The Power and the Purse: Aspects of the Genesis and Implementation of the Metropolitan Poor Act 1867

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by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the genesis and implementation of two provisions of the *Metropolitan Poor Act 1867*: rate equalisation and the appointment of central government nominees to local poor law bodies.

It is contended that while the Act pointed towards the twentieth-century state in that it led to a growth in government and to redistribution of the public spending burden, a new type of gentlemanly safeguard against elected power underpinned these developments. A radical call for redistribution of wealth in the metropolis, coming largely not from the East End but from the west, the south and the City, played a significant part in the genesis of the Act's innovatory restraining step of appointing Poor Law Board nominees to metropolitan bodies. The aim, it is argued, was to dilute the representative base of these bodies as some of their poor law spending came within the compass of the new metropolitan common purse: a step taken in the same year that the representative base for parliament was widened by the passing of the *Second Reform Act*.

The thesis examines the manuscript records of the major metropolitan movement for rate equalisation, analyses decision-making on the Act's largest and longest-running poor law body, the Metropolitan Asylums Board, in its first four years, and presents a census-based socio-economic comparative study of this board's elected and elite nominated managers. The role of central government (ministers and officials) in the state growth that arose out of the Act is also considered.

The conclusion reached is that in the metropolis in the 1860s the conscious, planned and more centralised growth of poor law services, and the accompanying partial redistribution of wealth from richer to poorer areas, both arising largely as a result of insistent reformist and radical pressure, took place within a context of gentlemanly ingenuity in finding new ways of retaining influence and power.

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Abbreviations

Publications

ALB	*Albion*
BM	*Blackwood's Magazine*
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
EHR	*English Historical Review*
FM	*Fraser's Magazine*
HN	*The Historian*
HJ	*Historical Journal*
IRSH	*International Review of Social History*
LJ	*London Journal*
NC	*The Nineteenth Century*
PP	Parliamentary Papers
P&P	*Past and Present*
VS	*Victorian Studies*

Libraries, repositories, other organisations

BI	Bishopsgate Institute
BL	British Library
BodL	Bodleian Library
CWA	City of Westminster Archives
FL	Finsbury Library
GL	Guildhall Library
LBC	Camden Local History Library
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
MAD	Metropolitan Asylum District
MBW	Metropolitan Board of Works
SAD	Sick Asylum District
SLSL	Southwark Local Studies Library
THLHL	Tower Hamlets Local History Library
UCL	University College Library
WSRO	West Sussex Record Office

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I dedicate this thesis to my sister, Joy Rosemary Kershaw, in remembrance of things past.

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

Welcome from all sides greeted the Metropolitan Poor Bill when Gathorne Hardy, Conservative President of the Poor Law Board, introduced it to the House of Commons on 8 February 1867. The measure, which had arrived in the legislature after a ten-year campaign to equalise poor rates in the metropolis and shorter but vigorous campaigns to improve services for the sick poor, became law within seven weeks.[1] The implications, however, of some of its provisions, and the issues they raised, were far wider than its benevolent First Reading reception and easy progress may seem to suggest.

The Act set up the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, the aim of which was to redress partially the balance of financial liability between poor law unions in wealthier and in poorer areas of the metropolis. It would redistribute a proportion of the locally raised poor rates, to the benefit of East End unions and at the expense of the West.

Studies referring to the *Metropolitan Poor Act* have focused mainly on its connections with the origins of the welfare state or with East End poverty and distress, or have noted some of its financial outcomes.[2] Yet the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, as well as being the financial centre-piece of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* and the instrument through which the Act's social policy goals were to be pursued, constituted in itself a significant redistributive development in public finance.

The Act also offered novel answers - one of them the only element to be immediately controversial - to the question of who should control the new redistributed local spending, and in so doing raised important issues that have not since been considered in depth.

A further feature of the Act not hitherto taken into account is its chronological conjunction with Disraeli's *Second Reform Act,* introduced into Parliament three days later.

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[1] 30 & 31 Vict. c.6, *Metropolitan Poor Act 1867; Hansard* 8.2.1867 col. 150-179; A. E. Gathorne-Hardy (ed.), *Gathorne Hardy, First Earl of Cranbrook, a Memoir* (London, 1910), I, 194. Hardy wrote in his diary on 9.2.1867 that "so far as talking went" the Bill had received "universal approval", and that Disraeli thought it had made "a most favourable impression". The Bill was passed on 25 March and received the Royal Assent on 29 March.

[2] G. Ayres, *England's First State Hospitals and the Metropolitan Asylums Board 1867-1930* (London, 1971), 28, 242-8; G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (London, 1992), 249-50, 253; J. Davis, *Reforming London* (Oxford, 1988), Appendix 3.

There are, in fact, thematic links between the two Acts in that while the *Reform Act* took a leap forwards, in terms of the representational base, the *Metropolitan Poor Act* took a step backwards.

The Reform Bill, metamorphosing as it progressed through Parliament, produced household suffrage without any of the "safeguards" against democracy first envisaged; urban artisan lodgers were enfranchised. The *Metropolitan Poor Act*, on the other hand, reduced the power of local elected representatives to make financial and administrative decisions about the poor law institutions for which they were raising the rates, placed new services under indirectly rather than directly elected control, and appointed central government nominees as full members of elected poor law bodies. Although one Act extended liberties, the other reduced them, while offering more equal and equitable provision of services.

From a twentieth-century perspective the *Metropolitan Poor Act* might be interpreted as a distant prelude to the National Health Service, the Department of Social Security and even institutions such as the Inner London Education Authority. It established greater control over health care for the poor by central government, brought the financing of relief for the destitute under closer central government control, and introduced the Common Fund financing of the education of pauper children throughout London.

But a closer study of the genesis and implementation of the Act shows it was significant also in relation to the distribution of power. One of the aims embodied in the Act was undoubtedly to dilute the representative base of local metropolitan poor law bodies as some of their spending came within the compass of the new metropolitan common purse. Even Hardy acknowledged, in moving the Bill at the First Reading, that the nominee proposal was a novel one, and would be objected to.[3]

This thesis will argue that while the *Metropolitan Poor Act* pointed towards the twentieth-century state in that it led to a growth in government and to redistribution of the public spending burden, a new type of gentlemanly safeguard against elected power underpinned these developments, in the form of the nominee clauses of the Act. A strong

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[3]Hansard 8.2.1867 col. 163. Also 9.2.1867 in *The Times*, 5b; *Daily News*, 3a; *Morning Herald*, 2f; *Morning Advertiser*, 2d. Olive Anderson, "Hansard's Hazards", *EHR*, 112, II (1997), 1203-15, has emphasised recently the perils of relying solely on *Hansard*.

Radical call for redistribution of wealth in the metropolis, it will be argued, had its counter-balance in this innovatory restraining step, which supplemented or replaced existing systems of influence or control.

II

There is at present an historiographical gap in knowledge, and therefore in perception, about the genesis and implementation of the rate equalisation and nominee clauses of the *Metropolitan Poor Act.*

The most detailed study so far of the genesis of the Act is James O'Neill's article about campaigns that focused on services for the sick poor.[4] O'Neill shows the range of philanthropic, medical and nursing influences that contributed to the passing of the Act, including those of the *Lancet*, *The Times*, the *British Medical Journal*, Florence Nightingale, Louisa Twining of the Workhouse Visiting Society, the Metropolitan Poor Law Medical Officers' Association, the Association for the Improvement of the Infirmaries of Workhouses, "the professional aspirations of medical men", and also the influence of events - the London workhouse scandals - of one of which Florence Nightingale had the candour to remark later that she was "so much obliged to that poor man for dying".

However, O'Neill traces proposals for funding the desired institutional reforms - a "general metropolitan rate" raised from "the whole area of London" - no further back than late 1865,[5] and considers the possibility of medical and nursing figures, including Nightingale, having been the originators of the idea. This thesis will show that, on the contrary, a vigorous Radical-led metropolitan campaign for rate equalisation began in 1857 (with even earlier roots), and that while some of its adherents supported also the later medical-orientated campaigns described by O'Neill, its power base lay among elected representatives of poor law and other local bodies.

Gwendolyn Ayres has, similarly, focused on the medical, nursing and institutional aspects of the Act. While rightly describing the Act as "the most important poor law measure for London between 1834 and 1929 and a significant step towards the socialisation

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[4]J. O'Neill, "Finding a Policy for the Sick Poor", *VS*, 7 (1963-4), 269-80.
[5]Ibid., 274-5.

of medical care in this country", she suggests, less accurately, that medical campaigners in 1865 were the major source for the "general poor rate". The equalised rate, she also notes, was "ardently supported" by John Stuart Mill and Sir Harry Verney ('the Member for Florence Nightingale'), who were both strong advocates of medical and nursing reforms.[6] Mill and Verney had not, in fact, been involved in the lengthy Radical campaign for rate equalisation, and Ayres makes no reference to the local government roots of the funding instrument.

Gareth Stedman Jones, on the other hand, acknowledges the significance in itself of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund as a redistributive development,[7] as opposed to its usefulness merely as an instrument for financing better services for the sick poor. However, his emphasis is on East End ratepayer and vestry pressure for rate equalisation, and he does not examine the wider metropolitan rate equalisation movement, which involved mainly local radicals from the West, the City and the South rather than the East.

Nonetheless, his argument that the "practically complete" geographical separation of classes in the metropolis by 1861 - and the consequent "deformation" of charitable giving - led some of the rich to fear that the traditional fabric of social control was threatened, is relevant for the wider metropolitan context of this thesis. The vision he floats of a London reconstructed by the Charity Organisation Society or its fellow-thinkers "along the lines of an old Arcadian myth .....under the firm but benevolent aegis of a new urban squirearchy" has some links - as Stedman Jones remarks - with metropolitan poor relief events of the 1860s. He suggests that the 1867 Metropolitan Common Poor Fund and nominee guardians were part of an attempt - together with subsequent regulation of charitable giving - to re-establish social controls.[8]

Although Stedman Jones touches only briefly on these provisions of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, his interpretation in this respect is essentially the same as that underlying this

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[6]Ayres, op. cit., 22, 28, 155.
[7]Stedman Jones, op. cit., 250-61.
[8]Ibid., 251, 252, 257; Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class* (Cambridge, 1983), 79-80. Although Stedman Jones, in *Languages of Class*, chapter 2 (first delivered as a paper in 1975) cautions against the loose use of notions of social control, his own use of the concept in his earlier *Outcast London* (first published in 1971) was clearly relevant to his analysis of the metropolitan wealth-poverty divisions in the 1860s and their consequences. The concept is similarly relevant to the examination in this thesis of metropolitan poor law issues and legislation of that period.

thesis. Where it differs is that he examines 1860s questions of legislated power and control in relation to the casual poor and pressure from the East End, whereas it will be argued here that rate equalisation was achieved as a result of a ten-year campaign by a largely middle-class and tradesman metropolis-wide radical movement. The nominee provisions (which, very significantly, were established for more than just boards of guardians) and the Fund format chosen for rate equalisation represented a gentlemanly (or "new urban squirearchy") reaction against radical policies such as those promoted by the movement, and a desire to maintain control of metropolitan (as well as East End) poor relief as a wider common purse was introduced.

Historiographically, metropolitan radicalism in the 1860s has received little attention. Stedman Jones notes that radical London artisans pursued parliamentary reform.[9] Miles Taylor[10] concludes that Radical MPs suffered an "almost total eclipse" in the 1857 elections, and that they were replaced by "a new breed" of London MPs who were adventurers and job-hunters, men from the City or "nabob-like", with East India Company backgrounds. His view of metropolitan municipal radicalism is that it was backward-looking, and of the radicalism of London MPs in the 1860s that it was "economistic" and a "sad terminus". This thesis will, however, show that radicalism in the metropolis in the 1860s, both among its MPs and among local politicians involved in poor law issues, was vigorous and highly effective. The achievement of support for rate equalisation was a tribute to this political vigour.

That metropolitan rate equalisation was not mere "economistic radicalism" but a major issue that continued to be significant for more than a century after 1867 is indicated by A. R. Ilersic's centenary report[11] for the Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants. His account, with its 1967 recommendations, echoed arguments that had contributed to the setting up of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund in 1867: for instance,

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[9]Ibid., 340.
[10]M. Taylor, *The Decline of British Radicalism 1847-60* (Oxford, 1995), 15, 92, 280, 282.
[11]A. R. Ilersic, *Rate Equalisation in London* (London, 1967), 3-7, 11, 15, 17, 18, 62. Subsequent metropolitan rate equalisation measures included the *London (Equalisation of Rates) Act 1894* (a uniform 6d. rate), the *Local Government Act 1948* London Equalisation Scheme (precept from the Metropolitan boroughs), the *Local Government Act 1959* London Equalisation Scheme (a common pool for 70 % of local government spending), and the *Local Government Act 1963* (the Inner London Education Authority and, in 1965, the Inner London Equalisation Scheme under s. 66 of the Act).

that it was the "marked contrasts" between the London boroughs which provided the basis for equalisation, that in size and concentration of wealth the metropolis was unique among British conurbations and it was therefore appropriate that rate equalisation be applied to the metropolis alone, and that the inhabitants of the "less affluent dormitory areas" helped create the wealth in the central areas and should therefore be enabled to share it.

Little attention has also been paid to the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* reduction of representative power other than that in Stedman Jones's assessment of the significance of the nominee provision. Brian Keith-Lucas[12] shows the role played by the fear of democracy in "safeguards" such as plural voting, restricted qualifications for election, ex-officio and nominated members, and restrictions on some decisions made by "bare majorities", and points out that in the early nineteenth century "elected councils came slowly to be substituted for the nominated and co-opted bodies which had previously ruled so much of England". His account of nomination refers, however, to locally-generated processes such as the appointment of trustees and, after 1835, aldermen on borough councils, rather than to central government appointments, and he misses the backward step taken by the *Metropolitan Poor Act*.

Anthony Brundage,[13] tracing the boards of guardians franchise, makes no reference to the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, and points to the 1869 arrival of a new Liberal President of the Poor Law Board as the stage at which central government began to show more concern about the actions of boards of guardians. His suggestion that poor law administration experienced a "relatively trouble-free" period during the years 1848-1868, the "age of equipoise", disregards events in the metropolis. However, the reason he gives for rural stability - ex-officio guardians' often more generous relief policies - needs to be considered in relation to the 1867 Act, because through the nominee clauses the Act aimed to strengthen the non-elected element on metropolitan poor law bodies.

An analysis of the implementation of the nominee clauses is important because of the further clarification this might provide of the aims of central government in placing its own representatives on local elected boards. The historiographical debate on the nature of local

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[12]B. Keith-Lucas, *The English Local Government Franchise 1834-94* (Oxford, 1952), 20, 180-191, 201-4.
[13]A. Brundage, "Reform of the Poor Law Electoral System 1834-1894", *Albion*, 7 (1975), 205.

political elites, based substantially on non-metropolitan areas such as Cardiff, Leeds and Birmingham, is clearly relevant here, and it is therefore useful to consider this in detail.

John Davis, analysing the composition of non-poor law bodies in the metropolis, concludes that metropolitan vestries were in general ineffective because as governing groups they lacked the empowerment that accrues both to natural elites (social or economic) and through participatory politics. Social elites, such as the aristocracy, he points out, did not in general become involved in London local government (other than in a few instances in West End vestries), while consolidated industrial elites were a feature more of the factory towns than of London, which was "overwhelmingly a city of small masters". Participation was also reduced through the nature of the franchise qualification, and there was often "shopocratic" domination.[14]

E. P. Hennock considers to what extent after 1835 - when the *Municipal Corporations Act* introduced election by ratepayers - the municipal corporations were able to "draw on the services of those most prominent in the economic and social life of the town". He points out that, prior to the 19th century, local government had been, quite considerably, by appointment from above. Town councillors were expected to be men of station or respectability, of substance or property or wealth, and intelligence or education; even reformers expected these qualities of candidates for elected office. He cites evidence that these attitudes persisted as the century progressed, with widespread dismay at the increasing accession to local power of inferior classes of people. But there was also some evidence of an alternative point of view: that wealthy men, although they might be large ratepayers, might not be the most appropriate people to safeguard the interests of the smaller man: "the small tradesmen, heavily rated for their shops, whose savings were often invested in a house or two". In an earlier work Hennock reaches the conclusion that "the system of local government finance tended ..... to push a section of the inhabitants, often a predominantly lower-middle-class section, into municipal politics". They had interests to defend, and these made them " potentially hostile" to professional and large businessmen, the "natural leaders of the community". When a reaction against the rates by small

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[14]Davis, op. cit., 20-23.

property-owners was successful and they were elected on an economist-type programme, there would be "a marked deterioration in the quality of local government".[15]

Martin Daunton disagrees with Hennock's identification of a community's "natural elite" as its economic leaders/large businessmen.[16] He also questions whether this group were superior as local leaders, and argues that it was not "natural" for merchants and industrialists to want to serve on local authorities if their businesses were not affected significantly by the bodies' decisions. It was the class below them - small businessmen and small landlords - who were more often affected by local decisions. He suggests that the swing from small businessmen/economist control to large businessmen/improver control, for example in Birmingham in the mid-nineteenth century, can be accounted for partly by the fact that a stage was reached where industrialists would benefit economically from an improved infrastructure and therefore had reasons for wanting to control the local authority. Hennock's approach, Daunton suggests, should be reversed. The question was not why lower groups became the "natural leaders" at certain times, but "why the lower groups as natural leaders might sometimes be replaced in certain circumstances by the elite." The quality of the leadership offered by both groups could also be queried. Large businessmen were often concerned only with the efficiency of local government, tighter accountancy procedures, and "treating municipal concerns like the private sector". Lower groups, on the other hand, might have "a wider conception of municipal functions". Daunton points out that in Cardiff the reverse of Hennock's interpretation applied in respect of both of these questions.

While these findings by Davis, Hennock and Daunton relate to non-poor law bodies (and only Davis's to London),[17] the questions they raise about the calibre of local representation are particularly important for this thesis. The major reason given for the introduction of the nominee clauses was, essentially, that metropolitan guardians could not

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[15]E. P. Hennock, *Fit and Proper Person: Ideal and Reality in nineteenth-century urban government* (London, 1973), 308-16, 332-4; E. P. Hennock, "Finance and politics in urban local government 1835-1900", *HJ* VI, 1 (1963), 217-8, 223; E. P. Hennock, "The Social Compositions of Borough Councils in Two Large Cities, 1835-1914" in H. Dyos (ed.), *The Study of Urban History* (London, 1968), 316, 322.
[16]M. Daunton, *Coal Metropolis, Cardiff 1870-1914* (Leicester, 1977) 149-51.
[17]J. Davis, "Modern London 1850-1939", *LJ*, 20, 2 (1995), 59, surveying metropolitan historioriography, notes the limited coverage of poor law local government; A. I. Tanner, "The City of London Poor Law Union 1837-1869", Ph.D. thesis (London, 1995), subsequently completed her study of the wealthiest metropolitan union.

be trusted to carry out their duties satisfactorily; the case presented here, however, is that these provisions represented a gentlemanly safeguard against the potential dominance of elected power on metropolitan poor law bodies as the *Metropolitan Poor Act* brought in rate redistribution and a vast expansion of services.

Overall, a study of secondary sources shows that the genesis and implementation of the 1867 provisions for metropolitan rate equalisation and central government nominees on poor law bodies has hitherto received limited coverage. This constitutes a significant gap not only in metropolitan history but also in English history. An assessment of the power relations inherent in questions involving the public purse and electoral representation - and particularly in questions involving jointly both - must inevitably affect one's interpretation of other issues.

III

In order to make clear the nature of the changes brought about by the *Metropolitan Poor Act* (and in subsequent chapters to compare these with policy alternatives available to the government, and draw further conclusions about the Act's genesis and implementation) a brief account will now be given of the Act itself.

The provisions of the Act with which this thesis is largely concerned (the financial and nominee clauses) are related integrally to most of its other provisions, but three distinct areas of change - to poor law institutions, to the control of these institutions, and to the financing of their activities - can be discerned.

Changes to institutions

The Act provided for the classification of the poor - the setting up of separate district asylums for "the sick, insane, or infirm, or other class or classes of the poor"[18] - in place of the general mixed workhouse.

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[18]Op. cit., s.59.

In order to achieve such large-scale reorganisation irrespective of whether the parishes/ unions that owned and ran the workhouses agreed, the Poor Law Board was given draconian powers. The Board was enabled to unite compulsorily any poor law unions and/or parishes into asylum districts, to order the district managers (a new designation) to buy, hire or build asylum buildings of any size, to order that any building presently being used as a workhouse be converted to use as a district asylum, and to decide the rent or compensation for buildings that should be paid to guardians. Guardians and managers (and therefore also the Poor Law Board) would not need to get the consent of electors before disposing of any buildings or land.[19]

Any parishes/unions that had previously classified their own poor and provided separate rather than general accommodation could be ordered by the Poor Law Board to admit similar classes of poor from other unions/parishes, with the "source" guardians having the power to enter and inspect the receiving workhouse. [20]

The new asylum managers would have the same powers as guardians had in relation to inmates. The Poor Law Board would make the rules for admission, provision of medicines and surgical care, and treatment of inmates. Asylums for the sick or insane might also be used as medical schools, "for purposes of medical instruction, and for the training of nurses".[21]

Drop-in dispensaries could also be required of guardians - who would be allowed to borrow money to set them up - together with places for the meetings of new dispensary committees and for medical officers to see the outdoor sick poor.

Changes in control

The Act's most disputed change of control was Hardy's "novel" proposal, the addition to local elected bodies of members nominated by the Poor Law Board.[22] Central

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[19]Ibid., s.16.
[20]Ibid., s.50.
[21]Ibid., s.29.
[22]Hansard 8.2.1867 col. 163.

government's nominees were to be added to three types of institution: the new asylum districts, the boards of guardians and the district school boards.

The new asylum districts would be run by corporate bodies of managers who would be partly elective (indirectly, from among guardians or from ratepayers qualified to be guardians) and partly nominated by the Poor Law Board from among Justices of the Peace and/or ratepayers in the district whose property had a rateable value of at least £40; this figure constituted a wealth boundary, in that the qualification that could be required of elected guardians had, for more than 30 years, been "not...exceeding...£40".

The Poor Law Board would have the power to prescribe the total number, qualifications and tenure of asylum district managers, the proportions of nominee to elective (to a nominee maximum of 1:3), the number, or weighting, of elective managers from each union/parish, the election procedure, and the quorum for managers' meetings.[23]

Similar conditions were prescribed for nominees to be added to boards of guardians and school district boards,[24] and the dispensary committees were to take the appointment of district medical officers out of the hands of the boards of guardians.[25]

A further major change of control was that the ten metropolitan parishes still governed by their own Local Acts rather than the 1834 New Poor Law[26] lost some of their individuality and independence. Henceforth they too would have to come within the framework of the standard 1834 boards of guardians provisions.[27] The Poor Law Board also gained the power unilaterally to group parishes into unions for poor relief purposes[28] without the previous restriction of having, for parishes with 20,000-plus population, to get the consent of two-thirds of the guardians.[29]

Changes in financing

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[23]Op. cit., s.9-12. (The debates in *Hansard* sometimes report the proportion as being one-third of the whole body, or 1:2.)
[24]Ibid., s.49 & 79.
[25]Ibid., s.39-41.
[26]4 & 5 Will. IV c.76, *Poor Law Amendment Act 1834.*
[27]Ibid., s.74.
[28]Ibid., s.78.
[29]7 & 8 Vict. c.101.s.64

The establishment of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund was a major step, the significance of which (despite its limited nature) it is difficult to exaggerate, in that for the first time the financing of large elements of metropolitan poor relief - including health care, education and social support - was spread over a wider field than the parish or union. At the same time, however, because it was a purely administrative Fund with no local electoral oversight, the line of financial accountability between spenders and ratepayers was disrupted.

Throughout the metropolis, parishes and unions were to be assessed for their contribution to the Common Poor Fund on the basis of annual rateable value of local property, with wealthier parishes/unions contributing more than they would have done if they had been collecting rates only for themselves, and poorer parishes and unions contributing less. The sum in the Common Poor Fund would then be distributed to parishes and unions as reimbursement for a wide range of poor relief expenditure.

Reimbursement from the Fund was to be allowed for specified maintenance and other revenue expenditure but not for spending on capital items. Allowable expenses were the maintenance of lunatics and the insane poor (except for such expenditure chargeable to the county rate), maintenance of smallpox and fever patients, medical and surgical supplies (including medicine), salaries of district school officers, asylum officers and dispensing staff, compensation for staff affected by the Act, birth and death registration fees, vaccination expenses, maintenance of pauper children in schools, the relief of the destitute (or casual, wandering poor), and provision of temporary wards for such poor. The costs of running the Common Poor Fund - the salaries and expenses of the Receiver and his assistants - would also be borne by the Fund, despite the fact that this was a central government function.[30]

In terms of capital items, the Act encouraged high spending by the local bodies. Asylum district managers were empowered to borrow money for the buying, building or hiring of buildings, and to charge the capital sum and interest to union/parish poor rates proportionately to these bodies' maintenance contributions to the asylum; their maximum permitted loan was equal to a third of the annual expenditure on poor relief within the

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[30]Op. cit., s.69-71.

asylum district aggregated for the preceding three years.[31] Boards of guardians were empowered to borrow up to one half of the total amount raised from the rates in their union or parish within the past three years.[32]

While capital spending such as this might lead to heavy parish- or union-borne loan debt, an advantage of high spending on building works required under the Act was that a local body might become eligible for reimbursement of indoor poor relief costs, for instance on the destitute or on paupers sent to the new institutions, from the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund.

IV

Hardy made a distinction between "equalising" metropolitan poor rates - which he said he was not prepared to do - and his chosen policy of "distributing" charges at present made separately in the localities,[33] but this distinction was to a considerable extent a matter of political semantics.

Although the Poor Law Board's Receiver, in administering the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, would not be required to announce regularly an equal metropolitan rate poundage but merely to calculate the contributions due from each local body based on the rateable value of property in its parish or union, the principle for both procedures was clearly the same: that income collected on the basis of the ability to pay should be distributed on the basis of (audited) need across the metropolis.

The reason Hardy gave for his policy choice (or policy definition) was that his Bill would be defeated if he proposed to equalise "the rates of the whole of the metropolis". However, his redistribution did of course involve the whole of the metropolis, and the point at issue was instead the number of spending items to which equalisation should apply. The distinction he was really making was between the radical concept of "rate equalisation" around which a highly effective campaign had been conducted since 1857 and which usually

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[31]Ibid., s.17.
[32]Ibid., s.80,81.
[33]*Hansard* 8.2.1867, col. 168. The distinction was reported also in several London newspapers on 9.2.1867, e.g. *The Times*, 5c; *Daily Telegraph*, 2f; *Daily News*, 3a; *Morning Herald*, 3b.

included metropolitan electoral control of the rates, and administrative redistribution operated by civil servants. The form taken by rate redistribution, or equalisation, in 1867 avoided an extension of electoral control and was therefore of a piece, strategically, with the changes of control introduced in the nominee clauses.

The changes introduced in the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* rate equalisation and nominee clauses were of greater significance politically than has generally been recognised. The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate their significance.

CHAPTER 2. The Legislative and Parliamentary Context

Some of the questions relating to the *Metropolitan Poor Act* had been debated since at least the reign of Elizabeth I. When, from 1857, an insistent call grew for a redistributive approach to metropolitan poor relief, parliament was a major arena for consideration of the issues, both old and new, that underlay the Act, and the focus of a wide range of influences on policy-making.

That redistribution of the poor relief burden was recognised as a policy area of long-standing and continuing significance is confirmed by the fact that in 1868, the year after the *Metropolitan Poor Act* was passed, the House of Commons ordered the reprinting of an 1850 select committee report[1] the sixth recommendation of which set the historical context:

> That the Relief of the Poor is a national object towards which every description of property ought justly to be called upon to contribute, and that the Act of 43 Eliz. c.2. contemplated such contribution according to "the ability" of every "inhabitant".

The concept was that of the legislated common purse. Essential, therefore, as a framework for understanding the changes brought about by the *Metropolitan Poor Act* is the Act's legislative context. The Act was also the outcome of a variety of policy-making processes. The debates in parliament provide insights into these processes as well as into some of the concerns and issues that affected the Act's key features and influenced its implementation.

II

Most of the metropolitan local poor law bodies affected by the 1867 Act operated under the New Poor Law - the *Poor Law Amendment Act 1834* (and its amending and

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[1]PP 1867-8, xiii, 1, *Report for Select Committee of House of Lords (in Session 1850) on laws relating to parochial assessments.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed 26.7.1850, and to be reprinted 9.7.1868.

related Acts) - as unions headed by boards of guardians. One of the aims of the 1867 Act was to bring the other ten[2] - the more independent Local Act poor law bodies - within 1834 conditions also. These differences in status are part of the legislative context of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*,[3] and were an important factor in conflicts of interest that arose whenever it seemed that a policy of metropolis-wide rate equalisation might require the ten "independent" parishes to be brought more closely under the control of the Poor Law Board.

Under the 1834 Act guardians were directly elected but on a plural voting system based partly on the 1818 *Vestries Act*,[4] which had aimed to retain but regulate the Open Vestries in which inhabitants assembled for direct decision-making, and had created a plural voting scale of up to a maximum of six votes. The 1818 Act and its adoptive sister-Act of the following year, the *1819 Poor Relief Act*,[5] which allowed select vestries to be elected on the 1818 plural scale in open vestry, had attracted much criticism over several decades, not only from Radicals such as Cobbett but also from anti-centralisers such as the Conservative Joshua Toulmin Smith[6] (although John Stuart Mill favoured plural voting[7]). Particularly unpopular, on the grounds both of disorderliness and of ancient rights, was the use of the complex voting scale in large open vestry meetings. Toulmin Smith, for instance, wrote that "it gives a number of votes not according to the number of minds, but the amount of property.....in the true spirit of centralisation it treats materialism as the sole foundation and criterion for human good ".[8]

In incorporating the 1818 vestries plural voting scale for boards of guardians into the 1834 *Poor Law Amendment Act*, parliament rejected the more recent, more equal

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[2]PP 1867 xii, *Report of Select Committee on Metropolitan Local Government*, Appendix 13, Local Acts of the Metropolis. The parishes where poor relief prior to the 1867 Act was controlled by Local Acts were St. Marylebone, St. Pancras, St. George Hanover Square, St. Mary Islington, St. Mary Newington, St. James Westminster, St. James & St. John Clerkenwell, St. Luke Middlesex, St. Margaret & St. John Westminster and St. Giles-in-the-Fields & St. George Bloomsbury.

[3]*Hansard* 21.2.1867, col. 774. In the Second Reading Hardy described these Local Acts as being "among the greatest impediments with which the Poor Law Board have to contend". The Board, he said, was "constantly .... liable to be tripped up in courts of law" by these bodies.

[4]58 Geo.III c.69 and 59 Geo.III c.85, *Vestries Act 1818* and *Vestries Act 1819* (known jointly as Sturges Bourne's Act).

[5]59 Geo.III c.12, *Poor Relief Act 1819.*

[6]Keith-Lucas, op. cit., 24.

[7]J. S. Mill, "Of Local Representative Bodies" in (ed.) H. B. Acton, *Utilitarianism, Liberty, Representative Government* (London, 1980), 349.

[8]Keith-Lucas, op. cit., 25.

and single franchise of the adoptive *1831 Vestries Act* (Hobhouse's Act), which had arisen out of Radical opposition in the metropolis to the working of close or select vestries, and which allowed single voting for a select vestry for all ratepayers, with a secret ballot if demanded by five ratepayers.[9] Most popular in London, and particularly in West End and adjoining "northern" parishes, the Hobhouse franchise pattern was in due course to be adopted in 1855 on a metropolis-wide scale for non-poor law government.

The 1834 Act, having thus disregarded the franchise reforms of Hobhouse's Act and also the even more recent parliamentary franchise reforms of the 1832 *Representation of the People Act*[10], which had given the vote to all city and borough £10 p.a. rateable value occupiers, set up poor law unions of parishes to be governed by boards of guardians elected through the six-step plural franchise, heavily weighted in favour of owners of land or property. There were separate voting scales for owners and for ratepaying occupiers, with an additional vote for owners who were also occupiers. The six-step scale for owners gave one vote for every £25 of annual rateable (rental) value, and culminated in six votes for a rateable value of over £150; owners were allowed to vote by proxy, and companies and other corporations were allowed to vote as owners. For occupier-ratepayers there was to be a maximum of three votes: the range was from one vote for property with an annual rateable value of under £200, to three votes for an a.r.v. of £400 or more. Voting was to be in writing, and the new central government Poor Law Commissioners would decide the method of collecting and returning voting papers. Further control from above came with the addition of all Justices of the Peace resident in the area to each board of guardians as ex-officio members.

Plural voting for guardians was, clearly, a safeguard against popular control, and its significance, initially, included its potential usefulness in the implementation of the 1834 Act's principles of "less eligibility" (and the labour or workhouse "tests").[11] However, electoral safeguards were not unique in the metropolis to the 1834 poor law bodies; of the ten Local Act independent poor law bodies, eight were also appointed by

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[9] 1 & 2 Will.IV c.60; Keith-Lucas, op. cit., 30, 32, 34. Keith-Lucas comments of Hobhouse's trail-blazing Act that "thus tentatively, and in the narrow sphere of the parish vestry, this guarantee of the voter's freedom was first introduced into general English law. Hobhouse himself, in his memoirs, concluded that "the Vestries Act was no bad pilot balloon for the great Act of 1832."

[10] 2 & 3 Will.IV c.45.

[11] D. Fraser, *The Evolution of the British Welfare State* (London, 1984), 43-49.

means of a "filtering" system, in that their members were elected not directly by ratepayers but indirectly by vestries consisting of both elected vestrymen and ex-officio parish officers.[12]

Furthermore, despite its franchise being heavily weighted in favour of the wealthy, the 1834 Act's qualifications for office as a guardian[13] were significantly less restrictive than Hobhouse's 1831 qualifications for select vestrymen.[14] Whereas the Hobhouse qualification barrier for vestrymen was to be a ratepayer at not less than £40 rental p.a. in London and in large parishes, or an owner (with a lower ratepayer entry of "not less than £10" only for smaller parishes outside London), the 1834 Act required that the Poor Law Commissioners (later the Poor Law Board) fix a ratepaying qualification that did not exceed £40 rateable value. Forty pounds was therefore the qualification floor for the metropolitan Local Act vestrymen who indirectly elected their own poor law bodies, but the ceiling for the Poor Law Board when they set the qualification for 1834 boards of guardians in the metropolis and elsewhere; the Commissioners subsequently allowed a £25 qualification for poorer parts of the metropolis. Indeed, the difference between Poor Law Board and "independent" qualifications was even greater in several of the wealthier Local Act parishes with their own independent poor law bodies: in St. George Hanover Square, for instance, the vestry formula was one-third vestrymen at £150, one-third at £80, and one-third at £40, and in St. Giles-in-the-Field and St. George Bloomsbury it was half at £75 and half at £50.[15]

Wealthier ratepayers in the Local Act parishes therefore stood to lose, through increased competition for places under the lower qualification requirement, if they came under 1834 conditions. On the other hand their electorate, under plural voting, would be more select, or less "popular". This suggests that the issue at stake in 1867 for Local Act parishes is likely to have been not so much fear of a radical change in electoral conditions as loss of local independence to the Poor Law Board.

Ten years after the introduction of the New Poor Law the inequality of representation between owners and ratepayer-occupiers on the boards of guardians was

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[12]PP 1867 xii, op. cit., Appendix 13.
[13]4 & 5 Will.IV c.76 s.38.
[14]1 & 2 Will.IV c.60 s.26.
[15]PP1867 xii, op. cit. (chaired by A. S. Ayrton). Appendix 13, "Local Acts of the Metropolis", shows the complexity of metropolitan vestry and non-1834 poor law arrangements up to 1867.

reduced slightly in the *1844 Poor Law Amendment Act.*[16] Although the principle of a six-stage plural franchise was retained, there was to be just one scale for both groups: rising in £50 stages from an annual rateable value of less than £50 to an a.r.v. of at least £250.

At the same time an attempt was made to introduce indirect election into a new form of poor law body. Guardians were to comprise the electoral college that would vote for members of new district boards of asylums for the destitute houseless poor and new district boards for pauper schools that were permitted to be established under the Act. Furthermore, the chairman of the board of guardians in each union of the district could become, if willing, an ex-officio member of the local district boards. The members of the new district boards would have the same minimum qualifications as guardians: to be set by the Poor Law Board at up to £40 a.r.v. These provisions were not implemented but are significant because they were, in a number of respects, to be re-introduced in the *Metropolitan Poor Act.*

Central government exerted further control over boards of guardians in the *1847 Poor Law Board Act*[17], when inspectors appointed by the Commissioners became entitled to "attend every board of guardians and every parochial and other local meeting held for the relief of the poor, and to take part in the proceedings, but not to vote at such board or meeting".

While boards of guardians of the poor law unions continued to function under the comparatively close control of central government and retained six-stage plural voting, non-poor law local government bodies were given greater freedom. Outside London the local government (non-board of guardians) franchise had moved, for boroughs, in the progressive direction formulated by Hobhouse and the London radicals in the *1831 Vestries Act* when, in 1835, the 1835 *Municipal Corporations Act*[18] introduced the franchise for all male occupiers who had been rated for three years, with one person one vote for each vacancy. Twenty years later in the metropolis the power of the metropolitan vestries increased as a result of the 1855 *Metropolis Management Act,*[19] which set up the Metropolitan Board of Works as a first tier authority for all of London, including the City. MBW members were elected indirectly by the larger (Schedule A)

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[16] 7 & 8 Vict. c.101.
[17] 10 & 11 Vict. c.109.
[18] 5 & 6 Will.IV c.76.
[19] 18 & 19 Vict. c.120.

vestries or the new District Boards of Works, which were themselves elected indirectly by the smaller (Schedule B) vestries. The new members of the MBW were in fact doubly or trebly elected, because they had all been elected first as parish vestrymen. The qualification for office as a vestryman (and therefore as a DBW and MBW member) was to be a ratepayer-occupier assessed at £40 or more a.r.v. (or £25 or more, if only one-sixth or fewer of a parish's assessments reached the £40 level.) The franchise for vestry elections was simply to be a parish ratepayer who had been rated for at least the preceding year. Voting was single, there would be a secret ballot if demanded by five ratepayers, and re-election would be by thirds every May. All of these conditions of election and office for vestrymen (apart from the conditional lower qualification of £25 instead of £10), were identical to those in Hobhouse's radical adoptive 1831 Act.

The legislative situation in the metropolis, therefore, as the 1860s approached, was that (leaving the City aside) elected members on the four leading local government institutions - the Metropolitan Board of Works, the District Boards of Works, the vestries and the boards of guardians - were all subject to a fairly similar qualification for office: assessment for the poor rate at an annual rateable (rental) value of around £40, with some variations.

The franchise on which they were elected was, however, very different. The boards of guardians franchise, with its multiple votes for the wealthier, contrasted with the open ratepayer franchise of parish vestry elections and the indirect elections to the MBW and DBWs deriving from this franchise. The boards of guardians franchise was to be further extended in the *1867 Poor Law Amendment Act*[20] to include joint stock or other companies, corporations, commissioners, and public trustees whose corporate property was rated in the parish. These organisations were enabled by the Act to appoint one of their officers to vote on their behalf in accordance with the value of their property.

Both the vestries and the boards of guardians had non-elected but voting ex-officio members - clergymen, churchwardens and overseers for the one, and Justices of the Peace for the other. However, none of the four metropolitan institutions had central government's voting nominees among their number: this was the unique development still to be introduced into metropolitan boards of guardians and other metropolitan poor

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[20] 30 & 31 Vict. c.106 s.10.

law bodies by the *Metropolitan Poor Act.* Nominated guardians were to remain for nearly 30 years, until the *1894 Local Government Act*[21] abolished both ex-officio and nominated guardians. This was not, however, the end of unelected members of boards of guardians, although it was the end of central government nomineeship: the 1894 Act introduced a form of co-option in which guardians themselves were enabled to elect up to four members, including their chairman and vice-chairman, from outside their body, as "additional guardians".

In 1867 the contrast between the two new systems of voting that the metropolis's ten "independent" Local Act parishes were now entering - the *Second Reform Act*'s new parliamentary franchise and the 1834 poor law franchise that they had to comply with as a result of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* - reflected the greater degree of social control incorporated in poor law governance. Under the *Second Reform Act* the vestry ratepayer franchise that had been achieved in 1855[22] was extended, for occupiers, to parliamentary elections. Anyone of full age who had been an inhabitant occupier and ratepayer of a house, as owner or tenant, for the preceding 12 months, was entitled to vote, as were lodgers if their lodgings had an annual unfurnished rental value of £10 and certain other conditions applied, such as that the property was not let out wholly as lodgings. Owners were no longer to be rated as such (apart from some lodgings exceptions) so their vote would depend on occupancy. All had a single vote. Voters for the ten new compulsorily-established boards of guardians, on the other hand, came within the plural voting conditions of the New Poor Law. "Ordinary" ratepayers did, however, experience a gain, in that for the first time, in most cases, they had a direct vote for their poor law body instead of being confined to choosing the vestrymen who chose the directors of the poor.

The franchise and the qualification for office were, however, far from being the only method by which government controlled the constitution of boards of guardians. Changes in the power of central government to reconstruct boards of guardians of parishes or unions through dissolving, dividing, uniting or amending took place from 1834 onwards. This was significant because, as this power developed through legislation, central government's ability to re-shape local poor relief communities, and to merge or divide inefficient, troublesome or strong-minded boards of guardians of

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[21] 56 & 57 Vict. c.73.s.20 (1).
[22] 18 & 19 Vict. c.120, *Metropolis Local Management Act 1855.*

unions or parishes, was increased. In 1834[23] the consent of two-thirds of the members of the board of guardians of a union was required before the Poor Law Commissioners could make an order to dissolve the union or separate parishes from or add them to the union. This consent requirement applied not only to 1834 unions but also to those Gilbert[24] and Local Act unions formed before the Act. Over the next 35 years protection against unilateral restructuring by central government was whittled away. In the *1844 Poor Law Amendment Act* the 1834 unions lost the two-thirds consent power given to them ten years earlier. However, large Local Act parishes (pop. over 20,000), of which there were several in the metropolis, gained this right in cases where the Commissioners wanted to unite them with other parishes.

The *Metropolitan Poor Act 1867* was to put a halt to this gain, repealing the provision for guardians' consent.[25] In the same year the *1867 Poor Law Amendment Act*[26] took the new step of allowing the Board to carry out restructuring following a "public inquiry on the spot". The elected boards of guardians would not be involved. All that was required was for an application to be made in writing to the Poor Law Board by "one tenth part in value of owners of property and of ratepayers" for readjustment or division of a parish; following the inquiry on the spot, the Board would either confirm the restructuring in the same terms as the application, or modify it. This was in effect an exercise in the direct linking, in significant decision-making, of the electorate with central government officials, without the mediation of an elected body; the Poor Law Board's order would however be made provisionally, and would have to be submitted to Parliament for confirmation. It was this same *Poor Law Amendment Act* which, after decades of annual renewal, made the Poor Law Board permanent - four years before the Board's abolition and replacement by the Local Government Board.

Draconian powers to dissolve any union - whether 1834, Gilbert or Local Act - were given in the *1853 Lunatic Asylums Act*[27] to any Committee of Visitors "with the consent of one of Her Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State". These were the

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[23] 4 & 5 Will.IV c.76 s.32.
[24] 22 Geo. III c.83, *Act for the Better Relief and Employment of the Poor, 1782* ("Gilbert's Act").
[25] 7 & 8 Vict. c.101 s.66,64. 30 & 31 Vict. c.6, s.78.
[26] 30 & 31 Vict. c.106.
[27] 16 & 17 Vict. c.97 s.39.

county asylums for pauper lunatics run by powerful committees of JPs. In some respects this Act was a minor precursor of the *Metropolitan Poor Act 1867* which, in setting up district asylums, also introduced additional central government controls on the boards of guardians who would be involved with the asylums.

The history of financial changes is also significant. The 1834 common, or general, fund was for expenditure on facilities that the parishes would share in common: the purchasing, building, hiring, providing, altering or enlarging of workhouses; the purchase or renting of lands or buildings for poor relief purposes; the maintenance of workhouses and other places; payments and allowances to union officers; the provision of utensils and materials "for setting the poor on work", and other expenses incurred "for the common use or benefit or on the common account of such parishes". The emphasis was on "common", or shared, usage or benefit. All other items of parish poor relief spending would continue to be paid for by the individual parishes.[28] Each parish would pay in to the union common fund on the basis of their average annual expenditure on poor relief over the previous three years. There was also provision for new averages to be assessed in future years.

The major question that was not addressed here in the 1834 Act was that of differences in levels of wealth and poverty between parishes in a union. A parish with a higher level of pauperism and therefore a higher "average" on which its contribution to the union general fund was assessed might very well be a poorer parish in terms of the wealth of its inhabitants; its own poor rate assessment might also be faulty, it that it might be based on local undervaluation or lack regular revaluation. These issues relating to the need for redistribution of financial burdens *within* unions were addressed by parliament at various times over the next 30 years, and were to be among the stepping-stones, in the metropolis, to the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund's wider redistribution - not *within* but *between* unions across the whole metropolis.

The first attempted change in funding arrangements after 1834 was significant in terms of later developments. The *1844 Poor Law Amendment Act*[29], in providing for the financing of the new district schools and district asylums for the destitute houseless

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[28]T168/82, 28.3.1897, Memorandum to the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, Appendix 3, "Subventions in relief of local taxation": All poor relief spending was raised locally until 1846, when Treasury funding of the salaries of poor law auditors, medical officers and teachers began; no further central grants had been introduced by 1867.
[29]7 & 8 Vict. c.101 s.41-48.

poor, required the asylums' expenditure to be charged to the constituent parish or union on the basis of the annual rateable value of property, as assessed for the county or borough rate. Although the asylum provisions were the part of the 1844 Act that met resistance in the metropolis and were not implemented, it is important to note that this important but permissive funding provision introduced, potentially, two new systems in local finance in the metropolis and the City of London (and also certain other named cities, towns and boroughs). Firstly, it adopted a redistributive form of rating *between* parishes and unions within the new districts, and secondly, in doing so, it created a wider new redistributive rating area - larger than a parish or union, but smaller than a county. The district asylums were to be set up "as and when (the Poor Law Board) may see fit".

More significant in practice because it was not permissive but compulsory was the *1848 Poor Law Amendment Act*[30] which, 14 years after the 1834 unions and their common funds had been instituted, made all relief of the irremovable poor (those who had gained settlement in a parish because of five years residence[31]) and also all relief of "destitute wayfarers, wanderers and foundlings" chargeable to the common fund. This meant that for the first time the common fund was paying for some of the poor relief expenses of an individual parish instead of just for facilities used in common by all parishes, such as the union workhouse. This Act also addressed one of the weaknesses of the parish poor rate system in that it gave guardians the power, when requested, to have a valuation made of property in any parish.

A fundamental change in funding occurred in the *1861 Poor Removal Act*,[32] when the basis of assessment of parish contributions to the union common fund changed from past levels of pauperism to property values. Parishes would in future be required to pay into the common fund in proportion to the value of all their land and property, whether actually rated or not. The guardians would base their calculations on the valuation on which the parish was assessed for the county rate. This requirement of proportionality of parish contributions for the large amount of expenditure now covered by the union common fund was a major step on the road to fully redistributive rating within unions.

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[30] 11 & 12 Vict. c.110.
[31] 9 & 10 Vict. c.66, *Poor Removal Act 1846*, s.1.
[32] 24 & 25 Vict. c.55.

The issue of valuation, a crucial element in a fair rating system but addressed only marginally in 1848, was tackled in the *1862 Union Assessment Committee Act,*[33] which placed in the hands of the boards of guardians the responsibility for setting up annually, from amongst themselves, an Assessment Committee with the responsibility to investigate and supervise valuations. One-third of the committee were, however, required to be ex-officio (J.P.) members of the board. A system for appealing against valuations was included, and Gilbert and Local Act unions were given the opportunity to apply to the Poor Law Board to be allowed to adopt the Act. (In 1869 the *Valuation [Metropolis] Act*[34] made it compulsory for all non-1834 Act unions and parishes to appoint Assesssment Committees.)

The closest precursor of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund in terms both of time and function was instituted under the *1864 Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act.*[35] The holder of Houseless Poor fund was to be, somewhat incongruously, the Metropolitan Board of Works, which hitherto had not been involved in the poor law; its institutional links were with the vestries and district boards of works and its responsibilities were local authority matters such as sewers, lighting, streets, parks and traffic. The new Act empowered the MBW to raise from parishes, through its general rate,[36] funds for the relief of destitute wayfarers, wanderers or foundlings; relief would include food and overnight temporary accommodation, whether hired or provided in workhouse vagrant or casual wards. The funds collected through the rate would be placed in a metropolitan common pool, and guardians would be able to apply to the common pool for reimbursement of money they had spent on these facilities. The common pool was set up initially for six months, "during the ensuing winter", and was to be available only to those unions or parishes whose guardians had provided vagrant or casual wards "as the Poor Law Board shall direct".

The following year the *Houseless Poor Act* was made perpetual, and a provision to inspect the wards and places of reception was added. This was, however, to be a short-lived "perpetual" common pool, being superseded in 1867 by the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, to which the *Houseless Poor Act's* redistributive functions were

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[33] 25 & 26 Vict. c.103.
[34] 32 & 33 Vict. c.67.
[35] 27 & 28 Vict. c.116.
[36] 18 & 19 Vict. c.120 s.158, 161.

transferred. The principle of a metropolis-wide common fund for poor relief had, nonetheless, been established by this unique venture.

The *Union Chargeability Act*[37] reached the statute book the same year, finally bringing all poor relief expenses of 1834 unions into the union common or general fund. No longer would parishes be required separately to fund the relief of their own poor. Union chargeability, or union rating, as it was commonly called, was the third stage of the process which had begun in 1861 with the establishment of the annual rateable value of property as the basis of contributions, had progressed to the setting up in 1862 of the union assessment committees, and was now to incorporate an equal pound rate. This momentous 1865 Act placed all poor relief finance on a redistributive basis within (but not between) unions.

Although Local Act unions and incorporations were offered the opportunity to adopt the Act and come within the same framework, the ten independent metropolitan local poor law bodies did not do so. However, they, together with the rest of the metropolis, were to come within the compass, two years later, of the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* administrative Common Poor Fund.

This study of the legislative context of the Act confirms the significance of the themes highlighted in the introductory chapter. The *Metropolitan Poor Act* extended the redistributive systems of the 1834 Act, the *Union Chargeability Act 1865* and the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Acts 1864/5.* The format, however - an administrative Fund controlled by central government - ran counter to previous developments. Hardy's Act also revived the previously rejected 1844 *Poor Law Amendment Act* provisions for dividing the metropolis into poor law districts - a system which provided, as did the 1867 Fund, an alternative to placing equalised funding under metropolis-wide electoral control.

In bringing all metropolitan poor law bodies within the framework of the 1834 Act[38] the *Metropolitan Poor Act* extended still further central government's powers. In adding its new system of nominees to the existing New Poor Law provisions for plural voting and ex-officio JP-guardians, the Act also expanded, in the metropolis, central government's instruments for non-elected control of poor relief at the local level.

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[37] 28 & 29 Vict c.79.

[38] LMA, *Notes on formation of boards of guardians.* Nine of the ten had become either single unions or parts of unions by 1869.

III

An immense amount of material about the issues and concerns involved in the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* genesis and implementation can be found in the records of parliamentary debates. The object in examining some of this material is not so much to consider the thinking of individual parliamentarians as to illuminate the processes involved in the making of this public policy.[39]

To analyse the debates, a methodological framework of five policy-making models has been devised[40] as a means of identifying and explaining the forces that shaped the policies[41] in the *Metropolitan Poor Act*. The models are based on the following five questions about the policy making process. Was the Act the product of a reasoned, or "Rational", decision-making process, with a correct identification of the problem - metropolitan poverty and the West-East divide - leading to a logical solution?[42] Did the Act, on the other hand, not represent a reasoned response but the attempted satisfaction of the demands of various interest groups pressing for change - a "Pluralist" solution? Was it but one stage in a gradual "Incremental" process in which various poor law policy-makers took a series of "small steps away from the *status quo*,[43] seeking remedies for practical poor relief problems? Was the Act made largely by civil servants who were pursuing their own perception of what was appropriate for the metropolitan poor law situation at that time - a "Bureaucratic Power" decision-making process? Or was the policy-making process governed by a desire to wield political control over events in accordance with a particular pattern, and therefore related to a discernible set of principles for government - a "Political" model?

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[39]*Hansard's* version of the debates studied usually corresponds with reports in *The Times*. Where the accuracy of *Hansard's* quotations was felt to be particularly important, comparisons were made with reports in other newspapers. See also Chapter 1, p. 8, n.3.

[40]The policy-making models used here (including my own hybrid, "Political"), are derived from the reading of a number of works, but use has been made particularly of Martin Burch & Bruce Wood, *Public Policy in Britain* (Oxford, 1990), 24-48, who suggest ten models.

[41]Ibid., 24. These goals were also those of Burch & Wood.

[42]The use of the term "Rational" is not intended to suggest the wider concept of "rationalist" but only the model of problem-solving and decision-making so-titled that is defined in much literature on policy-making as an objective, reasoned process.

[43]Burch & Wood, op. cit., 27.

Rational process

The Rational model of policy-making fits the public case that was made for rate equalisation: the identification of wealth differences in the metropolis as a problem that needed to be resolved in order to cope effectively with pauperism. The solution was inherent in the definition of the problem. If a West-East divide was causing major poor relief problems in the metropolis, the divide should be overcome by means of metropolis-wide shared and equal funding - an equalised rate. (The use of "West" and "East" needs to be clarified: while "West End" became - not very accurately - synonymous with wealth, and was taken to include some City parishes, poverty was identified not only with the East End but also with poorer parishes and unions south of the river.)

The question was placed explicitly on the local taxation agenda by A. S. Ayrton, Radical MP for the East End seat of Tower Hamlets,[44] when he moved (unsuccessfully) in 1857 for a Select Committee to enquire into "the causes of the inequality of the poor rates in the metropolitan district, and whether any measures should be adopted to render the rates more equal".[45] Graphically he contrasted the Spitalfields weaver with the "high-born lady of Belgravia or Mayfair" who wore his silk and velvet,[46] and the home of the sailor and dock labourer in St. George-in-the-East with that of the merchant who "resided with all his wealth in St. George-in-the-West".

A year later, arguing for his Bill "to provide a remedy for the inequality in the rates for the relief of the poor in the metropolis", Ayrton returned with vigour to the attack on distinctions of class and wealth, pointing out that if a man on the verge of destitution were found in the streets of St. George, Hanover Square, a policeman would be ordered to drive him from the locality because it would be assumed that he could

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[44]M. Stenton, *Who's Who of British Politics* (Sussex, 1976); DNB vol. XXII Supplement (Oxford 1921-2). Acton Smee Ayrton, 1816-86, MP for Tower Hamlets 1857-74, was Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury 1868-9, Chief Commissioner of Works and Buildings 1869-73, and Judge Advocate-General 1873-4.

[45]*Hansard* 16.6.1857 col.1899.

[46]Ibid., 16.6.1857, col. 1901; *The Times* version is identical. The *Daily News*, 17.7.1857, 2d,e, reported this as "so again take the weavers. They were kept in Spitalfields to gratify the ladies of rank who resided in St. George's in the West".

have no business, no residence and no occupation, whereas the same man found walking in St. George-in-the-East would be regarded as being in his element. In the areas of wealth and rank were to be found all the employers, he said, and in the areas of poverty and wretchedness, all the employed.[47]

The case of the parishes of Bermondsey and of Southwark St. George the Martyr, where most of the poor employed in the docks and City commercial establishments lived, were similarly cited by John Locke, Liberal MP for Southwark and son of a Southwark tradesman.[48] The great merchants of the City, he said, who owned a dozen Indiamen and perhaps employed 1,000 men in loading and unloading them, merely paid a nominal poor rate for a small office in an alley, while "their splendid residences at the West End" were comparatively free from poor relief charges because there were hardly any paupers in those parishes.[49]

Other examples included the construction of Regent Street, which had led to the dwellings of "thousands of persons of the poorer class" being demolished and their being driven from the richer parishes to the poorer parishes in the south and east of the metropolis. The greatest social evil in the metropolis was the fact that "hundreds of thousands of the poor were huddled together in the poorer neighbourhoods, and obliged to live in dwellings wholly unfit for their reception." [50] Fourteen rich parishes, Ayrton pointed out, with a rateable value of £172,000, paid £6,950 in poor rates, while the same number of poor parishes with a much lower rateable value of £62,000 paid not only proportionately but also actually higher rates of £11,350.[51]

Under the existing system, Locke suggested, the richer parishes would not allow dwellings for the poorer classes to be built (because this would lead to increased calls on the poor rate). With equalised rating, however, it would no longer be in the interests of a parish to prevent suitable houses being built for the poor. He recalled that when houses of the poor were pulled down in order to build Victoria Street, the Dean and Chapter of Westminster had congratulated themselves upon getting rid of 2,000-3,000 of their inhabitants.

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[47]Ibid., 12.5.1858, col. 498; *Daily News*, 13.5.1858, 3a, says a poor man was driven from the West End "in order that he might not become chargeable in the parish" (an accurate reflection of the situation, whether or not Ayrton said it).
[48]Stenton, op. cit. John Locke, 1805-80, MP for Southwark 1857-80.
[49]*Hansard*, 23.3.1858 col. 641.
[50]Ibid., 23.3.1858. col. 641 (Locke).
[51]Ibid., 16.6.1857 col. 1903 (Ayrton).

The House was asked to recall former times when, in all parts of the metropolis, low neighbourhoods had been "dotted here and there", and there had to a certain extent been a diffusion of poverty. However, the wealthy classes "did not like to have such a mass of squalid misery near them, but desired to banish it to a greater distance." It was their duty, however, to follow this misery wherever it went and to hold themselves liable to contribute equally to its support.[52]

Ayrton presented figures[53] showing that deaths from want and privation had risen almost 100 per cent. in the metropolis from 1848 to 1857. He added that such deaths "appeared" to have been most frequent in parishes where the rates were highest, and he contended that "all those deaths" should be laid at the doors of the wealthy inhabitants of the metropolis, "who were only paying 6d. in the pound for the relief of the poor."

The poverty of some East End ratepayers was another issue. In 1861 Ayrton pointed out[54] that there were ratepayers who had to pledge their goods in order to pay poor rates while rich people in the West End were "rejoicing at the small sums that they had to contribute to the rates".

Lord Wodehouse, Liberal peer, in moving the second reading in the Lords of the 1861 *Irremovable Poor Bill*[55], gave the House the example of St. Katherine's Dock, which had no poor because all its labourers lived in neighbouring parishes. "The place in which they worked escaped from all responsibility for their maintenance in case they became chargeable on the poor rates." [56]

Again in 1865, during the debates on the *Union Chargeability Bill,* Locke pointed to the burdens placed on the East End, including the area south of the Thames. Recent Acts had been passed for the building of new streets and railways, and the people who were removed to make way for the improvements were "driven across the water into districts where they were crowded in the most deplorable manner". No provision had been made for them in the richer parishes from which they had been dislodged. He recalled again the example of the building of Victoria Street, when the Dean and Chapter, asked whether provision had been made for 2,000 displaced persons, "said

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[52]Ibid., 12.5.1858 col. 498-9 (Ayrton).
[53]Ibid., 12.5.1858. col.501.
[54]Ibid., 8.2.1861 col. 238.
[55]Ibid., 23.7.1861. col. 1349.
[56]Ibid., 23.7.1861 col. 1349.

they had made no provision for them, and that they must go across the water".[57] The poor had done so, and after three years had become chargeable there. In Tower Hamlets lived "an immense number of persons" who worked in the docks, owned by shareholders living in all parts of town, but became chargeable solely in the poorer parishes.

An integral part of the reasoning for a poor relief policy to combat the metropolitan wealth/poverty divide had to be the special nature of the metropolis; if this argument was lost, the country gentlemen were likely to see metropolitan rate equalisation as the thin end of the wedge to be applied in future to the counties. Ayrton, for instance, when first raising the issue, said that he "must distinctly disclaim any intention of raising any discussion, except so far as it related to the metropolis itself",[58] and suggested that some Members were afraid the subject would lead to "investigations over a large area under circumstances that would be prejudicial to the landed interest".[59] The following year he contrasted the social structure of villages, where all classes lived near each other, with that of the metropolis, where the natural division was that between classes, living in their separate "quarters": for wealthy merchants, for manufacturers, and for artisans - as was the nature of great cities.[60] Although the argument, as reported, did not conform wholly with the claim that the wealthy were to blame for the West-East divide, the conclusion did: that financial liabilities ought to be borne by the metropolis at large, across the range of its "quarters", and not by the parish to which, by accidental circumstances, the poor had gone.

The simple, emotive logic of the rate equalisation case could only be opposed effectively by redefining the nature of the problem. While Radical supporters of rate equalisation focused on the poverty and hardship suffered because of the wealth-poverty divide, some opponents argued that it was merely a "ratepayer question" about the distribution of rates, not hardship[61] - and therefore, by implication, less emotive. Marylebone Liberal MP Harvey Lewis denied that it was a West-East problem: even Marylebone, which had many affluent residents, also contained many poor, and if rate redistribution increased West End rates by even a slight extent, he warned, many

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[57]Ibid., 21.2.1865 col. 485.
[58]*Daily News* 17.6.1857, 2d,e.
[59]*Hansard* 16.6.1857, col. 1900.
[60]Ibid., 23.3.1858 col. 627-8.
[61]Ibid., 16.6.1857 col. 1913, 1917.

ratepayers would be reduced to the condition of paupers.[62] T. Sotheron-Estcourt, Conservative President of the Poor Law Board in 1858-9, denied that pauperism was an exceptional problem in the metropolis: the level, he said, was 3.9 per cent. compared with 4.6 per cent. in the country as a whole.[63]

The foundation of the Rational case - that inequality actually mattered, and that it ought to be addressed by means of legislation - was questioned to only a limited extent. This was perhaps an indication of the power of the Radicals' dramatic illustrations and their simple, forceful reasoning. Ayrton, for instance, disposed of the charitable donations issue with the simple statement that "casual donations by the wealthy could never be accepted as an equivalent for the injustice of the present system of rating", and no disagreement was offered.[64] F. W. Knight, Conservative MP for West Worcestershire and a former secretary of the Poor Law Board, remarked briefly that the poor parishes "had not more ground of complaint against the rich parishes than one man had to complain of another being richer than himself", and the Liberal President of the Poor Law Board (E. P. Bouverie), admitting that "considerable inequality" existed, argued that "the mere fact of there being an inequality" was no reason for adjusting the rate (or, more emotively, according to the *Daily News*, "no reason for altering the pressure of the burden"). His fellow Liberal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (M. T. Baines), ventured only to deny that any great inequality existed between parishes in the metropolis.[65]

Provided, therefore, that rate equalisation proponents could withstand opponents' redefinitions of the problem and establish their own three premises effectively - that there was a wealth-poverty geographical divide, that it constituted a serious poor relief problem, and that the metropolis was different - the case for policy-making on grounds of reason was strong. It was on the simple logic of such arguments that the campaign for rate equalisation was built from 1857 to 1867, not only within but outside parliament.

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[62]Ibid., 21.2.1867, col.751.
[63]Ibid., 12.5.1858, col. 506.
[64]Ibid., 16.6.1857, col. 1905.
[65]Ibid., 16.6.1857, cols. 1913-14, 1926, 1930; *Daily Telegraph* 17.6.1857, 2b; *Daily News* 17.6. 1857, 2f.

Pluralist process

The policy-making context was in fact somewhat more complex. Despite the easy passage of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* through Parliament it was preceded, over several years, by vigorous campaigns and debates involving converging or competing interests such as ratepayers, the poor, clergymen, local poor law bodies and the medical world. While the Rational model is therefore relevant in relation to the incorporation of rate equalisation in the Act, a Pluralist process of pressures on government from competing interests was also at work.

Although the interests of poorer ratepayers were pressed frequently in the debates on rate equalisation and related legislation, there seems to have been no corresponding public attempt to support the position of wealthier metropolitan ratepayers (either individual or institutional) as they came under attack. The only defences offered (frequently and vigorously) were of the landed interest when they were accused in wider redistribution debates. Ayrton, for instance, suggested that the reason for the failure to improve the efficiency of poor law administration over the past 25 years was that such changes "might have a serious effect on the pecuniary interests of the great territorial aristocracy of this country", both within and outside the metropolis. It was because of this numerically small but very influential group that Ministers could not or dare not meet the real issues, he said.[66]

Despite, however, the apparent reluctance of Members of both Houses to support the interests of wealthy metropolitan gentlemen and businessmen who paid low poor rates, they clearly existed. It will be argued below[67] that their interests were well-represented within the Act.

Middle-range ratepayers in poorer metropolitan parishes and unions could, of course, expect also to benefit from rate equalisation, but emphasis was generally placed instead on the proportionately unfair burden they had to bear, and on the sufferings of the poor; Ayrton, for instance, emphasised that it "really was a poor man's question".[68] At times the contradictions of this position for Radical MPs became apparent. For

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[66]Ibid., 8.2.1861 col. 237. M. Caplan, "The New Poor Law and the struggle for union chargeability", *IRSH*, 23 (1978), considers this legislative question in detail.
[67]See Chapter 6.
[68]*Hansard* 12.5.1858, col. 501.

instance in the debates on the *Irremovable Poor Bill 1861* Locke argued against increasing the freedom of the poor by giving them the right to gain settlement in a parish after only three years residence instead of five. In Bermondsey and Southwark, he said, with their large numbers of paupers, the poor relief burden on ratepayers would be increased if paupers with the right to settlement elsewhere became irremovable sooner, and therefore eligible for relief from the parish or union after a shorter period of time.[69] Ayrton agreed that the proposal "did great injustice" to the parishes that he and Locke represented.[70] When, four years later, the *Union Chargeability Bill* proposed that all poor relief should be paid from a union's common fund, Locke had to make a similar point about the effect of this proposed reform in his constituency, and he called again for the whole metropolis to be formed into one single union.[71] It appears therefore, that the battle for metropolitan rate equalisation was a solution not only to problems of poverty and under-funding in the East and South but also to ratepayer pressure on politicians arising from the contradictions inherent in more moderate reforms.

Although it aroused widespread parliamentary anger and statements of rejection, Ayrton's inflammatory rhetoric on the demands of the poor and "the people", and the inability of poorer ratepayers to support their local poor, clearly added a significant element to the Pluralist pattern of pressures on government. It was not wise, he said, to allow men to think that they were suffering injustice at the hands of a certain number of wealthy noblemen and gentlemen. He warned that "the people would make themselves heard, but it might be in a manner that was not to be desired. Their plain sense of justice would prevail against all the cold philosophy of their opponents".[72]

This was, the House recognised, the language of menace. That Members were being threatened with the consequences of ignoring the interests of East End ratepayers and the poor was not denied. John Locke, supporting Ayrton's speech, pointed out that this was not the first time the House had been "menaced", and cited the repeal of the Corn Laws and Roman Catholic emancipation.[73]

Ayrton included "aggrieved ratepayers" in his graphic imagery, envisaging them calling to their aid "those poor people who were the victims of the present system, by

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[69]Ibid., 5.7.1861 col. 404.
[70]Ibid., 5.7.1861 col. 408.
[71]Ibid., 21.2.1865 col. 485.
[72]Ibid., 12.5.1858 col. 502. A varying degree of the detail of this rhetoric is including in the press.
[73]Ibid., 12.5.1858, 511-2.

denouncing to them the great and crying injustice perpetrated upon them by the wealthy and powerful". The question before parliament might now be considered in a calm and dispassionate manner, he said, "but it could not be so if the poorer classes of the metropolis were once induced to take it into their own hands". If the body of one of those who had died of starvation were to be held up before the people, he suggested, and they were told that this was the result of injustice, it would be very difficult to deal with the subject in a temperate manner.[74]

Pressure from East End clergymen was another element in the case for rate equalisation, and Ayrton gave this as the reason for his motion to set up a select committee so soon after his election as an MP despite ministerial lack of interest. Comparing the East End clergy with the Church's higher dignitaries (who might be "left with their influence to take care of themselves") he said that these lower clergy were "the ornaments of their profession", received exceedingly small stipends, were well-acquainted with the poor and had many opportunities of examining the condition of the people. Their concern with rating arose, he said, from the fact that ratepayers living in highly-rated poor areas were refusing to give either sympathy or support to the church's religious and social institutions because they were "subjected to such gross and crying injustice" on the poor rates. Clergymen were being told by East End ratepayers to go to the fashionable parishes of the West End for donations. When, the following year, Ayrton proposed his rate equalisation Bill, he said that it was the result of "a calm and temperate discussion" by ratepayers "under the auspices chiefly of the clergy of the Established Church".[75]

While this pressure for rate equalisation from clergymen and ratepayers (from a wider area that just the East and South)[76] was ultimately to succeed, attempts to defend the records of local bodies - particularly boards of guardians and Local Act parishes - were less effective. Attacks included Lord Robert Cecil's[77] chronology of the battles between the Poor Law Board and the metropolitan workhouses over the past five years: St. Marylebone workhouse in 1855 over ill-treatment of female paupers, St. Pancras

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[74]Ibid., 23.3.1858 col. 633-4.
[75]Ibid., 23.5.1858, col. 631.
[76]Ibid., 23.5.1858, col. 631. Ayrton pointed out that support for his 1858 rate equalisation Bill came from "ratepayers.....representing the great bulk of the inhabitants of the metropolis, who had that evening presented a petition in favour of the Bill". See also Chapter 3 below.
[77]Lord Robert Cecil, Conservative MP for Stamford and subsequently Prime Minister (the Marquess of Salisbury).

workhouse in 1856 over atrocious conditions in the casual wards, and the outdoor relief system, St. Pancras and St. James workhouses over the appointment of auditors, and Wapping workhouse. Cecil called for the Poor Law Board to be given "greater power of interfering summarily with the management of the workhouses in this metropolis".[78] Hardy, in introducing the Metropolitan Poor Bill, reminded the Commons of the 1864-6 metropolitan workhouse scandals - the cases of Timothy Daly, an Irish labourer who had died in the Holborn workhouse towards the end of 1864, and Gibson, who had died in the St. Giles workhouse in 1865, and also of conditions in the Rotherhithe Workhouse in 1865, in the Strand Union workhouse in 1866 and in Paddington workhouse - and the "exceedingly adverse" reports by Poor Law Board inspectors.[79]

Supporters of metropolitan local bodies tried to influence policy-making processes on many occasions leading up to the 1867 dilution of local elected power. Lord Fermoy, Liberal MP for Marylebone, pointed out that the St. Pancras guardians, accused in debate[80] of being "so hardhearted and unjust", had been among those calling for an enquiry into the administration of poor relief. They were doing their best to administer a notoriously difficult law, and he believed they had done all in their power to relieve distress. Alderman Thomas Sidney, former Lord Mayor of London, supported the call for more powers for boards of guardians to enable them to exercise greater discretion.[81] Liberal Sir John Hibbert, MP for Oldham and Deputy-Lieut. of Lancashire, regretted to see the Poor Law Board "disposed more and more to grasp the powers that ought to be left to boards of guardians". It did not become the dignity of either the Poor Law Board or the boards of guardians, he said, for the Poor Law Board to hold the reins so tightly.[82] The blame for the workhouse scandals lay, suggested Earl Fortescue (a former secretary to the Board) not with the boards of guardians but with the Poor Law Board: with those who had not "stimulated, rebuked and exercised sufficient supervision over the inspectors who were nominally in charge of the metropolis".[83]

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[78]*Hansard* 8.2.1861 col. 237.
[79]Ibid., 8.2.1867, col. 151. O'Neill, op. cit., 271-2, gives a more detailed account of the Daly issue.
[80]Ibid., 8.2.1861 col. 241.
[81]Ibid., 8.2.1861 col. 241.
[82]Ibid., 12.6.65, col. 99.
[83]Ibid., 17.5.1866 col. 1143. As Viscount Ebrington, Fortescue had been Liberal parliamentary secretary to the Poor Law Board 1847-51, and he was related by marriage to the Earl of Devon, Hardy's Conservative successor as President 1867-8. (See chapter 7, p. 195-6)..

Hardy himself did not condemn metropolitan guardians as such. The 1861-4 *Select Committee on Poor Relief*, he noted, had been shown nothing implicating the management of metropolitan workhouses in the charges which had subsequently "created so much excitement". On the contrary, there had been every reason to suppose that the workhouses were properly managed and that the treatment of the inmates did not demand intervention. On the scandals, he suggested that four cases in which great hardship and wrong had been inflicted in a total of 39 metropolitan workhouses housing 25,000-30,000 people "would not strike one as remarkable".

He remarked on the role of the press (a further channel for pluralist pressure on government). The four scandals, he suggested, seen "as it were, in a kaleidoscope, through the comments of the press", caused a sensation which was perhaps disproportionate to the circumstances under which they occurred, and blame had been imputed to the guardians not only of the workhouses in question but of the workhouses of the metropolis generally. Metropolitan guardians, he suggested, were watched with excessive scrutiny by the press. (Hardy's comments here can usefully be compared with David Roberts' analysis of the "real and imaginary tales of cruelty" in workhouses in the 1830s and 1840s told by "*The Times*, Lords, MPs and pamphleteers".)[84]

Medical interests, on the other hand, opposed in a number of respects to the existing powers of the boards of guardians[85] (but not to rate equalisation, which would fund the institutional reforms[86]) received almost unopposed support in parliament. The issues receiving the lengthiest attention in Hardy's First Reading speech were medical: the physical conditions in workhouses and their infirmaries, medical and nursing resources, and practical questions such as cubic space, ventilation and the desirability of draughts; the great point on which the whole question turned, the President said, was "ventilation".

Florence Nightingale was cited on the training of infirmary nurses and the Commons was reminded in detail of the initiatives taken by the medical world - the full and detailed enquiry conducted by *The Lancet* at its own expense into the overcrowded

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[84]Ibid., 8.2.1867 col. 151, 21.2.1867 col. 772-4; D. Roberts, "How Cruel was the Victorian Poor Law?", *HJ* (1963, VI, 1), 98, 101, 102, 103, 107-7.
[85]M. A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834-1929* (London, 1981), 160-5, gives an account of guardian/medical conflicts of interests.
[86]*The Times* 7.3.1867, 6f. Extra-parliamentary pressure included that from the Metropolitan Workhouse Infirmaries Association, which supported (unsuccessfully) the inclusion of infirmary building costs as an equalised item and the removal of the rating qualification for nominees.

sick departments of the metropolitan workhouses, and the roles played by the President of the College of Physicians and various other named and often eminent medical men who had visited the workhouses "by day and by night" to enquire into conditions. The Commons was assured (inaccurately, as it turned out) that the "extreme limit" of cost for the great building programme to implement the recommended improvements would be £400,000.[87]

The Liberal former President, Villiers, a supporter of the medical lobby, proposed an extension of their powers while agreeing that guardians' should be weakened. Nominees, he said, should be replaced by medical men, who would feel "bound to fulfil the duties imposed on them", would bring competence to the boards and should be paid to sit with the elected members. John Stuart Mill, also a strong supporter of medical men against local guardians, later grouped medical men together with "the sick, the poor, and the lunatics" as victims of the boards of guardians. Refusal by guardians to perform their local duties, he told the Commons, not only injured suffering and unprotected persons, but led to "the oppression of the medical profession".[88] The previous year, at the committee stage of the *Metropolitan Poor Bill*, Mill and Ayrton took up conflicting positions on the dismissal of medical men by the central Board: while Mill argued for an appeal or arbitration "so that they might not be at the mercy or discretion of a single officer", Ayrton, supporting Hardy and the Bill against his fellow-Liberal, remarked that "those who wished to elevate the medical profession placed their claims too high".[89]

Competing Pluralist pressures, it is clear, played a major part in parliament's consideration of poor relief policies in the 1860s, and particularly in the genesis of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, with local government and the medical world often ranged on opposite sides, the poor supported (from different perspectives) by both, and ratepayer interests coinciding more often with those of the local poor law bodies than with medical men's arguments.

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[87]Ibid., 8.2.1867, col. 153-62 & 164-6.
[88]Ibid., 21.2. 1867 col. 766-7, 11.3.1867 col. 1678-80 & 1685-6, 18.7.1868 col. 1424-5 (debate on the *Poor Relief Bill).*
[89]Ibid., 11.3.1867, col. 1685-6.

Incremental process

Although there is little parliamentary evidence for an Incremental approach (taking "small steps away from the *status quo*") in an administrative context, with small-scale internal problem-solving at the central Board leading to significant policy-making, there is considerable evidence for the use of incrementalism as a political tactic by Liberal and Radical MPs.

Much of this has already been considered by Caplan, who suggests that the *Union Chargeability Act 1865* was passed as a result of "piecemeal, step-by-step....legislation."[90] However, (as shown in the next chapter) a metropolis-wide locally-based radical-reform movement, working closely with Radicals in parliament, played a very active part in generating political support for equalising legislation. The "piecemeal" interpretation, under-emphasising as it does the question of political co-ordination, therefore needs to be re-assessed. For instance the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Acts 1864 & 1865*, presented to parliament by the Liberal President of the Poor Law Board initially as problem-solving responses to immediate needs and a small development out of previous policy, were a crucial stage in the ten-year co-ordinated political struggle in the metropolis for rate equalisation, and deserve closer attention than they have hitherto received.

The immediate source of the 1864 Act was the tenacious political tactics of Radicals - especially Ayrton and Locke - on the 1861-4 *Select Committee on Poor Relief*.[91] Villiers, however, argued - for obvious tactical reasons - that the Bill was, in effect, just another small step. There was no novelty in the principle of the new Bill, he said: the 1844 *Poor Law Amendment Act*'s[92] permissive provisions 20 years before for setting up large asylums for the destitute houseless poor in six metropolitan districts of the metropolis, combining rich and poor parishes, had applied the principles of rate equalisation and of the metropolis bearing "the burden of the support".[93] (In fact his argument was inaccurate in three major respects: there had been no proposed metropolitan fund in 1844 and no attempt at equalisation within the metropolis as a whole, the Act had not decreed six districts, and equalisation was intended only in the

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[90]Caplan, op. cit., 274-81, 285-96
[91]PP 1864 ix, Report of the *Select Committee on Poor Relief*, Proceedings, 57.
[92]7 & 8 Vict. c.101, s. 41-54.
[93]*Hansard* 25.7.1864 col. 2040-1; *Daily News* 26.7.1864, 3c,d.

sense that the annual rateable value basis for district precepts would have created an equal rate within each district. The Act was also weak as a precedent because it had been unpopular with local bodies and ratepayers, and had not been implemented.)

Pushing his measure through in a thinly-attended House at the end of the session, Villiers described this major predecessor to the *Metropolitan Poor Act* as "a very short Bill" and one in which he "simply sought .... to give effect to the recommendations of a committee which had arrived at an unanimous conclusion on the subject". On meeting opposition, he gave the assurance that he "certainly had no intention of sanctioning .... the principle of the equalisation of the rating for the relief of the poor throughout the metropolis". The object of the follow-up Bill the following year was "merely to continue another (Bill) which had already expired". When, in committee, Ayrton moved an amendment to make the provisions of the Bill permanent, Villiers "did not in the least object to it", pointing out that this had been the intention prior to the last-minute "considerable opposition" of the previous year.[94]

The opposition clearly recognised the President's small problem-solving Bill as a major political measure. H. Baillie, Conservative MP for Inverness-shire, compared Villiers' approach to the case of "the young woman who when charged with having had a bastard child vindicated herself by saying it was a very small one". Although Villiers had called it a very small Bill it was, Baillie said, a very important one. A Bill involving "such a total change in the constitution of the Poor Law" should not be "shuffled" through the House when there were very few Members present apart from the occupants of the Treasury Bench. Lord Claude Hamilton said that an important measure involving "a totally new principle" was being smuggled through. E. P. Bouverie, former President of the Poor Law Board, objected to "a Bill of such importance" being introduced at the end of the session. It was, he said, "one of the most important in its principle and operation which had in the present session been submitted", involving a problem which was perhaps "about the most difficult of solution" of any that confronted the Poor Law Board.[95]

Despite Villiers' argument that the proposed common fund to resolve the "evil" of the destitute poor who "paraded the streets of the metropolis at night" would "only

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[94]Ibid., 19.7.1864 col. 1771; 25.7.1864 col. 2043; 26.7.1864 col. 2101-2; 5.4.1865 col. 765-7.
[95]Ibid., 21.7.1864 col. 1802; 25.7.1864 col. 2044.

amount to £5,000 for the whole metropolis"- "a trifling sum",[96] opponents continued to attack the measure on the basis of its political and financial principles. For instance, Lord Claud Hamilton said that making the Metropolitan Board of Works the rating body subverted the whole system upon which the administration of poor relief was founded - "a combination of the principles of taxation and representation". Recognising the potential local government significance of the measure, he pointed out that the MBW had been established for sewerage, paving, draining, lighting and cleansing, and there was no reason why it should be introduced into the administration of poor relief.[97] Similarly Harvey Lewis, Liberal MP for Marylebone, suggested that the Bill sought to apply funds raised for one purpose - the sewage of the metropolis - to another, the relief of the poor.[98] Sir John Shelley voiced his suspicion that the Bill might be the "thin edge of the wedge" to bring in "district rating for the whole of the metropolis".[99] Political division extended to the MBW itself, where a small majority decided (to no avail) that they did not wish to administer such a rate.[100]

The application by Liberal and Radical politicians of "Incremental" tactics to rate equalisation policy-making was, it is clear, sometimes successful but usually recognised as such by their opponents and attacked on a political basis. The example of the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Acts*, predecessors to the 1867 Act, suggests that despite the vast range of poor law legislation that appears to include some incremental elements, a simple Incremental model of policy-making needs to be treated with caution in this field.

Bureaucratic Power process

There is parliamentary evidence not so much for a Bureaucratic Power process at work in the genesis of the 1867 Act as for the fear that such power might influence the making or implementation of policy unduly: the "centralisation" issue. There is also, however, evidence in the debates that such influences were not unwelcome and probably existed.

