

Poor relief, public assistance, and the maintenance of the unemployed in Southampton between the wars

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Recent interest in the history of the New Poor Law has largely by-passed its penultimate phase between the wars.¹ No doubt this reflects the diminished role of the poor law in this period, circumscribed by the innovations in social services which preceded the First World War, its stigma mitigated (though far from abolished) by the repeal of pauper disenfranchisement in 1918,² and apparently under imminent sentence of demolition with the publication in the same year of the Maclean Report,³ bearing the signatures of adherents of both the *Majority* and *Minority Reports of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress* in 1909.

In the event, however, the institutions of the poor law remained intact until the 1929 Local Government Act, while its essential principles endured to 1948.⁴ Though its role after 1918 was restricted, the poor law continued to exercise a significant influence both socially and politically. In particular, it occupied strategic ground in the complex and increasingly contentious relations between national and local authorities,⁵ sharply focused through the most problematic of the social issues of the inter-war period – unemployment.

For much of the later nineteenth century, the deterrent principles of the poor law had provided the sole official recourse for the unemployed. In the decade before the First World War, this role had been substantially circumvented by a combination of local-authority relief works, labour exchanges, and – most radical of all – an experiment in the maintenance of the unemployed, free of the stigma of pauperism, through unemployment insurance. Though restricted at its initiation in 1911 to a narrow range of trades, unemployment insurance, apparently highly successful in the optimum conditions of the pre-war boom, was to be extended in November 1920 to cover the substantial majority of the workforce.⁶

In the interval between the Armistice and the extension of insurance, the enduring, if essentially negative, influence of the poor law was evident in relation to first the fear and then the fact of post-war unemployment. In order to avert the necessity of recourse to a discredited but as yet unreformed poor law on the part of a substantial number of uninsured ex-servicemen and civilian war-workers, Out-of-Work Donations were introduced, temporarily entitling their recipients to benefits without contributions. Until their termination (for civilians in November 1919 and for ex-servicemen in April 1921), the existence of Donations with benefits more generous and conditions less restrictive than those of unemployment insurance, effectively by-passed both the insurance system and the poor law in the maintenance of the unemployed. The onset of mass unemployment in the spring of 1920 made evident the political impossibility of simply sweeping away the precedents set by Donations. Thus the extension of insurance in November 1920, and the subsequent grafting-on of appendages which were the subject of twenty-eight legislative amendments between 1920 and 1934, testified to the continuing reluctance of government to countenance the abandonment to the poor law of too many of those failing to meet the actuarial conditions of the original insurance scheme.⁷

If the failure of unemployment to fall significantly below 10 per cent of the insured workforce for the remainder of the inter-war period ensured the continuance of these make-shift extensions, equally the resultant accumulation of indebtedness by the Insurance Fund to an increasingly reluctant Treasury effectively prohibited the final severing of all links between the unemployed and the poor law. While the government endeavoured to minimize the role of the Guardians in the interests of public order, it could hardly insulate the able-bodied unemployed entirely from contact with the poor law so long as it was deemed desirable to maintain at least the semblance of an actuarial basis for unemployment insurance or a check against malingering. Ironically, after 1920 the preservation of insurance prohibited the abolition of poor relief. Though the extent of the Guardians' responsibilities for the able-bodied was now substantially dictated by the shifting conditions of eligibility for insurance benefit, the strain imposed on social and political institutions by long-term mass unemployment was therefore a potent force at one and the same time impelling and inhibiting a radical reform of the poor law.

These ambivalent pressures found expression in a mounting conflict of interests between national and local authorities regarding

financial liability, administrative responsibility, and political accountability for unemployment policy. For the Guardians and their successors (the Public Assistance Committees), the potential for conflict was intensified by the exclusion of poor relief for the able-bodied from the proliferation of Exchequer subsidies for local authority services which marked the early twentieth century. Thus their expenditure bridged the categories identified by the *Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation* of 1901 by being 'local' but 'onerous'. Nor, outside the narrow limits of the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund, was there any machinery for the equalization of the highly uneven rate burden imposed on different local authorities by expenditure on the relief of the unemployed, prior to the block grant system introduced in 1929. Furthermore, while local politics were largely tangential to the insurance system, financed and closely supervised from Whitehall, the boards of Guardians, as locally elected bodies with rate-making powers, were an inevitable focus for local pressure groups reflecting the inherent tension between the Guardians' role in the provision of welfare and their status as trustees of the rates. This tension was intensified both by the electoral implications of the enfranchisement of paupers in 1918, and by changing social attitudes towards the destitute, especially on account of unemployment, which that measure betokened.

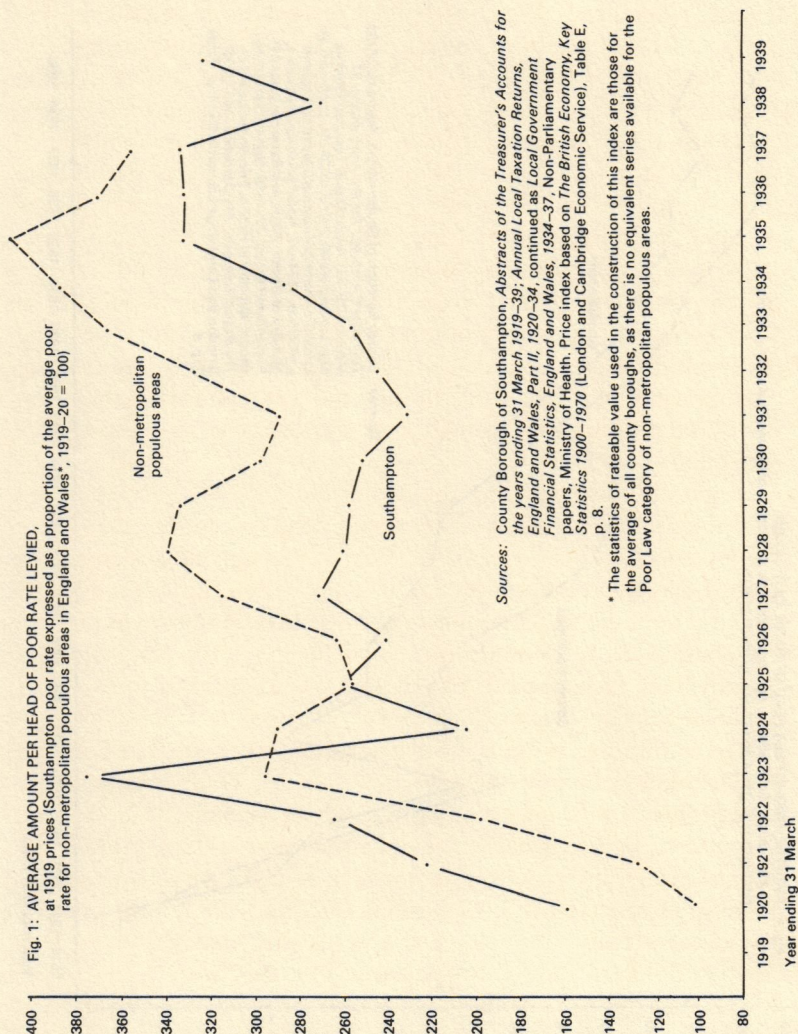
E. P. Hennock, in analysing the financial politics of nineteenth-century urban government, has drawn attention to the importance in social policy of the ratepayer interest with its predilection for economy. His exclusion of the poor law from consideration leads to the conclusion that this factor had by the beginning of the twentieth century been rendered largely irrelevant by the granting of exchequer subsidies.⁸ It is a contention of this article that, through the poor law, ratepayer politics and the preference for economy over welfare expenditure remained a key factor in local government well into the inter-war period. In particular, this paper examines the relationship between unemployment and the poor law between 1918 and 1939, in the light of conflicting national and local interests and in the context of one specific locality – the County Borough of Southampton – with a local economy and pattern of unemployment which were in many respects a microcosm of the national picture, incorporating 'staple' port industries experiencing structural, cyclical, casual, and seasonal unemployment, substantial construction, utility, and service sectors, and a widening range of 'new' industries.⁹

I

In November 1920, the area administered by Southampton County Borough Council was roughly doubled, and its population increased from 131,300 to 162,900, by the absorption of three parishes east of the river Itchen. For poor law purposes, however, Bitterne, Itchen, and St Nicholas continued to be administered by the South Stoneham union. While the Southampton union was entirely urban, that of South Stoneham encompassed both agricultural and industrial areas, the latter including both prosperous Eastleigh and the economically less stable Itchen parishes, heavily dependent on the shipbuilding and ship-repairing industries which exhibited especially high levels of unemployment.¹⁰ These distinctions between the two boards of Guardians were amplified by the results of the 1919 elections. In Southampton the Labour Party won twelve of the twenty-six seats and, as the largest organized party, secured the chairmanship of the board.¹¹ In the South Stoneham union, a slim Labour representation from Itchen was dwarfed by a substantial anti-Labour majority.

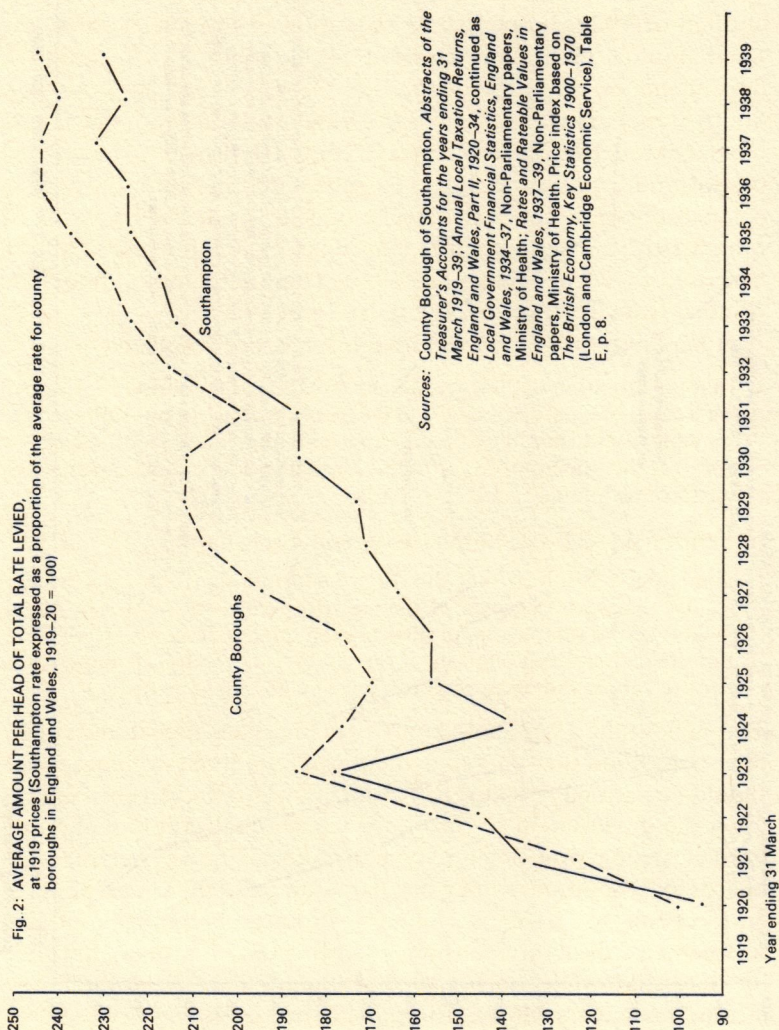
In the months following the Armistice, differences within and between the two boards were masked by the protection afforded to their respective out-relief expenditures through the existence of Out-of-Work Donations. By early 1919, with a thousand dockers on Donations owing to 'deplorable congestion' in the docks prior to the completion of demilitarization of the port, the Southampton employment exchange was paying out over £4000 in a week.¹² For the local Charity Organization Society, Donations were a 'promiscuous distribution of funds', which unsettled working-class feelings, and enabled women 'to walk up and down the High Street arm-in-arm, in threes, pushing other people off the pavements', and which encouraged strikes because the government would provide for the unemployed thus created. The borough council's general purposes committee objected that Donations distorted the labour market. The Southampton branch of the National Association of Discharged Soldiers and Sailors declared that they were a charity no better than the workhouse.¹³ On the other hand, the cessation of Donations brought protest from the Trades Council and from both the Southampton and South Stoneham Guardians, the chairman of the latter declaring the government's action a disgrace in forcing the unemployed onto poor relief.¹⁴ For the Guardians, the effect on relief expenditure appeared a most important distinction between doles and the workhouse.

Fig. 1: AVERAGE AMOUNT PER HEAD OF POOR RATE LEVIED, at 1919 prices (Southampton poor rate expressed as a proportion of the average poor rate for non-metropolitan populous areas in England and Wales*, 1919-20 = 100)



Sources: County Borough of Southampton, *Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts for the years ending 31 March 1919-39*; *Annual Local Taxation Returns, England and Wales, Part II, 1920-34*, continued as *Local Government Financial Statistics, England and Wales, 1934-37*; Non-Parliamentary papers, Ministry of Health, Price index based on *The British Economy, Key Statistics 1900-1970* (London and Cambridge Economic Service), Table E, p. 8.

