry. In 1556 Sir William Laxton, a rich grocer and lord mayor of London, founded a grammar school and almshouse. An ironmonger, Thomas Lewin, that same year built an almshouse for four pensioners in his company. Three years later an armourer John Richmond provided an almshouse for ten poor men.[67] In 1566 Sir Martin Bowes, a great goldsmith and former lord mayor, built five apartments for the poor of Kent. Sir Richard Champion, draper and lord mayor in 1565-1566, instructed his widow to "'buy as much land as would countervail the yearly alms of Mr. Milbourne,'"[68] thus adding capital valued at approximately £430 to the London almshouses which the former draper had established. The famous William Lambarde left £2337 8s 6d to his great foundation, "Collegium Pauperum Reinal Elizabeth", in addition to maintaining twenty poor over a thirty-year period.[69] In 1579 Sir Thomas Gresham, noteworthy for his personal giving, gave to town authorities eight richly endowed almshouses in St. Peter the Poor parish. In 1595 Anne, Lady Dacre, maid of honor to the Queen, gave £300 for the construction of Emanuel Hospital in Westminster. This was to relieve twenty poor folk and to train twenty poor children. A year later a Protestant Spaniard founded an almshouse at Tottenham High-Cross to house eight. Mr. Balthazer Sanchez purchased land for the quarters, paid all of the expenses and left an endowment of £400 for their full support.[70] These few donations listed were but a minute

portion of the almost £25,000 in capital, £9000 in additional endowments, and thirty-seven new almshouses contributed over a sixty-year period. This was indeed a remarkable achievement, especially considering the unstable economic realities.

At the same time that private charity was a dominant feature of Tudor poor relief, there was a steady extension of municipal authority in this area. This was in part due to the inherently independent position of the local officials. They possessed the authority to regulate their own affairs in the manner they found most efficient. They imposed taxes without Parliamentary consent, constructed hospitals, invented punsihments and banished newcomers whenever they saw the necessity. This was also due to the parish's awakening public conscience, its growing sense of duty to care for the poor. The local administration saw that individual charity, though beneficial, did not alleviate the poor problem. Inundated with a massive body of reform literature, these cities gradually turned to social projects. The theory behind these local programs was to close off the poverty in the regions, therby preventing loose migration and wandering thievery.[71] Thus contained in specific localities, the poor would be cared for.

London led in this field as it had in the area of private charity. Beggars wandered entirely as they desired until 1517 when the licensing of beggars began.[72] This meant that without such license, beggars could not enter the city to beg. Early in the reign of Henry the Eighth licenses were required for begging, putting it on a more organized basis. In 1533 the city authorities appointed persons to collect "'the devotions of parishoners for poor folk weekly,'"[73] an action anticipating the compulsory assessments.[#] The first such assessment was instituted in 1547 to support hospitals for one year.[74]

> Citizens and inhabitants of the said city shall forthwith contribute and pay toward the sustentation, maintenance and finding of the said poor personages of the space of one whole year now next ensuing the moitie or half deal of one whole fifteenth, and that the said weekly collection of the devotion of the people for that extent and purpose shall from henceforth utterly cease and be discharged.[75]

This order also provided that the money already gathered for the hospitals be delivered and paid to the "'governors of the said house.'"[76] Each tax collector was empowered to detain anyone who refused to pay his portion and encourage him to pay it.[77] This poor rate was particularly important because it was the first of its kind in England. It served as a basic pattern to be adopted in other communities and on the national level.

Not until 1550 was another major attempt made to aid the poor. From then until 1553 Ridley, the newly a inted Bishop of London made oncerted efforts to p t poor welfare on a much firmer foundation. He was supported substantially by the lord mayors, Sir Richa rd Dobbs and Sir George Barnes. Together they established the royal hospitals of King Edward's foundation. St Thomas' hospital was re-established under city management and enlarged by the addition of 200 beds.[78] St. Bartholomew's was repaired; its endowments increased;[79] and it was enlarged by sixty more beds.[80]

Another and perhaps the most famous such institution was Bridewell. In 1552 London citizens made suit to the Privy Council that the royal palace of Bridewell be converted into a house of correction to aid such helpless individuals as the "'succourless poor child, the sick and impotent, the sturdy vagabond, or idle person.'"[81] Their request for permission was in the following terms:-

> ...moveth us now to sue for the king's majesty's house of Bridewell; for that the situation and largeness thereof seemeth most meet and convenient for this purpose, if it shall please the king's most excellent majesty, of his

> great clemency and goodness, to grant that it may be employed to the said use.[85]