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[96]Ibid., 20.7.1864 col.1771-2; 21.7.1864 col. 1801-2.
[97]Ibid., 21.7.1864 col. 1796-7.
[98]Ibid., 25.7.1864 col. 2952.
[99]Ibid., 25.7.1864, col. 2051.
[100]Ibid., 25.7.1864, col. 2042; *Daily News* 26.7.1864, 3c,d.

Leading politicians in both parties prior to 1867 were certainly willing that the Poor Law Board's administrative powers should grow, and from 1867 the *Metropolitan Poor Act* and its successor Acts explicitly gave the Board greatly increased quasi-legislative powers in the form of the right to draft powerful orders relating to the extensive reorganisation of metropolitan poor relief; the Board was not, however, the only department to expand in this way.[101]

What the debates offer are glimpses of changing parliamentary attitudes to the powers of the Board, and evidence that civil servants' participation in policy-making could be acknowledged in debates. The position in 1867, when the *Metropolitan Poor Act* was introduced to the House, was therefore somewhat different from that in 1858 when the accusation by opponents of Ayrton's rate equalisation measure that it would reduce local powers was the reason he gave for withdrawing a hard-fought Bill.[102] Nine years later, a mere scattering of Liberal MPs raised the warning cry of centralisation as the *Metropolitan Poor Bill* passed swiftly through parliament and Ayrton, having reached a policy compromise with the Conservative President of the Poor Law Board, was not among the objectors.

Accusations of major law-making activities by the Board were sometimes imputed by opponents of rate equalisation as majorities were gradually achieved in the 1860s for redistributive legislation. Conservative Henley, for instance, in the debate on the *Union Chargeability Bill*, commenting on the role that he believed civil servants had played, referred to the shifting of financial burdens in the Bill as having been "so long the pet child of the poor law authorities".[103]

His fellow-Conservative, Knight, brought the House into uproar two months later with an attack on "the officials of Gwydor House" (home of the Poor Law Board) during a debate on the same Bill. Their sister establishment, the Board of Health, he said, "which had intended to lord it over the towns in the same way as the Poor Law Board sought to lord it over the parishes", had been swept away, and they were afraid that their usefulness might be questioned too. They thought, he said, that if they could succeed in "smashing the parishes", their salaries would be secure, because the officials "knew that as long as the parochial areas and parochial officers existed there would be

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[101]H. Parris, *Constitutional Bureaucracy* (London, 1969), 192-3, points out the prevalence of delegated legislation and quasi-legislation in the middle decades of the century.
[102]Ibid., 16.6.1857 col. 1931; 12.5.1858 col. 515.
[103]Ibid., 27.3.1865 col. 353.

no difficulty in returning to a cheaper and less centralised system of poor relief".[104] J. B. Smith, Liberal MP for Stockport, was one of those who expressed anxiety at the short tenure of ministers at the Poor Law Board. "Every two or three years the President was removed by a change of parties", Smith said, "and Mr. Lumley (permanent secretary to the Board) and two or three other gentlemen ruled the whole of the kingdom".[105] The veteran Conservative MP for Somerset East, Sir William Miles, disapproving of what he saw as a civil servants' policy-making tendency, remarked when the *Union Chargeability Bill* arrived on the Commons agenda that the House of Commons was too much in favour of placing everything under a central authority, and leaving nothing to guardians "except what poor law inspectors might advise".[106]

Poor Law Board ministers, however - past, present and future - showed a rather different perspective towards central government powers. The Earl of Devon, for instance, Hardy's successor as President of the Poor Law Board and the major Conservative hand in the implementation of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, noted approvingly the support of civil servants for the passing of the *Irremovable Poor Act 1861*[107] - the first Act to incorporate redistributive annual rateable value - pointing out that the Bill had been recommended by two select committees of the House of Commons and also by "a majority of the poor law inspectors, whose authority must be admitted".[108] The security from dissolution that civil servants finally gained when the Earl of Devon removed after 20 years the shackles of annual renewal by parliament and made the Poor Law Board permanent in the same year that the *Metropolitan Poor Act* was passed[109] was approved by Villiers who, having been President for seven years, thought the change would be useful in terms of staff attitudes. The annual threat of non-renewal was a "kind of terrorism" that crippled the Board's usefulness, he said: the "Minister at its head" was "always to be advised in the department to keep quiet, and to abstain from initiating needed reforms".[110] The implication was that the officers' advice was accepted. Hardy's view, as he shepherded the *Metropolitan Poor Bill*

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[104] Ibid., 11.5.1865 col. 170.
[105] Ibid., 12.7.1867, col. 1420.
[106] Ibid., 11.5.1865 col. 129.
[107] 24 & 25 Vict. c. 55, *Poor Removal Act 1861.*
[108] *Hansard* 23.7.1861 col. 1354.
[109] 30 & 31 Vict. c. 106, *Poor Law Amendment Act 1867.*
[110] *Hansard*, 25.7.1867 col. 145.

through parliament, was that metropolitan guardians were not "unmanageable bodies if sufficient power is given to those who have to rule and regulate them".[111]

The increased control given to the central Board by Hardy's Act was approved by various leading Liberals. Lord Kimberley remarked that the metropolitan guardians having "disregarded the rules and orders of the Poor Law Board", the Board had "very properly brought in a measure to remove the management of the metropolitan poor, to a certain extent, from the local authorities." He was glad, he said, that the powers of the Poor Law Board were to be increased.[112] Lord Enfield, recently Liberal Parliamentary Secretary to the Poor Law Board but also a West End MP, believed that the fear of central power -"the bugbear of centralisation" - would vanish because of the benefits that would be derived. There must be something radically wrong, he suggested, in a system in which, year after year, "unseemly contests arose between the Poor Law Board and the parishes under local Acts which refused to recognise the authority of the central Board".

One has to conclude that the parliamentary debates give, as one would expect, only brief hints about the extent of civil servant participation in policy-making, and that there is no undisputed evidence from this source that such participation was of the magnitude to be expected of a Bureaucratic Power model. Nonetheless, the fact that the *Metropolitan Poor Act* gave the Poor Law Board powerful quasi-legislative powers indicates that the Board's servants may for some time past have played a significant, even if not a dominant, role in policy-making.[113]

Political process

It is argued in this thesis that both the nominee clauses and the administrative format chosen for rate equalisation raised issues of political power and control, and were crucial elements in the Act. Evidence in later chapters will support this interpretation and confirm that an extension of gentlemanly political power was consciously sought and implemented.

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[111]Ibid., 21.2.1867 col. 773-4.
[112]Ibid., 19.3.1867, col. 108.
[113]C. Bellamy, *Administering central-local relations 1871-1919* (Manchester, 1988), 8, argues that the 1834 Report that preceded the New Poor Law recognised "the incapacity of the centre to fund and manage a national system"; this factor needs to be taken into account when assessing the extent and nature of bureaucratic power in the three decades that followed.

Gentlemen in parliament were, of course, unlikely to make statements that were too explicit in this respect. It was to his diary, and not to the Commons, that Hardy confided his view on the *Second Reform Act* a few months later that "if the gentry will take their part they will be adopted as leaders. If we are left to the demagogues, God help us!"[114]

The parliamentary debates on the *Metropolitan Poor Act* provide, therefore, only limited evidence that a process of pursuing gentlemanly power was at work in the genesis of parts of the Act. A form of negative confirmation that power and control were an issue was however given by MPs representing indignant boards of guardians from across the metropolis who were confronted with the possibility of having gentlemanly nominees added to their number.

For instance, Liberal MPs argued that the nominee proposal would "practically set aside the present boards of guardians" and should be omitted (Harvey Lewis, MP for Marylebone), that it struck a blow at local government (Charles Butler, MP for Tower Hamlets), that no provision was made for nominee guardians going out of office (Alderman W. Lawrence, MP for London), that it "ran counter to the constitution, and allowed the nominees of the Poor Law Board to override the will of the representatives of the ratepayers" (an anonymous "hon. Member"), and that his constituents strongly objected to it (A. H. Layard, MP for Southwark). John Candlish, MP for Sunderland, argued that it was "objectionable, dangerous, a great blot on the Bill and a serious inroad on representative government", James Wyld, MP for Bodmin, pointed out that the "perfectly novel principle" of nominees would be applied to a body possessing taxing powers, and Alderman Andrew Lusk, MP for Finsbury, upholding "the principle of representation as opposed to nomination", quoted a popular song, "Oh, woodman, spare that tree!"[115]

Although most of these arguments referred specifically to the concept of local government, what was being objected to was of course a potential transfer of political control away from existing board members and to unelected gentlemen. The fact that the nominee clauses were apparently greeted with much applause prior to these objections[116] indicates that many in the House at least did not identify with the much-

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[114]Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., I, 212, entry dated 9.8.1867.
[115]*Hansard* 11.3.1867 col. 1695-7. Most of these comments were reported in more than one newspaper.
[116]Stedman Jones (1992), op. cit., 254; J. R. Green, *Stray Studies* (1903), 130. Green himself

attacked metropolitan guardians, whether or not they actively supported the nominee clauses.

In Chapter 6 - on the implementation of the gentlemanly nominee policy on the first, largest and most long-lasting of the Conservative government's new "district" boards, the Metropolitan Asylums Board - more specific evidence will be presented that the Political model of policy-making was a significant factor in relationship to the Act. Further supporting evidence will be offered in a study in Chapter 7 of the political leadership of the Poor Law Board.

IV

The provisions of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* considered in this thesis - rate equalisation and the nominee clauses - arose in differing degrees out of all five of the above policy-making processes. However, the welcome accorded the Bill on its First Reading, and its subsequent easy progress, were a result in particular of two of these processes: the Rational, because the argument for rate equalisation had been won some time before by metropolitan radicals, and the Pluralist, because the Bill took account of various interests. It was because of this satisfying of significant interests that Hardy was able to record in his diary on March 12 that "last night I got through committee with my Bill almost unchanged, and ended amid loud cheers. Resistance to it was hopeless".[117] Also a major element, but present less explicitly in the parliamentary debates, was the Political model, to be found particularly in those parts of the Act that represented reaction rather than reform: the Fund format for redistribution, and the nominee clauses.

The Act was far from inevitable. It may in a number of respects seem to have developed incrementally out of an extensive range of past poor law legislation. But the massive institutional development programme and increased central control of metropolitan poor law institutions might have been achieved later, by other routes. Redistribution of wealth might have waited to be tackled on a national rather than a

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(Stedman Jones's source) supported putting nominees on boards of guardians, and indeed criticised the delay in implementing the provision in the East End, so his comment that "no provision in the Bill seemed more important" may have been influenced by this perspective.

[117]Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., I, 195, entry dated 12.3.1867.

metropolitan scale. It was because of the presence of Rational, Pluralist and Political policy-making processes that the *Metropolitan Poor Act* took the form that it did in 1867.

CHAPTER 3. The Movement for Rate Equalisation

Redistribution of poor rates across the metropolis became politically acceptable because of the success of a campaign for rate equalisation conducted for ten years by an extensive radical reformist organisation that has since received little attention.[1] Credit for the achievement of equalised rating has instead been awarded, with varying degrees of justice, to a number of other candidates, including Florence Nightingale,[2] other leading medical campaigners[3] and East End campaigners[4]. It was, however, several years before the medical and nursing campaigns for the sick poor that a vigorous and highly effective movement for metropolitan rate equalisation began, and the major co-ordinating figures, apart from one East End representative, were from the west, the City and the south.

The movement's success derived to a significant extent from the nature of its membership, its alliances and its tactics, and these will be examined in this chapter. Also important were its rhetoric and arguments, and these, together with its policies,

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[1]Caplan, op. cit., 282, notes the role of the movement in influencing public opinion; F. E. Gillespie, *Labor and politics in England, 1850-1867* (London, 1966), 132-3, 135-42, notes that "a serious movement" for rate equalisation began in 1857, but her main metropolitan focus is on labour militancy.
[2]E. Cook, *The life of Florence Nightingale* (London, 1914), II, 124, 133-4, says that by 1865 Miss Nightingale "knew perfectly well that the only way to (workhouse infirmary nursing) reform was by reform also in administration and finance". Poor law inspector Farnall, Cook points out, wrote to her of "your hospital and asylum rate", and said that Villiers, President of the Poor Law Board, had decided to adopt "your scheme". C. Woodham-Smith, *Florence Nightingale 1820-1910* (London, 1950), 466-8, 472-3, says that "the two basic principles for which (Miss Nightingale) had contended, were established .... and medical relief was to be a common not a parochial charge". F. B. Smith, *Florence Nightingale - reputation and power* (London, 1982), 170-2, reports her involvement in passing information about workhouses to the press in 1865, and the 1865 "heads of a bill" which she gave Villiers and which, Smith says, was "not original" and similar in its shape and general elements to "various schemes for 'state medicine' promulgated by radical medical men since the 1840s".
[3]O'Neill, op. cit., in his detailed analysis of the campaign in support of the needs of the sick poor, suggests that Dr. Ernest Hart's contribution may have been under-recognised, but he does not focus particularly on the financing of the reforms.
[4]A. Digby, *The poor law in nineteenth-century England* (London, 1989), 29, reports that the "pressure from the East End for an equalisation of the capital's poor rate achieved success in the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867 ..... thus taxing the wealth of the West End for the relief of poverty in the East End". This reflects what Hardy himself said when moving the Bill: that he had been "petitioned repeatedly by persons at the East End of the metropolis to do something to bring them into a better condition" (*Hansard* 8.2.1867 col. 170), and is also supported by much other evidence about pressure from the East End. Stedman Jones (1992), op. cit., 250, 253, says, citing contemporary East End press reports, that "the solution of East End ratepayers and vestries (to overwhelming rate demands).... was to press for the equalisation of the Metropolitan Poor Rate", and that the "campaign of the East End vestries against the inequality of the rates was finally satisfied by the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867".

will be analysed in the next chapter. The aim is to demonstrate that this was a substantial movement that played a notable part in the achievement of rate equalisation.[5]

The Association for Promoting Equalisation of the Poor Rates and Uniformity of Assessment throughout the Metropolitan Districts was inaugurated at a "numerous" meeting of delegates from City and metropolitan parishes and unions on 17 February 1857, and its minute books run from that date until the disbandment of the Association on the passing of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* ten years later[6]. The 1857 launch was not the first metropolitan attempt at getting a redistributive campaign off the ground, but the new Association was by far the most effective, establishing an active base in Parliament and focusing on building widespread support for its aims. [The Association, later to become the Metropolitan and County Association for the Equalisation of the Poor Rates, will, for the purposes of this study, be referred to hereafter as the Rate Equalisation Association.]

The Association was an early vehicle for the sort of co-ordinated metropolitan political activity combining "local interests and questions of political principle"[7] that, Davis and others suggest, did not generally appear in the metropolis until the mid-1880s. Although its membership was based on parish delegates, and its goals emphasised the needs of local ratepayers as well as of the poor, the equalisation rhetoric of the Association and its leading members, from the early days onwards, indicated wider perspectives and interests than those merely of vestrymen trying to keep the local poor rate down. The resolutions, reports, speeches, petitions, draft legislation, select committee evidence and published works of the Association and its members provide many examples of their articulation of taxation issues that either were, or were to become increasingly, part of the national debate on public finance.

The national context included budgets in which both Liberal and Conservative Chancellors - in 1852, 1854, 1863 and 1874 - allowed for a redistributive role for income tax. From 1853, H. C. G. Matthew notes, income tax and death and succession duties (all essentially redistributive in nature) "increasingly played a preponderant role" in Gladstone's budgets, and in 1855 his aim was "explicit and deliberate: to bring within

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[5]An article by myself in the *London Journal*, 22, 2 (1997), "Paying for the Poor: A Middle-class Metropolitan Movement for Rate Equalisation 1857-67", was based on this part of the thesis. See Appendix I.
[6]Guildhall MS 1088/1, 1088/2.
[7]Davis (1988), op. cit., 25.

the income tax the 'educated' part of the community, leaving the 'labouring part' outside the tax. Measures aimed at lower income tax payers in these years included a £50 and £150 differentiated exemption limit (Disraeli, 1852); a £100 undifferentiated limit and a graduated rate for £100-£150 incomes (Gladstone, 1854); an abatement allowance of £60 for £100-£200 incomes (Gladstone, 1863); and Northcote's 1874 election "bribe", an exemption limit of £150, and deduction of £120 for £150-£400 incomes. Buxton notes that Gladstone chose tea and sugar duties for reduction in 1866 because this would "tend to ameliorate the lot and improve the position of the labouring population".[8]

At the local level, relating the level of taxation to the ability to pay had been part of the Poor Law for 350 years, and the "Law of Elizabeth"[9] was cited frequently in parliamentary and other public debates in the 1850s and 1860s on redistribution of poor rates. "Ability" had originally implied income, but difficulties inherent in the assessment and collection of a personalised local tax by unpaid officials had resulted in the retention of traditional methods of levying the poor rate on the basis of the occupation of land and property. The concern of the Rate Equalisation Association for redistribution of the poor relief burden had roots, therefore, in principles of ability to pay deriving from centuries-old tradition and legislation. It was a concern the history of which far pre-dated redistributive considerations of nineteenth-century budget-making Chancellors.[10]

Nonetheless, however traditional the objectives of the Association may have been in essence, they were clearly in contrast with the more limited, immediate and inherently static goals involved in the massive but "temporary" charitable baling out of East End hardship by West End volunteers which occurred particularly in the harsh winters of 1860-61 and 1866-67.[11] To raise the question of the incidence of local taxation ("one of the great and constant preoccupations of Victorian and Edwardian politics"[12]) - and

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[8]H. C. G. Matthew, "Disraeli, Gladstone, and the politics of mid-Victorian Budgets", *HJ*, 22, 3 (1979), 615, 619-21, 623 n.; S. Buxton, *Finance and politics, Vol. I* (London, 1888), 347. Matthew suggests that "political and social stability in Britain was considerably indebted to the fiscal compromise to which they each, in differing ways, contributed".

[9]43 Eliz. c.2, *Poor Law Act 1601*.

[10]J. V. Beckett, *Local taxation: national legislation and the problems of enforcement* (London, 1980), 3-9.

[11]PP 1861 ix, Q. 3219-53; Stedman Jones (1992), op. cit., 244-6. See also W. Lubenow, *The politics of government growth: early Victorian attitudes towards state intervention 1835-48* (Newton Abbot, 1971), 19-22, on the philanthropic tradition; Lubenow includes an extract from an article in the *Westminster Review*, 1845, attacking "the cuckoo-cry - always charity, never justice, always the open purse, never the equal measure".

[12]A. Offer, *Property and politics 1870-1914* (Cambridge, 1981), 162.

particularly the wealth-poverty axis - was dynamic, in that the mere raising of the issue of incidence postulated radical, redistributive change.

Of the tax comparisons of particular concern to the Association,[13] - inequality between poorer and wealthier rating districts, and the balance between local and national taxation - the first appeared in a number of respects to be satisfied in 1867 by the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund's direct, progressive and redistributive taxation based on annual rateable value. The second concern was, however, resolved less satisfactorily in terms of Association policies because of the Act's establishment of direct central control of the new Fund, and the power given to the Poor Law Board to place its own nominees on local boards where revenue and capital spending decisions were made.

One of the reasons for the modern neglect of the Rate Equalisation Association is that Ayrton, the major parliamentary figure involved in the issue, chose, as a Tower Hamlets MP, to emphasise East End pressure for reform. When substantial support was needed, such as in select committees, public meetings and petitioning, it was the Rate Equalisation Association on whom he largely relied, but in his dramatic speeches he spoke only of pressure from the poor, the impoverished ratepayers and the lesser clergy of the East End. Similarly Hardy, anxious that his Bill should be passed, employed the more emotive concept of pressure from the East End. John Tosh's discussion of how intention and prejudice may affect the reliability of a source[14] is relevant here. It will be shown below and in the next chapter that, contrary to such contemporary accounts, it was the largely middle-class radical reformist movement in the west, south and City that provided the major support for rate equalisation in the ten years prior to the passing of Hardy's Act.

II

The Rate Equalisation Association was set up as a body to which metropolitan parish vestries, boards of guardians and other local poor law bodies sent their delegates. Constitutionally the Association functioned at two levels: the large Central (also called

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[13]Offer, ibid., offers four measures of incidence: local/central, country/city, occupiers/owners, poor/affluent districts.
[14]J. Tosh, *The pursuit of history* (London, 1991), 61-3.

General) Committee, which met only occasionally, and the smaller, very active Executive Committee. The role of the Central Committee developed into one of validating the activities and recommendations of the energetic Executive and confirming the Association's broad institutional base. Most delegates went only to the general meetings of the Central Committee, which were held when major policy decisions needed to be made or confirmed by the wider body (such as the decision, in October 1858, to expand the Association to the counties[15]), when the E.C.'s annual reports were submitted, and when the supporting bodies needed to be mobilised for a particular campaign; resolutions tended to be passed unanimously, and the focus was on action. Constitutionally, this was not an unusual structure; for instance, the United Kingdom Alliance, an extensive temperance organisation, functioned very similarly.[16]

Income seems to have been intended to come, initially, from a voluntary subscription of £10 from supporting bodies, but there seems to have been difficulty in getting it in;[17] from 1858 the main (and substantial) source of income was voluntary public subscription.

Supporting bodies sent as many nominees to the Central Committee as they wished. Two or three seems to have been the average, but in some cases it was greater. For instance the Governors and Trustees of the Poor of St. John Southwark appointed "a committee" to attend the Central Committee, St. Saviour Southwark appointed a committee of four, St. Ann Blackfriars sent five, St. George Borough sent six, and Bermondsey board of guardians sent their chairman and vice-chairman - a not unusual choice.[18]

It was, however, the vigorous Executive Committee - appointed by the Central Committee but clearly almost autonomous in terms of making policy and devising tactics, and with the power to replenish their own numbers, that was most active. E.C. members met often on a weekly or fortnightly basis, and were the public face of the Association at public meetings and on other occasions.

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[15]GL MS 1088/1, 5.11.1858.
[16]Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians. The temperance question in England 1815-1872* (London, 1971), 197, reports that at its first aggregate meeting the United Kingdom Alliance set up a General Council consisting of several hundred members who met annually, but that the "real organisers" of the Alliance campaign were the Executive Committee.
[17]GL MS 1088/1, 13.3.-8.4.1857; GL MS 1090, Rough Cash Book, 1857-60.
[18]GL MS 1088/1,2, 17.2-17.3.1857.

Geographically the new Association gained its major support not from the East End but from the west, the south and the City. Involved from the first General Committee meeting of the Association on 17 February 1857, or within the first month, were the delegates from Kensington, Chelsea, Fulham, and St. Andrew Holborn (west), Lambeth, Bermondsey, St. George and St. Thomas Southwark, Wandsworth and Tooting (South); St. Ann Blackfriars, St. Bartholomew the Great, St. Katherine Cree, All Hallows, St. Dionis Backchurch and St. Olave Silver Street (City), and St. Mary Whitechapel and Limehouse (East). Within three months of the formation of the Association, delegates and/or support had been received also from Hammersmith (West); St. James Dukes Place and All Hallows by the Wall (City); Camberwell, Rotherhithe, Greenwich and St. Nicholas Deptford (South); and St. George in the East and St. Leonard Shoreditch (East).[19]

This gives an initial count of 5 from the West, 8 from the City, 11 from the South and four from the East End: a total of 28 parishes. Although this simple head-count does not take into account the size of the parishes or the number and vigour of the delegates they sent (or the fact that in nine cases the parish was also the poor law authority), it nevertheless indicates that there was a wide spread of interest across the metropolis in the goals of the new Association, and that the parishes of the East End were in a small minority.

The two great parishes of Marylebone and St. Pancras, and their neighbour, St. George Hanover Square, with its particularly large proportion of wealthy inhabitants - who stood to lose more than most, financially, from a rate equalisation policy - declined to participate in the movement, as did most of the smaller parishes in the heart of the West End. Anxiety about losing their independent Local Act status would clearly also have been an important factor; a spokesman for St. Pancras at the Association's introductory public meeting, pointing out that all parishes supporting the meeting were in 1834 unions, proclaimed that "if those parishes have lost their independence, we are not content to sacrifice ours".[20]

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[19]GL MS 1088/1: Minute book of the Equalisation Association; GL MS 1088/2: Draft Minute Book.
[20]LMA MS 1089, 55, 80, 85-7; GL MS 1089, 85. The following year Sotheron-Estcourt, Conservative President of the Poor Law Board, warned the Local Act parishes that in a system of rate redistribution they would have to be placed on the same footing as the rest of the metropolis. He doubted, he said, whether the parishes, "attached as they were to their local Acts", would like that. (*Hansard* 23.3.1858 col. 637-8).

The extent of interest shown in rate equalisation was in fact even wider than the initial list indicates, in that 150 of the 188 metropolitan parishes had "consented" to the introductory meeting, held two days before the Association was formally set up and chaired by the Lord Mayor, and 500 parochial officers had signed the requisition for the meeting.[21] (This large number of parishes indicates that the City of London Union, with its 98 parishes, was among those consenting.) When it came to nominating individuals to attend the Central and Executive Committees, the figures are also sizeable when compared with the maximum possible. Of 38 local poor law authorities in the metropolis, 20 were represented geographically on the E.C., either as a whole or by one or more of their individual parishes.[22]

The composition of the 15-strong Executive Committee confirms that it was from the west, the south and the City that the predominant support came; there were only two East End representatives, and only one of these had a reasonable attendance.[23] E.C. and Central Committee members were mainly small local businessmen, professional men, shopkeepers and tradesmen. Having been sent by their local elected bodies they were, clearly, involved in local government in their own areas, where they held elected positions (on a variety of franchises[24]) and had personal experience of making decisions on their local rates and, in most cases, on poor relief matters.

Although the initiating move for the Association came from the Kensington vestry, its mover, William Gilbert, who was to become chairman of the Association, subsequently emphasised in one of his political publications the instrumentality of the Metropolitan Board of Works from 1855 in bringing metropolitan vestries together frequently in "combinations .... for the purpose of carrying out some object for their common good". With their post-1855 power the metropolitan vestries, when acting together on a subject, exercised a power "which it would be difficult, if not dangerous, for any government entirely to ignore", he wrote. However, Gilbert was not a member of the MBW, and it is clear that it was from Kensington that the actual initiative came. He added later, with perhaps a little exaggeration, that by getting the co-operation of so

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[21]GL MS 1089, 2, 85.
[22]Proportions of possible and actual were calculated on the basis of F. R. Youngs jr., *Guide to the local administration units of England: Southern England* (London, 1979), 648-9.
[23]GL MS 1088/1, 3.3.1857.
[24]PP 1867 xii, op. cit., Appendix 13, shows the wide range of local franchises in the metropolis.

many vestries, the Rate Equalisation Association achieved "a perfection of organisation rarely to be met with in movements of a political character."[25]

Gilbert, as well as being a Kensington vestryman, was a man of intellectual as well as political vigour, of independent means, previously a surgeon, a member of the Reform Club, and later one of the honorary secretaries of the philanthropic Society for the Relief of Distress. He wrote not only lengthy political pamphlets but also several novels, some of them dealing with "his favourite subject, the deepening contrast between the lots of rich and poor", and was the father of W. S. Gilbert of Gilbert & Sullivan fame. (The younger Gilbert is reported to have said, "He thought that if I could write, anybody could".) The family connection with the Rate Equalisation Association may have contributed, in 1873, to the younger Gilbert's hilarious political burlesque, "*The Happy Land*".[26]

Robert E. Warwick, one of the secretaries, was a grocer and tea-dealer by trade but also an articulate and prolific writer and speaker on poor law affairs. He was one of the founders and joint secretary of the Association's largely City-based predecessor, The Metropolitan Association for the Abolition of the Laws of Settlement and Poor Removal and the Equalization of the Poor Rate, for over five years secretary of the City of London Union Rating Association, a guardian and former overseer and assistant overseer for his own parish of St. Ann Blackfriars ("the largest and poorest parish in the City of London Union"), and was later to become a City common councillor for St. Ann and a vice-chairman of the City of London Poor Law Union. His practical experience of the operation of poor relief included having attended "for years" the West End Relief Committee of his board of guardians, which every week considered 70 to 90 applications for relief. It was probably through Warwick that papers and minute books of the Rate Equalisation Association have survived.[27]

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[25]W. Gilbert, *On the present system of rating for the relief of the poor in the metropolis* (London, 1857); W. Gilbert, *Poor law reform: proceedings of the Metropolitan and County Assocation for the Equalization of the Poor Rate* (London, 1860); Kensington vestry minutes 1855-8, pp. 237, 285; Kensington general business committees minutes, C/8/311, 59; GL MS 1089, 87.

[26]*DNB* vol. XXII Supplement (Oxford 1921-2) says that Gilbert, 1804-1890, younger son of a colonial broker, "became a midshipman in the East India Company's service, but his views as to the rights of man involved him in difficulties with the officers, and he quitted the service in 1821." He later studied at Guy's Hospital, was on its staff for a short period, and was also for a time an assistant surgeon in the Royal Navy. Also BL MS 53117N; S. Dark & R. Grey, *W.S. Gilbert: His life and letters* (London, 1924), 2; PP 1861 ix, Q. 4188. Gilbert's partly autobiographical *Memoirs of a cynic* (London, 1880) does not cover his political activities, but nonetheless demonstrates his concern for the poor.

[27]1861 census, RG9/220/67v; PP 1861 ix, 17.5.1861, 31.5.1861, and Appendix 6, paper submitted by Warwick; GL MS 7754, correspondence with F.W. Knight, MP, (former Conservative Parliamentary

Francis Hayman Fowler, the other secretary, a Lambeth architect and surveyor, was later a Lambeth member of the Metropolitan Board of Works for 20 years (and was accused by a Royal Commission in 1888 of voting and acting improperly on MBW committees for professional and private gain).[28] John Blachford, Vice-Chairman, of Fulham, was an Irish-born solicitor who had practised in London for over 40 years, and by 1861 had been a Fulham guardian for 14 years and chairman of the Board for seven. His union was "burdened with an enormous amount of pauperism", mainly Irish, and had a high level of summonses for non-payment of rates because of the large numbers of ratepayers who were "but just elevated above the paupers themselves".[29]

Another major figure on the E.C. was John Day, a multi-purpose local government officer in Southwark St. George, one of the parish's first guardians under the 1834 Act, an occasional poor law auditor and a writer on rate equalisation. Day had drawn up a Bill in 1853 with Apsley Pellatt, MP for Southwark, for national rate equalisation that had not survived its First Reading, and had been involved in two previous rate equalisation associations. His socio-economic status was lower than that of other leading E.C. members: he had no servants but two lodgers, and the trades of family members were stay-making and tailoring.[30]

There was a tendency for E.C. members from the same parish to come from similar occupational classes.[31] For instance, two of John Blachford's fellow E.C. members from Fulham were also professionals: John E. Panter, a barrister (in a two-servant household),[32] and Thomas Cooper, headmaster of a 65-pupil boys' school.[33] The fourth Fulham member, William Deller, while not a professional man, was a substantial market gardener, with 60 acres and employing 20 men.[34]

Secretary of the Poor Law Board) 1854/8, and paper delivered by Warwick to the annual meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in London, 1862; Tanner, op. cit., describes moves from 1849, in which Warwick was involved, for equalisation of rates between the parishes of the City of London Union.

[28]LMA 17.0 MBW; PRO/30/6/169; PP 1888 lvi, *Interim Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into the MBW*, 69-72, 77-9, 91.

[29]1881 census, RG11/65/11; PP 1861 ix, Q.8239, 8251, 8284, 8294, 8342-6.

[30]PP 1862 x, Q. 7554-60, 7631, 7644-5; *Hansard* 26.7.1853 col. 831; 1862 London Post Office Directory, Commercial; 1851 census, HO107/1565/11v; *The Times* 17.2.1843.

[31]Appendix II lists 55 delegates to the Central Committee named in the minutes, with their parishes or unions, and occupations where it has been possible to identify these from other sources. A few other unnamed delegates are referred to in reports of correspondence.

[32]1851 census, HO107/1471/203v.

[33]Ibid., HO107/1471/119v.

[34]Ibid., HO107/1471/261v.

The small City parish of St Dionis Backchurch sent a solicitor, but the occupations of other members from the City reflected the square mile's retailing and small tradesman sector: two jewellers, a linen-draper, a hairdresser, a coffee shop proprietor, a printing proprietor, a tin-plate maker, a net and tent maker, the owner of a silk and ribbon dyeing, embossing and printing business, and a seedsman and florist (who was probably also leech importer, sponge dealer and herbalist). River-side Bermondsey sent practical entrepreneurs involved in local trades: a wharfinger and a young builder employing 27 men. From neighbouring Southwark came mainly shopkeepers and tradesmen: baker, chemist, coal merchant, tin-plate worker, pawnbroker, bootmaker and two woollen drapers, and also a doctor. Still on the South side of the river but further to the West, parishes sent three landlords, an insurance company manager, hop and hemp merchants, a doctor and a surveyor.[35]

There was little difference between the occupations of the south/west/City representation and those from the East End: a brush and turnery manufacturer, a coffee rooms proprietor, a stationer and a pawnbroker. The most apparent difference was their number.[36]

However, although the East End's secular representation was limited, East End parish clergy gave the Association "invaluable aid" from an early stage.[37] When a meeting on rate equalisation was held in St. George in the East it was a clergyman, the remarkable Rev. G. H. M'Gill (who, as "An East-End Incumbent", wrote letters on rate equalisation to *The Times*) who convened it in the George Tavern in Commercial Road. Shortly after the establishment of the Rate Equalisation Association a separate association was set up in Tower Hamlets (Ayrton's constituency) with strong support from the clergy, and the two associations agreed to assist each other "to the best of their abilities".[38] Gilbert later wrote that "men of all shades of politics, and ministers of all religious sects" participated in the Tower Hamlets association, and the E.C., reporting in December the formation of the East End association, said that the promoters were "co-operating with us in the cause".

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[35]GL MS 1088/1; 1851 & 1861 censuses, HO 107 & RG9; P.O. London Directories, Commercial, 1851, 1861; Southwark St. George vestry annual reports 1856, 1867, 1858.
[36]1851 PO London Directory, Commercial.
[37]GL MS 1088/1, 8.4.1857, report of the secretary to the General Committee.
[38]GL MS 1088/1 & 2, 29.12.1857; Gilbert (London 1860), 4-5.

M'Gill, elected chairman in Tower Hamlets, began to attend the Rate Equalisation Association's E.C. meetings on a fairly frequent though irregular basis, and appears to have acted as liaison with Ayrton. Although in 1859-60 St. George in the East experienced its traumatic anti-Tractarian riots against the Pusey-ite rector, M'Gill appears to have concentrated his attention on rate campaigning. Suggestions by Pusey-ites, noted by Stedman Jones, that the riots arose partly because there was no higher class influence in the area do not appear at all in M'Gill's speeches or writings about the East End. His belief was, simply, that rate equalisation would resolve problems that arose from disparities of wealth. The evidence suggests that M'Gill (who was also a workhouse chaplain), together with other E.C. members, identified genuinely, and from personal experience, with the positions of hard-pressed guardians, poorer ratepayers and the poor.[39]

There is no evidence that the East End movement was able to draw on a range of support as extensive as that generated by the Rate Equalisation Association.[40] Its records do not seem to have survived, but what evidence there is in the Association's minutes suggests that it was a smaller association owing much of its impetus to Ayrton and the clergy, particularly M'Gill. Whereas the Association's activities were run by a co-ordinated group of people on the E.C., it was largely M'Gill who took responsibility for initiatives in Tower Hamlets. For instance, when East-West rivalry surfaced (in a canvassing demarcation dispute), the E.C. as a group discussed the question of whether they should instruct their canvassers to continue operating or whether canvassing should be done "from the Tower Hamlets office as proposed by the Rev. M'Gill". M'Gill's proposal shortly afterwards that the two Associations amalgamate was welcomed by the E.C. on condition that all become members of the Rate Equalisation Association, with united funds. In exchange the E.C. offered M'Gill a position as one of their Vice-

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[39]Crockford's Clerical Directory (London, 1886); PP 1861 ix, 9.4.1861; PP 1862 x, 4.7.1862; 1861 census, RG9/ 279/25r; G. H. M'Gill, *The London poor and the inequality of the rates raised for their relief* (London, 1858); *The Times* 27.8.67, 6f; Crouch, "*Bryan King and the riots at St. George's in the East*" (London, 1904); Stedman Jones (1992), 248-9. The Rev. George Henry M'Gill, MA (Brasenose College, Oxford) was appointed perpetual curate at Christ Church, St. George in the East, in 1854, and was therefore incumbent of one of the four churches in the parish. His first curacy had been in Stockport, Lancs., during the cotton district troubles, where he had had "a great deal to do with the relief of those who were in a state of semi-starvation at that time". On arriving in the East End he found himself in a parish where, in his first winter, he recalled later, "great distress prevailed" and "no fewer than 20 persons were reported to have died from starvation". In 1867, shortly after the passing of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, he was moved to Bangor-Monachorum as rector.

[40]Records of the Tower Hamlets Association do not appear to have survived.

Presidents, and his treasurer the post of joint treasurer; no other Tower Hamlets officers were mentioned. It is not clear whether formal amalgamation took place - although M'Gill did become a Vice-President later - but again, the Association seems to have behaved as the larger body.[41]

III

The Rate Equalisation Association's activities showed a sharp perception of where its strengths and its potential for success lay - in the generation of public support for change, in the building of links with those who had the potential for changing the law, the Members of Parliament, and in the seizing of every opportunity to promote their cause.

One of the most public demonstrations of the Association's consciousness of the importance of alliances and the building of influential support was the enrolment of over 60 Vice-Presidents in its cause[42] after it expanded constitutionally in October 1858 and became the Metropolitan and County Association for the Equalisation of the Poor Rates.[43] The vice-presidential tactic - a promotional practice that other campaigning organisations such as the United Kingdom Alliance had also instituted[44] - had in fact been agreed 15 months earlier at a meeting of the Central Committee[45] but not implemented. The Central Committee had resolved that the E.C. should "solicit noblemen and other influential gentlemen to become Vice Presidents of the Association":

The tally of over 60 influential gentlemen included the Lord Mayor of London and over 30 MPs. Athough Ayrton was certainly the Association's most active parliamentary voice, he was listed sixth from the top in the 1860 Annual Report, and fourth among MPs, being preceded not only by William Cubitt, MP and Lord Mayor, but by a former and a present City of London Alderman: James White, MP for Brighton, and Alderman Thomas Sidney, MP for Stafford. It seems the Association appreciated the public relations power of being seen to be allied with leading City

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[41]GL MS 1088/1, 19. & 21.1.1858.
[42]Ibid., Annual Report for 1860; minutes 13.10.1858.
[43]See below, p. 74-5.
[44]Harrison, op. cit., 220-1; D. A. Hamer, *The politics of electoral pressure. A study of Victorian reform associations* (Sussex, 1997).
[45]Ibid., 7.7.1857.

representatives. When, however, the E.C. wanted to mobilise the Parliamentary Vice-Presidents, it was Ayrton to whom they turned for practical political organisation. They never did select an agreed and willing person for the top job of President. Having 60 influential Vice-Presidents was perhaps an acceptable compromise; it certainly prevented the executive power of the E.C. from becoming diluted.

Although only 11 MP-Vice Presidents were in parliament continuously from 1858 to 1867 (election losses and other external factors taking their toll), a further eight were in the House for a substantial part of these years, with another eight present in the earlier years; all but two were Liberals or Reformers.[46] They were mainly backbenchers, with only three ever holding government office: Sir Robert Collier, MP for Plymouth (Solicitor-General 1863-66, Attorney General 1868), John Bagwell, MP for Clonmell (a Lord of the Treasury 1859-61), and Ayrton himself.

Many of the MP-Vice Presidents were doubly influential in that they had leading or significant positions in commerce, manufacturing and trade. For instance Robert Crawford, MP for the City of London, was a Director of the Bank of England (and previously Deputy-Governor), Chairman of the East Indian Railway and an East India Proprietor. Sir William Tite, MP for Bath, was Chairman of the Bank of Egypt, a Director of the London & Westminster Bank, and President of the Institute of British Architects. Herbert Ingram, MP for Boston, who met an untimely death by drowning in Lake Michigan in 1860, was Proprietor and Manager of the *Illustrated London News*. William Schneider, MP for Norwich and later for Leicester, was a merchant and shipowner. William Cubitt, MP for Andover and Lord Mayor of London 1860-62, was one of the founding brothers of the wealthy building firm.

Merchants included City of London Alderman (and former Lord Mayor) Thomas Sidney, MP for Stafford and teadealer and importer; James White, former Alderman, MP for Plymouth, and a merchant chiefly engaged in trade with China; Peter Rolt, Conservative MP for Greenwich to 1857 and a timber merchant and contractor; Samuel Morley, MP for Nottingham and then Bristol, member of a firm of wholesale hosiers (and also a leading Radical); R. J. R. Campbell, MP for Weymouth, merchant in Bengal and London, and author of works on banking and exchange; William Price, MP for

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[46]Stenton, op. cit. Stenton's descriptions of business activities have been used. As, however, he does not always attach dates to non-parliamentary career information, in occasional cases the business information may not be applicable for the period being studied; nonetheless it has been included as an indication of status.

Gloucester, a timber merchant and later a Railway Commissioner, and William Williams, MP for Lambeth.

Manufacturers included Apsley Pellatt, MP for Southwark and head of a Southwark glass manufacturing firm; E. G. Salisbury, MP for Chester and proprietor of extensive gasworks; Donald Nicoll, MP for Frome, merchant tailor, manufacturer of cloth, and partner in a Regent Street firm; and J. J. Colman, Sheriff and Mayor of Norwich, later to be MP for Norwich, merchant, manufacturer, and head of the mustard firm.

Others in (present or past) senior magisterial or other public positions included Sir James Duke, MP for London, past Sheriff of London and Middlesex, past Lord Mayor, and Alderman; Charles Butler, MP for Tower Hamlets and Chairman of Tower Hamlets Quarter Sessions; Thomas Perronet Thompson, MP for Bradford, Radical Lieut. Colonel, and former governor of Sierra Leone; Sir Charles Napier, MP for Southwark, a former Admiral in the Portuguese service, commander of the Baltic fleet and Royal Navy Admiral of the Blue; Captain Charles Mangles, MP for Newport, Isle of Wight and a former captain in the East India Company's service, and John Locke, MP, Ayrton's closest associate on the rate equalisation issue, who became Recorder of Brighton.

Also significant in the business world were almost all of the non-MP Vice-Presidents. Of 28 whose addresses were given as London, 17 have been identified as merchants, manufacturers, or wholesalers/retailers/dealers and one as a printer-publisher; for a further five there is a highly likely similar identification, bringing this category of businessmen to 23; for two only has it not yet been possible to identify an occupational or industrial grouping. A further miscellaneous group of six - a clergyman (the Rev. M'Gill), two doctors (one of them Dr. Josiah Stallard, later to become prominent in poor relief issues), and three from the provinces - brings the tally of non-MP Vice-Presidents to 31. Those who were also politically active in other fields included J. P. Gassiot (oporto merchant), treasurer of the radical Administrative Reform Association.[47]

At least two-thirds of the non-MP Vice-Presidents, therefore, and probably more, were men with significant business interests in London. Their fields of operation

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[47]Taylor, op. cit., 264-5.

included the wines and spirits, oporto, wool and fur trades (merchants); silk, linen, lace, glass and china, gloves, and hosiery (wholesale, retail, dealing and warehousing); and leather goods, lace, cutlery, tobacco and snuff, hats, brewing, glass and china, furs and skins, soap and candlesticks, furniture, oils and colours, and animal charcoal and ivory black (manufacturers).[48]

The enlisting of influential Vice-Presidents was, however, only one of the Rate Equalisation Association's wide range of tactics, and was started in the second of what one might term the four phases of its history.

The first phase (involving the unsuccessful moves for a select committee and a Bill) began with campaigning success in the March 1857 general election. Candidates advocating equalisation of the poor rates had been placed at the head of the poll in Middlesex, the E.C. noted, and all the candidates had "openly avowed their support to the cause". The press had also begun to discuss the question "in a manner well calculated to give us valuable aid", as had clergy in the East End. It was at this stage that the E.C. recommended to the Central Committee that "some independent Member" be found to introduce a Bill in parliament:[49] a common strategy for extra-parliamentary radical reforms groups,[50] and one that was to lead to a lengthy and highly productive relationship with Ayrton.

The E.C. now began organising a programme of widespread petitioning and public meetings throughout the metropolis of a kind that was to be the hallmark of the Association's campaigning for ten years. It seems likely that petitioning was used both as an end in itself (to mobilise support) and to show parliament that there was extensive support for rate equalisation.[51] Invariably members of the E.C. attended and spoke at the meetings,[52] and the arrangements indicate sound political organising skills. For instance, shortly before a "numerous meeting of the ratepayers of the City of London" on 7 May 1857 at the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill, with the Lord Mayor,

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[48]GL MS 1088/1, 18.2.61; P.O. London Directories, Commercial, 1851, 1862. See also Appendix III, Rate Equalisation Association: non-MP Vice-Presidents, 1861.
[49]GL MS 1088/1, 8.4.1857.
[50]Taylor, op. cit., 36.
[51]Sarah Palmer, *Politics, shipping and the repeal of the Navigation Laws* (Manchester, 1989), 121-2, discusses the use of parliamentary petitions in the mid nineteenth-century.
[52]GL MS 1088/1, 12.5. & 23.6.1857. Gilbert and other members of the EC attended meetings at Hackney, St. George in the East, St. George Southwark, Bermondsey, Camberwell, Shoreditch, Limehouse, Wapping, Fulham, Chelsea, Hammersmith, St. Clement Danes, Putney, Wandsworth and Bethnal Green.

Alderman Sidney, MP, in the chair, the E.C. met to agree the movers and seconders of three resolutions to be put to the meeting. These included two clergymen, three members of the E.C. and a City common councilman. All were passed, with a handful of dissentients, and following the meeting a short report, with resolutions, was inserted in the press as a paid advertisement. An indication of the recognition accorded the Association is that Lord John Russell wrote to apologise for his non-attendance, on the grounds that he had been out of town at the time that he received notice of the meeting, and Sir James Duke, MP for the City, Alderman and former Lord Mayor, sent his apologies because the meeting was being held on the first night of the parliamentary session.[53]

Ayrton's Commons motion for a select committee on rate equalisation was preceded four days before by an Association deputation on 12 June to the new President of the Poor Law Board, E. P. Bouverie, accompanied by the Lord Mayor and with a memorial "signed by the representatives of parishes containing upwards of 700,000 inhabitants, and assessed to the property tax to more than three millions of money". The new Liberal minister, however, gave "but very little encouragement .... as to the support we should receive from the Government."[54] Following the defeat of Ayrton's motion for a committee "to inquire into the causes of the inequality of the poor rates in the metropolitan district, and whether any measures should be adopted to render the rates more equal",[55] the E.C. sent their "best thanks" to him for the "able manner" in which he had advocated the question, and had verbatim copies of his speech printed.[56]

Their report to the Central Committee of the outcome of the deputation was favourable: that the President's replies and objections were "of so weak and unsatisfactory a character as to give them no cause to fear the argumentative powers of their opponents, but on the contrary, to give them great hopes of the ultimate success of their endeavours". The E.C. clearly saw the issue as one that could be rationally argued and won,[57] and they called for "an active system of agitation" to be carried on, "so as to bring before the ratepayers the importance of the movement".[58]

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[53]GL MS 1088/1, 12.5.1857.
[54]Ibid., 7.7.1857; GL MS 1088/2 (draft minute book) says the deputation was on the 13th.
[55]Hansard 16.6.57 col. 1899.
[56]GL MS 1088/1, 23.6. & 7.7.1857; GL MS 1090, Rough Cash Book.
[57]See chapter 2, Rational process of policy-making.
[58]GL MS 1088/1, 7.7.57.

The significance for poor law developments of the alliance between West/South/City radicals and East End MP has gone unrecognised by historians. The partnership between the Rate Equalisation Association and Ayrton was remarkable in terms of its achievements, which were built on the twin strengths of *his* parliamentary position and skills and *their* credibility as experienced, elected activists, office-holders and witnesses on the metropolitan poor law scene. Without the Rate Equalisation Association, Ayrton would have had to rely for campaigning support on the smaller and much less active Tower Hamlets Association, which appears to have functioned only occasionally, in response to externally generated events, and on the small and overstretched army of radical-minded East End clergymen.

Defeat on the 1857 Select Committee motion was taken as an opportunity to use the list of Ayes and Noes[59] as a checklist: while the 121 Noes are untouched, 13 of the 81 Ayes have been ticked, and five have been crossed out. At the next Central Committee meeting the E.C. reported that 13 metropolitan Members (those ticked)[60] had voted in support of Ayrton's motion, and that only one - Sir Benjamin Hall of Marylebone - had voted against. The five names crossed out were those of MPs who either died or left the Commons later in 1857; it seems likely therefore that in late 1857 or in 1858 the list of Ayes was used for canvassing MPs still in the Commons for further support. This may have included the canvass for "influential" Vice-Presidents, as 15 of the 81 Ayes later took on that role.

The list indicates how distant the prospect was at this stage of achieving rate equalisation. The Ayes were, overwhelmingly, Liberal backbenchers: only four of them ever held government office, either before or after the vote on Ayrton's motion. The sparse non-Liberal support consisted of seven Conservatives and seven Liberal-Conservatives (Stenton's classification).

Front-bench Liberals led the opposition: two-thirds of the Noes (80) were Liberals, and of these, 26 were present, past or future front-benchers. This large

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[59]GL MS 1088/2. The list does not appear in Hansard, but a blue printed list of Ayes and Noes, appearing to be of official origin, is pasted into the Association's Draft Minute Book.
[60]The 13 listed in MS 1088/2 (Draft Minute Book) were: Charles Butler (Tower Hamlets), General Codrington (Greenwich) - who protested several months later that he was not a supporter of rate equalisation, William Cox (Finsbury), Sir James Duke (City), Viscount Ebrington (Marylebone), Lord Grosvenor (Marylebone), Robert Hanbury (Middlesex), John Locke (Southwark), Sir Charles Napier (Southwark), William Roupell (Lambeth), William Williams (Lambeth), Charles Townsend (Greenwich), and Ayrton himself, who acted as one of the tellers for the Ayes.

proportion of office-holders or -seekers was headed by Lord Palmerston himself. Such a heavy-weight mobilisation to defeat Ayrton's proposal for a Select Committee suggests the government may have feared the impact on MPs of Ayrton's striking images of East-West disparities (images that were to become the staple of Equalisation Association rhetoric). Indeed, to have provoked such a turn-out can be taken as a measure of success. Four years before, when Apsley Pellatt, MP for Southwark, had attempted to move for leave to bring in a rate equalisation Bill (drafted with the support of John Day) the House had been counted out.[61]

The next step - the drafting of a Bill - led to a major difference of opinion between Ayrton and the Association. The Central Committee supported the E.C. in their interpretation of the difference: that Ayrton's less radical proposal was "objectionable" because it made the question "exclusively a ratepayer's question", proposed to equalise only half the rates, and did not tackle the poor removals issue. The Central Committee unanimously resolved that, having considered Ayrton's proposal for "mitigating the inequalities of the poor rate", it was their opinion that "nothing less than an equalisation of the rate on a uniform basis of assessment will do justice to the ratepayer or to the poor", and ordered that the E.C.'s draft Bill be passed on to counsel for further development.[62]

It was the more radical approach of the "West" that formed the basis for the new, vigorous programme of canvassing, petitioning and public meetings that the Equalisation Association now embarked upon, with resolutions at public meetings and petitions calling for "an equalised rate levied on rateable property throughout the District" [the metropolitan district]. Meetings were held, for instance, on the following dates in early 1858: Jan. 20 Bermondsey, Rotherhithe and St. Clement Danes; Jan. 21 Woolwich; Jan. 26 Lambeth; Jan. 27 Chelsea; Jan. 28 Hammersmith; Feb. 3 Chelsea; Feb. 5 Fulham; Feb. 9, 18 East London Union; Feb. 12 Clerkenwell; Feb. 24 West London; Feb. 26 City of London; March 2 Marylebone.[63] Following the engagement of a Parliamentary agent, Richard James, detailed weekly activities were recorded in the E.C. minutes, including numbers of signatures obtained on petitions and voluntary donations,

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[61]*Hansard* 26.7.1853, col. 831. No further attempt was made to introduce Pellatt's Bill "To abolish the removal of the poor, and to equalise the rates for their maintenance, and to make other amendments in the laws relating to the relief of the poor", and Pellatt lost his seat in 1857.
[62]GL MS 1088/1, 29.12.57.
[63]Ibid., 5.1.58-16.2.58.

or "subscriptions", received; it may have been through the subscriptions that most or all of the activities of the Association were now funded.[64] A short advertisement would also be placed in each morning paper twice a week giving the address of the association's office, 32 Fleet Street, which would be open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the hon. secretaries (Warwick and Fowler) in attendance.[65]

The Association responded boldly to opposition from either parishes or the Poor Law Board itself. For instance, when the Clerkenwell vestry wrote that "their parish officers would take no steps towards holding a public meeting in that parish", the Association went ahead and organised a meeting in the parish to be chaired by the Rev. Maguire, the incumbent ; it turned out to be "a very large meeting", and the resolutions of the Association were unanimously adopted. When the *Sunday Times* reported that Farnall, the Poor Law Board's metropolitan inspector, had been trying to persuade Chelsea guardians "that the equalisation of poor rates would be of no use to them", the E.C. invited Farnall to meet the Central Committee "at any time and place suitable to himself for the purpose of discussing the question". (There is no record of Farnall ever having taken up the offer; his right initially to enter into such a discussion with the Chelsea guardians was questionable anyway.)[66]

An accommodation was, however, reached with Ayrton on his draft Bill. Noting that their own Bill had the advantage of incorporating a representative body, the E.C. decided nonetheless that his would now achieve the Association's objectives; five amendments were submitted to Ayrton, one of which called for "as little power of interference as possible" to be given to the Poor Law Board.[67]

The Association now began campaigning vigorously for Ayrton's Bill.[68] A measure of their success by the First Reading was that Ayrton was able to tell the House that he understood that no metropolitan Member would oppose his motion to introduce the Bill, and Sotheron-Estcourt, the new Conservative President, remarked that the question was one which, "whether it could be fully borne out or not, nevertheless was

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[64]Ibid., 5.1.58. For instance, Richard James reported that on 15 days, from 16.12.57 to 4.1.58, he had obtained 4,431 signatures and £177.10s.6d. in the parishes of St. Saviour, St. George, St. Olave, St. John Bermondsey, Christ Church, Lambeth, Newington, Camberwell, St. Mary Rotherhithe, Deptford, Greenwich and Woolwich - "which to a large extent clears the map of the Southern and South Eastern parts of the Metropolis."
[65]Ibid., 12.1.58.
[66]Ibid., 5, 12 & 19.1.1858, and 16.2.1858.
[67]Ibid., 3.2.1858.
[68]PP 1857/8 iv, 47, Poor Rates (Metropolis) Bill.

considered by a large number of respectable persons in the metropolis to constitute a grievance".[69] The Bill having passed its First Reading, the E.C. worked at increasing support in its weaker areas, such as some of the Local Act parishes. They rallied their own troops with both a promise and a warning: that Ayrton's Bill would provide a full remedy against the "unjust and oppressive system of which we complain", and that considerable opposition was expected at the Second Reading, "particularly by interested parties who wish to uphold the present state of things", and emphasised the breadth of the interests involved - both the poor and ratepayers.[70]

There was, again, a contrast in vigour between the well-manned and multi-faceted Rate Equalisation Association, with its wide local base and many activities, and the East End association. Although the *East London Observer* was editorially supportive of Ayrton, the only references in the paper to rate equalisation during the crucial period surrounding the First and Second Readings of Ayrton's Bill were extracts from the Rev. M'Gill's booklet on the issue, and brief comments praising Ayrton after the defeat of the Bill. The only advertisement on the issue was one inserted by Warwick and Fowler about the major central London public meeting.[71]

Twenty-two MPs presented petitions bearing a total of 36,861 signatures to the Commons[72]. The largest number of signatures came from the populous districts south of the river: Southwark, Lambeth, Bermondsey, Newington and Rotherhithe (14,197). If Clerkenwell and St. Luke are counted as west (in accordance with the E.C.'s perception) the West total was 8,070. Tower Hamlets raised 2,686 signatures. The remaining 11, 908 came from the City, from East End districts organised by the Rate Equalisation Association such as Poplar and Limehouse, and from other districts further afield such as Greenwich, Putney and Wandsworth.[73] (*Figure 1.*)

Ayrton's withdrawal of his Bill at its Second Reading in the face of overwhelming Commons opposition[74] brought to an end the first phase of the Rate Equalisation Association's history. In the second phase (1858-60) three major steps were taken: the

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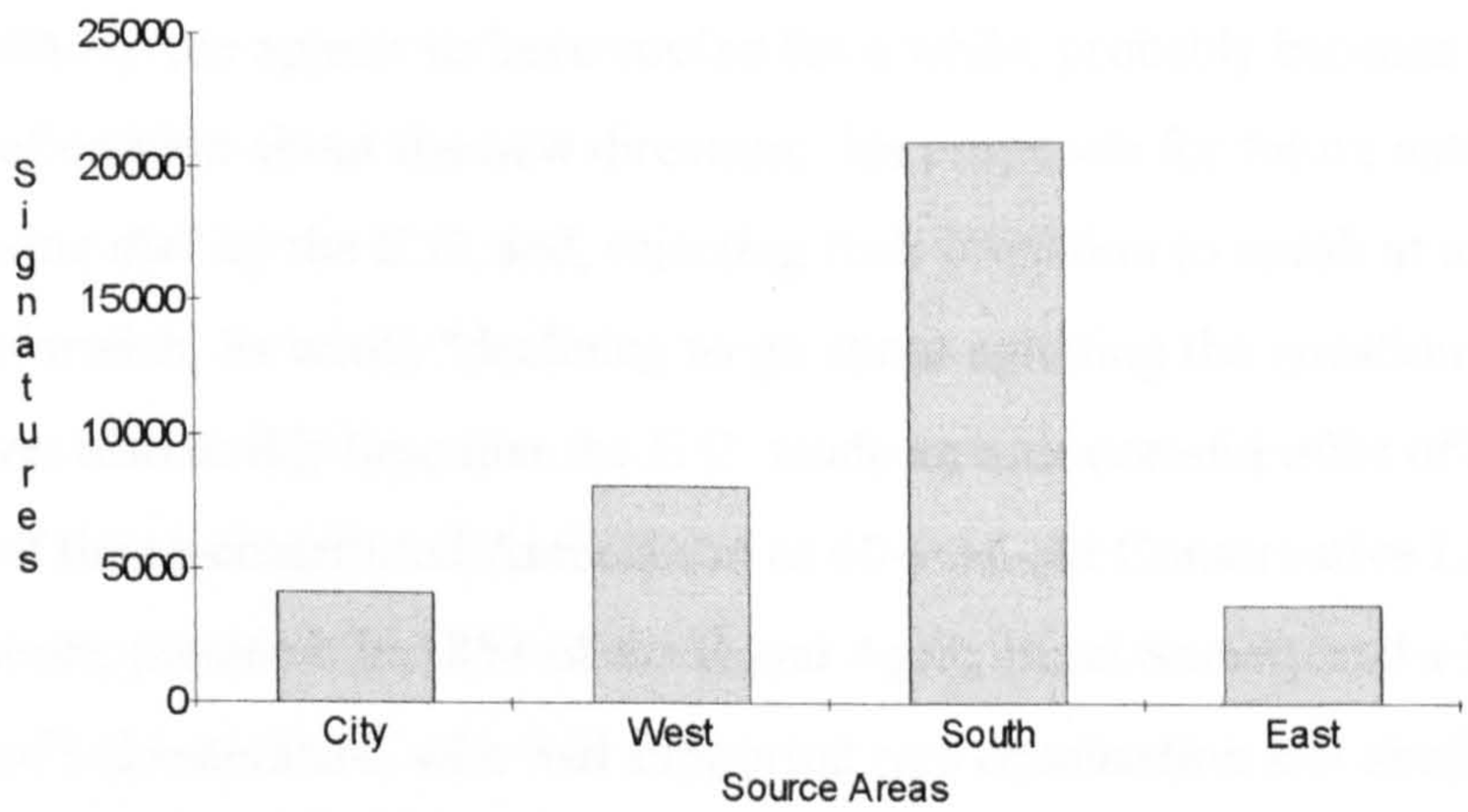
[69] *Hansard* 23.3.58. col. 635.
[70] GL MS 1088/1, 16.3.1858, 5 & 22.4.1858, 4.5.1858.
[71] *East London Observer* 24.4.1858, 4d; 15.5.1858, 3f; 29.5.1858, 2b.
[72] GL MS 1088/1, 19.5.58. As a few petitions came from local bodies and were listed as single signatures, the total number of signatures would have been slightly higher.
[73] Ibid., 19.5.1858.
[74] *Hansard* 12.5.1858, col. 516.

Association went "nation-wide", the enrolment of influential Vice-Presidents began, and further parliamentary tactics were planned formally and embarked upon.

From November 1858 the Association operated as the Metropolitan and County Association for the Equalisation of the Poor Rate. A prior circular to most of the boards of guardians and other local poor law authorities in England, Scotland and



Note:
City: 4,101
West: 8,070 (West End, St. Luke, Clerkenwell, Holborn, Marylebone, Chelsea, Fulham)
South: 20,993 (Lambeth, Southwark, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Greenwich, Putney, Camberwell)
East: 3,697 (Poplar, Limehouse, Tower Hamlets)

Figure 1: Rate equalisation petitions, May 1858.[75]

Ireland asking if they would be willing to support a movement to achieve rate equalisation through enlarged rating districts throughout the country had had an overwhelming response; Gilbert wrote later that letters arrived in such numbers "as to render it impossible for the Association, with the limited means they had at command, to keep up a sufficient correspondence". The wider campaign included a new manifesto, an address "showing that the equalisation of the poor rate is a poor man's question", and a further letter to the poor law unions in Ireland. A hectic schedule of meetings outside the metropolis was embarked upon. For instance, in one week in January (hardly the easiest time of year to travel) Warwick and Bennett attended a meeting in

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[75]GL MS 1088/1, 19.5.1858.

Worcester (21st), Gilbert and M'Gill were in Stafford (24th), Blachford and Chester were in Macclesfield (25th) and Fowler and Day were in Plymouth (also 25th). In all of these places resolutions supporting the Equalisation Association were passed, and local committees were formed "for the purpose of assisting the Central Committee".[76] Extensive canvassing was also organised, both within the metropolis and outside.[77]

The new, wider focus of the Association's activities was, of course, contrary to the metropolis-only policy that had been argued for in parliament by Ayrton and Locke. Relations with Ayrton appear to have cooled for a while, probably because of differences of opinion about the new direction; his proposals for future action were "adjourned *sine die*" by the E.C. and, rejecting their invitation to speak at a public meeting in Norwich, he wrote "declining to go about agitating the question of the poor laws". It was also at this time that the E.C. made an unsuccessful offer of the presidency of the re-constituted Association to 60-year-old Conservative Lord Berners, rural landowner, president in 1858 of the Royal Agricultural Society and a Deputy Lieutenant of Leicestershire, who had supported rate equalisation and abolition of the settlement laws from the platform of the Association's inaugural public meeting the previous year.[78]

The vital partnership with Ayrton revived, however, a couple of months later, and their next joint activity was to be of great significance in the struggle for rate equalisation. The first meeting of the parliamentary Vice-Presidents was held at the Union Hotel, Charing Cross, on 15 February 1859, with six E.C. members and eight Vice-Presidents present; Ayrton, in the chair, and the Rev. M'Gill were the only two East End representatives present. At this meeting the framework was laid for parliamentary activities that were to culminate, eight years later, in the passing of the *Metropolitan Poor Act.* The major decision was tactical: to launch a two-pronged manoeuvre to get the issue of rate equalisation placed on the agenda of an existing select committee and to get the remit of this committee extended to encompass the general

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[76]Ibid., 7.7.1858, 5.11. 1858, 12.11.1858, 19.11.1858, 21 & 28.1.1859; Gilbert (London, 1860), 9-10.
[77]Ibid., 7, 14 & 28.1.59. Over the Christmas period (13 Dec.-1 Jan.) canvassing had been carried out in Lambeth, Islington, Hoxton, St. George-in-the-East, St.Luke,Limehouse,West London Union,St.Mary Newington,Clerkenwell, Brentford, Hounslow and the City. On 14 Jan. canvassing was taking place in Clerkenwell, St.Luke, Shoreditch, Spitalfields, Lambeth and Newington, and on 28 Jan. the parliamentary agent reported canvassing in Clerkenwell, Shoreditch, the City, Greenwich, Worcester, Stafford and Macclesfield.
[78]Ibid., 5, 12, & 19.11.1858 and 1,10 & 17.12.1858; GL MS 1089, 18-28; V. Gibbs (ed.), *The Complete Peerage* (London, 1919), 158; *Dod's Parliamentary Companion* (London, 1859).

working of the poor law. The first was a variation on Ayrton's unsuccessful 1857 motion, and the second, opening the door to discussion of a wide range of poor law issues, was to allow special treatment for the metropolis to be argued for and won.[79]

The formula was initially unsuccessful on the 1858-60 *Select Committees on the Irremoveable Poor*,[80] but was pursued tenaciously by Ayrton and John Locke on Villiers' 1861-4 *Select Committee on Poor Relief* and in the Commons. The major poor law legislation of the next few years, described by Caplan as involving a "piecemeal, step-by-step" process,[81] was therefore in fact the product, to a significant degree, of the tactics agreed at the Union Hotel in February 1859.

In the third phase (1861-2) E.C. members gave select committee evidence (some of them in both years) and major public campaigning continued. For instance, an "influential" and "most crowded and respectable meeting" at the Guildhall, chaired by the Conservative Lord Mayor William Cubitt (who was to become one of the Association's Vice-Presidents) and attended by "a large number of the clergy, merchants, guardians of the poor and others" voted with only five dissentients in favour of several Association resolutions.[82] The wording of the requisition to the Lord Mayor for the meeting had confirmed the dynamic nature of the Association's response to the recent winter distress, calling for a meeting to consider "the causes of the late distressed condition of the London poor, and whether an extension of the area of chargeability and the equalization of the poor rate would not be the best means of providing for the relief of such distress in the future".[83]

One of the notable achievements of this meeting was that it succeeded in convincing the Lord Mayor himself. On the *Select Committee on Poor Relief* the following year John Locke recalled that Cubitt had not made up his mind on the subject when he went into the chair, but on leaving the chair he was "decidedly in favour of the

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[79]Ibid., 4, 11 & 15.2.59.
[80]PP 1857-58, xii, *Select Committee on the Irremovable Poor* (Conservative); PP 1859 (Session 2) vii, *Select Committee on Irremovable Poor* (Conservative), to which E.C. members John Blachford and John Day gave evidence in their local official capacities; PP 1860, xvii, *Select Committee on Poor Removals* (Liberal), to which one E.C. member, Henry Potter, gave evidence as vice-chairman of the West London Union. Ayrton was a member of all three committees.
[81]Caplan, op. cit., 296. Caplan, in tracing the parliamentary battles for reform of the laws of removal and settlement and the achievement of union chargeability, and the role of the landed interest, considers the question of why reforms "so decisively rejected in 1845 became acceptable in 1865". Although recognising Ayrton's 1857 and 1858 contributions, he suggests of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* only that "Mr Ayrton would indeed have been pleased that so much of what he had striven for had come to pass".
[82]GL MS 1088/1, 22.4.1861.
[83]Ibid., 2.6.1862, annual report, March 1862.

movement"; John Day, giving evidence, agreed that Cubitt was "a very warm supporter".[84]

The petition arising from the meeting, subsequently signed by 26,656 ratepayers, was presented to the Commons by the Lord Mayor and, on his motion, referred to Villiers' recently appointed wide-ranging *Select Committee on Poor Relief.*[85]

With some justification the Rate Equalisation Association, in their Fifth Annual Report,[86] looking back at the past year, felt they had "just cause for congratulation" at the progress and interest shown, both by the public and the legislature, "in the injustice, as well as the inadequacy, of the existing mode of raising.....funds for the relief of the Poor". They noted the role of winter distress in bringing to prominence the defects in the system of poor relief, but made the point that their own efforts had played a significant part in focusing attention on the inequities of the metropolitan rating system.

Seven Association supporters appeared before Villiers' mammoth 1861-4 *Select Committee on Poor Relief*[87] in its first year, but evidence was not taken on the rate equalisation issue (although Warwick was able to submit a paper arguing the case in some detail, with tabulated figures[88] and there were a few other minor references, in passing, to the Association). The seven formed a small proportion of the 68 witnesses questioned by the Select Committee from March to July 1861 on a wide range of poor law issues

When, at last, the rallying call came from Ayrton in June 1862 that Villiers' committee was ready to receive any evidence they "might wish to give on the subject of the equalisation of the poor rates",[89] the E.C. resolved to send a strong contingent of nine. Only one of these (the Rev. M'Gill) was to represent the East End (specifically, Tower Hamlets). Three were to be from the three City unions, two from Southwark, and three from the west (Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham, and Hammersmith). Once again the Equalisation Association was functioning almost entirely as an organisation based in the West, the South and the City.

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[84]PP 1862 x, Q.7723.
[85]GL MS 1088/1, 17.3.62; 2.6.62, annual report, 2.6.1862.
[86]Ibid., 2.6.1862.
[87]PP 1861 ix. They were Edward Collinson, chairman of St. George the Martyr Southwark board of guardians (12.3.1861), M'Gill (9.4.1861), Gilbert (16.4.1861), Potter (23. & 30.4.1861), James Harvey, chairman of the West London Union (14.5.1861), Warwick (17.5.1861) and Blachford (17.5.1861).
[88]Ibid., 2nd Report, Appendix 6.
[89]GL MS 1088/1, 2.6.1862.

In the event, six Association representatives gave evidence.[90] They were the only witnesses on rate equalisation, and the only non-official witnesses to come from the metropolis in 1862. Not even the 1862 medical officer witnesses (nor the petition handed in by a Poor Law inspector from the Executive Council of the British Medical Association "representing 2,100 medical men") focused on the rating issue; instead, they raised the conditions of appointment, employment and pay of medical officers.[91] The E.C.'s warning in its fifth annual report in March 1862 that paid officers had so far formed a large proportion of the witnesses, turned out to have been timely: from March to July the proportion was even greater, with the Poor Law Board, under attack on several major fronts, bringing in its senior regional staff, the Poor Law inspectors. The 42 witnesses in 1862 included seven of the Board's inspectors[92] and 18 paid local officials,[93] bringing the "official element" to just under 60%. The intention of the major part of the evidence to the select committee in 1862 was, therefore, to defend the Board's existing practices.

The contributions of the Rate Equalisation Association six were acknowledged in the select committee's 1864 Report, which noted

> that much evidence was adduced showing the unequal pressure of the charge for the relief of the poor in different parts of the metropolitan district; and various plans were submitted to Your Committee for the equalisation of the poor rate; and Your Committee recommend the general question of extending the area of rating to the further consideration of the House....[94]

In phase four, 1863-7, the Rate Equalisation Association appears to have begun responding to events rather than taking a pro-active role; one could argue that the Association had done as much as it could do at that time to achieve an equal rate in the

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[90]PP 1862 x. They were Warwick (27.6.1862), Collinson (1.7.1862), Day (1.7.1862), Gilbert (4.7.1862), M'Gill (4.7.1862) and Pilcher, chairman of the East London Union (9.7.1862).
[91]Ibid., 9.5.62.
[92]Ibid., 8.4.1862, 16.5.1862, 17.6.1862, 2.4.1862, 9.5.1862, 23.5.1862, 27.5.1862, 30.5.1862, 2.6.1862, 3.6.1862. H.B. Farnall, the metropolitan inspector, had given extensive evidence the previous year on 22.3.1861, 3.5.1861, 7.6.1861.
[93]Ibid., 21.3.62, 25.3.62, 28.3.62 (two), 1.4.62 (two), 8.4.62, 29.4.62, 9.5.62 (two), 13.6.62, 17.6.62, 9.7.62 (three), 16.7.62 (two), 23.7.62.
[94]PP 1864 ix, Report.

metropolis. The status of the Association and its E.C. members appears to have remained high, and it continued to be politically appropriate for an MP to be a Vice-President. For instance, the ninth annual report of the Association shows that one of the two new Vice-Presidents was the Rt. Hon. George Goschen, MP for the City and a future President of the Poor Law Board.[95]

When Villiers introduced the *Union Chargeability Bill* into Parliament, the E.C. viewed "with pleasure the success that so far attended their efforts in the cause of the equalisation of the poor rate" and gave the Bill their "cordial support", while reserving to themselves the right to any steps that might be advisable "to secure the same benefit to the large metropolitan parishes as the proposed Bill will give to unions". They agreed to campaign for a radical proposal from Ayrton, Locke and Sidney that the annually renewable *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act 1864* be extended to provide not only for the houseless poor but also for the irremoveable poor of the metropolis. If this had been successful it would, at a stroke, have achieved rate equalisation, although administered by the Metropolitan Board of Works, a body not previously involved in poor relief.[96]

In response to Hardy's 1867 Metropolitan Poor Bill the Association held two meetings of guardians, overseers and vestrymen at the London Coffee House, where it was agreed that attempts should be made (unsuccessfully, it turned out) to have additional charges placed on the intended new Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, and also that they should join the deputation of the "East End Association" to Hardy.[97] Three members of the E.C. (Warwick, Blachford and Fowler) joined the committee of the revived Tower Hamlets Association under the presidency of M'Gill.[98]

With the passing of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* the major principle underlying the formation of the Rate Equalisation Association in 1857 had been achieved, even if some of the practical details differed from proposals put forward by the Association over the years; the fact that the first "asylum district" to be set up under the Act was the

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[95]GL MS 1088/1, 28.1.67.
[96]Ibid., 6. & 20.3.65.
[97]Ibid., 30.1.1867, 18.2.1867, 25.2.1867.
[98]MH 25/18, Jan. 1867, manifesto of the Tower Hamlets Association for the Equalisation of the Metropolitan Poor Rates; MH25/18, 25.1.1867, memorial to Hardy by "the delegates appointed by various metropolitan parishes and unions to take steps for obtaining an equalisation of the poor rates of the metropolis". Notes by a Poor Law Board official attached to the memorial listed 11 East End poor law bodies, nine from the west and south, "and many others".

metropolis-wide Metropolitan Asylums District,[99] which conformed, at least geographically and in terms of its largely guardian-membership, with the Association's main county-based model, indicates a further campaigning success.[100] Their achievement was recognised by the E.C. in typically decisive fashion. On 14 June 1867 they agreed that the time had now arrived when the Association should be dissolved "inasmuch as the great object for which it was founded had been in a great measure effected by the passing of the Union Chargeability Act of 1865 and the Metropolitan Poor Law Act 1867".[101]

IV

In terms of tactics and alliances it is clear that for ten years the Rate Equalisation Association, and particularly its Executive Committee, played a significant role on two fronts: in the influencing of opinion, and in the battle of parliamentary tactics. It seems very likely that prominent among the reasons for their success when compared with the lack of progress of earlier attempts were (as Gilbert believed) the significant and powerful alliances that they built, both within and outside parliament. They could rightly claim success when, in 1867, they saw their goals largely achieved.

The fact that the Association was not an East End but a metropolis-wide movement is important. In deriving its delegates from boards of guardians and vestries across the metropolis it drew on a wide constituency of political activists at the sharp end of implementing poor relief and settlement laws. Such poor law activists had been denied a wider forum through the failure to give the capital municipal status in 1835-7, and the limited extent of metropolitan government - only a Board of Works - established in 1855.[102] With an active consciousness of poor law weaknesses and disparities of provision but no local forum for addressing such problems adequately, they underpinned the rate equalisation movement for ten years. This metropolis-wide grass-roots poor

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[99]See Chapter 6. There was no indication in the Act that a metropolis-wide body might be established.
[100]See Chapter 4, p. 80-83.
[101]GL MS 1088/1, 14.6.67.
[102]J. Firth, *Municipal London* (London, 1876), 539-43; 18 & 19 Vict., c.120; M. B. Baer, "The politics of London, 1852-1858: parties, voters and representation", Ph.D. thesis (Iowa, 1976), 30, suggests that the "muzzling of London" demonstrated "a desire evident among conservatives in all Victorian parties to restrict the political power of the metropolis".

law radicalism enabled the Association consistently to mobilise backbench Radicals in parliament and also the Liberal/Radical sympathies to be found among a significant proportion of large businessmen.[103]

That the movement was not only substantial and extensive but also politically radical in its rhetoric, arguments and policies will be further demonstrated in the next chapter.

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[103]J. Vincent, *The Formation of the Liberal Party* (London, 1966), 35-9.

CHAPTER 4. Rhetoric, Policies and Results

As has been shown above, one of the strengths of the Rate Equalisation Association was that it was able, because of its structure and composition, to campaign effectively for support for redistributive reforming policies among a largely middle-class ratepaying constituency. The nature of its membership, tactics and alliances were all significant factors in its success. However, its success in achieving support for metropolitan rate equalisation long before the 1865-6 workhouse scandals made the funding question a parliamentary priority is attributable not only to these factors. Its rhetoric and policies played a major role, and will now be examined.

That the Rate Equalisation Association's position was a Radical one will be demonstrated in this chapter. The movement not only made a significant contribution to what Dicey was later to describe, in the context of other issues, as "permanent currents of opinion"[1] - in this case, opinion about the need for more equalised spreading of the burden of paying for the poor and the sick - but did so within the context of radical discourse and policies. Comparisons with a range of alternative models for rate equalisation, including the much more centrally-controlled system devised by the Conservative government, will confirm this interpretation. The question of whether the system chosen did actually achieve significant redistribution of the financial burden in the early years 1867-70 will also be addressed.

The strength of the Rate Equalisation Association's rhetoric and policies was, essentially, its simplicity. The concept of inequitability was conveyed in emotive, concrete images, and the policies could be summarised in two words: rate equalisation. However, its strength could also be its weakness, as Ayrton in 1857 and 1858, and others before and after him, were made sharply aware: redistribution of wealth from St. George Hanover Square to Spitalfields was not only a promise but also a threat. That, nonetheless, the Association succeeded in influencing so many of those whose interests were threatened by its policies is perhaps a tribute to the power of its rhetoric as well as to the significance of its alliances and vigour of its tactics.

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[1] A. V. Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation between Law & Public Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1917), vii.

In terms of policy-making models the Association's approach to rate equalisation was that of its Radical supporters in parliament: the Rational clear identification of a metropolitan problem based on three clear premises,[2] leading with a simple logic to the proposed solution. Their major arguments were to remain common to metropolitan rate redistribution debate and policy-making for more than a century:[3] the contrasts in needs and resources between areas, the contribution of the poor to wealth creation, and the unique nature of the metropolis. Even when the Rate Equalisation Association expanded to include the counties, its policy was redistribution within county (and metropolitan) boundaries.

In one respect the Association came to occupy the middle-ground between the most vigorous anti-centralisers and those for whom government growth and paying for the poor from a centralised national rate or the Consolidated Fund held no fears.

On the other hand its rhetoric of metropolitan wealth and class divisions was emotive, radical, and well-removed from middle-ground politics. The question is whether the Association tended to be radical in rhetoric but reformist in policy. Some contemporaries would not have agreed with such a distinction: Villiers, for instance (whether for tactical reasons or from conviction), warned the Commons that if they rejected his "moderate" 1861 *Irremovable Poor Bill* they would give great impetus to "the movement in favour of a general and immediate equalisation of rates throughout the whole country".[4]

While the Association was not, in fact, the initiator of the idea of setting up a specific mechanism for equalising the poor rate - G. L. Hutchinson was probably first in the field in terms of being the 19th century "originator" of the proposal - the metropolitan focus was original to the Equalisation Association. Indeed Hutchinson tried to delete the word "London" from a motion at a meeting in 1857, and attacked Ayrton's 1858 Bill on the grounds that in restricting its proposals to the metropolis, it was "too confined and selfish", asking, "If a great good is to be obtained, why should the metropolitan districts alone enjoy it?" The hall-mark of Hutchinson's approach for three decades (starting with a personal letter to the Home Secretary in 1829) was

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[2]See chapter 2, p. 38.
[3]See chapter 1, p. 11.
[4]*Hansard* 28.6.61, col. 1902. The likelihood that Villiers was referring to the Equalisation Association is strong, given the relevance of his comment to the Vice-Presidents in the Commons and the "Metropolitan and County" Equalisation Association's influential Guildhall meeting two months before.

painstaking, detailed statistical analysis of poor rate figures, including parliamentary returns which had been "buried in oblivion". His role was acknowledged by (among others) Thomas Wakley, editor of *The Lancet* and Radical MP for Finsbury 1835-52, John Day, Southwark member of the EC, and Alderman Sidney, MP, later Lord Mayor of London and one of the Association's Vice-Presidents. That Hutchinson's labours influenced the Association seems likely, and they had several common concerns. For instance Hutchinson, arguing for his own reformist county-based scheme, wrote with clearly intended irony that it was the antithesis of "the much-dreaded centralisation" - a concern with which the Association, too, had to grapple. However, the Association's more vigorous and ultimately more successful style appears to have influenced the policy "originator" himself in due course: there was a distinct hint of their style in Hutchinson's 1858 comment about the President of the Poor Law Board that "a man with £2000 a year can afford to be funny."[5]

The position of *The Lancet* in terms of influence at this early stage, if any, on the policies of the Rate Equalisation Association, is more difficult to assess. The evidence may indicate, if anything, that it was the *The Lancet* that was being influenced by the Association, at least as far as rhetoric was concerned. For instance, in the week following the journal's review of Hutchinson's 1858 rate equalisation pamphlet, a lengthy editorial attacked the "aristocratic Bumbles" who "resolutely drive away the poor from the doors of the wealthy, and thrust them upon the shoulders of those who are scarcely above pauperism themselves", and noted that the parliamentary returns moved for by John Locke showed the unequal distribution of the "grievous burden" between wealthy St. George Hanover Square and the poor parish of Shoreditch.[6] Into the complex "influence" equation must, however, also be brought another significant factor articulated in *The Lancet*: the financial and professional interests of medical men. The reviewer of Hutchinson's pamphlet (possibly Wakley himself) pointed out that rate equalisation was a question "intimately connected with the duties and salaries of poor-law medical officers", and expressed the hope that when equalisation was achieved "the due interests of the poor and the proper remuneration of their medical attendants will

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[5]G. L. Hutchinson, *The Equalization of the Poor's Rate of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1858), 11, 12, 25, 80-3; *Lancet* 1858/I,630 & 1858/II,12; *The Times* 22.11.49.5e & 30.4.57, 12f; Gilbert (1857), op. cit., 3, noted that although the association established by Day and Warwick in the early fifties had not been "crowned with the success it deserved", it had, to a great extent, paved the way for the Equalisation Association.