* The statistics of rateable value used in the construction of this index are those for the average of all county boroughs, as there is no equivalent series available for the Poor Law category of non-metropolitan populous areas.



In December 1920, the Southampton employment exchange manager declared: 'Southampton was the last town to feel the distress of unemployment, but now things were coming to a very hard pass.'¹⁵ The exchange's live register of the unemployed had risen to nearly 4000, and was to peak at 12,600 in July 1921. By the autumn of 1921, despite some reduction in the live register, the Southampton Guardians claimed 6000 unemployed and their dependants on out-relief, with 2000 more in Woolston under the South Stoneham Guardians.¹⁶ On 1 January 1922, poor law unemployment relief was received by 319 per ten thousand of the population of Southampton and by 373 per 10,000 in South Stoneham, compared with a national average of 196. In the half year to 31 March 1922 the Southampton Guardians expenditure (£122,000), had risen by 94 per cent since 1919. The Southampton poor rate climbed from 2s 11½d in 1919 to 5s 7d in 1923.¹⁷

In September 1921, the Southampton board resolved:

That the attention of the government be called to the serious position of the Boards of Guardians owing to the heavy increase of out-relief, due to unemployment; that they be urged to take immediate steps to provide work for the unemployed, or failing this, adequate maintenance allowance from National Funds.¹⁸

In February 1922, the South Stoneham Guardians

unanimously resolved that this Board of Guardians strongly protests against the gross injustice of having to provide out-relief out of the pockets of the ratepayers for able-bodied unemployed who have come into the district from all parts of the country, and requests the government to supply the funds required out of National sources.¹⁹

Throughout the 1920s both boards of Guardians repeatedly voiced their conviction that unemployment was a national problem which should be nationally relieved. This belief was reflected both in calls upon the government to introduce some equalization of the rate burden arising from unemployment, and in the support of both boards for resolutions urging the maintenance of the widest possible entitlement to unemployment insurance benefits, and ex-servicemen's disability pensions.²⁰ In this the Guardians reflected the fact that while only a proportion of their electorate were income-tax payers, all were occupiers of rateable property.

The concern for out-relief costs and the poor rate which motivated the Guardians to press for the acceptance by the Unemployment Insurance Fund of the maximum share of the financial burden of unemployment also contributed to their evident preference for relief works over maintenance allowances. For the Guardians, any

ethical considerations were reinforced by the knowledge that the costs of relief works almost invariably fell to the account of other bodies, preferably the Exchequer but failing that the general borough rate rather than the poor rate.

Admittedly, the Southampton Guardians did initially attempt to give direct substance to their preference, offering in 1919 to initiate the construction of cottage homes for children in response to a Ministry of Health request for work for the demobilized unemployed.²¹ But the capacity of the Guardians to generate work themselves was obviously limited. As the South Stoneham board informed a British Legion deputation in 1924, since the Guardians could only provide inferior work nothing could be done beyond the expression of sympathy.²² Potentially more fruitful as a means of reflecting, and hopefully deflecting, the pressure of the unemployed on the poor law, was the urging of relief works on the borough council. In February 1921, the Southampton Guardians passed the first of a series of resolutions to this effect, culminating in a deputation from the board to the council in the autumn.²³ In September, the South Stoneham Guardians requested Southampton Council, as the local authority responsible for the parishes with the highest unemployment, to provide work in order to relieve the heavy burden on the South Stoneham ratepayers.²⁴

For the influential Labour element on the Southampton board, the advocacy of relief work coincided with an ethical belief in the right to work. It may also have been reinforced by party political considerations in view of the domination of the council by an anti-Labour Independent coalition.²⁵ However, the sharp reduction of Labour influence on the new board elected in 1922 did not diminish the Guardians' advocacy of works. One of the new board's first acts was to urge the mayor to convene a conference to consider relief works of public utility.²⁶ In place of Labour's emphasis on the right to work instead of maintenance, non-Labour Guardians stressed the duty to work in return for maintenance. Such a philosophy underlay the South Stoneham board's work-ticket scheme whereby applicants for out-relief could exchange a ticket supplied by the Guardians for cash in return for work performed for the district councils. However, the scheme foundered on the insistence of the Ministry of Health that, in order not to jeopardize insurance entitlements, the amount of work should not be strictly regulated by the amount of relief, which should be given half in kind – conditions under which it would have been illegal for the district council to operate as an employer.²⁷

In any case, the capacity of the Southampton Corporation to mount substantial works schemes was heavily circumscribed by rising rates and, from mid-1921, by the government's economy campaign.²⁸ Southampton Guardians contrasted 6000 on out-relief with a mere eighty-three men engaged in relief works by December 1921.²⁹ By 1923, the Southampton board appeared to have lost faith in the value of exhortations to relief works at either national or local level. A Trades Council deputation on relief works was refused a hearing on the grounds that the board had done all in its powers to urge the borough council to take action, without success.³⁰

II

If the Southampton and South Stoneham Guardians were united in urging both national acceptance of the financial burden of the maintenance of the unemployed, and relief works in preference to maintenance, in other respects the periodic deputations and resolutions of local pressure groups which accompanied rising unemployment served to crystallize the inherent distinctions within and between the two unions.

In April 1920, despite a deficit for the half-year, the Southampton Guardians added 6d to the out-relief scale to meet the rising cost of living. In September 1921, following the reception of deputations representing the unemployed, both boards adopted more liberal scales of relief up to a maximum of £3 for a large family.³¹ In both unions, the new scales led to the sanctioning of substantial overdrafts – up to £20,000 in South Stoneham and as much as £31,696 in Southampton by the spring of 1922.³² For both boards also, an increase in the poor rate brought mounting protest from organizations representing the ratepayers.

In South Stoneham, parish councils and ratepayers associations from the rural districts protested that while the maximum agricultural labourer's wage was only 32s, 'Why should others receive £3 a week to do nothing.' Though the Guardians initially resisted pressure to reduce the out-relief scale (the chairman deploring the ratepayers lamentable ignorance of the facts), in late January 1922 the board bowed to the ratepayers' demands. The scale was revised downwards from 30s to 25s for a man and wife, with a new family maximum of £2.³³ The revision brought protest from a three hundred strong deputation of the unemployed, which invaded the board room demanding a minimum of £1 per head, played the 'Red

Flag' on the piano, and refused to leave until assurances had been received that all cases would be considered on their merits pending full discussion. However a subsequent board meeting voted in accordance with the resolutions of the ratepayers and parish councils to reaffirm the new scale. A further demonstration by the unemployed was refused a hearing and, after 'various military movements were gone through with more or less precision', was dispersed by police with drawn batons.³⁴

In January 1922, the Southampton Guardians were under equally heavy fire from the Independent majority on the borough council who were sensitive to the fact that the total rate at 17/3*d* exceeded the national average for county boroughs of 16/11*d*. Independent leader Alderman Kimber successfully moved the resolution, 'That this Council protests against the liberal scale of the unemployment allowance now in operation, which will have the effect of considerably increasing the next poor rate, and requests the Guardians forthwith to reduce same.'³⁵ Extravagant unemployment relief, it was claimed, converted charity into a trade, discouraging thrift and work in a manner 'demoralising not only to the beneficiaries, but also to those who have to pay the money.' Maximum out-relief at £3 despite the recent fall in the cost of living, was compared to the average unskilled corporation wage at 52*s*. At first the Guardians voted by a substantial majority to allow the council's resolution to lie on the table. However, in February, to the intense embarrassment of the board, the Ministry of Health refused to extend its sanction for the Southampton Guardians' overdraft. To the combined pressures of borough council and Ministry of Health may be added electoral considerations. Under the poor law's triennial system, the whole board was up for election in April. Despite, or perhaps because of, a proportion of recipients of unemployment relief well in excess of the national average, and with ratepayers clearly outnumbering the unemployed and already exhibiting organized opposition to rating reassessment, the Southampton Guardians found themselves obliged to reduce the scale of out-relief to a family maximum of £2 13*s*, while the chairman of the assessment committee announced his resignation following the receipt of threatening letters.³⁶

The contest for the election of Guardians in Southampton in 1922 was fought by the Independent Party, with the active support of the Middle Classes Union, on an economy platform against alleged socialist extravagance inflicting hardship on the lower-middle and working classes. With only six of the board's former

twenty-six members surviving the election, Labour representation was reduced to three. In South Stoneham, the anti-Labour majority was further strengthened.³⁷ The verdict of the electorate seemed unmistakable.

As its first action the new Southampton board voted to rescind the existing scale in favour of the award to each case of sufficient relief to avert destitution, to a maximum of 43s for a man, wife and six children, to be given largely in kind and entirely on loan. In September, maximum unemployment relief for a family was further reduced to 35s on the pretext of conformity with a Ministry ruling that out-relief should not exceed the lowest wage in the Union.³⁸ In the autumn the district auditor stated:

The Guardians appear to be now making a more adequate attempt to deal with the financial difficulties arising out of their abnormal growth of expenditure . . . The scale of relief which was formerly sufficiently high to make unemployment attractive has now been revised, but will require constant watching to ensure that there remains a sufficient margin between unearned relief and the fluctuating average of wages.³⁹

Strict standards, which were maintained through 1923, predictably evoked a critical response from both the Trades Council and from the local branch of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement.⁴⁰

In South Stoneham too, out-relief was reduced in line with the cost of living and wage reductions, to a maximum of 35s for a family in May 1922. Two-thirds of this was to be in kind, and all on loan. A protest from a deputation of the unemployed that the board were Guardians of the poor, not the rate, met with the reply that the ratepayers were co-operating with the board as guardians of the poor.⁴¹ The spokesman of another deputation cited the Poplar Guardians' defiance of the Ministry of Health, declaring: 'You can't get much payment by results on a margarine diet', and warning of the danger of revolution if credit ceased. One Itchen Guardian claimed 'There is no doubt that starvation is stalking through Itchen'.⁴² Nevertheless the scale was confirmed in its essentials in December 1922. In March 1923, a reduction of £1000 in the out-relief estimates for the coming year contributed to a cut in the South Stoneham rate, despite the proportion of the population on out-relief representing three times the national average. In September, the out-relief estimate was again cut by 25 per cent even though evidence of consumption and the demand for free school meals supported the belief of an Itchen Guardian that children in Woolston were suffering from under-nourishment as a result of unemployment.⁴³

In effecting reductions in the estimates in the face of continuing

high levels of unemployment, the South Stoneham Guardians were counting on a trump card. Owing to the concentration of the severely depressed shipbuilding and ship-repairing industries in the Woolston area, 77 per cent of all out-relief expenditure in the half-year to March 1922 was attributable to the two parishes of Itchen and Bitterne – parishes which contributed only 20 per cent of the income of the union.⁴⁴ In December 1921, the Southampton union was approached with a view to the transfer of these parishes. In the words of a South Stoneham spokesman: 'There is no doubt that this operation is going to be our salvation as far as out-relief is concerned'.⁴⁵

The Itchen parishes were a source of friction, both externally in relation to Southampton's still liberal scale of relief, and internally through the comparison between unemployment relief of up to 35s (based on 75 per cent of an industrial wage) and an average labourer's wage in the agricultural districts of 32s. Therefore it is hardly surprising that enthusiasm for the proposed annexation should be expressed by the ratepayers of areas as diverse as urban Eastleigh and rural Bishopstoke, arguing that as Woolston wages were spent in Southampton in prosperity, so Southampton should bear the burden of distress. The Itchen members of the board, fearing that the loss of rural subsidy would lead to an increased local rate under Southampton, condemned the proposal as 'a sordid policy of devil take the hindmost' – an argument countered by the suggestion that if Itchen wished to remain in an agricultural union it should accept a relief scale based on agricultural wages.⁴⁶

A measure promising an 8*d* rate saving for the remnant of South Stoneham threatened a rate increase of 4–5*d* for Southampton, whose Guardians were hence reluctant to inherit the three parishes incorporating the highest unemployment in the area. Despite support for the annexation from a Ministry of Health enquiry, delaying tactics enabled the Southampton Guardians to defer its implementation from South Stoneham's preference for October 1923, through another winter of unemployment to April 1924.⁴⁷ Perhaps more graphically than any other specific issue, the transfer of the Itchen parishes exemplified the local politics of the poor law, dominated by the rates, and by a ratepaying electorate which not only outnumbered but also out-organized the unemployed.

III

By the date of annexation of the Itchen parishes, unemployment in

the Southampton area was already on the wane. The average live register fell to 14.2 per cent of the insured workforce in 1923 and 11.7 per cent in 1924, reaching its low point at 7.8 per cent in 1928. This gradual, if erratic, fall in the level of unemployment was accompanied in its early stages by the relaxation of unemployment insurance conditions under the first Labour government in 1924. In South Stoneham, unemployed recipients of out-relief declined from 373 per 10,000 on 1 January 1922 to 177 in 1924 and, following annexation, to a mere 3 in 1925. For the enlarged Southampton union, 319 recipients of unemployment relief per 10,000 in 1922 fell to 54 in 1923 and 6 in 1925, reflecting the deterrent effect of economy measures, as well as the factor of reduced unemployment.