Various London citizens administered this hospital. The governors or heads were six aldermen and twenty-four citizens, half of which were removed each year. Any two governors were empowered to search for and take into the house "'lewd and idle person.'"[83] They also inflicted punishment on anyone who hid such persons. Bridewell was divided into departments, each specializing in different crafts, and each headed by experts known as taskmasters and taskmistresses. Besides these executives, there were the necessary stewards, porters, and cooks.[84]

The house was used for numerous and varied occupations, profitable to and worthy of all. The lame busied themselves with wool-cards, drawing of wire, feather bed ticks, spinning, carding; the stubborn made nails and other ironworks. Certain citizens provided the stock and in turn received the finished wares.[85]

Completed in 1557[86] this royal hospital served as an excellent pattern for other "bridewells" throughout the country. Its innovations provided separate treatment for all types of vagrants, training some and punishing others.

Thus the municipal relief for the London poor, one sees, began early in the Tudor period. All of the major changes were completed by the 1550's. These developments were largely successful, their promoters stimulated by the great need for positive change.

The citizens of Lincoln, influenced by the Londoners, introduced similar measures beginning in the 1540's. In 1543 the city constables were ordered to bring before the justices all of the city poor. Those permitted to beg were given licenses for that purpose. A like order

was proclaimed three years later, with the stipulation that no one was to contribute alms to beggars without licenses. In 1547 the total number of beggars in Lincoln was first surveyed and those able were required to work. Becoming an annual responsibility, this was definitely a major advancement. In 1551 all idle youths were apprenticed to clothiers for a period of eight or nine years. Under this strict plan they lived with them, being given all the necessities of life. Those protesting were banished from the town. In 1560 the position of overseer of the poor was made official; from then on he was given an annual salary. During period of epidemics, special collections were demanded for poor relief. Besides these particular obligations, often there were municipal grants made to the poor as well as amounts given by the guilds to their poorer members.[87] In 1591 John Cheseman, a Boston citizen, established a knitting school which provided employment for 400 poor over a period of five years. The town provided the spinning wheels and the necessary stones of wool; Cheseman provided his knowledge. By 1596 this knitting school had contributed a great deal not only to the industrial progress of the town but also to the general social and intellectual progress.[88]

Ipswich was another center of municipal aggressiveness, its poor relief program being more similar to that of London that was Lincoln's. In 1551 the bailiff nominated two persons "'to inquire into the poor of every parish and thereof to make certificate to the bailiffs;'"[89] the poor thus were surveyed and licensed. In 1556 eight burgesses began framing a proposal to aid the poor and impotent and repress the vagrants. Finished in 1557, this measure stated that "'if any inhabitant shall refuse to pay such money as shall be allotted him to pay for the use of the poor,'"[90] he shall be punished. In 1569

House of Black Friars, later known as Christ's Hospital, was established as a combined house of correction, hospital, shelter for the aged and training schhol for the young.[91] Efforts were made also to create new markets so that "'Ipswich should become Antwerp.'"[92]

Norwich is another English town noted for its remarkable achievements in the area of poor relief. Following the example of London, Norwich sanctioned compulsory assessments in 1549. A statute was approved in 1563 to induce people to contribute more alms; apparently this problem was increasing in intensity and the town had to deal more harshly. Just two years later in 1565 St. Paul's Hospital was given to the city, part being converted into a center of entertainment and the other becoming a house of correction.[93]

Due to the worsening situation in the 1570's there were more very detailed requirements. By 1570 there were 2000 beggars roaming the city.[94] They were dissipated, demoralized, lazy, improperly clothed, diseased, in short, "'centers of physical and moral pollution.'"[95] To make it worse their number was increasing.

An elaborate census in 1570 was made of the number and dire condition of the local poor. In the small ward of St. Stephen's alone there were approximately forty impoverished families.[96]

Realizing from this that emergency measures were needed, the town adopted in 1571 its famous Orders for the Poor. The Orders began with a revealing description of the poor, graphically illustrating the reason for concern.