[6]*Lancet* 1858/I,630 & 1858/II,12.

not be unheeded". To a certain extent, it seems, medical support for equalisation derived from more narrowly focused interest group concerns.[7]

The Association's rhetoric of wealth and poverty appealed also to Charles Dickens, despite his disapproval of Ayrton's 1858 speech. He weighed in on the side not only of the poor but also of the ratepayers, drawing contrasts between "the wealthy ratepayers in the squares and terraces of Paddington" and "the impoverished ratepayers in the lanes and small streets of Saint George's-in-the-East". He also tackled the accusation of centralisation, mocking those who might suggest that rate equalisation was centralisation, that it "cuts at the root of liberty", and that campaigners against East-West disparities were "centralising revolutionists". With a flourish worthy of Ayrton, M'Gill or Gilbert, he declaimed with irony that when "the men of plush [West End servants] sicken in service, and can no longer give a return for what they eat, it is quite time that they should be off and throw themselves upon the rates of the poor parishes, whence they were originally drawn".[8]

At the parliamentary level even Villiers, despite his warning about a country-wide rate equalisation movement, employed the by now familiar comparisons, contrasting the poor relief burden in the wealthy parishes that contained the Bank of England and St. Katherine's Dock with neighbouring poor parishes where, he said, labourers swarmed.[9]

Indeed it is possible that the change of Radical rhetoric that Taylor notes in late 1859, when "mainly through the rhetoric of Bright and other leading reformers, the terminology of the ..... common people versus the upper ten thousand began to re-enter the radical vocabulary for the first time in almost twenty years" owed a debt of influence to the Rate Equalisation Association's dramatic images and arguments of the previous three years. Radical MPs such as Bright (whose speech to the Liverpool Financial Reform Association included the accusation that the guilt for the tax system, "cruel in its operation to the poor .....must lie at the door of the rich and powerful") would have been aware of the linguistic and conceptual vocabulary of the Association's rhetoric,

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[7]See Chapter 3, p. 72, on medical evidence given to Villiers' *Select Committee on Poor Relief* in 1862.
[8]*Household Words*, 1857 vol. 17, 5.6.1858, 577-8. Dickens did not hesitate to acknowledge his debt to a pamphlet by the Rev. M'Gill, but mentioned neither Gilbert, whose 1857 pamphlet he must also have read, nor the fact that it was Ayrton who had referred in parliament (*Hansard* 16.6.1857 col. 1903) to some of the dock company figures he quoted.
[9]*Hansard* 28.6.61 col. 30.

publicised as it had been not only in the Commons and the press but in extensive campaigning, and might very well have drawn on it themselves as a political resource.[10]

In terms of policy, the Rate Equalisation Association's perception was that there were, basically, four options for raising and redistributing the poor rate: a national rate levied, as the present parish-based poor rate was, on real property; basing poor relief on the Property Tax, or Schedule A of the income tax, which was likely to bear more heavily on the wealthy (including "the fundholder or the mortgagee"[11]) than did the existing parish assessments[12]; redistribution within Poor Law unions (which in fact took place in 1865 through the *Union Chargeability Act* but did not relieve the metropolitan single parish unions), and redistribution within counties.[13]

The option for which the Rate Equalisation Association campaigned - the fourth, redistribution within counties - was in due course to be that on which, in effect, the *Metropolitan Common Poor Fund* was based, although on a much more centralised basis than the Association had proposed[14].

In choosing which rate equalisation route to pursue the Association gave least priority to a national rate, although Gilbert himself offered to "take up the question of a national rate"[15] and perhaps at least one other member of the E.C., John Day, having worked with Apsley Pellatt, MP,[16] in 1853 on his Bill for a national rate, would have supported such a policy. Central Committee delegates occasionally raised the question but achieved little support. For instance T. Burlton of Southwark suggested that the Association adopt this radical option, which would be "a great and permanent settlement of the question", but was opposed by arguments that this would result in "a storm of opposition", and that they should "keep clear of all entanglements".[17] One of the

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[10]Taylor (Oxford, 1995), 334; *Times* 2.12.1859, 9c-f.
[11]PP 1861 ix, 17/31.5.1861, Warwick's paper on rate equalisation.
[12]Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 12; PP 1861 ix, 17/31.5.1861, Warwick's paper on rate equalisation. The "Property Tax", or schedule A of the income tax, assessed the profits from the ownership of land, houses, etc, such as income from landed rentals and, until 1865-6, from business activities such as docks, railways, gasworks, etc. (Rubinstein, New York, 1987, p.88.)
[13]Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 11-15.
[14]Although the London County Council was not, of course, established until 1889, the concept of the metropolis as a county-type area was inherent in much metropolitan campaigning in the 1860s, including that of the Rate Equalisation Association.
[15]GL MS 1088/1, 25.5.58.
[16]Stenton, op. cit. Pellatt, Liberal MP for Southwark 1852-57 and for seven years a member of the City's Court of Common Councillors.
[17]MH25/18, undated newspaper cutting in Poor Law Board files about the Association's ninth annual meeting on 30.1.1867.

objections expressed by the E.C. was that it would be a "simple socialistic tax". Others were that it would centralise "the whole management of the poor" in the hands of government and increase the powers of the Poor Law Board, would reduce self-government and local control, and would lead to lack of accountability to local ratepayers and lack of a check on government extravagance.[18]

These were traditional Radical arguments.[19] Gilbert argued also that ratepayers would not have the power of interference "should acts of tyranny or oppression be practised on the poor". Warwick, always particularly strong on the need for local powers, argued that it would deprive ratepayers and guardians of "that small portion of self-government and local control left them by the act of 1834".[20]

The property tax option, "Lord Malmesbury's proposal", was rejected reluctantly (with the Association having difficulty reading "a unanimous decision"[21]) but on more or less the same grounds[22] and also, Gilbert wrote, because of "an apparently unsurmountable obstacle" - opposition by Members of both houses of parliament, who were "so powerfully interested against" a property tax.

Here the Association flirted also with the idea of an alliance with the radical Liverpool-based Financial Reform Association, supporters of direct taxation and described by Matthew as the most extreme and organised proponent of direct taxation. They decided, however, that they could not agree with the financial case put by the F. R. A. (which would not have redistributed wealth to a significant extent), finding the F. R. A.'s data "inexplicable" despite their being "men of such talent and integrity."[23]

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[18]Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 11.

[19]Taylor, op. cit., 5-6, 28, 89-93. However, Taylor's view that metropolitan MPs returned to parliament 1847-1859 introduced "a strident parochial tone" and opposed "government plans to create London-wide municipal powers" cannot, it is clear, be taken to relate to the rate equalisation campaigning and other metropolitan policies of 1857 arrivals Ayrton and Locke. Taylor's references to anti-centralisation activities in the metropolis fail to make a further necessary distinction between different forms of support for localist-radicalism: for instance, between that of the Tory radical Toulmin Smith and that of the radical reformer and ex-Chartist William Newton. (See this chapter, below, for Toulmin Smith's opposition to the Rate Equalisation Association, and chapter 5, page 123, for Newton's support for Ayrton.) Ayrton's radicalism is considered further in chapter 5.

[20]Gilbert (London, 1860), 11; PP 1861 ix, 17/31.5.1861, Warwick's paper on rate equalisation; MH25/18, newspaper cuttings accompanying letter to Poor Law Board dated 4.2.1867.

[21]Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 15.

[22]Ibid., 11-12; Warwick, *The Poor Laws as they are and as they ought to be: Evidence to Select Committee* (London, 1861), Paper submitted with evidence, 24 (and also in PP 1861 ix, 17/31.5.1861); PP 1850 xvi, House of Lords Select Committee on Parochial Assessments (Chair: Lord Malmesbury).

[23]Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 12. Matthew, op. cit., 618, points out that because the FRA supported also heavy retrenchment, their tax proposals would not have borne heavily on the propertied classes, or significantly redistributed the wealth of the rich.

The weakness of the third option, union rating - from the point of view of metropolitan single parish unions - could be overcome, Warwick suggested, by some form of selective parliamentary grant: in effect, a Rate Support Grant. This would obviously, however, have involved increased central government control, which may have been why it was not pursued.

It is clear that a major reason for the Equalisation Association's settling on a county-based model of rate equalisation was that it was less centralised; furthermore, their published draft version incorporated elected members.[24] The proposal also had some recognised Radical credentials in that as far back as 1836 Joseph Hume[25] had argued for county taxation to be controlled by elected boards, and a version of this proposal had been defeated in parliament as recently as 1852.[26] While Gilbert, in support of the county proposal, devised a rather tortuous supporting argument about the accumulation of wealth and the economic homogeneity of counties[27], Warwick argued, simply and repeatedly, in speeches, evidence, correspondence and publications, that the introduction of county-based poor law rating, County Financial Boards, or County Poor Law Boards would enable rate equalisation to be achieved without centralisation. It was, he told the 1861 Select Committee, a plan that was "very popular in London" and pointed also to a "community of interests" in counties that would work well for the common good.[28]

While, therefore, all four of these rate equalisation options were raised in other debating forums, including parliament, and union rating was incorporated in the Poor Law in 1865, it was county and metropolitan rating (the metropolitan area being treated as equivalent to a county) that underpinned the campaigning and rhetoric of the Rate Equalisation Association.

Within the county-based framework there were also choices, and it is useful, in terms of assessing the policy relationship between the Equalisation Association's

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[24]GL MS 1088/1, 29.12.57, report of the E.C. to the Central Committee, with the proposal that a Metropolitan Financial Board be elected on the same principle as the Metropolitan Board of Works, that is, indirectly elected from directly elected bodies, the boards of guardians; Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 15, 30, included a "slight sketch" to show "how easily the system might be carried out". After the Association expanded to include the counties, the county-based equalisation policy seems to have been regarded as a framework rather than a blueprint.

[25]Stenton, op. cit.; *DNB* vol. X (Oxford, 1973). Hume, MP for Montrose, was for 30 years leader of the Radical party, until his death in 1855.

[26]Maccoby (London, 1935), 387-9; Maccoby (London, 1938), 15.

[27]Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 13-15.

[28]R. E. Warwick, op. cit., Paper submitted with evidence, 25.

proposals and the system eventually chosen by the Conservative government in 1867, to note these.

The county choices (articulated in 1862 in evidence given to the *Select Committee on Poor Relief* by E.C. member John Day under questioning by three of the Association's MP Vice-Presidents, Ayrton, Locke and Alderman Sidney) would all have allowed local boards of guardians to retain their other executive and administrative powers, with a new county board to adjust inequalities and make the rate. The three options were Warwick's draft for a county financial board with members elected indirectly by the boards of guardians, a fairly similar county board but with the same constitution as a board of guardians (part elected directly by ratepayers, and part JPs), and Ayrton's unsuccessful 1858 Bill for a Metropolitan Rating Sessions consisting of JPs drawn from the three metropolitan counties and the City - which, though referred to in Day's evidence, appears to have been dropped by the Association following its Commons failure.[29]

The only element of these proposals to be incorporated in Hardy's 1867 Act was Warwick's indirect election of members of a board, but the new boards created by the Act (district asylum boards) were apparently to be lower tier rather than at "county" level, were to have no powers of redistribution and were to have their electoral composition further diluted through the addition of the Poor Law Board's nominees. In this context the fact that one of the districts created was the "metropolitan district" (a "county" area) was of limited significance for rate equalisation. The Rate Equalisation Association's radical-reformist choice of proposals for control of redistribution, selected as workable policies that might achieve parliamentary approval, were therefore almost entirely disregarded.

Despite defeat on the local control issue the Association's rate equalisation policy was, in principle, achieved. Although not all local poor law funding was equalised in the metropolis in 1867, there can be no doubt that the Act redistributed a substantial proportion of costs and that therefore, despite the view of the Liberal President of the Poor Law Board in 1862 that there was "an enormous mass of opinion" against their

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[29]PP 1862 x, Q. 7663-4 & 7699-7704.

proposals,[30] the goals articulated in one of the Association's 1858 model resolutions[31] were largely achieved:

> That the Poor of the Metropolis are the Poor of the Whole Metropolitan Community and as such ought in the time of their distress to be relieved and supported by an Equalised Rate levied on rateable property throughout the District such Rate to be levied on one uniform basis of Assessment.

The resolution also illustrates the Association's general approach in that it links, simply and directly, political principle and practical policy. The fact that the Association rallied around alternative county-based methods of implementing the principle of rate equalisation (rather than one agreed measure) should be seen as a measure of the difficulty of the task they faced in building a workable majority of support (at both local and parliamentary level), and also as an example of common political practice. In terms of mobilisation of support, their county-based alternatives represented a political strength rather than a weakness.

In the arguments that supported the Association's extensive campaign for rate equalisation there had been two major fields in which the debate had to be won: the pro-active or more aggressive arguments on class, wealth and poverty in the metropolis, and the mainly reactive or defensive arguments relating to centralisation, local powers, and the fear that a bottomless public purse would lead to local extravagance.

Most recognisably radical were the pro-active arguments on wealth, class and equality, delivered with particularly force and frequency by the chairman, Gilbert, by Ayrton in parliament and by the Rev. M'Gill - who maintained initially that he was not a member of the Rate Equalisation Association[32] but clearly spoke on behalf of their cause and became in due course a Vice-President.

Gilbert, in his 1860 publication, succeeded in drawing together arguments about the roles of capital, labour and classes, of charities, philanthropy and self-interest, and of the settlement laws, East-West disparities and the record of the Poor Law Board: a rather notable achievement.

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[30]Ibid., Q. 7666 (C. P. Villiers.)
[31]GL MS 1088/1, 12.1.58.
[32]*The Times* 25.4.1857, 12d.

His linking theme was the increasing separation of rich and poor - through metropolitan improvements, through the settlement laws, through Poor Law Board failure to act, and through accumulation of capital. In the City union alone, he pointed out, "where wealth had accumulated to a fabulous amount", there were now 10,000 fewer of the working classes than in 1801, while in Spitalfields the growth of population from 27,000 to 98,000 had been of those "whose sole means of existence lay in the handicraft they practised", and in Whitechapel, although 1,770 houses had been destroyed under the pretext of improvements, the population had increased by 10,659, mainly of the working classes.[33]

So complete, he said, was "the separation of the rich from the poor, of the employer from the employed", that in two neighbouring parishes, the one occupied by the employers (St. Olave Hart Street) had had a drop in the amount spent on the poor from £730 to £700, while the other (Whitechapel), occupied by the workmen, had had a rise from £17,507 to £29,299. The poor were compelled to maintain the poor: the dock labourer when in work had to assist the unemployed weaver, and vice versa, while the merchant, manufacturer and shipowner were absolved from contributing "to assuage the misery of those on whose exertions so much of their wealth, comfort and station was obtained". Frequently a tradesman "in a moderate way of business in a poor neighbourhood" was obliged to contribute more to the poor rate than the Bank of England and the Royal Exchange combined, and in the City's poorest parish (St. Ann Blackfriars, where Warwick lived) 20 houses were compelled to pay more to the relief of the poor than six of the richest parishes in the City together.[34]

He attacked also the "enormously wealthy" Inns of Court, who were exempt by tradition from any contribution to poor relief while their surrounding parishes were "frequently in a state of the most abject destitution", and suggested that, in the debate on Ayrton's 1858 Bill, the "most vehement" opposition from John Arthur Roebuck, MP and QC, "came with a peculiarly bad grace from a gentleman whose abode in the Temple is exempt .....from rating"; Roebuck, the former leading Radical, had argued that contrasts between rich and poor were irrelevant, and had called on the Conservative President of the Poor Law Board to reject the Bill. Other Members of the Commons and the Lords living in the wealthier areas of the metropolis were also attacked: the

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[33]Gilbert, ibid., 6.
[34]Gilbert, ibid., 4, 5.

opposition to Ayrton's Bill from such Members "whose property would be injured by the passing of the Bill" had been most active, Gilbert wrote.[35]

Nonetheless, Gilbert linked his attacks on the wealthy with an insistence that it was government's responsibility to put things right. For instance, he accused the Poor Law Board of permitting the ejection of the poor and the destruction of their dwellings for many years "without one word of objection" and "without the slightest provision being made for their shelter". The separation of the employer from the employed and capital from labour was every day becoming more apparent, he said - not only because of the steady accumulation of capital (a goal which was, for instance, out of the reach of "fifty Spitalfields weavers", however hard they worked) but because of poor law legislation, which caused the rich every day to become "more distinctly separated from the poor".[36]

His rhetoric of capital and labour was directed particularly at the city and the docks. One of his examples was a City company with "a paid-up industrial capital exceeding a million" which rented a floor for which it paid £10 annual poor rates. While the profits were divided among the shareholders, he pointed out, labour - "the direct contributors to the wealth of the undertaking" - was left to be supported by the eastern parish in which they lived and actually worked. In another example of "this disgraceful disconnection of wealth from the labour it employs, and the poverty thereby occasioned", he singled out the contribution of shipping to the burden of pauperism in the river-side parishes For instance when in 1852-56 the shipping trade had been particularly active, he said, demand for labour had increased and so had pauperism, but all the profits had gone to the merchant and shipowner.[37]

The non-radical alternative to rate equalisation - charitable giving - was criticised. Quoting statistician Dr. Farr's[38] conclusion on the poor rates that in terms of their being "the regulated almsgiving of a Christian community" they left the wealthy districts "a large amount of arrears to be made up by voluntary gifts", Gilbert developed this criticism further, suggesting, for instance, that the most generous contributors (in proportion to their means) to the charitable funds of the metropolitan general hospitals

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[35]Gilbert, ibid., 7,8; *Hansard* 23.5.1858, col. 642-3; Taylor, op. cit., 264, 332.
[36]Gilbert, ibid., 6,7, 26-7.
[37]Gilbert (1857), op. cit., 16-18, 20.
[38]*DNB* vol. VI (London, 1973). Dr. William Farr, 1807-83, statistician at the Registrar General's office.

were retail tradesmen. A loss was frequently experienced by subscriptions of the wealthy and aristocratic , he wrote, "who too frequently consider it a cheap way of contracting for their sick servants".[39]

When, the following year, Gilbert attempted to clarify his views on the respective roles of equalised rating and charity under the hard grilling of a not generally sympathetic select committee,[40] the fact that he was a man wearing two hats, (having become also one of the hon. secretaries of the Society for the Relief of Distress) gave his views on poor relief policies an element of insider-credibility. The authorities ought, he said, to take responsibility (on an equalised rating basis) for night refuges for the houseless poor, for the sick and the old, and for a proportion of outdoor relief, and should continue to apply the workhouse test to discourage "vagabonds"; he would, however, be "very sorry to see the poor law supply the place of charity in outdoor relief."[41]

The radical nature of Gilbert's political views is confirmed by the fact that he raised the question of redistribution through public ownership in a much later work, "*Contrasts*", written well after the passing of the 1867 *Metropolitan Poor Act* and the disbanding of the Rate Equalisation Association. Seeking a solution to the high metropolitan rates that had followed equalisation and arguing in support, yet again, of the interests of poorer ratepayers, he pointed out that the value of the land, buildings and revenues of the three great endowed metropolitan hospitals - Guy's, St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's - would probably be sufficient to build and largely maintain every metropolitan Poor Law infirmary and asylum "without the cost of one shilling to the ratepayer" In effect he was suggesting redistribution of the hospitals' inherited income to publicly owned services.[42]

Overall it seems clear that the rhetoric and policies of Gilbert, both in his private capacity and as chairman of the Rate Equalisation Association, were radical but set within a framework of goals that were seen as realisable and capable of appealing to a wide spectrum of present and potential reformers. His involvement in philanthropic activities serves to confirm a personal commitment to improving the lot of the poor, but his rhetoric was more wide-ranging.

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[39]Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 29.
[40]PP 1861 ix, Select Committee on Poor Relief: Minutes of Evidence 16 & 19.4.61.
[41]Ibid., Q.4332-4367.
[42]Gilbert, *Contrasts* (London, 1873), 4, 9, 10, 307.

It is reasonable to assume that Gilbert and other leading Association members, as experienced and established local political figures, would have hesitated to embark on public discourse that might lose them the support for which they campaigned so hard from local metropolitan politicians, tradesmen and small businessmen (as well as from larger Vice-Presidential businessmen and MPs). Such radical style and arguments may therefore be interpreted not only as reflecting the views and attitudes of the proponents but also as evidence of anticipated constituencies of support - both locally and in the wider business and political world - for the radical case for rate equalisation.

The radical rhetoric of the Rev. M'Gill, on the other hand, while often dramatic, appears to have been grounded in the poverty and destitution of his East End parish rather than in political experience, and his views on poor relief policy fluctuated. However, as chairman of the sister- (and at times rival) organisation in the East End, a member of the Rate Equalisation Association's E.C., link-person with Ayrton and *Times* letter-writer (as the anonymous "East End Incumbent) he became a highly significant figure in the Association's campaigning and as an element in its public face.

In terms of political positions M'Gill was initially less worried about the possibility of an increase in centralisation, and when he did argue for local power, was prepared also to maintain or increase Poor Law Board intervention. Indeed he argued for rate equalisation based on Schedule A property tax valuation, suggested that the Poor Law Board might "settle" the level of spending each year, and said that whether such an equalised rate was administered by central government's treasurer or a financial board elected by the boards of guardians was "a matter of very little consequence"; these arrangements were "merely the vehicle" for achieving an equal rate. The following year, however, in a 36-page pamphlet supporting Ayrton's 1858 Bill (and written, it seems likely, with guidance from Ayrton), he argued that a national rate would overthrow local administration, that private charity could not meet the case, that London could be relieved without government centralisation and that "it is the duty of a good government to see that taxation is fairly and evenly distributed".[43]

Despite his relative inexperience politically, M'Gill's vigorous radical style, initially from the platform of *The Times*, was an early component in the rate equalisation debate. His first letter appeared at a particularly appropriate time: Gladstone and the Bishop of

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[43]BL 08248.c.33, *The London Poor and the Inequality of the Rates raised for their relief by an East-end Incumbent* (London, 1858).

London had delivered speeches in a Stepney schoolroom reminding the West End of the poverty of the East, "removed out of sight, and, unhappily, out of mind" a little over a week before the Rate Equalisation Association's inaugural lively public meeting on 15 February 1857,[44] and almost as if on cue, M'Gill wrote to *The Times* suggesting that the Bishop or Gladstone should introduce a Bill into parliament equalising the metropolitan poor rates.[45] Perhaps Billett, churchwarden of St. Pancras, deserved to be forgiven for the rather wild conspiracy accusations he made at the Association's inaugural meeting the following week.[46]

A *Times* editorial had concurred with Gladstone's remarks on links between the West End's "splendid streets, spacious squares, and richly-embellished shops" and poverty in the East "removed out of sight, and, unhappily, out of mind". No great accumulation of luxury and wealth could ever be formed, the editorial agreed, "without a corresponding growth of a laborious and struggling class of poor to sustain and minister to it". M'Gill, however, while praising the editorial, pushed the argument towards a more radical position by raising the threat of social instability and the issue of charity versus rate equalisation. Something more than the charity of the rich was required, he said, to meet the chronic destitution which always prevailed in the winter. It was impossible for tens of thousands of starving labourers to be "efficiently relieved by the spasmodic efforts of even the most extensive charity". If the rates were equalised, all the rich would be compelled to contribute, whereas through voluntary charity only the liberal and the humane gave assistance. Rate equalisation was necessary "if the peace of London is to be preserved intact" and an inordinate increase in crime prevented.

In the subsequent lively correspondence (with a cast including such anonymous local political commentators as "An East-End Churchwarden" and "A West-End Apothecary") M'Gill told *The Times* readers that he sympathised "most cordially" with the efforts of the Rate Equalisation Association "in so good a cause", and promised them "thus publicly, my own help in it, and that of four-fifths of the incumbents of the East-end of London, many of whom are ready to lend their school-rooms at once for

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[44] *The Times* 6.2.57. 6f.
[45] *The Times* 9.2.57,12e. M'Gill later told a public meeting (*The Times* 30.4.57,12f) that the Bishop and Gladstone had "expressed it as their opinion that the residents of the West End of London ought to contribute towards supporting the poor of the East End, in order to relieve the unequal pressure to which the inhabitants of that portion of the metropolis were subjected".
[46] See below.

meetings of ratepayers". He also, however, argued for centralised Schedule A property tax valuation for the rates, and advised the Association not to decide "upon any question of detail" until the principle of equality of rating and of assessment had been agreed by parliament: an early indication of the political difficulties ahead for the Association in devising practical policies around which majority support could be built.[47]

M'Gill's role as a vigorous campaigner was noted in official circles. On his first appearance before the *Select Committee on Poor Relief* he was grilled mercilessly by Villiers on one of his later letters to *The Times* on the 1860-1 East End winter distress, in which he had made the subsequently much-quoted statements that the Poor Law had "broken down" and that the Poor Law Board had "never moved a finger" to help.[48] Villiers even accused M'Gill of having "sought to discredit the Central Board":[49] an accusation that seems to provide evidence as much about the Poor Law Board's own attitudes to its radical critics in the metropolis as about M'Gill's own position.

As a prominent member of the East End deputation to Hardy on the eve of the 1867 Act M'Gill, doubtless as expected, did not pull his punches. The previous day, he said, he had gone to the Mansion House to appeal for charity; today he came to the President of the Poor Law Board to ask for justice. The previous week he had seen men being given poor relief - "hardy, stalwart men who built the iron-clads - iron-clads not to protect East End industry so much as West End wealth". These men, he said, who had contributed to the national wealth, "looked like starving wolves" - a choice of image that may have evoked uncomfortable thoughts among his official listeners.[50]

M'Gill's radical campaigning style may have reflected an inner anger at more than just the poor rate problem. When asked, in 1862, the standard London Diocesan Visitation question of whether there was anything that specially impeded his own ministry, or the welfare of the church around him, and whether he could suggest remedies, he wrote with frank simplicity: "I think it is a great mistake to build churches in poor districts like this without adequate endowment. Christ Church is totally

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[47]*The Times* 15.4.1857, 9c; 20.4.1857, 6f; 25.4.1857, 12d. Ten years later, at a public meeting to present M'Gill with a farewell testimonial, C.S.Butler, MP, realled "the immense amount of statistics and other information he brought to bear upon the matter in his excellent letters." (*The Times* 27.8.1867, 6f.)

[48]PP 1861 ix, Q.3192-3429.

[49]PP 1861 ix, Q.3387.

[50]MH25/18, 28.1.1867, newspaper cutting from *The Times* of 26.1.1867, filed at the Poor Law Board under "Suggestions - Miscellaneous".

unendowed: the people are too poor to pay pew rents and so they stay away from church. The Finsbury Prebend ought to provide a remedy and make these churches free. They would soon be full."[51]

His view of his rate equalisation achievements, as he departed after 13 probably stressful years in a difficult East End parish for a new and undoubtedly more restful rural parish a few miles from Gladstone's Hawarden Castle, was that he was "content with Mr. Hardy's Act as far as it went" but that the question "must not be allowed to slumber until the whole of the in-door poor and the sick were thrown upon a general fund".[52] It seems that M'Gill had no reservations about the increased central control of metropolitan poor relief that the Conservative government had introduced.

Warwick on the other hand, less dramatic in his rhetoric than Gilbert or M'Gill (but believing, too, that those who benefited from a man's labour "ought to bear a fair share of the relief required in the time of his distress"[53]) paid particular attention to defending the Association from potentially damning accusations about centralisation, extravagance and loss of local control: the strongest and most persistent arguments against rate equalisation. Opposed at one stage even to the continuation of the Poor Law Board, he argued that rate equalisation and a general uniformity of standards could be achieved without the intrusive control of central government.

The accusation that equalisation would necessarily increase centralisation had been raised publicly and noisily at the earliest point in the history of the Rate Equalisation Association: the public meeting held two days before the Association was formally established at a delegate-based Central Committee meeting.[54] The accusers - supporters of the Anti-Centralization Union (led by its major figure, Joshua Toulmin Smith) and representatives from large West End parishes such as St. Pancras, Marylebone and St. Luke Chelsea, the "most populous and important parishes in the

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[51]Lambeth Palace Library, Visitation Returns, Tait 441/491, dated 14.6.62.
[52]*The Times* 27.8.67,6f.
[53]PP 1861 ix, Appendix 6, 199.
[54]GL MS 1089: "First meeting, Feb. 15, 1857, Metropolitan Association for the Abolition of the Laws of Setlement and Poor Removal, and for the Equalization of the Poor Rates" (a verbatim hand-written account of the meeting at the London Tavern which, according to reported comments, lasted several hours). The chairman of the Association at this public meeting was City Alderman R.B. Whiteside, but two days later, at the first delegate-based Central Committee meeting, he was succeeded by Gilbert; Day and Warwick were the joint secretaries at both meetings.

metropolis"[55] - had opposed for several years the earlier City-based movement in which Warwick had been involved.[56]

In a meeting often in uproar, Toulmin presented his anti-centralisation case. It was a notorious fact, he said, shown by the histories of all countries, that "centralisation never comes forward - never makes any step in public - without first making profession for the public good." He pointed out the implications of rate equalisation: that if a "more equitable" rating were the aim, a national rate would be by far the more equitable. To exclamations, he added that the word "levelling" would better represent the aims of the Association, and protested against those who "seek covertly to gain the ends of centralisation, and to involve you, in a delusion, a mockery, and a shame".[57] It was, he said, ignorance and selfishness if "you try to get a great end, towards which there are twenty or thirty steps, by smoothing over the first two or three, so that they gradually lead on to the twentieth step, whence they will plunge you into the abyss".[58] The popular and humanitarian cry of benevolence - "so easy to raise" - was always employed to attain an object which was really opposed to the dictates of either humanity or benevolence.[59]

The hint of conspiracy theory was developed further by William Billett, senior churchwarden of St. Pancras, "the most respectable metropolitan district". Although the Association's supporters would say that centralisation was not involved, this was, he said, "the insidious way in which things of this sort are always done." The principle of centralisation during the last 30 years had made rapid and fearful strides in England. The government, he suggested, "never comes forward itself but it gets some cunning, ingenious men to come forward and do their dirty work".[60]

While parliamentary, Poor Law Board and Rate Equalisation Association records all show that such a simplistic conspiracy theory about the genesis of rate equalisation was inappropriate, there can be little disagreement that Smith, at least, had a valid perception of some of the implications for government growth of the equalisation of the

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[55]MS 1089, 53 (J. Toulmin Smith).
[56]GL MS 7754; GL MS 1089, 87. Smith conducted a lengthy correspondence with the Lord Mayor and Warwick in 1854 about a public meeting chaired by the Lord Mayor on 15 February 1854. William Billett, senior churchwarden of St. Pancras, supporting Smith on 15.2.1857, said he had been "watching the movement for years".
[57]GL MS 1089/ 63, 75.
[58]Ibid., 53.
[59]Ibid., 56.
[60]Ibid., 80-83.

costs of caring for the poor. Indeed Warwick had in some respects unintentionally conceded Smith's case about the growth of centralisation three years before when he had argued, in correspondence, that parochial control had been destroyed by the 1834 Act, which had put control into the hands of the government-appointed auditor, and that rate equalisation could hardly make matters worse.[61]

The fact that even platform speakers supporting rate equalisation at this initial public meeting attacked centralisation is a measure of the task that Warwick faced in attempting publicly to reconcile a radical policy (rate equalisation) with its internal contradictions: the financial gain but loss of power that a local body might have to expect. For instance the Lord Mayor, Alderman Thomas Sidney, Liberal MP for Stafford, chairing the public meeting, said that centralisation had in the past few years tended to "sap the institutions of our free country" and John Ayshford Wise, the Lord Mayor's fellow-Liberal MP for Stafford, said that he would have refused to second the motion being put to the meeting if he had thought there was anything in it "which tended, in the slightest degree, to a centralising principle".[62]

The anti-centralisation case for rate equalisation became easier to argue after the deletion of the removal/settlement issue from the new Association's programme in the two days between the disorderly public meeting and the first Central Committee. Toulmin Smith had taken pleasure in pointing out the rating implications of the abolition of removal and settlement: that if the poor were free to move anywhere, the poor relief burden in poorer and urban areas might very well increase further, with the most equitable solution being the centralised policy of a national rate.

The conjunction of these two issues had been acknowledged in the unsuccessful 1853 Bill of John Day and Apsley Pellatt, MP, which combined abolition with a national rate. The Rate Equalisation Association were wise, therefore, to agree to nail their colours to the mast of single issue politics: rate equalisation, with only its essential concomitant of uniformity of assessment[63] (although individual members of the E.C. still expressed, on occasion, their opposition to removal and settlement[64]).

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[61]GL MS 7754, letter of 1854 from Warwick to F. W. Knight, MP, former secretary to the Poor Law Board.
[62]GL MS 1089, 11, 29.
[63]GL MS 1089, 34, 63, 66. GL MS 1088/1, 17.2.1857.
[64]PP 1861 ix, Appendix 6, 202, 195: Warwick called the removal and settlement laws "a curse to the poor", and said that they should be "entirely swept from the statute book".

Warwick drew up a County Financial Board model for the metropolis in order to refute the anti-centralisers' arguments. His "*Plan for forming the Metropolis into one District or Union for the relief of the Poor*"[65] emphasised the role of the representative bodies, requiring each board of guardians in the metropolis (or similar body in Local Act parishes) to nominate someone each year to be a member of the proposed metropolitan Financial Poor Law Board. Each local board would also have to send its six-monthly estimate of its spending to this indirectly elected metropolitan board, who would apportion payment for the spending to each parish on the basis of the rateable value of its property. The metropolitan board would also have the power, on application of a parish or a certain number of ratepayers, to penalise local boards for "extravagance or carelessness".

The strength of Warwick's objections to the existing powers of the Poor Law Board is indicated in his evidence to the select committee on 17 May 1861. He argued that although close control by the central Board had been necessary for instituting the 1834 system, and it remained important for the poor law to be administered on a uniform basis throughout the country, there was now a body of paid local officials well-versed in principles and rules who could carry out this administration. There was now no need for the central Board's "interference with petty matters of detail". Any local difficulties could be adjudicated by the magistrates at the petty sessions, and statistical information could be gathered through the Registrar General.[66]

He insisted that the Poor Law Board was an unconstitutional and arbitrary body possessing powers "greater than the Crown, or either branch of the Legislature", because it issued orders which had the effect of Acts of Parliament, and suspended or dispensed with such orders as it pleased. Despite Villiers, in the chair, pointing out that the central Board could not issue a general order unless it were signed by three Cabinet Ministers, Warwick held firmly to this position, and maintained his view that the central Board was "no longer required": a view that not only he but many other guardians in

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[65]GL MS 7754, letter from Warwick to F. W. Knight,MP, dated 20.11.58 and enclosing a copy of his earlier letter to Knight of 1854; undated Plan, signed by Warwick, for a Metropolitan Financial Board; undated similar draft Bill, with proposed implementation date of May 1860; Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 30. Warwick also said in his 1858 letter to Knight that he and his colleagues had submitted to the Poor Law Board on 8.3.1854 a plan for the management of the metropolitan poor that bore a close resemblance to the subsequent 1855 *Metropolitan Management Act*; if correct, this suggests at the least a noteworthy legislative competence.

[66]PP 1861 ix, Q.7945-7981, 8029.

various parts of the country had already expressed by signing the 1860 petition to the House of Commons against the annual renewal of the powers of the Board. In a paper accompanying his evidence, Warwick suggested that whereas guardians were at present merely machines, the Association's proposed County Boards would restore local control.[67]

Demanding that the Poor Law Board be abolished was, undoubtedly, an extreme localist position; significantly, Warwick dropped this demand two years later, on the grounds that "a general wish" existed that the Board should continue as a court of appeal, though with reduced powers to interfere with the actions of boards of guardians.[68]

His other major line of argument, contained particularly in his 1861 and 1862 evidence to the *Select Committee on Poor Relief* and his first address, in 1861, to the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science,[69] was that the metropolis's present poor law problems had been caused by past legislation (the 1834 Act, the *Poor Removal Act* 1846 and the *Poor Law Amendment Act* 1848[70]), which had abolished settlement by hiring and service (affecting West End servants), created the irremovable poor, and apportioned union common fund charges inappropriately. The result had been to reverse the law of 43 Elizabeth, so that the poor rate had become a tax upon poverty rather than upon property.

Warwick's arguments were grounded largely in the realities of removal, rating disparities and poor relief legislation, and his sober forays into wealth and class differences were studded with statistics and references to the law. In attacking, for instance, the "slavery or serfdom" inflicted on the poor, he avoided the colourful metropolitan imagery of some of his associates and focused on explaining the significance of the first settlement laws enacted under Charles II. In his lengthy 1862 evidence on rate equalisation (and his County Financial Boards proposal) to the *Select Committee on Poor Relief* he responded to their cross-examination with detailed practical and statistical comparisons. In terms of Rate Equalisation Association rhetoric Warwick acted, perhaps unconsciously, as a complement and foil to the more

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[67]PP1861 ix, Q. 8005-8012, 8108, 7945; ibid., Appendix 6, 202.
[68]GL MS 7754, paper read by Warwick at a meeting of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science in Edinburgh, October 1863.
[69]PP 1861 ix, evidence 17.5.1861 and paper submitted 31.5.1861; GL MS 7754, paper delivered to the NAPSS in London, 1862; PP 1862 x, evidence on 27.6.62.
[70]4 & 5 Will. IV, c.76 s.64; 9 & 10 Vict. c.66; 11 & 12 Vict. c.110.

flamboyant Gilbert, and also as an assurance that the Association would remain on guard against "centralisation".[71]

Public opposition to some of the existing centralised powers of the Poor Law Board was expressed also by EC members Henry Potter and John Blachford. Potter, one of the tradesman members of the E.C. and a guardian of the West London Union, presented a detailed case to the Select Committee for reducing the powers of the central Board, and suggested that their powers in relation to boards of guardians might be modified to the extent that they only receive returns and give advice.[72] Blachford, vice-chairman of the Association, appearing as the Chairman of the Fulham Union, made it clear that he saw a role for the Poor Law Board but argued that some of the orders issued by the central Board were so trifling that they did not require the interference of anybody, and others were of such importance that they ought to be made by parliament. He objected in principle to parliament's delegating authority to the Poor Law Board to make general orders. The "nation at large", he said, had a right to know what alterations in the law were going to be made, and the public and boards of guardians should have the power to be heard.[73]

However, despite such "localist" priorities the Association, through its pursuit of legislated redistribution, inevitably found itself ranged at times with the central Board against fiercely independent local bodies such as some of the Local Act parishes. For instance Blachford in due course defended the Poor Law Board's implementation of the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* predecessor, the redistributive *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act 1864/5* (which had reached the statute book as a result of the parliamentary tactics agreed at the Association's first joint meeting of its parliamentary Vice-Presidents with the E.C. in 1859) when it came under attack from St. George Hanover Square guardians. This archetypal wealthy West End parish, instead of investing its rates in permanent casual wards, used the inefficient "ticket" system of putting the casual poor in private lodging-house bed (with conditional breakfast) accommodation. Answering condemnations of the Poor Law Board, its officers and the Act, Blachford put the blame instead on the policies of local guardians.[74] His support was in effect reciprocated the

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[71]GL MS 7754, Warwick's 1862 paper for the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1, 2, 7; 13 & 14 Charles II, *Act for the Better Relief of the Poor 1662*; Warwick, op. cit., paper submitted to Select Committee on Poor Relief, 31; PP 1862, Q.6921-7318.
[72]PP 1861 ix, Q. 4773-4920, 5022-4.
[73]PP 1861 ix, Q. 8249, 8255, 8302-3, 8308, 8331, 8335.
[74]*The Times* 5.2.1866, 12b; 9.3.1866, 5e, meeting of London guardians at St. James's Hall, called by

following year when the metropolitan poor law inspector, H. B. Farnall (previously an opponent of the Rate Equalisation Association[75]),using arguments that the Association itself might have used, said that the *Houseless Poor Act* was passed "to remedy the injustice of poverty-stricken parishes having a burden from which rich parishes were free". The only change it brought in, he said, was that "the payment for the houseless poor was spread over the whole metropolis instead of some poor parishes being burdened and others getting off."[76]

It is clear that the Association's policies and their arguments for rate equalisation were based on a conception of a more equal society in which the gulf between wealth and poverty would be reduced; they were therefore economic radicals. They also, however, adhered to concepts of freedom and political liberty that have played a major part in the long history of English radicalism.[77] Their insistence that rate equalisation must not be introduced at the cost of local powers - the case put publicly by Warwick especially - should be seen not as diluting the contention that the Association was a radical movement but as emphasising it. Although historically metropolitan rate equalisation ultimately contributed to the development of centralised state services, the Association itself took its stand in the Radical tradition of resistance to unaccountable, over-mighty or excessive central control.

As noted in the previous chapter, the Association gathered considerable support from those whose own parishes or unions would not have benefited a great deal, or at all, from rate equalisation; there may therefore have been a significant degree of support for increased redistribution as a principle, regardless of the individual's own economic interests. Some business organisations, on the other hand, doubtless had financial grounds for supporting an equalised metropolis-wide rate; the London Dock Company, for instance, which was severely disadvantaged by parish-based rating because it was situated in parts of four poor parishes, made a very early donation to the Association.[78]

St. George Hanover Square guardians; also *The Times* 27.2.1867, 12b & 28.2.1867, 12a.

[75]GL MS 1088/1, 7.7.1858. Farnall argued against the Association's proposals at guardians' meetings.

[76]*The Times* 1.1.1867, 11d, meeting of delegates from metropolitan boards of guardians at St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, called by Farnall.

[77]E. F. Biagini, "Popular Liberals, Gladstonian finance and the debate on taxation, 1860-1874" in Biagini & Reid, "*Currents of Radicalism*" (Cambridge, 1991), 135, 137; Taylor, op. cit., 5-6.

[78]GL MS 1090, op. cit., 7.5.1857; W. Gilbert (London, 1857), 17; *Hansard* 16.6.1857 col. 1903 (Ayrton).

Self-interest was in fact a campaigning issue from the early stages, and was one of the charges that Ayrton and E.C. members fired at their opponents; indeed it is likely that at least a few major figures were defensive converts to the cause of rate equalisation on these grounds. It was a charge denied absolutely by Sotheron-Estcourt, Conservative President of the Poor Law Board, on behalf of all Members of Parliament, when Ayrton suggested, during the debate on his 1858 Bill, that the principle of metropolitan rate equalisation would interfere with the pockets of many MPs and said that he doubted the sympathies for the poor of those "who had contrived to shift the burden from their own shoulders"; Sotheron-Estcourt's response was that he did not think Ayrton would be able to point to a single instance in which MPs "had made a sacrifice of principle, in order to save their own pockets."[79]

Defined more widely, self-interest doubtless included the fear of social instability: an issue raised particularly by the East End spokesmen Ayrton and M'Gill, but clearly never wholly absent in the metropolis. Ayrton's use of this shock tactic in the Commons may well have contributed to his later being caricatured, inappropriately, as an uncultured East End bogeyman: for instance, for his reference to the poorer classes of the metropolis taking the matter "into their own hands" and his suggestion that "the people would make themselves heard but it might be in a manner that was not to be desired".[80]

Of the E.C. members themselves it is evident that, irrespective of more complex theories that might be offered about personal cost-benefit analysis,[81] Gilbert, Warwick, M'Gill and Day, among others, having seen much hardship and distress, may have been motivated to a significant extent by a desire to improve the lot of the poor. John Day, for one, also articulated a wider historical perspective. Confident that history was on their side, he pointed out that places with the largest population were generally more

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[79]*Hansard* 12.5.1858 col. 497, 501, 503.
[80]Ibid., 23.3.1858 col. 634, 12.5.1858 col. 502; Stedman Jones (London, 1992), 241-2, says that in the 1860s "the fears of the governing classes focused primarily upon the condition of London and the condition of East London in particular"; Fraser (1984), op. cit., 241, makes a broader statement: that "from the anti-vagrant legislation of the fourteenth-century through to the uncovenanted benefit of 1920, social policy was motivated partly by a fear of social revolution". See also chapter 2, p. 50-1 (Hardy) and chapter 7, p. 231 (Hicks Beach).
[81]M. Daunton, "Introduction", (ed.) M. Daunton, *Charity, self-interest and welfare in the English past* (London, 1996), 13, summarises such approaches.

heavily burdened with rates, and (when) they "by-and-by, obtain more influence in the legislature ..... the minority must submit to the majority".[82]

The Association, in its pursuit of a legislative solution to poor law problems arising from inequalities of wealth and resources, became a powerful force in metropolitan politics. With an agreed policy package and, through its leading figures, strong "Rational model" arguments, it employed a radical discourse effectively to win overwhelming political support for the radical concept of rate equalisation.

II

The Rate Equalisation Association's proposals for implementing redistribution by means of elected county boards, together with a few other less widely publicised rate equalisation models, are useful criteria against which to assess the thinking underlying the Conservative government's chosen redistributive instrument and the nominee clauses, as are the two preceding Bills and an initial draft Bill presented to the Cabinet.

The nominee proposals became more centralised, more extensive and less permissive between the Bill's appearance in Cabinet in November 1866 as the *Poor Relief (Metropolis) Sketch of a Bill* and its First Reading. The sketch shows that three months before the First Reading there was only one tentative nominee clause: a margin note against asylum boards only, saying that power to nominate from among JPs "may" be given to the Poor Law Board and ending: "Query: President, or from the Physicians, Surgeons, or Beneficed Clergy". Although not wholly clear in view of the apparent inclusion of the President on the list, it seems that the clergy and medical men were envisaged as joining JPs in having a legislated part to play in controlling the local elected managers. By the date of the First Reading a specific nominee clause had been added, with "may" amended to "shall", and "may" used for the additional provision of nominees on school district boards and boards of guardians.[83]

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[82]PP 1862 x, Q. 7667.
[83]PRO 30/6/169, Carnarvon Papers, Cabinet paper dated 6.11.1866; PP 1867 IV, 261, Bill 9; PP 1867 IV, 283, Bill 66; 30 & 31 Vict, c.6, s.11, 49, 79.

Other amendments were however aimed at defusing potential Liberal opposition before the committee stage. The proposal in both the sketch and the First Reading Bill that there should be separate boards of management for each asylum was replaced before the committee stage by boards for each district. This was not the only instance of Hardy making the Bill more acceptable to dissenting Members before they began working through the detail of the clauses. In this case several Members, appearing to assume that it was district boards that were being proposed, had argued in the First and Second Readings for a metropolis-wide board, and Hardy's amendment was probably the most tenable position he could adopt. Another departmental amendment produced by Hardy between the Second Reading and the committee stage involved the qualifications for office of nominee managers. These had been set uniformly at £100 a.r.v. in the First Reading Bill, but after objections from a number of Liberal Members, Hardy remarked that he did not care if the nominees paid a farthing in rates, and the figure was amended to £40 a.r.v. before the committee stage. Significantly, however, the £100 a.r.v. qualification for elected managers remained in the Bill until reduced in committee to "ratepayers qualified to be guardians" or existing guardians. Attempts to increase the range of poor law costs equalised through the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund were, on the other hand, largely unsuccessful. Between the Cabinet paper sketch and the First Reading, smallpox and fever asylums were added, but thereafter the only addition was the widening of the initial provision to include in the Fund the salaries of only certain specified staff: salaries: a very limited extension when compared with proposals by the Rate Equalisation Association and by MPs at the committee stage. One of the unsuccessful proposed amendments - the inclusion of building purchase and development on the Common Poor Fund - would, if successful, have reduced the subsequent heavy spending required of individual local bodies and therefore also the dissatisfaction with the degree of redistribution actually achieved.[84]

Overall, Hardy's Act provided for more extensive control over local poor law bodies than initially proposed, and this was little diminished by the qualification amendments. Even with a lower qualification for nominees the Poor Law Board

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[84]*Hansard* 8.2.1867 col. 176-7, 21.2.1867 col.752-3, 771, 775, 8.3.1867 col. 1623, 11.3.1867 col. 1689-92,1694-5. Also GL MS 1088/1, 18. & 25.2.1867.

was free to appoint, if it so wished, only wealthier nominees, so Hardy's "farthing" comment had no real significance in terms of concessions. More significant was the fact that less well-to-do guardians were only enabled to sit on the new asylum boards as elected members because of a Radical amendment at the committee stage. The refusal of Hardy to yield, to any meaningful extent, on the items covered by the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund also indicates a concern for the interests of wealthier ratepayers on whom the redistributed increased burden would have fallen. Comparisons between the sketch, the two Bills and the Act show, therefore, that a concern to protect the purses of the wealthier and reduce the power of elected members was a constant factor in the genesis of the Act.

Whether Hardy's Bill owed a debt to earlier Villiers plans for rate equalisation legislation[85] is not clear, but Hardy said that it did not. He told the large and comprehensive deputation from the Tower Hamlets Rate Equalisation Association (led by Ayrton, the Rev. M'Gill and other MPs, and including leading East End Radicals, local politicians and major employers) a fortnight before the First Reading that he had found "no practical proof in the records of the office" that Villiers was in favour of metropolitan rate equalisation. Locke's statement that Villiers, "on being spoken to upon the subject, said all things could not be done at once, and they must wait", to some extent confirms this.[86]

Another alternative to the Association's proposals and Hardy's central Fund - the MBW option - was suggested to Hardy by the same deputation,[87] but rejected. Basing the equalisation mechanism on the Houseless Poor Act system administered by the Metropolitan Board of Works[88] would have placed administrative control in the hands of the wholly (though indirectly) elected MBW and was acceptable to the Rate Equalisation Association as well as to its sister organisation in Tower Hamlets. The Houseless Poor Act had been passed in 1864 as a result of the Association's parliamentary tactics, and did not contradict the major principles of its county financial board proposals because the MBW was an elected "county" board. Extending this system to include a greater (and financially more meaningful) range

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[85]Cook, op. cit., 134, says that Villiers' letter of 14.4.1866 to Florence Nightingale "foreshadowed legislation".
[86]*The Times* 26.1.1867, 6c,d; PP 1866 xxxv, op. cit. (Villiers' last annual report), gives no indication of pending rate equalisation legislation.
[87]*Ibid.*, 6c,d.
[88]27 & 28 Vict. c. 116, *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act 1864*, s.1, 2.

of poor law expenditure would have satisfied the major Association requirement because the general rate out of which the MBW paid for the destitute was based on annual rateable value and was therefore inherently redistributive. Eleven days before Hardy's First Reading the E.C. added a further argument at a meeting at the London Coffee House: that elected MBW control of an equalised metropolitan poor rate was feasible in the light of "the practicability being proved, and the justness of the principle admitted" in the houseless poor rate.[89]

Ayrton, in delivering the first speech in response to Hardy's Bill, emphasised that developing the *Houseless Poor Act's* common fund by adding further classes of the poor to it would have been an alternative approach,[90] and the ninth annual report of the Rate Equalisation Association made a related point. The report, delivered to a general committee meeting of delegates from parishes and unions on the eve of Hardy's Bill, suggested that the *Houseless Poor Act* had proved that there was a practicable way of collecting a poor rate over the whole metropolitan area.[91]

The more fully worked-out version of the MBW proposal presented in the recommendations of Ayrton's 1867 *Select Committee on Local Government*[92] six weeks after the *Metropolitan Poor Act* was passed clearly also did not conform with Hardy's priorities. The select committee's detailed proposals for a new, largely directly-elected, two-tier structure, with a Municipal Council of London responsible for both the raising of rates and equal assessment across the metropolis, would effectively have implemented poor rate equalisation through the incorporation of poor relief in other district council functions.

In not only disregarding the MBW option for rate equalisation but indeed repealing part of the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act 1864* and transferring the MBW's role to the Receiver controlling the Common Poor Fund, Hardy achieved further central government control while managing to satisfy both the demands for rate equalisation (in the short term) and the need for a funding instrument for the Act's institutional reforms. It is worth noting, however, that the formula he rejected (metropolis-wide representative financial responsibility for extensive areas of poor

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[89]18 & 19 Vict. c. 120, *Metropolitan Management Act 1855*, s.clxi; GL MS 1088/1, 28.1.1867.
[90]*Hansard* 8.2.1867, col. 176, makes this clear, but the *Morning Advertiser*, 9.2.1867, 2e, has Ayrton referring more explicitly to "the act affecting casual poor".
[91]MH 25/18, newspaper cuttings accompanying letter to Poor Law Board dated 4.2.1867; GL MS 1088/1, 30.1.1867.
[92]PP 1867 xii, Second Report. See also chapter 5, p. 130-1.

relief) was in effect implemented in 1888, when the new London County Council assumed not only the MBW's powers and duties but also a wide range of poor law financial responsibilities, including some of those previously carried out by central government.[93]

In some respects Hardy's Bill had minor similarities with the fleeting 1863 Casual Poor (Metropolis) Bill proposed in response to a workhouse incident the night before by two Liberals, Viscount Raynham and Wykeham Martin, and Conservative Sir Stafford Northcote. Their Bill aimed to develop the un-implemented 1844 *Poor Law Amendment* Act asylum districts for the houseless poor into a similar but metropolis-wide district headed by an elected body and funded by an equalised rate. Introduced too late in the session for serious consideration, the Bill was withdrawn after opposition that included an attack on Ayrton by Charles Gilpin, Villiers' Parliamentary Secretary at the Poor Law Board for six years. Gilpin accused Ayrton of supporting the Bill because he wanted in some way or other to bring about rate equalisation, and of seeing the measure as "one step towards his darling object". Although its 1844-type framework may have influenced Hardy when he began working on his own Bill three years later, the 1863 Bill was much closer, in terms of redistribution of power and finance, to the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act* pushed through parliament the following year by Villiers and Ayrton.[94] Northcote's role in the promotion of the measure did not signal an early general Conservative interest in rate equalisation, but appears to have arisen from his concerns about the particular "evil" involved and the "undue" burden of poor relief thrown on East End parishes. When compared with the 1867 Act this short-lived Bill serves to confirm again that Hardy pursued practical institutional solutions while rejecting elements that had Radical associations.[95]

A further alternative might have been for Hardy to revive elements of Ayrton's 1858 proposal, which bore some relation to the *County Rates Act 1852*[96] but which

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[93]51 & 52 Vict. c. 41, *Local Government Act 1888*, s. 8, 43.
[94]See chapter 2, p. 40.
[95]PP 1863 I, 207-10; 7 & 8 Vict. c.10, *Poor Law Amendment Act 1844*, s. 42, 48; *Hansard* 9.6.1863 col. 573, 10.6.1863 col. 673, 8.7.1863 col. 389-98.
[96]15 & 16 Vict. c.81. The Act required overseers/rate collectors to present to the vestry their returns of the annual rateable value of all property liable to be assessed for the county rate and then send them to the special rating committee of county JPs. The county-wide rate poundage was then decided by the county JPs and submitted to the vestries, with one month allowed for objections.

also proposed an 1867-type assessment of local bodies as having either an "excess" or a "deficiency" of funding. Any objections to this scheme on equalisation grounds were clearly no longer relevant, and the 1858 Conservative President's criticism[97] that it would take rate-making away from metropolitan parishes and unions of parishes and place it in the hands of an "irresponsible body" of unelected JPs (in a new metropolitan Sessions) with minimal local consultation, was based on an argument about local powers that applied even more to the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund and its Receiver, against whose central administration there was no right of appeal. In 1858 the local powers argument in the Commons had been employed as a means of resisting redistribution of wealth; by 1867, however, a rating Sessions manned by JPs would seem likely to have been not unacceptable to a Conservative President. Ayrton's 1858 county pattern would also have given Hardy the opportunity - if he had been seeking one - to integrate equalisation with metropolitan property re-valuation. That such a solution was disregarded despite its advantages and its links with the *County Rates Act* suggests a determination to maintain direct central government control of metropolitan redistribution.[98]

A further redistribution model - by Edwin Chadwick, former secretary to the Poor Law Commissioners - does not appear to have been publicised but may have contributed to background influences on policy-making. Chadwick was in close contact, during the passage of the Bill, with John Stuart Mill, who showed a proposed amendment of Chadwick's to Hardy and also raised it in the House.[99] Chadwick produced a *Memorandum on the Metropolitan Poor Bill*[100] which proposed that relief be paid from "a general rate" for categories of the poor such as the "general sick", lunatics and fever cases within the framework of the 1834 principle of classification of paupers. He envisaged a two-tier framework in which local bodies (towards which, as often, he expressed antagonism) would be of secondary importance to a central relief committee (or "general committee" or "Metropolitan Board") which would have powers to assign local buildings and local funds for the purpose of achieving classification of paupers. His central body would, he wrote, be conducive to economy and efficiency, in contrast to present fragmentary local systems. Board or committee membership would

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[97] *Hansard* 12.5.1858, col. 504-5.
[98] PP 1857/8 iv, op. cit. See also page 118-9 on re-valuation.
[99] UCL Chadwick MSS 1401/ 78-80 (5-12.3.1867); *Hansard* 11.3.1867 col. 1678-80.
[100] UCL Chadwick MSS 25, 100-114, hand-written paper by Chadwick, 1867.

be "in part by election and in part by nomination", and he proposed a very active administrative role for medical men.

Mill's views are relevant here in that, although he had not been involved in the rate equalisation movement (and indeed, in 1861, at the height of the Rate Equalisation Association's campaign, was opposed to metropolis-wide rating[101]), he may have contributed, even if only indirectly, to some of the thinking behind the nominee clauses: provisions which, as has been shown, were contrary to traditional Radical support for local control. In seeking to get on record, on Ayrton's 1866 select committee, evidence that related to his 1861 arguments for having "persons of a higher intellectual or social class" on local bodies, Mill was raising again the local member "calibre" question: a question that was also to be offered as justification the following year for the nominee clauses. Although in 1861 Mill had focused on ex-officio membership rather than on any concept of central government nominees (and in the process made an incorrect reference to an existing limitation of ex-officios to one-third of a board's membership[102]), his argument that ex-officio JPs had a "beneficial effect" and acted as "a check upon the class interests of the farmers and petty shopkeepers" who comprised the bulk of boards of guardians was related thematically, at least, to Hardy's subsequent nominee initiative; even his view that if "a portion of the very best minds" sat on local bodies they would inspire lower grade minds with their own "more enlarged ideas and higher and more enlightened purposes" might be translated, in practical terms, into the nominee policy.[103]

Mill's activities on Ayrton's committee had included questioning East End vestryman W. Clark on whether it was an advantage for vestries to have "a mixture of various classes of persons", and asking G. H.. Drew, Bermondsey vestry clerk, if he thought that "the acting in concert with persons possessing still higher qualifications than those who now act, would be a great advantage, and that the exercise of these functions would be a greater means of improvement to their own minds than they have

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[101]J. S. Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (London, 1861), 276. Mill wrote that "the area of rating should not be more extensive than most of the present unions".

[102]The first legislative reference to one-third appears in the *Metropolitan Poor Act*. Hardy's First Reading speech, *The Handy Book of Parish Law* (1872 edition), Keith-Lucas (1952), and an examination of earlier Poor Law legislation all support this conclusion. Mill's reference (BL 8009.ccc.39, 1865) must therefore have been incorrect, though prophetic, and he may have referred to a local practice. It is possible that Mill's widely-published error contributed to the actual adoption of the one-third formula in the *Metropolitan Poor Act*.

[103]Mill, op. cit., 270, 274-6.

at present".[104] Given the sudden appearance of the nominee provisions in the *Metropolitan Poor Act* the following year, it seems at least arguable that Mill's pursuit of the question of the social and intellectual composition of local government bodies may have influenced some of the thinking that went into the Act, or, at the least, may have given it an element of political respectability. He certainly supported Hardy's nominee policy until a late stage in the Bill, when he and other metropolitan MPs were tackled on the issue by vestrymen from his own constituency in the Commons tea-room; Mill's response was to write to Chadwick asking his opinion on whether an alternative to nominees might be found.[105]

The Mill/Chadwick position was not, therefore, a Radical one except insofar as they both envisaged a London-wide body. They focused on support for medical professionals, their distrust of local bodies, support for the widely agreed policy of classification of workhouses, their desire to have gentlemen - medical or other - in control of poor law bodies and, in Chadwick's case particularly, a necessity for more centralisation.

It is clear, therefore, that comparisons between the *Metropolitan Poor Act*'s mechanisms for redistribution and closer control, the first "sketch" for the Cabinet, the First Reading Bill, the Rate Equalisation Association's county board models, the related MBW option, the 1858 Ayrton/Association Bill and the Mill/Chadwick pattern show that the widely acclaimed Bill that Hardy presented to the Commons was far more centralised than any of these alternatives, and that the Association's models (based on a county board or the MBW) were the most radical.

The case for a representative element in redistribution continued to be put by significant metropolitan politicians well after the Act had been implemented. For instance in the debate on Goschen's 1870 *Metropolitan Poor Amendment Act*[106] Dr.William Brewer - Liberal MP for Colchester and also chairman of the first district board set up under the 1867 Act, the Metropolitan Asylums Board - attacked the "irresponsible management" of the Common Poor Fund, the "incurable vice" of which was that collection and distribution was not controlled by a representative body.[107]

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[104]PP 1866 xiii, Q 1782, 1785, 4244, 5607, 2932, 3103.
[105]UCL Chadwick MSS, 1401/78.
[106]33 & 34 Vict. c.18.
[107]*Hansard* 25.4.1870 col. 1770.

Two other MPs suggested that solutions other than the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund could have been found as a response to the need for rate equalisation and the boards of guardians scandals. W. M. Torrens, Liberal MP for Finsbury, supporting Dr. Brewer and opposing the 1870 Liberal Bill[108] which was to extend the Fund to include the maintenance of all indoor metropolitan poor, suggested that it would be possible to devise as many as 50 different re-arrangements of London to achieve rate equalisation while still "retaining elective institutions together with local responsibilities." The Bill was another step in the direction taken by the 1867 Act of "centralisation and disfranchisement". Conservative W. H. Smith, MP for Westminster,[109] argued that the Bill lodged "an enormous power" in the hands of an executive department. He too suggested an alternative: the "considerable evil in some localities" could be better tackled by improving the character of the boards of guardians than by diminishing their responsibility, with the Poor Law Board operating the sanction of dissolving boards that acted contrary to the public interest. He had a further suggestion: that "one board of representatives" in London could manage all poor law institutions - a board that would have sufficient power to carry out its important duties and at the same time be accountable to its constituents.[110]

Undoubtedly the new Conservative government's support for some form of metropolitan redistribution owed much to the rate equalisation movement's success, over ten years, in building a political majority for the policy. Without that majority the policy options would have been different: perhaps no great poor law institutional development programme, or perhaps further focusing on charity for the East End. While remaining always within the law and pursuing only the legislative route, the rate equalisation movement brought about an overwhelming change of opinion on poor law aspects of wealth differences in the capital. The nominee and Fund provisions appear however to have been, in essence, a reaction against, rather than a reform arising from, that success in changing opinion.

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[108]33 & 34 Vict., c. 18, *Metropolitan Poor Amendment Act 1870.*
[109]Stenton, op. cit. W. H. Smith, 1825-91, MP Westminster 1868-85 (having defeated Mill in 1868) and Strand 1885-91, First Lord of the Admiralty 1877-80, Secretary of State for War 1885-6, First Lord of the Treasury and Leader of the Commons from 1887.
[110]*Hansard* 25.4.1870 col. 1770, 1774.

The inter-action of reform and reaction in the genesis and implementation of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, and its effect on the nature of the change achieved, will be considered also in different contexts in subsequent chapters.

III

A further question that needs to be considered is whether, despite the flood of protests that soon arose at the increased poor relief burden placed on metropolitan ratepayers to pay for the capital's improved services, Hardy's Fund did achieve a significant degree of redistribution between East and West or between wealthier and poorer parishes and unions in the early years of the implementation of the 1867 Act.

The memorial of protest sent to Goschen in 1869 from a meeting of deputations from vestries, district boards and boards of guardians of "a large majority of the parishes and districts of the metropolis"[111] expressed similar complaints to those publicised in previous years by the Rate Equalisation Association's campaigning. The "present unequal method of levying the poor rates of the metropolis," they said, was bad in principle and unjust in operation because an unfair burden was being thrown upon those parishes in which the poor "from various circumstances beyond their own control are compelled to congregate"; the inequality had been aggravated, they pointed out, by legislation in recent years which had rendered the poor "practically irremovable". Further, the "modicum of redress" which had been promised by the framers of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* had proved "little better than a delusion and a snare" because the relief granted to overburdened parishes had turned out to be "much less than was boasted", and such small benefit as had been achieved had been to a great extent neutralised by the increased expenditure resulting from the Act. The Act had probably also, they suggested, prevented the passing of a more suitable Act founded on "the only just and equitable principle - complete equalisation of the rates". The "partial change" effected by the Act was leading to great expenditure which, while laying an increased charge on the richer parishes, failed to give corresponding relief to the poorer.

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[111] MH25/20, memorial received by Poor Law Board 23.3.1869; *Times* 23.3.1869, 10a.

Rejecting Goschen's proposed "mere re-valuation and reassessment" of rateable property as likely to confer "infinitesimally small" benefits, they made a pointed reference to the new reformed House of Commons: it provided a "supremely fitting opportunity for a vigorous effort to overcome that selfish opposition which has too long delayed a measure so obviously necessary and so incontestably just".

While metropolitan ratepayers and local authorities were demanding a reduction in the financial demands being placed on them and criticising the *Metropolitan Poor Act,* poor law professionals were using the Act's provisions and Common Poor Fund to ask for higher salaries: medical men as a continuation of their long-standing campaigns for greater recognition of their services through increases in salary,[112] and Metropolitan Workhouse Chaplains[113] (led in their first deputation to the Board by the Rev. G. H. M'Gill, formerly of the Tower Hamlets Rate Equalisation Society) in a request for pay equalisation for chaplains. The chaplains pointed out that the lowest stipends were paid in the poorest parishes although the duties there were heavier, and asked that "as the burden of all official salaries is now .... spread equally over the metropolis, such distinctions should cease to exist, and the remuneration should by the direct action of the Board be proportioned to the duties required". In the short term neither professional group was successful in adding its claims to the escalating poor relief bill.

An assessment of the extent to which the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund actually redistributed local taxation in the early years will be significant not only as an indication of how effective the Act's financial provisions were but also as a measure of how meaningful the redistributive policies of both Conservative and Liberal ministers appear to have been.

The system of redistribution was fairly simple. Each union or parish submitted to the Poor Law Board twice a year its claim under the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* expenditure heads (and initially under the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Acts* also, and later under the *Metropolitan Poor Amendment Act* 1870, which added the major item of the indoor relief of all paupers in the workhouses). The Board usually "allowed" most but not all of these claims. Having thus established what the aggregate income needed to be, the Board issued an "assessment" to each parish or union of the amount

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[112]MH25/18, 14.11.1867, letter to the Earl of Devon from the Council of the Metropolitan Poor Law Medical Officers' Association, and also MH25/19, 12.2.1868 and MH25/19, 15.2.1868.
[113]MH25/18, 17.12.1867, 28.12.1867, 8.1.1868.

for which it was proportionately liable, on the basis of its annual rateable value in relation to the a.r.v. of the whole Metropolis. If this assessment was lower than the local body's allowed claim, the balance would be made up from the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, and if the assessment was higher, the local body would pay the excess into the Fund. Some local bodies were overall payers and some were overall receivers, to varying degrees.

A comparison between Hardy's 1867 prediction to the House of Commons of the redistribution that would result from his measure and the actual out-turn (*Figure 2* and *Table 1*) shows a fairly significant difference: there was a wide band of local bodies that either paid or received very little out of the Fund in the year ending Michaelmas 1868 - distinctly wider than the prediction. In part the optimistic prediction arose because at this earlier stage the extra-parochial places (including the Inns of Court), who became low payers, were omitted from the redistribution calculations altogether, thereby creating the impression that there would be fewer low payers. However, the prediction also showed slightly higher payments generally from the wealthier bodies and correspondingly slightly higher receipts for the poorer bodies. At the level of individual bodies, there were some sharp differences between the prediction and the out-turn. The disillusionment expressed by many Metropolitan bodies from an early stage did therefore have a basis in fact.

Disillusionment would have been even greater if expectations had been based on the prediction in the memorial presented to Hardy in January 1867 by MPs, clergymen and local representatives that only five local bodies would be liable for "a material increase in their rates" and that 25 out of 39 would be "materially benefited".[114]

Poor Law Board figures over the wider period of the five half-years from Michaelmas 1867 to Lady Day 1870 show that the complaints of local authorities that the degree of redistribution was limited continued to reflect reality. *Figure 3* shows the changes for a few of the local bodies, but the continuing pattern of a wide middle-range of low payers/receivers over this longer period cannot unfortunately be represented here graphically in a readable form, as it has been in *Figure 2*, because of the amount of detail involved.

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[114]MH25/18, 28.1.1867. The five were the City, St. George Hanover Square, Paddington, Kensington and Islington.

The middle-range low payers included the Inns of Court, attacked vigorously and consistently in the past by members of the Rate Equalisation Association such as Gilbert

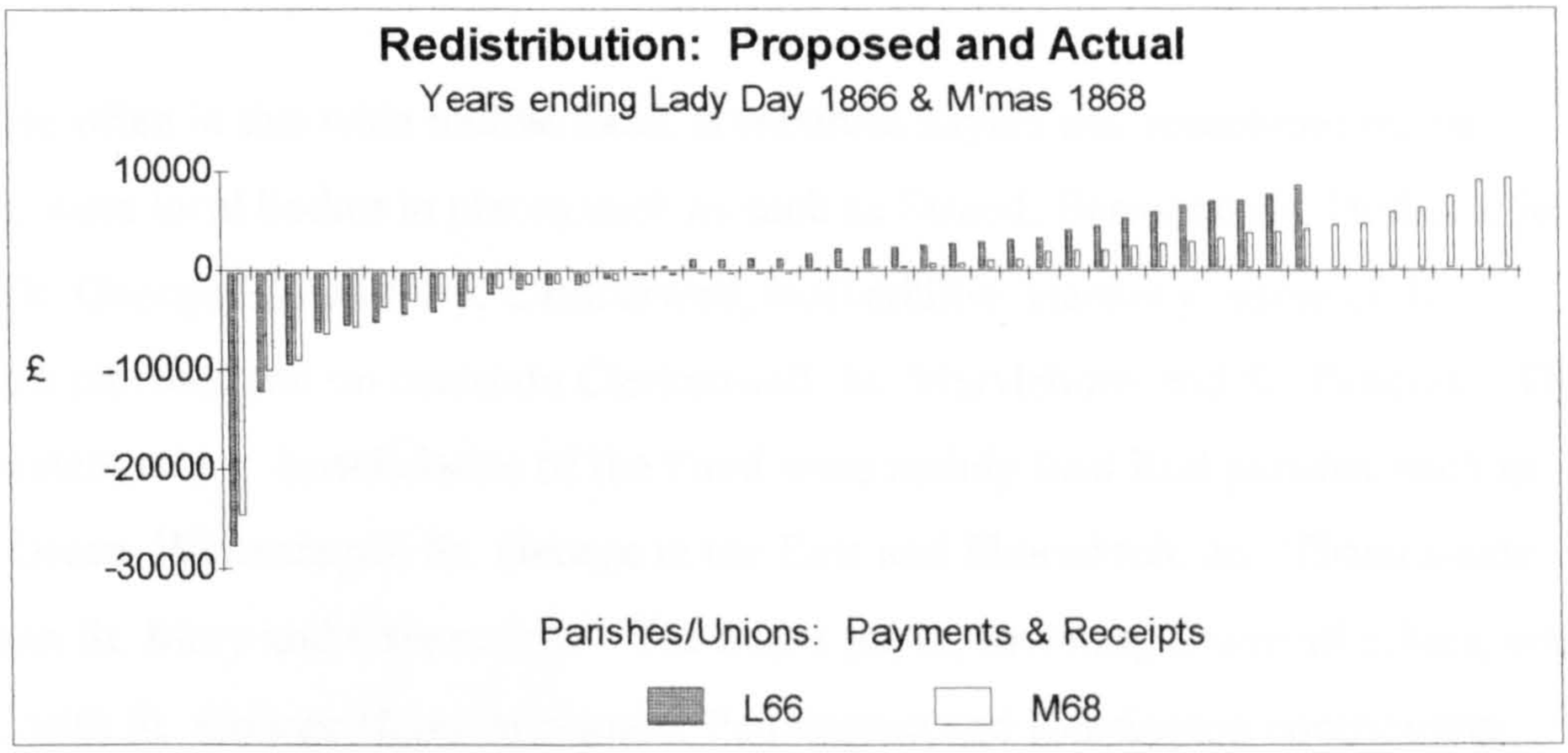

Figure 2: Gathorne Hardy's prediction of redistribution (based on actual spending in the year Lady Day 1865-66) and actual redistribution under the Earl of Devon (in the year Michaelmas 1867 to 1868).[115]

on the grounds that despite their great wealth they made no contribution to the frequently destitute surrounding parishes;[116] Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn, the Inner

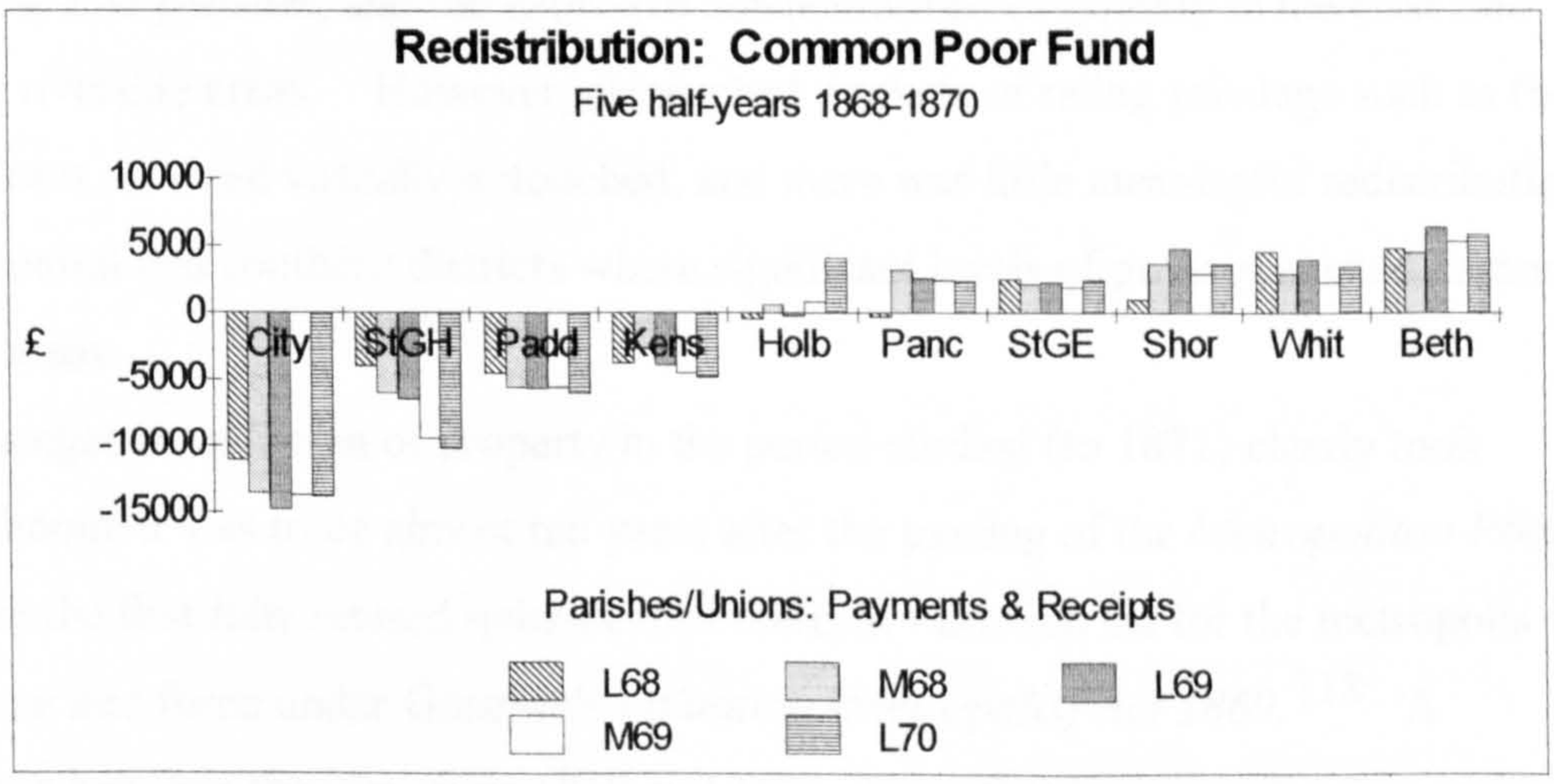

Figure 3: Half-years ending Lady Day 1868, 1869, 1870 (L68, L69, L70) and Michaelmas 1868, 1869 (M68, M69).[117]

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[115]PP 1871 lix, Accounts & Papers, 839, 841; PP1867 lx, Accounts & Papers, 117, Return to an Order of the House of Commons dated 14.2.1867. See also Table 1 for a detailed picture of the position for individual bodies.
[116]Gilbert (1860), op. cit., 7, 8.
[117]PP 1871 lix, Accounts & Papers, 839-47.

Temple and Middle Temple were payers, but hovered around the £100-£250 range which, distributed among its ratepayers, would have been an almost imperceptible increase.

Also often in this wide middle band, sometimes payers and sometimes minor receivers, were local bodies in places such as such as Strand, Bermondsey, Holborn, St. Giles & St. George Bloomsbury, Camberwell, Rotherhithe, Hackney, some of the Southwark parishes and on occasion Clerkenwell, St. Marylebone and St. Pancras. The few consistent major beneficiaries of the Fund were mainly East End parishes such as Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, St. George in the East and Shoreditch, and Thames-side Newington St. Mary and Greenwich. The major payer, towering above all others, was the City, with St. George Hanover Square, Paddington and Kensington contributing substantially but at a much lower level - mainly in the £3,000-£6,000 range, as opposed to the City's £11,000-£14000.

The pattern of redistribution therefore in the early years of the Fund's existence had two main elements. There was a redressing of the balance of poor relief financial responsibility between those areas that constituted, and had come to symbolise publicly, the most glaring contrasts of metropolitan wealth: the City and a few largely wealthy major West End parishes, and the extensive concentrations of poverty in the East End and some riverside areas. However, entrenched pockets of rating privilege such as the Inns of Court survived virtually untouched, and there was little meaningful redistribution in many central and southern districts where significant levels of poverty existed in more confined areas

Changes in valuation of property in the period studied (to 1871) clearly took place, although it was to be almost ten years after the passing of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* before the first fully revised quinquennial uniform valuation list for the metropolis could come into force under Goschen's *Valuation (Metropolis) Act 1869.*[118] A comparison between the two years 1868 and 1871 shows that increases for four major payers were proportionately a little more; the contrasts were slightly more marked in St. George in the East, which experienced almost no increase and therefore benefited proportionately more, and St. George Hanover Square, which had a slightly higher

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[118] 32 & 33 Vict., c.67.

increase than other payers. In 1876, with full revaluation presumably achieved, this tendency continued, although it was now the City and Kensington where valuation increases were highest; in the other three East End unions valuation increases had slowed down further, although not yet to the almost static level of St. George in the East (*Figure 4*).

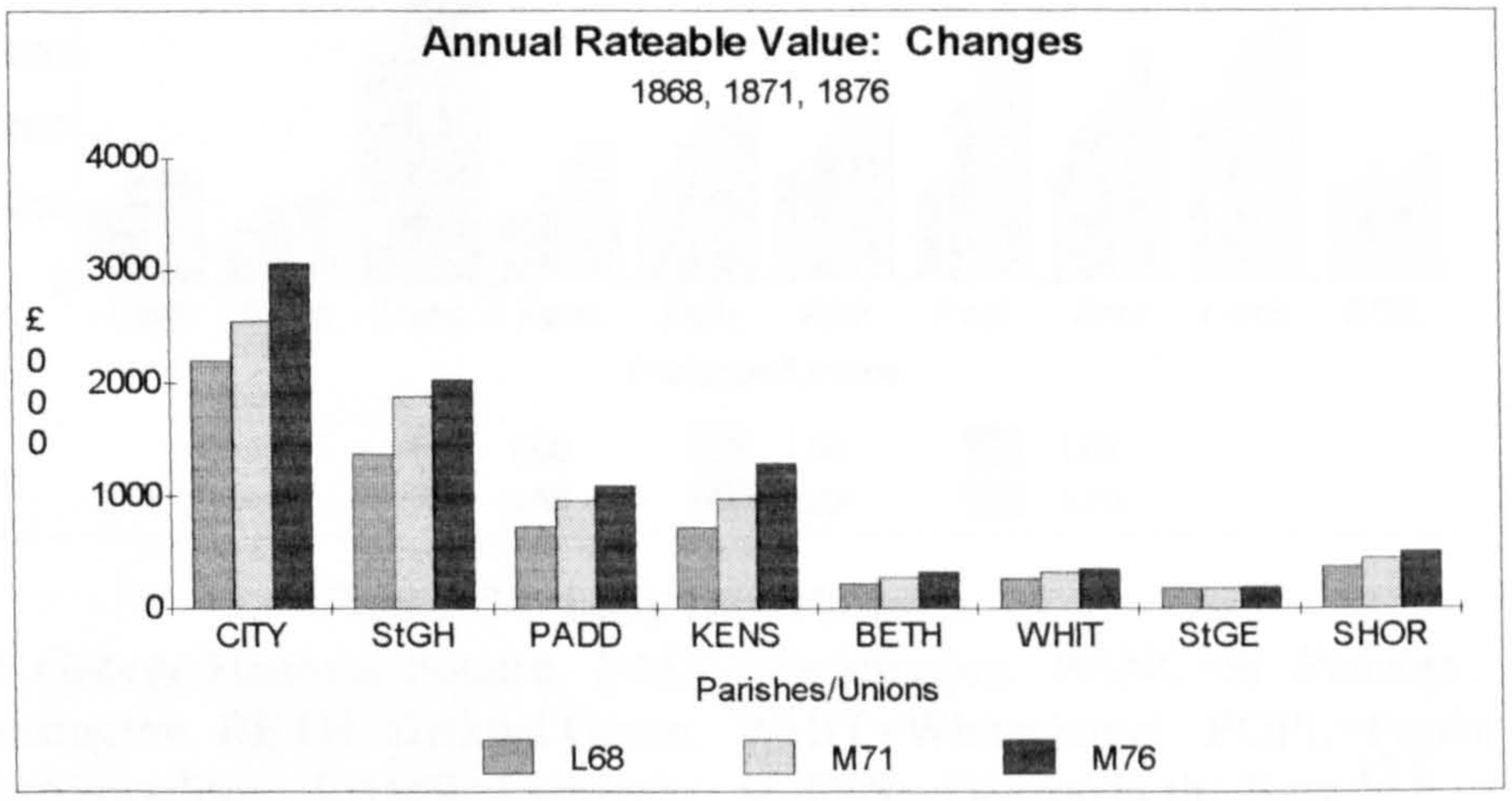

Figure 4: As at Lady Day 1868 and Michaelmas 1871 & 1876. StGH=St. George Hanover Square. PADD=Paddington. KENS=Kensington. BETH=Bethnal Green. WHIT=Whitechapel. StGE=St. George in the East. SHOR=Shoreditch.[119]

The valuation figures indicate that, despite widespread agreement that uniform property valuation and assessment across the metropolis would be an essential factor in the achievement of meaningful redistribution, changes took place gradually and to a limited extent.[120]

Greater redistribution in the middle band would only have been achieved if a much wider range of annual rateable values had been established, to enable the a.r.v. multiplier to have a more severe effect on the rates paid by the wealthy. Indeed, only really punitive differences in the rateable values of individual properties would have addressed the continuing issue of proportionately unequal burdens not only between

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[119]PP 1871 lix, Accounts & Papers, 839; PP 1873 xxix, 2nd Annual Report of Local Government Board, 327; PP 1878 xxxvii pt. I, 7th Annual Report of Local Government Board.