With the political composition of the Southampton Guardians now stabilized, the out-relief scale underwent no major change for the remainder of the 1920s, though the periodic tightening of the minutiae of administration evoked castigation from the Trades Council for 'the policy of economy practised by the board at the expense of the poorest and most needy sections of the community'.⁴⁸ 'Careful economy', aided by rising rateable values, enabled a reduction in the poor rate from 5s 7d for 1922-3 to 2s 10¼d for 1923-4, stabilizing at just over 3s in the later 1920s.

If unemployment relief occupied less space on the Southampton Guardians' agenda in the late 1920s, vagrancy gave increasing cause for concern. With seventy-seven casual inmates admitted to the board's institutions on 1 January 1927, the board appointed a special committee on overcrowding. This committee attributed the growth in the number and cost of casuals to the size of the town, the abolition of casual wards elsewhere in the region, and especially to the attraction of labour to Southampton as a result of national publicity for the Southern Railway Company's £13 million docks extension scheme.⁴⁹ The Guardians' solution was to close the centrally located St Mary's casual ward, concentrating casual facilities at the far less conveniently situated West End institution, despite protests from the Trades Council, and from a solitary clerical member of the board opposed to a policy he described as 'not wise, kindly, nor Christian.' The result was an immediate reduction in the weekly number of casual admissions from 305 in both wards to 157 at West End alone a fortnight later.⁵⁰

At the same time, the Southampton Guardians refused to join other local unions in the Hampshire Vagrancy Scheme for the pooling of the county's casual facilities at fifteen-mile intervals.

Despite pressure to comply from the Ministry of Health, it was declared that 'no subscription from the rates should be given in support of such inhuman efforts'. Once again, it was the rate rather than humanity which was at stake. The Guardians feared that, owing to the calculation of contributions to the scheme according to rateable values rather than the number of vagrants relieved, over a fifth of the total costs would fall on Southampton.⁵¹ Cost consciousness was also evident in the Guardians' support for resolutions urging the transfer of vagrancy costs to the Exchequer as unrepresentative of local causes of destitution.

Despite the reduced pressure of local unemployment, the Guardians continued to respond to successive changes in unemployment insurance legislation, pressing for the maintenance of maximum entitlement to benefits. However from mid-1925 the Guardians' continuing support for resolutions urging the acceptance by government of specific areas of responsibility was tempered by a new caution on the wider question of total absolution from the costs of unemployment relief.⁵²

It can hardly be fortuitous that the adoption of a less aggressive stance with regard to the duties of government should coincide with the advent of Neville Chamberlain to the Ministry of Health, heralding the revival of plans for the abolition of the boards of Guardians and the transfer of their responsibilities to the county and county borough councils – a policy invoking the opposition of the National Poor Law Association. In September 1925, the Southampton Guardians appointed an emergency committee to watch events with regard to poor-law reform. They supported resolutions opposing reform without the co-operation of those with administrative experience, arguing that change should come from within the existing system, and stressing the importance of an independent agency directly responsible to the ratepayers. The board even invited Neville Chamberlain himself to inspect their work, without success.⁵³ In 1928, with the sole dissent of its one Labour member, the board sought the support of Southampton's Members of Parliament in their opposition to the Local Government Bill, part I of which incorporated the transfer of the Guardians' functions to Public Assistance Committees of the borough councils. Only in October 1929, did they turn to consideration of the implementation of the Southampton scheme under the Act. The final meeting of the board, on 29 March 1930, was, in the words of the chairman, 'an affecting scene'.⁵⁴

IV

The Local Government Act abolished the boards of Guardians. It did not abolish the poor law. The Poor Law Act of 1930, and the accompanying Relief Regulations Order, reasserted the essential principles of poor law administration under new terminology, with the exception of the formal withdrawal of the workhouse test. In Southampton, although only thirteen (not including the chairman) of the twenty-two councillors and ten co-opted members appointed to the Public Assistance Committee (P.A.C.) had post-war experience of poor law administration, continuity was imparted by the P.A.C.'s inheritance of the Guardians' Relieving Officer and his staff.

Nonetheless, the reorganization of the administrative framework of the poor law did modify the local politics of unemployment in several respects. Henceforth, in the absence of the Guardians' system of triennial election of the whole board, sudden and radical changes in the composition of the responsible body were less likely. The borough council's subjection to annual election of a third of its members resulted in a more continuous, if less marked, form of political pressure. On the other hand, ultimate responsibility was diffused by the dependence of public assistance decisions on ratification by the full council. In addition, the principal local agencies in the continuing dialogue over the respective merits of works and maintenance were now compressed into the committee system of a single body. In party terms, the Labour Group which had won only three Guardians' seats in 1928, received, through the system of proportionate membership of council committees, eight seats on the P.A.C.

Furthermore, the abolition of an independent poor law authority was closely interwoven with major changes in the financial basis of central-local relations.⁵⁵ In 1928, the government announced the total derating of agricultural land and the partial derating of industrial property as a stimulus to the economy. The 1929 Local Government Act introduced, in place of the loss to rateable values from derating, together with the elimination of a number of specific Exchequer grants, a block grant based on local unemployment levels, the number of children, and sparsity of population as well as rateable values per head, to be phased in over fifteen years. Thus, this measure entailed at least a degree of equalization of rate burdens arising from unemployment, albeit as measured by the live register rather than out-relief costs. In addition, though henceforth

local authorities were even more dependent on central grants, the new system also gave a degree of increased freedom in their expenditure.

Initially the implications of these changes were masked by modest levels of unemployment in Southampton by comparison with the impact of the slump elsewhere. The *Hampshire Advertiser* expressed a widely held view when in December 1929 it editorialized: 'Southampton has reason to look ahead with some complacency'.⁵⁶ Not only was the Southampton live register substantially below the national average, but Southampton's unemployment relief rate, at 2 per 10,000 on 1 January 1930, compared very favourably with a national average of 63.

Under the Relief Regulations Order of 1930 the Public Assistance Committee continued to administer out-relief according to much the same principles as their predecessors. The scale adopted in June 1930 awarded unemployment relief 'to persons of good character, who are unemployed in consequence of no fault of their own, who have not refused work which they are capable of undertaking' at 18/6d for a man and wife, rising to a maximum of 35s for a family with more than six children, all on loan.⁵⁷ Mr Percy Ford, in evidence given to the *Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance*, stated: 'The local authority's attitude to the outdoor relief of unemployed persons has long been one of strict administration'.⁵⁸ Though Southampton's out-relief costs were the highest in Hampshire, they compared favourably with other ports and the average for county boroughs in England and Wales. The poor rate, set at 2s 6d in the last year of Guardians' administration, was reduced to 2s 3d for 1930-1.

If the administration of relief closely followed the practice of the Guardians, so too did the P.A.C.'s continuing concern with the number of casuals, attributed by the local press to reports of Southampton's prosperity attracting an influx of casual and unskilled labour.⁵⁹ Like the Guardians, the P.A.C. exhibited a preference for works over unproductive maintenance. In September 1930, the finance sub-committee recommended that, in the event of exceptional distress, the borough council be requested to formulate special schemes of employment, apparently to facilitate the maintenance of a labour test. In November 1932, with the council under pressure from a 6000-strong deputation of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, the P.A.C. inaugurated a programme of works on its own institutions.⁶⁰

Though as reluctant as the Guardians in their last years to lay full

financial responsibility for the able-bodied unemployed on the national Exchequer, the P.A.C. was as closely affected as their predecessors had been by changes in the unemployment insurance regulations. Divergences of local opinion were inevitably strengthened by the financial crisis of 1931 and the resultant constitutional upheaval centering on a reduction in unemployment insurance benefits. The Chamber of Commerce warmly endorsed economy measures on the part of both government and borough council, favouring 'drastic and immediate retrenchment',⁶¹ while Southampton's Labour M.P.s and Trades Council deplored the proposed insurance cuts, and condemned Macdonald's formation of a National Government as 'treachery to the working class'. The Labour Group secretary, Mr J. H. Matthews spelt out the implications for the P.A.C., urging that a balanced budget would lead through business dislocation to an increase in unemployment and hence an addition to the rate burden due to public assistance.⁶²

Local controversy was further heightened by the coincidence of general and municipal elections in the autumn of 1931. The general election resulted in a resounding defeat for Labour, which also lost four council seats. Nevertheless, as early as June 1932 the P.A.C. called for the restoration of the cuts in unemployment insurance benefits, a policy endorsed by the full council only in 1934 shortly before its implementation by the government.⁶³

The stimulus to local controversy injected by the national financial and political crisis was strongly reinforced by its coincidence with a marked escalation in local unemployment. In July 1931 the Public Assistance Officer attributed an increase in out-relief to the depression in shipping.⁶⁴ Average unemployment in Southampton rose from 7500 in 1930 to 11,000 in 1931 and nearly 14,000 in 1932, by which date the local percentage of the workforce unemployed equalled the national average. And if the full impact of the slump on Southampton was delayed, economic recovery was also to lag behind the national experience: Southampton's unemployment fell more slowly than the national average between 1933 and 1935.⁶⁵

At first the repercussions for public assistance were modest. The number per 10,000 on unemployment relief rose only slowly to 4 on 1 January 1931, and 9 in 1932, before leaping to 208 in 1933 and 266 in 1934, against 212 for county boroughs in general. Following expenditure in excess of the estimates for 1932-3 and 1933-4 the poor rates rose from 2s 2d in 1932-3, to 2s 7½d by 1934-5.

In response to a situation very similar to that of 1921, the P.A.C.

drew leaves from the *Guardians'* book, arguing that public assistance expenditure could only be kept down by the initiation of works schemes, with preference given to those close to exhausting their insurance rights. They also asserted that, since Southampton's difficulties were largely due to her status as a port, her unemployment should be a national charge.⁶⁶

Paradoxically, it was the effort of government to absolve itself of some of the unpopularity associated with economy measures through the imposition of new functions upon local authorities, which was to draw the P.A.C. from the periphery to the centre of unemployment policy. In the process, some of the hitherto latent implications of the administrative reforms of 1929 were given new emphasis. In November 1931, public assistance committees were made responsible for the administration, though not the financing, of transitional payments – the retitled extension of standard insurance benefits, newly subject under the National Economy Act to a family needs or means test. While there was evident sense in official reasoning that assistance committees, unlike local employment committees, had experience of means testing through their inherited poor law functions, this measure effectively yoked the local authority to the dual opprobrium associated with both pauperism and the means testing of insurance benefits. At the same time, traditional restraints were neutralized, in that it was the refusal rather than the award of transitional payments which promised to enhance the rate burden through public assistance.

In Southampton, as nationally, Conservatives endorsed the means test as necessary economy, the borough's Conservative M.P. frankly seeing it as a means of reducing the number of insurance claims.⁶⁷ It was bitterly opposed by Labour as an 'unwarrantable, unjust and unnecessary inquisition into the private lives of the people.'⁶⁸ The injection of a new note of party political controversy into the deliberations of the P.A.C. was evident in their refusal by fourteen votes to seven to endorse a resolution opposing the means testing of transitional payments.⁶⁹

Initially, the divisive implications of means testing were partially defused by the adoption of a scale closer to insurance benefits than to public assistance. At 23s 3d for two adults, rising to a family maximum of £1 19s 3d, Southampton's transitional scale was claimed to be more generous than that of all but one other borough.⁷⁰ The Labour Group was also able to congratulate itself on the relative liberality with which the scale was applied. During the first twenty months, 71 per cent of transitional applications were

allowed in Southampton at the maximum rate, against a national average of 51 per cent. Only 6 per cent were refused any payment, compared with 18 per cent nationally.⁷¹ However, the division between administrative responsibility and financial liability for the transitional category was an inevitable source of friction between central and local authorities. In April 1932, the P.A.C. was informed that the Minister of Health was 'unable to contemplate the continuance' of the Southampton committee's failure in its duty under the Unemployment Insurance (National Economy) (Number Two) Order to consider transitional applicants on the same terms as those for public assistance. In particular,

In a large number of cases, no evidence can be found that any regard has been paid to substantial household incomings available for the support of the applicant . . . and the Minister cannot believe that in numerous cases in which transitional payments have been determined, an application from persons in similar circumstances for public assistance would have been entertained.⁷²

Not surprisingly, the P.A.C. was reluctant to accept the political implications of reducing those hitherto in receipt of full insurance benefits to the economic status of paupers. A warning was sounded by a Trades Council conference in May demanding resistance to the National Government's efforts to bring the unemployed 'onto the rates and into pauperism and despair'.⁷³ The Committee unanimously replied that it was carrying out a very difficult and arduous task in a fair and reasonable spirit, materially handicapped by the absence of detailed instructions from the Ministry, and overwhelmed by 5973 new and 10,907 re-applications in five months. The chairman, Alderman Dunsford, believed this distasteful task should properly be performed by a special branch of the Ministry of Labour.

