



# WILEY

---

Poor Law Statistics as Used in Connection with the Old Age Pension Question

Author(s): Charles Booth

Source: *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 9, No. 34 (Jun., 1899), pp. 212-223

Published by: Wiley on behalf of the Royal Economic Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2956802>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 19:01 UTC

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



*Royal Economic Society, Wiley* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to  
*The Economic Journal*

## POOR LAW STATISTICS AS USED IN CONNECTION WITH THE OLD AGE PENSION QUESTION.

IN March, 1896, I contributed to the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL* a short paper on the subject of Poor Law Statistics in reference to this question, in which I dealt with some of the points raised by Mr. Loch and Mr. Yule in articles which had appeared in September, 1894, and December, 1895.

That I did not entirely satisfy Mr. Loch has been shown by some letters of his that have appeared recently in the *Times*, and it is true that one part of his paper was passed over by me—viz., that which concerned the relative decrease of pauperism in old age when compared with the diminution recent decades have shown in the extent of pauperism during the active years of life.

With this question I propose to deal now, and if I passed it by before, it was because there seemed but little between Mr. Loch's view and mine.

We agree that there has been an all-round improvement, and agree that the improvement amongst the old has been less than amongst the rest; we only differ as to the extent of the discrepancy and as to inferences to be drawn from it. It is difficult to apply any absolute test to differences in opinion of this kind, but as Mr. Loch seems to demand it, I will do what I can to meet him.

The gist of Mr. Loch's criticisms on my position as to this part of the question is that the statistics as I used them were imperfect, and that I improperly drew certain conclusions from their inherent inconclusiveness, while all the while further material and a sounder method lay ready to my hand, of which I neglected to avail myself. Following up this line in writing recently to the *Times*, he asserts that the figures of a single date (such as I for the most part employed) cannot supply material for a judgment of their own value, and claims that I have not

faced this point at all. He then asks me categorically the following questions:—

(1) Does Mr. Booth think that statistics of a single date afford of themselves evidence of their own meaning and value?

(2) And if not, by what statistical standard does he judge of the value and meaning of the one date statistics on which he rests his case?

To the first question I can only answer, "Yes." There are endless statistics the interest of which is quite apart from any comparison of recurring periods. Statistics of military matters, for instance. But I need hardly give instances. The first value of all census statistics lies in such direct and immediate comparison—of the numbers of the sexes—of married and single—of young and old; or as to the various employments of the people; or, it may be, comparison of one country with another in these particulars. It is only after successive enumerations have been made that a new value is found in periodic comparisons of results. In breaking new ground statistically, it is almost always the facts of one date that must serve. My own work has been mostly of this character. In dealing with the figures in question I attempted, by an analysis of Mr. Ritchie's return of 1892, to find out what were the conditions as to locality; as to industrial pursuits; as to proportion of old people; as to increasing or decreasing population; and as to the administration of the Poor Law; which were coincident with, and might be supposed to react upon—and possibly explain the extent of—pauperism in old age. As I wrote it five years ago, perhaps I may say that I think it was a good and ingenious piece of work; but no one could be more alive than I was then and am now to its imperfections, or more thankful for such criticism as that of Mr. Loch, and the kind of assistance he is so well able to lend in the elucidation of a subject of great difficulty, some aspects of which are to me still (as he says) "quite a conundrum."

I therefore do not wish to evade his second question, but in reply need only refer to the book itself, which step by step explains the methods it employs, and is, I think, very guarded in drawing conclusions.

Mr. Loch, however, takes exception to my material as well as to my methods. He does not like the plan of counting, as more or less pauperised, all who were relieved at all during twelve months. The one day count, which he prefers, no doubt best represents the *burthen of pauperism*, but, in my view, partly disguises the *extent of pauperisation*, and the wide margin we find

between the two plans of counting gives some, though by no means an adequate, idea of the mass of poverty which lies continually on the verge of pauperism. He points to errors in the year's count from duplication, and, as regards London, with some reason; though I do not think the number who may have been counted twice in London would materially affect the figures, which are so large as to be able to stand some discount. I was, moreover, careful to isolate London in all my tables.