> After begging food and eating they were overgorged they caste forth the rest into the street, so they might be followed by the sight thereof in pottage, bread, meat and drink which they spoiled very voluptuously... There were many whose flesh was eaten with vermin and corrupt diseases grew upon them so fast and so grievously as they were past remedy... so grieved the inhabitants that they earnestly called for reformation....Victualing houses were stuffed

with players and drunkards that so tended the drink all day that they could not incline to work.[97]

Then were enumerated the restrictions placed upon the poor, among which were the following:-No one begged on pain of six whip slashes. If anyone maintained any beggars, they were fined. "'At a house called the Normans,'"[98] twelve were employed, men grinding and women carding and spinning. Their hours were long, allowing only one-half hour for eating and one-quarter hour for prayer. The town's bridewell was reorganized after the example of London's famous house of correction. Only those with warrants were sent to bridewell. Once there, if the poor refused to work, they were punished "'by the whip at the discretion of the warden or bailiff of the house.'"[99] The inmates who remained in bridewell for at least three years were then sent from the city. No more strangers were permitted within the town limits. The compulsory assessments for the poor were renewed and strengthened.[100]

There was also a set of orders for "select women." The women were given specific duties to help reduce the number of unfortunates in the Norwich community. According to these orders, these women received between six and twelve persons in their homes to instruct in domestic activities. If they did not keep their hours or were unmanageable, the women sent for the deacon. As a last resort, the youths were sent to the house of correction.[101]

The effect of both of these sets of orders was profound. While the economy of the city improved, the number of beggars declined significantly. The Orders became well known throughout the country; even the Archbishop of Canterbury asked for information on the system.[102]

Measures, though not as elaborate as those of Norwich, were also taken in York. In the 1560's definite steps were taken to employ the

poor. For example, in 1569 the poor were required to go to the St. George's House

> 'where the city wool lieth, then and there to be proved by the aldermen, wardens, and twenty-four with the advice of Roger Ligh:e, clothier, what they can do; and such of them as can do ought, or are meet to learn to have wool delivered them by discretion of such as have charge thereof to work, and the said Roger to do his diligence to instruct such of the said poor as he shall perceive not perfect.'[103]

As in other large towns, there was a house of correction which admitted not only vagrants but also blasphemers and drunkards. Upon entering its doors, the inmates were first whipped "'till his or her body be bloody.'"[104] They were paid for their work, deductions being made for their sustenance. The diet of the inmates varied, depending largely upon their work. If they were idle, they ate only bread and water; if working but unskilful, they were given bread and a little ale; but if they were willing to work and were also skilful, they ate pottage.[105]

In 1587 the York town council divided the poor people into three classes. The first included the aged and impotent to whom the town gave the minimum of 3-1/2p a day,"'under which sum a poor creature cannot live.'"[106] Employment was given to all who would work. Each counsellor maintained two men, each alderman four, and each ex-chamberlain either one or two. Thirdly, those who were unwilling to work were either committed to bridewell or were expelled from the city.[107] A decade later, the civic officials initiated a relief program by contracting with a maufacturer from Hartlepool to introduce the making of fustions, employing at least fifty persons.[108]

The initiative taken by the civic leaders in Coventry is recognized by an order issued in 1547. In that year, the same as the enactment of the London poor rate, the aldermen of Coventry were

instructed to take a census of the ward inhabitants and to find occupations for the unemployed. The indolent men were punished; and, if they remained unchanged, were expelled. The deserving poor were relieved "'by the common alms of the city out of the common chest.'"[109]

Progressive towns were numerous throughout England. The speed of their advancement varied but, whether rapid or slow, the progress was certain. Winchester officials in 1578 set up a house of correction, strictly a training school, which provided work for eighty persons.[110] The poor were being licensed in Northampton in 1585.[111] Citizens of Suffolk searched the countryside for vagrants to carry before the justices or commit to their houses of correction in 1589.[112] The aldermen of Shrewsbury, during seasons of bad harvests, bought foreign wheat to sell to thepoor at below market prices. Unsold wheat the town bakers made into loaves which were distributed to the poor.[113]

From this multitude of examples there appears a general pattern of characteristics of municipal systems of relief. First, in all of these towns a census of the poor was instituted. Begging was restricted by licenses and then later prohibited altogether. The impotent were maintained primarily through hospitals. Children were trained in industrial schools or in homes. The unemployed were given work. The restless and unproductive element went to the houses of correction. Money gained from compulsory taxation, not almsgiving, made possible these measures. This entire complex organization, instituted on the local level, was based on secular authority and the distinction between the able and willing and the idle and impotent.

Chapter III

National policy to relieve the poor

These local projects and the fundamental reason for their introduction were major sources of stimulation to the national government. The Tudor rulers viewed the local institutions, their goals and their results realistically. They saw where the sphere of man's operations had expanded tremendously; the initiative had been taken by the people on a problem too long unresolved. The Tudors also recognized that the local attempts were not altogether successful precisely because they were regional and the scope of the problem was national.

