

carry a great public scheme of benefit must be proof against the most fatiguing delays, the most mortifying disappointments, the most shocking insults, and what is worse than all, the presumptuous judgments of the ignorant upon their designs.'

The functions of the new Poor Law administration were primarily repressive of the evils of the then existing abusive administration; the functions preventive of transgression are mainly sanitary functions for the direction of a 'Minister of Health,' under which institution the evils of such continued inattention as I have described could scarcely occur. With these may be combined the well-ordered functions of an educational department, under the undivided attention of a 'Minister of Education.'

## APPENDIX.

### I.

#### *The Local Union as the Unit of Local Administration.*

As questions on the alteration of local administrative authorities for the formation of county boards, and for other objects of local administration, are coming under consideration, I beg to submit some notes as to the plan and principles of the organisation of the union and of the board of guardians with a central service, as proposed by me and accepted by my colleagues, the Commissioners of the Poor Law Inquiry, and adopted by Parliament in the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. I submit them for comparison as to the leading points with the common municipalities, as the most eligible unit for urban as well as rural districts.

The sanitary Commissioners recommended that the town councils in urban districts should be the sanitary authorities. His proposal has not been founded on a due consideration of the public interests involved to warrant its general application.

In the first place, the areas of the municipal jurisdiction are in very few instances coincident with efficient and economical sanitary areas. Their outfalls for drainage and sewerage works are commonly through suburban or rural districts, and the subsoil drainage of adjacent rural districts is also frequently necessary for the sanitary improvement of the urban or municipal area, and rural land is also needful for the application of the sewerage. And for all these purposes, drainage areas for sanitary works, as set forth in the report of the Health of Towns Commissioners for 1845, are independent of municipal areas.

The municipal areas will commonly be found to require considerable extension for the purposes in question and for others. It is matter of experience that the occupiers of suburban districts violently resist being included in municipal boundaries—the general ground of resistance being the low character of the administration for efficiency, its real irresponsibility, its being a party political body to which the most respectable inhabitants of the borough frequently do not care to belong.

The municipal corporations are tainted with gross corruption, proved in various parliamentary inquiries. At present their administrative functions are chiefly of watching and lighting, and they have no primary sanitary functions. On the other hand, the boards of guardians have brought before them the relief of destitution, of

which a large, blameless, and preventable cause is excessive sickness and premature mortality, arising in great part from preventable disease.

The boards of guardians have under their direction, for the relief of the destitution caused by sickness, union medical officers, health officers, and inspectors of nuisances, through whom they have access to the causes of deaths. They have also the registrars of deaths, and the causes of deaths, and clerks, or the superintendent registrars. The functions which should be performed by these officers are essential to any proper sanitary organisation. It has been shown that during the last decade, ending in 1880, there has been a saving of upwards of a quarter of a million lives from causes chiefly affected by sanitation; and that the saving of the expenses of excessive funerals and excessive sickness would not be less than five millions of money. If the recent reductions of death-rates should continue, the saving of life in England and Wales would amount to three-quarters of a million.

Now, on the proposal to make the town councils the sanitary authorities in boroughs, the question arises whether such essential functions are to be given to them, with a proper staff of officers; and if so, as a consequence, is the locality to be burdened with duplicate fitting officers—those of the unions and those of the municipalities? What may the ratepayers be expected to say to that proposal?

It is to be observed that on town councils owners of the lowest class of tenements get elected more than on town guardians, on which there are too many. The town council of Manchester proposed in a Bill to forbid the use of the sewers for the drainage of houses with water-closets. The chief promoter of that measure, as a member of the town council, was the owner of cottage property (reputed to be the largest owner in the borough), who was violently opposed to a measure for which he would have been called upon to make, under the local law, a large immediate outlay for the proper drainage of his houses.

On the other hand, by the constitution of the boards of guardians, they comprise, as *ex officio* guardians, magistrates, owners of the higher descriptions of property, men of education, men of better means, and, on the whole, proved better disposition to the great object—the improvement of the habitations of the labouring classes—than the lower description of owners of house property, who predominate in town councils.

Under the constitution of the local board of guardians, the poorest pauper has a right of appeal to the central authority—a right which is exercised gratis. The permanent officers have a right of appeal, which is regarded by them as a most important privilege and protection. The same constitution confers the right of appeal to the poorest householder or occupier gratis. He may have a local public examination by competent inspectors from the

central board, and an administration of justice gratis. Minorities have the same inexpensive right of appeal against oppressive or illegal acts by majorities. These privileges are now in long and accustomed exercise, and are duly regarded privileges of a high order.

Is it intended by the adoption of the town councils as sanitary authorities, to deprive the poor, the ratepayers, and property owners, and also to deprive the local officers of their protection during good behaviour, and of their right of appeal?

The constitution of town councils have no readily available safeguards of the sort. They would have to be imposed, and would be resisted in their exercise, and, being party political bodies, they would be embarrassing the central authority.