In June the Ministry of Health informed the P.A.C. that:

While (the Minister) would regret that any necessity should arise for his direct intervention he will have no alternative but to have recourse to the powers conferred upon him . . . unless your Council forthwith take such steps as are necessary to bring their administration into conformity with the law.⁷⁴

This threat to impose a commissioner directly responsible to the Ministry prompted a conference between Independent leaders and Conservative M.P. William Craven-Ellis. Of the available options, the local political leaders rejected that of raising the public assistance scale to meet the present transitional scale at an additional rate cost of £8000 a year. Craven-Ellis was concerned that the

imposition of a commissioner would reduce the status of Southampton. However, he also feared that with the reduction of transitional payments to the public assistance scale, 'we shall be in the very position which Labour during the last election said local authorities would find themselves in'.⁷⁵

The solution was a compromise scale, below the current level of transitional payments, but still somewhat better than public assistance. In proposing this scale Alderman Dunsford argued: 'I have no sympathy with the Act, but it is the law and we must carry out the law'. Labour leader Councillor Lewis, under pressure from the Unemployed Workers' Movement to bring the unemployed onto the streets, and from the Trades Council urging the withdrawal of the Labour Group from the P.A.C., responded by declaring: 'We have crawled enough to the Ministry . . . if we are prepared to cave in any more we might just as well let them do the dirty work themselves'.⁷⁶

Despite the endorsement of the compromise scale on a strict party vote, it was firmly rejected by the Ministry. Given a month to put its house in order, the P.A.C. finally voted on the basis of a draft prepared with the unofficial assistance of the local Ministry inspector, to merge the transitional and public assistance scales at 18s for two adults and a family maximum of £1 17s 6d.⁷⁷ At last the Ministry noted with satisfaction the steps taken. Craven-Ellis stated: 'I am very pleased that this matter is now on an acceptable basis, although the scale and its formula is not all that I should desire'. Predictable protest ensued from the Trades Council and Labour Party, the latter pointing to £2000 a week lost to local tradesmen as a result of the economies.⁷⁸ However the P.A.C. had avoided the fate later to befall Rotherham and County Durham through the imposition of special commissioners.⁷⁹

Surrender on this issue, while it accentuated local controversy, did not eliminate conflict with the Ministry. The autumn of 1932 brought a more intense crop of petitions and deputations than at any time since the early 1920s, focusing on the harsh administration of the means test. In an effort to meet at least one of the demands in a ten-point petition presented on the eve of municipal elections by a 6000-strong National Unemployed Workers' Movement demonstration, the P.A.C. agreed to extend its traditional winter coal allowance for public assistance recipients to transitional claimants as well.⁸⁰ However, the Ministry of Health insisted that the cost – £1378 – must be borne entirely on the rates. Dire hints were also given that the district auditor might impose a surcharge for

relief in excess of that necessary to relieve destitution, and that the allowance could lead to the disqualification of transitionals from membership of local authorities as recipients of public assistance.⁸¹

Just prior to the elections, the P.A.C. voted against a Labour proposal to raise the transitional scale, preferring to await the announcement of government proposals.⁸² While Labour won only one new seat in the municipal elections, they gained for the first time a majority of the votes cast, seen by Councillor Lewis as a judgement on the means test. By November, the P.A.C. had changed its mind. Despite already overspending by £11,000 on the out-relief estimate, but with 270,000 tons of shipping idle at Southampton, and part-time working in force at the tobacco and cable works, the borough council endorsed a unanimous P.A.C. resolution to raise the transitional scale once again to a maximum of £1 19s 3d, at an additional cost to the rates of £1450 a year. At the same time the committee recommended 7500 hours of painting work for transitional claimants and those close to exhausting their insurance entitlements.⁸³

A deputation to the Ministry, claiming to represent the opinion of all classes of person in Southampton, met with resistance on the grounds that the new scale would differentiate unfairly between those above and below the £250-a-year income limit for eligibility for the insurance scheme.⁸⁴ In December, with the live register at a record 15,500, the P.A.C. voted to adopt a modification of the new transitional scale and an upward revision of the public assistance scale to correspond, a measure much to the gratification of the Labour group whose strategy had recently been condemned by the Trades Council. The revision received grudging acceptance from the Ministry.⁸⁵ Thus the divorce between political and financial accountability for transitional payments acted as the lever for a substantial adjustment in local relief policy.

By late October 1933, with out-relief for a week at a record £1065, the P.A.C. noted a new cause of high expenditure in the rejection by the employment exchange of more than fifty applicants for transitional insurance payments on the grounds that they were not normally seeking insurable occupation. The number of disallowances continued to rise, reaching 194 in a week in November 1934, consisting largely of casual and seasonal workers. The cost in public assistance was equivalent to £9000 per year. The P.A.C. passed a resolution of protest to the Minister of Health and Local Employment Committee condemning disallowances resulting in

the rates of the town having to bear a charge which should be borne by the Ministry itself.⁸⁶

In July 1934, tensions between local and national authorities were lessened by the restoration of cuts in both standard insurance benefits and transitional payments. Reduced pressure on the rates enabled more generous out-relief payments on a case-by-case basis.⁸⁷ As a result, relations between the P.A.C. and local pressure groups were also relaxed.

V

By mid-1934 the P.A.C. seemed in sight of liberation from the embarrassment of transitional payments, and from that part of the costs of public assistance attributable to unemployment relief, through the impending transfer of these responsibilities to the newly-announced Unemployment Assistance Board (U.A.B.). This body, due to commence operations in January 1935, was to cater for all the able-bodied unemployed outside standard insurance entitlements, applying uniform national scales and principles of assistance with allowances of unlimited duration, albeit still subject to a means test. For the government, it was a further step in the persistent effort to maintain strict financial control whilst deflecting the criticism and political pressure which inevitably accompanied administrative responsibility.⁸⁸ In the process the Unemployment Assistance Board equally promised to free local authorities from these same pressures. The P.A.C. were also promised a degree of financial relief through the limitation of their financial contribution to the Board to 60 per cent of the former cost of relieving the able-bodied unemployed and their dependants.

In Southampton, Conservative M.P. William Craven-Ellis greeted these proposals as a great step forward towards the humane and efficient treatment of the unemployment problem. However, former Labour M.P. Ralph Morley opposed the scheme as an attempt to take poverty out of politics, maintaining a means test divorced from both the House of Commons and the local authorities. The Chamber of Commerce, economy conscious as ever, was alarmed at the prospect of new civil service appointments.⁸⁹ On the eve of the U.A.B.'s acceptance of the first of the categories for which it was intended to cater – those over 18 and in occupations covered by unemployment insurance – the P.A.C.'s only criticism was a motion of protest, and a request for reimbursement, on account of the delay in the transfer of responsibility for the remainder of the able-bodied to March 1935.⁹⁰

Between November 1931 and December 1934 the Southampton P.A.C. had assessed 102,089 transitional cases, 18,286 of them original applications. Though Alderman Lewis declared that this had been 'one of the most interesting (periods) of his public life', taking satisfaction from the fact that Southampton had dealt with cases on a better scale than others, few can have mourned the passing of this responsibility.⁹¹

Yet no sooner had the U.A.B. come into operation than its scales of relief, at 24s for a man and wife (assuming 7s 6d rent), provoked a storm of protest, in Southampton as in the nation at large. Councillor Lewis condemned the government's colossal blundering over the Board which would lead to the breakdown of family life through the means test. William Craven-Ellis declared that he had voted for the Act believing it would improve the lot of the unemployed, but had been let down by the Ministry of Labour.⁹² The P.A.C. lent its support to a resolution critical of hardship inflicted by the U.A.B.'s scale.⁹³ The government's introduction of a Standstill Order, mitigating the application of the scale for former recipients of transitional payments, and deferring the transfer of the remaining able-bodied unemployed, brought Labour pressure to bear on the P.A.C. to suspend the use of a labour test for the duration of the standstill, and on the council to adopt work schemes to enable men to requalify for insurance benefits, thus protecting the rates.⁹⁴ In June 1936, the Southampton Labour Party was attacking 'the government's callous treatment of the unemployed and its failure to implement its undertaking . . . to make the maintenance of the able-bodied unemployed a national charge'.⁹⁵ For the P.A.C., the situation was eased by the receipt of a payment in lieu.⁹⁶

During 1935-6 the Southampton and Southampton Docks employment exchanges dealt with 3462 recipients of unemployment insurance benefits, 756 cases under unemployment assistance regulations, and 257 cases under transitional payments regulations.⁹⁷ Only in April 1937 were the U.A.B.'s responsibilities extended to cover all able-bodied unemployed insured under widows and orphans and old age pension acts. The failure of this definition to embrace the entirety of the able-bodied unemployed hitherto on public assistance was reflected in P.A.C. support for a resolution critical of the government's failure to fulfil its promises.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, by 1937 local agencies were at last effectively relieved of the real burden of responsibility for the outdoor relief of the unemployed. Furthermore, relief had come just in time to absolve the P.A.C. from increased expenditure in the downswing in the trade

cycle in 1938, by the end of which year there were 1704 on unemployment assistance in Southampton.⁹⁹

Alongside release from the millstone of transitional payments in 1935, the pressure on the P.A.C. was mitigated by the decline in both the live register and the numbers on public assistance. From an average of 14,000 on the local live register for 1932, Southampton's unemployment fell, steadily rather than spectacularly, to 5000 in 1937. Though Southampton's unemployment percentage was probably above the national average until 1936 thereafter it was clearly below. The number per 10,000 of the population on unemployment relief fell from its peak at 266 in 1934 to 49 in 1935, and a mere 8 in 1938. The poor rate, which had reached its maximum at 2s 7½d in 1934–5 was reduced only marginally in 1935–6–7, but more substantially to 2s 1¾d in 1938, though it was to rise again to 2s 7d in 1939. The ability of the P.A.C. to contain the impact of unemployment on the rates more effectively than the Guardians had done in the early 1920s contributed towards the stabilization of the general rate at 10s 10d from 1930–4, and even a reduction to 10s 3d in 1936–7, against an average for county boroughs of 13s 6d.

The neutralization of pressure on the rates coincided with an easing of local political tensions consequent on a change in the leadership of the Independents, appropriately renamed the Ratepayers Party in 1934.¹⁰⁰ The transfer of the principal cause of controversy – the maintenance of the unemployed – from the local arena to the national through the U.A.B., combined with the elimination of financial and political pressure on the borough council, facilitated the re-emergence of a bipartisan spirit on the P.A.C. In May 1936, Ratepayer and Labour members of the Committee jointly moved an increase in the scale of out-relief to 26s for a man and wife and a family maximum of 42s 6d.¹⁰¹

VI

The formation of the U.A.B. was an attempt to cut the Gordian knot of unemployment politics – the culmination of a series of expedients designed to free unemployment policy from political pressures at both national and local levels. In the process, it provided a means of reconciling forces which had rendered the maintenance of the unemployed a matter for acrimonious conflict between local and national authorities. Whatever the compromises enforced at national level, and despite the temporary re-invigoration of controversy by the Board's initial scale of benefits, by 1937 the U.A.B.

had largely succeeded in achieving at least one of its objectives. The maintenance of the unemployed had been removed from the centre to the circumference of local affairs.

In the long run this was inevitable. Indeed it was inherent in the experimental measures evolved in the decade before the First World War. Unemployment insurance, labour exchanges, and the Development Act all betokened a shift in the centre of gravity with regard to unemployment policy from local to national responsibilities.¹⁰² While in the short term the onset of mass unemployment in the post-war slump made the elimination of local discretion impractical, in the longer term the endurance of high levels of unemployment made it inevitable. Nevertheless, the persistence and strength of the local dimension for most of the inter-war period, and its concentration on the institutions of a poor law itself ripe for demolition, was a major cause of friction.

By the inter-war years, at least in the context of Southampton's unemployment problem, the poor law was more influential as a political seismograph than as an institution of social administration. In numerical terms, the poor law was no longer of more than incidental or residual importance in the maintenance of the unemployed. Nor were the unemployed generally of more than marginal significance in relation to the wider responsibilities of boards of Guardians or Public Assistance Committee.

For the vast majority of Southampton's employed, the unemployment insurance system, even at its most stringent, was the basic source of security. Between 1921 and 1931, claimants to insurance benefits formed between 83 and 91 per cent of the local live register.¹⁰³ At the worst point between 1922 and 1939, there were perhaps 8000 in receipt of out-relief on account of unemployment in the borough of Southampton. Most of these were dependants. Only in three years was the proportion above 1 per cent of the population, and in ten years it fell below 1 in 10,000. Furthermore, in no year did unemployment relief account for more than 50 per cent of all local recipients of poor relief or public assistance, whether institutional or domiciliary. On average between 1922 and 1939 those on unemployment relief constituted only 12.3 per cent of all those on relief of all kinds.¹⁰⁴

Despite the obsession of local institutions and politicians with the impact of unemployment on the rates, unemployment relief was at no point the preponderant influence on either poor law expenditure in Southampton, or the general borough rate. In no year was unemployment relief responsible for more than 27 per cent of local poor

law expenditure, while the poor rate averaged 23.5 per cent of the general borough rate – a proportion actually slightly below that for 1913–14.