[120]*The Times* 29.10.1868, 4e-f, a comprehensive article on re-valuation (a copy of which is pasted at the front of St. Mary Newington board of guardians minutes, LMA P92/MRY/308, indicating that local practitioners found it authoritative); *Hansard* 11.3.1867, 1682-5; N. Johnson, *The Diary of Gathorne Hardy* (Oxford, 1981), 27, indicates that Hardy intended in 1866/7 to introduce a Bill for uniform valuation to accompany the *Metropolitan Poor Bill*; PP 1867 vi, 553 & 591, Valuation of Property Bill 1867 did not, however, cover the metropolis and was in any case withdrawn on 18.7.1867.

wealthy, middle-range and poorer parishes and unions but also between wealthy and poorer ratepayers and parishes within unions.

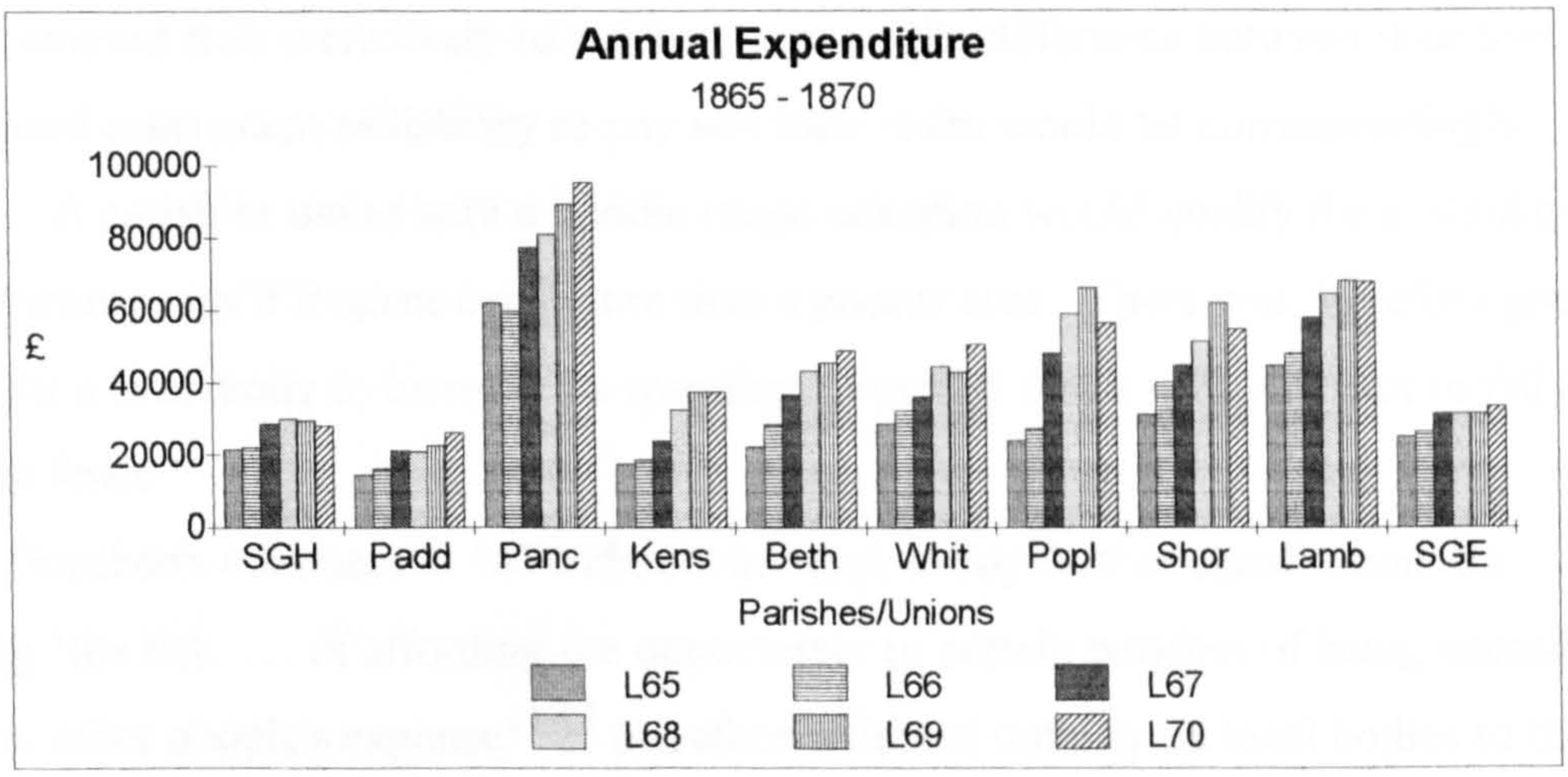

Figure 5 : Lady Day 1865-70.
SGH=St. George Hanover Square. PADD=Paddington. PANC=St. Pancras. KENS=Kensington. BETH=Bethnal Green. WHIT=Whitechapel. POPL=Poplar. SHOR=Shoreditch. LAMB=Lambeth. SGE=St. George in the East.[121]

Expenditure figures for individual parishes and unions only partly bear out the argument that increased spending was a significant part of the problem in the later 1860s (*Figure 5*). Although expenditure rose in some areas by about 100% between Lady Days 1865 and 1870 (for example, Kensington, Bethnal Green, Poplar), the increases between Lady Days 1868 and 1870, when expenditure under the Act began to take place, are in many cases not strikingly greater than those of immediately preceding years.

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[121]PP 1866 xxxv, 84-84, 18th Annual Report of the Poor Law Board (year ending Lady Day 1865); PP 1867 xxxiv, 160-163, 19th Annual Report of the Poor Law Board (year ending Lady Day 1866); PP 1867-8 xxxiii, 182-5, 20th Annual Report of the Poor Law Board (year ending Lady Day 1867); PP 1868-9 xxviii, 168-171, 21st Annual Report of the Poor Law Board (year ending Lady Day 1868); PP 1870 xxxv, 158-161, 22nd Annual Report of the Poor Law Board (year ending Lady Day 1869); PP 1871 xxvii, 262-5, 23rd Annual Report of the Poor Law Board (year ending Lady Day 1870). The figures shown are those for "Total Relief to the Poor, irrespective of any Contribution to or Repayment from the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund", comprising spending on "In-Maintenance, Out-Relief, Maintenance of Lunatics in Asylums or Licensed Houses, Workhouse Loans repaid and interest thereon, Salaries and Rations of Officers including the Sums repaid by Her Majesty's Treasury and Superannuations, and Other Expenses of or immediately connected with Relief". Given the nature of these expenditure heads there are, not surprisingly, some apparent anomalies in individual years for some parishes and unions - for instance, when out-relief was heavier than usual or when repayment of loans started.

The fact that the fund was needs-driven would clearly have contributed to the increase in expenditure and therefore to the increased burden borne not only by the high payers but also by the middle band. The larger the claims of the big receivers, the larger was the amount they were likely to receive, because the difference between their low a.r.v.-based assessment of liability to pay and their claim would be correspondingly greater. A parish or union with a middle range valuation would qualify for a similar-sized payment only if it spent even more than a poorer area. There was therefore good reason for a local body to increase its spending, provided that it took care not to fall at the audit fence.

Goschen's comment in 1870 about the need, in any further equalisation, for avoiding "the risk ..... of affording the opportunity to certain parishes of being exceeding liberal at other people's expense"[122] therefore reflected unfairly on local bodies to the extent that the needs-driven system as set up in 1867 supported local high spending (including capital spending required of local bodies by the Poor Law Board[123]) because the size of the redistributory pool depended on the claims of individual parishes and unions. The alternatives - payment of a wider range of items from a more resource-driven Consolidated Fund, or control by an electorally accountable county body with the power to set a "general" or wholly equalised rate and monitor spending more closely at the local level - do not appear to have been considered by Hardy or indeed by his immediate successors.[124]

The evidence suggests that in the early years the equalising mechanism of the 1867 Act, widely welcomed initially but criticised soon as being "little better than a delusion and a snare", was undermined by four factors: the delay in establishing uniform property valuation; the constrained nature of the chosen instrument, the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, the role of which was simply to apply redistribution on the basis of property valuation; the fact that the only decisions left to local politicians were about the size of their claim from the common pool, and the increases in rate-borne expenditure (including un-redistributed building costs) required by a central government

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[122] *Hansard* 18.2.1870, col. 574.
[123] 30 & 31 Vict. c. 6, s. 15, 18, 38.
[124] *The Times* 23.3.1869, 10a. Goschen told a metropolitan deputation that the issue was one of "efficient control of the common purse", but clearly envisaged this process as one where local boards would have to give up some of their power rather than one where electoral control was extended more widely.

intent on improving poor law services in the metropolis out of the pockets of local ratepayers.

The *Metropolitan Poor Act 1867* provided answers to a number of problems confronting the new President of the Poor Law Board. While doing so the Act also avoided passing political control of rate equalisation to the local bodies whose support for the economically radical policy had been so effective, and limited significant redistribution to the most dramatically apparent examples of metropolitan wealth and poverty.

CHAPTER 5. Ayrton and the Metropolis

The policies pursued by Ayrton and the Rate Equalisation Association represented a threat to significant interests, but because this strand of metropolitan radicalism has received less attention that it deserves, the nature of the reaction to it has also not been recognised. Ayrton himself has generally been undervalued as a Radical politician; he played a major role not only in the building of support for rate equalisation and the passing of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* but also in other radical reform issues.

This chapter presents evidence of his stature as a politician involved in metropolitan issues, and considers the question of why he has been under-recognised historiographically despite his achievements. Because of the Association's close relationship with Ayrton, this relative neglect of his Radical career has perhaps contributed to the failure to search for their records, which were in an accessible London archive waiting, in effect, to be found.[1]

A scarcity of non-public material on Ayrton has probably also contributed to this modern neglect, but other scattered but fairly copious evidence enables a wider assessment of him to be made in this chapter, with particular emphasis on his metropolitan role and the reactions to it.

When five policy-making models were considered in Chapter 2, Ayrton was associated particularly with the simple logic of the Rational model, in which identification of a problem - the metropolitan wealth/poverty divide - led to a proposed solution (rate equalisation) that could, objectively, be expected to resolve the difficulty. He was also part of a Pluralist policy-making process through his role as representative of some of the forces pressing for change: his Tower Hamlets constituents,[2] radical and

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[1]GL MS 1088, 1089 and 1090 (which include the Association's minute books) were found in the Guildhall Library, card-indexed under catalogue number L.65.7, Local Rates and Taxes, a section containing mainly Corporation of London drainage and sewer rate records but also a few miscellaneous association records. I am grateful for the advice of Andrea Tanner (op. cit.) that it was worth persisting in the search of Guildhall records on the grounds that it was here that she had found material on the earlier city-based rate equalisation association.

[2] *East London Observer*, 29.5.1858, 2b (edited by ex-Chartist, trade unionist and 1862-76 MBW member William Newton), supported Ayrton after his "threats" to the Commons and failure of his rate

reformist East End clergymen, and the Rate Equalisation Association. However, as shown in Chapter 4, the particular format advocated by Ayrton and other leading members of the Association - redistribution through an elected metropolis-wide board - conformed with Radical principles and conflicted with the political perspective that was to be embodied in the Act. This configuration of forceful rational arguments, political radicalism and active support for East End and metropolitan demands, apparent first in the rate equalisation issue, was to become a key characteristic of Ayrton's career.

His parliamentary career conforms in many respects with Miles Taylor's analysis of the developmental relationship between independent radicalism and parliamentary liberalism.[3] Starting as a Radical who sometimes opposed Whig/Liberal policies, he became a Gladstonian Radical Liberal and recognised as a prominent member of the government, even though never in the Cabinet.[4] Recognition came not only from his own party but from Conservative minority governments at two major stages in the rate equalisation struggle - when his rate equalisation Bill was given First Reading support by Sotheron-Estcourt in 1858, and when Hardy negotiated for and acknowledged his support on the 1867 Bill.[5] His political achievements - as a radical backbencher, an active and frequent member and chairman of select committees and a junior minister - were significant and in some respects unique. He was also clearly able to build effective political alliances, despite his alleged unpopularity. His most unpopular qualities, in the eyes of his political enemies, may have been his ability to win sizeable parliamentary support and often majorities for his views, and his willingness to launch into battle against powerful vested interests, using as his weapons a forthright and incisive vocabulary (or "evil tongue", as a contemporary defined it[6]), sharp political skills and, from 1868, his ministerial office.

There is the further relevant factor that his sphere of activity was largely the metropolis, and the focus of his attacks included the wealth and power of the City as well as the wealthy and often powerful residents of the West End - both well-

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equalisation Bill; the paper commented that "if Mr. Ayrton had done less than he did, he would have betrayed his duty and failed to represent his constituents who feel quite as strongly as he spoke".

[3]Taylor, op. cit., 338-46.

[4]See chapter 2, p. 34.

[5]*Hansard* 23.3.1858 col. 635, 11.3.1867 col. 1681-97.

[6]Sir Algernon West, *Recollections 1832-86* (London, 1899), vol. 2, 14. West had been Gladstone's private secretary; despite this comment, he tells a couple of not uncomplimentary anecdotes about Ayrton.

represented in the Commons. Ayrton may have been one of the first, but he was certainly not the last, to be demonized (and ultimately neutralised) because he was an effective radical politician based not at a comfortable distance away in the North or the Midlands, but on Members' doorsteps in the capital itself.

Previous chapters have shown Ayrton's highly effective advocacy of rate equalisation in Commons debates and his close relationship with the Rate Equalisation Association. This chapter will consider his prominence as a leading metropolitan radical in parliament and therefore as a factor in the reaction against some of the movement's proposals.

II

Ayrton's chairing of complex local taxation select committees, his acknowledged mastery of the issues and financial details, and his active membership of many other committees demonstrate the reputation he earned as an able politician.

Particularly significant in relation to the *Metropolitan Poor Act* were his achievements, together with John Locke, in the complex interactions of final amendments to the committee's draft 1864 Report of the 1861-4 Select Committee on Poor Relief. Their tactics of establishing principles that could later be incorporated in government-sponsored legislation - instead of proposing detailed solutions that might fall at the early hurdles of vested interests - were consistent with those of the Rate Equalisation Association as agreed in February 1859.[7]

Ayrton, having chaired the Association's 1859 meeting on tactics, is likely to have led the manoeuvring as the two MPs bided their time during the President's successful steering through the select committee of the various so-called "whitewashing" decisions (confirming the standing and responsibilities of the central Board), keeping a low profile during voting and in fact not always attending nor, if present, casting a vote. They launched their bid for redistributive policy-markers for the metropolis in the latter half of the report debates under the report headings of "Metropolitan Distress in 1860-61", "Equalisation of Rating" and "Casual and Houseless Poor".[8]

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[7]GL MS 1088/1, 15.2.1859. See also chapter 3, p. 70.
[8]PP 1864 ix, *Select Committee on Poor Relief*, Proceedings of the Committee, 56-7.

Ayrton's first attempt was only partially successful. He proposed that a statement in the draft report approving the adequacy of poor law administration in the winter of 1860-61 and guardians' powers to raise funds to relieve severe distress receive the addendum " but the legal charge would have pressed very heavily on some parishes within the metropolis, and very unequally on different parts of it". The committee rejected the last eight words, which emphasised the element of inequality.

However, a further amendment was added that did introduce into the report the concept of inequality but did not suggest change. Unattributed, and therefore perhaps negotiated with Villiers himself or other Members, it referred to "much evidence" having been given showing "the unequal pressure of the charge for the relief of the poor in different parts of the metropolitan district", and the fact that various plans had been submitted to the committee for equalisation of the poor rate. But the next sentence - "Your Committee are not, however, prepared to recommend any legislation on the subject limited to the metropolis ....." made it clear that this amendment did not signify an active response to such evidence.

It was here that Locke moved what was to become an extremely significant amendment: the deletion of the refusal to recommend, and the insertion of the words "and your Committee recommend the general question of extending the area of rating to the further consideration of the House; but the circumstances of the metropolis are so peculiar, that in any legislation to extend the area of charge or management, it would be necessary to have regard to those circumstances".

The "peculiar circumstances" were to be the key that opened the door for Parliament to introduce redistributive legislation for the Metropolis without having to consider the rest of the country, and this statement was quoted often in the three years leading up to the *Metropolitan Poor Act.* Crucially, it offered country gentlemen the opportunity to support metropolitan rate redistribution without compromising their opposition to a wider redistribution scheme.[9]

Locke's triumph - achieved without a division - was built on by Ayrton four days later at the next sitting of the committee. In three successive unopposed motions he achieved a framework for the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act,* which was introduced later in the year. Ayrton's first motion proposed that the charges for the metropolitan

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[9]Caplan, op. cit., 267, details the opposition of a section of the landed interest to union chargeability between 1845 and 1865.

houseless and casual poor should be paid "out of a rate assessed on the annual rateable value of the whole of the said metropolis": a radical proposal, as a charge for poor relief had never before been extended over so wide an area. Having achieved this success, Ayrton then proposed that the Metropolitan Board of Works be the body to raise such a rate. Again this was a ground-breaker, in that the MBW had never before been involved in poor relief. In due course there were to be criticisms - in the Commons and from the MBW itself - that such an arrangement infringed principles of accountability, but Ayrton's proposal passed through the select committee without a division.

Ayrton's final proposal, that the Poor Law Board be empowered to prescribe, enforce and implement all arrangements for carrying out these policies, was also carried without division. Here, it seems, is evidence that Ayrton felt that the role of centralisation as a redistributive instrument was of greater importance than fears about its increase. In terms of parliamentary tactics it seems that he had moved some distance from the position he had adopted in 1858 when he had withdrawn his Bill "to provide a remedy for the inequality in the rates for the relief of the poor in the metropolis" on the grounds, he said, that he could not divide the House on the issue of "local supervision of local funds".[10]

The subsequent attack by F. W. Knight, former Conservative Parliamentary Secretary of the Poor Law Board, on the "craftily managed"[11] way in which evidence had been handled referred not only to the committee's failure to criticise the Poor Law Board and "the disgraceful state of medical relief to the poor", but also to the crucial intervention of a "new" committee member who, evidence in the final report suggests, may have been working with Ayrton and John Locke to achieve redistributive goals. Unnamed by Knight, the "new" member was clearly Sir Arthur Buller, Liberal MP for Devonport, who attended only 14 times in the four years[12] (eleven of them in the closing weeks, and the other three in early 1861), voted almost always with Locke and often with Ayrton, and successfully moved the amendment that paved the way for the Union Chargeability Act of the following year.[13]

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[10]*Hansard* 12.5.58 col. 515.
[11]Ibid., 25.5.1865 col. 799.
[12]Stenton, op cit. Sir Arthur, brother of Charles Buller, Liberal MP for Liskeard (who had died in office in 1848 when President of the Poor Law Board) had, like Ayrton, been a lawyer in India.
[13]PP 1864 ix, op. cit., 59.

Buller's successful union rating amendment - "that any measure for extending the area of rating should in the opinion of the Committee embrace provisions for making the whole cost for the poor in each union chargeable on the common fund of the union" - was agreed without division, even though it followed immediately after his unsuccessful motion that the number of Poor Law inspectors be reduced, and the sitting after he had moved unsuccessfully that the President of the Poor Law Board be always a Member of the Commons. In both of these rejected proposals, which would have affected the power structure of the Poor Law Board, he had been supported by Locke but not by Ayrton: the voting on the President was 2-9 (with Ayrton absent), and on the inspectors 4-8, with Ayrton voting against. Given that the skilful political manoeuvring by Ayrton and Locke on metropolitan redistributive amendments had preceded Buller's union chargeability amendment, it seems very likely that Ayrton's and Locke's tactics paved the way for Buller's success - particularly in view of the fact that Buller succeeded despite his preceding almost unsupported attacks on Poor Law Board power. Ayrton's failure to support Buller's earlier proposals indicates a determination to focus on major goals that was to be a feature of his political career.

The first committee that Ayrton chaired - the 1861 *Select Committee on the Local Taxation and Government of the Metropolis*[14] - did not, on the other hand, produce any stepping-stones to redistribution, and indeed did not even make any recommendations. (Firth[15] blamed the City members on the committee for having "steadily voted against anything in the report except simple narrative"; possibly the fact that this was Ayrton's first experience of chairing a select committee also affected the outcome).

However, his second committee - the 1866 similar-sounding *Select Committee on Local Government and Local Taxation of the Metropolis*[16] - was more effective, and heard evidence from a wide range of authoritative witnesses. Under the general umbrella of metropolitan improvements it not only had referred to it the earlier (1861) report but succeeded in producing, in its first report on 16 April, several references to inequality of rate contributions between southern and East End districts such as St. George the Martyr Southwark and Whitechapel, and West End districts such as St.

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[14]PP 1861 viii, *Select Committee on Local Taxation and Government of the Metropolis, and the Local Administration of Justice therein.*
[15]J. F. B. Firth, *Municipal London* (London, 1876), 569-70.
[16]PP 1866 xiii *Select Committee on Local Government and Local Taxation of the Metropolis.*

George Hanover Square, Paddington, Kensington, and St. Margaret and St. John Westminster - albeit relating to the MBW's general fund, which dealt with environmental improvements rather than poor relief.

Ayrton's persistence led to the inclusion of evidence in support of rate equalisation from Sir John Thwaites, chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works. Having been given the opportunity by Ayrton to expound at great length on his preference for indirect taxation (the coal tax) rather than direct taxation (the rates), Thwaites was prepared to agree that (in Ayrton's words) "in the parishes which appear to be so highly taxed ..... small struggling tradesmen, and others who might be described as the working classes, chiefly reside" and that "in justice to these more struggling people..... it would be reasonable that the wealthy and influential parishes should at least bear an equal amount of taxation".[17]

Given that Ayrton's 1866 committee was not actually supposed to be considering the question of poor relief at all but only local taxation for metropolitan improvements, it was a noteworthy achievement that the recommendations in its First Report on 16 April produced the statement that "one mode of providing funds for all local purposes would be found in a nearer approach to the equalisation of local burtherns on the metropolis; but as this involves not merely the charges imposed by the Metropolitan Board, but the charges for the administration of the poor law, it would carry your committee beyond the scope of their present inquiry".[18]

The select committee continued to sit during the next three fraught months as the Liberal Reform Bill dominated parliamentary activities and the Conservatives came to power. While involved in the Reform struggles, Ayrton presided over the taking of evidence from a wide range of witnesses experienced in poor law questions at national and local level; these included Dr. William Farr of the Registrar General's Office, who gave information on disparities of rating, wealth and mortality in the metropolis, much of it drawn from the census and other official sources, Edwin Chadwick, former Poor Law Commissioner, whose strongly-expressed strong views on local administration included hints of interest in the nominee concept, and many elected local representatives.

In this large body of evidence given from April to July, as well as in some of the report's conclusions, may lie some of the reasons for the co-operative links that were to

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[17]Ibid., Minutes of Evidence, Q.615, 620.
[18]Ibid., First Report, 47.

be established between Ayrton and the new Conservative President of the Poor Law Board by the time the *Metropolitan Poor Bill* was introduced in Parliament the following February The authoritative views and evidence gathered by Ayrton's committee constituted an informative and new resource for a new President anxious to produce a metropolitan poor law policy. Formally, the position was that the committee's report at the end of July stated that the committee had not yet finished taking evidence and recommended its reappointment in the next session.

It is clear that Hardy regarded the gaining of Ayrton's support for his Bill as important[19] and this, together with the fact that the Conservatives were in a minority in the Commons and were to rely on Radical support for their Reform Bill, may have played a part in the reappointment in their entirety of the members of this select committee and Ayrton's continuation as chairman. The appointment of the committee "to inquire into the Local Government and Local Taxation of the Metropolis"[20] was announced on 12 February, four days after the introduction of Hardy's Bill; the interpretation given by Ayrton was that the 1866 committee had "continued" in 1867,[21] although it was in fact treated procedurally as a new committee.

The recommendations of this "new" 1867 select committee were more radical than anything produced by Ayrton's previous committees. Although the *Metropolitan Poor Act* became law before the committee issued its second and final report,[22] its recommendations (some of which have been noted by Davis[23]) are relevant for the present study because of their sharp contrast with some of the Act's provisions. The effect of the report's recommendations, if implemented, would have been to increase the electoral power of ratepayers over a new metropolis-wide council that would replace the MBW, increase this body's income by creating two new sources of funds, and increase the range of its responsibilities. Furthermore, as it was also proposed that the boards of guardians should be "merged" in new all-encompassing district councils, metropolitan poor relief would have been radically and uniquely altered, with its new, equalised

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[19]*Hansard* 14.3.1867 col. 1864.
[20]Ibid. 12.5.1867 col. 300; PP 1867 xii. The Select Committee was known by two titles: the *Select Committee on Local Government and Local Taxation of the Metropolis* and the *Select Committee on Metropolitan Local Government, etc. (London City Improvement Rates Bill).*
[21]*Hansard* 21.5.67, col. 885.
[22]PP 1867 xii, First Report 15.3.1867, Second Report, 6.5.1867. The *Metropolitan Poor Act* was passed on 25.3.1867.
[23]Davis (1988), op. cit., 59.

metropolis-wide system of funding far more directly accountable to the electorate than were those of either the existing MBW or Hardy's new bodies, and with electoral control of poor relief based on the new districts' single franchise rather than the 1834 plural voting system that applied in the rest of the country.[24] Another recommendation - to give the proposed new metropolitan body responsibility for establishing a common property valuation system across the metropolis - raised a major issue omitted from Hardy's Act, and would have satisfied the long-standing demand of the Rate Equalisation Association that equalisation should be accompanied by "one uniform basis of assessment".[25]

The proposals of Ayrton's 1867 committee therefore represented a detailed and ground-breaking Radical alternative to the *Metropolitan Poor Act*'s reduction of potential electoral control of an equalised rate through the introduction of nominees and the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, and also to Hardy's apparent intention of putting uniform property valuation in a separate Bill.

The contradiction between Ayrton's support for Hardy's Bill (including the nominee proposals) and the Radical recommendations of his select committee suggests that, in reaching an accommodation with the Conservative government, he may have been taking a longer term view and have given his support in exchange for the

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[24]Ayrton's committee recommended that a new Municipal Council of London (to be created from an expanded Metropolitan Board of Works, and therefore to include the City) be given the power to raise rates not only, in the traditional way, from occupiers, but also - for improvements - from owners, including the Crown. In return, private owners would be represented on the Municipal Council by ex-officio Justices of the Peace, and the Crown would be allowed to appoint two members to the Council: provisions intended to satisfy the principle of "no taxation without representation". In place of the MBW's existing membership, all of whom were indirectly elected, 50% of the Council would be directly elected by ratepayers, and 50% would consist of the JPs, the two Crown representatives and the present MBW base of indirectly elected local members. The new Council would be given powers over metropolitan gas, electricity and railways, and would also be responsible for achieving standardised property valuation throughout the metropolis. New large district Common Councils directly elected by ratepayers would replace the existing vestries and district boards but would have to submit any proposed owners' rates for the approval of the body on which owners were represented (the first tier authority, the Municipal Council). The Common Councils would exercise "all the functions necessary for the purpose of local administration in the district": a reference to the proposal in the body of the Report (page iv) that the functions of boards of guardians be included in the role of these new local councils (which was in some respects a precursor of the statutory inclusion of social services departments in London borough and other twentieth-century district councils).

[25]GL MS 1088/1, 12.1.1858. Goschen, with the support of Ayrton (*Hansard* 1.4.1869 col. 17) and despite opposition, brought in the *Valuation (Metropolis) Act 1869*, 32 & 33 Vict. c. 67, which set up a mechanism involving JPs from Middlesex, Surrey, Kent and the City sitting in general assessment sessions, but it was not until the *Local Government Act 1888* (51 & 52 Vict. c.41, s.40 [2] & s.42 [10]) provided for Quarter Sessions for London that the Ayrton committee's proposals for a single county body to be responsible for a common system of valuation, and for metropolis-wide Sessions, were realised.

opportunity to forge a select committee blue-print of metropolitan local government organisation that would incorporate ideas that he had advocated for several years. These included elements of JP involvement in the achievement of uniform metropolitan property valuation that he had suggested as far back as his unsuccessful 1858 Bill, full metropolitan rate equalisation of the kind that he and the Rate Equalisation Association had campaigned for over the ten-year period, and metropolitan administration of poor relief of the kind that he and Locke had manoeuvred for on Villiers' 1861-4 select committee and that had culminated in the 1864 *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act.* As an East End MP he would of course have experienced difficulty with his constituents if he had opposed outright a rate equalisation measure, no matter how restricted its aims, but in failing even to join his fellow metropolitan MPs in disagreeing with the nominee clauses (which were so much opposed to the goals he pursued on his 1867 committee and elsewhere), he was, presumably, pursuing what he saw to be a wiser strategy of extracting as many political gains as possible from Hardy's widely welcomed measure.

Ayrton's third appointment as chairman of a poor relief select committee - the 1868 *Select Committee on Poor Rates Assessment*,[26] also under the Conservatives - may have been a tribute to his competence and expertise. It may also have been an uneasy seat to occupy, with the committee including as it did a former Liberal President of the Poor Law Board (Villiers), the present Conservative President (Hardy) and a future and perhaps aspiring Liberal President (Goschen), as well as such other heavyweights as John Bright, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach (future Conservative Home Secretary) and G. J. Shaw-Lefevre, future Liberal President of the Local Government Board and son of one of the original three Poor Law Commissioners. The complexities of resolving difficulties in Disraeli's *Second Reform Act* such as the qualification for office of some poor law guardians - relating substantially to Hodgkinson's successful Liberal amendment on compounding[27] - clearly required chairmanship by a sharp legal mind experienced in franchise and local government issues. Even Lumley, deputy secretary at the Poor Law Board, when called to give evidence, had to confess at times that he did not know the answers and would have to search his department's files.

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[26]PP 1867-68 xiii.
[27]R. Blake, *The Conservative Party from Peel to Churchill* (London, 1972), 107-8; A. Briggs, *Victorian People* (London, 1971), 291-2.

Present and in the chair for 11 of the 18 sittings, Ayrton played as usual an active political role and made his own standpoint clear: so much so that, as chairman, he was defeated several times in the final voting on amendments to the draft report.[28] The draft that was worked on was, however, his: the committee had voted 10-6 that it should be Ayrton's draft report, rather than the rival drafts submitted by Hicks Beach and Shaw-Lefevre, that should form the basis of their voting. The fact that the report was reprinted twice in the next few years[29] is perhaps an indication of its standing.

III

It is clear that Ayrton was an exceptionally active and persistent as well as prominent Member; indeed, he acquired the reputation of being the only MP to read every Bill brought in, and of reading "more parliamentary papers than any four members".[30] In addition to his major role in metropolitan poor law and local government issues, his involvement in Reform Bill agitation and parliamentary manoeuvres was greater than is usually acknowledged. He not only moved the first of the three major Radical amendments to Disraeli's Bill (which reduced the residential qualification for voting from two years to one)[31] but made many Commons contributions in the Reform debates and was, in due course, chosen as the leading parliamentary spokesman at the Reform Fete banquet held at the Crystal Palace to mark the passing of the *Second Reform Act* - the Radicals' third choice, it seems, after Gladstone and John Bright sent their apologies.[32]

His attainment of office came after eleven vigorous and effective years as a backbencher. He had, said the short-lived *Circle* later, "an unpleasant knack of coming to the point, of condensing his observations, so as equally to please the House and discomfort officials". At last "he could be resisted no longer. A place in the

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[28]PP 1867/8 xiii, XVIII-XLIV, 8-18.6.1868, & report 22.6.1868.
[29]PP 1868-69 xi, ordered to be reprinted 8.4.1869; PP 1873 xvi, ordered to be reprinted 8.5.1873.
[30]G. J. Holyoake, *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* (London, 1893), 47, 147. Holyoake, a Radical, criticised Ayrton severely in some other respects, so probably would not have paid him a compliment if undeserved.
[31]Briggs, op. cit., 290.
[32]*The Times* 1.10.1867, 7e-f.

Administration became a necessity."[33] Gladstone appears to have acknowledged Ayrton's Commons power several years later when, commenting on one of his many disputes with Robert Lowe, he wrote that even if "uprooting" Ayrton from his position as First Commissioner of Works were just, "it will, as Glyn (the party whip) would tell you, be very difficult"; when the Queen objected to Ayrton's second and third ministerial appointments, Gladstone negotiated compromises with her.[34] A similar view was expressed by the leading political journalist Henry Lucy. Ayrton had won office, he suggested, because of his great skill in debate, "so dangerous to the Prime Minister when exercised from below the gangway"; Lucy compared Ayrton in this respect with two other major Liberals, Robert Lowe and Sir Vernon Harcourt.[35]

Ayrton's ability to construct and maintain lengthy political alliances challenges the claim that he was by nature personally difficult and unpopular; indeed, he appears to have been able to maintain good working relations despite some differences on policy details. His many long-standing alliances included not only those with his parliamentary supporters on metropolitan issues and with the Rate Equalisation Association but also his association with the Reform League, the Tower Hamlets Non-Conformist Alliance,[36] the Tower Hamlets group of Anglican clergymen led by the Rev. M'Gill, and the Association for the Repeal of the Taxes on Knowledge, whose prominent supporters included Gladstone, Bright, Cobden, Milner-Gibson and Samuel Morley, and who felt that a difference of opinion on a particular issue "did not interrupt the good understanding we always had with Mr. Ayrton".[37]

Ayrton's prominence in the public mind, even though he held only non-Cabinet posts, is shown also by his being caricatured, together with Gladstone and Robert Lowe, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the hilarious political burlesque *The Happy Land* at the Royal Court Theatre in 1873.[38] Indeed, Ayrton had some of the funniest lines and

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[33]*East London Observer* 5.2.1874, 7e, f. (Reprint from the *Circle*).
[34]J. Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (London, 1903), II, 421 (Gladstone letter 20.11.1871); P. Magnus, *Gladstone, a biography* (London, 1954), 225-6.
[35]*DNB* 1922-30 (London, 1937), on Lucy; H. Lucy, *Men and Manner in Parliament* (London, 1919), 235-6. Lucy, 1843-1924, knighted in 1909, was manager of the *Daily News* parliamentary staff, a journalist on the *Observer* for 20 years, a *Punch* political columnist, and author of popular handbooks on *Parliamentary Procedure* (1880) and *Law and Practice of General Elections* (1900).
[36]*Tower Hamlets Independent*, 7.2.1874, 5a.
[37]C. D. Collet, *History of the Taxes on Knowledge - Their Origin and Repeal* (London, 1899), 168, and also 140, 144, 155-6, 162, 174, 186, 193-4, 196-7, 199-201, 205, 208.
[38]BL MS. 531170, which may be the only surviving copy. There have been brief references to this play, for example in Port (*HJ*, 27, 1, 1984), 173, and in biographical dictionaries, but there has been no detailed modern study of it, nor indeed modern production.

marginally the longest speaking part. Although one of the authors was W. S. Gilbert[39] (later of Gilbert & Sullivan fame), son of William Gilbert, chairman of the Rate Equalisation Association, and the family connection may have contributed to the particularly lively depiction of the Ayrton character, it seems unlikely that he would have been chosen on these grounds alone as the companion caricature to the two major officers of state. Eminent persons in the First Night audience included the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh, and it was possibly the objections of the Prince of Wales - who disliked, apparently, the references to economising on the Royal palaces - that roused the Lord Chamberlain to banning it. Ayrton, according to his family record, was "much amused at the whole matter, and particularly the personal imitation of himself". The production was popular, and when it re-opened after the loss of one performance, with an adjustment of the strikingly recognisable make-up and wigs of the three "Right Honourables" and no reference to palaces, every place in boxes, stalls and pit had been taken.[40]

The burlesque is significant not only because it shows Ayrton's political prominence but also because it provides a further indication of how some contemporaries perceived him. Its major political themes - Gladstonian economising and post-*Second Reform Act* "popular" government - were policies in which Ayrton had played a significant part, and demonstrate Ayrton's close identification with the policies of the administration.

The play's opening emphasises the Reform context, set as it is in "a fairy landscape on the back of a cloud", with six innocent, carefree female fairies awaiting the arrival of the three ministers from England in order to discover the principles on which their system of popular government is founded, and to introduce these, if possible, into Fairyland. On cue the trio, Mr. G., Mr. L. and Mr. A., come up the trap, singing about their popularity, with the refrain "Still we are three most popular men! We want to

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[39]The authors were named as "F. Tomline and Gilbert A'Becket", but biographical entries on Ayrton give W. S. Gilbert and Gilbert A'Becket as the authors, and the play is named in the British Library's index and in the contemporary press as one of W.S. Gilbert's works.

[40]*Daily News* 6.3.1873, 3b; PRO/LC/1/277; J. O. Baylen & N. J. Gossman (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals* (Sussex, 1978), vol. II, 33; N. Chaplin, *The Chaplin and Skinner Families* (London, 1902), 30; *The Times* 6, 7, 8 & 10.3.1873 (10c; 12d; 5f; 8b & 11b); BL MS. 53117 N, handwritten original script dated 3 February, and document on "Lord Chamberlain's Office" headed paper titled "Deviations from the Licensed Copy of 'The Happy Land' performed at the Court Theatre"; BL 11779.cc.16, Gilbert's social satire *Fallen Fairies; or The Wicked World* on which the approved first, and milder, version was based.

know who'll turn us out!" (See Illustration 1,[41] showing Ayrton in the centre.) The irony of the dual meaning of "popular" was extended for second-week audiences by the fact that, after losing a major division in the Commons, Gladstone was compelled to soldier on because Disraeli refused to assume office.[42]

Economy and retrenchment in defence and in public works (Ayrton's field as First Commissioner of Works) is emphasised by all three. Their response to foreign policy problems (the claim of the King of Bonny to Scotland and the impending invasion of London by the Chinese) is uniformly not to spend money. All exclaim "Oh, no - no - no!" at a female fairy's suggestion that they should fight for Scotland, and Gladstone suggests that they give London to the Chinese at once, with Ayrton reacting with horror at the suggestion that they should offer the Chinese an indemnity of sixpence to withdraw. Both Ayrton and Lowe are shocked at Fairyland's expenditure on public works, and Ayrton exclaims, "Solid marble temple! Here's waste! What's become of brick and stucco, I should like to know?"

In one of the funniest scenes, in which ministerial posts are distributed in Fairyland by oral competitive examination, the allocation of Ayrton's post of First Commissioner of Works forms the dramatic climax. Zayda, the snappish fairy who becomes particularly attached to Ayrton, demands to know what's to become of her. "You appoint people to posts because they know nothing about them," she says. "Well, I know nothing about anything. Rude am I in speech, and little blessed with the set phrase of peace. I've no taste, I've no courtesy, I've no knowledge of Art, and if you don't give me something to do, I'll make the country too hot to hold you." Ayrton, bowing very low, hands her his portfolio as First Commissioner.

The play's treatment of Ayrton is more personal than that of the other two ministers. While it satirises some of the political views and actions of all three ministers, and particularly their zeal for economy and retrenchment, and suggests that they are an unpopular trio, it is Ayrton whose actual personality and manner are mocked persistently. The DNB suggests that the burlesque "unjustifiably caricatured" him,[43] and the play certainly demonstrates a delight in depicting him as someone who sought conflict for its own sake.

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[41] *Illustrated London News* 22.3.1873, 273.
[42] Magnus, op. cit., 224-5.
[43] *DNB* (Ayrton), op. cit., 89.

On the other hand the play, in emphasising the retrenchment policies of the Liberal government, gives a clearer insight than the contemporary press generally did into the wider political framework within which bitter personal criticism was aimed at Ayrton for his cost-cutting at the Treasury and the Office of Works. In linking "Mr. A" so closely with the retrenchment policies of the government, the play offers literary support for the point Michael Port makes that Ayrton's practical cost-consciousness in office was in close conformity with the Liberal government's financial policies, and Morley's comment that "Not thoroughly 'to understand pecuniary responsibility' was counted a deadly sin in those ..... days."[44] Through the medium of the hilarious dialogue it confirms the financial priorities expressed by Ayrton when taking up his first ministerial post - that it was necessary "to draw a hard line between expenditure demanded by public necessities and expenditure demanded by public opinion or caprice" and to give the great body of the people "the greatest blessings with the least possible taxation"[45] - while at the same time showing him as an exemplary supporter of Gladstone's economic policies.

Particularly important in terms of Ayrton's rate equalisation and other metropolitan political activities is the fact that his East End associations were also, it seems, emphasised. This is not apparent in the script, but a second review in *Vanity Fair* several months later[46] suggested somewhat mischievously that "as it is now quite settled that they do not represent those ministers", there could be no harm in the actors paying a visit to the House of Commons and amending their portrayals accordingly. One of the characters, it suggested, could speak "in a particularly Lancashire accent" (presumably Gladstone), one could read his words "with his paper close to his nose" (clearly a reference to the extremely short-sighted Lowe), and the third "might also aspirate his H's": an indication that the Ayrton character had (inappropriately, in terms of the real Ayrton) been dropping his aitches.

Another feature not apparent in the script and therefore presumably introduced in production was Mr. A's "violence", which "caused repeated laughter"[47] - again

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[44]M. H. Port, "A Contrast in Styles at the Office of Works. Layard and Ayrton: Aesthete and Economist", *HJ*, 27, 1 (1984) 162, 174; J. Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone*, II (London, 1903), 419-20.
[45]*The Times* 18.2.1869, 8c.
[46]*Vanity Fair* 1.11.1873, 143.
[47]*Daily News*, 6.3.1873, 3b.

probably inappropriate in terms of the real Ayrton, whose "languid manner" and "oratorical vitriol"[48] suggest a violence more intellectual than physical.

Overall, this neglected burlesque provides evidence that Ayrton was a more substantial public personality than is generally recognised. Firstly, he was a prominent Radical Liberal who, from the late 1860s onwards, was seen as an effective representative of Gladstonian political positions. Secondly, he remained linked in the public mind with his East End constituency base. The violence, working-class accent and hilarious political dialogue conveyed an image of a threatening East Ender who could also be laughed at when shown on the West End stage.

Evidence from sources as diverse as Commons debates, select committee proceedings, Rate Equalisation Association records, the press and the theatre confirms, therefore, that Ayrton was not only the leading MP involved in the campaign for rate equalisation but also a substantial Radical politician. His especial identification with metropolitan radicalism will now be examined further.

IV

The image of East End danger with which Ayrton came to be associated was one to which he himself had undoubtedly contributed, losing no opportunity to emphasise that he represented a huge constituency in a potentially threatening part of the metropolis. The first major instance was of course the rate equalisation campaign, when his inflammatory rhetoric in the Commons about "the people" aroused anger, and thereafter the national press was to show an exceptional interest in the activities of the holder of the huge Tower Hamlets seat - the largest constituency in the country in terms of population.

"The right hon. and noble savage" was one of the labels the *The Times* was later to confer on him. They suggested inaccurately, on his appointment as First Commissioner of Public Works, that his prior experience was "parochial", and commented that "constant contemplation of the architecture of the East-end of London can scarcely provide an artistic education" of the kind appropriate for one responsible

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[48] *Spectator*, 4.12.1886, 8b.

for "Palaces, Public Buildings, and Parks". Ayrton's subsequent cost-cutting on prestigious West End projects in the interests of tax-payers they described as involving a "well-trained habit of refusing to sanction public expenditure" which filled his imagination "if that be not an inappropriate term".[49] Such images must have reinforced caricature-like public perceptions of Ayrton as an East End bogeyman.

In Ayrton's second year as MP *The Times's* continuing interest in his relations with his East End constituents led to a lengthy, mocking report on his having had to explain to nearly 1,500 of his constituents his reason for having helped (in company with leading figures such as Gladstone and Russell) to bring the Palmerston government down. The leader-writer offered Ayrton mock sympathy for having to represent the 1832 *Reform Act* constituency's 600,000 people in "the vast regions of Dalston, Kingsland, Hoxton, Hackney, Bethnal-green, Shoreditch, Whitechapel, Commercial-road, Stepney, Limehouse, Poplar, Blackwall, the Isle of Dogs, Bromley, and Bow, all fagoted together in one huge borough containing the population of a small state" rather than an easier and "much more respectable" rotten borough such as "the green mound of Old Sarum".[50] The joke, clearly, was that democracy appeared to be presenting problems of accountability for those who were its most enthusiastic adherents.

The frequent mockingly entertaining press anecdotes on Ayrton's subsequent ministerial activities in the metropolis - some of them clearly emanating from the Treasury, where his fellow-Liberal but political enemy Robert Lowe reigned as Chancellor - were on occasion deliberately inaccurate, and had to be corrected.[51] (Different in kind from the personal anecdotal barrage - although related - were the indignant denunciations in the press from professional interests affected by Ayrton's cost-cutting measures, in that they represented the legitimate mobilisation of opinion by public notables against threats to their position or professional interests.)[52]

The nature of the contemporary press coverage of Ayrton's activities has tended to obscure a more important consideration. Because he was a particularly effective and determined politician, the fact that he paid vigorous attention to metropolitan issues

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[49]*The Times* 9.9.1871, 3b, 9.11.1869, 7a, 27.10.1869, 7b.
[50]*The Times* 25 & 26.8.1858, 9c & 8d. The vote against Palmerston had been on the *Conspiracy to Murder Bill* following the attempted assassination of Louis Napoleon: a radical issue. See also Taylor, op. cit., 296-7.
[51]*The Times* 11.7.1870, 10f, 21.9.1871, 5c.
[52]*The Times* 9.7.1870, 11b, 11.7.1870, 10f, 2.6.1871, 12d, 9.9.1871, 3b, 21.9.1871, 5c, 2.5.1872, 11c. Port, op. cit., 168, 171.

increased the likelihood that radical changes in finance and power might be brought about in the capital despite resistance from entrenched interests.

He was aware, from an early stage, of the perils of disturbing vested interests. He was sometimes induced to think, he said, that it would be "better to leave off this active interference with legislation, and to become a sleeping member of parliament." Being a sleeping member would be a very pleasant thing because "if you did nothing and attempted nothing, nobody would find fault with you; but the moment you began to work you could not move in this great metropolis, so full of special interests, without touching some one....." [53] His own account of the principle on which he had acted throughout his Commons career was "that the interests of the people at large should always prevail over those of special or privileged classes." As a result, "a certain extent of personal or corporate hostility has been raised".[54] Although it was in his 1874 election manifesto that he articulated this principle, when defending his seat against powerful opposition, the statement is supported by much evidence from throughout his parliamentary career. Port, for instance, notes the *Spectator's* 1870 comment that Ayrton was "always on the side of the people".[55]

City enmity was aroused as early as 1860 - if not before, given the tenor of his rate equalisation speeches from 1857 onwards. Contemporary historian and metropolitan politician J. F. B. Firth,[56] praising Ayrton's leading role in opposing City manoeuvres in 1860-1, cited his "scathing language" and "vigorous denunciation of this pusillanimous policy of truckling to the City Corporation". Ayrton's 1860 Commons attack on the City (in which he moved that a Bill on the Corporation be referred to a select committee in order to widen its remit to include metropolitan taxation and reorganisation) was, he said, "probably his ablest effort in the House of Commons, and .... scarcely second to the speech of Lord Brougham in 1843". As a result, the City lost their Bill. An unattributed pamphlet attacking Ayrton's speech[57] complained that "a powerful leading article the following day, in the most influential organ of public intelligence in the world" (*The Times)* had assumed Ayrton's allegations to be true and had "stigmatized the Corporation as 'a nuisance which ought to be got rid of'", and that

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[53]*The Times* 25.8.1858, 9c.
[54]BL 8139.k.3.
[55]Port, op. cit., 176; *Spectator* 14.5.1870, 602.
[56]Firth, op. cit., 568-9, and also 588-9 for a list of the Bills opposed by the City.
[57]BL 8138.f.20, *Remarks on the speech of A.S. Ayrton, Esq., MP* (London, 1860).

subsequently the same journal had denounced the Corporation as an "incorrigible old hypocrite". The aim of the pamphlet, the writer said, was to defend the Corporation against "the numerous and heavy accusations which Mr. Ayrton so unsparingly made and so frequently reiterated". David Owen notes that Ayrton's parliamentary activities "frequently put the Corporation on the defensive", and that by 1867 he was an "old enemy" of theirs.[58] Young calls him "a noted enemy of the Corporation".[59] (The City Corporation's political enemies, Robson has pointed out, could find themselves at the receiving end of corrupt and unscrupulous political manipulation, at least in the 1880s if not before.[60])

Ayrton's pursuit of "the interests of the people at large" in the metropolis continued until his death. It made him a not uncritical supporter of the MBW despite his envisaging the Board, for several years, as a possible vehicle for metropolis-wide rate equalisation. In 1862, for instance, five years before the very radical recommendations of his *Select Committee on Local Government and Local Taxation of the Metropolis*, there was an outcry from metropolitan vestries, district boards and the MBW itself when he attempted, in a Commons committee, to amend the *Metropolis Local Acts Amendment Bill* to make the Board more directly democratic by having it elected by ratepayers instead of by vestries and district boards.[61] He was still fighting the City and arguing for metropolis-wide policies in the 1880s, ten years after he had left parliament. For instance, when the question of London government returned to the forefront of the Liberal programme[62] he joined in the battle, trying at a county day meeting of the Middlesex magistrates to persuade his fellow-magistrates not to submit criticisms of the 1884 *London Government Bill* but to leave the question to the Liberal parliament.[63] During the lengthy genesis of the Bill he also proposed (via Firth to Lord Harcourt, one of his old Liberal political enemies but also now Home Secretary and sponsor of the Bill) that a political trap be set for the City. They should, he suggested, ask the City which of their privileges and chartered rights should be

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[58]D. Owen, *The government of Victorian London 1855-89* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 251-2, 232, 240.
[59]K. Young & P. Garside, *Metropolitan London. Politics and Urban Change 1837-1981* (London, 1982), 28.
[60]W. A. Robson, *The Government and Misgovernment of London* (London, 1948), 76-9, on the City's opposition to the 1884 *London Government Bill*.
[61]MBW Minutes of Proceedings 21.3.1862, 214, and also 1862, 204-5, 214-5, 222, 234, 237, 263, 256-8, 277-8, 303.
[62]Davis (1988), op. cit., 68-79.
[63]*The Metropolitan*, 24.5.1884, 328.

preserved in the new Act, and if they did not respond, "throw the blame on the City". Firth commented, "This is what we might expect Ayrton to advise."[64]

Ayrton himself referred to rate equalisation and other issues relating to metropolitan power and finance as major elements in his career. Of rate eqalisation he remarked that he had "by his persistency ..... brought about the acknowledgment of the principle of equalisation of poor rates, and now it was an easy thing, when the battle was over, for candidates to come forward and declare themselves in favour of what had really been done by the efforts of him they were seeking to displace."[65] The *Metropolitan Board of Works (Loans) Act 1869*,[66] which as a Treasury Secretary he had prepared and steered through Parliament, was, he told his electorate, "the most comprehensive measure of local finance ever submitted to Parliament". (The MBW had resolved, at the time, to convey to Ayrton "an expression of their great appreciation of the value of his services in connection with the measure".)[67]

The metropolitan factor was however also a weakness. Being the representative of an electorate that was almost in parliament's backyard was a powerful tool, particularly when arguing about hardship and demanding redistribution, because the issues were "local" and therefore potentially more threatening as well as sometimes being confirmed by evidence visible on streets through which Members passed daily. But the 1857 image of a menacing East End MP threatening popular violence and demanding redistribution of finance and power endured, it is clear, despite Ayrton's many more complex achievements and acknowledged ability. Similar associations were certainly present when Hardy, introducing the *Metropolitan Poor Bill* and anxious that it should be a success for the Conservative minority government, emphasised the East End, telling the House that he had been "petitioned repeatedly by persons at the East End of the metropolis to do something to bring them into a better condition", and pointing out that a memorial he had received the previous day from Whitechapel had proposed similar common charges to his own.[68]

A NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) attitude to metropolitan radicalism clearly played a part in the drafting of some of the clauses of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*.

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[64]Bodleian, Ms. Harcourt dep. 108/9, 4.1.1882. (Source ref. Davis (1988), op. cit., 59.)
[65]*East London Observer*, 4.2.1874, 3a.
[66]32 & 33 Vict, c.102.
[67]MBW Minutes of Proceedings 6.8.1869, 939; (ed.) H. C. G. Matthew, *The Gladstone Diaries* (Oxford, 1982), vol. VII, 112, 6.8.1869.
[68]*Hansard* 8.2.1867, col. 170.

(David Reeder's comment that parliament "had long held fears of a politically ambitious and overly powerful metropolitan city" is relevant here.[69]) While Ayrton's and Locke's select committee tactic of emphasising the "peculiar circumstances" of the metropolis had reduced the extent of opposition to rate equalisation that could be expected from country gentlemen anxious to support parochial rights, gentlemen with either local metropolitan or wider perspectives and interests might still feel vulnerable in the face of Ayrton's enduring image as an East End bogeyman, and the related vivid contrasts between rich and poor that he and other members of the Rate Equalisation Association emphasised.

Ayrton's forceful pursuit of the financial and political "interests of the people" in the metropolis throughout his parliamentary career therefore contributed not only to the realisation of some of his goals but also to reactions against them.

V

An important question remains in relation to Ayrton. If he did indeed play an important part in the achievement of Radical goals in the 1860s, including metropolitan rate redistribution, surely his achievement would have received greater recognition? A brief, wider survey of his reputation and career will however confirm conclusions reached above: that his effectiveness as an East End and metropolitan Radical politician set in train a series of reactions that affected not only the nature of changes he helped bring about but also the weight that was to be accorded to his political record.[70]

Ayrton disappeared from the parliamentary scene in 1874, when his record majority at the previous general election was succeeded by a plunge to fourth place and the winning of the Radical Tower Hamlets seat by the Conservatives for the first time since 1832.

The political reaction to his brand of metropolitan radicalism will now be examined in terms of its effect on historiography and therefore on modern recognition of

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[69]D. Reeder in Owen, op. cit., 352-3.

[70]The most substantial works on Ayrton are Port, op. cit., 151-76 (an account of his period at the Office of Public Works) and J. O. Baylen & N. J. Gossman, op. cit. Other briefer references include: *DNB*, op. cit.; F. Boase, *Modern English Biography*, (London, 1965), IV; Davis (1988), op. cit., 59, 62-3, 64, 78; Taylor, op. cit., 278-81.

the radicalism of the call for rate equalisation. The 1874 contest in Tower Hamlets forms a part of the argument, and will therefore be considered also.

The first published summaries of Ayrton's career - the obituaries - were unusually negative, and indeed continued the kind of attacks that had been launched at him throughout his political career, which had ended 13 years before. The *Illustrated London News,*[71] a rare dissenting voice, noted that "the maxim that we should say nothing ill of the dead has been strangely departed from ....." It criticised obituaries in which "we are told of his uncouthness, of the hideous hats he wore, and of his utter deficiency of taste".

The Times obituary[72] remarked on his being "one of the most unpopular members of Mr. Gladstone's Government", and having "little or no sympathy with art." Almost half of the coverage was devoted to a critical account of his disputes with professional men about the new Royal Courts of Justice, Kew Gardens and the Wellington monument in St. Paul's Cathedral. The obituary did not, in effect, treat Ayrton as a serious politician. The *Spectator*[73] did go so far as to say that Ayrton "might have been Chancellor of the Exchequer in any Whig Cabinet", but then condemned him for his personality; the implication here seems to have been that he had great ability but (in an oblique reference perhaps to his political enemy Robert Lowe) needed a rotten borough to ensure his hold on a parliamentary seat. Indeed, it seems almost as if two different hands wrote the *Spectator* obituary, the one commending Ayrton for his "remarkable powers" and for being "absolutely honest", "feared by corrupt persons", and "an excellent administrator", while the other mocked him as a "second-rate administrator" who, once out of the Parliamentary "coach" could "never regain a footing, even on the steps", because he had left himself "without an official friend".

The negative Ayrton obituaries conveyed the impression that Ayrton's disagreements with certain professional men while at the Office of Works were a major factor in his ultimate political "failure" and, indeed, that he lost his seat and failed to gain another because of a fatal flaw - his personality; they neglected to point out that there had been East End support for Ayrton's controversial monitoring and cutting of

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[71] *Illustrated London News* 11.12.1886, 626, 2b-c.
[72] *The Times* 2.12.86, 6f.
[73] *Spectator* 4.12.1886, 8b.

prestigious West End projects.[74] Twentieth-century biographical dictionaries - the major recent source for overall coverage of his career - tend to repeat this emphasis on personality. The *Dictionary of National Biography,*[75] while acknowledging Ayrton's "great ability and varied knowledge, with conspicuous independence of character", reports that he had "brusque" manners and came into "personal conflict with numerous men of eminence"; three instances of much publicised disagreements are cited. The *Biographical Dictionary of Modern British Radicals*[76] provides the most comprehensive coverage but refers also to his "rude and abusive manner of speaking" and reputation in the Commons as "a gadfly and something of a nuisance", and calls him "the most hated member of Gladstone's ministry". Other modern writers also repeat this theme. Magnus says he was "generally regarded as an impossible outsider", and Port says he "generally behaved in an arrogant and bloody-minded way".[77]

It would have been fairer if the earlier sources had cited also comments such as that of Robert Lowe's private secretary that the sculptor Stevens was driven almost to despair, and appealed to Lowe for help, because Ayrton was "a man who carried out his purposes".[78] In other words, it was Ayrton's determination in pursuit of difficult goals that led to an escalation of the opposition to him. Gladstone's thoughts on appointing Ayrton to the Office of Works confirm that he was seeking someone who could actually implement retrenchment. The post, he wrote to Lord Granville, "should be filled by some one capable of exercising control".[79] The view of the *Annual Register*, in its obituary of Ayrton, was that he had been "a dangerous opponent". Hardy, the political opponent to whom Ayrton clearly pledged his support on the *Metropolitan Poor Bill,* spoke of his "great intellect and ability"; Ayrton's single-mindedness undoubtedly contributed to the passing of the Act in that, intent it seems on achieving rate

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[74]*East London Observer*, 1.10.1910, 7a-b, remarks that "the textbook biographers are quite in error in supposing that Ayrton's early administration as Commissioner of Works was unpopular. In the Tower Hamlets this certainly was not the case, and his principal supporters were consistently loud in praising his zeal for economy in the public interest .... His cutting down of the extravagant expenditure upon the new Courts of Justice certainly did not annoy his East London followers."
[75]*DNB*, op. cit.
[76]Baylen & Gossman, op. cit., 33-7. (The Ayrton contribution is by Thomas F. Gallagher.)
[77]Magnus, op. cit., 226; Port, op. cit., 175.
[78]A. Patchett-Martin, *Life and Letters of the Right Hon. Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke*, vol. II (London, 1893), 379-80, quoting Mr. (later Sir) Rivers Wilson, private secretary to Lowe.
[79]J. Morley, *The Life of William Ewart Gladstone* (London, 1903), II, 419-20, letter of 18.8.1869.

equalisation at almost any price, he, alone of the metropolitan Radicals, ruthlessly supported even the nominee clauses.[80]

The tally of eminent people with whom Ayrton fell out or whose ire he aroused is, indeed, impressive, ranging from the Queen and John Bright, through John Stuart Mill, Chadwick, Charles Dickens, leading Liberals such as Robert Lowe and Sir William Harcourt to leading public architects and senior civil servants. His public criticism at a reform meeting on 4 December 1866 of the Queen's extended seclusion following the Prince Consort's death (for which John Bright rebuked him but on which Ayrton was far from being a lone voice) led to the Queen's objecting to his second and third ministerial posts because she did not wish to have personal contact with him, and to her telling Granville that it was very important for her to have a "gentleman" at the Office of Works.[81]

Leading Liberals who found Ayrton a threat did not confine their opposition to mere differences of opinion. For instance a conspiratorial letter (published biographically but little noted since) links Harcourt, Lord Russell and Sir Charles Dilke in a plot to get rid of Ayrton.[82] Russell's enmity may have arisen partly from the fact that his 20-year tenure as MP for the City (1841-1861) had included the period in which Ayrton's made his much-resented 1860 attack on the Corporation, and partly because Ayrton represented Gladstone's administration, to which he was now opposed. The aristocratic Harcourt, an ambitious future Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the Liberal Party,[83] although generally professing radicalism during these years, took up ambivalent positions and often opposed Gladstone. (He wrote to Goschen the following year that Whig doctrines were his principles[84] and in 1875, particularly significantly in terms of his opposition to Ayrton, that "if Gladstone flings himself into the arms of the Radicals, he cannot expect that moderate men will follow

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[80]*Annual Register* 1886 (London), II, 168-9; *The Times* 26.1.1867, 6d; *Hansard* 11.3.1867 col. 1695-7.

[81]Port, op. cit., 160-2 particularly, and 151-176; R. Jenkins, *Gladstone* (London, 1995), 371; Dickens, *Household Words*, 1857, 17, 5.6.1858; *DNB*, op. cit. (Ayrton); *East London Observer* 9.2.1867 and also 1.10.1910, 7a-b, (a retrospective account of Ayrton's career which pointed out that his views on the Queen's seclusion "were very largely shared by the masses, and occasioned the circulation of offensive scandals and very pointed criticisms and cartoons in the newspapers").

[82]A. G. Gardiner, *Life of Sir William Harcourt* (London,1923), I, 236-9.

[83]Stenton, op. cit., *DNB* Supplement 1901-11 (London, 1927).

[84]A. D. E. Elliot, *Life of Lord Goschen 1831-1907* (London, 1911), I, 152 (29.12.1874).

him".[85] The Radical Dilke's presence in the conspiracy may appear less explicable, but Harcourt was apparently Dilke's "closest associate" at this period.[86]

The immediate occasion for the conspiracy - Ayrton's new rules for the holding of public meetings in Hyde Park - led to Harcourt's writing to Dilke that the rules were "done for, and Ayrton too". He had had a letter from Lord Russell "in a great state of exhultation at the row", he said. Russell had written that "there never was a Government towards which distrust was more justifiable, and of all its members Ayrton is least trustworthy". The elated Harcourt suggested to Dilke that "something might be done in the way of getting up big petitions all over London for the removal of Ayrton. If a few hundred thousand signatures were got and sent in to Gladstone it would have a good effect."

The outcome - Ayrton's trouncing of the over-confident Harcourt in debate - provides yet another example of his dangerous ability to defeat powerful opponents through the use of rhetoric and reason, and win over the Commons against the odds. Conservative peer Lord Grimthorpe recalled 13 years later how completely Ayrton had "baffled" his eminent opponent.[87] Harcourt, he said, "went down to the House with the air of Juggernaut or a steamroller to pulverize the First Commissioner for something or other". The outcome was that "the Ayrtonian stones remained unbroken and the steamroller was seriously damaged". Journalist Henry Lucy's recollection was similar: Ayrton, having risen "amid a freezing silence..... sat down under a storm of cheers". Ayrton's concluding comment on Harcourt's attack - that he objected to any Member expressing his opinion in language so pretentious "as to declare that he is the only wise man in this Assembly, and that all the rest of us are nothing but fools" gives an indication of the ruthlessness of his style.[88]

The conspiracy is significant because it casts considerable light on the reasons for the eclipsing of Ayrton's real political record and hence the modern under-recognition of the significance of metropolitan rate equalisation activities in the 1860s. John Morley's account in his biography of Gladstone places the emphasis differently, but Morley's interpretation, it will now be argued, is tainted.

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[85](ed.) P. Colson, *Lord Goschen and his friends. The Goschen Letters* (London, 1945), 101.
[86]R. Jenkins, *Sir Charles Dilke, A Victorian Tragedy* (London, 1968), 48-50.
[87]*The Times* 6.12.1886, 9c; *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, op. cit. (1886), 45.
[88]*The Times* 6.12.1886, 9c; Lucy, op. cit., 238; *Hansard* 10.2.1873 col. 199-228.

Morley was a major supporter of the extraordinary Radical, Captain F. A. Maxse, who stood against Ayrton in 1874 in Tower Hamlets and "let the Tory in".[89] The various occasions on which Morley refers slightingly to Ayrton - either by name or, more commonly but recognisably, by anecdote, may be interpreted, it is suggested here, as a form of justification for his participation in the vicious general election campaign against a prominent and effective Liberal personality.

The incident of the parks rules he presents merely as an example of Gladstone's deferring to the judgment of his cabinet and instructing Ayrton to back down (with no indication that Ayrton nonetheless emerged the tactical victor). On the dispute between Ayrton and the director of Kew Gardens he develops at length Gladstone's description of Ayrton as being a "somewhat angular" person - an emphasis not conforming, in this case, with the conclusion of the official peacemaker that Ayrton was the "more reasonable man of the two".[90] In the case of the 1873 post office scandal[91] Morley names Ayrton with the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Postmaster General as being concerned in "the gross and unexcused irregularities", although noting separately that Gladstone had said only that it was on account of the other two that the government deserved a vote of censure. He also misleadingly introduces into the middle of his account of the post office scandal a brief reference to the ministerial accountability issue in which Ayrton had been involved in the Commons, giving the clear impression that this too related to the scandal rather than to the comparatively innocuous Thames Embankment question.[92]

Ayrton's political enemies, it is therefore clear, came not only from the more obvious sources such as Conservatives, opponents of Radical policies such as electoral reform and rate equalisation, threatened civil servants and professionals, and those who had taken personal offence at his outspokenness (such as the Queen), but from powerful members of his own party such as Lowe, Russell and Harcourt (whose view on the 1874 Liberal general election defeat was that he was "not sorry .... We shall have a nice little party, though diminished").[93]

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[89]*Tower Hamlets Independent & Advertiser*, 13.12.1873, 4e,f. Morley supported Maxse at his first public meeting in Tower Hamlets.
[90]*DNB*, op. cit.
[91]Magnus, op. cit., 225.
[92]Morley, op. cit., II, 419-21, 460-3.
[93]S. Gwynn & G. M. Tuckwell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles W. Dilke, bart., MP* (London, 1918), I, 171-3.

It is possible that one of the consequences of such enmities was Ayrton's failure to return to parliament in a different constituency after 1874. Dilke, playing a leading role in the metropolis after the Liberal defeat,was in 1876-80 chairman of the Elections Committee of the Liberal Central Association, a position which gave him influence over the choice of parliamentary candidates. Furthermore, when Ayrton in 1885 made his final attempt to get back into parliament, the five-man central arbitration panel set up to resolve the Mile End dual candidature problem included Morley and Joseph Chamberlain (who, like Morley, had been closely involved with Maxse). Perhaps not surprisingly, Ayrton refused to submit to such arbitration; when warned that the dual candidature might let the Tory in, he allegedly made the bitter comment, "Then let him in."[94]

Another reason for Dilke's being an opponent of Ayrton may have been his close association not only with Harcourt but, from 1869, with J. S. Mill, who opposed Ayrton on several metropolitan issues. For instance (as shown in chapter 2) they were on opposite sides in 1867-8 in the lengthy and acrimonious dispute between medical men and guardians. Mill also attempted to pre-empt the Commons' consideration of the report of Ayrton's *Select Committee on Local Government and Local Taxation of the Metropolis* (a committee of which he himself had been a member) by introducing a Bill supported in his own constituency which was in theory more favourable to the City's interests.[95] When his close associate, Chadwick, was seeking a parliamentary seat in 1868, Mill suggested (somewhat ambiguously) that he offer himself for one of the two parliamentary boroughs into which Tower Hamlets was to be divided by the *Second Reform Act* because "you would not displace any existing member whose friends would oppose you".[96] As Ayrton had given Chadwick a rather rough ride when he gave evidence to his 1866 select committee,[97] the suggestion was presumably not unwelcome; Ayrton had, for instance, suggested that one of the first local boards of health to take advantage of scientific assistance from Chadwick's General Board of Health "had the misfortune to suffer more than any other board in the country from the

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[94]Ibid.; J. M. Davidson, *Eminent Radicals Out of Parliament"* (London, 1875-80), 4-5; Jenkins (1968), op. cit., 43, 100; *East London Observer* 26.9.1885, 7c,f, 24.10.1885, 3d, 14.11.1885, 7e, 10.10.1885, 5c, 31.10.1885, 5, 28.11.1885, 5; *The Times* 19.11.1885, 4f. The 1885 election result was: Charrington (C) 2091 (52.9%), Hart (L) 1442 (36.5%), Ayrton (Ind.L.) 420 (10.6%).
[95]*Hansard* 21.3.1867 col. 882-7; Young, op. cit., 29. See also Davis (1988), op. cit., 59-62, for Mill's London local government activities.
[96]UCL Chadwick MSS 1401/82, 19.5.1867, letter from Mill to Chadwick
[97]PP 1866 xiii, Q. 6557-70.

course it has pursued". Ayrton's Liberal general election opponent in 1885, Dr. Ernest Hart, also had links with this chain of influence and common interests, having been strongly opposed, when a leading medical campaigner for the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* institutional reforms,[98] to the metropolitan boards of guardians; for instance, he wrote to Chadwick that he heartily wished for the destruction of guardians "but fear it cannot now be accomplished".[99]

The origins of the historiographical under-recognition of the significance of Ayrton as a Radical figure are therefore wide. In terms of the contemporary record, once Ayrton had lost his power base in parliament, there were many who had no reason to draw him back into public life and who, on the contrary, would have felt publicly more secure or comfortable if his impact on the political scene could be forgotten.

The 1874 voting figures offer further evidence that Ayrton's disappearance from the parliamentary scene was a more complex matter than merely the criticisms levelled in the election campaign: that he had paid insufficient attention to local interests and had not visited the constituency for a long time (ever since, in fact, his meeting with his constituents had been violently broken up, Ayrton believed by the brewing interest, in 1871[100]).

The dramatic drop in his vote between 1868 and 1874, from head of the poll with a record 9,839 votes[101] to fourth place with 3,202,[102] was the result of a pincer movement in which he was caught, the two prongs of which were the new Radical candidate and Crimean hero, Captain Frederick Augustus Maxse, RN,[103] and a moderate Liberal local politician, Edmund Hay Currie.[104] Currie had, ironically, gained some of his local government experience as one of the Poor Law Board's nominees on the Metropolitan Asylums Board set up under the *Metropolitan Poor Act*,

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[98]O'Neill, op. cit., 273-5, 282-4.
[99]UCL Chadwick MSS, 949, 17.9.1866, letter from Hart to Chadwick; three months before, Hart had been involved in a much-publicised dispute about the Whitechapel workhouse in Ayrton's constituency (PP 1866 lxi, 597-601).
[100]*The Times* 25.1.1871,12a, 26.1.1871, 9d.
[101]F. W. S. Craig, *British parliamentary election results 1832-1885*, (Aldershot, 1989). Ayrton's 1868 vote was the highest ever in Tower Hamlets, until 1880, and also the only vote in the constituency before 1880 to exceed 8,000.
[102]The 1874 result was: Ritchie (Con.) 7,228, Samuda (Liberal) 5,900, Currie (Liberal) 5,022, Ayrton (Liberal) 3,202, Maxse (Radical) 2,292 (*Tower Hamlets Independent* 7.2.1874, 5a).
[103]ADM/196/37, 884; *London Gazette* 8.10.1854, 3060.
[104]*Tower Hamlets Independent*, 31.1.1874, Supplement, 1a.

having been one of the hasty nominations made in the Goschen-Stansfeld changeover period.[105]

One of Captain Maxse's leading Radical supporters expected Ayrton to lose the "3,000 working men's votes" that his 1868 electoral alliance with Edmond Beales, Radical President of the Reform League, had brought him. It was, furthermore, Captain Maxse's refusal to withdraw and leave the two sitting Liberals, Ayrton and Samuda, to do battle with the Conservative that opened the door to the moderate Currie, who "accepted the situation and announced himself." Despite his Radical platform, Captain Maxse showed little desire to attack the more moderate sitting Liberal MP, Samuda, and both he and Currie (who was supported by a vicious anti-Ayrton local press campaign)[106] concentrated their fire on Ayrton, who was also the only candidate to have his election meetings consistently broken up or turned into uproar.[107]

In terms of the number of votes, 1874 was not even a very good year for the Conservatives in Tower Hamlets; in 1868, when Ayrton achieved his record poll, the defeated Conservative's vote had been 7,446, whereas in 1874, at the top of the poll, the Conservative vote was down by more than 200, to 7,228.

As Gladstone himself pointed out four years later,[108] if neither Maxse nor Currie had stood, the result might have been close but quite probably Ayrton and Samuda would have retained both seats for the Liberal Party, as the combined votes of the Liberal and Radical candidates totalled 16,416, against the Conservative's 7,228.

Although the Tower Hamlets drink interest played a part in the abrupt ending of Ayrton's political career (the Conservative C. T. Ritchie was supported by local brewer O. E. Coope, the unsuccessful 1868 Conservative candidate, and the new Liberal candidate Currie was a large local distiller[109]) the intervention of Captain Maxse was undoubtedly a key element in de-stabilising the Liberal tenure of Tower Hamlets. Maxse, son of a wealthy Tory squire, appears to have impressed all who met him in Tower Hamlets with his gentlemanliness - in implied contrast to the East End's "Right

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[105]See Chapter 7, p. 230-1.
[106]*East London Observer* 5.2.1874, e-f.
[107]Ibid., 31.1.1874, 2d,e, 3a, 7e, 4.2.1874, 3a, b, 5.2.1874, 7c; *Tower Hamlets Independent* 31.1.1874, supplement, 1b.
[108]W. E. Gladstone, "Electoral Facts", *The Nineteenth Century*, 4 (1878), 960-3.
[109]*Tower Hamlets Independent*, 13.12.1873, 4d. *East London Observer*, 7.2.1874, 6d. See also the assessment by H. J. Hanham, *Elections and Party Management* (London, 1978) 222-5, of the initial description by Gladstone (standing in nearby Greenwich) of the 1874 general election as "a torrent of gin and beer".

hon. and noble savage" (see portraits, Illustration 2[110]) - but had impeccable Radical credentials, including a remarkably wide circle of English and French radical, revolutionary and famous friends.[111] He subsequently rose to be a Retired Admiral, country gentleman and Hampshire JP who frequented the "great Whig citadel",[112] Brookes's,[113] whereas the defeated Ayrton persisted in his enthusiastic allegiance, until the end of his life, to the Reform Club and the pursuit of radical metropolitan issues: a contrast that might perhaps have been a cause for embarrassment for someone such as John Morley, who had supported Maxse at his introductory public meeting in Tower Hamlets.

That responsibility for the loss of Tower Hamlets could be laid at the doors of Liberals or Radicals who had intervened in the constituency was clearly Gladstone's view. Expressing his anger more than four years later at the "mania" of multiple Liberal candidatures, he cited the Tower Hamlets contest as a prime example of the role of "sects" which could break up a Liberal majority into two or three minorities and "make over the seat to a Tory".[114]

Twentieth-century judgements of Ayrton - and hence of the significance of some of his causes and some of his political associates - have been built, it is therefore argued, on the less than reliable foundation of self-interested, politically influenced or defensive contemporary accounts of his career, and on what *Vanity Fair* described as "the malignity of Mr. Ayrton's persecutors".[115]

An important modern comment that now needs to be reassessed is that of Taylor, who describes Ayrton as one of the new "nabob-like candidates" of 1857 with East India Company backgrounds, and links him with "fears that the 'worship of Mammon' had taken hold amongst the London electorate".[116] From this perspective, and without access to or consideration of sources such as the Rate Equalisation Association's records, Taylor's reasonable view is that "the economistic radicalism of London

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[110] Ayrton, aged 40, *Illustrated London News*, 16.5.1857, p. 479; Maxse, aged 41, *Beehive*, 27.3.1875, front cover.
[111] Morrison, op. cit., 61-69; M. C. Finn, *After Chartism: class and nation in English radical politics, 1848-1874* (Cambridge, 1993), 280, 291, 297-300; WSRO *Maxse Papers*, 143, 180, 184-5, 187, 189, 196-7, 201, 203, 205-6, 212, 215; BI 341.65, 76 (Maxse pamphlets).
[112] Blake, op. cit., 137.
[113] Navy Lists 1853-1887; Walford, E., *The County Families of the United Kingdom* (London, 1888).
[114] Gladstone, op. cit., 960-3.
[115] *Vanity Fair*, 29.11.1873, 183.
[116] Taylor, op. cit., 280, 282.

ratepayer politics" championed in the 1850s and 1860s by Ayrton (and others such as, he suggests, C. T. Bright and Torrens McCullagh) was "all in all a sad and inappropriate terminus for the retrenchment advocated year on year by old Joe Hume".[117]

Ayrton was, however, far from being either nabob-like or corrupted by Mammon. His family records[118] show that he was the son of a London lawyer "of small means" and an original mind who at one stage ran a business experimenting with merino sheep at Richmond-on-Thames, was skilled at carpentry, upholstery and shoemaking, went to Bombay to practice law in order to pay for his children's school fees, and died in India when Ayrton was seven years old. The five children had been told by their mother, a Colonel's daughter, that "papa would never come back if we spent so much"[119] - perhaps an indication that Ayrton's extreme zeal for economy at the Office of Works had deeper roots even than Radical political convictions or a desire to carry out Gladstone's wishes.

At the age of 15 the young Ayrton became a legal apprentice of one of the City livery companies, the Leathersellers,[120] but as soon as he turned 21 left for India,

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[117]Ibid., 92; Maccoby, op. cit., 45, says that the administrative reformers who entered parliament in 1855 were perceived as "noisy and reckless agitators anxious to elevate themselves quickly from the position of political 'nobodies'" - a perception that ought clearly not to be applied to Ayrton who, arriving two years later, employed effective, consistent and more complex strategies over a 17-year period.

[118]Chaplin, op. cit., 30-33. Only 50 private copies of this account of the Chaplin, Skinner, Ayrton and Hicks families were printed; a copy survives in the library of the Society of Genealogists, London.

[119]Ibid., 23.

[120]The Leathersellers' Company, Court Minutes Jan. 1826-Oct. 1833, temp ref. GOV/1/13. The records are not open to the public, but information was kindly supplied by Wendy Hawke, the Company's Temporary Archivist. The record shows that on 5 October 1831 "Acton Smee Ayrton, son of Frederick Ayrton, late of Bombay in the East Indies, esquire, deceased, was bound apprentice to Bury Hutchinson of Russell Square, Middlesex, citizen and leatherseller of London, for seven years." His master, who was also the Leathersellers' Company's Clerk, Accountant and Receiver of Rents from 1810 (Hunting, P., *The Leathersellers' Company: A History* [London 1994], 139) died three years later, and there is no record of Ayrton (now an orphan, his mother having died the previous year) having been turned over to a new master. In 1875-6 (the year after he was defeated in Tower Hamlets) Ayrton served as steward in the Leathersellers' Company, in 1877-8 as fourth warden, and on 4 October 1882 he was elected onto the Court of Assistants. In the 1880s he negotiated on behalf of the Leathersellers with the Charity Commissioners and, having as an MP shown an interest in technical education, represented the Leathersellers as a governor of the City & Guilds Institute. Outside the Leathersellers' Company it may not have been widely known that Ayrton's membership derived from the traditional apprenticeship route. William Gilbert, his former campaigning colleague on the Rate Equalisation Association, when criticising the City Livery Companies in 1877 (W. Gilbert, *The City: an inquiry into the City Livery Companies* [London, 1875], 135-6) published *The Times*'s rather mocking list of liverymen (who included the Prince of Wales, Gladstone and Lowe as fishmongers, and Goschen as a spectacle-maker) but also repeated the *Times* error of including Ayrton, as a leatherseller, in this ceremonial category.

followed in his father's footsteps in becoming a Bombay lawyer, and "acquired one of the chief legal practices in Bombay, and with it a very fair fortune."[121] For two years in his early twenties, 1839-41, he was solicitor to the East India Company, and he was later associated with the Indian railways.

His living circumstances, on his return to England in search of a parliamentary seat, were hardly "nabob-like". In the early days he and his brother Edward shared a small servant-less flat off Piccadilly, and thereafter he lived on his own - for at least 20 years in the West End, and then in South Kensington - with only one manservant, his housekeeper-wife and their children.[122] The only addition to this household appears to have been the arrival of Ayrton's niece, Julia Chaplin, some time before 1881.