The Tudor government, primarily interested in civil order and harmony, was intensely involved in this problem. This was partially because the Tudor power originated in the chronic disorders of the late fifteenth century. Any threat of local disturbance was to the Tudors a dangerous evil, a sign of possible political upheaval.

Also in the Tudor theory of state every person had a specific place in the social organization. The community functioned ideally as long as everyone was perfectly adjusted to his station. However when there were serious maladjustments, the government had to intervene to correct the situation.[114]

The sixteenth century social rebellion necessarily involved the removal of many men from their set social positions. Rootless, helpless and unemployed, the impoverished were forced to assemble into bands of vagrants. Realizing the need for adjustment and order, the Tudors had to prevent such assemblages.[115] This policy is evidence, not of sentiment, but of practicality. The national government felt that out of this unrelieved, uncontrolled poverty must first come order; poor relief and provisions for employment were but secondary.

The first attempts to bring about such order followed an economic crisis and the resultant dislocation. The English alliance in 1528 with France strangled the cloth trade with Flanders, bringing about serious unemployment in several populous areas. This was worsened by a general scarcity due to the bad harvest.[116]

The 1530 statute was the first to organize begging by discriminating between the two types of poor and applying different methods of treatment to each. The local justices licensed the aged and impotent poor to beg in specific districts. If the poor did not remain within these limits, they were imprisoned in stocks for two days and ordered to return immediately to their confines after this period. The second group, treated more harshly, included the vagabonds and idle poor. These poor without licenses were whipped "'until the body was bloody by reason of such whipping'"[117] and then sworn to return either to their birthplace or last place of three-year residency.[118] All who gave alms to such beggars were fined, except for the Master and governor of the hospitals.[119]

The nature of this act was quite repressive in limiting the number of beggars and not providing sustenance to the poor. According to this, the impotent could maintain themselves only through begging. In this it is quite similar to the earlier regulations in London. On the whole, the measure secured very little support and was not very effective.

The next and more beneficial act was passed in 1536. This statute has been called "the first real poor law of the period"[120] because its principles had, until then, not been conceived on the national level. Previously it was felt that if one could not find a job himself, he must beg. However with this statute came the concept that it was the duty of the parish to locate employment for the willing and

able poor. Also the state itself accepted the responsibility for administering the relief, collecting and distributing the funds.[121] The preamble shows that compulsory maintenance was considered although a regular tax was not.

> 'That it was not provided by the Act...how poor people and sturdy vagabonds should be ordered at their repair and coming into their counties, nor how the inhabitants of every hundred should be charged for their relief, nor yet for the setting and keeping in work and labor the said valiant beggars at their repair in every hundred of this realm.'[122]

Upon the arrival of the poor in the village, the householders and officials were required by the law to charitably receive them and "'succour, find and keep them by voluntary and charitable alms, so that none shall be compelled to go openly in begging.'"[123] If the alms were not collected, the parish was penalized 20s/month. On Sundays, holidays and other specified days the mayor and other town officials collected alms so that those unable to work might be relieved. Also preachers were to exhort their congregation to give liberally.[124]

In this statute the matter of collections was a major issue. They were made necessary because private relief in the form of money was forbidden "on pain to forfeit ten times as much."[125] All organizations, such as the Church. which had previously made distributions, henceforth had to do so through the common boxes. To prevent the misuse of these collected funds, churchwardens

> ...calling unto them six or four of their honest neighbors shall have the power every quarter or oftener to command every collector to render account of all sums thus collected and how employed, and if any default is found, they are to carry the offender before a justice, who shall commit him till he has paid back the same, and also 6s 8d for a penalty, and books shall be kept in every parish.[126]

The money thus collected would either be kept in the church coffer box or by a trusty man until used. If there was a surplus, this

amount was distributed to needy parishes.

Apprenticeship was made compulsory for all who sought admission to industry or trade. The pauper children were bound at age seven and remained in service until the age of twenty-four for boys, twenty-one for girls.[127]

There were four classes exempt from the provisions of this act. Lepers and bedridden persons were exempt. Friar mendicants could beg and receive as usual. Servants, leaving their home service and having letters to that effect, were allowed to be free for one month. And beggars traveling to their birthplace were able to get food and lodging every ten miles.[128]

In total this act provided all the fundamental principles that dominated Tudor poor law with a single exception. Omitted was compulsory taxation; the statute was enforced only if the district voluntarily chose to provide relief.