The controversial nature of unemployment relief arose less from the absolute burden imposed on local finances, than from its volatility in relation to other elements of expenditure. Unemployment relief as a proportion of total poor law expenditure varied in the early 1920s from 5.1 per cent for September 1922 to March 1923, to 27.2 per cent for September 1921 to March 1922. In the early 1930s the variation was from 1.5 per cent for 1931–2 to 11.4 per cent for 1934–5. Similarly, the poor rate ranged from 20 per cent of the general borough rate in 1932–3 to as much as 36 per cent in 1922–3 – a variation substantially greater than that for the borough rate itself or, for instance, the education rate.¹⁰⁵ Thus it was with some justification that the Southampton rate-makers and ratepayers saw expenditure on unemployment relief as a highly problematic factor in their ability to control the overall rate. Such assumptions were derived with particular force from the experience of the two peaks in local unemployment in 1921–2 and again in 1933–4. At both points, unemployment relief leapt alarmingly from its generally modest level by national standards to proportions above the average even for populous areas. Both the severity of the problem, and its effect on local politics, were deepened by the delayed impact of the trade cycle in Southampton, which, especially in the 1930s, resulted in a local unemployment peak which coincided with the first signs of national recovery and with the constraints imposed on local policy by a national economy campaign. The heavy deficits incurred during these two brief periods by Guardians and Public Assistance Committee respectively, with the consequent enforcement of increases in poor and general rates, coloured local political assumptions throughout the inter-war period.

Nor were similarities between the crises of the early 1920s and 1930s confined to numerical and financial experience. On both occasions the poor law authorities were a natural focus for local pressure groups. The extent of the financial predicament in 1921–2, and to a lesser extent in 1933–4, can be partially attributed to the short-term success of organizations representing the unemployed in securing relatively liberal relief scales. Their longer-term inability to withstand the counter-pressure of the ratepayers partially accounts for the resolution in the form of stringent economy. As the only local agency with substantial discretion in the award of maintenance, it was inevitable that the poor law authorities should be

subject to such demands. It was entirely rational on their part to strive consistently to deflect these financial and political pressures, arising out of a phenomenon over which they could exert only minimal control, by seeking to shift the burden, preferably to the national government and taxpayer through the insurance system, or failing that to the borough council through relief works, or even from one poor rate to another (as in the Itchen annexation).

These preferences were for the most part shared by all political persuasions. Thus in the 1920s the local interests of Independent Guardians gave them common cause with some of Labour's national policies, favouring relief works and liberal insurance entitlements, while the rate implications of the South Stoneham annexation led to Itchen Independents adopting a stance in some respects similar to that of the disqualified Woolston Unemployed Workers' Committee candidates in whose place they sat. In the early 1930s, when transitional payments divorced liberality from the protection of the rates, Independents proved no less willing than had Labour between 1920 and 1922 to espouse the interests of the unemployed. Bi-partisan policies in general only broke down when it became obligatory to opt between the twin responsibilities of guardianship of the poor and of the rates. Labour, understandably in view of their political constituents, were more reluctant than Independents to shift the burden from the ratepayers to the unemployed themselves. In a borough such as Southampton, where the unemployed were always a distinct minority of the electorate, it was no doubt inevitable that the interests of the ratepayers should ultimately predominate. This was all the more probable in view of the coincidence of the ratepayer perspective with the prevailing assumptions of national government for the bulk of the period. Hence Labour, too, found it opportune to couch its policies as far as possible in terms of the ratepayers' interests.

The conflicting demands of local pressure groups and the clash between local and national authorities account not only for the fundamental consistency in the response of Guardians and P.A.C. alike to unemployment relief, but also for some of the distinctions. The financial pressures on the Southampton poor law were most evident in 1921-2. By the early 1930s they had been mitigated by the expansion of the insurance system, the implications of the Local Government Act, and falling prices.

If financial pressures were most acute for the Guardians, the political dimension was more complex for the P.A.C. The latter was under pressure not merely from conflicting local interests with

regard to public assistance, but more critically through responsibility for transitional payments, and was presented with the task of reconciling the interests of the local unemployed with the far less flexible demands of the Ministry of Health. In hindsight, such a divorce between financial liability and political accountability could hardly be more than a temporary expedient. It proved, however, to be a traumatic one, bringing about by the mid-1930s not only the concession of the demands of the unemployed to the interests of the ratepayers, as in the 1920s, but also the ceding of the remnants of local autonomy in unemployment relief to national authority. As the rating system was both the guarantee and the price of local autonomy, so the element of discretion available to both the Guardians and their successors proved both their strength and their weakness. Once the post-war threat of disorder had been contained, it was no doubt inevitable that local discretion in the maintenance of the unemployed would ultimately be sacrificed to the twin objectives of national uniformity and economy. By 1935, that element of discretion clearly represented too high a price, in both political and economic terms, for national government and local authorities alike. Perhaps the most striking contrast between the last days of the Guardians and the attitudes of the P.A.C. lay in the willingness with which the latter yielded its responsibilities for the able-bodied. By the late 1930s, Southampton, like other local authorities, had been reduced from the status of participant to that of attendant in the formulation and implementation of unemployment policy.

Notes

¹ The major exception concerns the controversy aroused by the actions of the Poplar Guardians in the early 1920s, discussed in B. Keith-Lucas, 'Poplarism', *Public Law* (spring, 1962), pp. 52-80; G. W. Jones, 'Herbert Morrison and Poplarism', *Public Law* (spring, 1973), pp. 11-31; P. A. Ryan, "'Poplarism" 1894-1930', in *The Origins of British Social Policy*, ed. P. Thane (1978), pp. 56-83. While the Poplar affair was in certain respects unique, it was also, as this article seeks in part to show, reflective of pressures and responses of wider relevance. For a wider coverage of poor law policy, see B. B. Gilbert, *British Social Policy, 1914-1939* (1970), especially pp. 203-35. The most detailed treatment of the general history of the poor law in this period remains S. and B. Webb, *English Poor Law History: Part II: The Last Hundred Years: Vol. 2* (1929), pp. 811-1024.

² In many unions this measure significantly altered the balance between the Guardians, their pauper beneficiaries, and their electorate. See A. Deacon and E. Briggs, 'Local Democracy and Central Policy: The Issue of Pauper Votes in the 1920s', *Policy and Politics* II (4), (1974), pp. 347-64. Recipients of poor relief, however, remained ineligible for election to boards of Guardians. In Southampton three candidates were disqualified on this account in 1922.

³ *Report on the Functions of Poor Law Authorities in England and Wales*, P(arliamentary) P(apers), 1917-18, xviii, Cd. 8917.

⁴ The National Assistance Act, 1948, opened with the declaration: 'The existing

Poor Law shall cease to have effect.' See J. S. Morgan, 'The Break-Up of the Poor Law in Britain, 1907-47: An Historical Footnote', *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* xiv (2) (1948), pp. 209-19.

⁵ See K. B. Smellie, *A History of Local Government* (4th edn 1968), pp. 108-11, arguing the emergence of a more 'imperative mood' on the part of central government in relation to local autonomy after 1914. C.f. the description of this period as 'The Years of Hesitant Intervention', in B. Keith-Lucas and P. G. Richards, *A History of Local Government in the Twentieth Century* (1978), pp. 159-66.

⁶ Even after the incorporation of the munitions trades in 1916, unemployment insurance covered only approximately a quarter of the workforce. The 1920 Unemployment Insurance Act encompassed almost all manual workers and others earning less than £250 p.a., the principal exceptions being agricultural workers and domestic servants. For an account of the complexities of the administration of unemployment insurance see E. M. Burns, *British Unemployment Programs, 1920-38* (Washington 1941); A. Deacon, *In Search of the Scrounger* (1976); A. Deacon, 'Concession and Coercion: The Politics of Unemployment Insurance in the 1920s', in *Essays in Labour History*, vol. III, ed. A. Briggs and J. Saville (1977), pp. 9-35.

⁷ Gilbert, *Social Policy*, pp. 54-97.

⁸ E. P. Hennock, 'Finance and Politics in Urban Local Government in England, 1835-1900', *Historical Journal*, vi (2), (1963), pp. 224-5. See also N. McCord, 'Ratepayers and Social Policy', in *The Origins of British Social Policy*, ed. P. Thane (1978), pp. 21-35.

⁹ See A. J. Vinson, 'Unemployment Relief Works in Southampton Between the Wars - a Case Study', in *Exeter Papers in Economic and Social History*, xii (1979). A useful contemporary source is P. Ford, *Work and Wealth in a Modern Port* (1934). See appendix for details of local unemployment.

¹⁰ E.g. *H(ampshire) I(ndependent)*, 17 Feb. 1922.

¹¹ C.f. Webb, *Poor Law History*, II (2), p. 847.

¹² *H.I.*, 8 Feb. 1919, 3 May 1919, 10 Jan. 1920.

¹³ *H.I.*, 20 Dec. 1919, 24 May 1919, 18 June 1919.

¹⁴ *H.I.*, 6 Dec. 1919

¹⁵ *H.I.*, 18 Dec. 1920.

¹⁶ *H(ampshire) A(dvertiser)*, 26 Nov. 1921. S(outhampton) C(ivic) R(ecord) O(ffice), D/AGF 1/36; (Minute Book of) S(outh) S(toneham) B(oard of) G(uardians), (meeting on) 4 Oct. 1921.

¹⁷ For statistical series and their sources, see appendix. The rateable value of the town had declined since 1913 due to the lack of new property. *H.I.*, 6 Sept. 1919.

¹⁸ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/18: (Minute Book of) S(outhampton) B(oard) of G(uardians), (meeting on) 8 Sept. 1921.

¹⁹ S.C.R.O. D/AGF 1/37: S.S.B.G., 21 Feb. 1922. The Guardians were particularly aggrieved by the closure of the government rolling mills, and by unemployment in shipbuilding, both of which industries had been stimulated by war demand.

²⁰ Between them, the Guardians of Southampton and South Stoneham expressed their opposition to the institution of statutory gaps between periods of entitlement to insurance benefits, the extension of the 'waiting period' preceding initial payment of benefit, the withdrawal of insurance benefits from those over sixty-five, and the application of the 'continuity rule' regarding successive periods of short-term unemployment, as well as local delays in the payment of benefit and its refusal to those unemployed as a result of industrial disputes. Especial concern was devoted to regulations affecting the insurance entitlements of casual labourers, who formed a high proportion of local unemployment as a result of Southampton's dependence on the port industries. See S.C.R.O., S.B.G., and S.S.B.G., *passim*, C.f. Webb, *Poor Law History*, II (2), p. 968, and the *Report of the Departmental Committee on Unemployment Insurance*, vol. 1, pp 42-3, paragraphs 78-9, Non-Parliamentary papers, Ministry of Labour, 1927, for evidence that in this respect the Southampton Guardians were typical of poor law authorities in general.

²¹ S.C.R.O. SC/AG 1/3/14: S.B.G., 20 Feb. 1919. The same scheme was, however, still under discussion two years later. Only painters, whose local union branch was particularly effective at lobbying, appear to have benefited significantly from work generated on poor law properties.

²² H.A., 12 Jan. 1924.

²³ H.A., 18 Feb. 1921, 23 July 1921, 26 Nov. 1921.

²⁴ S.C.R.O., D/AGF1/36: S.S.B.G., 15 Sept. 1921.

²⁵ In 1920, a group of councillors opposed to Labour 'extremism' launched, in consultation with the Southampton Ratepayers Association, a 'non-party platform' of which economical administration and rate reduction were the central planks. A year later the Independents, now comprising all members of the council outside the Labour Group, issued a manifesto claiming to have achieved 'more united and earnest work in the interests of the ratepayers'. *H.I.*, 6 Mar. 1920; *H.A.*, 24 Sept. 1921. The nineteenth-century origins of economy-orientated ratepayer parties are discussed in Hennock, *Hist. J.*, vi (2), p. 217. For comparison with the Poplar Municipal Alliance, see sources listed in n. 1.

²⁶ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/19: S.B.G., 27 April 1922.

²⁷ S.C.R.O., D/AGF1/37: S.S.B.G., 11 July 1922; *H.I.*, 17 Nov. 1922. A similar scheme advocated by the Southampton Guardians foundered over trade union opposition to, and Ministry of Health insistence on, payment below union rates. *H.I.*, 23 June 1922. In any case, work-ticket schemes had more in common with test work than with genuine relief works, the South Stoneham Relieving Officer expressing the conviction that 'if more test work could be found there would be, I think, greater determination in finding employment elsewhere'. S.C.R.O., D/AGF 1/37: S.S.B.G., 17 Apr. 1923. At one point thirty-six roads were being hand-picked for stones as a way of creating test work. *H.I.*, 20 April 1923. For a comparison with relief-work schemes under poor law auspices in Birmingham and Salford, see Webb, *Poor Law History*, II (2), pp. 874-6 and 885.

²⁸ For the impact of the 'Geddes Axe', emanating from the *Report of the Committee on National Expenditure* in December 1921, see Vinson, *Exeter Papers in Economic and Social History*, xii.

²⁹ H.A., 24 Dec. 1921.

³⁰ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/20: S.B.G. 20 Dec. 1923. A similar response was given to the next Unemployment Grants Committee circular.