The Poor Law unions are generally free from the taint of party politics. Under the board of guardians, the ratepayers have the security of settled common forms of accounts, which are comparative, and a regular audit of them by responsible auditors, under conditions of security which the ratepayers have not in respect to town councils. The boards of guardians have a wider and more popular electoral basis than town councils in the house to house collection of votes by voting papers, which brings up three or fourfold more votes to bear, without expense and with less falsification than the method of electing town councillors. The town council elections are excessively tainted with bribery, in the shape of payments for lost time in coming up to give the votes. The two methods of exercising the franchise—that by attendance at polling booths, and that by the house to house collection of voting papers—were brought under the examination of the committee of the House of Commons on the local government of the metropolis, which unanimously pronounced in favour of the method of electing guardians. It is objected to this mode of election that it does not comprise the ballot; but it may easily be made to comprise that method of election, by the circulation of balloting papers, to be enclosed and returned in envelopes, as is the practice with charitable associations. By this method the gross expense of parliamentary elections might be avoided. With this method is to be compared that of the poll adopted for the London elections, with the result of putting them in the hands of minorities of one-fifth of the total number of voters, at great expenses, which serve for the purchase of public position, by positively ill-educated men who will incur them, and operate to the exclusion of specialists, of the highest qualifications as educationists, who will not.

Whilst the areas of the jurisdiction of town councils are in a few instances coincident with necessary sanitary or drainage areas, and the areas of the Poor Law unions laid out for other purposes, and at a time when sanitary science was unknown, are little more so;—but the areas of the Poor Law unions may be extended and varied more easily than the areas of town council jurisdictions. Unions themselves may be easily combined by the central board for

any common administrative purpose, as they have been for district schools (*i.e.*, districts of unions), combining physical and industrial with mental training, with the highest success of any local administrative measure, as it has given a far higher order of teaching or training power at a lower order of cost, or less than one-half that of the cost of teaching power as conducted by the Education Department of the Privy Council.

In some cases the areas which considerations of efficiency and economy will require to be brought under one sanitary authority would include two urban districts, or two municipal boroughs. It will be much more difficult to combine them for any such work than it would be to combine Poor Law unions or boards of guardians.

The districts for the registration of births and deaths are now coincident, not with municipal but with the union areas. The function of the registration of the causes of death is, as stated, of great importance as a means of indicating future progress. That function now exercised by the union officers, must either be set aside or put, under municipal jurisdiction, or be exercised by duplicate authorities of some sort if the union is not to be the sanitary authority. This involves the exercise of a function of the highest importance for local service, as well as of general or Imperial service; the function of the central authority of collecting for the information and guidance of each local authority, and of the ratepayers, the experience of the whole, to be obtained by order of returns, on common standards, for comparison; as also of reports by medical officers and by officers of health, so much insisted on as necessary for the advancement of sanitary science and administration. The functions of collecting information as to what does do, and what does not do, in works, for the protection of local administrators or rate expenders against waste from simple, uninformed ignorance,—may be proved to be of the greatest importance to them and to the ratepayers.

This is a function sometimes to be exercised through the inspectors, as well as by circulars and printed instructions and reports, to which unions and union officers have been accustomed, and by whom it is properly to be regarded as an individual and collective local privilege. But nothing of the kind exists in municipal corporations.

The Royal Sanitary Commissioners recognised the existing want of constant and official communication between central and local officers; the objection to the duplication of local officers, and the imperfect representative constitution of the town councils. But they did not appear to have had the other public securities for responsible government brought before them—*viz.*, especially the right of appeal of the poorest to the central board at the cost of a letter, and, if needed, an inquiry and adjudication by a competent and impartial authority gratis; nor 'the right of appeal, gratis, to minorities and reversioners against the undue distribution of local charges'; nor the right of appeal of local officers, and continuance

in office during good behaviour; nor 'the right of the local authority to information and instruction for their guidance, founded on the collection of the widest experience'; nor 'the right of the ratepayers to securities as to the qualifications of the local officers, and to the money value of their services by examinations of the nature of competitive examinations provided for in the Poor Law Amendment Act; nor 'the right of the ratepayers and others for the dismissal of incompetent officers, and against the protection of incompetent and wasteful service, by reason of favouritism and jobbery on the part of irresponsible rate expenders.'

By the central arrangements, and through the President of the Local Government Board, the administration of the guardians is made responsible to Parliament.

The auditors of the expenditure of the boards of guardians, are better appointed; are more responsible; their returns are more conducive to a national accountability to parliament; their functions are better systematised than are the auditors of the municipal councils.

If powers are taken, as they may be, to form a composite local authority in urban and rural districts, these rights of the ratepayers, and corresponding duties of the rate expenders, provided by centralisation, should be duly regarded, for preservation in the interests of the locality.