There were, furthermore, no serious contemporary accusations of a propensity to worship Mammon. Indeed, the few who spoke out publicly against the negative obituaries in the London press emphasised Ayrton's integrity and determination: as a man who thought "more of the public good than his own advancement";[123] as someone opposed to corruption and having a "detestation of anything which had the attributes of a job";[124] as one who had an "unswerving love of truth",[125] and as a man who was "second to none in singlemindedness of purpose" and thought for himself on every subject, never being sufficiently "accommodating" or "partisan" to "gain the position to which his great abilities and public spirit entitled him to aspire".[126]

The explanation given by some of Ayrton's opponents for his acceptance of the less publicly exposed post of Judge Advocate-General in August 1873 - that his ministerial career had taken a downward turn - may very well have been incorrect, as other factors relating to family and career were present.[127] Two of his brothers had died in 1872 - one on the day after his return from India, and the other after a long

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[121] Chaplin, op. cit., 30.

[122] 1851 census, HO107/1476/47; 1861 census, RG9/44/18; 1871 census, RG10/101/13; 1881 census, RG11/49/10.

[123] *The Times* 6.12.1886, 9c (Lord Grimthorpe, Conservative).

[124] *The Times* 7.12.1886, 7c (Capt. Douglas Galton); Port, op. cit., 167-8 (who identifies Galton as a civil servant drafted in by Robert Lowe, despite Ayrton's objections, to head the Office of Works).

[125] *The Times* 8.1.1887, 10f (resolution passed at a court of the Leathersellers Company).

[126] *The Times* 3.12.1886, 6f (Irish-born barrister, Joseph Napier Higgins). Also 1881 census, RG11/70/301, and Post Office Directory 1881.

[127] *East London Observer* 5.2.1874, 7e (reprint of article,"An estimate of Mr. Ayrton" in the new daily newspaper *The Circle*) said of his new post: "However, he has at length entered upon a new phase in his career; he may now occupy the dignified, respectable, and safe position of the extinct volcano. As Judge-Advocate General he may cease from troubling, and, if he is weary, which is doubtful, he may be at rest."

illness - leaving the politician the sole survivor of four brothers, and the senior Ayrton, in what appears to have been a close family; his only other sibling, his widowed sister, lived nearby, he was in due course to share out his estate, in his will, between six nieces and nephews, and one of his nephews, Holroyd Chaplin, was to demonstrate family solidarity by writing to the *Spectator* to defend and praise his uncle when it published its unpleasant obituary.[128] There may, therefore, have been unpublicised family reasons for Ayrton to welcome the move from the publicly contentious Office of Works post in 1873. Furthermore, his new position was sufficiently prestigious to have been occupied by Villiers prior to his acceding to his six-year tenure as President of the Poor Law Board, and earlier by the highly-regarded Charles Buller, who had also subsequently become President of the Poor Law Board. The *Spectator*'s obituary, indeed, seems to provide evidence in support of a positive interpretation of Ayrton's ministerial move. As a lawyer in India, it says, Ayrton had made himself "in especial a terror to courts-martial, tribunals which, from the very structure of his mind, he detested". Ayrton had "really improved their procedure by his audacity and caustic criticisms", and the office of Judge Advocate-General was one "which he probably understood better than any man in the world".[129]

When Gladstone unexpectedly called the general election in 24 January 1874 Ayrton was therefore still, it is argued, a political force to be reckoned with, in a ministerial position which might promise higher things, and therefore a potential threat to his enemies. If he had not lost his seat in 1874 this promise might very well have been realised and, as one of the consequences, the current of 1860s metropolitan radicalism apparent in the 1857-67 rate equalisation movement might have received greater historiographical recognition than has hitherto been the case.

It is clear from the evidence of both friends and foes that Ayrton represented a continuing threat to many of his political contemporaries, not only because of what appears to have been his undoubted integrity but also because of his independent-minded willingness to launch merciless assaults on powerful interests. He was a significant driving force for change and an effective Radical political figure, and the major part he played in the achievement of the rate equalisation provisions of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* developed into a life-long involvement in issues of metropolitan power and finance.

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[128]Chaplin, op. cit., 31-3.
[129]*Spectator* 4.12.1886.

He was, in a sense, too successful for his own good; a journalistic comment in 1874 that in his political battles he "generally stops nothing short of annihilation"[130] reflected the danger his enemies felt he personally represented.

As a politically forceful individual and a particularly effective practitioner of the Rational approach to policy-making, Ayrton helped drive the concept of rate equalisation towards political acceptability at a faster rate than would otherwise have happened. The outcome of this success - the nominee provisions and the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund - constituted, to a significant extent, a reaction against the Radical context of the ten-year campaign.

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[130] *East London Observer* 5.2.1874, 7e: re-print of article from the *Circle*.

CHAPTER 6. The Metropolitan Asylums Board 1867-71: a case of gentlemanly quangoism?

Despite the dearth of modern recognition of the significance of Hardy's unique nominee provisions, it is clear that they were intended to fulfil two linked functions that were significant in terms of electoral representation: to restrict the powers of new and existing representative poor law bodies in the metropolis, and to set up new managerial elites to influence or control decision-making on these bodies.

The sources and manner of recruitment of these new local elites, their social and economic backgrounds and their decision-making activities would be relevant subject matter for several types of study - for instance, of nineteenth-century political elites, of the development of metropolitan local government, and of poor law development. For this thesis, however, analysis of the new managerial elite in these terms will clarify further the role of the nominee clauses of the Act as a potentially powerful element of reaction - a "restraining force" against some of the "driving forces" for change.[1]

The study that follows conforms in many respects with Giddens'[2] suggestion that studies of elites should combine "positional" or "recruitment" aspects with decision-making or "the actual use of power" - that is, the nature of the elite and the nature of their decisions - rather than concentrating on just one of these processes. The fact that the managers and their decision-making in this study constitute a comparatively small "closed" situation constrained by the managers' limited remit has been of assistance in reaching some clear, definable conclusions.

This chapter will analyse decision-making and membership of the Board of Management of the Metropolitan Asylum District (MAD),[3] the first body to receive

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[1]K. Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science* (London, 1951), 259; Stivers & Wheelan (ed.), *The Lewin Legacy: Field Theory in Current Practice* (Berlin, 1986), xi & 166-78. Force field analysis and the concepts of driving and restraining forces, commonly used nowadays in the context of management problems, provide a useful analogy here. While the Rate Equalisation Association and Ayrton were among the driving forces for change, fear of the political and financial consequences of rate equalisation was a restraining force, and led to the devising of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund and the nominee clauses.

[2]A. Giddens, "Preface", in P. Stanworth & A. Giddens (ed.), *Elites and Power in British Society* (Cambridge, 1974), xii.

[3]The printed and bound minute-books of the Metropolitan Asylum District at the LMA are labelled "M.A.D." for 27 years, until "M.A.B." is substituted in 1894.

nominees, for four years, from 1867 to 1871, with emphasis on comparisons between the composition and activities of the elected and the nominated groups of managers. The central question to be considered is whether the operation and membership of MAD in these early years provides evidence that the *Metropolitan Poor Act* had an effect on the distribution of political power as well as of finance: not only in the more obvious sense of bringing Local Act parishes' poor relief within the 1834 central government framework but in the more complex matter of the role of central government's chosen "elite" in the Board's decision-making.

In her comprehensive study of the achievements of the Metropolitan Asylums Board Ayres argued that MAD "recruited from an elite accustomed to arbitrary leadership, free competition of ideas and opinions, and intolerance of all but a minimum of State interference ...." who battled with Poor Law Board bureaucrats endowed by the Act with dictatorial powers.[4] This study, while not disputing the extent and nature of the powers given to the Poor Law Board, will attempt to assess the practical significance of the fact that one-quarter of MAD's managers actually owed their position to the Poor Law Board, and will analyse decision-making and membership in this light. It will seek to establish whether, through their MAD nominees, the central Board's powers were in reality even greater than Ayres has noted in that, at times, divisions of opinion may have been perhaps a matter not of the central Board versus MAD but of the central Board and its nominees versus the elected members of MAD. This may in turn cast light on the role of this section of the administrative state in relation to the growth of government.

Another reason for studying MAD - rather than the boards of guardians, who were also intended by the 1867 Act to receive nominees, or the new Sick Asylum Districts, two-thirds of which had a brief and rather uncertain existence - is that MAD represents a stable "greenfield site". It was a substantial metropolis-wide new organisation with no previous working relationships on the Board of Management to obscure distinctions and differences that might arise between elected and nominee members, and it lasted until 1930. Another consideration is that because there were no existing ex-officio members (as there were on the boards of guardians), the full total of

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[4]Ayres, op. cit., 32, 139.

one-quarter non-elected members had to be nominated by the Poor Law Board, which again offers an opportunity for clearer analysis.

II

The Metropolitan Asylum District, set up less than two months after the passing of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* of 1867 under wide powers given to the Poor Law Board, was not actually referred to in the Act. Indeed, Members of Parliament might with some justification have argued that the Act's first and largest body slipped into being through a ministerial back door.[5] They did not however do so, in the fraught 1867-8 Session dominated on the domestic scene by the Second Reform Bill, and it was not until expenditure under the powers of the Act began to escalate that the implementation of Hardy's measure came under sustained attack.

The Board of Management of MAD consisted of three-quarters elected members (45) and one quarter Poor Law Board nominees (15), in accordance with sections 9-12 of the Act.[6] The elected managers were indirectly elected: they were chosen by their local boards of guardians, whether union or parish-based, and had themselves to be either local guardians or local ratepayers qualified to be guardians.[7] The nominees had to be either Justices of the Peace for any place or £40 a.r.v. ratepayers, but needed to be residents of the metropolis. MAD's two categories of manager were called Elected Managers and Nominated Managers in minutes, correspondence and other documents.

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[5]The difference between the *Metropolitan Poor Act* provisions and the establishment of MAD was that the emphasis in the Act had been on the setting up of districts, in the plural. Section 6 enabled the Poor Law Board to combine unions and/or parishes into districts, "as they think fit", and Sections 7 and 8 said there would be one or more asylums for "each" district. The Act did not indicate that an all-embracing metropolis-wide district might be set up.

[6]See Appendix IV, MAD's Board of Management, 1867-71.

[7]The 39 unions or parishes that sent 45 elected managers in June 1867 were: City of London, East London, West London, Fulham, Greenwich, Hackney, Holborn, Lewisham, Poplar, St. Olave's Southwark, St. Saviour's Southwark, Stepney, Strand, Wandsworth andClapham, Whitechapel, Mile End Old Town, Paddington, St. George in the East, St. George Hanover Square, St. George the Martyr Southwark, St. Giles Camberwell, St. Giles and St. George Bloomsbury, St. James Clerkenwell, St. James Westminster, St. John Hampstead, St. Leonard Shoreditch, St. Luke Chelsea, St. Luke Middlesex, St. Margaret and St. John Westminster, St. Martin in the Fields, St. Mary Abbots Kensington,St.Mary Islington, St. Mary Lambeth, St. Marylebone, St. Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, St. Mary Newington, St. Mary Rotherhithe, St. Matthew Bethnal Green and St. Pancras.

The parliamentary debates on the nominee provision show that Hardy saw their role as being to work voluntarily under the orders of the Poor Law Board; they were to "enter into some undertaking to do the duties imposed on them by the...Board", because the Board's existing "eyes and ears", the inspectors, were insufficiently numerous. It was therefore no exaggeration for Thomas Chambers, MP for Marylebone, to suggest that the nominees would be treated as the Poor Law Board's spies, and to ask, "What set of gentlemen would like to conduct business with persons appointed to watch their proceedings with a view to report them to the head office?" In fact, the nominees were clearly intended to be more than just inspector-style eyes and ears in that, as full managers, they also had the power, through voting and taking initiatives, to influence decisions and events on MAD (as also on the SADs, the boards of guardians and the school district boards) in accordance with the central Board's wishes.[8]

The setting up of MAD may have been Hardy's last major decision at the Poor Law Board. On 17 May, two days after the Order constituting MAD was made[9], he became Home Secretary. During Hardy's last few weeks at the Poor Law Board it had been clear that Walpole, the Home Secretary, was about to leave his post and that Hardy might be his successor; in his diary on 13 May Hardy wrote that Derby had told him, after a Cabinet meeting, that "the Houses of Lords and Commons and the public, at once fixed on me".[10] MAD may therefore have been constructed in somewhat of a hurry. Hardy had indicated, in debate, that a metropolitan "district" might be established at some stage as an experiment, after being pressed on this point by Ayrton in the First Reading, and later by Mill.[11] Whatever the reason for the sudden setting up of MAD, it seems that Hardy's successor, the Earl of Devon, presided over the major early steps: the devising of its regulations and the selection of its nominee managers.

The next three sections of this chapter will examine the Poor Law Board's recruitment of its nominees, compare the socio-economic status of nominees and elected managers, and analyse decision-making in terms of whether the nominees behaved as nominees on present day "quangos" might behave: as "members appointed by central

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[8]*Hansard* 21.2.1867 col. 773 & 778, 8.3.1867 col. 1620.
[9]LMA MAD I, 67/8, 22.6.67; PP 1867/8 xxxiii, 20th Annual Report of the Poor Law Board, 17. (Order constituting the Board - 15 May; order prescribing preliminary regulations - 18 July.)
[10]Johnson, op. cit., 39.
[11]*Hansard* 8.2.1867 col. 175-7, 8.3.1867 col. 1609-10.

government to supervise or develop activity in areas of public interest" rather than as members accountable to an electorate.[12]

III

How did the Poor Law Board find its nominees, and are any significant tendencies discernible in the recruitment process?

These are important questions to ask if it is argued that, in terms of representation, the nominee provisions of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* represented elements of reaction rather than of reform: a restraining force rather than a driving force for change. Undoubtedly the brief of MAD was to bring about reorganisation of a substantial part of poor law health provision within the metropolis, but it will be contended here that although pressure for such change, financed redistributively, had become irresistible, steps were taken to put in place an elite group that it was hoped would be able to influence or control the Board's implementation of central government's policy. In nominating its own representatives on MAD the Poor Law Board appears, in effect to have been setting up the first "quango".

In his study of political elites Parry remarks: "There is a great tradition of voluntary service in British government which has continued into these days of professional administration. Lay advisers are regularly called in to provide expert counsel or merely to 'represent' the public."[13] It will become clear, however, from an analysis of the activities of MAD's Board of Management that such a description is inappropriate for the role of the nominees: their aims were to supervise and to control.

A limited amount of documentation on the recruitment process is available in Poor Law Board files, but nonetheless what there is makes it clear that there were three sources of MAD nominees: recommendations from ministers or other politicians; a trawl by Poor Law Board and Home Office officials of medical men with whom they had associated; and unsolicited applications to the Board by individuals and their

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[12]Chambers Dictionary (Edinburgh, 1993) defines a quango (Quasi-Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation) as "a board funded by, and with members appointed by, central government to supervise or develop activity in areas of public interest".
[13]G. Parry, *Political Elites* (London, 1969), 92.

supporters. A short study of this documentation now follows, with emphasis on political, "official" and other significant source factors.

Significantly, despite probable difficulty in recruiting sufficient nominees at short notice, applications from three leading campaigners for the 1867 reforms do not seem to have been seriously considered.

Dr. Ernest Hart, new editor of the *British Medical Journal* and one of the founding honorary secretaries, in 1865, of the Association for the Improvement of the Infirmaries of Workhouses,[14] wrote to the Earl of Devon offering to assist as a nominee manager in "the practical working of an Act for which I have had some share in bringing about the enactment". The response of the Board appears in two internal notes on the letter: one saying "For Mr. Lambert" (the influential Poor Law Board inspector) and the other, "Acknowledge receipt and reply to Mr. Lambert", indicating that Lambert would deal with any further correspondence. Hart's name did not appear on either of the Board's two June lists of nominees. [15]

F. H. Fowler, Lambeth architect and one of the joint secretaries of the still functioning Metropolitan Association for the Equalisation of the Poor Rates, in applying to be a nominee member of "the Asylum District Board in which I reside", reminded the President that "on many occasions" he had been a member of deputations to the Poor Law Board, suggested that his professional skills would be useful in the early stages of reorganisation, and referred to his involvement in local government. An internal note on his letter said, "Acknowledge, and thank for the offer. State that it will be duly considered by the Board with other similar communications which they have now received." A letter in similar terms was subsequently signed by G. Sclater Booth, MP, Secretary to the Board. Fowler's name, too, did not appear on either of the Board's June lists of nominees.[16]

Ernest Ebsworth, FRCS, was another unsuccessful candidate who, in applying, pointed out that he had supported the campaign for reform. Through his "instrumentality and writings", he said, he had "contributed in a very large degree, to bring about the desired reform." He had been the promoter of a General Nursing Instruction, managed nearly the largest staff of private nurses in London, and was a

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[14]O'Neill, op. cit., 274, 282.
[15]MH17/33, 17.5.67.
[16]GL MS 1088/1, 14.6.1867; PRO/30/6/169; MH17/33, 22.5.1867.

surgeon for the South Eastern District of the General Post Office - a district of nearly 25,000 people. The internal note on his letter said, "Acknowledge and promise consideration. Then register."[17] However, despite a brief initialled statement, "Registered", by the Permanent Secretary, Fleming, a week later, Ebsworth did not appear on either of the June nominee lists.

Other apparently unsolicited applications were more successful. John Young, architect and City deputy alderman, wrote in at a very early stage, on the day that the Bill passed its Second Reading in the Lords; his reference to "the London or the Metropolitan District" suggests, however, that even at this stage he may have had inside information on the likely geographical distribution of the proposed new asylum districts.[18] Young outlined his standing ("one of the very few persons living on their own property" - a house of over £700 annual rateable value, and possession of other freehold and leasehold properties in the City), referred to his past role as Insurer of the Cholera Relief Fund for the Tower Hill District and his expenditure of over £1200 in relief "at the homes of the poor" since January, and added that he was well-known to various MPs and, "being a Catholic", was well-acquainted with Dr. Manning. (Young believed, presumably, that his Roman Catholic reference would carry weight, and may have been aiming for the attention, particularly, of a civil servant rather than a Minister: John (later Sir John) Lambert, "a pious Roman Catholic"[19] and the influential official involved in the drafting of the 1867 Act, became the first Receiver of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund and from 1871 was the first Permanent Secretary of the new Local Government Board. He was "on terms of intimate friendship with Cardinal Manning, whose gaunt, majestic figure was very frequently to be seen at the office of the Local Government Board".[20]

Another early name was that of Walter Carew Cocks, a wealthy senior examiner on the staff of the Audit Office.[21] A note by Sclater-Booth, Parliamentary Secretary, said simply: "Highly qualified to be a nominated manager under the new Act."[22]

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[17]MH17/33, 7. 6.1867.
[18]MH17/33, 19.3.1867.
[19]S. & J. Webb, *English Local Government, vol. 8* (London, 1924), 200*n*.
[20]J. Gillow, *Biographical Dictionary of the English Catholics* (New York, 1885), 98-106. Lambert, a Liberal, supported both Gladstone and Disraeli in the preparation of major legislation.
[21]*British Imperial Calendar & Civil Service List* (London, 1867); RG10/51/47. Cocks had six servants at the 1871 Census.
[22]MH17/33, 15.5.1867; RG10/51/47.

The Poor Law Board drew several of its nominees from among the ex-officio Justices of the Peace on existing local poor relief authorities, particularly the large, powerful single parishes of the West End from where the only resistance to the Act had come. While some appear to have taken the initiative in offering their services, others may have been "head-hunted" by the Board.

Sir James John Hamilton, an ex-officio member of the Directors and Guardians of the Poor of the Parish of St. Marylebone, and from 1867 of the new 1834-style St. Marylebone Board of Guardians, a Middlesex JP for 25 years, and the man chosen by the Poor Law Board to chair MAD's first meeting, was one of those apparently head-hunted. A frequent attender at the meetings of his board of guardians, Hamilton had been Conservative MP for Sudbury in 1837, and unsuccessful Conservative candidate for Marylebone in the 1841 and 1847 general elections. He owned freehold and leasehold land and property in the City and St. Marylebone, and was also a large landowner in Ireland and South Wales. His response to the Poor Law Board's invitation was to point out that although, as a landowner, he was necessarily absent from London in the summer and autumn, when present he endeavoured to discharge "any metropolitan duties .... as may devolve upon me, with zeal and punctuality". (The guardians' minutes show that this was his custom on his local body also - absent at those times of year when upper class London left the capital, and a meticulous attender at other times.) If the Board, under these circumstances, thought fit to avail themselves of his "humble services", he wrote, he placed them "cheerfully at their disposal".[23]

W. H. Wyatt, another JP involved in poor law activities, wrote to the Poor Law Board offering his services on MAD on the basis of his six years' experience as Chairman of the Visiting Justices of the Middlesex County Lunatic Asylum at Colney Hatch, and also the services of his fellow committee-members should the Poor Law Board have difficulty finding suitable nominee managers. An ex-officio member of his local Directors of the Poor - St. Pancras - prior to the passing of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* (though not often present), he appears to have become much more active in this large single-parish poor law authority as soon as the Poor Law Board used its new 1867 powers to convert it into an 1834-style board of guardians. Clearly a forceful personality, he stood immediately for the post of chairman on the new body (a position

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[23]LMA P89/MRY1, 584, 22.6.1866; LMA St.M.BG.1, 2.8.1867, 3.1.1868 & 28.2.1868; LMA MJP/Q/7; MH 17/33, June, 1867; Stenton, op. cit.

previously held by churchwardens), defeating an established activist and churchwarden, Robert Furniss, 16-5, and on his arrival at the first meeting of the MAD Board of Management attempted (unsuccessfully) to achieve the same feat[24]

The other ex-officio St. Pancras guardian to arrive on MAD as a nominee - Jonathan Rashleigh, also a JP (and a Deputy-Lieutenant) - appears to have been a late addition to the roll of nominees, as he is not on either of the Poor Law Board's early June lists; he would, however, have been known to Poor Law Board staff through his ex-officio membership of the St. Pancras Directors of the Poor, and as a wealthy member of a county family he may well have been known to other nominees such as Sir James Hamilton in the neighbouring parish of St. Marylebone.[25]

It seems likely that, at least in the case of Wyatt and Rashleigh, recruitment to the nominee elite was linked to the Poor Law Board's desire to have greater control over their parish's poor relief administration, which had been the subject of much public attack. They had a clear run in representing the interests, if they wished, of St. Pancras on MAD, or of preventing their own parish from opposing any steps they themselves might wish to take as the Poor Law Board's nominees, at least for the first year of MAD's existence, because the two elected members on MAD from St. Pancras were not in a position to report back easily to the body they were representing; Eckett and North, sent by the Directors of the Poor nine days before the body was replaced by the new union,[26] (and subsequently unsuccessful candidates in the June 1867 elections for the new board of guardians) did not attend a single MAD meeting.[27] There is evidence that Wyatt worked well with Poor Law Board officials in his post as chairman of the new union: in a lengthy report delivered to the guardians in the presence of the two inspectors (Corbett, the metropolitan poor law inspector, and Dr. W. O. Markham, the Poor Law Board's medical inspector) Wyatt, recalling that St. Pancras had in the past been "a bye-word ..... for the management of its poor", and remarking how

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[24]LMA MJP/Q/8, 175; LBC P/PN/PO/59, 1866, 1867, & 23.4.1867; St.P.BG/1, 13.6.1867; MH17/33, 15.5.1867;

[25]LBC P/PN/PO/59, 23.4.1867; LMA St.P.BG/1, 13.6.67; RG11/179/24. Rashleigh is not listed in the Middlesex JP Qualification Oaths 1849-1885 (LMA MJP/Q/8-10), but is described in the 1881 Census (not present at his home in Regent's Park in 1861, 1871) as a magistrate and Deputy-Lieutenant, so presumably held these positions outside London.

[26]LBC P/PN/PO/59, *Minutes of the Directors of the Poor of the Parish of St. Pancras*, 4.6.1867, 566-7. With churchwarden Eckett in the chair, the meeting refused 13-6 to give the seven candidates for MAD representation the opportunity to address the meeting before the votes were taken; Eckett (15) and North (17) then defeated the other candidates conclusively.

[27]See Appendix 4, MAD Board of Management attendances, 1867-8.

"comparatively free from complaints we now are", noted "how much the parish is indebted" to Corbett and Markham, and the "willing assistance and advice" they had given in every difficulty.[28]

It is clear that it was not only in St. Pancras that working relationships that central government officials had established with JPs and professional men played a significant part in the selection of MAD's nominee managers: Dr. Markham wrote to Lambert supporting the recommendation of Corbett that "Dr. Sibson of St. Mary's Hospital and Mr. T. Holmes of St. George's Hospital" be nominated. "Better men could not be found to assist in doing the work of the Board," Markham wrote, and added that he hoped to send Lambert soon the name of a man "well-versed in the management of lunatic asylums .... in whom full trust may be placed."[29] As Wyatt had written his apparently unsolicited letter as early as 29 March (the day that the *Metropolitan Poor Act* received the Royal Assent) to Hardy (who passed it on to the Poor Law Board staff 17 days later), it is not clear whether or not it was Wyatt to whom Markham was referring, but it is certainly possible that Wyatt and the inspectors had discussed the Bill as it made its almost unopposed progress through Parliament. Holmes and Dr. Sibson, who may have been motivated more by professional than political concerns, both lasted only a year on MAD, and there is some evidence that at least one of them identified more closely at times with the concerns of the elected members than with those of the nominees.

Of the 16 nominees written to by the Poor Law Board in June requesting their "assistance in effecting the objects of this important measure" (only eleven days before the inaugural meeting of the Board of Management, and with a reply requested within two days), 12 accepted. Given the otherwise rather peremptory nature of such a sudden request, it seems likely that there had been more preliminary oral approaches than are recorded in the Board's files.

The four "refusers" included two Liberal MPs: the Hon. D. F. Fortescue, MP for Andover, a Deputy Lieutenant of Devon and second son of Earl Fortescue, and G. J. Shaw-Lefevre, MP for Reading and many years later a member of the London County Council and a Cabinet member.[30] Conservative MPs and future MPs appear to have

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[28]MH17/33, 15.5.1867; LMA St.P.BG/1, 13.6.1867, 5-8; LMA St.P.BG/2, 12.3.1868, 63, 79-88; LBC P/PN/PO/59, 19.& 23.4.1867, 4.6.1867.
[29]MH17/33, 21.5.1867.
[30]Stenton, op. cit.

placed greater importance on being a nominee manager of MAD. The only apparent Conservative refuser, Spencer Charrington, Mile End brewer and chairman of Mile End board of guardians (and later a member of the London School Board in 1879-82 and Conservative MP for Mile End 1885-1905) offered a scrupulously correct excuse: although his firm was one of the largest ratepayers in Mile End, he wrote, he was not a resident of the area, and therefore "it appears I am not qualified, otherwise would be willing to accept."[31] Such conditions would in fact have barred at least two others among the first batch of nominees if they had been similarly frank - and a few of the elected members too, particularly from the City.

Two other prominent Conservatives were recruited as nominees the following year, shortly before their election to parliament: John Gilbert Talbot (Middlesex JP and chairman of Kent Quarter Sessions in 1867, Conservative MP for West Kent 1868-78 and for Oxford University 1878-1910) and W. H. Smith (Middlesex JP and the Conservative candidate who, a few months later, displaced John Stuart Mill as MP for Westminster). Both were already involved in local government in the metropolis. Talbot was chairman of the Governors and Directors of the Poor of the Parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster (where he and his family lived when not at their country home in Kent), although the previous year an unsuccessful attempt had been made to un-seat him from the chair on the issue of "the power of the Board to elect an absent governor as Chairman". Smith, the wealthy newsagent, had been the Westminster member on the Metropolitan Board of Works since its inception in 1855.[32]

The appointment of prominent Conservatives continued even under the subsequent Liberal presidency of the Poor Law Board: Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Conservative MP for East Gloucestershire 1864-85, and Alexander H. Ross, Middlesex JP, unsuccessful Conservative candidate for Maidstone in 1874 and MP there in 1880-88, joined MAD in 1871. Hicks Beach's appointment is particularly noteworthy in that he had been Parliamentary Secretary at the Poor Law Board under the Earl of Devon, in the Conservative ministry that preceded Goschen's presidency.[33] Only one of the 1871 replacements can be identified as Liberal: E. H. Currie, the Tower Hamlets distiller from

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[31]MH17/33; LMA St.B.G./ME/9, 15.2.1866; H. Finch, *The Tower Hamlets Connection* (London, 1996), 172-4.
[32]LMA MJP/Q/9, 121 & 149; LMA MAD II, 18.7.1868; CWA E.5231 vol. 24, 30.4.1867, 272; Viscount Chilston, *W.H. Smith* (London, 1965), 35, 58-62.
[33]Stenton, op. cit.; LMA MAD IV 25.3.1871; LMA MJP/Q/9, 121, 149. See chapter 7, p. 230-1, for a discussion of the process by which this extraordinary appointment of Beach as a nominee was made

a Conservative family background who was to stand against Ayrton in Tower Hamlets three years later and, together with the Conservative candidate and the Radical Captain Maxse, bring about his defeat.[34] It seems fair to conclude, therefore, that while major Conservative politicians were very keen to join MAD as nominees and achieved this under both Conservative and Liberal Presidents of the Poor Law Board, Liberal and Radical politicians were either not proposed by those in power or not interested in the role.

Currie was one of four major East End employers to become nominees. The other three, recruited earlier, in the Conservative government's first wave of appointments in 1867, were John Charrington (Shadwell coal merchant, JP, and chairman of Stepney board of guardians), Edward North Buxton (member of the Brick Lane brewing firm Truman, Hanbury, Buxton & Co., member of the London School Board from 1870 and later its chairman, alderman of Essex County Council, chairman of Essex Quarter Sessions, and Liberal MP for Walthamstow 1885-6), and Robert Wigram (member of the wealthy family ship-owning business based in Blackwall, a banker, and a member of the election committee of Ayrton's Conservative opponent in 1874).[35]

It seems rather likely that the East End social distress in 1866-7 resulting from depression in the ship-building, engineering, water-side and associated industries[36] contributed to the willingness of these employers to become involved in decisions on MAD about the financing and reorganisation of poor relief provision, and to central government's recognition that they had a stake in such provision. The metropolitan poor law inspector, Uvedale Corbett, also recommended Wigram and Currie as nominees on the Poplar SAD, on the grounds that they (and others) were members of the East End Central Relief Committee and interested in the prosperity of the Poplar Union "both as ratepayers and employers of labour in the large shipbuilding yards, ironworks and other important trades in the district".[37]

It seems unlikely, on the other hand, that the inspector's was the only hand involved in the selection of businessmen for MAD and the SADs. This was a period

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[34]Finch, op. cit., 59, points out that Currie, elected to the new London School Board in 1870, was knighted in 1876 for his role as chairman of the Beaumont Trustees, "who were responsible for the opening of the People's Palace, Mile End".
[35]LMA MJP/Q/9,165; LMA St.BG/45, 8.8.67; *East London Observer* 2.2.1867, 2c; Stenton, op. cit.; RG11/49/17; *East London Observer* 31.1.1874, 5e,f; Palmer, op. cit., 15, 49, 121, 184.
[36]Stedman Jones (1992), op. cit., 102-6.
[37]PP 1867/8 xxxiii, op. cit., 124.

when the Conservative Party was beginning to organise the new urban working-class voters (a movement in which one of the nominees, W. H. Smith, parliamentary candidate for Mill's seat, Westminster, played a leading role in the metropolis).[38] Mobilising employers of the new voters would clearly have been at least as much a political as a philanthropic or financial step.

The remaining nominees were two military men (Col. Francis Haygarth, retired from the Scots Fusilier Guards,[39] and John Bostock, surgeon major, also in the Scots Fusilier Guards[40]), two JPs (J. A. Shaw Stewart and a barrister, Borlase Adams[41]), and an elderly surgeon, William Harvey, who chaired the St. Mary Islington Board of Trustees and Guardians of the Poor and who, presumably, was another in whom, in the view of Poor Law Board officials, "full trust may be placed".[42]

Further insights into the nature of some of the nominees is gained from comments by inspector Corbett when some of them were replaced in 1871. Cocks, the Audit Board official, was, Corbett wrote in a minute, at present in Ireland, where he was likely to be for some time, "and I doubt if he has attended any meeting this year, nor has he been at any time a useful member of the Board". Wigram, "never a very regular attendant", had been in Australia on business for a year; Rashleigh had since his marriage practically ceased to attend "and is generally I believe in Cornwall", and the attendance of Young (the acquaintance of Cardinal Manning) "from the first has been nearly nominal".[43] Most of the nominees, however, as the study later in this chapter of the activities of MAD's Board of Management will show, were good attenders and played an active role.

The following conclusions are drawn from the nominee recruitment documentation and from other sources for those on whom there is no correspondence in the Poor Law Board's files: that to have been a campaigner for the *Metropolitan Poor Act* reforms - whether for rate equalisation or for the institutional or staffing changes - was not a particularly welcome qualification for a hopeful nominee to have; that it was held to be desirable to establish (Conservative Party) political control of the new

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[38]Blake, op. cit., 114, 144-5; Hanham, op. cit., 106-7.
[39]Army List 1854.
[40]RG10/112/23.
[41]RG10/29/50 & LMA MJP/Q/9, 99; RG10/339/11 & LMA/MJP/Q/8, 199.
[42]RG10/255/23 & LMA P83/MRY1, 425, 440.
[43]MH17/36, minute from Corbett to Sir James Stansfeld, Goschen's replacement as President, 17.3.1871.

metropolis-wide body - or, at the least, to prevent control by those who might pose a threat to Conservative policies or power; that the distinctions between the roles of elected politicians and of professional civil servants at the Poor Law Board and Home Office were significantly blurred as officials selected paid (health) officials to sit as equals with elected members on a decision-making and spending public body, and a minister, similarly, selected a wealthy Audit Office official to sit as a member of the MAD Board; and that other reliable categories from whom the elite "eyes and ears of the Poor Law Board" could be drawn were JPs sitting as existing ex-officio members of local boards of guardians (particularly in the large "West End" single-parish new unions), major East End employers, and others with appropriate contacts, such as Young, acquaintance of Cardinal Manning.

Such a range of sources for nominees - political, professional, civil servants, JPs and East End employers - might suggest a pattern of "elite pluralism" in which leaders of various interest groups were recruited by the Poor Law Board with the intention of power being in effect shared between them and the state.[44] However, the recruitment documentation and the parliamentary debate (and perhaps also the rejection of reform campaigners) suggests rather that the nominees were appointed because they had values in common with those in charge at the Poor Law Board and were people who, for political, professional or other reasons, were trusted to implement the policies of central government and keep the majority elected element on MAD under control, rather than because the Board was seeking a means of devolving its decision-making powers.

The recruitment processes not only for nominees but also for elected managers confirm the importance of membership of MAD's Board of Management in the eyes of those involved in metropolitan poor relief. For instance, in several authorities there were contests that clearly represented significant competition for the position of MAD representative. In Poplar there was a contest between the chairman and vice-chairman, and after a 5-5 vote the chairman gave his casting vote in favour of himself - subsequently almost overturned. In the City of London Union there were five nominations for two places, with Robert Warwick of the Rate Equalisation Association, vice-chairman of the union, nominating one of the unsuccessful candidates, City Deputy R. B. Whiteside, one of the Association's Vice-Presidents. In Holborn one of the

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[44]Parry, op. cit., 66-8, 125.

ordinary guardians, Proudfoot, succeeded in beating off challenges from the vice-chairman and an acting chairman, who stood against him in two separate votes. In St. Giles and St. George Bloomsbury two candidates tied 6-6, and the chairman, Admiral Barnett, broke the tie with his casting vote. In St. George the Martyr Southwark, when James Barnes (a former member of the Rate Equalisation Association executive) took over the chairmanship he also took over the previous chairman's representation on MAD. In St. Pancras, when the anomalous representation by two absentee former Directors of the Poor came to an end in 1868, their replacements included elected guardian R. Furniss, who had competed unsuccessfully for the chairmanship and vice-chairmanship of the new union in 1867 but who, by the date of his election to MAD, had become vice-chairman.[45]

Just over half of the local bodies, in fact, sent their chairman or vice-chairman to MAD.[46] This high proportion is a further indication that the elected managers sent to MAD constituted in the main a consciously powerful elite group of local representatives. (See *Figure 6.*)

There was a further major issue in terms of representation on MAD: the number of elected representatives allowed to each local poor law authority, some being allowed one, and some (particularly the powerful "northern" parishes such as St. Pancras, St. Marylebone and St. George Hanover Square) two. The Lambeth board of guardians wrote to the Poor Law Board about the question, having resolved unanimously that they

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[45]At LMA: C.BG.48 4.4.1867, 253-4, X90/10 4.6.67; Ho.BG.149 5.6.1867, So.BG.22 15.4.1868. Also LBC P/GG/PO/13 4.6.67; GL MS 1088/1, 4.3.1861;

[46]See also Appendix V. Original and replacement managers (1867-71) have all been counted as separate individuals, as each represented a separate choice by the local body concerned; the calculation is based, therefore, on 57 individuals rather than on the 45 elective places on the board of management. At LMA: X90/10, 4.6.67; Wa.B.G./22, 6.6.67 & 12.3.1868; St.M.B.G./001, 2.8.67; We.B.G./S.G./63, 10.8.67; St.B.G./Wh/45, 24.12.67; P83/MRY1/425, 440; C.BG.48, 4.6.1867, 253-4; C.BG.22, 16.4.1867; So.BG.22, 15.4.1868; P89/MRY1/584; Ho.BG.1, 24.6.1868; Ho.BG.149, 5.6.1867; Pa.BG.9,18.4.1866; St.P.BG.1,13.6.1867; We.BG.1., 6.6.1867; Ca.BG.13, 12.6.1867; So.BG.39/17, 18.4.1867; G.BG.2, 18.4.1867; Hp.BG.9, 21.3.1867; St.BG.ME.9, 18.4.1867; C.BG.11, 7-9; So.BG.21, 17.4.1867; Le.BG.018, 21.3.1868; La.BG.10, 8.5.1867; St.BG.45, 8.8.1867; B.BG.17, 17.4.1867; St.BG.SG.11, 31.5.1867, CH.BG.21, 17.4.1867; Ha.BG.23, 14.4.1867; B.BG.35, 18.4.1867; B.BG.17, 17.4.1867; K.BG.23, 18.4.1867; We.BG.ST.28, 16.4.1867. The following pre-1867 sources were at borough archives, as indicated: CWA St. Martin-in-the-Fields churchwardens & overseers minute book 27.5.1867; CWA C1126, 9.5.1867; CWA St.James vol. 46, 3.5.1867; SLSL Y.L75, 18.4.1867; FL St. Luke guardians' minutes, 1861-9, 5.6.1867; FL St.James Clerkenwell guardians minutes 22.12.1863, 355 & Vestry of Clerkenwell minutes, vol.7, 1866-68, 23.4.1867, 176. The minutes of St. James Clerkenwell guardians are missing for 1864-71 but Partridge, the MAD representative, had previously chaired periodically; if he too is counted as a chairman, the proportion of local bodies sending their chairmen/vice-chairmen to MAD is over 50%.

wished to know "why the large and populous parish of Lambeth is to have but one member, while the City of London and other unions and parishes are to have two

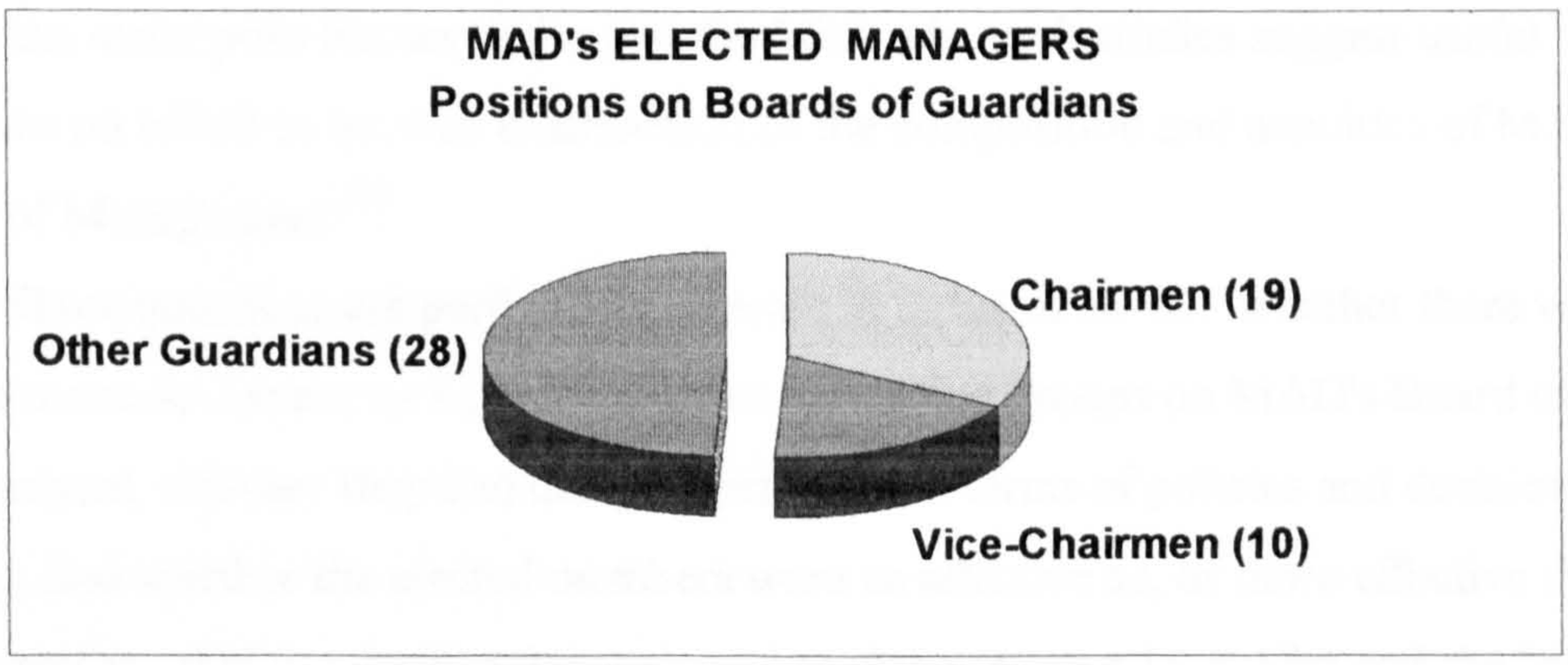

Figure 6. (Appendix V gives a detailed breakdown.)

members each", and the principle upon which numbers of members had been apportioned. The Poor Law Board's reply was that "it was deemed expedient to give a second member only to the six parishes and unions named in the Order which will contribute most largely to the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund:"[47] in other words, that it had favoured the principle of territorial wealth rather than that of population as the basis for representation.

The conclusion reached is that both the Poor Law Board's recruitment documentation and the records of local boards confirm that the MAD Board, certainly in its first four years, consisted not of a homogeneous "elite" prepared to do battle with the Poor Law Board as they built the beginnings of a state hospital service[48] but of two separate "elites": central government's nominees, and the leading activists from the local boards of guardians. The central Board attempted to weight the composition of MAD still further in favour of gentlemanly and business wealth by allocating more elected seats to the wealthier local bodies.

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[47]LMA La.BG.10, 22.5.67 & 18, 29.5.67, 27.
[48]Ayres, op. cit., 32, 139.

IV

Although major analyses of local elites in urban areas at this period have focused not on the metropolis but on Wales and the Midlands, such studies suggest useful questions on which to base an examination of the composition and activities of MAD's Board of Management.[49]

Three questions are particularly relevant in terms of MAD: whether there was a socio-economic distinction between the two governing groups on MAD's Board of Management, whether they had different priorities in terms of policies and decision-making, and whether the elected members were as effective as, or more effective than, the nominees; that is, whether they behaved as if they were a local elite and the "natural leaders".

If the answers to all three questions are in the affirmative, and if the elected members were in general of a lower socio-economic level, one may conclude that the nominees were appointed not because they provided a superior natural leadership but because they represented the perspectives and interests of a different elite.

At this stage it is appropriate to define more closely the sense in which the term "elite" is being used in this study. Daunton and Hennock employ the concept in relation to large businessmen, professionals, or the upper socio-economic class.[50] Parry initially defines elites as "small minorities who appear to play an exceptionally influential part in political or social affairs".[51] MAD's elected managers, it is suggested, can be categorised as members of "governing elites", in that they were all indirectly elected to MAD through being members of local boards of guardians: a position of local status and power attained through public election, through indirect election by their elected vestry or, if ex-officio guardians, through membership of an additional elite, the Middlesex JPs. Those owing their position as guardian to an electoral process would have ascended their parish or union poor law hierarchy by means of their political skills, their social and/or economic status, or both, and can therefore be described, together with their local ex-officio colleagues, as members of local elites. They arrived on MAD's Board of Management, however, as fragmented members of separate local elites

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[49]See Chapter 1, p. 10-11.
[50]Daunton, op. cit., 150-1, 155; Hennock (1968), op. cit., 318-9.
[51]Parry, op. cit., 13.

without, probably, the "cohesive, conscious" relationship with each other that a cohesive group would have and, indeed, quite possibly having some of the characteristics of elite pluralists, in that they might very well have represented competing local interests. The nominees, on the other hand, having all been selected by the Poor Law Board, were more likely to have had some sense of being a cohesive, conscious group, whether or not they were also "conspiratorial" - the third of the qualities which, Parry suggests, the student of elites should assess[52] - and were therefore likely (whatever other elites they may individually have been part of) to have been, in effect, a newly-constituted management elite.

The method adopted in studying the two groups was H. J. Dyos's 100% "topographical sampling", which is in some respects similar to that practised by Booth in 1889.[53] A socio-economic lifestyle study was conducted of the neighbourhood where each manager lived, based mainly on the 1871 census. Factors studied were occupational groups, number of servants, and prevalence of multi-occupation and lodger-keeping. The Booth-type neighbourhood approach was chosen because the alternative - simpler comparisons between individual managers - would have disregarded the fact that - as Dyos has noted - although people might have similar occupation titles, their social or economic standing might be very different. Conclusions on comparisons between two distinct groups such as the elected and nominee managers might therefore be over-simplified and might misrepresent the actual socio-economic relationship between them. (See Appendix VI, "Neighbourhood survey of MAD Managers: notes on the gathering and recording of data".)

The analysis showed clear distinctions between the two groups of manager. There was also, however, a significant middle stratum where overlapping occurred. These two elements in the findings are important because they confirm not only that the nominee managers were appointed largely from a socio-economic elite but also that, in terms of the socio-economic middle stratum, there were other factors involved relating to control; the existence of a middle stratum may also have provided a basis for the unity discerned by Ayres in MAD's later years as managers "battled with Poor Law Board bureaucrats endowed by the Act with dictatorial powers".

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[52]Parry, op. cit., 95, 118.
[53]Charles Booth, *Descriptive map of London poverty 1889* (London, 1984); H. J. Dyos, *Exploring the urban past* (Cambridge, 1982), 103-5.

Occupational evidence

The occupations of householders in the neighbourhoods where nominees and elected managers lived demonstrate both of these elements. Appendices VI-VII show in greater detail the rationale, method and structure of information gathering and analysis, but for ease of reference the occupational groups are listed below:

Ia Large industrialists, manufacturers, merchants.

Ib Aristocracy, MPs, JPs, wealthy fundholders, gentlemen, large landowners.

IIa Professional: doctors, lawyers, bankers, military, clergy/ministers.

IIb Professional: teachers, architects, science, accountants, curates, publishers, creative.

IIIa Tradesmen, shopkeepers, dealers, publicans, landlords, hotel keepers, small businessmen.

IIIb Clerical/administrative, including solicitors' and accounting clerks.

IIIc Supervisory workers, e.g. inspectors, managers, NCOs, police.

IIId Annuitants, retired, lesser fundholders and gentlemen.

IVa Skilled workers, craftsmen.

IVb Semi-skilled/service: postmen, mariners, soldiers, shopworkers, watermen, servants in own home, lesser creative (e.g. performers).

Va Unskilled and casual workers, labourers.

The most striking difference - as might be expected in the light of the recruitment documentation - was between the proportions in Group Ib, to which 39.4% of nominees belonged (4.4% elected managers) and in Group IIIa, where the figures were practically reversed (26.2% elected members and 10.6% nominees). (See *Fig. 7.*)

The elected members' neighbourhoods were also, as might be expected, proportionately in the majority in Groups IIIb, IIIc, IVa and IVb. Some nominee neighbourhoods, however, also contained these categories. Though in the minority, a significant proportion of nominee neighbourhoods included IIId (elected 10.8% elected, nominees 6.2%) and IIb (elected 6.3%, nominees 3.9%).

An apparent anomaly - almost equal proportionate representation in Group Va (elected 2.8%, nominees 2.5%) is accounted for by the fact that Currie, the East End distiller nominee appointed by the Liberal government, lived close to his distillery, with 42% of his neighbours coming within this category. Although personally within the occupational category of Ia, he had comparatively frugal living circumstances, with only

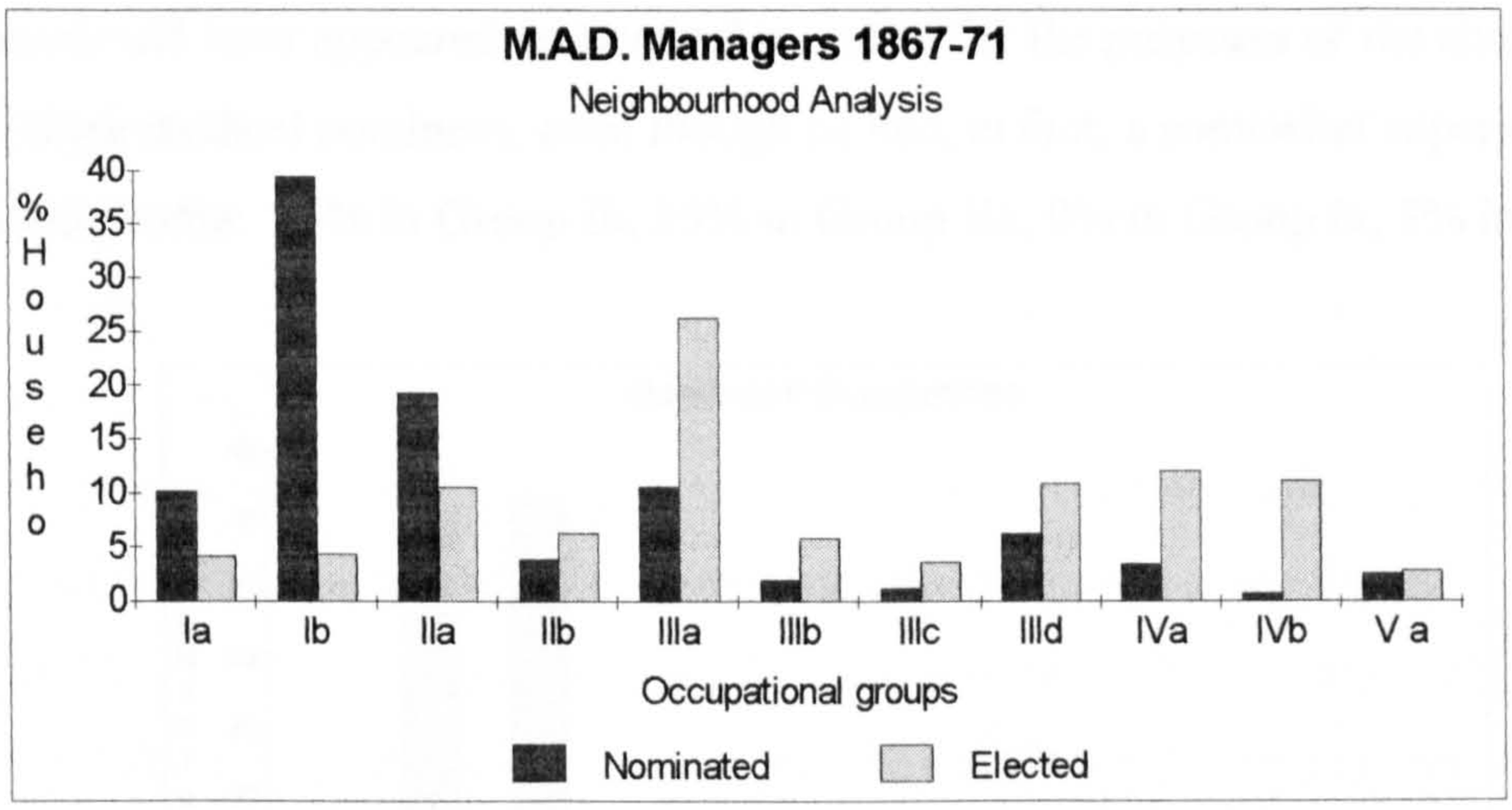

Figure 7.

two servants, in Bromley-by-Bow, where he apparently remained all his life,[54] surrounded by servant-less neighbours such as employed and unemployed shipwrights and labourers, distillery labourers, a rivet-maker, a laundress, a harness-maker, a boiler-maker and a lock-keeper and with only a few neighbours, also servant-less, in slightly higher categories such as naturalist, publican and general shopkeeper. Of the elected members only 11 of the 55 had any neighbours in Group Va and these were mainly in small proportions; four, however (from Bermondsey, Lambeth, Bethnal Green and the City) had 17-42% of their neighbours in Group Va.

A potential statistical weakness in there being in total only 17 nominees is that in small categories such as Group Va the figures may seem to carry undue weight. However, Currie represents an important element in the nominee contingent, even though he was a latecomer to MAD. Original (1867) nominees who lived in "middling" neighbourhoods included John Charrington, elected chairman of Stepney guardians, and some of the medical nominees.

The value of neighbourhood occupational profiling for assessing the nature of the elites on MAD is shown also by a study of the four medical nominees: Sibson and

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[54]Finch, op. cit., 59.

Holmes (who had been recommended by the Poor Law medical inspector Markham), William Harvey (physician and chairman of St. Mary Islington guardians, and regarded presumably as a friend of the Poor Law Board) and John Bostock, surgeon-major in the Scots Fusilier Guards. Bostock, if recorded simply as a fourth medical man to be placed personally in the Group IIa (a position for which he also qualifies as a senior military man) would have appeared as identical in status, for the purposes of the study, to the other three medical nominees, even though he had, in fact, a somewhat superior neighbourhood profile: 53% in Group Ib, 35% in Group IIa, 9% in Group Ia, 3% in

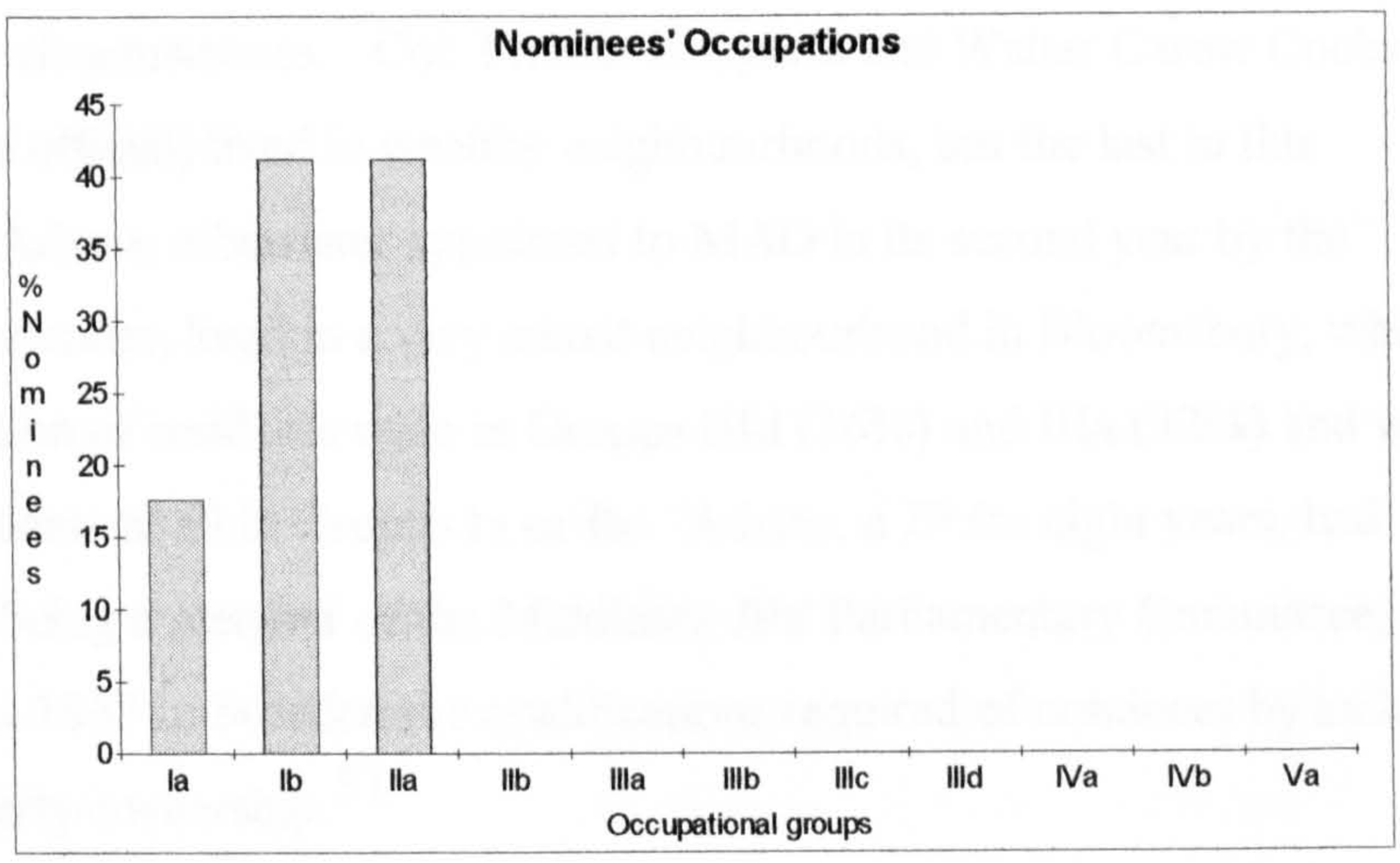

Figure 8

IIId and no neighbours at all in any of the other occupational groups. The neighbourhood profiles of the other three medical nominees, and particularly Harvey, include much higher levels of tradesmen (IIIa) than all but one of the other nominees, and in the case of Harvey and Holmes also higher levels of skilled workers and craftsmen (IVa), apart from Currie. Their socio-economic circumstances were therefore lower than a simple assessment based on their professions might suggest, and one might conclude that their professional experience and inter-action with Poor Law Board civil servants played a part in their selection as nominees.

Figure 8 shows how a simple nominee occupational analysis would look, and needs to be compared with the nominee neighbourhood profiles in *Figure 7*, in which the diversity of socio-economic backgrounds from which the nominees came is demonstrated.

The fact that there were also six medical men among the elected managers suggests that pressure to include medical men on MAD came from several directions, including medical men themselves concerned for their professional interests[55] and/or involved, from choice, on local boards of guardians. A Home Office surgeon, Charles Bradley, arrived on MAD as one of the elected six, from Islington board of guardians (chaired by nominee Harvey), and it is possible that Harvey was given his place as a nominee in order to free up a place as elected representative for the medical civil servant, for whom a nomineeship may have been deemed inappropriate.[56]

Other professionals among the nominees also diverged from each other in terms of socio-economic circumstances. Col. Francis Haygarth and Walter Carew Cocks (the senior Audit Office official) lived in wealthy neighbourhoods, but the last in this category, Borlase Adams, a barrister appointed to MAD in its second year by the Conservative government, lived in a very mixed neighbourhood in Bloomsbury, where the largest proportion of residents were in Groups IIId (36%) and IIIa (32%) and where there were no residents at all in Groups Ia or Ib. Adams, a JP for eight years, had political interests, being a member of the Middlesex JPs' Parliamentary Committee, which attempted in 1867 to broaden the qualifications required of nominees by including non-resident property-ownership.[57]

Large businessmen, as *Figure 8* shows, were in very much of a minority among the nominees themselves: only 17.6% of them were individually in Group Ia. Nonetheless, this proportion was higher than that found in nominee neighbourhoods (10.2%) or elected managers' neighbourhoods (4.2%)(*Figure 7*). Nominees whose own census descriptions of their occupations placed them as individuals in Group Ia were Charrington, a Shadwell coal merchant (who added that he was also as a magistrate and landowner), Currie (who simply used the term "distiller"), and Robert Wigram of the shipbuilding and banking family (who described himself as ship-owner and banker). If Buxton, a Brick Lane brewer, had lived within the metropolis and therefore been

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[55]W. J. Reader, *Professional Men. The rise of the professional classes in nineteenth-century England"* (London, 1966), 158-61, describes the growth of professionalism and professional values in the medical profession at this period.

[56]The six elected medical men were Bradley, Beevor (Chairman of St. Marylebone guardians), Bird (a JP from Fulham), Brewer (Vice-Chairman of St. George Hanover Square, in due course Chairman of MAD, and later a Liberal MP), Cortis (from Newington, and a recent churchwarden) and Griffith from Camberwell.

[57]LMA MJP/Q/8, 199; LMA MA/RS1/233.

included in the survey, and if W. H. Smith, who described himself in the 1871 census as "MP and landowner" but was of course also head of the newsagents' business, had also been counted as a member of Group Ia, the proportion of large businessmen among the nominees would have been larger.

Of the 55 elected members only one - Thomas Spence, a shipbuilder employing 92 and representing Stepney on MAD - has been placed in Group Ia, but he was not a really major employer; a possible further elected manager candidate for Ia, William Stutfield, an ex-officio guardian in St. George in the East but the boards's elected representative on MAD, was a "Magistrate[58], Deputy Lieutenant and wine merchant" in 1871, and has been classified as a Group Ib wealthy gentleman.

The only large businessman, therefore, to reach MAD through the elected route was Spence, a moderately large local employer; even Charrington, who, judging from his subsequent performance on MAD, must have been a powerful chairman of the Stepney guardians, apparently preferred to join MAD as a nominee and leave the elected Stepney representation to Spence. Practically all of the few large businessmen on MAD were, therefore, not present as representatives of a "natural" local elite involved in the politics and administration of the boards of guardians. Furthermore, to the extent that a small study of 17 nominees can do so, the analysis indicates that the large businessmen became MAD managers in a proportion greater than their incidence in the 72 neighbourhoods studied. The special steps taken to get them involved - with efforts apparently concentrated on those whose businesses were in the East End - thus suggest a concern to co-ordinate the interests of large employers or extend their opportunity to influence events.

Davis's conclusion on the involvement of employers in metropolitan politics is that "individual industrialists participated in local politics, and generally stressed their place in the local economy when they did so" but that London lacked "the interlinked, consolidated employer caste of the factory towns". Paul Johnson concludes that employers' organisations had little place in the "dynamic and thriving small-scale manufacturing economy" of the metropolis.[59] These assessments are relevant here in that in 1867 the Conservative-led Poor Law Board found it appropriate to initiate some

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[58]LMA MJP/Q/8, 147. Stutfield, hon. treasurer of the board of guardians, was absent when elected to MAD, and the Board agreed to write and tell him; there was no contest for the post.
[59]Davis, op. cit., 20; Paul Johnson, "Economic Development and Industrial Dynamism in Victorian London", *LJ*, 21, 1 (1996).

government-led consolidation and organisation of East End employers, bringing them together with members of the metropolis's gentlemanly elite for the purpose of what was to be, in effect, political action.

Servant-keeping evidence

The next measure of the socio-economic status of MAD managers, servant-keeping, is somewhat simpler, and used frequently in socio-economic studies based on censuses; Booth, too, as noted in the Notes at the end of this chapter, used this measure.

Although there were some exceptions, the general pattern of servant-keeping was one of more servants for the nominees and fewer for the elected members. Five of the nominees in particular - Sir James Hamilton, Alexander Ross, W.H. Smith, Sir Michael Hicks Beach and Robert Wigram - were very well provided with servants. Hamilton kept 12, Beach and Ross 14, Smith 12 and Wigram 10. The first four were past, present or future Conservative MPs, and Wigram was a leading supporter of East End Conservative candidates. If the other Conservative MP among the nominees, John G. Talbot (Chairman of Kent Quarter Sessions and of Westminster board of guardians) had not been excluded from the census study for residential reasons, the number of nominees with an exceptionally high tally of servants would have been six, as Talbot had 11 at his Westminster home, and presumably others in Kent. Not far behind were J. A. Shaw Stewart with seven, Walter Carew Cocks (from the Audit Office) with six, and Wyatt (chairman of St. Pancras) and surgeon-major Bostock with five.

Four of these top Conservative servant-keepers - Hamilton, Beach, Smith and Ross - also lived in the most exclusive neighbourhoods in terms of occupation, with neighbours in Groups Ia, Ib and IIa only, and the other one - Wigram - had only one, apparently anomalous, neighbour in a lower category.

Figure 9 shows the number of servants kept by each nominee, with known wealthy Conservatives (Hamilton, Hicks Beach, Ross, Smith and Wigram) towering above the rest, East End businessmen Charrington and Currie among the lowest servant-keepers, Holmes and Sibson, the medical men who left MAD after the first year, also in the foothills,and Wyatt, the forceful new chairman of the new St. Pancras union who stood as the nominees' candidate for the chairmanship of MAD, very comfortably

placed with five. Harvey, the only nominee with no servants, was the 71-year-old practising physician, surgeon and chairman of the Islington Board of Guardians who lived near the workhouse that MAD converted into a smallpox hospital[60] and who possibly won his place as a nominee as a means of making an elected place available for

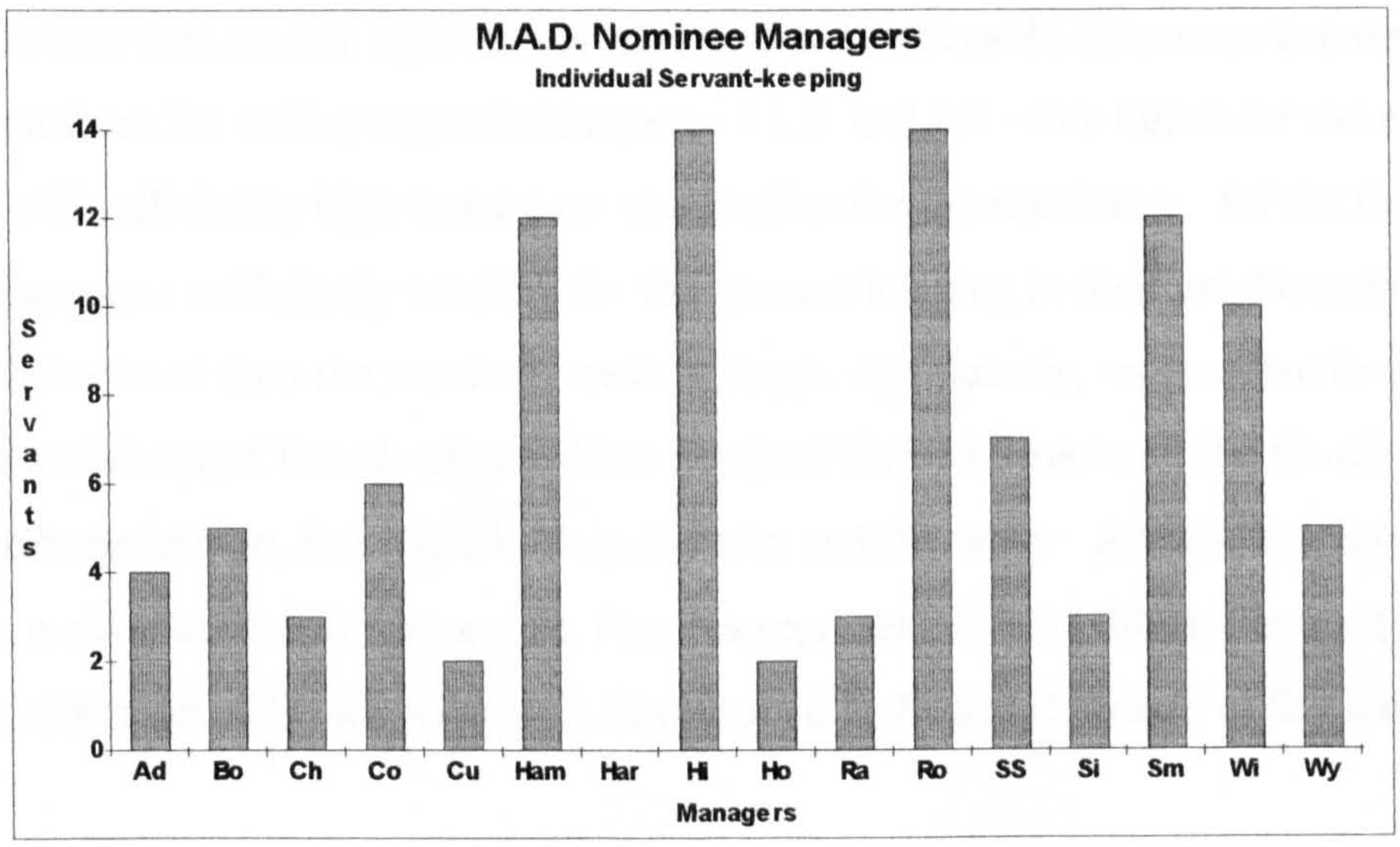

Figure 9

KEY: **Ad**ams, **Bo**stock, **Ch**arrington, **Co**cks, **Cu**rrie, **Ha**milton, **Ha**rvey, **Hi**cks Beach, **Ho**lmes, **Ra**shleigh, **Ro**ss, Shaw **S**tewart, **Si**bson, **Sm**ith, **Wi**gram, **Wy**att.

Home Office surgeon Bradley. In terms of residential areas, 25% of nominees lived in neighbourhoods averaging six or more servants per household, and 40% in neighbourhoods averaging 3-5. (*Figure 10.*)

Elected managers, on the other hand, lived in neighbourhoods where the figures were vitually reversed, with 40% of households having 1-2 servants. Their degree of servant-keeping indicates mainly comfortable, moderately comfortable or poorer lifestyles. As individuals, all but three of the elected managers had at least one servant, and many had two or more. The servant-less, and possibly poorest, elected managers were two tradesmen and a craftsman: Duff (a draper representing the wealthy parish of St. James Westminster), Partridge (a Clerkenwell manufacturing jeweller), and Lockyer (a pharmaceutical chemist in Greenwich).

The middle stratum incorporating some nominee and some elected managers is apparent in the servant-keeping analysis. *Figure 10* shows this overlap of levels of

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[60]RG10/255/23.

wealth, with 20.6% of elected managers' neighbourhoods having household averages of 3-5 servants, and 17.3% of nominee neighbourhoods having household averages of 1-2.

The middle stratum overlap is shown also in the *Figure 11* illustration of the range of neighbourhood servant-keeping within the two groups of managers - the highest, lowest and median figures. While there is a noticeable difference between the highest numbers for each group of managers - 11.3 and 6.5 - this figure for the elected group is still sufficiently high to surpass the median for the nominees. Of the four elected managers sufficiently wealthy for the servant-keeping in their neighbourhood to be at a higher level than the nominee median, three, significantly, represented large, powerful parishes and boards of guardians north of Oxford Street and the fourth, a JP and large businessman, had roots both in the east and the west: Attenborough (4.5 servants, a silversmith and the new St. Pancras representative in 1868), Beevor (5.2, surgeon, chairman of St. Marylebone), Seymour (6.5, JP and chairman of St.George

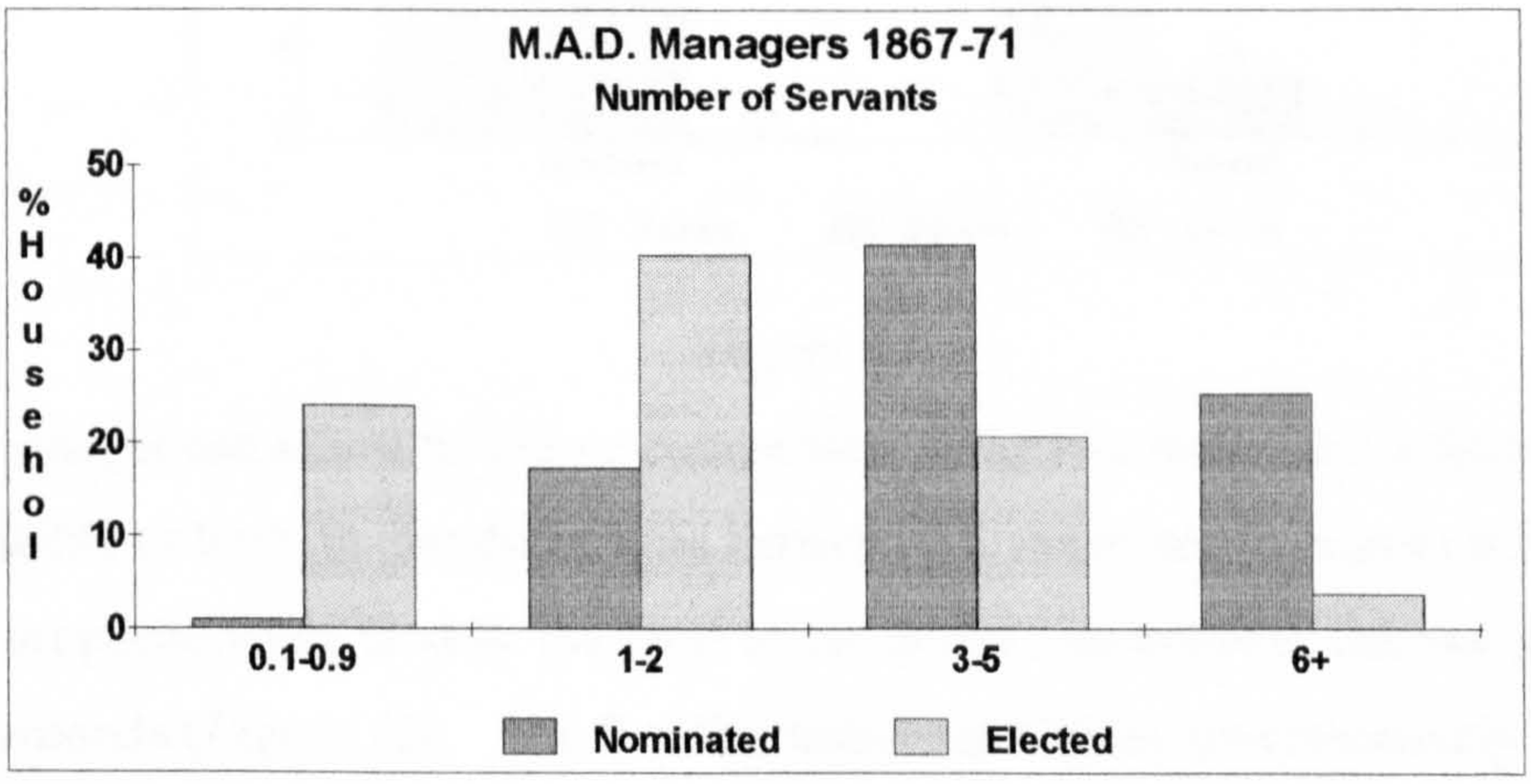

Figure 10

Hanover Square) and Stutfield (5.2, JP, magistrate, Deputy Lieutenant and wine merchant, living in St. Marylebone but ex-officio member and treasurer of the East End guardians in St. George in the East). Although part of MAD's elected contingent, they therefore contributed also to the presence of wealthy gentlemen on the board of management.

The high-median-low range is useful also in illustrating that the immediate neighbourhoods in which most of the elected managers lived were comfortable by contemporary standards, and might be termed "middle-class". (Booth in 1889 described households with 1-2 servants as "well-to-do".) The 24 elected managers

living in neighbourhoods below this standard (average number of servants per household from 0.1 to 0.9) came from all parts of the metropolis,[61] with the largest contingent (7) coming from small West End parishes.

While the neighbourhood analysis of servant-keeping provides a more sophisticated picture than a simple comparison of managers' individual servant-keeping - for instance, in its ability to communicate neighbourhood servant-keeping that averages less than one, and to indicate the socio-economic standing of the neighbourhood in

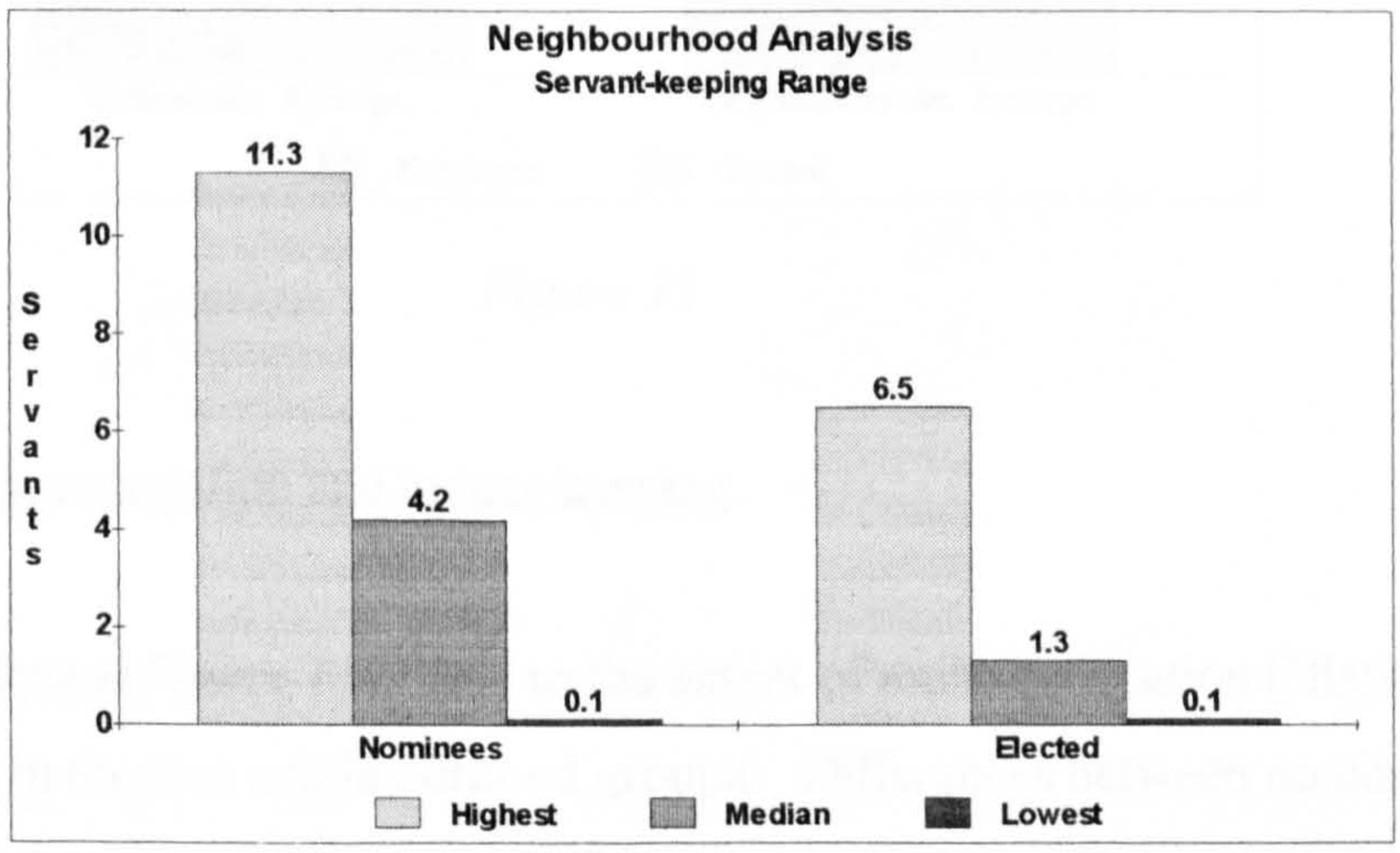

Figure 11

which the manager can afford to live - a comparison of the two methods confirms the overall reliability of both, in that differences between individual nominee and elected groups are proportionately broadly the same as the differences between the two groups of neighbourhoods (*Figure 12).* The fact that individual figures are consistently higher than neighbourhood figures reflects the fact that managers tended as individuals to be among the higher, or the highest, servant-keepers in their neighbourhoods: a complement, perhaps, to their roles as members of local governing elites.

The analysis of MAD managers' servant-keeping using various measures has shown not only clear differences overall between the two groups of managers, with most of the nominees having much higher numbers of servants than the bulk of the elected managers, but also elements of overlap which cast further light on the composition of both groups.

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[61]East End 4, West End 7, South 6, East-Central (St. Luke, Clerkenwell, Shoreditch) 3, and others (Chelsea, Greenwich and City) 4.