The next major step was, by far, the most savage of the series; yet contemporaries saw the 1547 enactment as only slightly more severe than the others. With the first conviction, the vagabond was branded on the breast with a V and placed in serviture for two years. Convicted a second time, he was branded on the forehead with an S and placed in servitude for life. The third time the vagabond was condemned to death as a felon.[129]

This statute was quite extraordinary in English law because of its brutality and inhumane treatment directed against the lower classes. Soon after this became law, Parliament admitted that it was too extreme. It was repealed in 1548 and was mercifully replaced by the 1530 statute.[130] A proposal was made in 1559 to restore the 1547 act; however this was defeated.[131]

In the shifting years of mid-century, years dominated by religious action and reaction and by political uncertainties and misfortune, the Council and Parliament were tentative and hesitant. There was not enough money coming in through the reorganized church to relieve the poor adequately. The only possible action was the issuance of exhortations, nothing stronger.

In 1552 Parliament passed a piece of poor relief legislation in which the probability of compulsory taxation was alluded to. This act ordered that the local officials in an assembly of all landowners would nominate two men to serve as collectors. It was their duty to "'gently ask'"[132] all citizens how much they could contribute and then collect this poor relief. If stubborn, a parishoner was admonished by the parish cleric; and if he still remained obdurate he was brought before the bishop. Besides disciplining such non-contributors, the bishop made sure that all collections, once received, were dispersed equally.[133]

This act remained in effect over a decade until it was superseded in 1563 by a law which attempted to correct the former's deficiencies. Because the bishops had been largely unsuccessful in collecting from their "stingy parishoners," [134] a more obvious compulsion was necessary. This new act required that,if a person continued adamant, he must appear before local magistrates who not only gently persuaded but also assessed weekly contributions. If this failed, the negligent citizen was imprisoned.[135] With this enactment, we see the power of the local justices, mayor and bailiffs increasing and expanding in the social realm.

There were no more major enactments until the 1570's when the heightened economic distress made reform imminent. The immediate

result was the 1572 law for the poor, intended to organize and to generalize provisions for them. The main feature of this act was the following detailed definition of vagabonds:-(1) all proctors or procurators;[136] (2) persons "using subtle crafty unlawful games and feigning themselves to have knowledge in physiognomy, palmistry or other abused sciences,"[137] (3) all able-bodied men without land or master who did not explain their means of livelihood and who refused employment, (4) all fencers, bearwards, common players in interludes, minstrels not in the service of a baron of the realm, jugglers, pedlars, tinkers, and petty chapmen who traveled without licenses from two justices, (5) common laborers who refused the standard wage, (6) seamen improperly licenses, (7) all unlicensed but freed prisoners, (8) all counterfeiters of licenses, and (9) scholars of Oxford and Cambridge who begged unlicensed.

This law affected heavily the professional poor. Although severe, however, it did not go to the extremes of the 1547 enactment. With the first offense the vagabond was whipped and bored through the ear unless someone acting as a sponsor took him into service for one year. With the second he was charged with a felon unless a sponsor employed him for two years. With the third offense he was adjudged a felon without clergy and probably put to death.

This law also provided for a system of collectors and distributors and a compilation of all parish poor. Every month the town officials made a search for and study of the newly arrived and native poor. In the Register Book were included all their names and living quarters. From these registers the officials were then able to determine roughly how much was needy and contributed in each district. Everyone was assessed. If anyone refused to pay, the justices remanded him to jail. Also a system of overseers was formally established. These overseers

supervised and directed the local collection and distribution. Appointed yearly by the justices, these unpaid officials bore almost complete responsibility for the poor elfare.[138]

The central deficiency of this act, employment for the poor genuinely desirous of work, was supplied in the 1576 act, the next major step toward a complete national program. It ordered that a "stock of wool, hemp, flax, iron or other stuff" be provided and entrusted to "collectors and governors of the poor"[139] who distributed it among the poor "to be wrought into yarn or other matter."[140] The finished product was then sold to furnish money for more supplies. Anyone refusing to work was committed to the local house of correction. The author of this act hoped to insure that

> 'youth may be accustomed and brought up in labor and work, and then not like to grow to be idle rogues... that such as be already grown up in idleness, and so rogues at the present, may not have any just excuses in saying that they cannot get any service or work, and that the poor and needy persons being willing to work may be set to work.'[141]

Furtherm this act provided for bastard children and for the local bridewell. Two justices were authorized to order the maintenance of these unfortunate children and the correction of their supposed parents. Houses of correction were ordered to be constructed in every county with directors appointed by the justices.[142]