The representatives of the boards of guardians throughout the country, and also the chambers of agriculture throughout the country, have petitioned Parliament for a return to the principles of administration set forth in our report of 1833. The principles then set forth have in ordinary periods been carried out with the greatest integrity in Ireland, including full relief to the able-bodied, with half the expense to the ratepayers that is incurred in England. At a recent meeting of Poor Law guardians in the metropolis, instances were given of a reduction of the rates by nearly one-half, with an improvement in the administration, by an adherence to those principles, chiefly by making out-door relief the exception, instead of the rule. Nevertheless, it is proper to state that at the time the administration of the rates was centralised they amounted, with labour rates and other sources of relief to the able-bodied, and of wages, to upwards of ten shillings per head on the population. At the same rate (instead of eight millions, as at present, or five millions as they were once, and now ought to be), they would have been upwards of twelve. Wages would have been lower, production would have been less, and rents would have been lower. Even as it is, the total saving effected with the agency of paid officers in the place of the unpaid parish officers has not been less than eighty millions. The future progress will be in more competent and responsible central action, with better informed public support; with more extensive and efficient direction of the labours of competent paid officers, especially the reduction by sanitation of the destitution arising

from working disability, from excessive sickness and excessive mortality; and next, the better general physical, industrial, and mental training of the children of the wage classes, as carried out, on the half-time principles, in the district half-time schools.

East Sheen, January 6, 1883.

## II.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY.

#### *Draft Resolutions for Consideration as to the Constitution of the Central Board.*

(1.) That, with all due respect for the ability and integrity of the present President of the Local Government Board, and of others, his predecessors—yet, having regard to the average duration of Governments and of the short period of service of changing party political chiefs, and to the long undivided attention absolutely necessary to become competently acquainted with the means for the protection of the public health, and with the laws for their application—having regard also to the time necessary to become duly conversant with the evils of the mal-administration of the funds for the relief of the destitute, and with the laws for their prevention—the present arrangements for the administration of the central executive authority cannot be regarded as entitled to public confidence.

(2.) That, under the present arrangements, functions, requiring very special aptitudes and undivided and persistent attention for their successful application, are confided to gentlemen who are usually undistinguished by such aptitudes, whose attention is obviously divided and distracted by the claims of other high, and often more congenial duties, and who leave office before they can acquire competent skill to give original, independent, and safe instructions for the successful promotion of the public service.

(3.) That, under arrangements such as the present, it is notorious that, as a rule, the central executive administration falls to subordinate officers—frequently obscure subordinate officers—and is often performed by them under great difficulty and discouragement, from the distracted, perfunctory, and insufficient attention they usually obtain from their chiefs for the sanction and support of their measures.

(4.) That the first considerable progress in the administration of the laws for the protection of the public health, and also in the amended administration of the funds for the relief of the destitute, was made under real boards, composed chiefly of members of proved special aptitudes, who gave an undivided attention to their duties; the chief progress in sanitary measures being in establishing examples of the reduction of old death-rates by one-third; and an administration of relief to the destitute at one half the previous rates of expenditure.

(5.) That the administration of the funds for the relief of the destitute and of the medical charities of Ireland, by a real board of specially-qualified commissioners, giving their undivided attention to their service;—and as respect Poor Law Relief, administering the law on the principles laid down by the commissioners of inquiry for amendment in England,—

stands out in contrast with the administration under changing political chiefs and fictitious boards; the most prominent feature of the contrast being, in Ireland, a more full relief in individual cases of real destitution, at a total expense of about one-third of the present aggregate expenditure for the legal relief of the destitute in England and Wales.

(6.) That since the change was made from real boards of members specially qualified, giving their undivided attention to the service, to nominal boards of high political officers, who it is notorious never do or can meet as legally intended, for deliberation, and who must sign documents in a formal and perfunctory manner, the administration of Poor Law relief, as declared at public meetings of persons concerned in local administration, has retrograded disastrously, and entailed a return of the worst evils intended to be remedied, with an oppressive expenditure of fifty millions of money since the dereliction of the established principles took place; that the like change in the administration of sanitary law has entailed in the metropolis, and in the chief manufacturing towns, immensely oppressive local expenditure, with continued excessive death-rates from preventable disease, the undiminished death-rates from such disease being rated at upwards of one hundred thousand deaths annually.

(7.) That, as a rule, the administration, whether local or central, is as the time given to it by the administrators; and that it is of the first importance for a moral influence on the local administration, that the central administration should be transparent, and strict to principle, and that the ostensible should be the real and the true.

(8.) That it is prayed, therefore, that Her Majesty be empowered to appoint, in lieu of the First Lord of the Treasury and of the Lord Privy Seal, and of her Principal Secretaries of State, as members of the board, three or more persons of special qualifications, of settled principles of administration, and of clearly expressed views for their application, to give their whole time to the execution of the Act, at such salaries as the Lords of the Treasury shall direct.

SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION,

1 Adam Street, Adelphi, W.C.

April 5th, 1872.