³¹ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/17: S.B.G., 15 April 1920; SC/AG1/3/18, 8 Sept. 1921; D/AGF1/37, S.S.B.G., 15 Sept. 1921. For details of relief scales, see appendix.

³² *H.I.*, 20 Jan. 1922; S.C.R.O., D/AGF1/37; S.S.B.G., 28 Mar. 1922.

³³ S.C.R.O., D/AGF1/37: S.S.B.G., 16 Jan. 1922, 21 Feb. 1922; *H.A.*, 5 Nov. 1921.

³⁴ *H.I.*, 17 Feb. 1922, 24 Feb. 1922, 17 Mar. 1922. A request from the Guardians to the chief constable for a ban on deputations was rejected on grounds both of practicality and expediency. *H.I.*, 14 April 1922.

³⁵ *H.I.*, 20 Jan. 1922; C(ounty) B(orough of) S(outhampton), *Minutes (of Proceedings) of Council and Committees, 1921-2*, p. 188. The Southampton and South Stoneham scales may be compared with maximum unemployment insurance benefit at 23/4d. The 'Mond' scale issued in 1922 by the Ministry of Health in response to the Poplar affair aimed at imposing a family maximum of 54s plus 2s fuel allowance (less by 10s than the standard rate of wages for the London manual labourer), with 15s for a single man and 25s for a married couple. For relief scales elsewhere, see Webb, *Poor Law History*, II (2), pp. 855-62.

³⁶ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/18: S.B.G., 19 Jan. 1922, 16 Feb. 1922. The power to grant or reject applications for sanction to overdraw would appear to have been the Ministry of Health's most effective weapon in disciplining extravagant Guardians in the early 1920s. This power was, of course, only effective against unions with high enough employment and low enough rateable values to necessitate an overdraft. The determination of the Poplar, and later the West Ham, Guardians to withstand

pressure from the Ministry, by comparison to Southampton's speedy capitulation, suggests the importance of sympathetic local authorities as a second line of defence, and of confidence in electoral support, on neither of which could the radical element on the Southampton board count.

³⁷ *H.I.*, 17 Mar. 1922, 7 Apr. 1922. The result no doubt reflected a combination of Labour voters' disillusion at the reduction of the scale and ratepayer indignation at the board's former liberality, still evident in the decision at its final meeting to award relief to those involved in a lockout in the engineering and shipbuilding industries.

³⁸ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/19: S.B.G., 27 Apr. 1922, 31 Aug. 1922. An amendment urging the maintenance of a state of health compatible with fitness to resume work was negated.

³⁹ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/19: S.B.G., 26 Oct. 1922.

⁴⁰ *H.I.*, 12 May 1922. A proposal to further reduce the family maximum to 32s was, however, rejected by a substantial majority.

⁴¹ S.C.R.O., D/AGF1/37: S.S.B.G., 16 May 1922. Average weekly incomes in the docks had fallen from a peak of 55s 6d to 39s 6d as a result of wage cuts. *H.I.*, 12 May 1922.

⁴² *H.I.*, 16 June 1922, 14 July 1922.

⁴³ *H.I.*, 16 Mar. 1923, 30 Mar. 1923; *H.A.*, 19 Sept. 1923, 24 Nov. 1923.

⁴⁴ Calculated from figures in S.C.R.O., D/AGF 1/36: S.S.B.G., 11 Apr. 1922.

⁴⁵ S.C.R.O., D/AGF 1/36: S.S.B.G., 22 Nov. 1921; SC/AG 1/3/18; S.B.G., 19 Jan. 1922; *H.I.*, 11 Aug. 1922. St Nicholas, which though less unbalanced presented a special problem owing to the high level of rents, was added at the insistence of the Southampton Guardians, who were prepared to consider only a transfer which equated their jurisdiction with the boundaries of the borough. The absorption of the Itchen parishes by the Southampton union had been rejected by South Stoneham at the time of the extension of the borough in 1920.

⁴⁶ *H.I.*, 19 May 1922, 16 June 1922, 11 Aug. 1922, 15 June 1923.

⁴⁷ *H.I.*, 25 May 1923, 4 Aug. 1923, 1 Sept. 1923.

⁴⁸ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/22: S.B.G. 19 Nov. 1925. For instance, a 5 per cent commission was offered to relieving officers for the collection of repayments of relief on loan. The only exceptions to stringent administration were the exclusion of ex-servicemen's disability pensions from income to be set against the scale, and the exemption of 50 per cent of casual earnings in order to encourage the acceptance of casual work. From 1926, the Ministry of Health adopted an increasingly stringent approach to local poor law administration. Webb, *Poor Law History*, II (2), pp. 913-17.

⁴⁹ *S(outhern) D(aily) E(cho)*, 22 Oct. 1926, 19 Nov. 1926; S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/23: S.B.G., 20 Jan. 1927. For the national increase in vagrancy, see Webb, *Poor Law History*, II (2), pp. 945-62.

⁵⁰ *S.D.E.*, 21 Apr. 1927, 6 May 1927. The board also vetoed a proposal to improve the casual diet. *H.A.*, 28 July 1928. By 1928, however, the number of casuals was once again on the increase.

⁵¹ S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/24: S.B.G., 5 May 1927; *H.A.*, 11 Feb. 1928.

⁵² In February 1928, the Guardians supported the first part of a resolution from the Norwich union opposing the effects of the 1927 Unemployment Insurance Bill in adding to poor law costs, but declined to endorse the resolution's second part, which urged the government to adopt the financial burden of unemployment in full. S.C.R.O., SC/AG1/3/24: S.B.G., 9 Feb. 1928.

⁵³ S.C.R.O., SC/AG 1/3/22: S.B.G. 3 Sept. 1925; SC/AG 1/3/23: S.B.G. 21 Oct. 1926, 10 Mar. 1927; SC/AG 1/3/24: S.B.G. 2 June 1927. Chamberlain's campaign for the abolition of the Guardians is discussed in Gilbert, *Social Policy*, pp. 218-35; and Webb, *Poor Law History*, II (2), pp. 985-1024.

⁵⁴ *H.A.*, 29 June 1929, 29 Mar. 1930; S.C.R.O., SC/AG 1/3/25, S.B.G., 18 Oct. 1928, 13 Dec. 1928; SC/AG 1/3/26, S.B.G., 24 Oct. 1929

⁵⁵ See Keith-Lucas and Richards, *Local Government*, pp. 139-40, 143-5;

Smellie, *History of Local Government*, pp. 130–1. In Southampton, the loss to rateable values was £92,608. The borough treasurer stated that the block grant system would result in a purely temporary gain. *H.A.*, 23 Mar. 1929, 11 May 1929.

⁵⁶ *H.A.*, 18 Dec. 1929.

⁵⁷ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1929–30*, p. 921. These amounts were identical to the scale inherited from the Guardians.

⁵⁸ *Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance*, Evidence, Appendix III, pp. 180–89, Non-Parliamentary Papers, Ministry of Labour, 1931–2. Only 3 per cent of a sample of those disallowed insurance benefit in 1930 received poor relief in Southampton, compared with 17 per cent as the average in a survey of eight industrial areas, and as many as 33 per cent in Liverpool. Ford attributes these figures to a combination of the relatively recent impact of the slump in Southampton, and the strict administration of the Southampton P.A.C. Southampton's relief scale was also lower than that of Liverpool, Hull, and Newcastle. Ford, *Work and Wealth*, pp. 168–9.

⁵⁹ *H.A.*, 30 Aug. 1930. The P.A.C. did support Southampton membership of a Joint Vagrancy Committee comprising Hampshire, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, with contributions based on numbers relieved as well as rateable values.

⁶⁰ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1929–30*, p. 168., *ibid.*, 1931–3, p. 1633; *H.A.*, 22 Oct. 1932. The P.A.C. also stressed the use of local labour on all council contracts, whereas e.g. the electricity committee favoured the lowest tender irrespective of local labour.

⁶¹ *H.A.*, 5 Sept. 1931. The Chamber of Commerce, which was well represented amongst the ranks of Independent councillors, and of which the corporation was for a time a subscribing member, was the principal pressure group for economy in the 1930s. Among council committees, the general purposes committee spearheaded the economy campaign, taking a less sympathetic view than the P.A.C. of resolutions and deputations on behalf of the unemployed.

⁶² *H.A.*, 29 Aug. 1931, 19 Sept. 1931, 31 Oct. 1931.

⁶³ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1931–2*, p. 1043; *ibid.*, 1933–4, p. 860.

⁶⁴ *H.A.*, 4 July 1931.

⁶⁵ The delay in Southampton's reaction to the slump may be accounted for partly by her dependence on passenger rather than cargo trade, and partly by the impact of the Southern Railway Company's £13 million docks extension scheme. See Vinson, *Exeter Papers in Economic and Social History*, XII.

⁶⁶ *S.D.E.*, 18 Feb. 1933.

⁶⁷ Gilbert, *Social Policy*, pp. 175–8. The Labour government's proposed economy package had involved the imposition of the costs as well as the administration of transitional payments on the local authorities. Transitional payments were applicable to all those normally in insurable employment who had either exhausted or failed to qualify for standard insurance benefit, provided they had paid either eight contributions in the preceding two years or twenty at any time. They were distinguished from public assistance by not being subject to test work and by being paid entirely in cash. The Southampton P.A.C. also established separate premises and rota committees for transitional as opposed to public assistance applicants. *H.A.*, 7 Nov. 1931. For the national campaign against the means test, see W. Hannington, *Unemployed Struggles 1919–36* (1936), chs. 13–17.

⁶⁸ *H.A.*, 30 Jan. 1932, 14 May 1932.

⁶⁹ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1931–2*, p. 287.

⁷⁰ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1931–2*, p. 39; *H.A.*, 1 Oct. 1932. Unemployment insurance benefit for a married couple was also 23s 3d following the imposition of a 10 per cent cut by the National Government.

⁷¹ *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance*, P.P. 1931–2, xiii, Cd. 4185, p. 62. At the extremes, the full rate was awarded in 98.8 per cent of cases in Merthyr but only in 11.2 per cent in Aberdeen.

⁷² S.C.R.O., TC File 257/10. One case, for instance, concerned a successful applicant with investments worth £1300. The chairman of the P.A.C. drew attention to applicants from Liverpool, where a single adult received only 12s, coming to Southampton for 15s 3d.

⁷³ H.A., 4 June 1932.

⁷⁴ S.C.R.O., TC File 257/10.

⁷⁵ H.A., 15 Oct. 1932, 29 Oct. 1932.

⁷⁶ H.A., 9 July 1932, 15 Oct. 1932, 22 Oct. 1932. This scale was based upon the North-East Conference scale initially applied in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

⁷⁷ S.C.R.O., TC File 257/10. While a sub-committee could grant above the scale in an individual case, no award was to exceed the level of insurance benefits.

⁷⁸ H.A., 22 Oct. 1932.

⁷⁹ R. C. Davison, *British Unemployment Policy: The Modern Phase Since 1930* (1938), pp. 22–5. This measure may be compared with the suspension by the Ministry of Health of the recalcitrant boards of Guardians in West Ham, Chester-le-Street, and Bedwelty under the Board of Guardians (Default) Act, 1926. It may be noted that Southampton's board came closest to suspension not under a Labour, but an Independent administration. In the early 1920s some thirty-six boards of Guardians were under pressure from the Ministry of Health (Webb, *Poor Law History*, II (2), p. 909); in the 1930s 20 P.A.C.s were deemed consistently over-generous (Gilbert, *Social Policy*, p. 177).

⁸⁰ H.A., 22 Oct. 1932, 28 Oct. 1932. Protests against the means test were delivered to this meeting by Southampton Trades Council, the Amalgamated Society of Woodworkers, the Co-operative Women's Guild, and the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. S.B.C., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1932–3*, p. 1582.

⁸¹ S.D.E., 13 Feb. 1932; S.C.R.O. TC File 257/10. The ineligibility of paupers for election to boards of Guardians had been applied to recipients of public assistance in regard to county and county borough councils in 1929, and was extended to all local authorities in 1933.

⁸² H.A., 29 Oct. 1932. A labour spokesman claimed that the existing scale fell 30 per cent below the poverty line.

⁸³ H.A., 5 Nov. 1932; S.C.R.O. TC File 257/10. At least one unsuccessful Independent candidate blamed his defeat on the electoral significance of the means test. S.D.E., 2 Nov. 1932.

⁸⁴ S.C.R.O., TC File 257/10.

⁸⁵ H.A., 23 Oct. 1932, 3 Dec. 1932. Between 1928 and 1932 the public assistance scale, aided by the fall in the cost of living, had risen from well below to approximate parity with both insurance benefits and a poverty datum line constructed for Southampton. Ford, *Work and Wealth*, p. 147.

⁸⁶ H.A., 11 Nov. 1933, 10 Nov. 1934. A question in the House of Commons elicited the information that at the outset the majority of transitional disallowances in Southampton were of married women. *Parliamentary Debates, Official Report*, 5th ser., 1931–2, CLX, col. 403. Antagonism between the P.A.C. and the Ministry of Labour was reflected in June 1934 in a resolution resenting the Ministry's prosecution of an insurance fraud case despite the contrary recommendation of the transitional payments sub-committee concerned. H.A., 16 June 1934. Southampton's experience certainly conflicts with the claim of Keith-Lucas and Richards, *Local Government*, p. 165, that 'The Guardians disappeared in 1930 and the following decade was a relatively peaceful period for central-local relations.'