There followed a pause in poor welfare legislation which was interrupted around 1590 by some rather incidental legislation. In 1589 Parliament passed an act to stop the rural settlement of more poor families. Accordingly, one house could accomodate only one family and no house could be constructed unless surrounded by four acres of land. Exceptions were made for homes of shepherd, miners, and forest rangers, and homes built near waterways. Four years later two more bills were

passed to alleviate the poor problem. To prevent the location of more poor families in London, Parliament ordered that, with very few exceptions, no new houses could be built in London, Westminster or within three miles of each area. Also neither boarders nor apartments in houses were allowed. In the second act, a supplementary rate was levied for the relief of soldiers and sailors returning home.[143]

Then in the very last years of that unstable closing decade of the century with its exceptionally high food prices, the extension of the Irish rebellion, the dragging war with Spain and the resulting interference with economic trade, the English poor law was made into a code that was to have a very long life. The brilliant thinkers of the period were behind it:-Burghley, Coke, Archbishop Whitgift and Bacon. They considered seventeen proposals, all originating in the Commons committees.[144] The subject in its entirety was submitted to discussion, appraisal and criticism. The result was the famous 1597 act for poor relief which in its essence was nothing new and bold, but a compilation of legislative and administrative experience of almost a century. Unlike other pieces of legislation, it did not open with a pious eloquent preamble but moved quickly to the subject.

In every parish the churchwardens and four "substantial householders"[145] were the overseers. They had a multitude of duties. They put to work those persons unable to maintain themselves and those children whose parents could not help them. They raised a "stock of flax, hemp, wool, thread, iron, and other necessary ware and stuff to set the poor to work and also complete sums of money"[146] for the relief of the impotent. They, with the assent of two justices, bound children as apprentices. Also the overseers collecting money to provide for all of this. Ideally they kept accurate accounts of all

money rated, assessed and received.

If the parish was unable to collect enough for their needs, the justices would "tax, rate and assess as aforesaid any other of other parishes."[147] If anyone refused to contribute his sum, the town officials with a warrant levied the money. The recalcitrant person went to prison unless he paid. The justices also had the authority to bind anyone over to the houses of correction if he did not work as required.

Cottages and other places of habitation for the poor were constructed in the waste or common area within the parishes. The poor were also relieved by able relatives according to the rate assessed.[148]

No longer was anyone able to wander begging with licenses or without; if he did he was punished as a vagabond. One exception was made for the poor asking "relief of victuals only in the same parishes where such poor people do dwell."[149] Also soldiers and sailors journeying without money and work but having a deposition from a justice went undetained.

The weekly parish poor rate was the amount assessed annually either by a citizens' agreement, or, if impossible, agreement of the town officials. If anyone refused to pay the assessment, the officials did "levy the same by distress and sale of the goods of the party so refusing or neglecting."[150] Otherwise to prison he went. All financial surpluses in the county stock was given for the "relief of the poor hospitals of that county and of those that shall sustain losses by fire, water, the sea or other casualties, and to such other charitable purposes."[151]

As if to emphasize the difference between the deserving and the undeserving poor, the flogging of vagabonds and control of county bridewells were dealt with in separate acts. All former statutes regarding these subjects were repealed. Houses of correction were to

be built in each locality from taxes levied by the justices in the quarter session. The same classes of persons enumerated as rogues in the 1572 act were repeated, being subject to the penalties of the new law. Two extra groups were added:- those wanderers claiming losses by fire and other accidents, and all calling themselves gypsies. After a whipping, the vagabond was given a testimonial signed and sealed in which he was required to go to either his parish of birth or to the parish in which he had lived for at least a year, or, if these were unknown, the last parish he traveled through unpunished. If a vagrant, known to be a dangerous leader of rogues, was apprehended he was either banished "to parts beyond the sea"[152] or to the galleys for life.[153]

Two other significant acts were passed in this historic session, one to maintain the present number of farms and the other to prevent the conversion of land from cultivation to enclosure.[154]

This extensive code was designed as an experiment to last only three years. But because of its unprecedented success, it was re-enacted in all essentials in 1601. The principal aspects that were copied almost verbatim were the appointment of overseers, the levying of rates, the employment of the able-bodied, provisions for relief of the impotent and apprenticeships.[155]

There were also some important changes. Instead of sending those who refused to work to the local houses of correction, the justices were empowered to commit them to jail. The act was vague as to how they were to be employed.[156] The colleges erected on commons land would "not at any time after be used or employed to or for any other habitation, but only for impotent and poor of the same parish."[157] All relatives, grandparents, parents and children were reciprocally called upon to maintain one another.[158] Besides the ordinary rates

for relieving and employing the poor, a sum of money was to be raised for the relief of the poor prisoners of the King's Bench and Marshalsea and also for county hospitals and almshouses. A minimum of twenty shillings was asked of each county annually.[159] An appeal to quarter sessions was given to persons aggrieved by any tax or act committed against them.[160] The clauses relative to the prohibition of begging and vagrancy were for the first time entirely omitted.[161]