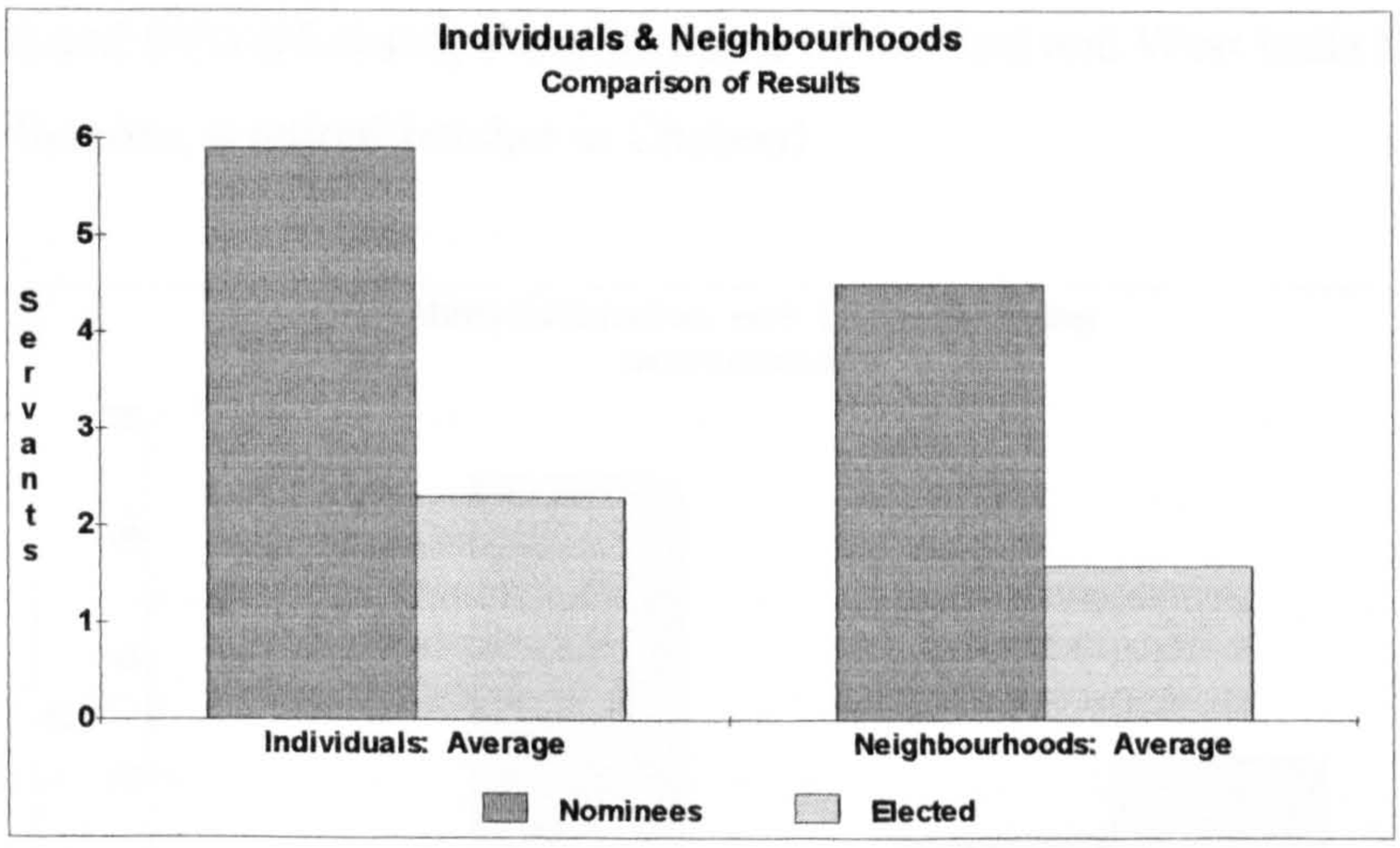

Figure 12

Evidence on multiple occupation and lodger-keeping

The final analyses (*Figure 13*) relate to the extent of multi-occupation ("flats") and lodger-keeping in the two neighbourhood groups. Differences between nominee and elected managers are far greater in the multiple occupation comparison and are broadly similar to those found in the occupation and servant-keeping comparisons. In the case of lodger-keeping, however, the contrast between the two groups is much less, and the results here may have been affected by the nature of residential practices in the metropolis and therefore be less valid for the purposes of this study. For instance, people in small accommodation and multiple occupation were less likely to have space for lodgers, and lodgers may also have been under-counted, as some of those recorded as visitors may have been lodgers. (See Appendix VI, Notes on the gathering and recording of data.)

Multiple occupation was found in nominee neighbourhoods in only four cases: Currie in the East End (6%), Harvey, the Islington chairman and physician-surgeon (14%), and the two medical men who left at the end of the first year and who lived in streets in the West End which had a substantial proportion of other medical men, hotels and lodging houses - Holmes (22%) and Sibson (24%). Of the elected members, on the other hand, 31 (56%) lived in neighbourhoods where there was multi-occupation, which ranged from a mere scattering of households to high proportions, such as 88% (Collins, a Bethnal Green builder), 77% (Doulton, of the Lambeth pottery), 76% (Duff, the

servant-less draper, in one of the poorer parts of the wealthy parish of St. James Westminster) and 64% (Hickson, superintendent of the East and West India Dock in Poplar, and Symons, a retired butcher in Chelsea).

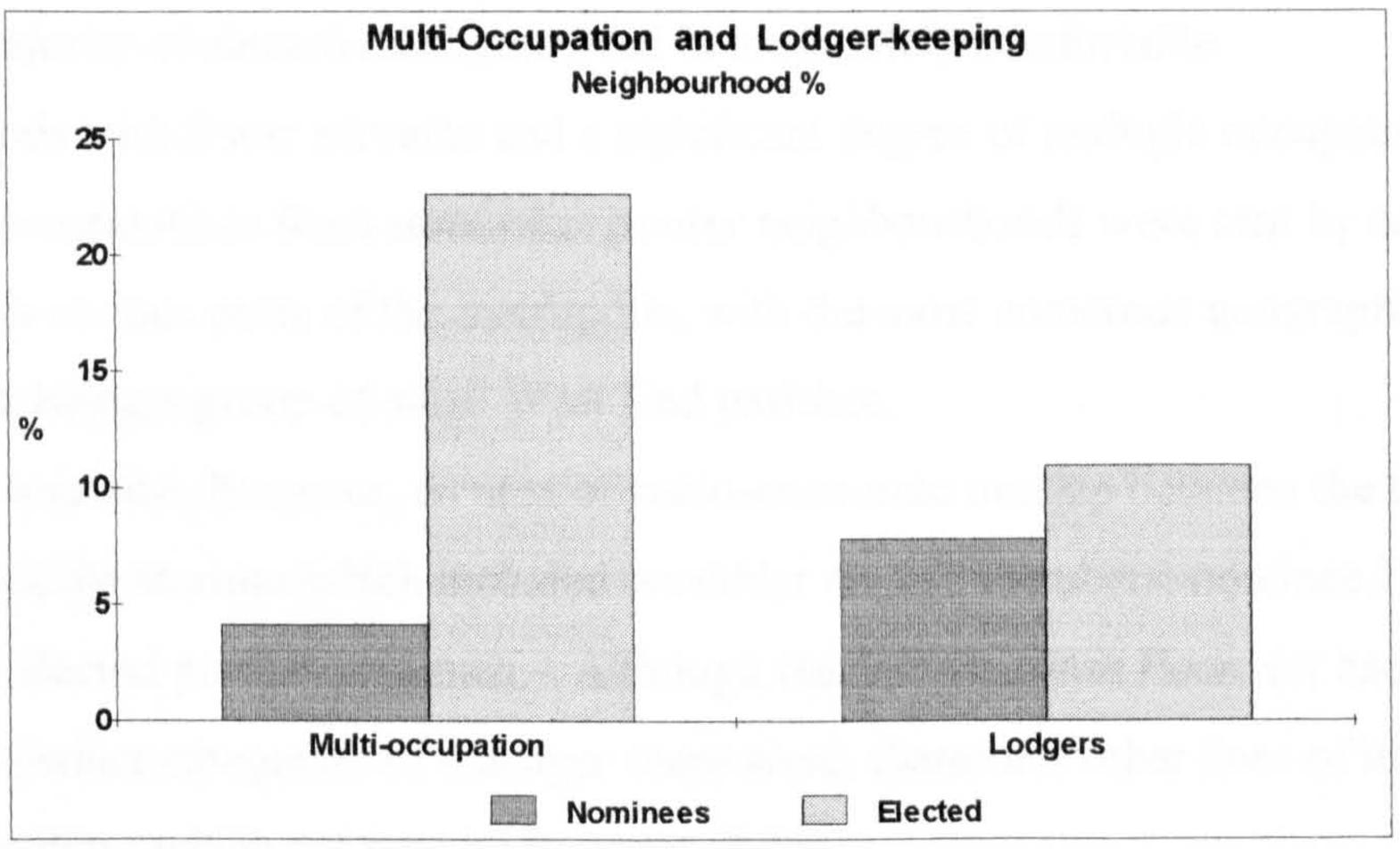

Figure 13

Lodger-keeping followed the same pattern for the nominees, with two additions: a substantial proportion (29%)in the neighbourhood of Borlase Adams, barrister and member of the Middlesex JPs' Parliamentary Committee, who lived in a mixed area in the West End, and a few (5%) in the neighbourhood of Wyatt, magistrate, powerful new St. Pancras chairman and a "merchant" 20 years before, who in 1871 lived in a largely comfortable but mixed road with some tradesmen, clerks and lesser gentlemen. As lodger-keeping is, however, clearly a flawed criterion for assessing the socio-economic circumstances of elected managers and, indeed, of anomalous nominees such as large businessman Currie, living as he did in a poor river-side neighbourhood, its figures will not be taken into account.

The comparisons that give consistent results - occupations, servant-keeping and multi-occupation - show that in socio-economic terms there were three groups of managers. Proportionately the largest single group of neighbourhood occupations among the two types of manager was Group Ib in the nominee group; this socio-economic stratum (the aristocracy, MPs, JPs, wealthy fundholders, gentlemen and large landowners) was therefore represented to an extent that might help them influence MAD's activities. Large businessmen, although comprising only a small proportion of

residents in all neighbourhoods studied, also had a significant presence in terms of the residential backgrounds from which nominee managers came. The very wealthy "Top Five" nominees (or "Top Seven" if one includes Buxton and Talbot, who have been excluded from the figures for residential reasons) came from these two groups.

The majority of elected managers lived in moderately comfortable neighbourhoods with fewer servants and a significant degree of multiple occupation. However, representatives from somewhat poorer neighbourhoods were sent by several local bodies in various parts of the metropolis, with the most numerous geographical concentration being a group of small West End parishes.

There was also, however, an area of socio-economic overlap between the two groups in a middle stratum which included wealthier elected members, nominee JPs, and nominee and elected professional men. Although the *Metropolitan Poor Act* had created two distinct categories of manager there were, therefore, other lines of interest and influence along which the new body might divide.

V

Although very wealthy gentlemen were in an actual minority on MAD's 60-strong Board of Management, they and their well-to-do nominee colleagues were a distinct and potentially cohesive elite group because of the manner of their selection and the confidence placed in them by the Poor Law Board. Whether their potential for influencing or controlling MAD was in practice achieved, and whether the goals they pursued were distinct from those of most elected members, will be examined in this section. The main source is the published minutes of the Board, which have hitherto been studied only in relation to the development of health institutions and services.[62]

First year: 1867-8

The manager chosen by the Poor Law Board as provisional chairman of MAD's first meeting was Sir James Hamilton, one of the "Top Seven" and the only titled

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[62]LMA MAD I, II, III, IV (1867-71); Ayres (London, 1971), viii, the major writer on MAD, says that she used the minutes, "bleakly succinct but complete", as the "factual skeleton" for her history of the organisation.

member. As Hamilton was, however, out of London for substantial periods of the year on his landed estates, it was not appropriate for him to hold the chair on a more permanent basis. Given the Poor Law Board's seminal role in the setting up of MAD, it seems likely that the Board was involved also in the decision that nominee Wyatt, new JP chairman of St. Pancras, should stand for the permanent chairmanship of MAD.

In this first decision of MAD's Board of Management[63] a division of loyalties partly in accordance with members' status as elected or nominated seems to have occurred. When Wyatt was proposed as chairman by one of the East End employers (nominee Charrington) and one of Wyatt's fellow-JPs (Marshall, elected manager from Hampstead), two elected managers from small west/central parishes (Holborn and St. Luke) attempted to delay the decision by proposing that the question be adjourned for a week.

Two further elected managers (from Poplar and St. Marylebone - the provisional chairman's own parish) then proposed Dr. Brewer of St. George Hanover Square, who would clearly have been a strong candidate for those critical of the Poor Law Board because of his role the previous year in mobilising guardians across the metropolis in protest at problems relating to the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act* during the preceding winter, and who was also a known Liberal.[64]

From a show of hands "it appeared", the minutes record, that there was an even division between the two candidates of 23-23. A second vote, with voters' names taken, resulted in Dr. Brewer winning 29-24. A further elected member, Alfred Suter from the City, was then agreed unanimously as Vice-Chairman. While at least nine elected members must have voted for nominee Wyatt, it seems likely from the preliminaries that the division of support was largely between nominees and elected managers.

The setting up of committees of the Board of Management also appears to have involved disagreement, with elected members from South London and the East End proposing the successful five-committee formula (Finance, Fever Patients, the Insane, Smallpox Patients and General Purposes) despite an attempted nominee amendment to set up a committee to make decisions about the committees.[65] The Poor Law Board's

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[63]LMA, MAD I, 67/8, 22.6.67.
[64]LMA Le.BG.17, 1.2.66, 208; *Times* 5.2.1866, 12b, & 9.3.1866, 5e. Brewer, standing as a Liberal, failed to gain a parliamentary seat in Colchester in February 1867.
[65]LMA MAD I, 67/68, 20.7.67.

regulations[66] allowed the Board a great deal of freedom - they were able to appoint "at any time" one or more committees of 3-5 members with powers and authority that the managers wished to delegate to them - so it appears that either the elected members were better prepared when the question came up or the nominees would have preferred smaller scale back-room consultation on the issue.

The allocation of committee responsibilities among Board members a month later[67] showed a distinct division between the preferences of elected and nominated members.

The most political of the five new committees - in terms of health emergencies, in which the Poor Law Board and the government might find themselves liable to criticism for ineffectiveness - was at this stage probably the Committee for Fever Patients. For instance, the ten-year metropolitan typhus epidemic received frequent and prolonged coverage in the *Lancet*, and "London society was shocked", by the death the previous year from typhus of a distinguished St. Bartholomew's Hospital doctor.[68] It was also likely to become one of the highest-spending committees.

It was to the Fever Committee that the nominee members flocked: five of its nine members were nominees, a total which, with the standard addition of the Board's elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman, placed the nominees only just in a minority and certainly in a very influential position. The fact that a nominee, Dr. Sibson, was chosen to chair the committee suggests that in practice they were in a dominant position.

The Finance Committee, on the other hand, attracted only one nominee member, John Young (Cardinal Manning's acquaintance), whose involvement in MAD became rather minimal. He had the lowest attendance of any of the nominees at Board of Management meetings in the first year: only five out of 20.

Given that the Finance Committee would be involved in the raising of funds channelled through the boards of guardians for what was to become an extensive building programme, the interest shown in membership of the Finance Committee by the elected representatives of the guardians was to be expected. It was also to the Finance Committee that complaints from guardians about inequalities in metropolitan rating

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[66]MH17/33, No. 12,496/67, *Regulations for the Board of Management, The Metropolitan Asylum District*, June 1867: Article 15.
[67]LMA, MAD I, 67/8, 27.7.67.
[68]A. Hardy, "Urban famine or urban crisis? Typhus in the Victorian city", in (ed.) R. J. Morris & R. Rodger, *The Victorian City 1820-1914* (London, 1993), 221-9.

assessment were to be referred As early as August a letter was reported from Mile End Old Town board of guardians "calling attention to the inequality that exists in the method of assessing rateable property throughout the metropolis, and protesting against any contribution being levied by the Board upon the basis of the present assessments 'for the relief of the poor'".[69]

The reason for the apparent lack of interest shown by the nominees in this committee is less obvious, but MAD's minutes indicate that the allocation of members to particular committees was agreed without dispute. It seems likely that nominees were more concerned about achieving authorisation by MAD of expenditure on the expansion of poor law services than about the details of the sources of the income: about strategic issues rather than about local concerns relating to the rates. (In this respect there is a similarity with Daunton's comparison between the strategic regional or even international interests of the "mercantile elite" in the availability of suitable docks and the more local concern for the continued prosperity of Cardiff by those involved in local government.[70]) Until the provision of funds became a problem, nominees had no need to concentrate their energies on finance. A further, related, factor may have been the close financial control that the Poor Law Board had been given by the *Metropolitan Poor Act*: if the central Board now had greater authority to do its own barking in terms of finance, there was no need also to have watchdog nominees on the Finance Committee.

Two other service committees acquired a low proportion of nominees - one only on the Committee for the Insane and two on the Committee for Smallpox Patients - but both were chaired by a nominee members.

The fifth committee, General Purposes, attracted only two nominee members at this stage; later, when it increased in strategic importance, the nominee membership increased too. At this early stage the chairmanship of General Purposes was left in the hands of the elected Whitechapel member Thomas Brushfield. Finance, likewise, was chaired by an elected member, John Proudfoot of Holborn.

Monitoring of the Board's activities took place not only through the minutes (which were circulated to the Poor Law Board and to members but were not available to the public in the earlier years) but also through the attendance of Poor Law Board

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[69]LMA MAD I, 67/8, 24.8.67.
[70]Daunton, op. cit., 159.

officials at Board meetings. The first two meetings were attended by W. G. Lumley, Assistant Secretary of the central Board, as well as two inspectors; thereafter at least one and often both of the inspectors were present at each Board meeting, in observer capacity.

In terms of who controlled the reins of power within MAD, the Poor Law Board seems originally to have intended that the committees should be closely accountable to the Board of Management. Their Order of 18 June[71] required all minutes of the committee meetings to be read at the next Board of Management meeting. Perhaps at this stage, prior to MAD's first meeting, the Poor Law Board expected that one of their nominees would win the chairmanship of the Board of Management.

A change in committee accountability rules was announced at MAD's third meeting[72] a week before the allocation of committee membership: the Poor Law Board had issued a new order rescinding the requirement that committee minutes be read at Board meetings. The change would clearly have increased the independence of committees from detailed oversight by the Board which, in plenary session, had an elective majority over nominees of 45-15.

Despite the Poor Law Board's change of rule, and despite an apparent nominee attempt to reinforce the change, the Board of Management established the practice of considering committee recommendations in detail. At the first Board meeting that received committee reports,[73] Charrington proposed that the recommendations of the Finance Committee (which were mainly about acting on the redistributive provisions of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*) should not be considered one by one but that the committee's report should simply be adopted and referred back to them for implementation. His amendment was lost 10-20; as nominee attendance was at the low figure of six on this particular occasion, Charrington (who showed himself from the beginning to be a heavyweight nominee with a tendency to take and support significant initiatives) must have picked up a little elected support. But presumably it had occurred to the majority of Board members that allowing such independence to the elective-dominant Finance Committee might create a precedent that could be claimed by

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[71]LMA MAD I, 67/8, 20.7.67.
[72]Ibid., 20.7.67.
[73]Ibid., 24.8.67.

the other committees, and would also reduce their own decision-making powers as a corporate body.

The Board then proceeded to confirm their procedure by separately considering each of the Finance Committee's recommendations, having a relevant section of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* read to them, agreeing each of the recommendations in turn, and only then referring the report back to the committee for implementation.

The Finance Committee was given an easy ride in comparison with the first report-back experiences of the three nominee-chaired service committees.[74] The Committee for Insane Patients (chaired by Wyatt, the unsuccessful nominee candidate for the Board's chair) had its whole report referred back "for further consideration and report". The Smallpox Committee had consideration of one of its recommendations postponed. The Fever Committee lost two of its recommendations and almost lost a policy statement; at a poorly-attended adjourned Board meeting[75] it was able to muster only two supporting Fever Committee members (one of them the committee's nominee chairman) in an 8-17 defeat.

Significantly, all three of these first reports from the service committees had outlined proposals that would lead to spending. The Smallpox Committee, which received the gentlest treatment at the hands of the Board, had proposed accommodation for a maximum of 200 patients, whereas the Committee for Insane Patients had suggested 3,000 and the Fever Committee, while referring to the need to build hospitals, was not yet prepared to suggest the total number of beds that would be required.

While further disagreements seem also to have had some roots in the different agendas of nominated and elected members, there were, as well, clearly differences in the perspectives of various elected members. In effect, it seems that the elected members were behaving as elected representatives might be expected to behave - with a consciousness of their accountability to the various elected bodies that had sent them to MAD.

For instance, when five boards of guardians wrote asking for details of MAD's expenditure and the Board's authority for levying a rate of one-eighth of a penny in the pound across the metropolis, the representatives from Mile End (whose guardians were

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[74]Ibid., 24.8.67.
[75]Ibid., 31.8.67.

involved) and Newington proposed (successfully) that the Finance Committee be instructed to handle the matter, whereas two other elected members (one of them actually a member of the Finance Committee) attempted unsuccessfully to have the question considered by the Board of Management as a whole, perhaps regarding it as a wider policy issue with implications that related to all local bodies.[76]

There was disagreement on whose should be the signatures to be sent to the Bank of England. Again there was an apparent victory here of elected over nominated members, with the Finance Committee's recommendation that the signatures of the Board's chairman and vice-chairman and all members of the elective-dominant Finance Committee be authorised being carried 17-2, following the 10-17 defeat of a proposal by Ellis (a somewhat unpredictable elected member from wealthy Paddington) and leading nominee Wyatt that signatures of all 60 members of the Board of Management be authorised.[77]

Probably one of the most remarkable achievements by elected members in MAD's first year was their success in getting leading nominees to accompany them on a deputation to the Poor Law Board on an issue seen initially as a matter for the Finance Committee and hence, by choice, of only arms-length concern to the nominees.

The issue was, in effect, that of metropolitan rate equalisation. The elected members from Mile End Old Town and St. Olave's Southwark (Donald Munro and Henry Pelling Wellbourne) moved[78] that MAD ask the Poor Law Board to order that contributions from unions and parishes be assessed on a more equitable basis than that set out in s.55 of the *Metropolitan Poor Act.* This appeared to be a reasonable application to make to the central Board because s.55 stipulated that the annual rateable value basis of contributions should be calculated according to the valuation lists, the latest local poor rate, or "on such other basis as the Poor Law Board from time to time direct".

The motion having been carried, Munro then gained the support, as seconder, of nominee Dr. Sibson, chairman of the Fever Committee, in a further successful motion: that MAD set up a special committee, on the usual formula of nine members plus MAD's Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to consider the question. Three nominees joined the new

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[76]Ibid., 26.10.67.
[77]Ibid., 26.10.67.
[78]Ibid., 26.10.67.

committee - heavyweights Wyatt and Charrington who, as chairmen of their own boards of guardians, would have had pre-determined views on the issue, and J.A.Shaw Stewart - together with two elected members from the East End, three from the City/West London Unions, and one from St Marylebone.

The elected members had thus managed to bring about the setting up of a powerful combined team of nominee and elected members to consider an issue that had, only four months before, been treated as a concern mainly of elected members.

External elective pressure - several parishes and unions had already defaulted on MAD's first and very limited order for contributions[79] - doubtless also spurred the nominees to join the move by representatives of poorer authorities for assessment changes. Without sufficient income, clearly the service committees' hopes for extensive building and development programmes would not come to fruition.

The special committee's findings[80] confirmed the arguments of elected members and poorer parishes and unions that the present systems were unfair. Having examined not only the poor rate but also the property tax and county, police and main drainage assessments, they concluded that "the greatest inequalities" existed, with a difference of from 5 to 40% in the various bases of assessment. Their recommendations were practical: that gross rental should be the basis for MAD rates, that the three-fifths of metropolitan valuation still not revised under the 1862 *Union Assessment Committee Act*[81] be carried out speedily, and that until metropolis-wide reassessment had been achieved, the county rate should temporarily be the assessment basis. (A radical suggestion - by Suter, vice-chairman of the Board and elected member from the City, and Dannell, elected member for Rotherhithe - that the property tax be the basis of assessment - was defeated 5-31 by a Board that was clearly seeking an immediate and realistic way out of potential funding difficulties.) The *Union Assessment Committee* strategy had already developed a head of steam outside, having been raised in the Commons on the grounds that rates payable to the Common Fund should be levied "on a fair and equal basis" .[82]) The final recommendation of the special committee was that a MAD deputation visit the Poor Law Board "to urge upon them the adoption of the

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[79]Ibid., 16.11.67.
[80]Ibid., 30.11.67.
[81]25 & 26 Vict. c.103.
[82]Hansard 15.8.67, col. 1571

above recommendations". The deputation, the Board decided, should consist of the members of the special committee.

When the deputation met Lord Devon at the Poor Law Board on 10 December, 1867, his response was to promise to send them copies of the recently amended Valuation Bill, which aimed to achieve uniformity of assessment in England. Having in due course examined the six copies that arrived, the special committee continued apparently to present a united front in the face of lack of any real progress with the Poor Law Board. They reported to the Board of Management that the Valuation Bill was not applicable to the metropolis, and achieved the Board's support for their proposal that the Poor Law Board be asked to bring all metropolitan parishes within the scope of the *Union Assessment Committee Act.*

As the first year drew to a close, the nominees were presumably not dissatisfied with this position, as the defaulting parishes and unions had, in the meantime, all paid their rates under the existing assessment systems.

An evaluation of MAD's first year leads to the conclusion that the nominees, intended by the drafters of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* to fill what had been argued, in select committees and in the *Metropolitan Poor Bill* debates, to be a shortfall in the ability, skills and correct governing instincts of elected local members, emerged from their first year by no means crowned in superior glory. In a number of respects they had found their match in and even been out-manoeuvred by politically-experienced elected members.

Second Year: 1868-9

A shift in the balance of power in favour of nominees was clearly aimed for when MAD reassembled for its second year. The vehicle was to be the hitherto insignificant General Purposes Committee, and the aim seems to have been to establish a coordinating committee with a strong nominee presence.

The first stage of the shift[83] had a practical logic because MAD was now moving into an era of actually planning and building hospitals and asylums. Each of the three nominee-chaired service committees was broken up into separate committees for each

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[83]LMA MAD II, 4.4.68.

proposed institution: the Committee for Insane Patients became the committees for superintending the erection of the asylums at Leavesden, Herts., and at Caterham, Surrey. The Committees for Fever and Smallpox Patients became committees for the proposed hospitals at Hampstead (North West District), Stockwell (Southern District) and Homerton, Hackney.

Coincidentally, perhaps, the two nominee chairmen of the Fever and Smallpox Committees whose committees were broken up into three hospital committees - Dr. Sibson and surgeon Holmes - had been the only two of the nominees not to return to MAD at the start of the second year. (Dr. Sibson in particular had forged co-operative links in the first year with elected members, and had seconded the important motion to set up a special committee that had led to the deputation to the Poor Law Board about rate equalisation. Both gave lack of time as their reason for leaving MAD.[84])

The three chairmen of the new hospital committees were all nominees - Charrington, Harvey and Shaw Stewart - and these committees all recruited their permitted maximum of one-third nominee members. Charrington successfully proposed, further, that each of the hospital committees be given the power to appoint a sub-committee of three members (together with the Board's chairman and vice-chairman) to "confer upon all matters" connected with their committee, including matters referred by the Board of Management to the committee. This suggests that powerful inner circles were set up to make decisions and recommendations on the building of the new metropolitan hospitals.

The two new asylum committees and the structurally unchanged Finance Committee were not accorded this degree of attention by the nominees. Although Wyatt took the chair of the new Leavesden Asylum committee, he was the only nominee to join this committee. An elected member particularly active in the previous year (Dr. Cortis, who had joined forces with Munro of Mile End in support of boards of guardians) became chairman of the Caterham Asylum committee. The Finance Committee chairman remained the elected member Proudfoot, and Young, whose attendance at Board meetings in the first year had been so poor, remained its sole nominee member.

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[84]MH17/33, 20.3.1868.

The second stage, the restructuring of the General Purposes Committee, was built partly on the changes to the service committees. On the motion of Charrington it was agreed that in future General Purposes should consist of one member from each of the committees, to be chosen by each committee, with the usual addition of the Board's chairman and vice-chairman.[85] Giving the committees the power to nominate their representatives meant, of course, that the Board of Management lost control of the nominated/elected proportion on the General Purposes Committee. The ratio turned out to be 50:50, and the three nominated members included the heavyweights Charrington and Wyatt. To bring the numbers up to the usual nine, the Board of Management added two elected members and one nominee, Sir James Hamilton, on the motion of Charrington.[86]

The bringing in of Hamilton at this stage was significant because it was he who had been the Poor Law Board's choice for provisional chairman the previous year.[87] He now returned to centre-stage as the chairman of the newly-structured General Purposes Committee, taking the place of Brushfield, elected member for Whitechapel and chairman of the Whitechapel Union, which the previous month had passed a resolution against Poor Law Board powers to order expenditure. Control of the up-graded General Purposes Committee therefore passed from the chairman of a recalcitrant East End union to the Poor Law Board's favourite chairman, with nominees in a narrow minority of 4-5.[88]

While the re-structuring of General Purposes clearly involved a transfer of power, the uses that nominees made of this are not always apparent. It reported infrequently to the Board of Management, and several of the matters reported appear to have been routine or procedural: for instance, the shortlisting of applicants for a clerkship, and a contract for printing and stationery.[89] The committee also produced an answer to MAD's lengthy search for offices of their own, away from the Metropolitan Board of Works: a recommendation that they rent offices in the Strand from W. H. Smith,

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[85]LMA MAD II, 4.4.68.
[86]Ibid., 25.6.68.
[87]Ibid., 22.6.67.
[88]Ibid., 23.5.68, 25.6.68; LMA/St.BG.Wh.45, 7.4.68, 411-2.
[89]LMA MAD II, 23.5.68, 19.12.68.

Conservative candidate for Westminster,[90] who shortly afterwards joined MAD's Board of Management as a nominee.[91]

Other questions handled by the re-structured committee provide a clearer indication, however, of its potential as an alternative source of power to the Board of Management, which of course still had its pronounced elective majority, elective chairman and elective vice-chairman. For instance, on issues of undoubted political significance such as rating inequalities and the Poor Law Board's and parliament's approach to sorting out the property valuation problem, there were proposals (not all of them successful) to refer matters to General Purposes. One might argue that the rates question ought more naturally to have been a matter for the Finance Committee, which continued to handle other matters involving the raising of funds for the service committees' land purchase and building programmes, and for MAD's administrative expenses.[92] On the other hand, if MAD's deputation to the Poor Law Board the previous year on rate equalisation had embarrassed the central Board, elevating the issue to the level of a newly powerful General Purposes Committee might have constituted an attempt to exert greater nominee control over the issue.

It was Whitechapel, the East End union chaired by the deposed Brushfield that raised the issue of rate equalisation a few months after the re-structuring of General Purposes and almost immediately after the Gladstone government came to power. The union sent a memorial to MAD (signed by their chairman) protesting that the basis of valuation for contributions to the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund was not fair and equitable because of unequal systems of assessment in the various metropolitan unions and parishes. The memorial presented a firm proposal for tackling the problem. It called on MAD to recognise the need for measures to remedy the inequalities and to seek statutory power to call for evidence from unions and parishes. If the evidence proved that inequalities existed, MAD should be "empowered and required" to appeal to Middlesex JPs at their Quarter Sessions, who should have the power to correct inequalities and omissions.[93]

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[90]Ibid., 6.6.68.
[91]Ibid., 18.7.68.
[92]Ibid., 9.5.68.
[93]Ibid., 19.12.68. The general election took place in November and the Whitechapel Union memorial was dated 8.12.1868. Their proposal contained elements of Ayrton's unsuccessful 1858 Bill and, significantly, it was to be the Whitechapel area that apparently remained loyal to Ayrton in the 1874 election (*East London Observer*, 7.2.1874, 6e).

Despite the nominee strength on General Purposes, the issue was thrashed out at Board of Management level, where the elected members were stronger, probably because of Brushfield's tactic in moving, at the Board, that MAD "adopt such measures .... as may be deemed expedient" at its next meeting.[94] By the time of the next Board meeting further memorials had arrived from other East End and City unions, including Hackney, Mile End Old Town and West London, who called for a deputation to the President of the Poor Law Board urging him to introduce a measure to remedy "the present extraordinary inequality of rating". Brushfield and a Westminster elected member moved that a petition be sent by MAD to parliament embodying the Whitechapel proposals.[95]

After an attempt by two new elected members (from St. Marylebone and the City) to stem the equalisation tide failed miserably - in a 5-23 vote against only acknowledging the existence of "certain inequalities of assessments" - the Board settled for a forceful compromise, proposed by the Stepney elected member and his fellow East End guardian, the nominee Charrington, that MAD send the Whitechapel memorial to the Poor Law Board with an opinion that it demanded their serious attention, "and urging the Poor Law Board to promote a measure for remedying the inequalities of assessment within the Metropolitan Asylum District".[96] The deputation and the petition had been avoided, but in terms of policy the East End unions had undoubtedly won the day at MAD, despite the re-structuring of the General Purposes Committee, which had been side-stepped by the elected members.

Tensions in relation to General Purposes are apparent also in relation to its extended role as the committee that examined legislation. Having been asked by the Board of Management to look at the sensitive *Valuation of Property (Metropolis) Bill*[97] that had followed the recent pressure on the Poor Law Board for re-valuation, General Purposes reported that several clauses required considerable consideration and amendment; they suggested that their committee be empowered to seek an interview with the President of the Poor Law Board on the provisions that "affect the interests of the Managers". The Board objected; an interview with the President was presumably interpreted as being a different process from the more confrontational deputation for

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[94]Ibid., 19.12.68.
[95]Ibid., 16.1.69.
[96]Ibid., 16.1.69; MH17/34, 20.1.1869.
[97]32 & 33 Vict.c.67, *Valuation (Metropolis) Act* 1869.

which East End unions had pressed. Munro and Dr. Cortis successfully proposed 21-9 that the Bill be referred back to General Purposes for further consideration and another report to the Board.

The question of having the authority to talk directly to the Poor Law Board on this major issue (which had aroused substantial activity on other local bodies[98]) was clearly significant for the nominees because Charrington and Wyatt persisted, taking the untenable position of moving that "any further reference of this Bill to the Committee be discharged". Not surprisingly, they had to withdraw the attempt. The eventual outcome of this particular item indicates the existence of an armed peace between leading nominees and leading elected members: Charrington and Hamilton successfully proposed that the Valuation Bill be referred to a special committee, which then attracted the permitted maximum of three nominees, together with elected members mainly from poorer unions, including Munro himself[99].

By the end of 1868-9 Hamilton and Wyatt had, however, obtained agreement, on grounds of convenience and through the medium of the General Purposes Committee, that not only the Finance Committee but also other committees could incur expense; they had also successfully moved that General Purposes be empowered to consider and report on "any Bills affecting the Managers" which were introduced in Parliament that session.[100]

At the end of the second year, therefore, it seems that while the elected members were continuing to benefit from their own tactical skills and political experience, and were still able to achieve majorities on the Board on matters where there were clear differences of interest, the nominees, led by the powerful team of Hamilton, Charrington and Wyatt, and aided by changes in the committee system, were becoming more effective than they had been at the end of the first year.

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[98]LMA 29, *Report of the United Metropolitan Vestry Committee to the Vestries and District Boards of the Metropolis, 1869* (London, 1869), 6-16e, shows that this recently formed voluntary metropolitan body held lengthy discussions on the Valuation Bill and also negotiated in detail with the Metropolitan Board of Works and Members of Parliament about it, succeeding, they believed, in getting it amended to a significant degree.
[99]Ibid., 24.3.69.
[100]Ibid., 24.3.69.

Third year: 1869-70

Evidence supporting the contention in this chapter that the relationship between the Poor Law Board and its nominees was a mutually supportive one appears in the minutes early in MAD's third year. In the previous year the harmful effect of parish/union amalgamations on the tenure of MAD's elected members had been raised to no effect; early in 1869, however, it became clear that nominees would also be affected, and a remarkable change of position by the central Board followed.

The issue had originally been raised when the Poor Law Board, under its *Metropolitan Poor Act* powers, attached the parish of St. Martin in the Fields to the Strand Union, and ruled that the existing St. Martin's delegate was no longer eligible to occupy a place on MAD's Board. Despite a recommendation by the General Purposes Committee (attended by an elected member majority of 4-3 and with Sir James Hamilton absent from the chair) supporting the Strand Union's view that the excluded member should be allowed to continue on MAD, the Poor Law Board refused to yield.[101]

The following year, however, when proposed further amalgamations by the new Liberal President brought the issue to the fore again, General Purposes produced a more powerful argument. If further elected members were deprived of their MAD seats, the nominee position would also be affected, they pointed out, because the number of nominees would then exceed the one-third proportion allowed by the *Metropolitan Poor Act.* The implication was, of course, that some of the nominees would also have to lose their seats.[102] The committee wrote directly to the Poor Law Board, expressed "the willingness of the committee to see the President upon the subject, should he desire it", and recommended that the Board of Management empower them to take legal advice on the changes, which had "a vital bearing on the constitution of the Board".

In notable contrast to their previous position, the Poor Law Board replied[103] that the matter had not escaped their attention and that there would be a clause in the proposed Bill amending the 1867 Act in order to allow current elected managers to retain their positions until the period of appointment expired.[104]

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[101]Ibid., 25.4., 9.5., 23.5., 6.6., 4.7., 18.7.68.
[102]Ibid., 22.5.69.
[103]Ibid., 5.6.69.
[104]*Metropolitan Poor Amendment Act 1869*, 32 & 33 Vict. c.63, s.7. The 1867 Act had in fact given the Poor Law Board the power to prescribe the tenure of both elected and nominated managers, and from March 1868 a three-year tenure operated, so it appears that the Board could, if it wished, have

The issue of the raising of finance, initially surrendered to the elected members on the Finance Committee, also received increasing attention from General Purposes[105] as questions well removed from routine financial decision-making continued to press themselves upon MAD. There was an escalation from the early rate equalisation/valuation concerns relating to revenue spending financed through the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, to problems of severe difficulty in raising loans for the large capital programme because of defective provision, in the 1867 Act, for loans security.[106] As with revenue spending, capital expenditure had to come ultimately from the ratepayers through the boards of guardians, hence the rapidly developing interest of the nominees, whose sponsors, the Poor Law Board, were wholly dependent on metropolitan ratepayers for the financing of the extensive institutional developments that the Act had authorised them to embark upon.

In negotiating with the Poor Law Board on an amendment to the 1869 Bill that would overcome the loan security problem, it is clear that the General Purposes Committee had a considerable degree of freedom.[107] For instance, having been empowered to "take the necessary steps, by conference with the President of the Poor Law Board or otherwise", they instructed solicitors "to confer with the President, if he should desire it" or to submit their views in writing, and only subsequently reported these steps to the Board of Management.

On the other hand it is clear also that the Board, with its elected majority, retained a certain degree of control over the issue: while voting to receive the General Purposes report on the matter, the Board held back from approving it formally: Hamilton's motion for approval was, after discussion, withdrawn. Instead, a proposal by Dale (of St. Luke) and Munro that the matter be deferred pending a reply from the Poor Law Board was agreed.

Parliamentary attacks on the costly building programme and escalating expenditure arising from the 1867 Act, in relation both to MAD and to the six Sick Asylum Districts, might be expected to have rallied a more or less unanimous defensive position by elected and nominee members, in that its building programme was, in effect,

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resolved the issue at the earlier stage.
[105]LMA MAD III, 22.5.69.
[106]Ibid., 24.3.69, 22.5.69.
[107]Ibid., 10.4.69, 22.5.69.

MAD's *raison d'etre.* There appears however to have been an element of reluctance, on the part of leading nominees at least, to become involved in the question.

The attack had come from W. M.Torrens, Liberal MP for Finsbury (under pressure not only from constituents but also from some medical men), who gave notice that he would move in the committee stage of the *Metropolitan Poor Amendment Bill* 1869[108] that new asylums should be for the use of people living within the local parish or union only - a denial of the metropolitan context of MAD's objectives.[109]

Elected members Dr. Cortis (Lambeth) and J. W. Butterworth (West London Union) moved, not unreasonably, that Torrens' proposed provision would cause "great inconvenience" to the operations of the Board of Management, and proposed that the Poor Law Board be written to accordingly. They succeeded in their move only narrowly. Having fought off (11-13) a blocking "next business" motion by Wyatt and Charrington, Cortis and Butterworth achieved 16-12 support for their motion.

The voting figures indicate that at least some of the support for Wyatt and Charrington came from elected members, but nonetheless the positions taken by the leading figures appear to have represented a division between nominee and elected interests. The majority were, in effect, supporting the position of the Liberal government, with Goschen at the Poor Law Board. This may have been a matter of political loyalties, but an alternative explanation hinges on the "great objective" of the Bill, which Goschen described as being "to classify by amalgamation rather than by increased buildings".[110] This objective related not to MAD but to the Sick Asylum Districts, which Goschen was seeking Poor Law Board power to dissolve and replace with union amalgamations: that is, to abolish at least some of the 1867 nominee-headed bodies and replace them with more elective structures. If this is what the dispute between MAD's managers was about, it makes sense that the elected members would support Goschen. The nominees' apparent support for Torrens (whose first sally against the Bill had been an attempt to delay it through the setting up of a Royal Commission or select committee[111]) suggests that they may have been motivated by stronger loyalties to the nominee concept to which they owed their influential positions. Indeed, six MAD nominees became nominees also on Sick Asylum Districts: Wyatt,

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[108]32 & 33 Vict. c. 63.
[109]LMA MAD III, 19.6.69; *Hansard* 7.6.1869 col.1348; Hodgkinson, op. cit., 506.
[110]*Hansard* 28.5.1869 col. 962.
[111]Ibid., 7.6.1869 col. 1350.

Borlase Adams and W. H. Smith on the Central London SAD, and East End employers Charrington and Wigram on the Poplar and Stepney SAD, together with Spence, an elected member but also an East End employer.[112] A seventh employer, Currie, was first a SAD nominee and only later joined also the MAD nominee ranks. Alternatively, having been appointed nominees by a Conservative government, the nominees may simply have been opposing a Liberal measure on political grounds.

At the end of the third year of MAD's existence, therefore, there appears still to have been a distinction between the interests of nominated and elected members. The General Purposes Committee had by this stage become in some respects a partly autonomous body dominated by nominee interests, but it remained accountable, ultimately, to the Board of Management, where leading elected members were still able to achieve a majority. The Committee seems to have been orientated towards trouble-shooting and achieving control on issues regarded by the Poor Law Board's ministerial or official elements as sensitive or particularly significant.

Fourth Year: 1870-71

MAD's fourth year,1870-71, appears to have been the stage when the role and activities of its managers began to focus to a proportionately greater extent on practical health goals. In his annual chairman's report at the end of the year, Dr.Brewer pointed out that all of the proposed hospitals and asylums had opened, and that the year had also seen a serious outbreak of disease, which had "severely tried the resources and endurance" of the Board of Management. The most serious feature had been that almost half of these patients were normally self-supporting, and not of the type usually to call on the poor law for help.

Brewer's address had an inspirational tinge, with the use of rhetoric such as "....have a fair prospect before you of turning back the tide" of disease, and "..... your energies and self-denial will not be less than the occasion may demand".

Another significant reference in his report was to a further change in committee responsibilities: the members of each committee would apportion the duties of "constant supervision" of the four hospitals at Homerton and Stockwell among

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[112]PP 1871 lix, Accounts & Papers, 465-99.

themselves, "onerous as the task may be, and despite the risk and cost". It was likely, of course, that problems of time and cost would weigh more heavily on tradesmen and other working members of the committees than on those of independent means with the leisure to donate their time to magisterial and other unpaid social duties.

However, Brewer's address, with its emphasis on unity, past achievements and future goals, avoided any suggestion of disagreements or divisions other than those between the Board and external opponents who had, for instance, levelled "bitter vituperation" against the managers for their choice of residentially desirable sites for their new institutions. With a common enemy, and the prospect of parliament adding "an additional series of duties", there was clearly a basis for the future strengthening of a sense of corporate loyalty on the Board of Management. Brewer himself spoke of a "strong feeling of regard for our colleagues (that) has grown up in the breast of every member of this Board".

Whether there was evidence thereafter of a continuation of distinct nominee and elected perspectives is not a concern of this study, which stops at the end of the watershed year 1870-71. In 1874, however, *The Times*, in a leading article, attacked both MAD and the indirectly elected Metropolitan Board of Works as "authorities which are estranged from the people of the Metropolis, and distrusted as they are estranged".[113]

This analysis of the first four years of the Board has confirmed, it is suggested, that MAD exhibited some elements found in present-day "quangos". Funding, while not provided by government, was raised on its authority, and although the choice of three-quarters of the managers was not in the hands of government, its own nominees wielded significant power. Nominees had in effect had executive authority delegated to them by the Minister, and the 15 nominees appear largely to have acted together, sometimes with the support of some of the elected members (who were, or are likely to have been, sympathetic colleagues on the boards of guardians from which some of the nominees came - particularly from Stepney, St. Pancras and other "northern" parishes such as Paddington and Hampstead). The nominees clearly saw their role as being "to supervise or develop activity in areas of public interest",[114] and sought to maintain and increase their influence in order to achieve the goals set by government. They were a

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[113]Keith-Lucas, op. cit., 197.
[114]*Chambers Dictionary*, op. cit.

conscious and, in the main, cohesive elite, largely from socio-economically superior backgrounds and expecting or seeking a leadership role.

Elected managers, on the other hand, appear to have pursued the interests of the local bodies and localities that they had been elected to represent, and sought to maintain control of MAD in order to achieve policy goals acceptable to their localities. They were more likely to press for comparatively radical policies (for instance, equalisation of rates and valuation), and those most actively pursuing such policies tended to come from smaller West End local bodies, East End bodies not represented on MAD by a JP, and local bodies south of the river. Their selection as MAD representatives arose out of their positions as members of local governing elites, or "natural leaders", and they demonstrated considerable political skills in pursuit of their policies and interests. They appear, indeed, to have been politically more effective than the nominees imposed on the poor law governing process by central government, and were only defeated through constitutional tactics such as the re-structuring of the General Purposes Committee (to which they had, of course, agreed); even then, defeat was only partial.

The analysis of MAD's minutes also shows that a major aim underlying the institutional and financial provisions of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* was the achievement of higher spending on poor law health services, particularly in fields where public concern had been manifested. The major role of nominees in this respect was not to restrict or monitor Common Poor Fund spending, as suggested by Hardy and others in parliament on occasion, but to encourage substantial expenditure financed by ratepayers.[115] The very significant growth in importance of the General Purposes Committee, and the transfer of its chairmanship from elected to nominee hands, shows the sensitivity of nominees to threats to the financing of poor law health re-organisation. When the purse became an issue, power was redistributed within MAD in order to enlarge nominee participation in financial decision-making.

MAD's minutes confirm, therefore, that the state growth brought about by the *Metropolitan Poor Act* was accompanied by a conscious extension of gentlemanly power through the nominee provisions.

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[115]PP 1866 xxxv, op. cit., 13, illustrates the conflicting demands from central government for less, or more, local poor law spending, in that Villiers, in his last annual report, criticised spending increases in Middlesex and some other counties in two successive years which, though they had "not been very considerable", could not, he said, he justified by the state of trade or agriculture.

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That landed gentry, members of the aristocracy and Justices of the Peace should see it as their role to exercise a controlling hand on local poor relief income and expenditure was of course far from new, and the New Poor Law, in incorporating the ex-officio membership of J.P.s on boards of guardians, had provided precisely for this perceived need, although with varying degrees of success. A problem, as has been noted widely, was the difficulty of finding sufficient members of these elites (and of larger businessmen in the urban areas) who were willing to sit on boards of guardians with local tradesmen and farmers for the often tedious routine administration of relief and localised political disagreements.

What was entirely new on the Metropolitan Asylums Board was the fact that central government (ministers and civil servants) actually hand-picked and appointed their own nominees, who did not need to be J.P.s, and therefore were not either ex-officio or co-opted. This was indeed a new kind of organisation, but has not previously been recognised as such probably for two reasons: because MAD's massive programme of building "England's first state hospitals" has distracted attention from the innovatory nature of its political structure, and because the New Poor Law's introduction of ex-officios in 1834, building on centuries-old traditions, has somehow obscured the fact that the 1867 Act was not a continuation of this tradition but a new departure.

Cain and Hopkins[116] have argued that gentlemanly ruling elites were not destroyed by capitalism but absorbed and adapted it through their control of the financial and service sectors. In the metropolis in the 1860s gentlemanly ruling elites at the Poor Law Board and among the wealthy or powerful in the local communities adapted organisational structures and behaviour in order to maintain control of the expansion of poor relief. The inclusion of several substantial businessmen among the nominees, with emphasis on the East End - always a potential threat to ruling elites - confirms the existence in metropolitan policy-making at this time of an instinct for gentlemanly survival through compromise and assimilation. Cain and Hopkins have described this

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[116]P. J. Cain & A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914* (London, 1993).

type of process as a "distinctive form of conservative progress, one that safeguarded tradition and privilege while .... offering prospects of material improvement", with the co-option of "the new urban middle class .... into the defence of property and order".[117] "Gentlemanly quangoism" on MAD was the fore-runner of a new genus of political decision-making bodies that is still alive, well, and prolific today, and its origins in the reform and reaction tensions of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* deserve wider attention than they have hitherto received.

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[117]Ibid., 467.

CHAPTER 7. A Pattern of Power at the Poor Law Board

Some major questions of relevance to the process of government growth in the nineteenth-century still remain to be answered. A central issue is the role of the Poor Law Board in relation to the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* genesis and implementation. The Board was one of 16 government departments that in 1854, as Roberts has shown, had important powers over local authorities, but it and its predecessor, the Poor Law Commission, also had other extensive legislative, administrative, judicial and financial powers, some of them unique.[1] Of particular significance to this study are the individuals in authority at the Board (parliamentarians and officials), together with their attitudes and actions.

The top positions at the Board from 1847 to 1871[2] were the two parliamentary representatives (the President and the Parliamentary Secretary), the senior paid officials based in London (the Permanent Secretary and two Assistant Secretaries), and the 12 inspectors for the poor law districts (who included the metropolitan inspector); two medical inspectors were added in the 1860s. The full Commission, nominally in charge, consisted of the President and four ex-officio major officers of state - the Lord President of the Council, the Lord Privy Seal, the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but they "never met and were never intended to meet".[3] Effective power and authority was wielded by the President, Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and inspectors, subject to parliament's approval.

In practice, because of other duties and habitually short tenures of office, Sidney and Beatrice Webb suggest, the Presidents of the Poor Law Board (of whom there were 12 in 24 years) and their parliamentary Private Secretaries were less fully involved in the functioning of the department than their three Commissioner predecessors had been. It

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[1]D. Roberts, *Victorian Origins of the British Welfare State* (Yale, 1969), 106-115.
[2]In 1847 the three-man salaried 1834 Poor Law Commission was replaced by the Poor Law Board headed by two politicians accountable to parliament and a nominal parliamentary Commission of four; in 1871 the Board was replaced by the Local Government Board.
[3]S. & B. Webb, *English Local Government*, vol. 8 (London, 1929), 191.

was the civil servants, the Webbs say, nominally the subordinates of the minister, who took the place of the three Poor Law Commissioners in the "detailed consideration of policy and the overcoming of difficulties".[4]

While there is logic in this assessment in terms of workload, the implied interpretation of the policy-making balance between politicians and civil servants is contradicted by a closer examination of the part played by the Presidents in the 1860s and also, as noted in earlier chapters, by the role of other political influences. For instance, the Webbs' claim about the *Union Chargeability Act 1865* that "without detracting from the merits of the minister, we may recognise in the solution the achievement of the civil servants" is clearly inappropriate. The 1865 Act - seen widely as a milestone on the road to further redistribution, particularly in the metropolis - owed a great deal to the persistent arguments, campaigning and co-ordinated political tactics from 1857 of the Rate Equalisation Association.

The Webbs reject a significant political dimension in favour of a major administrative and incremental policy-making role for civil servants. For instance, they suggest of the 1865 Act that "after half a century of confusion" the officials of the Poor Law Board had succeeded in resolving a range of problems which had "taxed the brains of successive generations of statesmen", and that "the indirect approach to the problem, suggested by the official mind, along the lines found to be immediately practicable, had proved at last successful; instead of the more logical direct assault of a position which passion and prejudice had made impregnable".[5]

In fact both politicians and administrators showed an acute perception of political implications when contesting or proposing changes in poor law administration, and there is little evidence of the Board being "the chimera of an agency acting free of political influence" that was claimed of its predecessor, the Commission.[6] The reason for this contrast with the work of government departments such as those involved in the *Local Government Act* of 1858[7] and the Passenger Acts[8] is the poor law political

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[4]Ibid., 192-3.
[5]Ibid., 430-1.
[6]Roberts (1969), op. cit., 134.
[7]R. Lambert, "Central and local relations in mid-Victorian England: the Local Government Act office 1858-1871", *VS*, 6, (1962).
[8]O. MacDonagh, "The nineteenth-century revolution in government: a reappraisal", *HJ*, 1 (1958), 55, 58-61, and *A pattern of government growth 1800-60* (London, 1961).

dimension emphasised, for instance, by Fraser, Caplan and Brundage[9]. In particular the Poor Law Board's involvement with the local boards - leaders in their own communities but also channels through whom central government might influence the activities of the poor and the destitute - was a major factor in its politicisation.

II

There were four Presidents involved directly or indirectly in the genesis or implementation of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*: the Liberal/Radical Charles Pelham Villiers (July 1859 - June 1866), Hardy (July 1866 - May 1867), the Conservative Earl of Devon, who led the Board from the House of Lords (May 1867 - November 1868) and George Joachim Goschen (December 1868 - March 1871). Devon has been particularly neglected historiographically,[10] or misinterpreted, with the result that the roles of the others have been distorted. A closer study of the manner in which they fulfilled their Presidential roles is needed.

Villiers' career at the Poor Law Board indicates an identification of the interests and views of the parliamentary heads with those of the paid senior staff, for instance in the large-scale mobilisation of staff evidence on his 1861-4 "Whitewashing Committee", and the committee's recommendations, which were, to a significant degree, defensive.[11] His long involvement in poor law questions - including participation in the 1832-4 enquiry and the protracted struggles over removal and settlement - may have contributed to this affinity, and also partially explains his careful incremental political tactics during his seven-year term as President.

When the Conservatives returned to power in 1866 Ayrton gave his own interpretation of the opportunities that had been afforded him on Villiers' committee. It

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[9]D. Fraser, "The poor law as a political institution" in (ed.) D. Fraser, *The New Poor Law in the nineteenth century* (London, 1978), 111; Brundage (1978), op. cit., 183-4; Caplan, op. cit., 285-93.
[10]Fraser (1984), op. cit., 93, for instance, overlooks Devon's Presidency entirely, calling Goschen "Hardy's successor at the Poor Law Board".
[11]PP 1864 ix, op. cit., 49, 51, 54-5. The committee recommended placing the Board on a permanent footing, and resolved, for instance, that there were "no sufficient grounds" for interfering with the present system of medical relief other than with medicine provision, that the state of workhouse education, making allowances for various circumstances, was "upon the whole satisfactory", and that principal officers of unions and parishes should not be dismissed unless the Poor Law Board agreed. See also chapter 5, p. 127.

was, he said, "only when the existence of the Poor Law Board was imperilled, that official personages would consent to the appointment of a committee to investigate the operation of the poor law in the metropolis and other parts of the country".[12] A parliamentary comment two days before on a different matter has perhaps also some relevance here: that "there was a very substantial reason why gentlemen who were great departmental reformers before coming into office, should cease to be so after they had held office - namely, that official experience and information taught them that things were not so bad as they had imagined, and even that a great deal was right and proper which they had thought to be the reverse before."[13]

In terms of decisions to implement reforms, the unrealised undertaking given by the Liberal President in 1866 to introduce a measure "for more effectually securing the execution of the laws relating to the relief of the poor in the metropolis"[14] arose as much from the vigorous 1865-6 campaigns organised by Florence Nightingale and other major figures, buttressed by the workhouse scandals,[15] as from his own select committee's conclusions. (O'Neill's view is that the previous year "Miss Nightingale had apparently concluded either that Villiers lacked the qualities needed to convince parliament of the need for poor law medical reform or that the best hope might be to persuade Palmerston, the Prime Minister".[16]) The triangular relationship that developed between Villiers, Miss Nightingale and the metropolitan poor law inspector, H. B. Farnall (who, according to his own account, tried to "push along" Villiers on the subject of a hospital and asylums rate) offers further evidence (if one accepts Farnall's account) that Villiers' style of central control was defensive rather than reformist, and certainly evidence that some senior Poor Law Board staff were closely involved in political activities.[17] Eight years earlier Farnall's political manoeuvres had included an attempt to persuade metropolitan boards of guardians to reject the Rate Equalisation Association's statistical arguments for redistribution; the executive committee's

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[12]*Hansard* 6.8.1866 col. 2102.
[13]Ibid., 4.8.1866, 2066. (Reply by Corry.)
[14]Ibid., 12.2.1866 col. 345.
[15]O'Neil, op. cit., 270-8; Cook, op. cit., 131-5.
[16]O'Neill, op. cit., 272.
[17]Cook, op. cit., 131-5; Nightingale Papers, BL Add. Mss. 45786, f.188, 20.2.1866 & f.192, 2.1.1867: letters from H.B.Farnall to F. Nightingale. (Farnall assured Miss Nightingale, who was anxious about confidentiality, that he had burned her letters.)

response was to resolve to write to the Poor Law Board protesting against his actions as being "inconsistent with the duties of the office for which he is paid by the public".[18]

When Hardy, the new broom, arrived at the Poor Law Board in July 1866 and in less than a month swept Farnall away to Yorkshire and the East Midlands - even having to fund the replacement inspector's sudden and unexpected transfer to London "at almost a day's notice" with a special payment from the Treasury[19] - Villiers tackled Hardy in the Commons about Farnall's transfer.[20] Although Farnall had made himself unpopular with local elected representatives in the metropolis, Villiers defended the inspector's position, asking "whether his withdrawal at this peculiar time had reference to any ground of complaint that he (Hardy) had against Mr. Farnall personally, or on account of the manner in which he had discharged his duties".

When the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Daily News* suggested that the new President was supporting conservative officials (who had "captured" him) rather than reformist officials, Hardy confided to his diary: "Villiers, Farnall &c at the bottom of it all" and "the *Daily News* ..... aimed through me at the permanent staff." Villiers, he believed, was responsible for "abuse" in the *Telegraph* about his transfer of Farnall and the implied criticism of Villiers himself, as head of the former administration. The former President, Hardy wrote, had also sent for Hugh Owen (the office manager whom the Webbs describe as holding "the most influential position in the Department"[21]) "and tried to pump out of him what I was doing!"[22] (Farnall had also, it has since emerged, been removing papers from the office and passing them, via Miss Nightingale, to Villiers, but there is no indication in Hardy's diary that he became aware of this.[23])

Such actions by Villiers after the end of his seven-year Presidency would suggest that he was motivated partly by simple political rivalry (as Hardy undoubtedly was also) and a continuing sense of "ownership" of his former department, but also by a continuing identification with the interests, attitudes and activities of some of the officials with whom he had worked.

Hardy's short Presidency is simpler to assess. He clearly had a specific practical brief: to produce a measure acceptable to a Liberal-dominated parliament that, as in the

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[18]GL MS 1088/1, 7.7.1858.
[19]MH32/13, 11.8. & 19.10.1866.
[20]*Hansard* 6.8.1866 col. 2096-7.
[21]Webb, op. cit., 196.
[22]Cook, op. cit., 131-5; Johnson, op. cit., 22, 23 (10,15 & 16.8.1866).
[23]Smith, op. cit., 171-172.

case of the 1867 *Reform Act*, might help "dish the Whigs". In this respect Blake's analysis of the genesis of the *Reform Act* is to a large extent applicable here also:[24] "informed, intelligent, middle class opinion" was calling for metropolitan poor law reform, and for party-political reasons Hardy had to produce an acceptable Bill. At Cabinet level the pressure to produce measures that would be political winners led Hardy to write that if they had time for them all "we must be in for some years! Such reformers of departments & general law never met. Who can call us obstructives....."[25]

The new Conservative President took purposeful control of the Poor Law Board staff: as well as dispatching Farnall northwards, he noted the tendency of Fleming, the Permanent Secretary[26] with whom Villiers had had a "feud", to "try to commit me to a course which I do not approve"; Fleming, he thought, was "inclined to take too much upon him, very civilly (sic) but pertinaceously", and to write on papers which ought to be dealt with by the President, leaving the President to deal with the civil servant's "milk and water". Hardy objected also to his senior civil servant's attempt to "tame" one of the medical inspectors, Dr. Markham, and told Markham that he wanted "his genuine and fresh opinion". Lambert (a comparatively recent recruit to the inspectoral ranks) would be, he decided, his "main help" because "he at all events is not obstructive".[27]

The question of whether Hardy removed Farnall from his metropolitan post for political reasons - such as Farnall's close working relationship with the outgoing Liberal President or his commitment to policies that may have been unacceptable to the Conservatives - needs to be considered because it casts further light on the Conservative President's relations with the permanent staff. Hodgkinson,[28] in her sympathetic account of the medical reformers' struggles, suggests that the new President "punish(ed) Farnall for his activity in aiding the Workhouse Infirmary Association". Johnson (editor of Hardy's diaries), more even-handed in her analysis, suggests that Hardy

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[24]Blake, op. cit., 100-103. Similarly to Blake's analysis of the genesis of the *Second Reform Act*, the *Metropolitan Poor Act* was not, apart from one minor instance, the product of Liberal or Radical amendments (although background manoeuvres by Ayrton - subsequently also the mover of a major Radical amendment to the *Reform Bill* - appear to have had some effect), and there is no evidence that the Act represented true aspirations of Disraeli for "Tory democracy" (and indeed the nominee clauses provide decisive evidence to the contrary).

[25]Johnson, op. cit., 22-3, 14.8.1866.

[26]Webb, op. cit., 196. Henry Fleming was a poor law civil servant for nearly 30 years: Assistant Secretary 1848-59, Permanent Secretary 1859-71, and joint secretary at the LGB from 1871 until his death in 1875. The Webbs describe him as "an undistinguished member of the Civil Service of the old type."

[27]Johnson, op. cit., 18, 22, 24 (8.7, 7.8. & 19.9.1866).

[28]R. Hodgkinson, *The origins of the National Health Service* (London, 1967), 442.

disagreed with Farnall's particular plan for the management of the metropolitan workhouses and took the opportunity to reorganise the Poor Law Board's staff.[29]

Hardy's position as a JP, ex-officio Kent guardian and chairman of Quarter Sessions[30] may however have played a greater part in the decision: Farnall's attitude to boards of guardians in his 1866 report on metropolitan workhouse infirmaries would have caused offence, and was in this respect in strong contrast to the report of Hardy's replacement inspectors. A comparison between the initial reports by Farnall and Dr. Edward Smith on the infirmaries and the subsequent joint report ordered by Hardy from the new metropolitan inspector, Uvedale Corbett jun., and Dr. W. O. Markham,[31] shows that the conclusions reached in all three reports on the physical and institutional changes needed in the metropolis were broadly similar, in conformity with contemporary educated thinking and in due course to be incorporated in the Act: that there should be classification of paupers according to their needs in separate institutions, that the pay and conditions of medical men and nursing staff should be improved, and that further buildings would need to be provided if these recommendations were to be implemented. The striking differences between the reports of Farnall and the replacement inspectors were in the attitudes they displayed to relations with local bodies. The replacement inspectors, in their courteously reasoned report, made brief, appreciative remarks about ratepayers and local poor relief and noted that instances of ill-treatment in workhouses "which have naturally excited the indignation of the public" were accidental and exceptional, with the neglect of the few unjustly being "indiscriminately visited by the public upon all". They referred briefly to the benefits of uniform standards being laid down by the Poor Law Board. Farnall, on the other hand, attacked guardians and called explicitly for a great increase in the powers of the Poor Law Board, a common metropolitan rate to pay for the additional spending required, and all additional poor law expenditure to be raised from ratepayers.

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[29]Johnson, op. cit., 21 (3.8.1866, footnote).
[30]Hodgkinson, op. cit., 442.
[31]THLHL, L.2541.335.1: *Report of H. B. Farnall, Poor Law Inspector, on the Infirmary Wards of the several Metropolitan Workhouses, and their existing arrangements,* 12 June 1866, laid before House of Commons 2 July 1866; *Report of Dr. Edward Smith, Poor Law Inspector and Medical Officer to the Poor Law Board, on the Metropolitan Workhouse Infirmaries and Sick Wards,* 26 June 1866; *Report of U. Corbett, Junior, and W. O. Markham, M.D., Poor Law Inspectors, relative to the Metropolitan Workhouses,* 8 February 1867.

The arrogant and authoritarian manner in which Farnall presented his conclusions may have caused as much offence as the criticisms and recommendations themselves, for instance in his remark that there were "always one of two reasons which the guardians adopt to avoid building a new workhouse.....that the times are so bad that the ratepayers cannot then bear the taxation necessary.....that the times are so good and pauperism so low that there is then no necessity to build a new workhouse."[32] Farnall himself was doubtless to some extent using attack as the best means of defence; he admitted that many of the faults in workhouses had been known to him for many years prior to the current medical campaigns for improvements. The same point was made two weeks after the report was laid before parliament when Hardy was asked in a Commons question "how it has happened that Mr. Farnall and others whose duty it has been to inspect these workhouses have not made known the lamentable condition of these sick wards until attention was directed to the subject by non-official persons?"[33]

The Farnall issue is important because the question that arose, following the scandals, was whether the major part of the blame should be laid at the doors of the metropolitan guardians or of the Poor Law Board and its salaried servants. The *Metropolitan Poor Act* appears to support the position of the Poor Law Board, in that it weakened the power of local elected members, but, as has been argued earlier and demonstrated in evidence, the aim of the nominee policy was to maintain or increase gentlemanly control as the Act brought about government growth. Hardy was not the only Conservative minister to make clear his objections to the activities of the Poor Law Board's metropolitan official. Earl Fortescue, who had previously been, for four years, Poor Law Board Secretary, indicated to the Lords in 1865 that in his opinion Farnall's speeches and tone when in the cotton districts had been unsuitable. The metropolitan district, he added, needed a man possessing "soundness of judgement and kindliness of feeling" and who showed "constant care and vigilance";[34] the implication of Fortescue's comments was that Farnall had none of these qualities.

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[32]Ibid., Farnall's Report, 7-8; Report by Corbett & Markham, 4, 6, 9; PP 1866 lxi, 598, minutes of the Whitechapel board of guardians, who concluded that if allegations by Farnall about their workhouse were correct, he himself would be implicated in the mismanagement.
[33]Ibid., Farnall's Report, 8; *Hansard* 17.7.1866 col. 939. Hardy gave the House Farnall's response - that he had made many reports to the Poor Law Board from time to time - but, as the newly-appointed President, did not commit himself further on the issue.
[34]*Hansard* 23.2.1865 col. 580.

The case of Farnall is symbolic of a major difference between the Presidencies of Villiers and Hardy. While the Liberal President clearly identified with the interests of the salaried staff and the central Board, Hardy, although the recipient at the end of his short Presidency of "the very hearty regrets of my Poor L[aw] Board people at my leaving",[35] showed a wariness of over-mighty central officials, using his position as a Conservative minister in a consciously political way to maintain, influence or strengthen the positions of certain local elites and professionals whilst also maintaining central political control. This conclusion about the Conservative tenure at the Poor Law Board, which may appear somewhat tenuous at this stage, will be further developed by a study of aspects of the poor law career of the next President, the Earl of Devon.

Assessments of the governmental career of the Earl of Devon - brief accounts by Hodgkinson, the Webbs and (less accessibly but indicative of opinions that are likely to have contributed to the Webbs' views) a letter in the Chadwick Papers - are not particularly complimentary. However, some early letters about the poor law by Devon himself (Lord Courtenay until 1859) help clarify his political priorities and are relevant to an understanding of the genesis and implementation of the *Metropolitan Poor Act.*

Devon' s poor law career spanned the divide between paid official and politician. As MP for South Devon from 1841 to 1849 he chaired the momentous 1846 *Select Committee on the Andover Union*[36] that preceded Chadwick's downfall and the replacement of the Poor Law Commission by the Poor Law Board, a performance for which he received praise from both sides of the House for his conduct, "courtesy and good judgement". From 1849 to 1850 he was a poor law Inspector employed by the central Board, for the substantial period 1851-9 Permanent Secretary (until he succeeded to the earldom and was replaced at the Board by the long-lasting bureaucratic Fleming), in 1859 Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and in 1867-8 Hardy's successor as President (despite Liberal protests at the fact that he sat in the Lords). On the fall of the Derby-Disraeli government, he retired from national politics. The reason for Devon's career as a paid Poor Law Board officer was financial - his father had been "financially embarrassed", and he was appointed inspector when the Liberal Viscount Ebrington, a relative, was Parliamentary Secretary to the Poor Law Board. It does not, however, seem to have been merely a matter of finding a source of income. Devon had

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[35]Johnson, op. cit., 40 (18.5.1867).
[36]PP 1846, v.

a very long-term voluntary interest as a country gentleman and JP in poor law matters, including 52 years as chairman of Devon Quarter Sessions.[37]

The Webbs suggest that Devon "proved better fitted to be a member of the legislature and a minister than a civil servant". Under him, they say, the central Board "made no great advance in either vigour or efficiency".[38] Hodgkinson (writing from the perspective of medical interests) concurs with the Webbs, saying that Devon "previously supported all the worst parts of the old system, and as a poor law inspector had always yielded to the boards of guardians". Although Devon's Presidency lasted only 18 months, she blames him for the fact that the dispensary clauses of the 1867 Act were not implemented for six years.[39]

A broadly similar view to the Webbs' but in much greater detail was expressed in 1871 by the ageing poor law inspector Gulson, one of the long-standing inspectors who had worked with Chadwick from 1834. Chadwick, out of government office but still actively pursuing poor law and other public issues, had written to at least four of his former inspectoral colleagues about model unions, and Gulson's reply consisted of an attack on the policies of the Poor Law Board - from which he had recently retired - and particularly on Devon.[40] Blaming the Board itself for an increase in pauperism and vagrancy, Gulson lamented the departure from "sound principles of relief". No one, he said, had done as much to break down the proper administration of the poor law as Devon. "First as Secretary, & afterwards as President, he gave way to the most pernicious propositions." In particular Gulson cited the allowing of "non-resident relief" (relief to local poor who had moved away), relief in aid of wages (a major 1834 issue which Gulson said had now become "very common"), and failure of the Board to support auditors who had disallowed items of guardians' expenditure.

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[37]Webb, op. cit., 195; *Hansard* 28 May 1846, cols. 1409-14; *Foster's Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage* (London, 1882). Viscount Ebrington, MP for Plymouth 1841-52 and for Marylebone 1854-9, was secretary to the Poor Law Board 1847-51.

[38]Webb, op. cit., 196.

[39]Hodgkinson, op. cit., 443. Goschen himself offered practical reasons in 1869 for the non-implementation so far of some of the 1867 dispensaries provisions (PP 1868/9 xxviii, 21st Annual Report of the Poor Law Board).

[40]UCL Chadwick MSS 795, no. 149; S. E. Finer, "The transmission of Benthamite ideas 1820-50" in G. Sutherland (ed.), *Studies in the growth of government* (London, 1972), 13-19, names Gulson as one of several Poor Law Board officials who, "after contact with Chadwick.....behaved as though impregnated with Benthamite notions", and who were involved in a process he defines as "irradiation, suscitation, permeation" with Benthamism.

These accusations suggest that the Board - particularly during Devon's two periods of office - encouraged or allowed more generous and less punitive policies towards the poor and showed less sympathy for the auditors' role of policing local guardians' spending. Gulson's comment that "exception became the rule" under Devon suggests a flexible and less rule-bound approach by the Conservative peer. His remark that "... medical men and the ladies became masters" may indicate that Devon also had a political instinct for taking account of interest groups and sources of influence.

Devon's own expression of his views on poor law policy and administration are available not only in *Hansard* but also in a few of his inspectoral reports in 1849-50. These are a more private and confidential source than his parliamentary speeches, and therefore particularly useful in assessing the nature of his contribution to the process of government growth at the Poor Law Board. Neither of these sources seems to have been taken into account by the Webbs or Hodgkinson.

Hansard shows that Devon's publicly expressed views in his earlier parliamentary days occupied the wide middle ground of poor law opinion. He supported the replacement of the Poor Law Commissioners by "a more direct parliamentary responsibility", believed that poor law principles were "upon the whole sound and safe" and, while opposed to "a harsh and unbending series of rules and regulations", supported "that degree of uniformity which was essential to the just administration of the law". He condemned the Andover Union for its "very unnecessary harshness", criticised the Commissioners on the issue (but not as severely as some did) and (more unusually) defended Chadwick, on the grounds that he "manifested the greatest energy and anxiety to promote sound principles in the administration of the poor law .... and to improve the moral and physical well-being of the labouring classes".[41]

Devon's confidential inspectoral reports indicate that he saw the poor law operating in "the transitional period through which the agricultural population of the South of England of all classes will have to pass" as a result of "the low prices of agricultural products". There was a hint of class anxiety in his call for "watchful and anxious consideration" of the agricultural poor because it was they who would experience the most severe hardship and difficulties.[42]

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[41] *Hansard* 18.5.1846 col. 1080 & 1083, 17.6.1846 col. 680-2.
[42] MH32/1, 11.6.1849, early 1850 & 15.1.1851 (shortly before Devon's appointment as Permanent Secretary).

This was the closest that Devon came in his reports to hinting at anxieties about rural instability. The only poor law guardians he referred to were "the more intelligent guardians" with whose ideas on reform of the poor law he concurred, and there was no indication of disagreement with guardians' exercise of authority: an issue that sometimes arose in other inspectors' districts, including the metropolis. Also absent were references to poor law discipline, authority or efficiency - apart from reporting that in hard times in some unions he had recommended outdoor relief for the aged and children in order that guardians might apply the workhouse test to the able-bodied. His interest in allotments places him among Brundage's "Tory paternalists".[43]

Two of his themes were to be relevant nearly 20 years later to aspects of the *Metropolitan Poor Act.* He distinguished between unenlightened employers (often men of little or no capital) who, fearing low prices for their produce, reduced wages or numbers of labourers in disregard of the effect on "the general social condition of the community" and the poor rate, and "enlightened men of the upper classes" who tried to improve the condition of the agricultural labourer, often in their own localities. From the example and influence of these more enlightened views, he said, he hoped for "a gradual extension of sound opinions and more humane feelings". The second theme was growing dissatisfaction with the removal and settlement laws; his generalised solution - reform of the law - became more explicit on the eve of his appointment as Permanent Secretary. The opinion of the more intelligent guardians with whom he had spoken, he wrote, "points to an extension of the area as well for settlement as for rating" - that is, in favour of union-based settlement (and therefore chargeability) rather than a parish-based system.[44]

It is unusual to cite rural poor law evidence in support of metropolitan arguments, but the Earl of Devon's unique position as a leading member of the West Country territorial aristocracy who became a Poor Law Board civil servant and later minister makes his inspectoral views significant. His perception of wealthy "enlightened" and poorer "unenlightened" agricultural employers (and "enlightened" guardians who are likely also to have been among the wealthier members of local boards) appears to have a

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[43]A. Brundage, *England's "Prussian Minister": Edwin Chadwick and the Politics of Government Growth 1832-1854* (London, 1988), 37, describes allotments as "a favourite device of Tory paternalists like Michael Sadler, who had proposed a bill in 1831 that would have provided quarter-acre allotments with government-subsidised housing".
[44]MH 32/11, 11.6.1849, early 1850 & 15.1.1851.

parallel in the nominee selections that he presided over in 1867 and the role that they clearly were given on the Metropolitan Asylums Board of delivering expanded medical services despite the financial reservations of metropolitan guardians. His inspectoral comments on removal, settlement and chargeability suggest, however, sympathy with those in parliament who struggled to extend union authority against the 20-year opposition of the landed gentry;[45] some of his phrases, indeed, are identical to some of those used in the resolutions of the radically reform-minded 1847 *Select Committee on Settlement and Poor Removal.*[46]

The Webbs' criticism of Devon seems therefore to represent a simplification of a rather more complex approach to the role of central government regulation of poor relief. Gulson's attack indicates that Devon was no supporter of Chadwick-style regulation and Benthamist efficiency as ends in themselves, and similarly the analysis, in an earlier chapter, of MAD's composition and activities while Devon was in charge at the Poor Law Board shows that the President maintained his earlier aristocratic identification with the interests of the traditional wealthy local elites who controlled many boards of guardians. But Devon's explicit and consistent inspectoral support for the 1834 framework of union-based rather than parish-based control suggests an approach to government growth that involved accepting the need for social change while working to ensure ultimate control remained in the hands of traditional gentlemanly elites.

Brundage's conclusions that the "purpose and result" (of the New Poor Law) were "to reorganise and strengthen the power of the country's traditional leaders over their localities", and that JP-guardians' tendencies to liberality helped keep rural areas "relatively trouble-free", clearly have a degree of relevance here. Similarly his finding that poor law reforms benefited landed magnates needs to be taken into account when noting Devon's support for reforms such as union chargeability and the freer movement of labour. Such interpretations cast a clearer light on the more comprehensive picture now emerging of the Conservative President's gentlemanly perspective when implementing the *Metropolitan Poor Act* in 1867-8.[47]

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[45]Caplan, op. cit., 273-8.
[46]PP 1847, xi. (Nine resolutions are reproduced in Caplan's article.)
[47]A. Brundage, "Reform of the Poor Law Electoral System, 1834-94", *ALB*, 7 (1975, 205; Brundage (1978), op. cit., 182, 184.

In terms of the party perspectives of both Conservative Presidents, Blake's conclusion that their party needed, in the Derby-Disraeli period, to show that it was not "the 'stupid' party, likely to provoke revolution by pursuing a narrow agrarian class interest", but "fit to govern" and "*the* party of government"[48] may also be relevant here. Devon's record prior to his Presidency shows, indeed, that his own aristocratic governing instincts coincided with such an approach, and places him somewhat far from the "red-faced country squires who thronged the back benches".[49]

That both Devon and his Liberal successor, Goschen (and also Villiers and Hardy) followed an administrative rationale involving broad principles of efficiency and economy within a framework of orders and rules is clear from the voluminous and detailed Poor Law Board files, and is not disputed in this study. The two major Poor Law Board Acts passed in the two years following the *Metropolitan Poor Act* (under Devon and under Goschen) both sought to achieve greater standardisation of poor law provision under the Poor Law Board within the 1834 framework. Devon's *Poor Law Amendment Act* 1868[50] increased the Poor Law Board's powers to dissolve or amend unions, including Local Act unions and the 1782 Gilbert Unions, throughout England, and Goschen's *Metropolitan Poor Amendment Act* 1869[51] specifically extended some of the 1868 additional powers over Local Act parishes to the metropolis and removed the still existing requirement of the consent of two-thirds of guardians before a metropolitan union could be dissolved; the central Board was also enabled to issue an order and make regulations "as the nature of the case shall in their judgement require", without the confirmation of parliament. In practical terms, by the end of his first year Devon was able to report that, in addition to getting MAD under way, he had formed five Sick Asylum Districts (SADs), issued orders for the election of boards of guardians for the ten Local Act parishes, and instructed 17 boards of guardians to set up infirmaries detached from workhouses.[52]

MacDonagh's legislative-administrative process[53] is relevant here insofar as the Poor Law Board's pursuit of increasingly centralised standard procedures may have derived part of its momentum from officials' identification of deficiencies in systems.

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[48]Blake, op. cit., 104-5.
[49]ibid., 104.
[50]31 & 32 Vict. c.122.
[51]32 & 33 Vict. c.63.
[52]PP 1867/8 xxxiii, op. cit., 15-24.
[53]MacDonagh (1958), op. cit., 58-61.

However, these two Acts were passed by Presidents anxious that their parties remain in power in the politically turbulent mid-1860s, and it is clear that there was a conscious political assessment of the legislation needed to achieve standards that a more widely informed public was growing to expect. Expansion of Poor Law Board power passed, therefore, through the two very different filters of the Earl of Devon's aristocratic instincts (towards paternalism, stability and prosperity) and Goschen's City businessman's background.

But Devon's 1868 Act went further. It not only extended the Poor Law Board's powers to standardise the law and control local bodies but also repealed the requirement of the previous year that *Metropolitan Poor Act* nominees be resident within the area of their board.[54] The change widened still further the difference in the recruitment bases of elected and nominated members, in that elected members continued to have to live within the local union that they represented, whereas the elite nominees did not even have to be resident ratepayers within the wider area of their district board but could have property occupancy anywhere. It may have followed renewed requests from JPs, who had previously tried unsuccessfully to persuade Hardy to include this concession in his Bill as it passed through parliament.[55] Devon's willingness to appoint to positions of power any approved individuals, several of whom had rural estates, may indicate an interest in extending to the metropolis the benefits of gentlemanly control more commonly found in the countryside, and in finding "enlightened" and more generous guardians of the kind that, as an aristocratic JP and inspector, he had approved in the west country.

The Goschen Presidency produced distinctive policies that confirm again that change at the central Board was driven not only by administrative considerations but also by political perceptions. The hand of Liberal policy was apparent most clearly in Goschen's Gladstonian economising - the application of a brake to the escalating costs of the Conservatives' generous plans to expand poor law services at the expense of metropolitan ratepayers - and in further rate equalisation: the addition, in 1870,[56] of the indoor maintenance of paupers in workhouses and asylums to the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund. The Act also, however, tightened Poor Law Board controls in the

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[54] 31 & 32 Vict. c. 122, s. 9.
[55] LMA MA/RS1/233, Middlesex April General Session, 1867, report of the Parliamentary Committee, 28.2.1867, on Bills referred to them by Quarter Sessions.
[56] 33 & 34 Vict. c.18 s.1.

metropolis considerably by introducing financial penalties and inducements.[57] Guardians or managers who failed to follow the Board's orders - about altering or enlarging workhouses, providing proper drainage, sewers, ventilation, fixtures, furniture, surgical or medical appliances, or complying with classification requirements - would not be reimbursed from the Fund for that category of expense; on the other hand, a capitation allowance for indoor paupers, also from the equalised Fund, was to be payable only for a certified number of paupers, to encourage utilisation of facilities but discourage overcrowding.

These principles of cost-cutting and poor relief discipline appeared also in the famous "Goschen Minute",[58] which regularised the role of charitable giving (in keeping with the approach of the Charity Organisation Society, set up in April 1869, seven months before the Minute, which "claimed to reconcile the divisions in society"[59]), defined the parameters of state action at the local level and emphasised "one of the most recognised principles" underlying the New Poor Law, that relief should be given only to the "actually destitute". The following year, in his annual Poor Law Board report, Goschen in effect called specifically for cost-cutting by metropolitan guardians when he suggested that they should make greater use of the workhouse test ("strict adherence... to the rules and regulations....(for) out-door relief"[60]). In all, this was an approach somewhat different in emphasis from that of the apparently more flexibly-minded Conservative J.P. who had preceded him in office.