The figures of Mr. Ritchie's return, though a surprise to the public, were not so to me. They merely confirmed my previous calculations regarding the extent to which the twelve months' count might be expected to overrun the one day count in town and country respectively. Of the general and practical truth of that return I have no doubt whatever, and in advocating old age pensions, I have only needed to use the undeniable fact that of those over sixty-five in nearly all parts of England, and under almost all possible conditions, nearly 20 per cent. are constantly, and nearly 30 per cent. are either constantly or occasionally, constrained to seek relief under the poor law with the evidence that it was age, and nothing else, that brought this about, as the proportions so relieved are extraordinarily less below sixty-five, and rise steadily from sixty-five years of age upwards.

In my analysis of the condition of things now and during the last decade (1881—1891), I was not able to recognise to any very great extent the influence of the improved methods of administration with which Mr. Loch is identified.<sup>1</sup> Where carried out completely, the results have indeed been wonderful, but the principles have not spread, and the instances of their application are rare. To this unfortunate negation, I believe, may be attributed the bitterness of Mr. Loch's attack, and it is in regard to this point especially that he refers to neglected material and a better method of enquiry. These, he claims, may be found in the use of the systematic returns of the not-able-bodied.

I said in my book that there were no recurrent statistics as to old age pauperism, and consequently no positive evidence as to increase or decrease; but Mr. Loch rightly points out that the returns of the not-able-bodied throw some light on the subject, as a large proportion of these are the old, and the decrease shown in them must imply a decrease among the old. It is my failure to make use of these figures that he notices, and although I

<sup>1</sup> In this conclusion I seem to be borne out by Mr. Yule's latest investigations. In the summary of a paper read before the Statistical Society, on 21st March, 1899, he says: "In the second decade . . . apparently, change in out-relief ratio had hardly any effect. . . ."

admit that I did not think of their possible application, I believe I shall show before I have done that as material they are rather difficult to handle.

Mr. Loch gives the figures of not-able-bodied pauperism per 1,000 of the population of England and Wales as follows :<sup>1</sup>

	Males.	Females.	Total.
1858.....	10·3	22·4	16·5
1872.....	10·0	22·0	16·2
1892.....	5·2	12·3	8·8

and subjoins a more detailed table in order to develop his case ; which is, that the old have to a very great extent shared in the improvement of the able-bodied, that their pauperism is gradually passing away, and thus needs no other treatment than the careful administration of the Poor Law and restriction of relief. His figures are as follows :

Year.	Per cent. pauperism all ages on population all ages.	Per cent. all ages to 16 on population to 16.	Per cent. all ages 16—60 on population 16—60.	Per cent. 60— on population 60—	Per cent. of 60— pauperism as it would have been if old age pauperism had decreased at the same rate as pauperism at the active age of life.
1851	4·5	4·7	1·5	21·5	—
1861	4·2	4·2	1·3	20·8	—
1871	4·5	4·5	1·5	21·5	21·5
1881	2·8	2·7	·7	15·1	13·8
1891	2·4	2·1	·6	13·7	11·4

This table does not stand examination very well, but the mistakes in the figures make sometimes in favour of, as well as sometimes against, Mr. Loch's contention.

In the *first* place, the percentages given for 1851 are all incorrect, the returns of the Poor Law Board only covering 597 unions with a population of 15,428,116, whereas the above are calculated on a population of 17,927,609. There is a similar mistake in the figures given above for total not-able-bodied pauperism in 1858, which I believe should be 19·6 in place of 16·5 per 1,000.

*Secondly*, the column headed "all ages 16—60 on population 16—60" should read "*able-bodied* of all ages 16—60." The *not-able-bodied* of these ages are omitted entirely in the above table.

*Thirdly*, nothing is said in the paper as to the method adopted to arrive at "those over sixty" by deducting from the not-able-bodied those below that age. I have, however, learnt from Mr. Loch privately that this has been effected by deducting 19 per cent.—this being, according to Mr. Loch, the proportion of those

<sup>1</sup> See ECONOMIC JOURNAL, Sept., 1894.

under sixty in August or July, 1890, when Mr. Burt's special return of ages was made. I think the figure should be 18 per cent., but that is a small matter. What is really serious is, that Mr. Loch assumes that the proportion of those over sixty is a constant quantity. That is, he assumes that the rate of improvement in the condition of those under sixty has been no greater than that for those over sixty, and he makes this probably untenable assumption without any explanation to the reader.