⁸⁷ H.A., 14 July 1934.

⁸⁸ For differing emphases on the motivations behind the establishment of the U.A.B., see E. Briggs and A. Deacon, 'The Creation of the Unemployment Assistance Board', *Policy and Politics*, II (1), (1972), pp. 43–62; F. M. Miller, 'National Assistance or Unemployment Assistance? The British Cabinet and Relief Policy, 1932–3', *Contemporary History*, IX (2), (1974), pp. 163–84. Gilbert, *Social Policy*, describes the U.A.B. as 'virtually a centralized poor law' (p. 181) but conversely

terms its creation 'the termination of the principle of less eligibility' (p. 191). This contradiction mirrors both the controversy between Chamberlain as Chancellor and Betterton, the Minister of Labour, in the evolution of Part II of the 1934 Unemployment Act, and the confusion subsequently arising from its initial application.

⁸⁹ H.A., 2 Dec. 1933, 27 Jan. 1934, 10 Feb. 1934. Nonetheless the president of the Chamber of Commerce accepted nomination as the U.A.B. representative on the Southampton Appeals Tribunal. *Ibid.*, 12 Jan. 1935.

⁹⁰ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1934-8*, p. 183. The benefit to the rates from the establishment of the U.A.B. was estimated at £7,377 for the year to 31 March 1935. *Ibid.*, p. 318.

⁹¹ H.A., 12 Jan. 1935.

⁹² H.A., 2 Feb. 1935, 16 Feb. 1935. The Trades Council accused the U.A.B. regulations of breaking up the family by forcing the young to leave home in order to prevent their parents from losing benefit. S.C.R.O. DZ /TU, Minutes of Southampton Trades Council, meeting on 13 Feb. 1935.

⁹³ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1934-5*, p. 605.

⁹⁴ H.A., 13 Apr. 1935. 15 per cent of those on relief were subject to test work, but without any systematic arrangement. C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1934-5*, p. 1917. Though the law gave the P.A.C. greater discretion in this area than the Guardians, the Ministry of Health nevertheless criticized the P.A.C. decision on the grounds that test work was designed to preserve employability in the interests of the applicant.

⁹⁵ H.A., 19 June 1935.

⁹⁶ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1934-5*, p. 1920.

⁹⁷ *Return Under the Unemployment Assistance Act, 1934*, P.P. 1935-6, xvii, Cd. 5240, p. 7.

⁹⁸ C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1936-7*, p. 900. The excluded categories consisted of those with so poor an employment record as to be outside insurable status under the wide terms of the contributory pensions acts, and those, such as small traders, in occupations outside the scope of the acts, together with vagrants. Nationally those categories formed about one-third of the former recipients of public assistance. H. W. Marshall, 'Public Assistance', in *Social Security*, ed. W. A. Robson (2nd edn 1945), p. 52; Political and Economic Planning, *Report on the British Social Services* (1937), pp. 142-3.

⁹⁹ *Report of the Unemployment Assistance Board for the Year 1938*, P.P. 1938-9, xii, Cd. 6021, p. 88.

¹⁰⁰ H.A., 30 June 1934. Alderman Kimber, leader of the Independents from their formation in 1920, was displaced following discontent within the party at his autocratic leadership. H.A., 23 June 1934, 30 June 1934.

¹⁰¹ H.A., 16 May 1936; C.B.S., *Minutes of Council and Committees, 1935-6*, p. 1106. In November 1935, the Independents accepted a Labour nominee as one of the council's two representatives on the Area Advisory Committee of the U.A.B. in view of the nature of the issues involved.

¹⁰² J. F. Harris, *Unemployment and Politics* (1972), p. 348.

¹⁰³ Calculated from weekly statistics published in the local press. Allowance must be made, however, for the fact that no doubt some of those not entitled to benefit lacked sufficient incentive to register at the employment exchange.

¹⁰⁴ Calculated from *Statements of the Number of Persons in Receipt of Poor Relief in England and Wales on the Night of 1st January*, P.P. 1920-1939.

¹⁰⁵ Calculated from County Borough of Southampton, *Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts, 1919-40*. See Figs. 1 and 2, pp. 181-2.

Appendix

TABLE 1: *Unemployment relief scales*

(a) Southampton Board of Guardians, 1919-30

Date adopted	Single male adult living alone	Man and wife	Man, wife and two children	Man, wife and six children	Maximum	Conditions
	<i>s d</i>	<i>s d</i>	<i>s d</i>	<i>s d</i>	<i>s d</i>	
Existing scale ^(a)	12/6	25s	34s	46s	52s	Additional 6d for all on out-relief from 15 Apr. 1920 to meet the rising cost of living, renewed for 3 months on 10 June 1920.
8 Sept. 1921	15s	30s	40s	60s	60s	Initially all in cash; from 27 Oct. 1921 half in kind. All incomes, including pensions and unemployment benefits, to be deducted.
16 Feb. 1922	15s	25s	36s	53s	53s	Families with more than 6 children to be given individual consideration. Otherwise as at 27 Oct. 1921 (see above).
27 Apr. 1922	10s	20s	29s	43s	(50s) ^(b)	5s only in cash. All incomes to be deducted, except for the first 10s of disability pensions and half any casual earnings to encourage the taking of casual employment. Widows to receive 5s. All cash relief on loan. Each case to be treated entirely on its merits and after full investigation. From 8 June 1922, all relief in loan and immediate relief in kind only. All incomes to be deducted except the first 10s of disability pension and half of any casual earnings to a maximum of 7s 6d. Up to 5s rent allowance in addition in very special circumstances together with the cost of medical necessities. From 3 Oct. 1922, up to 10s allowable in cash.

Date adopted	Single male adult living alone	Man and wife	Man, wife and two children	Man, wife and six children	Maximum	Conditions
	<i>s d</i>	<i>s d</i>	<i>s d</i>	<i>s d</i>	<i>s d</i>	
28 Sept. 1922	10s	18/6	24/6	34s	35s ^(c)	The first 10s of any casual earnings exempted. Otherwise as at 27 Apr. 1922, as ammended on 8 June 1922 (see above).

(a) Date of adoption untraced, but prior to 1919.

(b) Maximum for a man, wife and 8 children.

(c) A maximum of 35s for a family was adopted on 31 Aug. 1922, a thorough revision of the scale following a month later.

Source: S.C.R.O., AG1/3/14-26, *Minute Books of Southampton Board of Guardians, 1918-30*.

(b) South Stoneham Board of Guardians, 1919-24

15 Sept. 1921 ^(a)	15s	30s	40s	60s	60s	All sources of income to be deducted. Each case to be dealt with according to its merits, with the proportion in cash or on loan to be at the discretion of the relieving committee. Relief to be granted for periods not exceeding 2 weeks at a time. From 6 Oct. 1921, a 6-day waiting period imposed.
23 Jan. 1922	15s	25s	33s	49s	(57s) ^(b)	Relief in no circumstances to exceed 75% of the standard unskilled wage, and sufficient only to relieve destitution. All incomes to be deducted, but an allowance made for expenses incurred in seeking work.
21 Feb. 1922	15s	25s	35s	52s	^(c)	As at 23 Jan. 1922, except that any relief totalling less than £1 to be given entirely in cash.
16 May 1922	10s	20s	29s	35s	35s	A maximum of $\frac{1}{4}$ to be given in cash. All income to be deductible on a household basis, except for the first 10s of disability pension, rent from lodgers, and half any casual earnings, together with an allowance for reasonable expenses incurred in seeking work. From 12 Dec. 1922, half of any

Date adopted	Single male adult living alone <i>s d</i>	Man and wife <i>s d</i>	Man, wife and two children <i>s d</i>	Man, wife and six children <i>s d</i>	Maximum <i>s d</i>	Conditions
						relief to be in cash. A labour test, not governed by the amount of relief, to be decided in each case by the relieving committee; otherwise all relief to be on loan. A widow and child to be treated as 2 adults. A 5s pregnancy/maternity allowance to be granted for 10 weeks. Otherwise, conditions as at 23 Jan. 1922.
(a) Apparently no out-relief scale was in force prior to Sept. 1921.						
(b) Man, wife and 8 children.						
(c) Families with more than 6 children to be referred to the Relief Committee.						
Source: S.C.R.O., D/AGF1/35-37, <i>Minute Books of South Stoneham Board of Guardians, 1919-24.</i>						
(c) Southampton Public Assistance Committee, 1930-9						
5 June 1930 ^(a)	10s	18/6	24/6	34s	35s	Each case to be considered entirely on its merits. Relief committees to determine the proportion to be given in cash, and all relief to be on loan. All income to be taken into consideration except the first 10s of any disability pension and half any casual earnings to a maximum of 7/6, together with allowance for medical necessities.
18 July 1932	13/6	23/3	27/3	35/3	37/6	Lower level of relief for single women (12s if living alone) introduced.
1 Dec. 1932	15/3	23/3	27/3	35/3	39/3	Differential payments introduced for boys and girls aged 16, 17 and 18-21. Half any disability pension or workmen's compensation, the entirety of a blind pension, the first 15s of a wife's income, half the excess of net rent and rates, 25% of sub-lettings up to 8s and the first £25 of investment income to be discounted.

Date adopted	Single male adult living alone <i>sd</i>	Man and wife <i>sd</i>	Man, wife and two children <i>sd</i>	Man, wife and six children <i>sd</i>	Maximum <i>sd</i>	Conditions
5 July 1934	(17s) ^(b)	(26s)	(30s)	(38s)	(38s)	Any increase over previous basis to be dependent on careful consideration of the needs of the case. Maximum raised in line with transitional payments scale following restoration by the government of cuts in unemployment insurance benefits.
7 May 1936	15s	26s	34/6	42/6	42/6	The scale to be considered as a maximum, having due regard to the conditions under which the applicant is living, and discriminating between those who have followed a regular occupation and are anxious to return to work, those with casual earnings not exceeding the scale, and those whose character and previous history render out-relief undesirable. After 4 weeks, out relief to be conditional so far as practicable on performing work or undertaking training. Differentials for children aged up to 8, 8-14, 14-18, 18-21. For list of allowances against household income, see <i>Minutes of Southampton County Borough Council</i> , 7 May 1936. Normally out-relief to be granted in cash, but no out-relief to recipients of unemployment insurance benefits and a residence qualification imposed on applicants from common lodging houses. No out-relief to exceed full-time net earnings of the head of the family when following his normal occupation.

- (a) This scale was identical to that adopted by Southampton Board of Guardians on 8 June 1922.
- (b) Though the basis grant was not automatically increased, the maximum was eased, subject to consideration of the individual circumstances, in order to permit an improved scale for transitional payments without contravening the

duty to consider such applicants in the same light as applicants for public assistance.

Source: County Borough of Southampton, *Minutes of Proceedings of Council and Committees, 1930-9*.

TABLE 2: *Employment and unemployment*

Date	A Population	B Insured population	C Average unemployed	D % Unemployed Southampton (e)	E UK
1919	131,300 (a)	(43,980) ^(b)	—	—	—
1920	162,700	—	—	—	3.9
1921	161,000	(48,520) ^(b)	(9500) ^(d)	(19.6) ^(f)	16.9
1922	163,700	—	(8300) ^(d)	—	14.3
1923	165,200	52,450	7400	14.2	11.7
1924	167,300	—	6300	11.7	10.3
1925	168,600	—	6100	11.0	11.3
1926	169,300	57,840	5700	9.9	12.5
1927	169,800	58,330	5000	8.6	9.7
1928	169,900	59,070	4600	7.8	10.8
1929	172,300	62,000	5300	8.6	10.4
1930	175,000	64,390	7500	11.7	16.1
1931	176,000	62,820	11,100	17.7	21.3
1932	177,500	64,290	13,900	21.6	21.3
1933	177,600	63,140	13,000	20.6	22.1
1934	177,000	61,000	11,100	18.2	19.9
1935	177,200	61,270	9400	15.3	15.5
1936	177,400	63,270 (c)	7200 (c)	11.4 (c)	13.1 (c)
1937	178,700	67,260	6200	9.2	10.8
1938	180,100	70,180	7100	10.2	12.9
1939	181,400	—	5900	—	10.5

(a) Absorption of area formerly administered by Itchen Urban District Council.

(b) Bracketed figures are for National Health Insurance, broadly comparable to the scope of Unemployment Insurance as extended in November 1920.

(c) Inclusion of agricultural workers, together with a minor alteration in the method of compiling unemployment percentages.

(d) Bracketed figures derived from weekly live register statistics irregularly printed in the local press.

(e) Due to differences in the methods of compilation, column D is comparable with column E in trend but not in absolute level.

(f) Calculated from sources subject to notes (b) and (d) above.

Sources: A: *The Registrar General's Statistical Review of England and Wales, Tables, Part II Civil, 1919-39*.