The accomplishments of these most extensive acts were numerous and progressive. There was widespread employment of the previously unemployed and unemployable. Pressure was applied heavily on employers to keep their workers during depressions. Almshouses were founded by private charity throughout the realm. Hundreds of documents, wills and inscriptions in churches attest to the generosity of the people in lending money to deserving apprentices and setting up stock to employ all Englishmen. The extremely unfortunate, evident in the French Revolution, were provided for. The measure of social security thus developed averted wholesale unemployment and the complete helplessness and destitution of old age.[162]

Conclusion

Within less than a century Englishmen assumed secularly the responsibility for public welfare that had been vested in religious authorities for many, many centuries. Necessity preceded it; success followed it. Religious impotence and economic and social distress manifested clearly the prevalent needs of the society. Because there was no adequate institution to satisfy such needs, generous individuals first provided relief in the form of private charity. London, the English social and political center, is the finest example of this benevolence. This one town also best exemplifies the growth of municipal authority in the field of poor relief. Other local divisions such as Lincoln, Norwich and Ipswich soon followed in developing their programs. Eventually, with local men addressing themselves so persistently and openly to the problem, the interest of the national government in this field intensified, resulting in numerous legislative enactments. The essence of these laws, reflected in the 1597 and 1601 achievements, was little more than the application on the national scale of principles already practiced in the localities. The importance of the English poor law lies not in its novelty but in its extension to and its support by the entire English nation.

Epilogue

A detailed account of the enforcement of such local and national enactments is necessary for a complete understanding of the sixteenth century poor relief. Although such a study is impossible in this thesis, one must note the importance of the Privy Council and the justices of the peace in this area.

Under the surveillance of the Privy Council, the justices enforced locally the poor laws. They were notified by local citizens of problems concerning the poor such as lack of housing, medical needs,[163] high prices, and the increase of pillaging and thievery. The justices directed, advised and worked with the local sheriffs, constables and other officials in finding a solution to the welfare problem. If theirattempts were fruitless they then notified the Privy Council of their problems.

The Privy Council interferred with local administration only when absolutely necessary. In times of dire adversity, the leadership of the Privy Council was of profound importance, not only to the justices who followed its advice, but also to the public which viewed this intervention as a national guarantee of improvement.

The existing correspondence shows how well informed the Privy Council was on local affairs and how it used pressure to force effective action. A word from this noteworthy body urging better performance greatly influenced local officials to improve. In 1589 the Privy Council reprimanded the lord mayor for not restricting begging in the streets of London.[164] The Council in 1583 strongly suggested ways to prevent the increase of Irish beggars in London. The justices of Devonshire were admonished for not relieving their soldiers and sailors. The Council advised the Cambridge officials to decrease the number of the town's decaying tenements.[165]

General orders were also issued by the Council, applicable to the entire nation. In 1549-1550 the Council, because of the high prices and resulting revolts, issued general orders regulating the prices of commodities in limited supply, such as poultry and butter. It also sent letters to the justices and lord lieutenants notifying them of its action. A decade later other proclamations were issued which, instead of fixing prices, attempted to organize poor relief.[166] The most effective of the Council's general advisory orders was the 1586 Book of Orders. It required the appearance of justices at the market on market days to supervise buying and selling. Also the justices were to determine objectively the price of grain. These and other requirements in the Code were so effective that the Book of Orders was re-issued in 1594,1595, and 1596.[167]

Briefly then one sees that the Tudor justices of the peace locally and the Privy Council nationally directed the enforcement of the national public welfare programs. Inexperienced in this new and developing field, they were often unsuccessful. However they did earnestly try to bring stability to a shaky and unwholesome situation.

Footnotes

[1] W.K. Jordan, Philanthropy in England 1480-1660 (London, 1959), p. 58.

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[3] Ibid., II, pp. 314-315.

[4] E.M. Leonard, The Early History of English Poor Relief (Cambridge, 1900), p. 18.

[5] G.M. Trevelyan, Illustrated English Social History (New York, 1950), I, p. 105.

[6] Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 60.

[7] Ashley, Introduction, II, p. 317.

[8] Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 60.

[9] Ibid., p. 57.

[10] Ibid., p. 63.

[11] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[12] C. E. Robinson England A History of British Progress. (New York, 1928), p. 239.

[13] W.K. Jordan, Philanthropy in England 1480-1660, p. 65.