*Finally*, the figures in the last column are very incorrect and misleading. For this calculation he starts with the assumed ratio 21·5 per cent. for pauperism amongst those over sixty in 1871 (a rate almost certainly too high), and then asserts that, if old age pauperism had decreased during the ten years at the same rate of decrease as pauperism in the active years of life [*for the able-bodied* being understood]; it would in 1881 have been 13·8 per cent. for those over sixty in place of 15·1 per cent., a comparatively small difference. But not only are all the figures he uses untenable; the calculation is wrong also. We have here a comparison of ratios, a simple rule of three—as 1·5 : ·7 :: 21·5 : (not 13·8 but) 10 per cent. Among the young and able-bodied the proportion of paupers fell to less than half of what it had been in 1871, and so 21·5 at the same rate of progress becomes 10 per cent. Or if instead of ten years we extend the comparison over twenty years, starting again, as the arrangement of the figures in the table seems to indicate, with 1871, we have this sum:—

as 1·5 : ·6 :: 21·5 : (not 11·4 but) 8·6.

No doubt another comparison may be made if we consider only the last decade 1881–91, but then we obtain a higher figure than the 11·4, thus: as ·7 : ·6 :: 15·1 : 12·9.

I do not wish to make too much of these mistakes, nor to explain their origin, for in truth the statistics used are ill-adapted for the purpose to which they are turned. Nevertheless, partly to make what I have said more intelligible, and partly from a very keen interest in the subject, I am constrained to try to construct on the same lines a more correct table, taking my chance of falling, perhaps, into some similar errors, and with the fear of Mr. Yule and his mysterious methods constantly before my mind.

In doing this I am not satisfied to substitute sixty for sixty-five as Mr. Loch has done, for it is precisely at and after sixty-five that the great increase of pauperism is seen. Moreover, it is as easy to deduct all under sixty-five from the not-able-bodied returns as to deduct only those under sixty, and for sixty-five we have two dates at which the calculation can be made, that is, July

and August, 1890, by use of Mr. Burt's return, and 1st January, 1892, with Mr. Ritchie's return.

The first of these comparisons stands thus:—

B return—Not-able-bodied (over 16) relieved 1 July, 1890, 350,882.

Burt's return	{	Persons in receipt of relief, of 60 years and upwards,
		1 August, 1890, 286,867.
		Persons in receipt of relief, of 65 years and upwards,
		1 August, 1890, 245,687.

As 350,882 : 286,867 :: 100 : 81·8; therefore 18·2 per cent.<sup>1</sup> were under 60.

Or as 350,882 : 245,687 :: 100 : 70; therefore 30 per cent. were under 65.

The other calculation for 1st January, 1892, is as follows:—

B return—Not-able-bodied (over 16) relieved 1 January, 1892, 350,838.

Persons in receipt of relief, of 65 years and upwards, 1 January, 1892, 268,397.

As 350,838 : 268,397 :: 100 : 76·5; therefore 23·5 per cent. were under 65.

The fact that according to the B return there were practically the same number of not-able-bodied paupers over sixteen years of age relieved on 1st January, 1892, as on 1st July, 1890, indicates a very considerable improvement—winter being compared with summer. But it will be observed that those *over* sixty-five show an actual increase of 22,710 in number, and thus account for 76·5 per cent. in place of 70 per cent. eighteen months previously. This difference is undoubtedly explained by the winter season; during which many old people seek refuge in the house, but may perhaps also include some permanent increase in the proportion of the old.

For the tables which are here inserted, A, B and C, I have used the 1st January returns and have taken as a basis the rough estimate that on 1st January, 1891, 75 per cent. of the not-able-bodied were over sixty-five years of age. I then make two tables, in the first of which I adopt Mr. Loch's theory, that the proportion of the old remains unchanged from decade to decade—that is, in the present table is always 75 per cent.; this theory involves the assumption that those of the not-able-bodied who have not reached sixty-five have decreased in number in exact proportion to those of sixty-five years and upwards. In the second table I have adopted the opposite theory, viz., that those

<sup>1</sup> This figure represents Mr. Loch's 19 per cent.

TABLE A.

Paupers on 1st January.	1851.		1861.		1871.		1881.		1891.		1898.	
	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.
Under 16	318,871	5.50	322,612	4.26	392,245	4.51	271,987	2.71	235,478	2.18	225,652	1.93
16-60 A B	147,760	2.64	150,526	2.13	189,839	2.94	111,169	1.86	98,794	1.13	107,071	1.14
16-65 N A B	87,571	36.74	95,884	30.87	112,952	31.53	89,311	27.54	91,299	19.96	100,097	20.3
65 and upwards	262,713		287,651		338,858		267,982		273,899		300,202	
Total of Paupers.....	816,915	5.30	856,673	4.27	1,033,894	4.55	740,349	2.85	699,470	2.41	732,992	2.94

The above Table assumes that the not-able-bodied from 16 to 65 have decreased in same proportion as the not-able-bodied of 65 and upwards.