However, although Goschen emphasised in parliament his intention of reducing extensively the costs of implementing the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, the only major cut was the virtual removal of four of the six SADs[61] set up by Devon as smaller companions to MAD. Goschen, placing the blame on errors in Hardy's estimates and also on increases in pauperism and building costs, admitted that removing the SADs would reduce only a small part of the overall increase, but pointed out nonetheless that cutting them would

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[57]*Hansard* 25.4.1870, col. 1783. ("The power of the purse", Goschen argued, should be available to the Poor Law Board in place of the more cumbersome legal power of mandamus.)
[58]PP 1870 xxxv, 9-12. The Minute was issued on 20.11.1869.
[59]C. L. Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society 1869-1913* (London, 1913), 1-22.
[60]PP 1871 xxvii, 23rd Annual Report of the Poor Law Board, xx.
[61]Hodgkinson, op. cit., 505-9; Ayres, op. cit., 28. *Hansard* 28.5.1869 col. 946-61. Hodgkinson, who has written the most detailed account so far of the early history of the SADs, refers frequently to decisions, views, statements and actions of "the Poor Law Board" rather than of particular ministers or governments (with a few references to "the officials"); her perspective is mainly that of Dr. Rogers and other medical men.

also reduce revenue spending on management and administration of their boards and staff.[62] The figures given by Goschen to parliament (with gaps and inaccuracies) show that the SAD removal represented a deletion of only one-sixth (£20,000) from Hardy's projection for the SADs. Goschen's explanation that Hardy's estimates had been low because they had omitted the costs of purchasing new sites and of some of the furniture and fittings suggests extraordinary incompetence by civil servants; the fact that the obvious expenditure item of changes to workhouses arising from classification had also been wholly omitted suggests, however, that Hardy himself may not have been blameless. Goschen himself massaged the figures to some extent by presenting two sets of estimates, the first of which showed a massive increase in all capital costs over the 1867 estimates, and the second of which then brought these estimates down a little. The differences, however, were startling: from Hardy's £360,000 to Goschen's first estimate of £1,400,000 and then second estimate (minus the four SADs and small reductions on schools and in MAD spending on smallpox/fever hospitals) to £l,050,000. (See *Figures 14 & 15.*)[63]

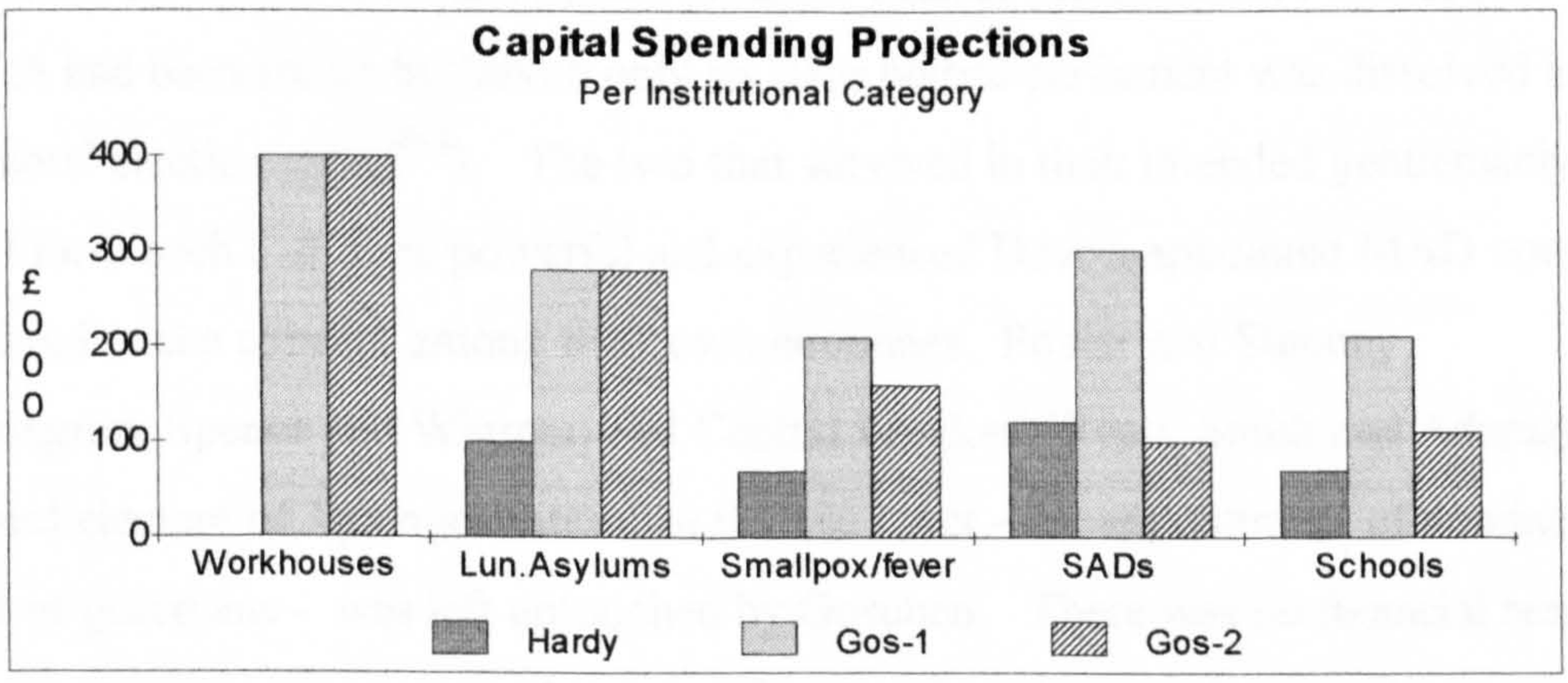

Figure 14. Comparisons between Hardy's predicted amounts in 1867, Goschen's 1869 revised estimates,and Goschen's new 1869 proposals. (Note: Hardy gave no figures for spending on workhouses.)

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[62] *Hansard* 28.5.1869 col. 952-5, 957; PP 1868/9 xxviii, 21st Annual Report of Poor Law Board, vi.
[63] *Hansard* 8.2.1867, col. 173; 28.5.1869, col. 946-52

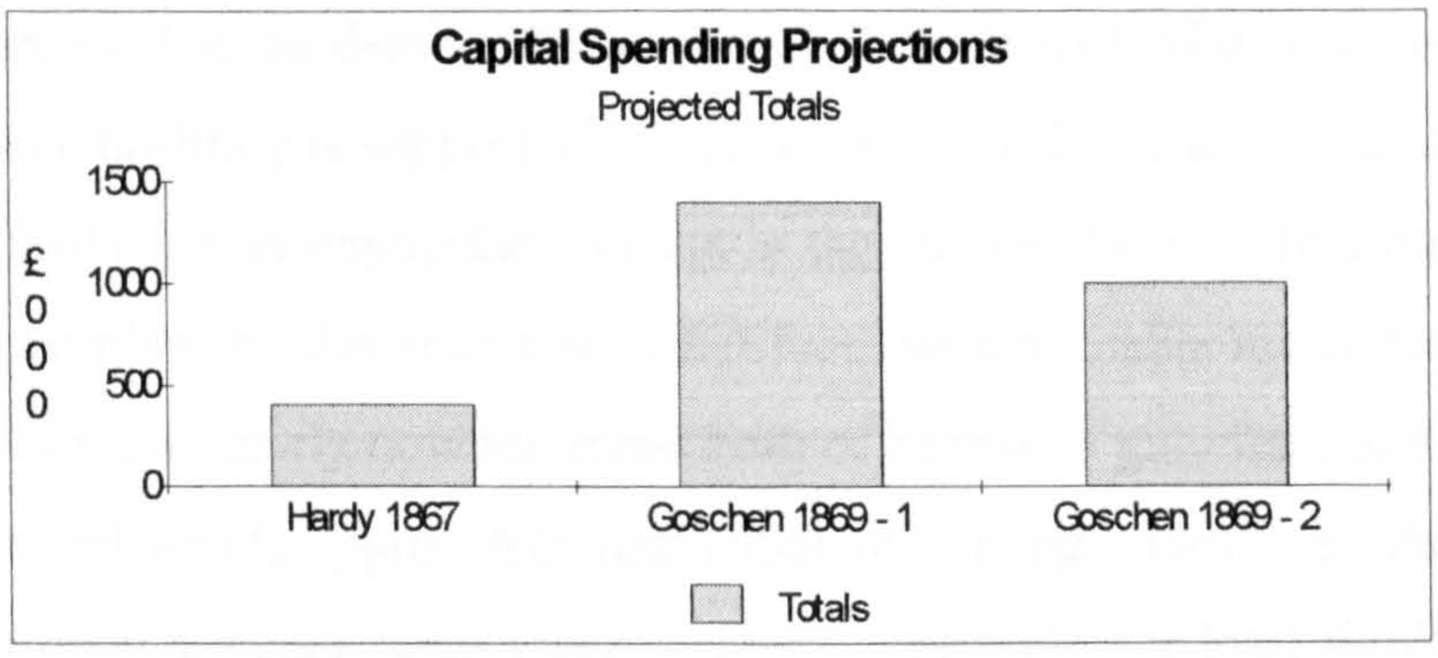

Figure 15. Comparisons between Hardy's 1867 predicted total, Goschen's 1869 revised estimated total, and Goschen's new 1869 proposed total.

The enormous rise in estimated expenditure over the two years and Goschen's decision, nonetheless, to maintain three-quarters of the programme suggests that despite Liberal retrenchment priorities he concurred with his Conservative predecessors on the policy of using high rate-borne spending as a means of resolving metropolitan poor relief pressures.

Indeed, the only major cut Goschen did make - the four SADs - appears to have been forced on him by local and radical pressure against these nominee bodies (the last of which had been set up by Devon only six days before parliament was dissolved and the general election called[64]). The two that survived in their intended gentlemanly-headed form each had three powerful and experienced Devon-appointed MAD nominees committed to the concept among their own nominees: Poplar and Stepney (Charrington, Spence and Wigram) and Central London (Wyatt, Smith and Adams). The third element of "quango-isation" in the 1867 Act - the appointment of nominees to boards of guardians - was left untouched by Goschen. There was no financial reason to remove the provision and, perhaps significantly, the minority of unions (six out of 30) that had received nominees were broadly in the same two areas in which the SADs survived: the East End (five) and Central London (one, the controversial Strand union, over which medical men and guardians had clashed). Both of these were also areas where contrasts of wealth were particularly apparent, with wealthier employers or gentlemen working or living close to poorer tradesmen and labourers.[65]

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[64]PP 1868/9, xxviii, op. cit. The Finsbury SAD was formed on 5.11.1868 and parliament was dissolved on 11.11.1868.

[65]PP 1871 lix, Accounts & Papers, 465-99. The six unions were Bethnal Green (where the nominees included E. N. Buxton, brewer and MAD nominee), Mile End Old Town (where nominees included Spencer Charrington, brewer, who won the Mile End parliamentary seat for the Conservatives in 1885,

The argument that the demise of four out of Devon's six SADs was pressed on Goschen by public hositility is supported by parliamentary debates and Goschen's annual report;[66] they had been an unpopular concept in the metropolis since first proposed in 1844,[67] and as nominee bodies aiming to redistribute within smaller areas than the whole metropolis were clearly now the rivals both of boards of guardians and of the now acceptable metropolis-wide approach to redistributive funding. However, the fact that the four discontinued nominee bodies were probably politically the least significant of the six, and the other two were retained, indicates that the SAD concept itself was not rejected by Goschen.

There are three further important points that one can note about Goschen's 1869 Bill. The first is that one of Goschen's two named supporting ministers was Ayrton,[68] at this stage the new economy-minded parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury. Given Ayrton's tenacious pursuit of metropolitan issues (and his objection, in the 1867 First Reading, to Hardy's proposed "multiplicity" of district boards on the grounds of unnecessary expense and inefficiency[69]), it is likely that he contributed to the content of the Bill. Second, the removal of some of the Conservatives' new cohorts of management and administration, and their replacement by enlarged unions in some cases, constituted a re-instatement of some of the powers of boards of guardians - although some smaller Local Act management bodies of longer-standing were also removed. Third, the new programme of union and parish amalgamations not only retained but extended the major institutional principle underlying the 1867 Act, the classification of paupers: an 1834 principle that, in the context of the new amalgamations, would achieve further rate equalisation within the new unions through enlarging the area of chargeability and would also further reduce removability.[70]

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and William Newton, Radical and newspaper owner who supported Captain Maxse against Ayrton in 1874), Poplar (where C. H. Wigram was an active nominee), Whitechapel, Shoreditch St. Leonard, and Strand (where Gladstone's son, W. H. Gladstone, MP, became a nominee but attended only three times in 1869-70).

[66] *Hansard* 28.5.1869 col. 946-52, 957; PP 1868/9 xxviii, op. cit., 17-18.

[67] 7 & 8 Vict. c.101, *Poor Law Amendment Act 1844*. In contrast, Villiers' organisation of the metropolis into five poor law districts - East, West, North, South, Central - (PP 1866 xxxv, op. cit., 12) which appears to have been for statistical purposes only, and certainly did not involve either redistribution or changes in control, was unopposed.

[68] *Hansard* 28.5.1869 col. 946.

[69] Ibid., 8.2.1867 col. 175-7.

[70] Ibid., 28.5.1869, 959-60; PP 1868/9 xxviii, op. cit., 17; PP 1868/9 iv, 63, Metropolitan Poor Amendment Bill.

The 1869 Bill, it is clear, conformed with several long-standing political priorities associated with Ayrton and other radicals in and out of Parliament, and also with the interests of various metropolitan local representative bodies. At least initially, therefore, when Goschen was finding his feet at the Poor Law Board, there was a distinct change in political emphasis at the Board, with the interests of more radical local elected representatives experiencing a brief surge of support. This change of political approach - a process that had occurred also when Villiers was succeeded by Hardy - confirms that legislative direction was influenced to a significant extent by the political process.

Subsequently, however, as Goschen's tenure at the Board lengthened, the political emphasis changed again, and support can be found, in this early period in his career, for the view of Cooke and Vincent that, while showing in some respects a "precisian and technocrat" approach, Goschen was by nature a creative manipulator, a rigorous theorist, and interested in "creating a new basis of power for an anti-democratic ruling party".[71] One of Goschen's biographers reached a similar conclusion: that he was "repelled by the idea of democracy, for he had no faith in the ability of the lower classes to govern the country and expected to be plundered when they obtained the vote. Democracy, he feared, would lead to equality".[72] This "anti-democratic" tendency in Goschen was apparent, it is suggested here, in his earlier days at the Poor Law Board, and may therefore have been among the influences he brought to bear on decision-making there.

His Rating and Local Government Bill - produced at the end of his Presidency - which sought, by ground-breaking means, to increase local standardisation and central control while protecting gentlemanly interests (particularly town and City gentlemen, of which he was one), adds thematic support for this interpretation. The grounds given by Goschen for this and his other 1870 Bill, on local taxation - the "chaos" of existing systems[73] - have been widely quoted. The content of the Bills themselves, however, and the parliamentary debates, suggest a somewhat different emphasis - on reducing local representative power - particularly when compared with a wide range of related

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[71] A. Cooke & J. Vincent, *The Governing Passion* (Brighton, 1974), 84-5.
[72] T. J. Spinner jr., *George Joachim Goschen: transformation of a Victorian Liberal* (Cambridge, 1973), x.
[73] *Hansard* 3.4.1871, col. 1115-30; PP 1871 v, Rating and Local Government Bill. Neither of the two Bills was passed; although the first excluded the metropolis, the ideas it contained are relevant nonetheless when assessing Goschen's priorities and achievements at the Poor Law Board.

proposals from other sources, including those of the Rate Equalisation Association in 1862, Goschen's successor Stansfeld's in 1874, Ayrton's 1867 select committee and even those of Sclater Booth, Conservative President in 1878.

Two major elements in Goschen's Bill - increased central control and the creation of a single powerful figure in each parish - underpin his proposals not only for two new bodies - Parochial Boards and County Boards (or County Financial Boards) but also for changes in the composition of boards of guardians. A major advantage, Goschen pointed out, of his proposed Parochial Boards - which would virtually take over the functions of vestries, consolidate all local rates including the poor rate and have a powerful "civil head", the directly elected chairman - would be that decisions by central government ("parliament") could be implemented immediately; his chairmen could be brought together "for unity of action for any purpose whatever, a thing which at present is entirely impossible", and a central decision having been made, "the thing is done". The proposed voting rights - for rate-paying occupiers and registered owners, to be accompanied by the ballot and removal of plural voting for guardians - were appropriate Liberal elements for a post-*Second Reform Act* situation, but accompanying proposals were clearly intended as safeguards against electoral power. The County Boards would consist of the Lord Lieutenant of the county, chairmen of quarter sessions and other JPs, and an unspecified proportion of parish "civil heads" whose numbers would be approved by Quarter Sessions and the new Local Government Board. The perceived problem of there being insufficient ex-officio JPs on some boards of guardians was to be resolved by giving the various parish "civil heads" in a union the power to "select" additional ex-officios, either from among themselves or from those of a similar level of wealth.

What Goschen was proposing here for the boards of guardians was a slightly different version of Hardy's *Metropolitan Poor Act* nominees, with parish "civil heads" awarding nominee, or "selected", status in place of the Poor Law Board; it would of course have been unworkable for a central Board to attempt to take on such a role throughout the country and, as noted in chapter 6, they appear to have had difficulty even within the smaller area of the metropolis in finding sufficient nominees. Goschen had emphasised in his first reading speech[74] the stature of the "civil head", or Parochial

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[74]*Hansard* 3.4.1871 col. 1124-5.

Board chairman: he would be "responsible for the affairs of that parish" and, it was hoped, "the principal person in the parish". So here, it seems, was an extension of "gentlemanly quangoism" to the localities, with local elected gentlemen appointing themselves or fellow-gentlemen (whether JPs or not) to boards of guardians. The network of gentlemen, or new local elites, would be linked to central government explicitly through the Local Government Board's power to call them together to implement central directives, and through its power to control their proportions on the County Boards.

What sharply distinguishes Goschen's proposal from others before and after in both political parties is the greater weight given by others to electoral representatives. The much earlier County Financial Board draft of Warwick (of the Rate Equalisation Association)[75] proposed that each board of guardians or other local poor relief body elect a representative on the Board. The even earlier proposals of Milner Gibson, MP in 1850-2 had been for equal representation for J.P.s and guardians, and the next legislative attempt, the 1869 County Financial Boards Bill moved by Knatchbull-Hugessen, Liberal MP for Sandwich, had proposed mixed J.P.-guardian boards.[76] Stansfeld, Goschen's Liberal successor at the Poor Law Board, proposed in an 1874 Cabinet paper[77] that County Boards should include substantial representation by elected local guardians, and all Cabinet members agreed, other than Goschen, who declined to consider Stansfeld's proposals; the major difference of opinion was on whether guardians should comprise part or the whole of such boards, and two Cabinet members suggested a third possibility - a wholly directly elected board. Sclater Booth, as Conservative President of the Local Government Board, proposed in 1878[78] that County Board membership include representatives chosen by rural elective guardians and town councils. The proposals of Ayrton's 1867 *Select Committee on Local Government and Local Taxation of the Metropolis*[79] - which included amalgamation of the metropolitan boards of guardians with directly elected large district common councils - related to Goschen's 1871 proposals insofar as both envisaged some degree of convergence of poor law and other

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[75]GL MS 7754, 20.11.1858 & draft Bill for May 1860.
[76]*Hansard* 11.5.1869, col. 604-9.
[77]T168/82, Hamilton Papers, Cabinet Paper on "Local Government in connection with Local Taxation: Mr. Stansfeld's Proposals and Questions with the Answers", 7.1.1874.
[78]HLG29/43, 857,859.
[79]PP1867 xii, First and Second Reports. See also Chapter 4, p. 124.

local government administration and control, but differed strikingly in the fact that the Ayrton committee supported the safeguarding and extension of local elected power.

This contrast between Goschen and Ayrton is particularly important in terms of the theme of control that is traced in this and earlier chapters. Ayrton was in some respects the Liberals' President-in-waiting whom the City would never have accepted, whereas Goschen, a member of the City firm of financial agents Fruhling & Goschen, was City MP 1863-80. Cain and Hopkins' comments on the symbiotic relationship between the state and the City, the City's influence on economic life and economic policy, and "the charmed circles of power" inhabited by top gentlemanly financiers and "those who controlled the machinery of state" are relevant to the political careers both of Goschen and of Ayrton. While Ayrton frequently attacked the City and was, in the Queen's view, definitely not a gentleman, Goschen was undoubtedly a City gentleman - as well as clearly wishing to place firmer restraints on local elected power than did a wide range of his contemporaries.[80]

Were there any distinctive differences between the attitudes to nominees of the two Conservative ministers and their first Liberal successor other than Goschen's extension of the idea to local implementation? Their major political difference may have been the traditional broad distinction of interest between the "town" and "country" parties: for instance, the question of whether Goschen's 1870 Bills and report were correct in their assumption that the burden of taxation needed to be shifted from house property in the towns to the land.[81] In terms of control, all supported major extensions of central administrative power, and saw an integral link between the sharing of a common purse and the distribution of power. For instance, Goschen emphasised, in 1870, the link between equalisation and the further growth of the central state, saying that every further step towards equalisation must be taken in ways that did not allow parishes "to utilise the common fund without the control of those who represent the common interests";[82] he clearly saw the common interest as being represented not by local elected metropolitan poor law bodies but by central government. In two anonymous articles written after the passing of the *Second Reform Act* he had described the Act as "nothing less than a revolution", but believed that "the classes who have

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[80] *City of London Directory 1878* (London, 1878), 398, which describes Goschen's firm as "Fruhling & Goschen, financial agents, 12 Austinfriars"; Cain & Hopkins, op. cit., I, 26-7; Port, op. cit., 161.
[81] *Hansard* 3.4.1871 col. 1136, 1142-3; PP 1870 lv, Accounts & Papers, 222.
[82] *Hansard* 18.2.1870, col. 572.

hitherto exclusively wielded political power will still retain ample strength to prevent their being overwhelmed by numbers" if they had right and justice on their side.[83]

The puzzle of the appointment of two leading Conservatives, one of them Hicks Beach (former Parliamentary Secretary of the Poor Law Board under the Earl of Devon) to MAD during the changeover period between the Liberal Presidencies of Goschen and the radical Stansted may also be relevant here.[84] Although Stansfeld was by this time, as President, answering minor Poor Law Board questions in the Commons, and Goschen, as the new First Lord of the Admiralty, was doing the same for his new department, Goschen remained closely involved for some time with the Poor Law Board; for instance, his introduction of the Rating and Local Government Bill in the Commons on 3 April would have involved his working closely with the Poor Law Board's civil servants.[85]

Goschen would therefore have been in contact at this time with Uvedale Corbett, the metropolitan inspector, who, in a minute to Stansfeld,[86] urged that "not a day be lost" in the annual re-constitution of MAD's committees because of the "great amount of work" they were doing, and offered eight names to fill five expected nominee vacancies. The political process by means of which the inspector's list was drawn up is far from clear, but Corbett appears to have discussed the question with Goschen, who suggested a fellow-cabinet minister, who turned out not to be willing. The choice presented urgently by the inspector to the newly-arrived Stansfeld became one essentially of either two major Conservatives or two retired military men.[87] Whatever the manoeuvres behind the two remarkable appointments, it seems politically unlikely that the Radical Stansfeld had an initiating role, whereas certainly Goschen was actively present at the Board at the time and was involved in the issue. One of the outcomes of the new appointments was of course the strengthening of opportunities for gentlemen of

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[83]Elliot, op. cit., 157, 162.
[84]See chapter 6, p. 167; Stenton, op. cit. Sir James Stansfeld, MP for Halifax 1859-95, is described by Stenton as "a Radical and Home Ruler". When the Local Government Board succeeded the Poor Law Board in August 1871, he became its first President.
[85]Hansard 20.3.1871, col. 268-9; 21.3.1871, col. 339; 3.4.1871, col. 1115.
[86]MH17/36, 17.3.1871.
[87]The list consisted of E. H. Currie (Liberal chairman of the London Hospital and three years later one of Ayrton's general election opponents in Tower Hamlets), J. W. Proudfoot (an elected guardian whose seat was to disappear because of boundary changes), Alexander Ross (Conservative chairman of the Middlesex Hospital), Sir Michael Hicks Beach, MP, Lieut. Col. Hon. W. E. Sackville West (retired from the Grenadier Guards), Lieut. Col. Arthur Fremantle (retired from the Coldstream Guards), and Dr. Thomas Jervis. Goschen's recommendation, who withdrew, was Dr. Lyon Playfair.

property, whether of the "town" or the "country" party, to influence the way that contributions to the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund were spent.

Significantly, Hicks Beach articulated two months later a strongly-felt political reason for maintaining judicious gentlemanly control over local poor law bodies. The principle that every man had a right to relief if he required it, he said, "was a great social safeguard, and had much to do with the fact that for the last 50 years and more England had been free from the social movements and revolutions which had so often occurred in other countries of Europe".[88]

Having restored Devon to a significant position in the pantheon of four 1860s Presidents - as a power-broker and political mover rather than a mere inefficient administrator - and having cast a rather wide but, it is argued, relevant net in analysing Goschen's presidency, one can discern a presidential pattern. While Villiers, the former Radical and Benthamite, appears to have identified particularly closely with the machinery of government, his three successors, presiding in the new political environment engendered by the Reform period, showed a noticeable concern for gentlemanly power. Hardy and Devon sought to maintain a stable poor law environment under gentlemanly ascendancy even if this meant enlarging the extent and powers of the state, while gentlemanly financier Goschen, seeking to reduce public expenditure in line with Gladstonian retrenchment, nonetheless maintained the nominee provisions, developed the Poor Law Board's powers further, sought also to maintain gentlemanly power through novel local government proposals, and may possibly have had a hand in the appointment of two major Conservative gentlemen as nominees. The political priorities of all four, though varied, clearly contributed to the growth in power of the administrative state.

III

The nature of this growth can also be assessed in terms of the views of several of the Poor Law Board's senior civil servants. These were to a considerable degree not

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[88] *Hansard* 5.5.1871 cols. 300, 306. Hicks Beach was opposing his fellow-Conservative MP and MAD nominee, W. H. Smith, who had protested at high metropolitan poor law spending, clearly in response to pressures from his Westminster constituency. Smith, it has been suggested, was not accepted as a gentleman; W. L. Arnstein, "The Survival of the Victorian Aristocracy" in (ed.) F. C. Jaher, *The rich, the well born, and the powerful* (London, 1973), 239, says that Smith "remained fully conscious of his origins", and points out that in 1862 he had been blackballed in his attempt to become a member of the Reform Club because he was a "tradesman".

hidden but available to MPs and others during the policy-making processes of the 1860s, in that officials wrote reports ordered by the Commons and gave evidence to select committees. The 12 district inspectors, furthermore - the "eyes and ears" of the central Board - had their detailed personal *Observations* on the 1860 petitions against the Poor Law Board submitted as evidence to Villiers' four-year *Select Committee on Poor Relief* and printed as an appendix to the final report (although they may possibly have believed initially that their comments were to be confidential).[89]

The evidence in the *Observations* of poor law inspectors' attitudes does not agree wholly with the Webbs' assessment, which was that their relationship with local bodies was "merely as consultants and visitors" - "never giving orders but everywhere explaining and advising, discussing problems and smoothing out difficulties". The inspectors were, the Webbs thought, "of finer function than anything that Jeremy Bentham had conceived, or that Chadwick had contemplated" and "a constitutional innovation, characteristically British", as well as being, initially, men of superior education and of a higher social class that most guardians.[90] Clearly this was a somewhat idealised conception of the inspectors; Roberts' view, however, that in the administrative state personality and intelligence were all-important because Victorians, "averse to a powerful bureaucracy, ... put their faith....in men" serves to support the case for examining the views of some of the senior Poor Law Board officials in the years preceding the *Metropolitan Poor Act.*[91]

In contrast to the Webbs' assessment of inspectors' roles and attitudes, 1860s evidence shows that they and the central officials generally adhered to an emphasis on centralised efficiency and a Chadwick-like tendency to under-value or even oppose representative power; in a few cases there was also a desire to participate very actively in policy-making, Farnall, the metropolitan inspector, being a prime example in 1866, as noted above in the study of Villiers' presidency.

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[89]PP 1864 ix, *Select Committee on Poor Relief,* Appendix 2. The phrase "eyes and ears", originating with Sir James Graham, Home Secretary 1841-6, was first applied to the Assistant Poor Law Commissioners, and subsequently and often to the inspectors; Gulson and Sir John Walsham, for instance, used it in the *Observations*, as did Hardy in the Second Reading of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* when suggesting that the existing system of inspection of metropolitan workhouses was insufficient (*Hansard*, 21.2.1867, col. 773).
[90]Webb, op. cit., 206-7.
[91]Roberts (1969), op. cit., 136.

Farnall showed noticeably hard-line support for strong central powers. For instance, when, in the *Observations*, the inspectors were asked to comment on the "proposition" in the petitions that the inspectorate should be either abolished or reduced in size, all but Farnall responded with reasoned, detailed explanations of the importance of their role as links between the central Board and the local boards of guardians, tending to emphasise the importance of the relationship with the guardians. Farnall, however, started with five quotations from authoritative sources - four from MPs and one from a committee of inquiry - and then concentrated largely on the authority role of an inspector: their mastery of the arrangements and statistics of every union, their sheltering of the poor from local abuse and local tyranny, their acquisition of "direct and distinct local knowledge" that enabled the central Board to "enforce its central power in any locality", and their role of enabling the President to be "as it were, everywhere through his inspectors.....to secure respect for and obedience to the law, together with a wholesome and strict economy in its administration".

He criticised "humanity-mongering" (a Chadwick phrase[92]), by which he meant giving outdoor relief on a generous scale to the poor, and emphasised the inspectors' role in preventing guardians from abandoning tests of destitution such as the workhouse test, the stone-breaking yard and oakum-picking. Through such tests, he wrote approvingly, "humanity-mongering - which is still defined by many persons as the good old system" was repressed. There was a Benthamist tinge in his later comment that the 1834 Act had been founded on the principle of providing for the interest and the "happiness, rightly understood", of the poor.

Other inspectors also argued for more power for the central Board and greater implementation of the 1834 principles, and suggested that, rather than having its powers reduced, as the petitioners wished, the Poor Law Board should have greater powers. For instance Hawley, one of the original 1834 Assistant Commissioners who had remained as inspectors, pointed out that there were still Gilbert unions to be dissolved, single parishes to be dealt with, Local Act parishes and unions to be remodelled, and 1834 unions to be modified. Lambert's view was that restrictions on the central Board's powers to order local authorities to purchase land, spend money above a certain

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[92]Brundage (1988), op. cit., 38.

amount or build or enlarge workhouses unless a majority of guardians consented, constituted "serious obstacles to the due and efficient administration of the law".

Although, therefore, he was by no means the only inspector to disagree with the calls in the 1860 petitions for a reduction in the control of the central Board over boards of guardians, the metropolitan inspector's comments indicated a particularly strong distrust of guardians. Good management among guardians, Farnall said, was "partial and accidental, and dependent wholly on the exertions of some particularly intelligent person". When a "true system", he said, had been introduced into a country, there should always be "some supervising authority with discretionary power to maintain and regulate it, otherwise a relapse to false systems will ensue". Other inspectors remarked on the "malcontents" on local boards, "interested and ignorant persons" who objected to the withholding of relief from able-bodied paupers, and also on the large proportion of guardians elected from "the lower and less educated class of ratepayers" who were often "amongst the most constant attendants at the Board"; there was also the comment that while rural guardians tended to be parsimonious, "in commercial districts, where popularity more frequently animates guardians, there is occasionally a tendency to excess".

Further political contributions by Farnall included his citing of "the people" or "the public" in support of what were clearly his own and far from universal views: for instance, that "the people" did not ask for a "restitution of the controlling power to local authority", and "the public" were contented that "the present system shall be maintained, and the boards of guardians shall not be allowed to exercise, each in their own locality, their own unaided discretion".

Inappropriately, one might argue, the inspectors were also asked their views on guardians' electoral power being extended through the system of election by thirds for three-year terms. Although most of the inspectors had no strong feelings on the issue (and indeed, a few of them seemed uncertain as to the implications) those who did understand were opposed to it. Farnall, one of those who realised that extending guardians' tenure would strengthen the elective element, wrote that there would be no "beneficial result" in the change. It might be "the means of seating objectionable persons as guardians for three years, when it might be very desirable that they should vacate office". Andrew Doyle suggested that a "thirds" system would remove a safety valve, as "a great deal of parochial excitement passes off" through annual elections.

Lambert,[93] later to rise to the powerful position of first Permanent Secretary of the Local Government Board, and a significant participant in the drafting of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, also objected to "thirds", which he saw as aiming to make the office of elected guardian more "permanent".

Lambert was clearly a key official. From the mid- to late-1860s his position appears to have been that of trusted adviser to Poor Law Board Presidents (including Hardy, as noted above) and also to leaders of both political parties on issues such as the rate-based Reform legislation.[94] Although one of the newer generation of inspectors who had not previously been on Chadwick's staff at the Poor Law Commission, he displayed what seem to have been conventional Poor Law Board values: seeking evidence in defence of the central Board when asked to do so in 1861 (by getting the written views of local personages "likely to be in favour of the existing central authority and mode of supervision", and then sending the Board a list of those "who either from their experience or intelligence will probably be the best witnesses";[95] noting the problems caused by uncontrolled charitable giving - "when misdirected private charity assumes the form of public relief, and anticipates the application to the relieving officer",[96] and expressing early reservations about the activities of reformers such as Louisa Twining, founder of the Workhouse Visiting Society in 1858 (whom he described as providing "scant and feeble evidence" and making remarks that were "contrary to fact and experience, or based on a few exceptional and isolated cases"[97] - inspectoral opinions that conform with Crowther's statement that the central Board "grudgingly recognized the society".[98] A Liberal from a gentlemanly Wiltshire background and the first Roman Catholic mayor of Salisbury,[99] he held, it is clear, conventional inspectoral and official views.

Inspectors and other senior Poor Law Board officials in the 1860s seem, despite occasional forays into political fields, to have operated most commonly in the context of an 1834 administrative-legislative agenda that had still to be completed and that was to lead, inexorably, to greater control by central government. Those elements in Devon's

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[93]Webb, op. cit., 200-1; Johnson, op. cit., 29.
[94]Webb, ibid., 201.
[95]MH32/30, 17.1.1861, Lambert to Fleming, Permanent Secretary.
[96]MH32/30, 28.1.1861, Lambert to Fleming.
[97]MH32/30, 19.12.1861, Lambert to Fleming.
[98]Crowther, op. cit., 69-70.
[99]Gillow, op. cit., 98-106.

1868 Act and Goschen's 1869 and 1870 Acts (discussed above) that were clearly aimed at increasing standardisation and controlling the efficiency and effectiveness of local bodies would have derived a significant degree of their impetus from this long-standing administrative agenda. Another example of this continuity of administrative policy was Villiers' ill-fated *Poor Law Board Continuance etc. Bill 1865;* the rejected *"etc."* included the power to direct guardians to make arrangements for better classification of workhouse inmates, the power to dissolve Gilbert unions without the consent of guardians, and changes in the enforcement of penalties for infringing Board orders: all passed by parliament later in the decade under subsequent Presidents.[100]

A twin-track pattern of government growth therefore existed at the Poor Law Board in the 1860s, particularly in relation to the metropolis. While ministers clearly addressed wider political agendas, generating state growth "in almost absence of mind",[101] officials generally followed the administrative/legislative agenda set by the 1834 Act.

The distinction between these two policy-making processes at the Poor Law Board - characterised in chapter 2 as Political and Bureaucratic Power models - is apparent also in the major institutional provision of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, the policy of classification, which had not been insisted upon anywhere in the country prior to its inclusion in Hardy's Act but which, by 1867, had become a largely uncontroversial proposal, at least in relation to the parliamentary debate. The Webbs, in a detailed discussion of the widespread early rejection of classification of paupers despite the 1834 Report's having recommended it, in favour of its alternative, general mixed workhouses, suggest several organisational reasons relating to policy contradictions, impracticality and the small size of most unions, and point out the influence of the Assistant Commissioners (later inspectors) in these largely administrative questions.[102]

However, it is clear that there was also a political dimension. Classification of paupers into separate institutions would generally only be feasible in very large unions; sharing facilities *between* unions might threaten local interests, at least as much in the counties as in the metropolis, and only became realisable in the metropolis in 1867

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[100]28 & 29 Vict. c. 105. The Act was passed without its 32 "*etc.*" clauses, becoming simply an Act to continue the Board for another year.
[101]Roberts (1969), op. cit., 318, borrows this phrase when writing of centralisation.
[102]Webb, 121-33. M. E. Rose, *The Relief of Poverty 1834-1914* (London, 1981), 35, suggests single union workhouses were chosen in order to keep down costs.

because it was organisationally consistent with the newly acceptable funding instrument of an equalised metropolis-wide rate. (Indeed, the least metropolitan of the 1867 classification processes - the sharing of workhouses between unions - became, it seems, a "dead letter" because of continuing local opposition.[103]) Ayrton pointed out the association between equalisation and classification as early as 1858, in the First Reading of his Bill, when he linked rate equalisation with the ability to "get rid of the want of division of the poor in workhouses",[104] but there appears to have been no Poor Law Board support, either ministerial or official, for this case for several years; indeed, an 1864 recommendation from Villiers' *Select Committee on Poor Relief* in support of classification was only achieved when a "Popular Liberal" succeeded, despite opposition, in drastically amending a Villiers motion.[105] This institutional cornerstone of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* was, therefore, not an administrative but a significant political issue. Its acceptability developed not through the pursuit by Poor Law Board officials of 1834 administrative goals nor, initially, through the philanthropic campaigns of the medical and workhouse lobbies but, essentially, because it became part of a metropolis-wide poor law perspective that won political acceptability.

A further possible influence on policy-making at the Poor Law Board needs to be noted: the copious in-letter files containing numerous unsolicited suggestions from individuals for policy or procedural changes. Hardy, shortly after arriving at the Board, told parliament that he was "wading through a vast mass of information"[106] and therefore not yet ready to embark on new policy-making. His search for a policy that would expand and fund metropolitan poor relief while maintaining appropriate control may well have encompassed such correspondence.

For instance, one of the fairly recent in-letters (received while Villiers was at the Board) bears a striking resemblance to the nominee provisions that were to appear in the Bill of the following year. Thomas Massey, a London solicitor, suggested[107] that the Crown appoint members to boards of guardians, or Visitors with the power to call in the Poor Law Board, to overcome the problem of guardian elections being dominated

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[103]Firth, op. cit., 485, 496.
[104]*Hansard* 23.3.1858 col. 633.
[105]PP 1864 ix, Proceedings of the Committee, 22.4.1864; Charles Neate, MP for Oxford, moved the amendment.
[106]*Hansard* 17.7.1866 col. 939.
[107]MH25/17, 26.3.1866, letter from Tho. Massey of 5 Grays Inn Square, W.C.; 1871 London directory.

by poorer shopkeepers and licensed victuallers; men of "more education and refinement and of higher principles and influence" would in these circumstances, he said, have the authority on the boards of "Crown servants", while at the same time rendering "willing and uniform deference to the proper control of the Poor Law Board". Another letter on the same theme of strengthening gentlemanly power was raised in a proposal from a Norfolk JP, John Hill.[108] Hill suggested physically separating ex-officio JP-guardians from elected members by putting them in separate rooms, with the ex-officios constituting a "court of appeal" that should have to follow "stringent rules" drawn up by the central Board so that they did not "fall into the error of the magistrates - giving too large allowances to the paupers". In both letters the proposed solution to a perceived problem was broadly the same: that gentlemen, placing themselves under the orders of the Poor Law Board, should resolve local spending problems through being in a position to control elected members more effectively.

The extent to which any of the Presidents took account of letters such as these, some of them clearly from reputable sources, is of course impossible to assess. Nonetheless, they serve to emphasise that this was a problem-solving and policy-making as well as administrative department, and that in this environment senior officials, including the London-based metropolitan inspector, were in constant contact with external influences. More than in many other government departments, the line drawn between political policy-making and administrative management may at times have been a tenuous one.

Irrespective, however, of any such fine distinctions or role ambiguities, the Webbs' dismissal of the existence of a significant political dimension at the Poor Law Board, and their major policy-making claims on behalf of the Board's officials, are clearly inappropriate, at least in relation to metropolitan policy-making in the 1860s.

IV

This study of the people at the Poor Law Board in the 1860s has shown a distinct "pattern of power". While the permanent staff's continuing support for and advocacy of some of the policies and ideas of 1834 suggest that they played a significant part in

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[108]MH25/17, 2.7.1866, letter from Hill to Villiers.

the devising of some legislation, the political contributions of the Presidents to policy-making need to be emphasised more than they have been hitherto.

Changes of government brought distinct changes of policy at the Poor Law Board, although there was also a continuation of support for the nominee concept, and hence for the strengthening of gentlemanly power on metropolitan local poor law bodies, when Goschen succeeded the two Conservative Presidents. Opposition to the SADs and the nature of some of Goschen's later legislation suggests that his position differed in some respects from that of some of his fellow-Liberals and from Radicals, many local politicians and his former fellow-members of the Rate Equalisation Association.

The Earl of Devon is a crucial figure in a proper assessment of the implications and implementation of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*. He was not the weak, incompetent official and President that the Webbs portrayed but a territorial aristocrat committed to the maintenance of social stability through comparatively generous poor relief policies controlled by "enlightened" gentlemanly guardians. Although it was Hardy who created the legislative framework for introducing this rural perspective into the metropolis, Devon's implementation of the nominee provisions, accompanied as it was by further increases in central control, showed a determination to defend and extend gentlemanly power in the *Second Reform Act* era.

Both Conservative Presidents, it is clear, in establishing their party as "*the* party of government", were prepared to foster the process of government growth. They increased the powers of central government over local bodies in the metropolis to a remarkable degree, using the 1867 Act's new governing instrument, the nominee provisions, to maintain gentlemanly control of expanded poor relief organisation and financial systems; Goschen, Liberal City financier, in following them, supported these policies and developed them further. All three were prepared to order or encourage the spending of vast amounts of money on building and redeveloping poor relief institutions at the expense of metropolitan ratepayers, in order to satisfy demands for reform.

There seems to be no evidence, on the other hand, that the legislative provisions studied in this thesis - nominees, rate redistribution and the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund - arose to a significant degree out of pressures from officials. They were the choices of politicians and therefore emphasise decisively the political dimensions of metropolitan poor law in the 1860s.

CHAPTER 8: Conclusion

The metropolis and the country were not, said a leading figure in the implementation of the *Metropolitan Poor Act*, at the tail-end of a gentle and progressive transition state, but "at the snout-end of a fierce and bitter struggle". The struggle was between "a new, hitherto untried system of centralised social government and an old system - the most ancient and once the most popular of all systems", now in disfavour with all governments.

This emotive analysis by Dr. Brewer, elective chairman of the Metropolitan Asylums Board and from 1868 Liberal MP for Colchester,[1] points to some of the reform/reaction tensions apparent in the genesis and implementation of the 1867 Act. It was made in MAD's earliest years when conflicts of interest between its elected and nominee members were at their strongest, and clearly came from a significant spokesman.

Brewer warned the Commons that the 1867 Act had placed guardians "not....under the operation of fixed and known laws" but "under the arbitrary impulses of a central power which issued its edicts, according to the shifting policy of every varying controlling head". His attack on the operation of the new system does not seem to have arisen from sentiment about the "ancient" system, as his own parish had in 1867 willingly surrendered its Local Act poor law status and was in 1870 to become the major partner in an amalgamated union.[2] His comments therefore provide support for the argument that the changes in governmental power brought about by the *Metropolitan*

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[1] *Hansard* 7.6.1869 col. 1356. Brewer may at the time have been motivated partly by the need to perform a careful public balancing act between his roles as MAD chairman, St. George Hanover Square guardian, past public opponent of the *Metropolitan Houseless Poor Acts* 1864-5 (an initiative which had probably won him the MAD chairmanship), and Gladstonian Liberal.

[2] *Hansard* 7.6.1869 col. 1356-61 (Brewer), 21.2.1867 col. 752-3 (Colonel Hogg, chairman of St. George Hanover Square board of guardians); LMA, Notes on formation of boards of guardians: City of Westminster. Brewer made his comments in the course of a speech objecting to his fellow-Liberal Goschen's 1869 *Metropolitan Poor Amendment Bill.*

Poor Act and its amending Acts were recognised by contemporaries as involving a struggle for control.

Brewer's "ancient and once the most popular of all systems" was doubtless the system of parish control of poor relief which was superseded in many areas of the metropolis under the 1834 Act and almost entirely following the 1867 Act.[3] His rural metaphors of "tail-end" and "snout-end" have, however, to be taken as referring not to the two different systems (parish-based and centralised) but to the nature of the change process. The contrast was between a gentle transition not to be feared (the "tail-end" of his metaphorical animal) and a potentially more aggressive change scenario.

The evidence in this thesis about reform-reaction tensions embodied in the 1867 Act confirms a "snout-end" interpretation of this major period of poor law change in the metropolis. The changes were brought about both by the radicals' pursuit of rate equalisation and by other pressures, but were also to a large degree the product of a desire to maintain political, but more particularly gentlemanly, power. As such they fit the Rational and Pluralist models of change, but suggest also a Political model. This was not, therefore, a "gentle and progressive transition state" moving by consent towards centralised provision of better poor law services. It was a struggle for control of the expanding state in which power over the equalised common purse was a central concern of those who hoped to benefit from it, those whose wealth was to be redistributed, and those who feared the consequences of unredressed grievances.

The hitherto unresearched records of the Rate Equalisation Association, together with contemporary published material about the Association to which little attention has previously been paid, show that it was a radical reformist organisation whose ideas posed a threat to wealth and gentlemanly power in the metropolis, and that was therefore operating at the snout-end. The call for redistribution of wealth in support of the poor, with control to be exercised by a metropolis-wide representative body, was supported by poor law activists from across the metropolis. Vigorous radical support in parliament for rate equalisation strengthened the movement still further.

The lack of modern recognition that this ten-year campaign was a significant political event can be attributed not only to the less than obvious cataloguing of the Association's records[4] but also to several other factors. The career of Ayrton, the

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[3]See chapter 2. Also LMA, Notes on formation of boards of guardians.
[4]See chapter 5, p. 123.

leading MP on the rate equalisation issue, has been historiographically largely neglected (for reasons discussed in Chapter 5), and therefore some of the questions on which he took a lead in parliament have also been ignored (or, in some cases, seen through the distorting glass of contemporary animosity). Ayrton himself, as a Tower Hamlets MP, emphasised in parliament the role of East End pressure: a version that has endured in the pages of *Hansard* and the parliamentary columns of the press but which has also distorted the political picture. Hardy, concerned above all to get his 1867 Bill through parliament, similarly over-emphasised East End pressure while ensuring, through its provisions, that control of the common purse would not fall into the hands of elected bodies of metropolitan poor law activists intent on redistributing wealth radically to poorer areas, and providing instead for an extension of Poor Law Board and gentlemanly power through the Fund and nominee provisions.

The state growth that arose out of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* occurred because two Conservative Presidents of the Poor Law Board and their Liberal successor were willing to foster it. They required, and authorised, the spending of vast amounts of money on institutional change and development in response to vigorous campaigns for improvements in medical services for the poor. Their responses were party-political to the extent that there were some differences of policy between the Conservatives Hardy and the Earl of Devon and the Liberal Goschen (though Hardy in particular focused on achieving the cross-party support necessary for the survival of his party's minority government). All, however, supported strongly the gentlemanly nominee and administrative Metropolitan Common Poor Fund policies. They all, therefore, it is argued, responded both defensively and aggressively to the threat posed by metropolitan radicals to the power and the purses of commercial and residential metropolitan gentlemen, at a period when the *Second Reform Act* was extending representative liberties. The Presidents and those they represented, as also the radicals who believed in a more substantial degree of rate equalisation controlled by elected representatives, were indeed "at the snout-end of a fierce and bitter struggle".

The summary above of the argument of this thesis raises issues that have been considered, in different contexts, by others. Two areas of historiographical debate will now be discussed in the light of the above conclusions: the growth in government, and the nature of poor law local government and politics in the metropolis. Most of the

secondary sources have been referred to either directly or by implication in earlier chapters.

It is clear that the *Metropolitan Poor Act* contributed to the nineteenth-century growth in government in that it established new managerial and service institutions and new centralised financial systems which needed to be financed, staffed and administered, and that it also established, in effect, central government's first "quangos" through the nominee provisions. It is therefore appropriate to consider what the Act's place might be in the much-debated subject of the Victorian expansion of the administrative state. Perspectives that need to be taken into account include the "pattern of government growth" discerned by Oliver MacDonagh, with its emphasis on the growth of systems and processes,[5] and other approaches provided by historians such as Anthony Brundage, Derek Fraser, Royston Lambert, William Lubenow and Jenifer Hart.

At first sight MacDonagh's initial stage of bureaucratic growth - the "intolerability" trigger and "exposure of a social evil" - appears to play a particularly significant part in the genesis of the Act, in relation to the workhouse scandals that led to the Act's institutional developments but also in relation to rate inequalities, which the Rate Equalisation Association and MPs such as Ayrton "exposed" extensively to the metropolitan public and to parliament. However, Jenifer Hart's criticism of the term "intolerable"[6] - on the grounds of its subjectivity, its elasticity, its time-scale, and the willingness to bring about change - is relevant here, in that, certainly as far as rate equalisation was concerned, the gross inequalities having been publicised systematically for at least ten years, there had been only very limited attempts to make the situation more "tolerable", for instance in the 1865 *Union Chargeability Act*, which was applicable on a national basis and made matters worse rather than better for several of the large single parishes in the metropolis. Indeed Hardy, reporting in retrospect[7] the 1867 decision to equalise a portion of the poor rates, made it clear that he had done so on instrumental grounds and not on grounds of intolerability by quoting a section of the Report of Ayrton's 1866 *Select Committee on Metropolitan Local Government*[8] (not even a poor law report but one of Ayrton's many equalisation vehicles): "So heavy is the charge of local taxation become in the less wealthy districts that the Metropolitan

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[5]MacDonagh, (1958), op. cit., 58, and (1961), op. cit., 8, 345-9.
[6]J. Hart, "Nineteenth-century social reform: a Tory interpretation of history", *P&P*, 31 (1965), 50-1.
[7]PP 1867 xxxiv, 19th Report of the Poor Law Board, 17.
[8]PP 1866 xiii, First Report, paragraph 46.

Board is of opinion that direct taxation on the occupiers of property there has reached its utmost limits". The Conservative President omitted the accompanying more political and class-focused statement that while expenditure that reflected inequalities (poor relief) remained local, that which benefited the wealthy districts (environmental improvements) had been distributed across the metropolis - even though this statement would have offered further justification for the new poor rate equalisation provisions.

That rate equalisation had political impetus - as opposed to being more closely related to what MacDonagh describes as "the great body of (centralising) changes" that were "natural answers to concrete day-to-day problems, pressed eventually to the surface by the sheer exigencies of the case"[9] - is clear from the history of the ten-year campaign. Metropolitan poor rate equalisation was a collectivist policy in that the centralised sharing of financial resources enabled institutions and systems to be established that, transcending existing local boundaries, constituted collectively a more extensive provision of services. The political challenge for those in power at the Poor Law Board was to ensure that although local poor law authorities across the metropolis would jointly be paying the piper, the tune would be called in accordance with the established poor law principle of the dominance of property over population numbers - since 1834 through plural voting for guardians, and ex-officio JPs, and in 1867 through the additional vehicles of the nominee clauses and the limitation of the equalisation device to an administrative process. There is a clear difference between this situation and MacDonagh's description of a five-stage "legislative-cum-administrative" process that "spread like a contagion out of sight" towards collectivism, "...the corrosion working steadily for many decades". The collectivist 1867 rate equalisation provision, its form dictated by overtly political considerations, constituted both an administrative instrument and a conscious political reaction. Ironically, the first challenges that confronted the Poor Law Board's safeguarded equalisation system came not from the local guardians against whose unwise over-spending or under-spending the central department's administrators were supposedly providing a superior overlordship, but from two professional groups who almost immediately showed their recognition of the value of the new centralised funding by putting in collective claims for pay rises: the workhouse medical officers and the workhouse chaplains.

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[9]MacDonagh, op. cit., 65.

Lubenow's[10] conclusion, too, that the growth of government (up to 1848) involved an incremental process of "cautious modifications", while bearing some relation to the tenacious tactical select committee "political incrementalism", several years later, of Ayrton and Locke, does not place sufficient emphasis, in terms at least of the poor law, on politico-socio-economic power conflicts. His assessment of poor law reformers as "proceeding according to modest goals and pragmatic methods", seeking neither to restore idealised traditional authority systems nor to create a new utopia, is of little relevance either to the genesis of the *Metropolitan Poor Act* or to the tone of the rate equalisation debate, which abounded in rhetorical flourishes. Rate equalisation campaigners argued vigorously for equalisation across the metropolis in many political forums, and MPs such as Ayrton and Locke aimed for small, limited policy goals only when, as in the final voting on Villiers' *Select Committee on Poor Relief*, bolder steps were inappropriate.

More immediately comparable to elements in the Act's genesis and implementation is Royston Lambert's conclusion on the Local Government Act Office[11] that central government's scientific, legal and practical expertise significantly influenced the central-local balance - an example of "the extraordinary potency of technical authority in government at this time". The presence of several medical men on the Metropolitan Asylums Board, both as nominees and as elected members, from its inception in 1867, indicates a similar respect for technical expertise both on the Poor Law Board and on the local boards of guardians, to the extent of including these metropolitan health professionals among the membership of a politically-charged decision-making body. This was not only a "technical" decision but also a political one, in that health professionals had become a powerful interest group whom politicians ignored at their peril.

The major characteristic, however, of the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* expansion of poor law services and centralised control was that it was conscious, planned growth formulated as a political response to reformist and radical demands. While the workhouse scandals represented in several respects the conventional "evil" to which a practical answer - the institutional changes - was provided, the financing and control of

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[10]Lubenow, op. cit., 67.
[11]R. Lambert, "Central and local relations in mid-Victorian England: the Local Government Act office 1858-1871", *VS*, 6 (1962).

these changes was politically particularly significant. These conclusions on the solutions devised and supported by three successive poor law ministers in the 1860s conform with conclusions reached by several historians on other poor law questions. Derek Fraser,[12] noting that social historians interested in poor relief have concentrated heavily upon social administration and ignored political dimensions, points out that the poor law was "a vital political institution, granting to those who directed affairs in their own community great powers and much patronage". A struggle for power within the poor law, he says, "was often part of a much broader contest for total local control". Anthony Brundage's contention that the poor laws, "vitally important in maintaining the economic ascendancy of peers and gentry" and "the area of the greatest involvement by the dominant interest group in society", were not substantially centralised in 1834 because the Act reorganised and strengthened the power of traditional local leaders, is grounded also in an emphasis on political power. Particularly relevant is Brundage's focus on the pro-active nature of the approach of large landowners to poor law re-organisation.[13] In the later debate on the issue[14] the common ground between Brundage and Peter Mandler includes the centrality of gentlemanly local political power. Daunton agrees that the New Poor Law was one of the legislative developments that represented a new order "without displacing the landed aristocracy from control of the central state".[15]

Caplan, tracing the eventual achievement of union chargeability in 1865 (one of the *Metropolitan Poor Act's* forerunners), comes to a fairly similar conclusion about the power of the gentry and aristocracy: that the reasons for the passing of the 1865 Act included changes in the composition of the Commons that reduced the landed interest, and landowners' concern for social stability.[16] This view supports, in essence, a major theme of this thesis: that while new services were developed because convincing cases were made for them through a pluralist process, additional provisions aimed to maintain gentlemanly political power and financial strength; the ascendancy of gentlemanly

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[12]Fraser (1978), op. cit., 111.
[13]Brundage (1978), 181-2; A. Brundage, "The landed interest and the New Poor Law: a reappraisal of the revolution in government" in *EHR*, 87 (1972), 27-31.
[14]P. Mandler, "Debate. The making of the New Poor Law redivivus", *P&P*, 127 (1990), 194-201; A. Brundage (as for Mandler), 183-6.
[15]M. J. Daunton, *Progress and poverty* (Oxford, 1995), 495.
[16]Caplan, op. cit., 296-7.

interests was a major factor in the passing of the Act for those who drew it up, most of those who supported it in parliament, and those whose interests it sought to preserve.

The contribution of this thesis to the debate on the growth of government is, therefore, the assertion that one of the reasons for the expansion of state control in the late 1860s was the desire to increase gentlemanly power on local metropolitan poor law bodies as the common purse and wider spending requirements were introduced; gentlemanly power was one of the forces involved in the struggle taking place at the snout-end. The nature of the other forces - local poor law activists, radical reformers and their policies - will now be discussed in the light of conclusions reached by several historians on a range of related questions

Crucial to the argument of this thesis is the identification of the rate equalisation movement and its major adherents as radical reformist, and their policies as among the most radical of the various alternatives available to a government intent on passing some kind of redistributive measure. The aim is to show that the form of rate equalisation achieved in 1867 was not the result of a gentle, agreed progression towards the sharing of financial responsibility for better and wider services, but a political compromise arising from a hard-fought ten-year struggle between radical reformers pursuing the interests of poorer ratepayers and the poor, and those within and outside parliament concerned to protect the power and the purses of the wealthier.[17] Chapters 3, 4 and 5 present evidence supporting the contention that the rate equalisation movement was substantial and radical reformist, but in doing so these chapters disagree to some extent with recent major analyses that have not found significant local radical activity in the metropolis at this period. In particular Eugenio Biagini and Miles Taylor, although identifying as radical many elements that have been found in this study to be integral to the Rate Equalisation Association's rhetoric and policies, have either made no reference to, or rejected after brief consideration, the activities of rate equalisation campaigners.

Taylor identifies the themes of public accountability, control of strong executive power and emphasis on popular representation (which can be found in Association arguments for a county model for redistribution) and the "pursuit of public over private interest" and concern about public expenditure (which were issues that Association

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[17]Hart, op. cit., 61, comments of nineteenth-century social reform that the role of men and ideas should not be belittled, and emphasises (relevantly for this thesis) the "considerable effort and determination on the part of men (even if only obscure men) who realised that it was worthwhile making a conscious effort to control events".

supporters pursued).[18] Biagini similarly cites popular radical policies such as local autonomy, self government, popular hostility to the expansion of the state and retrenchment.[19] While both writers generally refer to retrenchment in relation to central government expenditure, this term might clearly also be applied, it is argued here, to the policies of at least some metropolitan boards of guardians who tried to keep down local public spending while providing adequately for the poor. This interpretation is in conformity with Biagini's quotation from the radical *Reynolds's Newspaper* that "the great art of taxation in a well governed state [was] to spend as little as possible, and to collect that little from the people better able to pay".[20]

In terms of radical involvement in rating issues, Biagini makes two brief references to Ayrton's 1866 *Select Committee on Local Government and Local Government of the Metropolis*. In the first reference he notes only that J. S. Mill was an active member and that the committee had highlighted the "peculiar problems" of the capital, including its lack of "a system of equalisation of the rates". This committee was, of course, empowered to consider only the MBW rates and not the poor rates, and it is not clear whether Biagini considers poor rate equalisation at all. He concludes, after a further reference to "the commitment of J. S. Mill and the radicals", and to "the campaigns of A. S. Ayrton, Tower Hamlet's Liberal MP, in favour of the equalisation of the rates", that because of popular apathy, municipal reform for a long time interested exclusively the middle classes, and notes also Radical George Howell's lack of success in starting a ratepayers' movement in the 1870s.

Taylor, concentrating largely on parliamentary Radical activity, makes relatively few references to other forms of metropolitan radicalism and, as noted in Chapter 5, refers dismissively to Ayrton's support for "the economistic radicalism of London ratepayer politics". This is his nearest reference to the rate equalisation issue (although his conclusion, in general, that "criticism of the tax burden remained a hallmark of the radical movement long after the death of Cobden and the demise of Chartism" needs to be noted.[21] His view that 1850s London municipal radicalism was "backward-looking, based on a romantic vision of semi-rural democracy" must refer, clearly, to the anti-

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[18]Taylor, op. cit., v, 6, 31-2,
[19]E. Biagini, "The debate on taxation 1860-1874" and E. Biagini and A. Reid, "Currents of Radicalism", in (ed.) E. Biagini & A. Reid (Cambridge, 1991), *"Currents of Radicalism. Popular radicalism, organised labour and party politics in Britain, 1850-1914)*, 10,17, 137-8.
[20]Biagini, op. cit., 138, quoting *Reynolds's Newspaper* 22.4.1877, 3.
[21]Taylor (Oxford, 1995), 339.

centralisation campaigning of Toulmin Smith and his supporters, opponents of the Rate Equalisation Association, and has no bearing on the Association's advocacy of metropolis-wide elected control of an equalised poor rate.[22]

Although neither Biagini, Taylor, nor other historians of radicalism and reform (other than Caplan and, briefly, Gillespie[23]) have recognised or shown the significance of the rate equalisation movement, it clearly has to be acknowledged as an important presence in metropolitan radicalism. As such, the radical reformist policies it promoted represented a force to be taken seriously at the snout-end of political change when Hardy set out to devise a broadly acceptable redistributive policy.

From a wider perspective the Rate Equalisation Association's activities fit, to some extent, within Taylor's framework of the failure, by around 1860, of radicalism's political strategy of the independent monitoring of and pressure on government and its replacement by, or absorption within, parliamentary liberalism and the two-party structure. In fact, in a very practical sense the Association's important first joint formal meeting of its executive with its parliamentary vice-presidents in February 1859 signalled a similar change of direction when it decided to adopt a select committee strategy as a successor to its previous vigorous campaigning in support of an independent Bill. However, this change was in some respects more apparent than real, in that Ayrton's first ploy, in 1857, had been a motion for a select committee; furthermore, while on occasion the Association's E.C. found it politic to be less prescriptive about the form of rate equalisation they favoured, and to suggest that the actual choice of scheme be made by the Liberal government, they clearly maintained their preference for a radical reformist elective option, and pressed for this as late as January 1867.[24]

It is important to note also that, after having operated very publicly at the surface of national politics for ten years, leading members did not disappear from the metropolitan radical scene but instead continued their involvement in poor law activism at their own local levels or in other fields. Warwick, for instance (as shown in Chapter 6), from the vice-chairmanship of the City of London Union, attempted unsuccessfully to get one of the Association's vice-presidents elected to MAD's board of management. Gilbert in 1873, seeking a solution to the high metropolitan rates that had followed

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[22]Taylor (Oxford, 1995), 92.
[23]Gillespie, op. cit., 135.
[24]See chapter 4, p. 107-8.

equalisation, and arguing in support, yet again, of the interests of poorer ratepayers, pointed out that the value of the land, buildings and revenues of the three great endowed metropolitan hospitals - Guy's, St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's - would probably be sufficient to build and largely maintain every metropolitan poor law infirmary and asylum "without the cost of one shilling to the ratepayer";[25] this was, in effect, a suggestion that these hospitals' inherited wealth and income be transferred to public ownership. Ayrton, after achieving ministerial office, continued strenuously to pursue metropolitan radical reform issues, despite exceptional levels of political and personal attack, until defeated by a range of forces in 1874. Evidence about changes in the Association's tactics after 1858 and about post-1867 activities of some of its leading figures, as well as the large amount of information available about their rhetoric and policies, suggests therefore that the radicalism of the rate equalisation movement was not superseded by 1860s Liberalism but continued as a strand within it.

The other major area of debate in relation to the conclusions of this thesis - the composition and nature of local bodies - has been considered by several historians, although little such work has been done on metropolitan poor law bodies. Insights by Daunton, Davis and Owen into the nature of non-poor law bodies are, however, relevant here, and need to be discussed.

A more general conclusion formulated by Ken Young is also, it is suggested, relevant when considering the structure and functioning of the new and modified local bodies established under the *Metropolitan Poor Act.* Young, pointing out that the Conservative record on metropolis-wide authorities was "one of unremitting hostility" to the concept, suggests it is a paradox that the London County Council and its successor (the Greater London Council) "should have been created by the very party which thereafter strove to limit and fetter them both". He dates such hostility to at least as far back as "a Conservative tradition of thought" linked to the writings of Toulmin Smith in the 1850s. Young's explanation for the paradox (an explanation that should be considered also in relation to the *Metropolitan Poor Act*) is that "matters of political strategy and tactics appeared to pose a contradiction between government rhetoric and government action".[26] The significant difference, it is suggested here, between the LCC and GLC political paradoxes and those evident in Conservative policy-making in

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[25]Gilbert (1873), 4, 9, 10, 307.
[26]K. Young, "The Conservative Strategy for London, 1855-1975", *LJ*, 1 (1975), 57.

1867 is that Hardy integrated his limits and fetters with other provisions within the Act itself: a strategy which has contributed to their being overlooked historiographically. As Chapter 6 has, however, made clear, some of the fetters (in the form of nominees) were only partially effective on the Act's largest and most important board; it is this question of the control and policies of local bodies that will now be considered further.

MAD's elected managers came from the same socio-economic strata as elected metropolitan vestrymen and MBW members, and indeed were sometimes the same people; just as membership of the MBW was drawn, either directly or via the district boards, from the local vestries, so the elected section of MAD's managers came from the local boards of guardians. Conclusions about the effectiveness of local non-poor law representatives are therefore relevant to an assessment of poor law representation.

One of the reasons John Davis gives for the ineffectiveness, in his view, of London local government - a "councillor calibre" problem arising from the restricting qualification for office (which reduced participation) and the lack of either an active civic social elite or an economic elite - is contradicted in a number of respects by the findings of this thesis. What has been found instead in the study of MAD is that the "shopocratic" and tradesman tendency identified by Davis in the composition of many vestries as a result of the restrictive qualification for office, though present also among MAD's elected managers, does not seem to have adversely affected their ability, as apparently a fairly cohesive group, to achieve their goals. Indeed, the social and business elite drafted in by the Poor Law Board had some difficulty holding their own, and were defeated quite often until a constitutional change in the committee structure strengthened their position.[27]

The issue in 1867, it is argued, was not generally one of ability or calibre; if, furthermore, Hardy had perceived the problem as being a lack of numbers of potential guardians in some areas, he could have remedied the qualification barrier without even changing the law, because the 1834 Act allowed him to do so.[28] The governmental problem, however, was one of achieving politically different and elite, rather than more participant and popular, control of decision-making on metropolitan poor law bodies.

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[27]Davis (1988), op. cit., 17-23.
[28]See chapter 2, p. 20.

In terms of local policies David Owen,[29] also having found that the make-up of the new vestries and district boards was "what one would expect, dominated as they were by tradesmen, publicans, builders and solicitors" (with the exception of wealthy St. George Hanover Square), came to the conclusion that the metropolitan vestries seem to have been guided by "a penny-pinching, pound-foolish philosophy"; he balances this view, however, with an acknowledgement that vestrydom was "firmly committed to economy as a principle of local government", and that economy is "a legitimate consideration in government". Davis, despite his concern about calibre, similarly offers a corrective to a narrowly critical view of metropolitan local government - that "the tradesman and petty bourgeois have dominated the British local government system, for good or ill, since its inception"[30] - and rejects Hennock's[31] "attempts to correlate municipal performance in Birmingham and Leeds with the social standing of councillors".

Evidence in this thesis not only confirms and extends these correctives but shows that MAD's elected managers were competent local politicians concerned about the effect that high spending would have on ratepayers, particularly in the poorer areas, and about effective redistribution of charges. The fact that there is often a clear policy demarcation between most of the elective local governing elites, many of whom appear to have been economy-minded, and the Poor Law Board's largely socio-economically superior nominees, should not, however, be taken as supporting Hennock's case that socio-economic status as such influenced the quality of local government decision-making. The differences in policy priorities arose from the differences in the interests that they represented: the local members had to be responsive to the needs of their constituents, whereas the influences bearing on the nominees were of a wider political nature.

Daunton's discussion of the role of elites[32] is relevant here. His rejection of Hennock's view that "elite rule was 'natural', and also that it was superior" relates to a business and social elite who correspond, in a different and metropolitan context, much more closely to MAD's nominee elite than to its elected local governing elites. His suggestion that what needed to be explained was "not the replacement of the elite as

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[29]Owen, op. cit., 39, 218-9.
[30]Owen, op. cit., 217-9; Davis (1988), op. cit., 18.
[31]See chapter 1, p. 13-14.
[32]Daunton (1977), op. cit., 149-51.

natural leaders by lower groups" but "why the lower groups as natural leaders might sometimes be replaced in certain circumstances by the elite" expresses a central issue in this thesis. In the metropolis in 1867, of course, the change was conscious and deliberate; the replacement or the reduction in the power of local governing elites on boards of guardians, district school boards, SAD boards and MAD's board of management was not a "natural" process in the sense that one might normally use the term, but one imposed by Hardy's Act with the aim of achieving control over elected representatives who were largely of a lower socio-economic level.

The analysis of MAD's composition and activities has shown that the governing elites from the local bodies represented a threat to wider political and gentlemanly concerns. They competed for and won the chairmanship of the board of management and consistently pursued the interests of the local bodies to whom they were accountable, usually with success, despite opposition from the Poor Law Board's elite nominees. The nominees, on the other hand, selected almost entirely from socio-economically superior social, economic and professional elites, focused on achieving high rate-borne expenditure on an extensive programme of poor law institutional development. Their aim, clearly, was to establish a level of services that would satisfy the insistent demands of moderate reformers but would also relieve pressures, emanating particularly from the poorer parts of the metropolis, that might come to represent a threat to gentlemanly and business interests. Elite nominees on the other 1867 bodies were intended to fulfil a similar function for workhouses, local infirmaries and casual wards for the wandering homeless, where metropolitan paupers congregated in extensive numbers. While Goschen, the next Liberal President of the Poor Law Board, pursuing retrenchment, was to emphasise the need for centralised control of spending under the equalised rate, the two Conservative Presidents, with the assistance of their nominees, set about spending their way out of trouble with the aid of a compromise: a partially equalised metropolitan poor rate that made limited extra demands on the purses of the wealthy.

Whether, from a different perspective, it *was* natural for socio-economic elites in the metropolis to seek to control elected lower leaders when the legislative opportunity occurred, is a wider question. It is clear, however, that such a process was embarked upon in 1867 and that it followed radical reform pressure, the extent and significance of which has not hitherto been recognised, for redistribution of wealth from richer to

poorer areas. A consequence of the success of the arguments for rate equalisation over a ten-year period was that the conscious, planned and more centralised growth of metropolitan poor law services took place within a context of gentlemanly ingenuity in finding new ways of retaining influence and power.

Paying for the Poor: A Middle-class Metropolitan Movement for Rate Equalisation 1857–67

PAULINE ASHBRIDGE

The Conservative government's 1867 Metropolitan Poor Act[1] brought in three types of change: to institutions, to local control and to the financing of poor relief. It provided for large-scale reorganisation and building of institutions, added central government nominees to local Poor Law bodies, and set up the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund. Studies referring to the Act have focused mainly on its connections with the origins of the health service or with East End hardship and distress, or have noted some of its financial results or its contribution to the standing of the medical profession.[2] There has been little research into the genesis of the redistributive policy embodied in the Common Poor Fund, which sought to 'tax the wealth of the West End for the relief of poverty in the East End'[3] as a means of funding some of the social policy goals of the Act.

There has been even less study – in fact, almost none – of a remarkable largely middle-class movement in the Metropolis[4] that worked for ten years towards the Act's policy of redressing the imbalance of poorer areas paying higher poor rates than wealthy areas. Credit has instead been awarded, with differing degrees of justice, to a number of other candidates, including Florence Nightingale[5], other leading medical campaigners[6] and East End campaigners[7]. In fact it was several years before the intervention of Miss Nightingale and the Poor Law medical lobby that a vigorous and highly effective campaign for Metropolitan rate equalisation began, and its major co-ordinating figures, apart from one East End representative, were from the West, the City and the South.

The Association for Promoting Equalization of the Poor Rates and Uniformity of Assessment throughout the Metropolitan Districts (later to become the Metropolitan and County Association for the Equalization of the Poor Rates) was inaugurated on 17 February 1857, and its minute books run from that date until it was disbanded on the passing of the Metropolitan Poor Act ten years later[8]. For the purposes of this study it will be referred to as the Rate Equalization Association, or the Association.

The aim of the article is primarily to examine the characteristics of this organisation but also to investigate its contribution to a redistributive taxation approach.[9]

The Association was an early vehicle for the sort of co-ordinated Metropolitan political activity combining 'local interests and questions of political principle'[10] that, Davis and others suggest, did not generally appear in the Metropolis until the mid-1880s. Although its membership was based on parish delegates and its goals emphasised the needs of local ratepayers as well as of the poor, the equalisation rhetoric of the Association and its leading members indicated wider perspectives and interests than those merely of vestrymen trying to keep their local poor rate down. The resolutions, reports, speeches, petitions, draft legislation, Select Committee evidence and published works of the Association and its members provide many examples of their articulation of taxation issues that related to a wider discourse.

The national context included budgets in which both Liberal and Conservative Chancellors – in 1852, 1854, 1863 and 1874 – allowed for a redistributive role for income tax. From 1853, H. C. G. Matthew notes, income tax and death and succession duties (all essentially redistributive in nature) 'increasingly played a preponderant role' in Gladstone's budgets, and in

1855 his aim was 'explicit and deliberate: to bring within the income tax the "educated" part of the community, leaving the "labouring part" outside the tax'. Buxton notes that Gladstone chose tea and sugar duties for reduction in 1866 because this would 'tend to ameliorate the lot and improve the position of the labouring population'.[11]

At the local level, relating the level of taxation to the ability to pay had been part of the Poor Law for over 350 years, and the 'Law of Elizabeth'[12] was cited frequently in Parliamentary and other public debates in the 1850s and 1860s on redistribution of poor rates. 'Ability' had originally implied income, but difficulties inherent in the assessment and collection of a personalised local tax by unpaid officials had resulted in the retention of traditional methods of levying the poor rate on the basis of the occupation of land and property.[13] The concern of the Rate Equalization Association for redistribution of the poor relief burden had roots, therefore, in principles of ability to pay deriving from centuries-old tradition and legislation. It was a concern the history of which far pre-dated redistributive considerations of nineteenth century budget-making Chancellors.

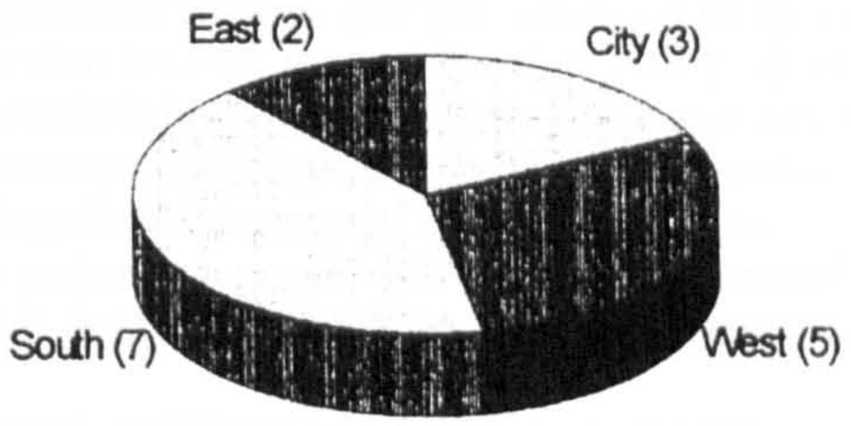
Nonetheless, however traditional the objectives of the Association may have been in essence, they were clearly in contrast with the more limited, immediate and in essence static goals involved in the massive but 'temporary' charitable baling out of East End hardship by West End volunteers which occurred particularly in the harsh winters of 1860–61 and 1866–67.[14] To raise the question of the incidence of local taxation ('one of the great and constant preoccupations of Victorian and Edwardian politics'[15]) – and particularly the wealth-poverty axis – was dynamic, in that the mere raising of the issue postulated redistributive change.

Of the tax comparisons of particular concern to the Association – inequality between poorer and wealthier rating districts, and the balance between local and national taxation powers – the first appeared in a number of respects to be satisfied in 1867 by the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund. The Fund was to finance local revenue spending through direct, progressive and redistributive taxation based on annual rateable value. The second concern was, however, resolved less satisfactorily in terms of Association policies. The Act established direct central control of the new Fund – while nonetheless steering well clear of funding an expansion of Poor Law spending from the national budget – and also gave the central Poor Law Board the power to place its own nominees on local boards where revenue and capital spending decisions were made.

With the aim of casting further light on the part the Association played in the development of these extended redistributive poor relief policies, three aspects of its role will be examined: its membership, its tactics and alliances, and its rhetoric and policies.

Membership of the rate equalization association

The 1857 launch was not the first Metropolitan attempt at getting a redistributive campaign off the ground, but the new Association was by far the most effective. It was set up as a body to which Metropolitan parish vestries, Boards of Guardians and similar local bodies sent their nominees. Constitutionally it functioned at two levels: the large Central (also called General) Committee, which met only occasionally, and the smaller, very active Executive Committee, which met often weekly or fortnightly. The role of the Central Committee developed into one of validating the activities and recommendations of the energetic Executive and confirming the Association's broad institutional base. Geographically the new Association gained its major support not from the East End, but from the West, the City and the South; indeed, the initiating parish was Kensington. Fully involved within the first month were delegates from Kensington, Chelsea, Fulham, and St. Andrew Holborn (West); Lambeth, Bermondsey, St. George the Martyr, St. Thomas and Christ Church Southwark, Wandsworth and Tooting (South); St. Ann Blackfriars, St. Bartholomew the Great, St. Katherine Cree, All Hallows, St.



Note
West: 5 (Kensington, Chelsea, Holborn, Fulham, Hammersmith)
South: 7 (Lambeth 3, Southwark 2, Bermondsey, Wandsworth)
City: 3 (St. Ann Blackfriars 2, Aldgate 1)
East: 2 (Shoreditch, Limehouse)
(Source: GL MS 1088/2, Report to General Committee 7.7.1857.)

Figure 1. Composition of Executive Committee July 1857

Dionis Backchurch and St. Olave Silver Street (City); and St. Mary Whitechapel and Limehouse (East). Within three months of the formation of the Association, delegates and/or support had been received also from Hammersmith (West); St. James Dukes Place and All Hallows by the Wall (City); Camberwell, Rotherhithe, Greenwich and St. Nicholas Deptford (South); and St. George in the East and St. Leonard Shoreditch (East).[16]

This gives an initial count of 5 from the West, 8 from the City, 11 from the South and four from the East End: a total of 28 parishes. Although this simple head-count does not take into account the size of the parishes or the number of delegates they sent (or the fact that in nine cases the parish was also the local Poor Law authority) it nevertheless indicates that there was a wide spread of interest across the Metropolis in the goals of the new Association, and that the parishes of the East End were in a minority. The two great West End parishes of Marylebone and St. Pancras, and their neighbour St. George Hanover Square, with its particularly large proportion of wealthy inhabitants – who stood to lose most from a rate equalisation policy – declined to participate in the movement, as did the smaller parishes in the heart of the West End.

The extent of interest shown in rate equalisation was in fact even wider than the initial list indicates, in that 150 of the 188 Metropolitan parishes had 'consented' to the holding of a public meeting two days before, chaired by the Lord Mayor, and 500 parochial officers had signed the requisition for the meeting.[17] (This large number of parishes indicates that the City of London Union, with its 98 small parishes, was among those consenting). When it came to nominating individuals to attend the General and Executive Committees, the figures are also sizeable when compared with the maximum possible. Of 38 local Poor Law authorities in the Metropolis, 20 were represented geographically on the EC, either as a whole or by one or more of their individual parishes.[18]

The composition of the 15-strong Executive Committee[19] confirms that it was from the West, the South and the City that the predominant support came; there were only two East End representatives, and only one of them had a reasonable attendance. The EC and Central Committee members were mainly small local businessmen, professional men, small shopkeepers and tradesmen.

The man chosen as Chairman, William Gilbert of Kensington, a man of intellectual as well

as political vigour, of independent means, and previously a surgeon, was a Kensington vestryman, and it was in this role that he had moved for the setting up of the special vestry committee that was to lead to the establishment of the Rate Equalisation Association. Gilbert himself later emphasised the instrumentality of the Metropolitan Board of Works from 1855 in bringing Metropolitan vestries together frequently in 'combinations . . . for the purpose of carrying out some object for their common good.' However, he himself was not a member of the MBW, and it is clear that it was from the Kensington vestry that the actual initiating move came.

