



Durrington

Emigration

Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners for England and Wales, Vol. 2 (1836) By Great Britain Poor Law Commissioners

Improved Character of Labourers – Savings

Amesbury Union.

The new system of poor law administration has been worked in this Union, from its formation to the present time, with undeviating success, and is, I hope, producing very beneficial results, notwithstanding the disadvantage we labour under of being without any workhouse.

It is generally to be observed, that labourers are more anxious to procure, and less careless of retaining permanent places than heretofore; and the general demeanour of the poor is, towards the farmers, more respectful, and they receive their bread and pecuniary aid, if added, with expressions of thankfulness, as a charity and not as their indefeasible right.

These are the apparent results of the new system. I have no reason to think them fallacious appearances, or that there is any under-current of feeling of an opposite tendency.

The relief afforded, in this Union, to the aged, the sick, and infirm, and to widows with young families, is exceedingly liberal; and this liberality has proved equally advantageous to the recipients themselves, and the success of the system. These parties are the great talkers, and their contentedness puts to silence the clamour of imposture, and the grumbling of idleness.

Relief to able-bodied men is now seldom applied for, and never given except in cases of real temporary destitution, or to labourers with very large families and inadequate wages.

Relief in child-birth is regulated in the same way; not given as a matter of course, but only in peculiar circumstances, and then almost invariably in bread. Thus giving the husband the power of spending his wages in such indulgences as his wife's situation may require.

The wages of this Union are very low, only lately advanced to 7s., and still at 6s. in one parish. The labourers are contented with 7s.; but bread has been selling at 10d. per gallon.

One other circumstance connected with the well-working of the new system I am desirous of mentioning, as its practical result has been strongly exemplified in this Union. I allude to the employment of labourers by the board of guardians at full wages, who have been thrown out of work in their own parish without any fault of their own, and compelled to ask the relieving officer for work or support. This matter was, if I recollect right, explained to you when you last visited us, and was partially illustrated by the two cases you inquired into yourself.

It has not been of rare occurrence for a score of labourers to be all at once thrown upon the parish from a quarrel amongst the farmers about employing their fair proportion of men.

This occurred at Durrington. We directed the relieving officer to employ the whole body so dismissed in lowering a hill in the parish of Bulford, charging the work to the parish of Durrington.

They held out a fortnight; but from that day to the present no labourer has been ___ of employ in that parish. Indeed they have stirred themselves with such good effect, that a month since they shipped upwards of 20 as emigrants to Canada.

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Orcheston, Devizes, 30 April, 1836

(signed) G. P. Lowther

Number of Emigrants, Cost, &c.

County	Name of Parish	Amount raised or borrowed either from Exchequer Loan Office, or from private individuals			Number of Persons who have Emigrated	To What Part Emigrated
		£	s.	d.		
Wilts	Durrington	100			36	Upper Canada