TABLE B.

Paupers on 1st January.	1851.		1861.		1871.		1881.		1891.		1898.	
	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.
Under 16	318,871	5.50	322,612	4.26	392,245	4.51	271,987	2.71	235,478	2.18	225,652	1.93
16-60 A B	147,760	3.19	150,526	2.51	189,839	2.82	111,169	1.45	98,794	1.13	107,071	1.18
16-65 N A B	136,551	29.89	139,107	26.23	175,438	25.81	102,736	21.41	91,299	19.96	98,948	20.33
65 and upwards	213,733		244,428		276,372		234,507		273,899		301,321	
Total of Paupers ....	816,915	5.30	856,673	4.27	1,033,894	4.55	740,349	2.85	699,470	2.41	732,992	2.94

The above Table assumes that the not-able-bodied from 16 to 65 have decreased in same proportion as the able-bodied of those ages.

TABLE C.

Paupers on 1st January.	1851.		1861.		1871.		1881.		1891.		1898.	
	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.	No. of Paupers.	Per cent. of Popu- lation.
Under 16	318,871	5.50	322,612	4.26	392,245	4.51	271,987	2.71	235,478	2.18	225,652	1.93
16-65	229,891	9.91	268,021	9.32	334,034	9.58	247,192	1.40	190,098	1.13	200,578	1.14
65 and upwards	238,223	33.32	266,040	28.55	307,615	28.62	261,220	21.98	273,899	19.96	300,162	20.29
Total of Paupers.....	816,915	5.30	856,673	4.27	1,033,894	4.55	740,349	2.85	699,470	2.41	732,992	2.94

The above Table represents the mean between Tables A and B.



under sixty-five have decreased in numbers proportionately to the able-bodied of same ages.

These theories may perhaps be accepted as representing the extremes on either hand. It is certainly improbable that the not-able-bodied under sixty-five should not have shared in some degree the exceptional improvement of the able-bodied, and perhaps no less improbable that they should have shared it to the full extent, when we bear in mind the greater tenderness felt for the sick and the great improvement in the management of sick asylums. I have therefore added a third table giving the mean result. Here or hereabouts the truth perhaps lies. I must, however, say that if we look to inherent probabilities for guidance, it is not with Mr. Loch's assumption nor even with the mean, but with the opposite assumption that we seem to find them. For each table we start with the same figures for our basis, viz., with approximately 20 per cent. of those over sixty-five in receipt of relief on 1st January, 1891, as compared with a little over 1 per cent. for those from sixteen to sixty and a little over 2 per cent. for those under sixteen, or a total of not quite  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. for the whole population. Mr. Loch's assumption brings us to the enormous, and I think improbable rate of 36·7 per cent. for old age pauperism in 1851, which, if anything like the same rule applied as in 1891, would indicate that about half of the old then sought relief sometime during the year. Even the mean figures, showing  $33\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in 1851, have to me an exaggerated look.

Mr. Loch's contention in his recent letter to the *Times*, and also in his article in the *ECONOMIC JOURNAL* in 1894, is that the progress as to old age pauperism has been satisfactory. To show this he compares the various ratios of improvement. This part of his letter reads as follows :

“A second test or standard of interpretation may be found in comparing past and present. The able-bodied pauperism of England and Wales has decreased, as all admit, with remarkable rapidity. On January 1st, 1871, it was 1·5 per cent. and in 1891, 0·6 per cent. on the population between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Of the not-able-bodied paupers, by a comparison of certain returns, it may be concluded that about 19 per cent. are under the age of sixty. Excluding these, therefore, we can compare the not-able-bodied poor who are above the age of sixty with the able-bodied. So far then as the evidence goes we find that the not-able-bodied poor above sixty years of age numbered in 1871 21 per cent. [really 21·5], and in 1891 13 per cent. [really 13·7] of the population of that age. If they had decreased as rapidly as the able-bodied paupers they would have numbered

11 per cent. instead of 13 per cent." I have already pointed out that the relative proportion would be not 11 but 8·6 per cent. on these figures. Mr. Loch, however, goes on thus: "If then we take the decrease in not-able-bodied paupers as a kind of test of what the decrease in the aged might have been expected to be, we find that a difference of 2 per cent. marks the relative failure of the aged poor to become as independent as the able-bodied." "Thus" (says Mr. Loch), "when a standard of comparison or interpretation is found, statistics acquire reality and meaning; and the meaning is entirely different from that sensational magnitude with which an unguided imagination has been led to endow them." Perhaps the corrected difference of 5 per cent. (13·7—8·6), may to the casual reader sound hardly more considerable than Mr. Loch's 2 per cent. (13·7—11), but when we remember that 2·7 on 13·7 is really a deficiency of nearly 20 per cent. and that 5 on 13·7 is over 36 per cent. it is possible that the meaning of these statistics may become more real even if somewhat more sensational.