In addition to his political publications Gilbert, a member of the Reform Club, wrote several novels, some of them dealing with 'his favourite subject, the deepening contrast between the lots of rich and poor', and he was the father of W. S. Gilbert of Gilbert & Sullivan fame. (The younger Gilbert is reported to have said, 'He thought that if I could write, anybody could'). The family connection with the Rate Equalization Association may have contributed, in 1873, to the younger Gilbert's hilarious burlesque, '*The Happy Land*'.[20]

Robert E. Warwick, one of the Secretaries, was a grocer and tea-dealer by trade but also an articulate and prolific writer and speaker on poor law affairs. He was one of the founders and joint secretary of the Association's largely City-based predecessor, The Metropolitan Association for the Abolition of the Laws of Settlement and Poor Removal and the Equalization of the Poor Rate, and was to become a City Common Councilman for St. Ann Blackfriars and Vice-Chairman of the City of London Poor Law Union. It was probably through Warwick that papers and minute books of the Association have survived.[21]

Francis Hayman Fowler, the other Secretary, a Lambeth architect and surveyor, was later Lambeth member of the Metropolitan Board of Works for 20 years (and was accused by a Royal Commission in 1888 of voting and acting improperly on MBW committees for professional and private gain).[22] John Blachford, Vice-Chairman, of Fulham, was an Irish-born solicitor who had practised in London for over 40 years, and by 1861 had been a Fulham Guardian for 14 years and chairman of the Board for seven.[23]

Another major figure on the EC was John Day, a multi-purpose local government officer in Southwark St. George, one of the parish's first guardians under the 1834 Act, an occasional Poor Law auditor and a writer on rate equalisation. Day had drawn up a Bill in 1853 with Apsley Pellatt, MP for Southwark, for national rate equalisation that had not survived its First Reading, and had been involved in two previous rate equalisation associations.[24]

There was, not unexpectedly, a tendency for Central Committee delegates from the same parish to come from similar occupational classes. For instance, two of John Blachford's fellow members from Fulham were also professionals: John E. Panter, a barrister (in a two-servant household), and Thomas Cooper, headmaster of a 65-pupil boys' school. The fourth Fulham member, William. Deller, whilst not a professional man, was a substantial market gardener, with 60 acres and 20 employees.[25]

The small City parish of St Dionis Backchurch sent a solicitor, but the occupations of other members from the City reflected the square mile's retailing and small tradesman sector: two jewellers, a linen-draper, a hairdresser, a coffee shop proprietor, a printing proprietor, a tin-plate maker, a net and tent maker, the owner of a silk and ribbon dyeing, embossing and printing business, and a seedsman and florist (who was probably also leech importer, sponge dealer and herbalist). Riverside Bermondsey sent practical entrepreneurs involved in local trades: a wharfinger and a young builder employing 27 men. From neighbouring Southwark came mainly shopkeepers and tradesmen: baker, chemist, coal merchant, tin-plate worker, pawnbroker, bootmaker and two woollen drapers, and also a doctor. Still on the South side of the river but further to the West, parishes sent three landlords, an insurance company manager, hop and hemp merchants, a doctor and a surveyor.[26]

There was little difference between the occupations of the South/West/City representation and those from the East End: a brush and turnery manufacturer, a coffee rooms proprietor, a stationer and a pawnbroker. The most apparent difference was their number.[27]

However, although the East End's secular representation was limited, East End parish clergy gave the Association 'invaluable aid' from an early stage. When a meeting on rate equalisation was held in St. George in the East it was a clergyman, the remarkable Rev. G. H. M'Gill (who, as "An East-End Incumbent", wrote letters on rate equalisation to *The Times*), who convened it in the George Tavern in Commercial Road. Either around the same time or a few months later, a separate Tower Hamlets Association was set up, with strong support from the clergy, and the two associations agreed to assist each other 'to the best of their abilities'. M'Gill, elected chairman of the Tower Hamlets Association, attended the Rate Equalization Association's EC on a fairly frequent though irregular basis.[28]

The brief study above of EC and Central Committee members indicates that, drawn as they were almost entirely from local bodies in the west, south and centre of the Metropolis, they reflected a significant middle-class and tradesman interest in these areas in rate equalisation.

Tactics and alliances

The Rate Equalization Association's activities showed a sharp perception of where its strengths and its potential for success lay – in the generation of public support for change, in the building of links with those who had the potential for changing the law (the Members of Parliament) and in the seizing of every opportunity to promote their cause.

One of the most public demonstrations of the Association's consciousness of the importance of alliances and the building of significant support was the enrolment of over 60 Vice-Presidents in its cause, the Central Committee having resolved to 'solicit Noblemen and other influential gentlemen to become Vice Presidents of the Association'.[29]

The tally of over 60 influential gentlemen included the Lord Mayor of London and over 30 MPs.[30] They never did settle on an agreed and willing person for the top job of President. Perhaps having 60 influential Vice-Presidents was found to be an acceptable compromise; it certainly avoided the danger of the executive power of the EC becoming diluted.

Although only 11 MP-Vice Presidents were in Parliament continuously from 1858 to 1867 (election losses and other external factors taking their toll), a further eight were there for a substantial part of these years, and another eight in the earlier years only; all but two were Liberals or Reformers. They were mainly backbenchers, with only three ever holding government office. The three included Acton Smee Ayrton, MP for Tower Hamlets,[31] who played an exceptionally active part in the campaign for the ten years of the Association's existence.

Many of the MP-Vice Presidents were dually influential in that they held significant positions in commerce, manufacturing and trade. For instance Robert Crawford, MP for the City of London, was a Director of the Bank of England (and previously Deputy-Governor), Chairman of the East Indian Railway and an East India Proprietor. Sir William Tite, MP for Bath, was Chairman of the Bank of Egypt, a Director of the London & Westminster Bank, and President of the Institute of British Architects. Herbert Ingram, MP for Boston, who met an untimely death by drowning in Lake Michigan in 1860, was Proprietor and Manager of the *Illustrated London News*. William Schneider, MP for Norwich and later for Leicester, was a merchant and shipowner. William Cubitt, MP for Andover and Lord Mayor of London 1860–62, was one of the founding brothers of the wealthy building firm.

Merchants included City of London Alderman (and former Lord Mayor) Thomas Sidney, MP for Stafford and tea dealer and importer; James White, former Alderman, MP for Plymouth, and a merchant chiefly engaged in trade with China; Peter Rolt, Conservative MP for Greenwich to 1857 and a timber merchant and contractor; Samuel Morley, MP for Nottingham and then Bristol, member of a firm of wholesale hosiers (and also a leading Radical involved in the Administrative Reform Association[32]); R. J. R. Campbell, MP for Weymouth, merchant in Bengal and London, and author of works on banking and exchange; William Price, MP for Gloucester, a timber merchant and later a Railway Commissioner, and William Williams, MP for Lambeth.

Figure 2. The leading Parliamentary campaigner for rate equalisation, Acton Smee Ayrton, MP for Tower Hamlets 1857–74. From *Illustrated London News*, 16 May 1857. (By permission of the University of London Library).

Manufacturers included Apsley Pellatt, MP for Southwark and head of a Southwark glass manufacturing firm; E. G. Salisbury, MP for Chester and proprietor of extensive gasworks; Donald Nicoll, MP for Frome, merchant tailor, manufacturer of cloth, and partner in a Regent Street firm; and J. J. Colman, Sheriff and Mayor of Norwich, later to be MP for Norwich, merchant, manufacturer, and head of the mustard firm.

Others in (present or past) senior magisterial or other public positions included Sir James Duke, MP for London, past Sheriff of London and Middlesex, past Lord Mayor, and Alderman; Charles Butler, MP for Tower Hamlets and Chairman of Tower Hamlets Quarter Sessions; Thomas Perronet Thompson, MP for Bradford, Radical Lieut. Colonel, and former governor of Sierra Leone; Sir Charles Napier, MP for Southwark, a former Admiral in the

Portuguese service and Royal Navy Admiral of the Blue; Captain Charles Mangles, MP for Newport, Isle of Wight and a former captain in the East India Company's service, and John Locke, MP for Southwark, son of a Southwark tradesman, and Recorder of Brighton.

Also significant in the business world were almost all of the non-MP Vice-Presidents. Of 25 whose addresses were given as 'London', 17 have been identified as merchants, manufacturers or wholesalers/retailers/dealers and one as a printer-publisher; for a further five there is a highly likely similar identification, bringing this category of businessmen to 23; for two only has it not been possible to identify an occupational or industrial grouping. A further miscellaneous group of six – a clergyman (the Rev. M'Gill), two doctors, and three from the provinces – brings the tally of non-MP Vice-Presidents to 31.

At least two-thirds of the non-MP Vice-Presidents, therefore, and probably more, were men with significant business interests in the Metropolis. Their fields of operation included the wines and spirits, oporto, wool and fur trades (merchants); silk, linen, lace, glass and china, gloves, and hosiery (wholesale, retail, dealing and warehousing); and leather goods, lace, cutlery, tobacco and snuff, hats, brewing, glass and china, furs and skins, soap and candlesticks, furniture, oils and colours, and animal charcoal and ivory black (manufacturers).

The enlisting of influential Vice-Presidents was, however, only one of the Rate Equalization Association's tactics, and was started in the second of what one could term the four phases of its history. It is possible here to indicate only some of the major features of these phases.

The first phase (involving unsuccessful moves for a Select Committee and a Bill) began with campaigning success in the March 1857 General Election. Candidates advocating equalization of the poor rates had been placed at the head of the poll in Middlesex, the EC noted, and all the candidates had 'openly avowed their support to the cause'. The press had also begun to discuss the question 'in a manner well calculated to give us valuable aid', as had clergy in the East End.[33]

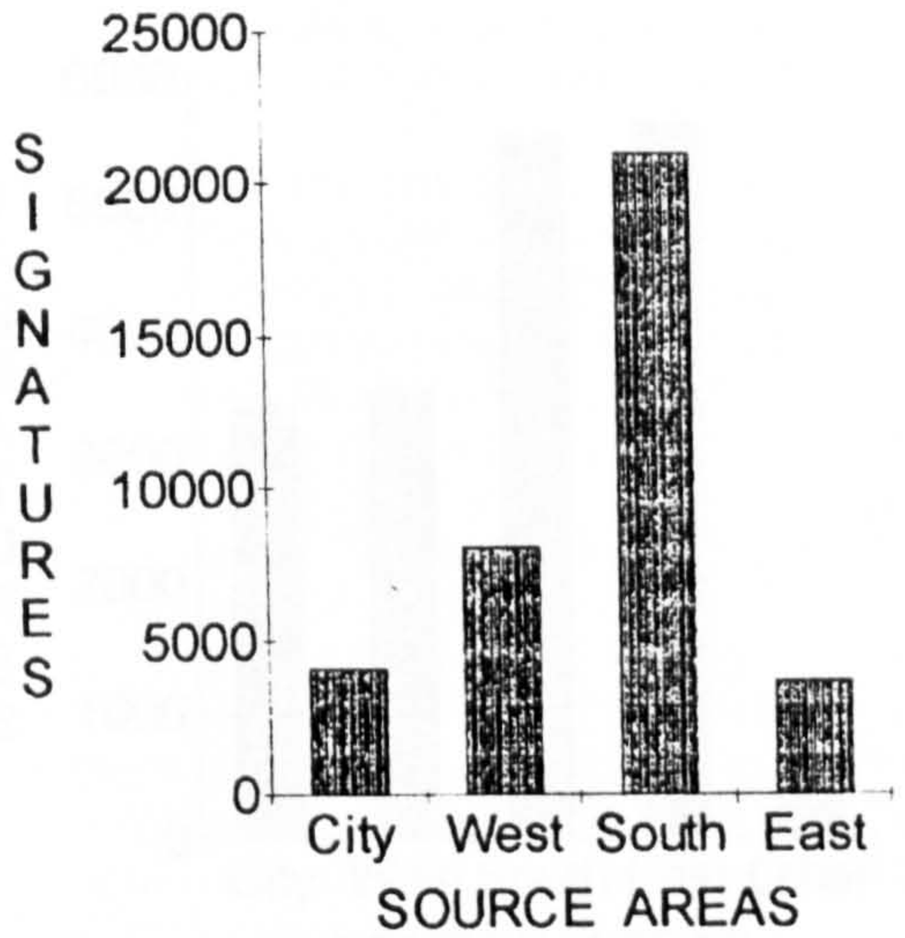
In less than three months Ayrton, new MP for Tower Hamlets, had raised Metropolitan rate equalisation in the House of Commons by moving the setting up of a Select Committee on the issue.[34] While the Association's minutes do not reveal the first contact with Ayrton, it is clear that a productive relationship developed at an early stage, and the Association organised widespread public meetings and petitioning in support of the motion.

Defeat was taken as an opportunity to use the list of Ayes and Noes[35] as a checklist: while the 121 Noes are untouched, 13 of the 81 Ayes had been ticked, and five have been crossed out. At the next General Committee meeting the EC reported that 13 Metropolitan Members (those ticked) had voted in support of Ayrton's motion, and only one had voted against. The five names crossed out were those of MPs who either died or left the Commons later in 1857; it seems likely therefore that in late 1857 or in 1858 the list of Ayes was used for canvassing MPs still in the Commons for further support. This may have included the canvass for 'influential' Vice-Presidents, as 15 of the 81 Ayes later took on that role.

The list indicates how distant the prospect was at this stage of achieving rate equalisation. The Ayes were, overwhelmingly, Liberal backbenchers: only four of them ever held government office, either before or after the vote on Ayrton's motion. The sparse non-Liberal support consisted of seven Conservatives and seven Liberal-Conservatives (Stenton's classification).

Front-bench Liberals led the opposition: two-thirds of the Noes (80) were Liberals, and of these, 26 were present, past or future front-benchers. This large proportion of office-holders and seekers was headed by Palmerston himself. Such a heavy-weight mobilisation to defeat Ayrton's proposal for a Select Committee suggests the government may have feared the impact on MPs of Ayrton's striking images of East-West disparities (images that were to be the staple of Rate Equalization Association rhetoric). Indeed, such a turn-out can be taken as a measure of success: four years before, when Apsley Pellatt, MP for Southwark, had attempted to move for leave to bring in a rate equalisation Bill (drafted with the support of John Day) the House had been counted out.[36]

The next step – the drafting of a Bill – led to a major difference of opinion between Ayrton



Note

City: 4,101

West: 8,070 (West End, St. Luke, Clerkenwell, Holborn, Marylebone, Chelsea, Fulham)

South: 20,993 (Lambeth, Southwark, Bermondsey, Rotherhithe, Greenwich, Putney, Camberwell)

East: 3,697 (Poplar, Limehouse, Tower Hamlets)

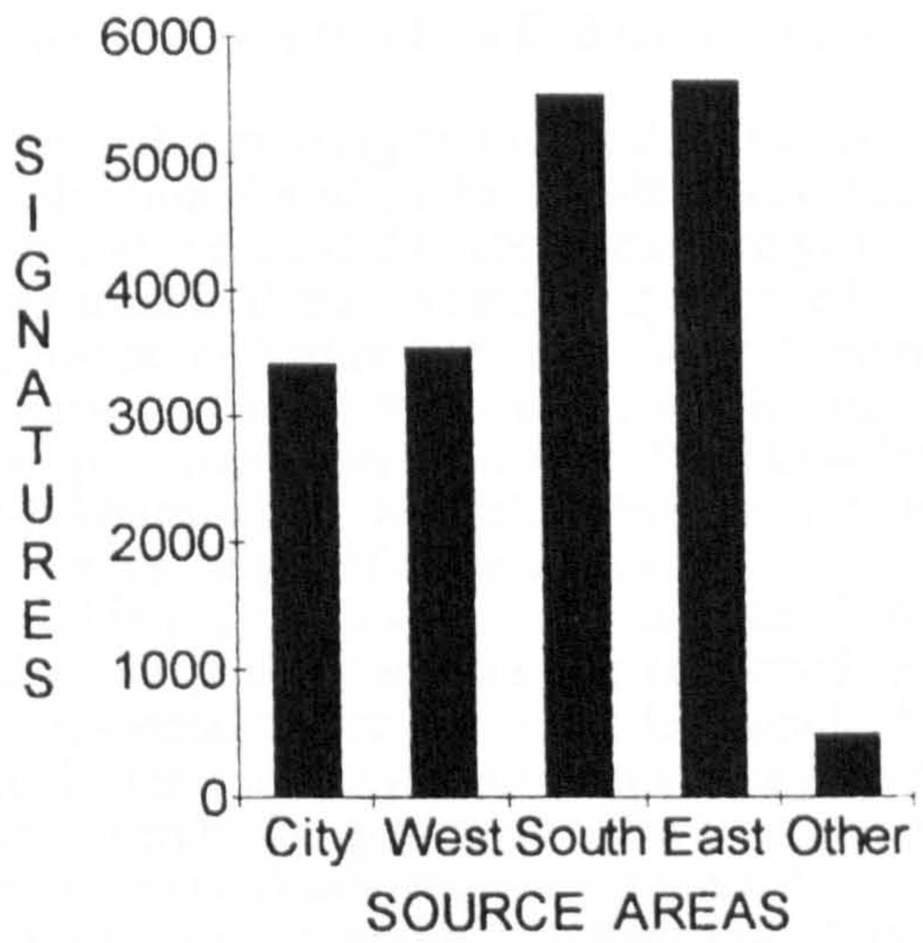
(Source: GL MS 1088/1, 19.5.1858)

Figure 3. Rate Equalisation Petitions May 1858

and the Association. The Central Committee supported the EC in their interpretation of the difference: that Ayrton's less radical proposal was 'objectionable' because it made the question 'exclusively a ratepayer's question', proposed to equalise only half the rates, and did not tackle the poor removals issue. The Central Committee unanimously resolved that, having considered Ayrton's proposal for 'mitigating the inequalities of the Poor Rate', it was their opinion that 'nothing less than an Equalization of the Rate on a uniform basis of Assessment will do Justice to the Ratepayer or to the Poor', and ordered that the EC's draft Bill be passed on to counsel for further development.[37]

It was the more radical approach of the 'West' that formed the basis for the new, vigorous programme of canvassing, petitioning and public meetings that the Association now embarked upon, with resolutions at public meetings and petitions calling for 'an equalized rate levied on rateable property throughout the District' [the Metropolitan district]. Association meetings were held, for instance, on the following dates in early 1858: Jan. 20 Bermondsey, Rotherhithe and St. Clement Danes; Jan. 21 Woolwich; Jan. 26 Lambeth; Jan. 27 Chelsea; Jan. 28 Hammersmith; February 3 Chelsea; Feb. 5 Fulham; Feb. 9, 18 East London Union; Feb. 12 Clerkenwell; Feb. 24 West London Union; Feb. 26 City of London; March 2 Marylebone. The Association was now functioning, in effect, as a professional campaigning organisation, with a paid Parliamentary agent.

They also reached an accommodation with Ayrton on his draft Bill, noting that although their own Bill had the advantage of incorporating a representative body, his would now achieve the Association's objectives, and began campaigning vigorously for it. As a result,



Note

City: 3,420
West: 3,540 (Clerkenwell, Finsbury, Fulham, St. Pancras)
South: 5,537 (Lambeth, Southwark)
East: 5,650 (Tower Hamlets only)
Other: 490 (Aylesbury, Gloucester, Stafford, Worcester)

(Source: GL MS 1088/1, 25.2.& 4,11,18.3.59.)

Figure 4. Rate Equalisation Petitions February/March 1859

twenty-two MPs presented petitions bearing a total of 37,833 signatures to the Commons. The largest number of signatures came from the two large districts south of the river, Southwark and Lambeth (16,680). If Clerkenwell and St. Luke are counted as West (in accordance with the EC's perception), the 'West End' total was 10,019. Tower Hamlets (Ayrton's constituency, and base of the Tower Hamlets Association) raised 3,630 signatures. The remaining 7,500 came from the City, from East End districts organised by the Rate Equalization Association such as Poplar and Limehouse, and from other districts further afield such as Greenwich, Putney and Wandsworth.[38]

The failure of the Bill brought to an end the first phase of the Rate Equalization Association's history. In the second phase (1858–60) three major steps were taken: the Association went 'nation-wide', the enrolment of influential Vice-Presidents began, and further Parliamentary tactics were planned formally and embarked upon.

From November 1858 the Association operated as the Metropolitan and County Association for the Equalization of the Poor Rate, and a hectic schedule of meetings outside the Metropolis was embarked upon. For instance, in one week in January (hardly the easiest time of year to travel) Warwick and Bennett were in Worcester (21st), Gilbert and M'Gill in Stafford (24th), Blachford and Chester in Macclesfield (25th) and Fowler and Day in Plymouth (25th). In all of these places resolutions supporting the Association were passed and Local Committees formed 'for the purpose of assisting the Central Committee'.[39]

At the Association's next major joint activity with Ayrton – the first meeting of the Parliamentary Vice-Presidents, on 15 February 1859 at the Union Hotel, Charing Cross, with six EC members and eight Parliamentary Vice-Presidents present – the framework was laid

for Parliamentary activities that were to culminate, eight years later, in the passing of the Metropolitan Poor Act. The only two East End representatives were Ayrton, in the Chair, and the Rev. M'Gill.[40]

The major decision of this meeting was tactical: to launch a two-pronged manoeuvre to get the issue of rate equalisation placed on the agenda of an existing Select Committee, and to get the remit of this Committee extended to encompass the general working of the poor law. This formula, initially unsuccessful but subsequently pursued tenaciously by Ayrton and John Locke, MP for Southwark, on Villiers' 1861–64 Select Committee on Poor Relief[41] and in the Commons, was to open the door to the achievement, in large part, of the Association's redistributive goals. The 'piecemeal, step-by-step'[42] Poor Law legislation of the next few years, including the 1864 Metropolitan Houseless Poor Act,[43] the immediate precursor of the Metropolitan Poor Act, arose out of these tactics.

In the third phase (1861–2) EC members gave Select Committee evidence (some of them in both years) and major public campaigning continued. For instance an 'influential' and 'most crowded and respectable meeting' at the Guildhall, chaired by the Conservative Lord Mayor William Cubitt (one of the Association's Vice-Presidents) and attended by 'a large number of the clergy, merchants, guardians of the poor and others', voted with only five dissentients in favour of several Association resolutions.[44]

With some justification the Association, in their Fifth Annual Report,[45] looking back at the past year, felt they had 'just cause for congratulation' at the progress and interest shown, both by the public and the legislature, 'in the injustice, as well as the inadequacy, of the existing mode of raising . . . Funds for the Relief of the Poor . . .' They noted the role of winter distress in bringing to prominence the defects in the system of poor relief, but made the point that their own efforts had played a significant part in focusing attention on the inequities of the Metropolitan rating system.

In response to Ayrton's rallying call in June 1862 that Villiers' Committee was ready to receive any evidence they 'might wish to give on the subject of the equalisation of the poor rates', the EC resolved to send a strong contingent of nine.[46] Only one of these (the Rev. M'Gill) was to represent the East End (specifically, Tower Hamlets). Three were to be from the three City unions, two from Southwark, and three from the West (Kensington, Chelsea and Fulham, and Hammersmith). Once again, it is clear, the Association was functioning almost entirely as an organisation based in the West, the South and the City.

In the event, six EC members gave evidence. They were the only witnesses on rate equalisation, and the only non-official witnesses to come from the Metropolis in 1862. Not even the 1862 medical officer witnesses (nor the petition handed in from the Executive Council of the British Medical Association 'representing 2,100 medical men') focused on the rating issue; instead, they raised the conditions of appointment, employment and pay of medical officers. This suggests, as noted earlier, that significant and specific medical support for rate equalisation developed only later.[47]

The contributions of the Rate Equalization Association six were acknowledged in the 1864 Report, which noted

> 'that much evidence was adduced showing the unequal pressure of the charge for the relief of the poor in different parts of the metropolitan district; and various plans were submitted to Your Committee for the equalisation of the poor rate; and Your Committee recommend the general question of extending the area of rating to the further consideration of the House . . .'[48]

In phase four, 1863–7, the Association appears to have begun responding to events rather than taking a pro-active role; one could argue that the Association had done as much as it was able at that time to achieve an equal rate in the Metropolis. The status of the Association and its EC members appears to have remained high, and it continued to be politically appropriate for

an MP to be a Vice-President: for instance, the Ninth Annual Report of the Association shows that one of the two new Vice-Presidents was the Rt. Hon. George Goschen, MP for the City and a future President of the Poor Law Board.[49]

In response to the 1867 Metropolitan Poor Bill of the new Conservative President of the Poor Law Board the Association held two meetings of guardians, overseers and vestrymen at the London Coffee House, where it was agreed that attempts should be made (unsuccessfully, it turned out) to have additional charges placed on the intended new Metropolitan Common Fund.[50]

With the passing of the Metropolitan Poor Act the major principle underlying the formation of the Rate Equalization Association in 1857 had been achieved, even if some of the practical details differed from proposals put forward by the Association over the years. This was recognised by the EC in typically decisive fashion. On 14 June 1867 they agreed that the time had now arrived when the Association should be dissolved 'inasmuch as the great object for which it was founded had been in a great measure effected by the passing of the Union Chargeability Act of 1865 and the Metropolitan Poor Law Act 1867 . . .'[51]

In terms of tactics and alliances, it is clear that for ten years the Equalisation Association, and particularly its Executive Committee, played a significant role on two fronts: in the influencing of opinion, and in the battle of Parliamentary tactics. It seems very likely that prominent among the reasons for their success when compared with the lack of progress of earlier attempts were (as Gilbert believed) the significant and powerful alliances that they built, both within and outside Parliament. They could rightly claim success when, in 1867, they saw their goals largely achieved.

Rhetoric and policies

The strength of the Rate Equalization Association's rhetoric and policies was, essentially, its simplicity. The concept of inequitability, while underpinned with rating statistics, was conveyed in emotive, concrete images and contrasts – for instance, the distant poor families of the 'powdered lacqueys' of Belgravia, the 'old and incapable' servants of the aristocracy, and the farthing-in-a-pound poor rate paid by the Bank of England, 'that great organ of monetary circulation'.[52]

However, its strength could also be its weakness, as Ayrton in the Commons in 1857 and 1858 was made sharply aware: redistribution of the local taxation burden from Spitalfields to St. George Hanover Square was not only a promise but also a threat. In 1861 Villiers (whether for tactical reasons or from conviction) warned the Commons (a number of whose Members were Vice-Presidents of the Association) that if they rejected his 'moderate' Irremovable Poor Bill[53] they would give great impetus to 'the movement in favour of a general and immediate equalization of rates throughout the whole country'.[54]

The Association's rhetoric of wealth and poverty appealed even to Charles Dickens, despite his disapproval of Ayrton's 1858 speech. He weighed in on the side not only of the poor but also of the ratepayers, drawing contrasts between 'the wealthy ratepayers in the squares and terraces of Paddington' and 'the impoverished ratepayers in the lanes and small streets of Saint George's-in-the-East'.[55] On a Parliamentary level even Villiers, in moving the Irremoveable Poor Bill, employed the by now familiar style of comparisons.[56]

While the Association was not, in fact, the initiator of the idea of setting up a specific mechanism for equalising the poor rate – G. L. Hutchinson was probably first in the field in terms of being, as he claimed, the nineteenth century 'originator' of the proposal – the Metropolitan focus was original to the Rate Equalization Association. Indeed Hutchinson tried to delete the word 'London' from a motion at a meeting in 1857, and attacked Ayrton's 1858 Bill on the grounds that in restricting its proposals to the Metropolis, it was 'too confined and selfish', asking, 'If a great good is to be obtained, why should the metropolitan districts alone enjoy it?'[57]

In terms of policy, the Association's perception was that there were, basically, four options for raising and redistributing the poor rate: a national rate levied, as was the present parish-based poor rate, on real property; basing poor relief on the 'Property Tax', or Schedule A of the income tax, which was likely to bear more heavily on the wealthy than did the existing parish assessments; redistribution within Poor Law unions [which was achieved in 1865 through the Union Chargeability Act but did not relieve the Metropolitan single-parish unions]; and redistribution within counties, which is what the Equalization Association campaigned for and what the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund in effect implemented within the Metropolitan 'county-equivalent', although on a much more centralised basis than the Association had proposed.[58]

The Association showed least interest in a national rate, although Gilbert himself offered to 'take up the question of a National Rate' and perhaps at least one other member of the EC, John Day, having worked with Apsley Pellatt, MP, in 1853 on his Bill for a national rate, would have supported such a policy. One of the Association's objections to this radical option was that it would be a 'simple socialistic tax'. Others were that it would centralise 'the whole management of the poor' in the hands of government and increase the powers of the Poor Law Board, and would lead to lack of accountability to local ratepayers and lack of a check on government extravagance.[59]

The property tax option, 'Lord Malmesbury's proposal', was rejected reluctantly, but on more or less the same grounds and also, Gilbert wrote, because of 'an apparently unsurmountable obstacle' – opposition by Members of both Houses of Parliament, who were 'so powerfully interested against' a property tax. In connection with this option the Association flirted also with the idea of an alliance with the radical Liverpool-based Financial Reform Association, supporters of direct taxation, but found that they could not agree with the financial case put by the FRA.[60]

It is clear that a major reason for the Association's settling on a county-based model of rate equalisation was that it was less centralised: their published draft version incorporated indirectly elected local members. The proposal also had recognised radical credentials in that as far back as 1836 Joseph Hume had argued for county taxation to be controlled by elected boards, and a version of this proposal had been defeated in Parliament as recently as 1852.[61]

There were two major fields in which the debate had to be won: the pro-active or more aggressive arguments on class, wealth and poverty in the Metropolis, and the mainly reactive or defensive arguments relating to centralisation, local powers and the fear that a bottomless public purse would lead to local extravagance.

Gilbert was one of the Association's most vigorous and wide-ranging debaters on wealth, class and inequalities. In 1860[62] he succeeded in drawing together arguments about the roles of capital, labour and classes, of charities, philanthropy and self-interest, and of the settlement laws, East-West disparities and the record of the Poor Law Board: a rather notable achievement. His linking theme was the increasing separation of rich and poor – through Metropolitan improvements, through the settlement laws, through Poor Law Board failure to act, and through accumulation of capital – and he insisted that it was government's responsibility to put things right.

His many contrasts of wealth and poverty included dock labourers and weavers who had to support each other through the poor rate when out of work while merchants, manufacturers and shipowners were absolved from contributing, and the 'enormously wealthy' Inns of Court which were exempt by tradition from any contribution to poor relief while their surrounding parishes were 'frequently in a state of the most abject destitution'.[63]

It was the tireless Warwick who argued most strongly on the issue of centralisation and local control. Opposed at one stage even to the continuation of the Poor Law Board (which he saw as having powers 'greater than the Crown or either branch of the Legislature'), he contended that a general uniformity of standards could be achieved without the intrusive control of central government, drew up a County Financial Board model for the Metropolis

with members indirectly elected through local guardians, and emphasised the role of the representative bodies. (He nonetheless also saw 'no valid objection' to a Parliamentary grant – in effect, a rate support grant – for certain parishes.)[64]

In putting the case for local control Warwick was contesting the accusations of opponents such as Joshua Toulmin Smith, who argued that the word 'levelling' would better represent the aims of the Association, and who attacked those who 'seek covertly to gain the ends of centralisation'. It was, Toulmin Smith said, ignorance and selfishness if 'you try to get a great end, towards which there are twenty or thirty steps, by smoothing over the first two or three, so that they gradually lead on to the twentieth step, whence they will plunge you into the abyss'.[65]

One of the Association's many public resolutions provides a further illustration of their arguments and style, linking as it does political principle and practical policy:

> That the Poor of the Metropolis are the Poor of the Whole Metropolitan Community and as such ought in the time of their distress to be relieved and supported by an Equalized Rate levied on rateable property throughout the District such Rate to be levied on one uniform basis of Assessment.[66]

The rhetoric and policies of the Rate Equalization Association, it is suggested, indicate that this largely middle-class organisation from western, southern and City parishes of the Metropolis employed a substantially radical discourse in pursuit of radical-reformist polices.

Conclusions

The nature of the Association's membership, its tactics and alliances, and its rhetoric and policies were all significant factors in its achievements. An early example of a co-ordinated radical-minded Metropolitan political movement grounded in, and focusing on, elected bodies – and operating at an earlier period than has hitherto generally been expected – it built a powerful constituency of support for the policy of Metropolitan rate equalisation long before the 1864–6 workhouse scandals[67] made it politically imperative for the government in power to find an acceptable new funding instrument.

A notable degree of this support came from those whose own parishes or unions would not have benefited a great deal, or at all, from rate equalisation; there may therefore have been, it seems, much support for increased redistribution as a principle.

The Rate Equalization Association clearly gained much of its strength from a latent local Metropolitan radicalism that had been denied a wider forum through the failure to give the capital municipal status in 1835–7 and the limited extent of Metropolitan government – only a Board of Works – established in 1855. In deriving its delegates from boards of guardians and vestries, the Association seems to have drawn on a natural local radical constituency – political activists at the sharp end of implementing settlement and other poor laws. The radicalism of EC members such as Gilbert, Warwick and Day clearly had strong roots in such experience. Thus the potential Radical backbench support in Parliament for rate equalization and the Liberal/Radical sympathies to be expected among a significant proportion of large businessmen[68] were capable of being mobilised consistently over a ten-year period because the movement was underpinned by local radical-minded politicians with an active consciousness of Poor Law weaknesses and disparities of provision. Significantly the Metropolitan Poor Act, when it was passed, provided yet another instance of central government's wariness on the London government question: although it tackled the rate redistribution issue, it set up an administrative Fund and asylum boards rather than the Association's proposed elected County Board.

In terms of its ultimate policy achievements the Rate Equalization Association, it is contended, made a significant contribution to what Dicey was later to describe, in the context of other issues, as 'permanent currents of opinion':[69] in this case, opinion about the need for more equalised spreading of the burden of paying for the poor and the sick.

NOTES

1. 30 & 31 Vict. c.6.
2. G. Ayres, *England's First State Hospitals and the Metropolitan Asylums Board 1867–1930* (London, 1971), 28, 242–8; G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London* (London, 1984), 249–50, 253; J. Davis, *Reforming London* (Oxford, 1988), Appendix 3; M. A. Crowther, *The Workhouse System 1834–1929* (London, 1983), 162.
3. A. Digby, *The Poor Law in the Nineteenth-Century* (London, 1989), 29.
4. M. Caplan in 'The New Poor Law and the Struggle for Union Chargeability', *International Review of Social History*, 23 (1978), 282–3, noted briefly the role of the movement in influencing public opinion.
5. E. Cook, *The Life of Florence Nightingale* (London, 1914), 124, 133–4, 139; C. Woodham-Smith, *Florence Nightingale 1820–1910* (London, 1950), 466–8, 472–3; F. B. Smith, *Florence Nightingale – Reputation and Power* (London, 1982), 171–1.
6. J. E. O'Neill in 'Finding a Policy for the Sick Poor', *Victorian Studies*, 7 (1963–4), 284, suggests that Dr. Ernest Hart's contribution may have been under-recognised, but he does not focus particularly on the financing of the reforms.
7. Stedman Jones, op. cit., citing contemporary East End press reports, says that 'the solution of East End ratepayers and vestries [to overwhelming rate demands] . . . was to press for the equalization of the Metropolitan Poor Rate', and that the 'campaign of the East End vestries against the inequality of the rates was finally satisfied by the Metropolitan Poor Act of 1867'. This reflects what Gathorne Hardy himself said when moving the Bill: that he had been 'petitioned repeatedly by persons at the East End of the metropolis to do something to bring them into a better condition' (Hansard 8.2.1867 col. 170), and is supported by other evidence about pressure from the East End. This petitioning took place in 1867, of course, at the end of the ten-year period studied. It was in Gathorne Hardy's interests, for various reasons, to emphasise the role of the East End. (John Tosh's discussion of bias in historical sources, in *The Pursuit of History* (London, 1991), 59–63, is relevant in this respect.)
8. Guildhall [GL]Mss 1088/1 and 1088/2.
9. This article is part of a broader study by myself of aspects of the genesis and implementation of the Metropolitan Poor Act.
10. Davis, *Reforming London*, 25.
11. H. C. G. Matthew, 'Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Politics of Mid-Victorian Budgets', *Historical Journal*, 22, 3 (1979), 619–21, 623 n. 34, 627; S. Buxton, *Finance and Politics, Vol. 1* (London, 1888), 347.
12. *Poor Law Act* 1601, 43 Elizabeth c.2.
13. J. V. Beckett, *Local Taxation: National Legislation and the Problems of Enforcement* (London, 1980), 3–9.
14. PP 1861 ix, Q. 3219–53; Stedman Jones, *Outcast London*, 244–6.
15. A. Offer, *Property and Politics 1870–1914* (Cambridge, 1981), 162.
16. GL MS 1088/1: Minute Book of the Equalization Association; GL MSS 1088/2: Draft Minute Book.
17. GL MS 1089 pp. 2, 85.
18. Proportions of possible and actual calculated on the basis of F. R. Youngs jr., *Guide to the Local Administration Units of England: Southern England* (London, 1979), 648–9.
19. MS 1088/1, 3.3.1857.
20. Kensington Vestry minutes 1855–8, pp. 237, 285; Kensington General Business Committees minutes, C/8/311, p. 59; DNB Vol. XXII Supplement (Oxford 1921–2); S. Dark & R. Grey, *W. S. Gilbert: His Life and Letters* (London, 1924), 2; British Library MS 53117N; W. Gilbert, *Poor Law Reform* (London, 1860), 3–4.
21. GL MS 7754; A. Tanner's Ph.D. thesis '*The City of London Poor Law Union 1837–1869*' (London, 1995) describes moves for rate equalisation within the CLU from 1849, in which Warwick was involved.
22. PRO/30/6/169; Greater London Record Office 17.0 MBW; PP 1888, LVI, Interim Report of the Royal Commissioners appointed to inquire into MBW, 69–72, 77–79, 91.
23. 1881 Census: RG11/65/11; PP 1861 ix, Q.8239, 8251, 8284, 8294, 8342–6.
24. PP 1862 x, Q.7554–60, 7631, 7644–5; Hansard 26.7.1853 col. 831.
25. 1851 Census: HO107/1471/203, HO107/1471/119, HO107/1471/261; 1851 PO Directory, Commercial.

26. GL MS 1088/1; 1851 & 1861 censuses, HO 107 & RG9; P.O. London Directories, Commercial, 1851, 1861; Southwark St. George vestry annual reports, 1856, 1867, 1858.
27. 1851 PO Directory, Commercial.
28. GL MS 1088/1, 8. & 24.4.1857; Crockford's Clerical Directory (London, 1886); PP 1861 ix, Q.3203.
29. Ibid., 7.7.1857 & 13.10.1858; Annual Report for 1860.
30. Ibid., 18.2.61. M. Stenton, *Who's Who of British Politics, Vol. I, 1832–1885* (Sussex, 1976). [Stenton's political classifications and descriptions of business activity have been used. As Stenton often does not give dates for non-Parliamentary career information, the business information may sometimes not be applicable for the period studied; nonetheless it has been included as an indication of business status.] Kelly's *P.O. Directory, London: Court City & Banking, & Commercial* (1851 & 1862); 1851 and 1861 censuses.
31. Stenton, ibid.; DNB Vol. XXII Supplement (Oxford 1921–2): Ayrton was Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury 1868–9, Chief Commissioner of Works and Buildings 1869–73, and Judge Advocate-General 1873–4.
32. S. Maccoby, *English Radicalism 1853–1886* (London, 1938), 70.
33. GL MS 1088/1 8.4.1857.
34. Hansard 16.6.57 col. 1899.
35. GL MS 1088/2. The list does not appear in Hansard, but a blue printed list of Ayes and Noes, appearing to be of official origin, is pasted into the Association's Draft Minute Book.
36. Hansard 26.7.1853, col. 831.
37. GL MS 1088/1, 29.12.57.
38. Ibid., 19.5.58.
39. Ibid., 7.7.58, 27.10.58, 5.11.58. 21 & 28.1.59.
40. Ibid., 15.2.59.
41. PP 1861 ix, 1862 x, 1864 ix.
42. Caplan, op. cit., 296.
43. 27 & 28 Vict. c. 116.
44. GL MS 1088/1, 22.4.61; Times 26.4.61, 5c.
45. Ibid., 2.6.62.
46. Ibid., 2.6.62.
47. PP 1862 x, 9.5.62.
48. PP 1864 ix, Report.
49. GL MS 1088/1, 28.1.67.
50. Ibid., 30.1.67, 18.2.67, 25.2.67.
51. Ibid., 14.6.67.
52. Hansard 23.3.1858, col. 628 (Ayrton); W. Gilbert, *On the Present System of Rating for the Relief of the Poor in the Metropolis* (London, 1857), 14–15.
53. 24 & 25 Vict. c. 55.
54. Hansard 28.6.61, col. 1902.
55. *Household Words*, 1857/17, 5.6.1858. Dickens did not hesitate to acknowledge his debt to a pamphlet by the Rev. M'Gill, but did not mention Gilbert, whose 1857 pamphlet it seems likely he would also have read.
56. Hansard 28.6.61, col. 1900–1.
57. Hutchinson, *The Equalisation of the Poor's Rate* . . . (London 1858), 9, 25; *Lancet* 1858/I,630 & 1858/II,12; *Times* 22.11.49.5e, 30.4.57, 12f.
58. Gilbert, *Poor Law Reform* (1860), 12; R. Warwick, *The Poor Laws as they are and as they ought to be* (London, 1861); PP 1861 ix, 17/31.5.1861.
59. Gilbert, ibid., 12; GL MS 1088/1, 25.5.58.
60. Gilbert, ibid., 11,12; Matthew, op. cit., 618; PP 1850 xvi/1867–8 xiii, Lord Malmesbury's evidence, in which he recommended a new national tax, to be called the Poor Tax.
61. GL MS 1088/1, 29.12.57; Maccoby, *English Radicalism 1832–52* (London, 1935), 387–9; Gilbert, *Poor Law Reform* (1860), 13–15; Warwick, op. cit. (1861), 25.
62. Gilbert, ibid., (1860).
63. Ibid., 5–7.
64. GL MS 7754: Plan; Warwick, op. cit. (1861), 25.
65. GL MS 1089/53, 63, 75.

66. GL MS 1088/1, 12.1.58. Uniform Metropolitan assessment reached the statute book in 32 & 33 Vict. c.67, *Valuation (Metropolis) Act*, 1869.
67. Hansard 8.2.67, col. 152.
68. Vincent, *The Formation of the Liberal Party* (London, 1966), 35–9.
69. Dicey, *Lectures on the Relation between Law & Public Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1917), vii.

Appendix II. Rate Equalisation Association: delegates to the Central Committee, 1857

Delegates notified to the Association by June 1857[1]

St. Dionis Backchurch, City: George Gutteres, solicitor; George Singer, letter press, copper plate and lithographic printer.
St. Bartholomew the Great, City: William Evans, jeweller; James Butcher, linen-draper.
St. Ann Blackfriars, City: Robert Warwick (chapter 3); William Catchpole, hairdresser; Stephen Twymann, coffee shop proprietor; Robert Bennett, tin-plate maker; Job Allen (net and tent maker).
All Hallows, City: J. H. Borley, jeweller.
St. Katherine Cree, City: City Alderman Robert Whiteside, Berlin wool business, formerly tailor and draper.
St. Olave, Silver Street, City: Samuel Green, owner of silk and ribbon dyeing, embossing and printing business.
St. Andrew, Holborn: Henry Potter, seedsman and florist,and probably also leech importer, sponge dealer and herbalist; James Harvey, woollen draper, woollen and manchester warehouseman.
Kensington: William Gilbert (chapter 3); Captain I. Heather, retired civil servant; W. Banting, retired upholsterer.
St. Luke: Mr. Phillips, coal exchange (from 1860).
Bermondsey: William Darnell, wharfinger; William Smith, builder employing 27 men.
St. George & St. Thomas, Southwark: John Day (chapter 3); H. Thruppe, coal merchant; William Howard, tin-plate worker; William Clothier, pawnbroker; G. Hayward, baker; William Gilpin, woollen draper; Beriah Drew, chemist; Edward Palmer, woollen draper; Joseph Pash, bootmaker; Dr. Evans; James Barnes, landlord (from 1860).
Christ Church, Southwark: Thomas Gannon, probably grocer.
St. Saviour's, Southwark: I. N. Monnery; T. Baston (or Bastow); C. D. Field, probably poor rate collector.
Fulham: John Blachford, John Panter, Thomas Cooper, William Deller (all chapter 3).
Wandsworth: Dr. J. Howell; Charles Dagnall, hemp merchant.
Hammersmith: W. F. Ainsworth; James Curtis, coffee rooms proprietor.
Putney: Alfred William Ray, manager, World Life Insurance Co.(from 1860).
Chelsea: John Perry, surveyor, estate agent and valuer; William Lawrence, landlord; James Miles, landlord.
Tooting: W. D. Norriss.
Lambeth: F. H. Fowler (chapter 3); Thomas Giles, landlord of land and houses; J. Rhodes, hop merchant.
Whitechapel: W. H. Black, brush and turnery manufacturer; Thomas Sherwood, coffee rooms proprietor.
Limehouse: Stephen Skillett, stationer; J. Dicker, pawnbroker.

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[1]GL MS 1088/1, February-June 1857; 1841, 1851, 1862 PO Directories, commercial; 1851 census, HO107/1560/285v, HO107/1559/198r, HO107/1473/67v, HO107/1473/240v; 1861 census, RG9/322/79v, RG9/372/77v, RG9/30/86v, RG9/356/80-1, RG9/365/108r, RG9/20/99, RG9/16/53; PP 1861 IX, Q4681-4695; SLSL, Southwark St. George Annual Reports, 1857, 1858.

Appendix III. Rate Equalisation Association: non-MP Vice-Presidents, 1861

February 1861[2]

Of the 31 non-MP Vice-Presidents listed in the minute book, the occupations of 21 have been firmly identified.

J.P.Gassiot, oporto merchant.
George Hitchcock, warehouseman, wholesale & retail silk mercer, linendrapers, shawlman, hosier, laceman, etc.
John Derby Allcroft, wholesale glover (with addresses also in the Midlands, in Paris and Grenoble).
J. Moritz Oppenheim, fur and skin merchant.
G. William Petter, printer and publisher.
Joseph Sterry, oil and colour man.
George Torr, manufacturer of animal charcoal, ivory black, etc.
Robert Charles jun., soap and candlemaker.
J. J. Mechi (Alderman), cutler, and manufacturer of writing cases, travelling bags & other leather goods.
John Vickers, distiller, wine and liqueur merchant, importer and exporter.
Henry Vyse, merchant and manufacturer of millinery, mantles, flowers, etc.
Thomas Brankston, cigar, tobacco and snuff manufacturer.
Henry Jenkins of Goding & Co., brewer.
Arthur Wilcoxon, plate glass manufacturer, wholesale cabinet maker and paperstainer.
Samuel Morris, furrier and skin dresser.
Alderman Robert Whiteside, Berlin wool business.
Sampson Copestake, lace manufacturer.
J. K. Hooper, wine and spirits merchant.
Rev. G. H. M'Gill, clergyman.
Dr. John Challice, physician, health officer.
Dr. Josiah Stallard of Worcester (Alderman, and later Deputy Lieutenant).

J. Fenning, Southwark.
William Leaf, London.
John Bradbury, London.
Thomas Gooch, London.
John Knowles, London.
Francis Cook, London.
James Green, London.
Humphrey Bull, Aston Clinton, Bucks.
Henry T. Lomax, Stafford.
Samuel Barton, Macclesfield.

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[2]GL MS 1088/1, the Association's 4th Annual Report (for the year 1860), dated February and March 1861; P.O. Directories, 1851, 1862, court; 1851 and 1861 censuses.

Appendix IV. Metropolitan Asylum District: Board of Management 1867-71[1]

From 22 June 1867

Elected managers

City of London	William Clements
	Alfred Suter
East London (City)	Thomas S. Owden
Fulham	William Bird, JP
Greenwich	George Lockyer
Hackney	William Turner, JP
Holborn	John W. Proudfoot
Lewisham	Rev. Francis Cameron
Poplar	William Hickson
Saint Olave's	Henry Pelling Wellborne
Saint Saviour's	Charles Harris
Stepney	Thomas Bennett Spence
Strand	George Wilkinson
Wandsworth & Clapham	George Alder
West London (City)	Joshua W. Butterworth
Whitechapel	Thomas Brushfield
Mile End Old Town	Donald Munro
Paddington	William Goslett
	William Ellis
St. George in the East	William Stutfield, JP
St. George Hanover Square	Hugh H. Seymour
	William Brewer, MD
St. George the Martyr Southwark	Thomas Park
St. Giles Camberwell	John T. Griffith, MD
St. Giles & St. George Bloomsbury	Richard Cull
St. James Clerkenwell	Thomas Partridge
St. James Westminster	Peter Duff
St. John Hampstead	James Marshall, JP
St. Leonard Shoreditch	Henry Dodd
St. Luke Chelsea	Thomas Symons
St. Luke Middlesex	John Dale
St. Margaret & St. John Westminster	George Burt
St. Martin-in-the-Fields	William Goodchild
St. Mary Abbots Kensington	John Thomas Wilkins
St. Mary Islington	John C. Hillman,
	Charles L. Bradley
St. Mary Lambeth	John Doulton
St. Marylebone	Charles Beevor
	James Tavener

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[1]MAD I, 22.6.1867; MAD II, III, IV.

St. Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey — Henry Youngman
St. Mary Newington — William S. Cortis, MD
St. Mary Rotherhithe — Edmund G. Dannell
St. Matthew Bethnal Green — William Davis Collins
St. Pancras — Henry North,
Henry Eckett

Nominated Managers
John Ashton Bostock
Edward North Buxton
John Charrington
Walter Carew Cocks
Sir James John Hamilton, bart.
William Harvey
Col. Francis Haygarth
Timothy Holmes
Jonathan Rashleigh
Francis Sibson, MD
John Archibald Shaw Stewart
John Gilbert Talbot
Robert Wigram
William Henry Wyatt
John Young, jun.

<u>New managers added to Board 1868-71</u>

Elected managers

City of London — Charles Crane
East London (City) — Henry William Nind
Hackney — Rev. J. Godding
Lewisham — Brownlow Poulter
Paddington — Robert Evans
Poplar — James Barringer
St. George Southwark — James Barnes
St. Marylebone — Edwin Henry Galsworthy
St. Mary Magdalen Bermondsey — Thomas Suffield
St. Pancras — Robert Attenborough
Robert Furniss
Wandsworth & Clapham — Michael Sarson

Nominated managers

Borlase H. Adams
William H. Smith, MP
Alexander H. Ross
Edmund Hay Currie
Sir Michael Hicks Beach, MP

Appendix V. MAD's elected managers: positions on boards of guardians

Manager	J.P.	Chair B.G.	Vice-Chair B.G.	Local body
ALDER		Yes		Wandsworth
BARNES		Yes		St. George Southwark
BARRINGER			Yes	Poplar
BEEVOR		Yes		St.Marylebone
BIRD	Yes			Fulham
BRADLEY				Islington
BREWER			Yes	St.G.Hanover Sq.
BRUSHFIELD		Yes		Whitechapel
BURT				St.M/J.Westminster
BUTTERWORTH			Yes	City (West)
CAMERON (Rev.)		Yes		Lewisham
CAMERON (Rev.)		Yes		Woolwich
CLEMENTS				City
COLLINS			Yes	Bethnal Green
CORTIS				Newington
CRANE				City
CULL				St.G/G Bloomsbury
DALE				St.Luke
DANNELL				Rotherhithe
DODD				Shoreditch
DOULTON		Yes		Lambeth
DUFF				St.James Westminster
ECKETT		Yes		St.Pancras
ELLIS				Paddington
EVANS				Paddington
FURNISS			Yes	St. Pancras
GOODCHILD		Yes		St.Martin-in-Field
GALSWORTHY				St. Marylebone
GODDING				Hackney
GOSLETT			Yes	Paddington
GRIFFITHS				Camberwell
HARRIS		Yes		St.Saviour
HICKSON		Yes		Poplar
HILLMAN				Islington
LOCKYER				Greenwich
MARSHALL	Yes		Yes	Hampstead
MUNRO		Yes		Mile End
NIND				City (East)
NORTH				St.Pancras
OWDEN			Yes	City (East)
PARK		Yes		St George Southwark
PARTRIDGE				Clerkenwell
POULTER	Yes			Lewisham
PROUDFOOT				Holborn
SARSON				Wandsworth
SEYMOUR		Yes		St G.Hanover Sq.
SPENCE				Stepney
STUTFIELD	Yes			St George East
SUFFIELD				Bermondsey
SUTER				City
SYMONS		Yes		Chelsea
TAVENER			Yes	St Marylebone
TURNER	Yes	Yes		Hackney
WELLBORNE		Yes		St Olave
WILKINS			Yes	Kensington
WILKINSON		Yes		Strand
YOUNGMAN		Yes		Bermondsey
TOTALS	**5**	**19**	**10**	

Appendix VI. Neighbourhood survey of MAD's managers: notes on the gathering and recording of data.

The 1871 Census Enumerators' Books were the main source of information on the lifestyles of MAD's managers, with the 1861 CEBs as an alternative source when managers were not found in 1871, and very occasionally the 1881 census. Post Office directories, electoral registers and the 1881 census and surname index were used for confirmation of identity where needed.[1]

The approach adopted was in some respects similar to that practised by Charles Booth in his 1889 *Descriptive Map of London Poverty,* in that socio-economic status was assessed on a street by street basis, or even on the basis of part of a street, rather than the wider residential area in which the manager lived. This small-scale approach was necessary because of the differences in social level often found in adjacent streets. Reeder, commenting on Booth's results, points out that "even in relatively prosperous areas there was always a significant proportion of the working class who were distributed in some degree throughout London, and also frequently a group of streets which had degenerated into dark blue (Booth's 'very poor, casual. Chronic want') or black streets ('Lowest class. Vicious, semi-criminal')".[2] Booth's West End map, for instance (the "North-Western sheet"), shows contrasts such as yellow-coded Bryanston Square ("Upper-middle and upper classes. Wealthy") with dark blue Moore Street; yellow Blandford Square with dark blue Devonshire Street; and Crawford Street with sections that are yellow, red ("Well-to-do. Middle-class" and pink ("Fairly comfortable. Good, comfortable earnings").[3]

An alternative to the street by street approach in this study of MAD's managers might have been to compare merely the individual households of managers. Dyos notes difficulties in this approach: two heads of household with apparently similar occupations might live in very different kinds of street, which might indicate a difference in their occupational or social standing. He suggests that the only reliable way of judging social status from census returns may be the study of the whole street or neighbourhood: a 100 per cent. "topographical sampling". Even then, errors to guard against, he

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[1]1871 Census RG10; 1861 Census RG9; 1881 Census RG11; 1881 census surname index for England and Wales published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons); Post Office London Directories, commercial, court, law and city sections, 1862, 1871, 1881; electoral registers for Middlesex and City, 1874.
[2]Booth, op. cit., introduction by David Reeder.
[3]Ibid., north-western sheet, C4, C5.

says, are that the sample area may be socially mixed, or perhaps contain just one or two untypical households.[4]

The decision was made, for this survey, to adopt a 100 per cent. topographical analysis of small, more or less socially homogeneous, street-based areas - with the proviso that being socially mixed should itself be recognised as the character of some streets. (Booth took account of this factor in his purple-coded streets: "Mixed. Some comfortable, others poor.") The occupations of heads of households only would be noted, it was decided, together with three other criteria: number of servants, whether there were lodgers/boarders, and whether the family lived in multi-occupation ("flats").[5]

The question of validating the results of the street surveys against wider statistics such as those found in the census Population Abstracts did not arise, for two reasons: the fact that the present survey was not sample-based but a 100 per cent. non-random analysis based on specified individuals, and the fact that the criteria on which the Population Abstracts (the usual source for comparisons) are based are inappropriate for this study. For instance, the occupational summaries in the Abstracts[6] are based not on heads of household but on the whole enumerated population of a district, which distorts statistically the social character of a district; an example relevant for this study is the wealthy district of St. George Hanover Square, where the Abstracts' inclusion of large numbers of servants makes their occupational analysis meaningless for the purposes of this study.

Other difficulties are that in the Abstracts' occupation/district analysis tables the occupational classes and orders are too broad and the districts to which they relate too wide: the most detailed analysis of occupational data is in terms of age-groups, and the smallest geographical areas - the Registrar's sub-districts - are also broken down only in terms of ages, not occupations. There are also some well-known general occupational classification infelicities: Class I (Professional), for example, includes the exceptionally broad category I.2, Persons employed in the defence of their country, and Class VI (Indefinite and non-productive class) groups together VI.16, Labourers and others, branch of labour undefined, and VI.17, Persons of Rank or Property not returned under any Office or Occupation.

In order to assess whether there were meaningful lifestyle differences between MAD's nominated and elected managers, data categories were selected that took account of the metropolitan context of the survey and the expected top-heavy and tradesman-heavy socio-economic range on the Board.[7]

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[4]Dyos, op. cit., 103-5.
[5]Edward Higgs, *A clearer sense of the census* (London, 1996), 150-2, suggests that the latter three categories are appropriate for contrasts between a well-to-do suburb and a working-class area. High proportions of households in multiple occupancy and containing boarders or lodgers are indicators of low social status, he notes.
[6]1871 Census Population Abstracts, Vol. III (London, 1873).
[7]See Appendix VII and chapter 6, p 175.

Firstly, three categories of servant-keeping were devised: 1-2, 3-5 and 6+. The reason for structuring this differently from Booth's almost contemporaneous classification (1-2 servants, well-to-do; 3 or more, wealthy; 0, from "working-class comfort/comfort mixed with poverty" downwards) was the expectation that the nominees might include some very wealthy men among whom it might be useful to distinguish degrees of overt household wealth. The presence of households with no servants - expected to be only a few - would be apparent from any difference between the number of households in a street and the total households in each servant-keeping category. As actual numbers of servants were also recorded, it was possible to calculate an additional measure: the average number of servants per household for each manager's residential area.

The questions of lodgers/boarders and multi-occupation were recorded as simple postive/negative. Again because of the expectation of the relative comfort of most managers, and also because the actual size of a multi-occupied property would not be known, it was decided not to record the actual number of separate households at an address. In terms of lodgers/boarders it was decided that distinguishing between those who did and those who didn not take in lodgers would be a sufficient measure. Servants working in lodging houses were not recorded as personal household servants unless this distinction seemed clear. The ever-present problems in census analysis of "visitors" who might in fact be lodgers, and a smaller number of apprentices and shop/work staff who were additionally described as servants, were handled in accordance with the actual information enumerated: as non-lodgers and non-servants. The lodger-factor may therefore have been under-counted, but this was felt to be preferable to over-counting, which might have exaggerated the differences between nominated and elected members. Hotel-keepers were counted as tradesmen (occupational group IIIa) who had lodgers and, according to circumstances, sometimes one or two personal servants.

Occupational groups were selected in accordance with metropolitan population norms; farming and mining occupations were, for instance, omitted. Peter Tillott's 1966 occupational and social groups for urban analysis were the broad basis for classification,[8] but some categories were omitted or altered. For instance his "private income recipient" was moved into an extensive new Group Ib, created because of the expected large presence of its categories among the nominee managers. Parallel to some extent, in terms of wealth, is the new Group Ia, containing large industrialists and manufacturers (such as shipbuilders and brewers) and merchants. A large Group III was created, with four sub-groups, to provide for the expected extensive presence of tradesmen, shopkeepers, clerks and supervisory workers among elected members . As in Tillott's groups, skilled craftsmen were placed in a separate group

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[8]A. Rogers, *Approaches to Local History* (London, 1977), 101.

(unless they qualified for Group III by running their own small business). A minimal Group V was created because it was not expected that many unskilled and casual workers would be found as heads of household in managers' residential areas.

All nominated and elected managers over the four-year period 1867-71 were researched apart from two ministers of religion (elected members) whose place of residence and presence on the Board, it was decided, related more to their calling than to other factors. Two nominees were subsequently omitted from calculations because they lived outside the metropolis in semi-rural areas where the residential structure did not conform to a homogeneous urban street pattern and therefore could not be analysed meaningfully for this study. A third nominee, J. G. Talbot, had substantial family homes both in rural Kent and in Westminster, but as his Westminster home was one of only four out of 36 properties occupied residentially, the remaining 32 being occupied by "office-keepers" and "housekeepers", it was, again, not possible to do a meaningful neighbourhood analysis within the parameters of this study. The metropolitan homes of two nominees could be found only in the 1881 census but they have been included because it seems very likely that the 1881 neighbourhood information was representative of their own and their families' backgrounds in 1871.

In total, socio-economic profiles based on census data have been constructed for 17 out of 20 nominated managers and 55 out of 57 elected managers, a total of 72 out of the full roll-call of 77 during the years 1867-71. Fifty-seven of the profiles are based on the 1871 census (RG10), 12 on the 1861 census (RG9) and three, as explained above, on the 1881 census (RG11).

The number of neighbouring households recorded has varied for each manager, depending to a large extent on the length of the street, or the ease or difficulty with which the homogeneity of an area could be established. For instance in Lower Brook Street (West End) the address of nominee Dr. Sibson, data was gathered on 55 heads of households because of the mixed social composition of the street. In Deptford High Street, however, the home of elected member George Lockyer, data was gathered on only 12 heads of households because of the clear social homogeneity of this separately-enumerated section of the High Street: three butchers, a baker, a corndealer, a fishmonger, a licensed victualler, a commercial traveller, a milliner, a chemist, a grocer and a draper, all of whom came within the 1-2 servant category or had no servants. In some wealthy streets in particular, the number of heads of household recorded might be considerably fewer than a house number-count might suggest would be the case because of the absence of the family, with the house (and sometimes children) left in the charge of a few servants. The largest proportion of such absentees was found in nominee Sir James Hamilton's area, Portman Square. Of 45 houses recorded, 16 had only servants (and one upholsterer) present.

As has been remarked in numerous other studies based on the Victorian censuses, information on occupation usually consists, unavoidably, of the respondent's own valuation of himself, particularly in the case of heads of households, who often filled in the census forms themselves. However, as has also been widely agreed, although this factor may lead to minor inaccuracies in data gathered, the proportion of significant error is probably very small in relation to the massive amount of data that a census provides. In this particular study, the subjective element in occupational descriptions is likely to be significant in positions such as "gentleman", "fundholder" and "annuitant", who are found living in a wide range of socio-economic circumstances. These occupations have therefore been allocated to two separate categories. "Lesser fundholders and gentlemen" (with 0-2 servants) are in group IIIb, which also contains "annuitants" and "retired", while "wealthy fundholders and gentlemen" (with 3+ servants, and including wealthy "annuitants") are in group Ib with the aristocracy, MPs, Justices of the Peace/magistrates and landed proprietors. Heads of household who were clearly wealthy but declined to give an occupation have also been allocated to Ib (wealthy fundholders) on the grounds that they must have had the support of a fairly large private income; the alternative, to omit them from the count altogether, would have meant omitting also much servant data and, as a result, sometimes misrepresenting proportions. As the four socio-economic criteria - occupation, servants, multi-occupation and lodgers - are calculated separately at the end and treated as four independent measures rather than as elements in a formula for a single, composite measure of status, the occasional recourse to overlaps of data of this nature does not compromise the conclusions but in fact increases the degree of accuracy.

Census references, the number of households recorded for each of MAD's managers, summaries of data and totals are listed in Tables 2 a-d.

Metropolitan Asylum District - Board of Management 1867-71
SOCIO/ECONOMIC PROFILE: FROM 1871 (& 1861, 1881) CENSUS

N/E	NAME	ADDRESS	REPRESENTATION (Elected only)
E	*James Barringer*	*Upton Villas, Stratford*	*Poplar*

RG 9	PARISH /DISTRICT & STREET	NO.	HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	OCCUPATION	OCCUPATIONAL GROUP											SERVANTS			MO	LO
1057	*West Ham*				I		II		III				IV		V	1-2	3-5	6+		
	ROMFORD RD				a	b	a	b	a	b	c	d	a	b	a					
164	*Margery Hall Cott*		*Robert Dexter*	*Architect & surveyor*				X								—				
	Upton Villas	*1*	*James Barringer*	*Starch & chicory manufacturer*					X							*1*				
		2.	*Charles Hussey*	*Brewer's agent*							X					*2*				
165		*3*	*Douglas Harrison*	*Retired H.M.Customs searcher*							X					*1*				
		4	*John Moore*	*House proprietor*					X							*2*				
	Epping Villas	*1*	*Samuel Bell*	*Vesta manufacturer, 100 hands*					X							*1*				
		2	*(Servants only)*	———																
	Upton Place	*1*	*Samuel Plotman*	*Hotpresser of paper*										X		*1*				
		2	*Thomas Hewes*	*House proprietor*					X							—				
		3	*George Hampton*	*House proprietor*					X							*1*				
		4	*James Stocker*	*Mining agent*							X					*1*				
		5	*John R. Youl*	*Retired butcher*					X							*1*				
		6	*William Crew*	*Shipping butcher*					X							*1*				
		7	*Elizabeth Hadden*	*House proprietor & fundholder*								X				*2*				
		8	*Jessie Western*	*Wife of head of household*		X											*4*			
166		*9*	*Mary Richardson*	*Fundholder (niece of head)*								X				*1*				
			Households: 15	***(Total servants: 19)***	—	*1*	—	*1*	*7*	—	*3*	*2*	—	*1*	—	*12*	*1*	—	*0*	*0*

OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS

Ia Large industrialists, manufacturers, merchants. **Ib** Aristocracy, MPs, JPs; wealthy fundholders, gentlemen, landowners.
IIa Professional: doctors, lawyers, bankers, military, clergy/ministers. **IIb** Professional: teachers, architects, science, accountants, curates, publishers, creative.
IIIa Tradesmen, shopkeepers, dealers, publicans, landlords, hotel keepers, small businessmen. **IIIb** Clerical, including solicitors' & accounting clerks.
IIIc Supervisory workers, e.g. inspectors, managers, NCOs, police. **IIId** Annuitants, retired, lesser fundholders & gentlemen.
IVa Skilled workers, craftsmen. **IVb** Semi-skilled/service: postmen, mariners, soldiers, shopworkers, watermen, servants in own home, lesser creative.
Va Unskilled and casual workers, labourers.

KEY

N/E = Nominee/Elected
MO = Multi-occupation
LO = Lodger(s)

Table 1. Redistribution: proposed and actual

(1866: Hardy's prediction. 1868: Metropolitan Common Poor Fund)

	Prediction L. 1866 £	Actual M. 1868 £
City	-27709	-24638
St.George Hanover Sq.	-12137	-9957
Paddington	-9480	-10023
Islington	-6118	-5616
Kensington	-5437	-6340
St.Marylebone	-5179	-930
Lewisham	-4326	-1723
Wandsworth/Clapham	-4176	-3040
St.James Westminster	-3541	-2151
Poplar	-2332	3202
Hampstead	-1908	-2172
St.Martin-in-the-Fields*	-1363	
St.M/J Westminster	-1327	-3624
Hackney	-814	-3015
St.G/G Bloomsbury	-368	-1269
Fulham	442	-1401
Camberwell	1089	418
St.Olave Southwark	1156	368
West London (City)	1198	2052
St.Pancras	1234	2889
Holborn	1265	241
Rotherhithe	1685	1067
Chelsea	2187	2003
St.James Clerkenwell	2218	1160
Mile End Old Town	2286	1923
Bermondsey	2503	715
St.Saviour Southwark	2754	685
St. Luke	2885	193
Greenwich	3072	8053
East London (City)	3328	2455
St.Mary Newington	4070	5870
Strand	4536	4028
Bethnal Green	5301	9328
St.George-in-the-East	5922	4654
Stepney	6618	6311
St.George Southwark	7009	2641
Whitechapel	7133	7910
Lambeth	7687	4174
Shoreditch	8635	4682
Woolwich **		-3842
Charterhouse		-36
Gray's Inn		-237
St.Peter Westminster		-27
Inner Temple		-373
Middle Temple		-243
Lincoln's Inn		-324

*St. Martin-in-the-Fields was added to Strand 1868. **Woolwich was detached from Lewisham 1868.
Minus figures: overall payers. Others: overall receivers.
L66: year ending Lady Day 1866. M68: two half-years ending Michaelmas 1868.
(PP 1871 lix, 839, 841; PP 1867 lx, 117)

Table 2a. MAD's nominated managers (See also Figures 7-13)

MANAGER	Census Ref. (RG)	No. of HHs	Occupational Group totals											Occupational Groups as % of HHs										
			I a	I b	II a	II b	III a	III b	III c	III d	IV a	IV b	V a	I a	I b	II a	II b	III a	III b	III c	III d	IV a	IV b	V a
ADAMS	10: 339/9-13	28			4	4	9	1		10						14	14	32	4		36			
BOSTOCK	10: 105/32-42, 112/9-13, 22-5.	66	6	35	23					2				9	53	35					3			
CHARRNGT'N	10: 312/6-10	26	5	1	7	1	5	1		5	1			19	4	27	4	19	4		19	4		
COCKS	10: 51/46-48	1ł	1	5	5									9	45	45								
CURRIE	10: 572/51-3	31	1	1			4		3		7	2	13	3	3			13		10		23	6	42
HAMILTON	10: 162/15-18;164/58-62, 165/44-5.	29	1	25	3									3	86	10								
HARVEY	10: 255/17-23.	44			7	2	12	5	1	9	8					16	5	27	11	2	20	18		
HAYGARTH	10: Same ref. as Bostock above.	66	6	35	23					2				9	53	35					3			
HICKS BEACH	11: 58-62	14	1	11	2									7	79	14								
HOLMES	10: 101/18-25.	54		10	6	4	18	2	3	3	6	2			19	11	7	33	4	6	6	11	4	
RASHLEIGH	10: 202/5-9.	28	9	11	5	1	2							32	39	18	4	7						
ROSS	10: 157/33-5; 77-8.	11	1	10										9	91									
SH. STEWART	10: 29/48-53.	19	4	13	1					1				21	68	5		5						
SIBSON	10: 98/21-26; 93/16-17.	48	1	3	15	6	13	1		6	1	2		2	6	31	13	27	2		13	2	4	
SMITH	10: 21/17.	14	1	11	2									7	79	14								
TALBOT	See Append.VI	—																						
WIGRAM	11: 49/14-18.	20	6	7	3	3				1				30	35	15	15				5			
WYATT	10: 206/8-14.	39	5	4	15	2	7	3		3				13	10	38	5	18	8					
Buxton & Young	Semi-rural	—																						
TOTALS														173	670	328	67	181	33	20	105	58	12	42
Averages														10.2	39.4	19.3	3.9	10.6	1.9	1.2	6.2	3.4	0.7	2.5

MANAGER	Servants					Multi-Occ HH		Lodger HHs	
	1-2 No. & %	3-5 No. & %	6+ No. & %	Tot. Serv	Av. per HH	Total	% of HHs	Total	% of HHs
ADAMS				64	2.3			8	29
BOSTOCK	(5) 8	(44) 67	(17) 26	308	4.7				
CHARRNGT'N	(12) 46	(14) 54		67	2.6				
COCKS		(6) 55	(5) 45	59	5.4				
CURRIE	(1) 3			2	0.1	2	6	6	19
HAMILTON		(4) 14	(25) 86	267	9.2				
HARVEY	(37) 84	(2) 5		53	1.2	6	14	4	9
HAYGARTH	(5) 8	(44) 67	(17) 26	308	4.7				
HICKS BEACH			(14) 100	141	10				
HOLMES	(21) 39	(18) 33	(5) 9	120	2.2	12	22	19	35
RASHLEIGH	(3) 11	(19) 68	(6) 21	117	4.2				
ROSS		(1) 9	(10) 91	124	11.3				
SH. STEWART	(1) 5	(13) 72		138	7.3				
SIBSON	(15) 31	(25) 52	(5) 10	148	3.1	1.2	24	13	27
SMITH		(8) 57	(6) 43	83	5.9				
TALBOT									
WIGRAM		(10) 50	(9) 45	107	5.4				
WYATT	(16) 41	(22) 56	(1) 3	124	3.2			2	5
Buxton & Young									
TOTALS	276	659	505		82.8		66		124
Averages	16.2	38.8	29.7		4.9		3.9		7.3

Table 2b. MAD's elected managers, A-D (See also Figures 7-13)

MANAGER	Census Ref. (RG)	No. of HHs	Occupational Group totals											Occupational Group % of HHs											Servants					Multi-Occ		Lodgers	
			I a	I b	II a	II b	III a	III b	III c	III d	IV a	IV b	V a	I a	I b	II a	II b	III a	III b	III c	III d	IV a	IV b	V a	1-2 No. & %	3-5 No. & %	6+ No. & %	Tot. Serv	Av. per HH	To-tal	% of HHs	To-tal.	% of HHs
ALDER	10/703/41-4	17		1	4		3	3		1	3	2			6	24		18	18		6	18	12		(9) 53	(4) 24		28	1.6			4	24
ATTENBORO'	10/195/9-14	22	5	4	9	1	3							23	18	41	5	14								(20) 91	(2) 9	98	4.5	2	9		
BARNES	10/607/72-5	34			3	1	2	2	1	1	16	5	3			9	3	6	6	3	3	47	15	9	(2) 6			2	0.6				
BARRINGER	9/1057/164-6	15		1	1		4		3	5		1			7	7		27		20	33		7		(12) 80	(1) 7		19	1.3				
BEEVOR	10/157/14-20	34	9	12	9	2	2							26	35	26	6	6								(16) 47	(17) 50	178	5.2				
BIRD	10/60/23-6	24	1	2	3	1	3	2	1	8	1	2		4	8	13	4	13	8	4	33	4	8		(17) 71	(3) 13		34	1.4	3	13		
BRADLEY	9/127/119-125	42		4	2	19	7	2	4	3	3	1				10	5	45	17	5	10	7	2		(39) 93	(3) 7		67	1.6			6	14
BREWER	10/96/24-31	34	1		10	2	13	1		5	2			3		29	6	38	3		15	6			(14) 41	(12) 35	(3) 9	81	2.4	2	9	10	29
BRUSHFIELD	9/266/1-4	32			1	2	15	1	2		7	2	2			3	6	47	3	6		22	6	6	(19) 59	(1) 3		26	0.8	14	44	7	22
BURT	10/117/17-20	25	1				6	1	2	3	1	8	3	4				24	4	8	12	4	32	12	(8) 32	(4) 16		22	0.9	6	24	2	8
BUTTERW'TH	10/698/9-10	19	1	2	3	4	6			3				5	11	16	21	32			16				(14) 74	(5) 26		45	2.4			1	5
CAMERON	Clergyman	—																															
CLEMENTS	10/284/61-7	15					4			1	5	5						27			7	33	33		(1) 7	(1) 7		5	0.3			5	33
COLLINS	9/250/115-9	33					2				25		6					6				75		18	(1) 3			2	0.1	29	88	6	18
CORTIS	10/621/4-8	31		1	8	3	10	3		6					3	26	10	32	10		19				(17) 55	(6) 19		50	1.6	8	26	2	6
CRANE	10/431/129	18			1	1	3	2		1	4	3	3			6	6	17	11		6	22	17	17	(3) 17			4	0.2	11	61	2	11
CULL	9/171/69-70; 172/2-4	26			4	5	8	1			4	4				15	19	31	4			15	15		(15) 83			22	0.8	7	27	11	42
DALE	10/410/62-5; 411/9-10	30			1	1	8		1	4	12	3				3	3	27		3	13	40	10		(5) 17			7	0.2	19	63	2	7
DANNELL	10/643/142-4	23					9			1	5	6	2					39			4	22	26	9	(2) 9	(3) 13		4	0.2	7	30	5	22
TOTALS														66	88	228	94	449	84	49	177	315	183	71	700	308	68		26.1		394		241
Averages														3.7	4.9	12.7	5.2	24.9	4.7	2.7	9.8	17.5	10.2	3.9	38.9	17.1	3.8		1.4		21.9		13.4

Table 2c. MAD's elected managers D-N (See also Figures 7-13)

MANAGER	Census Ref. (RG)	No. of HHs	Occupational Group totals											Occupational Group % of HHs											Servants					Multi-Occ		Lodgers	
			I a	I b	II a	II b	III a	III b	III c	III d	IV a	IV b	V a	I a	I b	II a	II b	III a	III b	III c	III d	IV a	IV b	V a	1-2 No. & %	3-5 No. & %	6+ No. & %	Tot. Ser.	Av. per HH	To-tal	% of HHs	To-tal	% of HHs
DODD	9/236/63-5	26					4	3	1		6	12						15	12	4		23	46		(4) 15			5	0.2	10	38	5	19
DOULTON	9/352/68-72	44					5	1			7	21	10					11	2			16	48	23	(1) 2	(1) 2		4	0.1	34	77	4	9
DUFF	10/136/55-58	38					6	3			13	13	3					16	8			34	34	8	(5) 13			5	0.1	29	76	5	13
ECKETT	9/107/32-6	42			1	2	9	5	1	4	9	11				2	5	21	12	2	10	21	26		(12) 29	(1) 2		17	0.4	25	60	10	24
ELLIS	10/11/40-2	16	7	3		1	3			2				44	19		6	19			13				(6) 38	(10) 62		36	2.3	2	13		
EVANS	10/10/5-9	28	2	5	11	1		1		8				7	18	39	4		4		29				(8) 29	(20) 71		87	3.1			1	4
FURNISS	10/247/49-52	26		3	1		9	1		12					12	4		35	4		46				(22) 85	(3) 12		40	1.5				
GALSW'THY	10/177/87-90	20	4	5	8		2			1				20	25	40		10			5				(5) 25	(15) 75		71	3.6			1	5
GODDING	Clergyman	—																															
GOODCHILD	9/59/10-11; 6-17	21					12				4	5						57				19	24		(13) 62	(1) 5		19	0.9	12	57	5	24
GOSLETT	10/1/5-7	22	1		3	2	7	1	2	5		1		5		14	9	32	5	9	23		5		(17) 77	(3) 14		37	1.7			3	4
GRIFFITH	10/725/8-10	14			2	3	5	3		1							14	21	36	21		7			(10) 71	(7) 1		17	1.2				
HARRIS	10/734/72-6	30		1	1	2	8	2	3	6		7			3	3	7	27	7	10	20		23		(21) 70	(3) 10		40	1.3	3	10		
HICKSON	10/586/13-15	22					1	2	2	3	7	5	2					5	9	9	14	32	23	9	(2) 9			3	0.1	14	64	1	5
HILLMAN	Same ref. as Bradley	42			4	2	19	7	2	4	3	1				10	5	45	17	5	10	7	2		(39) 93	(3) 7		67	1.6			6	14
LOCKYER	10: 751/28	12					10				1	1						83				8	8		(7) 58			9	0.8			1	8
MARSHALL	10:190/72-5	23	1	2	3	4	1	1		5	1	5		4	9	13	17	4	4		22	4	22		(6) 26	(3) 13	(3) 13	47	2.0	8	35	5	22
MUNRO	10: 560/31-4	29		1	2	3	9	3	1	1	4	5			3	7	10	31	10	3	3	14	7		(13) 45	(2) 7		24	0.8	8	28	4	14
NIND	10: 311/26-7	8					6		1	1								75		13	13				(7) 88	(1) 13		14	1.8				
TOTALS														80	89	132	77	507	130	76	208	185	268	40	835	300	13		23.5		458		175
Averages														4.4	4.9	7.3	4.3	28.2	7.2	4.2	11.6	10.3	14.9	2.2	46.4	16.7	0.7		1.3		25.4		9.7

Table 2d. MAD's elected managers, N-Y (See also Figures 7-13)

MANAGER	Census Ref. (RG)	No. of HHs	Occupational Group totals											Occupational Group % of HHs										
			I a	I b	II a	II b	III a	III b	III c	III d	IV a	IV b	V a	I a	I b	II a	II b	III a	III b	III c	III d	IV a	IV b	Va
NORTH	10: 250/72-3	13			2	3	3	2	1	2						15	23	23	15	8	15			
OWDEN	10: 339/ 139-40	6		1	1	1	1			1		1			17	17	17	17			17		17	
PARK	9:331/181-2	33				2	9	4	2	1	13	2					6	27	12	6	3	39	6	
PARTRIDGE	10:390/25-7	28			1	7	5	3	1	4	4	3				4	25	18	11	4	14	14	11	
POULTER	10:764/104-8	21	3	4	4	2	3			5				14	19	19	10	14			24			
PROUDFOOT	10:371/100-102	32		1	7	1	6	4	3	4	3	3			3	22	3	19	13	9	13	9	9	
SARSON	10:710/54-6	16		2	5		5	2		2					13	31		31	13		13			
SEYMOUR	10:98/43-4	22	1	14	4		2		1					5	64	18		9		5				
SPENCE	10:325/110	13	2		1		5	1	2	1		1		15		8		38	8	15	8		8	
STUTFIELD	Same ref. as Beevor	34	9	12	9	2	2							26	35	26	6	6						
SUFFIELD	10:633/92-4	24									5	9	10									21	38	42
SUTER	10:325/139-43	23	2		3	2	9		1	5	1			9		13	9	39		4	22	4		
SYMONS	10:81/5-8	33				4	7		1	2	13	5	1				12	21		3	6	39	15	3
TAVENER	9:90/106-8	12	1	1	2	1	4			2		1		8	8	17	8	33			17		8	
TURNER	10:312/13-14	8		1	1		5			1					13	13		63			13			
WELLBORNE	10:624/37-40	17	1		1	6	8		1					6		6	35	47		6				
WILKINS	10:51/64-6	24		1	2	4	5			12					4	8	17	21			50			
WILKINSON	10:362/48	50			1	2	16	6	3	4	8	10				2	4	32	12	6	8	16	20	
YOUNGMAN	10:698/165	17			1	1	5	3	1		2	4				6	6	29	18	6		12	24	
TOTALS														83	176	225	178	486	102	72	210	154	156	45
Averages														4.4	3.3	11.8	9.4	25.6	5.4	3.8	11.1	8.1	8.2	2.4

MANAGER	Servants					Multi-Occ		Lodgers	
	1-2 No. & %	3-5 No. & %	6+ No. & %	To-tal	Av. per HH	To-tal	% of HHs	To-tal	% of HHs
NORTH	(6) 46	(4) 31		22	1.7			1	8
OWDEN	(1) 17	(4) 67		16	2.7				
PARK	(7) 21			7	0.2	18	55	2	6
PARTRIDGE	(11) 39			13	0.5	15	54	10	36
POULTER	(10) 48	(8) 39	(2) 10	64	3			1	5
PROUDFOOT	(12) 38	(2) 6	(1) 3	30	0.9	10	31	7	22
SARSON	(6) 38	(9) 56		39	2.4	2	13		
SEYMOUR	(2) 9	(5) 23	(14) 64	142	6.5				
SPENCE	(8) 62	(2) 15		21	1.6	2	15	2	15
STUTFIELD		(16) 47	(17) 50	178	5.2				
SUFFIELD	(3) 13			3	0.1	13	54	2	8
SUTER	(14) 61	(7) 30		48	2.1	2	9		
SYMONS	(9) 29	(1) 3		10	0.3	21	64	8	24
TAVENER	(5) 42	(6) 50		28	2.3				
TURNER	(5) 63	(3) 38		18	2.3				
WELLBORNE	(16) 94	(1) 6		31	1.8			1	6
WILKINS	(19) 79	(5) 21		43	1.8			2	8
WILKINSON	(18) 36	(5) 10		42	0.8	22	44	11	22
YOUNGMAN	(8) 47	(1) 6		15	0.9	4	24	4	24
TOTALS	746	448	129		37.1		363		184
Averages	39.3	23.6	6.7		2.0		19.1		9.7

Illustration 1. **Scene from *The Happy Land*, 1873**

***Illustrated London News*, 22 March 1873.**

Illustration 2. A. S. Ayrton and Captain F. A. Maxse

A. S. Ayrton, aged 40 (*Illustrated London News*, 16 May 1857)

Captain F. A. Maxse, aged 41 (*The Beehive*, 27 March 1875)

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