B: Ministry of Labour, *Local Employment Index, 1927-39*; Minutes of Evidence (days 10 and 11) of the Ministry of Labour to *The Royal Commission on the Geographical Distribution of the Industrial Population*, Non-Parliamentary papers 1938, Appendix I, Table xxxii, p. 314.

C: Calculated from monthly returns in *The Ministry of Labour Gazette, 1921-39*.

D: Recalculated from sources as for columns B and C.

E: *British Labour Statistics, Historical Abstract 1886-1968*, (H.M.S.O., 1971), Table 160, p. 306.TABLE 3: *Numbers in receipt of relief*

(a) Southampton Board of Guardians

Date (1 Jan.)	Total	Institutional (excluding casuals)	Domiciliary	On account of unemployment	Unemployment Relief per 10,000 of population			Casuals
					South- ampton	Non-met- ropolitan populous areas ^(a)	England and Wales	
1919	3935	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1920	3032	1462	1562	(709) ^(b)	—	—	—	8
1921	3451	1607	1814	(950) ^(b)	—	—	—	30
1922	8213	1687	6486	4132	319	264	196	40
1923	4842	1727	3082	718	54	255	189	33
1924	4509	1779	2676	256	19	187	137	54
1925 ^(c)	5023	2012	2974	93	6	110	84	37
1926	5013	2105	2861	167	10	152	125	47
1927	4625	2142	2406	111	7	193	162	77
1928	4391	2045	2299	112	7	147	114	47
1929	4248	2000	2193	41	2	109	79	55
1930	4398	2059	2284	35	2	89	62	55

(a) Southampton was a 100 per cent populous area.

(b) Figures for 1920 and 1921 are other than on account of sickness, accident, bodily or mental infirmity.

(c) Including parishes transferred from South Stoneham Union.

Source: *Statements of the Numbers of Persons in Receipt of Poor-Law Relief in England and Wales on the Night of 1st January*, P.P., 1919-30.

(b) South Stoneham Board of Guardians

Date (1 Jan.)	Total	Institutional (excluding casuals)	Domiciliary	On account of unemployment	Unemployment Relief per 10,000 of population		Casuals
					South Stoneham	Non- populous areas ^(a)	
1919	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1920	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1921	989	—	—	—	—	—	—
1922	3171	353	2808	2130	373	87	10
1923	2801	367	2412	1570	271	66	22

(a) Southampton Board of Guardians (*contd.*)

Date (1 Jan.)	Total	Institutional (excluding casuals)	Domiciliary	On account of unemployment	Unemployment Relief per 10,000 of population		Casuals
					South Stoneham	Non- populous areas ^(a)	
1924	2292	406	1850	1035	177	41	36
1925 ^(b)	526	189	294	8	3	27	43
1926	549	168	381	35	13	65	0
1927	551	195	356	29	11	107	0
1928	592	169	423	46	16	48	0
1929	549	165	384	9	3	32	0
1930	652	191	461	17	5	24	0

(a) South Stoneham was a 55 per cent populous union.

(b) Following the annexation of the Itchen parishes by Southampton Union.

Source: *Statements of the Numbers of Persons in Receipt of Poor-Law Relief in England and Wales on the Night of 1st January, P.P., 1919-30.*

(c) Southampton Public Assistance Committee

Date (1 Jan.)	Total	Institutional (excluding casuals)	Domiciliary	On account of unemployment	Unemployment Relief per 10,000 of population				Casuals
					Southampton	Hampshire	County Boroughs	England and Wales	
1931	3786	1130	2589	74	4	5	72	39	67
1932	4130	1154	2891	168	9	12	122	66	85
1933	8273	1195	6929	4717	266	30	212	105	149
1934	9352	1052	8225	3691	208	31	198	104	75
1935 ^(a)	5901	1052	4734	874	49	27	214	112	115
1936	6097	1032	4974	723	41	17	155	81	91
1937	5694	959	4659	375	21	8	123	59	76
1938 ^(a)	5561	988	4473	127	7	2	29	14	100
1939	5540	950	4451	148	8	2	25	13	139

(a) Bars indicate the transfer of responsibility for the able-bodied unemployed, in two stages, to the Unemployment Assistance Board.

Source: *Statements of the Numbers of Persons in Receipt of Poor-Law Relief in England and Wales on the Night of 1st January, P.P., 1931-9.*

TABLE 4: *Expenditure*^(a)

(a) Southampton Board of Guardians

Half-year/ year to:	Amount called for £	Gross ordinary expenditure		Out-Relief		Unemployment Relief	
		Estimated £	Actual £	Estimated £	Actual £	Estimated £	Actual £
31 Mar. 1919	47,057	62,610	63,657	8355	8617	—	—
31 Sept. 1919	53,629	61,232	64,728	9044	9498	—	—
31 Mar. 1920	59,514	69,977	75,495	9943	10,894	—	—
31 Sept. 1920	74,746	76,859	82,099	11,968	12,414	—	—
31 Mar. 1921	84,193	94,318	90,852	13,702	14,185	—	—
31 Sept. 1921	90,857	98,664	95,215	15,716	15,538 ^(e)	—	3370 ^(d)
31 Mar. 1922	106,143	121,640	136,153	30,947	17,731 ^(e)	—	37,006
31 Sept. 1922	141,280	138,694	128,481	16,042 ^(e)	17,132 ^(e)	33,142	21,442
31 Mar. 1923	64,575	121,678	104,887	17,439 ^(e)	16,673 ^(e)	15,354	5318
31 Sept. 1923	59,950	88,158	81,334	16,251 ^(e)	19,940	6705	—
31 Mar. 1924	55,777	83,658	89,559	15,102 ^(e)	24,851	4386	—
31 Sept. 1924 ^(b)	97,464	104,807	95,182	36,584	28,835	—	—
31 Mar. 1925	70,313	91,970	94,051	22,043	22,753	—	—
31 Sept. 1925	75,556	93,911	190,474	21,729	43,756	—	—
31 Mar. 1926	80,207	97,589		21,998		—	—
31 Mar. 1927	163,630	189,296	186,711	32,878	35,152	—	—
31 Mar. 1928	157,002	192,756	187,141	32,064	35,749	—	—
31 Mar. 1929	151,348	186,205	(189,460) ^(e)	35,152	(35,503) ^(e)	—	—
31 Mar. 1930	148,770	189,313	(145,918) ^(e)	35,841	(38,726) ^(e)	—	—

(a) No equivalent statistics available for South Stoneham Board of Guardians.

(b) Including parishes transferred from South Stoneham Union.

(c) Excluding unemployment relief.

(d) For 3 weeks only.

(e) Bracketed figures from Southampton County Borough Council, *Minutes of Proceedings of Council and Committees, 1930-2*.
Source: S.C.R.O., AG1/3/14-26, *Minute Books of Southampton Board of Guardians, 1918-30*.

(b) Southampton Public Assistance Committee

Year ending 31 March	Total gross expenditure ^(a)		Out-Relief		Relief to those normally in regular occupations	
	Estimated £	Actual £	Estimated £	Actual £	Estimated £	Actual £
1931	150,759	143,752	42,903	41,062	1800	1904
1932	153,349	146,551	43,490	44,261	1800	1483
1933	154,016	153,628	47,469	54,891	2050	4683
1934	164,512	170,476	58,389	67,206	4700	14,598
1935	179,393	188,648	71,434	79,834	15,250	18,992
1936 ^(b)	187,525	194,962	79,209	90,009	8960	16,950
1937 ^(b)	198,231	196,986	85,059	92,459	5950	14,034
1938 ^(b)	198,830	201,200	91,612	91,057	5800	9743
1939	215,800	213,186	—	97,924	—	10,299

(a) Including contribution to children's homes administered by Education Committee.

(b) In the financial years 1935-6, 1936-7, 1937-8 the Public Assistance Committee's contributions to the Unemployment Assistance Board were assessed at £5000, £4000 and £4000 respectively.

Sources: Estimated expenditure: Southampton County Borough Council, *Minutes of Proceedings of Council and Committees, 1930-9*.

Actual expenditure: County Borough of Southampton, *Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts for the years ending 31 March, 1931-9*.

1928	3	1½	(3 0.5)	1	7	4	0.1	1	0	5½	11	8½	1	1	1½
1929	3	0	(3 0.0)	1	8	3	9.2	1	0	3½	11	11¾	1	0	2¾
				(c)									(c)		
1930	2	6	(2 6.0)	1	4	3	1.2	1	0	3	12	0½	1	0	0
1931	2	3	[2 2] (d)	2	2	3	2	14	9½		12	3½	18	11	
1932	2	2½	[2 2] (d)	1	11.5	3	3.4	15	2.6		11	4.1	19	7.8	
1933	2	2	[2 3.2] (d)	1	10.7	3	6.8	16	0.3		11	1.7	1	1	7.1
1934	2	4¾	[2 5.8] (d)	2	0.7	3	8.6	17	10.1		12	1.1	1	2	8.1
1935	2	7¼	[2 6.1] (d)	1	9.8	3	9.5	19	1.4		11	3.8	1	4	3.7
1936	2	6½	[2 4.7] (d)	1	7.9	3	4.2	18	7.3		10	6.5	1	1	8.5
1937	2	6¾	[2 3.9] (d)	1	8.5	3	3.2	18	10.4		11	0.9	1	1	7.3
1938	2	1¾	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1939	2	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

(a) Column A represents the average of rates throughout all parishes in the borough, while column B shows those for the oldest part of the borough only, comparable with columns C and D.

(b) Transfer of parishes from South Stoneham to Southampton Union.

(c) In 1929 the South Stoneham Union was renamed as the Eastleigh Union. In April 1930 the Guardians responsibilities were transferred to Hampshire County Council.

(d) Figures in square brackets are for net expenditure on revenue account not met out of specific income, expressed as the equivalent rate in the £.

Sources: A: County Borough of Southampton, *Abstracts of the Treasurer's Accounts for the years ending 31 March 1919-39*; B, C, D, E, F, G: *Annual Local Taxation Returns, England and Wales, Part II, 1920-34*, continued as *Local Government Financial Statistics, England and Wales, 1934-7*, Non-Parliamentary papers, Ministry of Health.

(b) Total Rates

Date (year ending 31 March)	A		B		C		D		E		F		G	
	Total Rate levied per £ of assessable value		Southampton ^(a)		County Boroughs: England & Wales		Southampton		County Boroughs: England & Wales		Southampton		County Boroughs: England & Wales	
	s	d	s	d	s	d	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1919	9	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	(11 4)		11 5.2		5.0		5.1		—		—	
1920	11	3												
1921	16	9 $\frac{3}{4}$	(16 11.9)		15 7.1		5.3		5.2		—		—	
1922	17	3												
1923	15	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	(15 7)		15 6.0		5.5		5.8		—		—	
1924	11	6 $\frac{1}{4}$												
1925	12	9	(12 9)		13 5.2		5.7		5.9		3 9		—	
1926	12	2												
1927	12	3	(12 3)		14 3.6		6.1		6.2		3 11		—	
1928	12	3												
1929	12	0	(12 0)		14 2.7		6.4		6.6		3 12		—	

(c)

1930	10 10	(10 10)	13	2.8	7.6	(d)	7.1	(d)	(3 17)(g)	—
1931	10 10	(10 10)	13	1	7.2		6.4		3 15	—
1932	10 10	(10 10)	13	0	7.3		6.5		3 15	—
1933	10 10	(10 10)	13	1	7.5		6.5		3 17	—
1934	10 10	(10 10)	13	1	7.6		6.6		3 18	—
1935	10 6	(10 6)	13	0	8.1	(e)	6.9		4 0	4 3
1936	10 3	(10 3)	13	3	8.3		7.0		3 19	4 6
1937	10 8	(10 8)	13	6	8.5		7.1		4 4	4 9
1938	10 8	(10 8)	(13 7)(e)		(8.6)(f)		(7.2)(f)		4 6	4 11
1939	11 0	(11 0)	(14 1)(e)		(8.8)(f)		(7.3)(f)		4 12	4 17

(a) Column A represents the average of rates throughout all parishes in the borough, while column B represents those for the oldest part of the borough only, comparable with column C.

(b) Extension of the borough.
(c) Rating reassessment.

(d) Total derating of agricultural land and partial derating of industrial property, under the Local Government Act, 1929.

(e) Estimated from sources as for (f).

(f) Calculated from *Rates and Rateable Values, England and Wales*, Non-Parliamentary papers, Ministry of Health, 1938-9.

(g) Derived from *Rates Levied in Various Towns*, Borough Treasurer's Department, Preston.

(h) 1920-9, statistics of assessable value; 1930-9, statistics of rateable value.

Sources: A: County Borough of Southampton, *Abstract of the Treasurer's Accounts for the years ending 31 March 1919-39*; B, C, D, E: *Annual Local Taxation Returns, England and Wales, Part II, 1920-34*, continued as *Local Government Financial Statistics, England and Wales*, 1934-7, Non-Parliamentary papers, Ministry of Health; F, G: *Statements showing the amount of the Local Rates per Pound of Assessable Value and the Assessable Value in Force, England and Wales, 1925-29*; *Rates and Rateable Values in England and Wales, 1929-39*, Non-Parliamentary papers, Ministry of Health.