And this view becomes more and more emphasized the further we go. Not only is 11 made to stand for 8·6, not only is 13 loosely used for 13·7, and 2 for 2·7 in these calculations, while we find the proportion of those over sixty among the not-able-bodied taken as 81 per cent. in place of 81·8; but, as I have shown, the entire basis of Mr. Loch's contention is untenable. He no doubt secures the appearance of an improvement in the present, but it is effected to a great extent by an exaggeration in the past.

If we use the figures given on page 218 to make a comparison on Mr. Loch's plan we obtain the following results, starting from 1851, 1861, 1871 and 1881 respectively.

In these tables the first figures are the actual ratios for pauperism 16—65, and the next are the assumed ratios for pauperism over 65.

On assumption A.				That is, the old are in a worse position since 1851 than those from 16-65—			
1851 to 1891	2:64 : 1:13 :: 36:74 : 15:72	in place of 19:96		by ratio	4:24	or 27 per cent.	
1861 " "	2:13 : 1:13 :: 30:87 : 16:88	" "	" "	" "	3:58	" "	22 " "
1871 " "	2:34 : 1:13 :: 31:53 : 15:23	" "	" "	" "	4:73	" "	31 " "
1881 " "	1:36 : 1:13 :: 22:54 : 18:74	" "	" "	" "	1:22	" "	6 " "
On assumption B.							
1851 to 1891	3:19 : 1:13 :: 29:89 : 10:52	in place of 19:96		" "	9:44	" "	89 " "
1861 " "	2:51 : 1:13 :: 26:23 : 11:62	" "	" "	" "	8:34	" "	72 " "
1871 " "	2:81 : 1:13 :: 25:81 : 15:34	" "	" "	" "	9:62	" "	93 " "
1881 " "	1:45 : 1:13 :: 21:41 : 16:68	" "	" "	" "	3:28	" "	20 " "
The mean of the two theories gives the following results :							
1851 to 1891	2:91 : 1:13 :: 33:32 : 12:93	in place of 19:96		" "	7:03	" "	54 " "
1861 " "	2:32 : 1:13 :: 28:55 : 13:95	" "	" "	" "	6:01	" "	44 " "
1871 " "	2:58 : 1:13 :: 28:62 : 12:53	" "	" "	" "	7:43	" "	59 " "
1881 " "	1:40 : 1:13 :: 21:98 : 17:74	" "	" "	" "	2:22	" "	12 " "

If this last table may be taken as a reasonable compromise between two extremes, it would appear that in the race for improvement the old have fallen behind to the extent of 50 per cent., that is their present numbers (300,000), are 100,000 in excess of what they would have been had they shared the improvement that has taken place as to pauperism amongst those under sixty-five years of age—not, be it observed, the able-bodied only, but all of the ages sixteen to sixty-five, whether ill or well.

This is what results from going back to 1871 or earlier. I do not know that the figures are very important, but Mr. Loch has appealed to them. In my book, I did not go back at all beyond 1881, and the trend of things from 1881 to 1891 and onwards still appears to me to be the more important question.

What strikes the eye most in the figures given above, is the approximation of the rate of improvement when we compare the old and those in earlier life after 1881, which is carried still further in such figures as can be given for the years since 1891. These last figures are a little uncertain, but I do not suppose they contain any serious error, and they are of considerable interest.