[14] Robinson, England, pp. 209-210.

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[16] Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 64.

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[18] Ibid., p. xvii.

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[31] John E. Neale, Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601 (New York, 1957), p. 335.

[32] Edward P. Cheyney, A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth (New York, 1948), II, p. 4.

[33] Ibid., p. 5. [34] Ibid., p. 6.

[35] G. B. Harrison, The Elizabethan Journals 1591-1603 (New York, 1939), p. 50.

[36] Cheyney, History of England, p. 7.

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[38] Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 93. [39] Cheyney, pp. 21-22.

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[41] Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 79.

[42] Leonard, Early History, p. 12.

[43] E. Lipson, The Economic History of England (New York, 1931), III, p. 422.

[44] Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 80. [45] Ibid., p. 57.

[46] Ibid., pp. 165-168. [47] Ibid., p. 168.

[48] Ibid., p. 173. [49] Ibid., p. 178.

[50] Ibid., p. 175. [51] Ibid., p. 173.

[52] Wallace Notestein, The English People on the Eve of Colonization (New York, 1954), p. 146.

[53] W. K. Jordan, The Charities of London 1480-1660 (London, 1960), pp. 17-18.

54 There was a definite change in attitude toward almsgiving with the passing of years. During the period 1480-1510, 78.10% of all charity was in the form of alms or funeral doles. However between the years 1510-1540,only 47.64% was given in these forms, indicating the increased acceptance of the idea that such gifts would not relieve but sustain poverty.

55 Jordan, Charities, p. 94.

56 Ibid., p. 95.

57 Ibid., p. 99.

58 Ibid., p. 99.

59 Ibid., p. 101.

60 Ibid., p. 102.

61 Ibid., p. 137.

62 Ibid., p. 135.

63 Ibid., p. 138.

64 Ibid., p. 139.

65 Ibid., p. 140.

66 Ibid., p. 140.

67 Ibid., p. 141.

68 Ibid., p. 142.

69 Ibid., p. 142.

70 Ibid., p. 145.

71 Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 81.

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83 Ibid., p. 307.

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90 Ibid., p. 42.

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92 Rowse, England of Elizabeth, p. 353.

[93] Leonard, Early History, p. 42. [94] Rowse, p. 353.

[95] Leonard, p. 102.

[96] Tawney and Power, pp. 313-316. [97] Ibid., p. 317.

[98] Ibid., p. 319. [99] Ibid., p. 320.

[100] Ibid., pp. 318-323. [101] Ibid., pp. 324-326.

[102] Leonard, p. 101.

[103] Lipson, Economic History, III, p. 415.

[104] Ibid., III, p. 424. [105] Ibid., III, p. 424.

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[108] Ibid., III, p. 430. [109] Ibid., III, p. 415.

[110] Ibid., III, pp. 424-425. [111] Ibid., III, p. 418.

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[113] Cheyney, History of England, p. 8.

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[115] Eden, State of the Poor, p. xxiii.

[116] Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 84. [117] Eden, p. 5.

[118] Ibid., p.5. [119] Leonard, p. 54.

[120] Ashley, Introduction, p. 359. [121] Leonard, p. 55.

[122] Eden, p. 5. [123] Ibid., p. 5.

[124] Ibid., pp. 5-6. [125] Ibid., p. 6.

[126] Ibid., p. 6. [127] Lipson, III, p. 435.

[128] Eden, p. 7. [129] Lipson, p. 423.

[130] Leonard, p. 57. [131] Lipson, p. 423.

[132] Leonard, p. 57. [133] Ibid., pp. 57-58.

[134] Ibid., p. 58.

[135] Jordan, Philanthropy, p. 87.

136 A proctor is a person employed by clergy to collect the fruits of his benefices.

137 Tawney and Power, Tudor Economic Documents, p. 328.

138 Ibid., pp. 328-331.

139 Ibid., p. 332.

140 Ibid., p. 333.

141 Lipson, III, pp. 429-430.

142 Tawney and Power, pp. 331-334.

143 Leonard, p. 73.

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151 Ibid., p. 353; Ibid., pp. 346-354.

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156 Ibid., p. 2.

157 Ibid., p. 110.

158 Ibid., p. 112.

159 Ibid., pp. 118-119.

160 Ibid., p. 112.

161 Ibid., pp. 1-121.

162 Trevelyan, Illustrated English Social History, II, pp. 88-89.

163 See Notestein's English people on the eve of colonization pp. 219-220 for more information on this.

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165 Leonard, Early History, p. 93.

166 Ibid., p. 51.

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