Before I proceed to consider these and the other figures on their merits, I would ask the reader's attention to the following table of population from 1851 to 1898 divided by age periods, as used in the foregoing statements of pauperism :

Popu- lation.	1851.	Ratio of in- crease	1861.	Ratio of in- crease	1871.	Ratio of in- crease	1881.	Ratio of in- crease	1891.	Ratio of in- crease (Est.)	1898. (Est.)
—16	6,736,494 37·5% <sub>2</sub>	12·4	7,571,057 38% <sub>2</sub>	14·7	8,686,889 38·2% <sub>2</sub>	15·4	10,028,657 38·6% <sub>2</sub>	7·8	10,816,948 37·3% <sub>2</sub>	8	11,682,304 37·3% <sub>2</sub>
16—65	10,360,291 57·8% <sub>2</sub>	11·6	11,563,360 57·7% <sub>2</sub>	12	12,950,634 57·1% <sub>2</sub>	13·9	14,757,133 56·8% <sub>2</sub>	13·9	16,812,975 58% <sub>2</sub>	8	18,158,013 58% <sub>2</sub>
65—	830,824 4·7% <sub>2</sub>	12	931,807 4·6% <sub>2</sub>	15·3	1,074,743 4·7% <sub>2</sub>	10·6	1,188,644 4·6% <sub>2</sub>	15·5	1,372,602 4·7% <sub>2</sub>	8	1,482,410 4·7% <sub>2</sub>
Total...	17,927,609 100%	12	20,066,224 100%	14	22,712,266 100%	13	25,974,439 100%	11·9	29,002,525 100%	8	31,322,727 100%

NOTE.—The population of the 597 Unions included in the Poor Law returns for 1851, has been proportionately divided as follows for the tables on page 218 :—

1—16	5,797,278
16—65	8,915,849
65—	714,989

15,428,116

These figures are in themselves very noteworthy. We see from 1861 to 1881 a constant and most remarkable change in the proportion of children, which by 1891 is all lost, the proportion actually falling below what it was in 1851. Between 1851 and 1861 the whole population increased 12 per cent., and the children 12·4 per cent. By 1871 the whole population had further in-

creased 13·2 per cent. while the children had increased 14·7 per cent.; by 1881 the whole population had further increased 14 per cent., but the children led again with an increase of 15 per cent. But in 1891, while the total ratio of increase had fallen to 11·7 per cent., that of the children alone had actually fallen to 7·8 per cent. The period from 1861 to 1881, and especially the decade 1871 to 1881, was a time of rapidly advancing prosperity and rising wages. I think this was the time to which Mr. Gladstone's famous phrase "leaps and bounds" referred. It was a time of marrying and begetting children, and it was also a time of decreasing pauperism. This decrease Mr. Loch would have us attribute entirely to improved administration of the Poor Law. There was, it is true, a great effort made, but had it not been that the tide was in their favour, the results would have been less conspicuous.

The other marked peculiarity in these figures is the curious wave in the numbers of those over sixty-five, who increased 12 per cent. the first decade, then 15·3 per cent. from 1861 to 1871, followed by only 10·6 per cent. from 1871 to 1881, rising again to 15·5 per cent. from 1881 to 1891. The varying numbers of the old may have had some effect on the ratios of pauperism.

If the reader will now turn back to table C of *Pauperism* (page 218), he will see that the strongly marked peculiarities of the decade 1871 to 1881 depend in great measure upon the reactionary state of things from 1861 to 1871. If the improvement noticeable from 1851 to 1861 had been continued to 1871, we should have an almost uniform line of improvement from 1851 to 1881. Thus an altogether exceptional state of things lay at the bottom of the extraordinary reduction in pauperism from 1871 to 1881. The comparatively slow rate of improvement since then becomes explicable.

As to the children, the improvement has continued. We have the following series of ratios: 5·50 (1851), 4·26 (1861), 4·51 (1871), 2·71 (1881), 2·18 (1891), and perhaps about 1·93 for 1898. If there had been no reaction from 1861 to 1871, the curve (if laid out) would show continuous and almost regular improvement for the whole period. Since 1891 (if my estimates of population are not seriously out) it is in the children only that there has been any improvement. This improvement, I venture to suggest, is largely due to an increase of private charity. Such institutions as Dr. Barnardo's Homes cannot but have had a great effect in this direction.

As to the active years 16-65, too, the curve of improvement

up to 1891 would be very nearly regular but for the reaction 1861-71. But since 1891 no further improvement can be traced.

As to the old, we have a very regular series except for 1861-71, but the rate of improvement seems to be checked before 1891, and since 1891 there has been a slight increase in the ratio. So long as there was improvement to share, the old shared it to some extent; but they always drag behind, and now, improvement having ceased for those from 16-65, we find the disadvantage of the old taking the shape of a positive increase of the proportion of paupers amongst them. Such are the conclusions to be drawn from a careful study of the official statistics of not-able-bodied pauperism.

CHARLES BOOTH