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ARTICLE

Rawson Rawson and Early Victorian Poverty Knowledge

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This article scrutinizes Rawson W. Rawson over seven years, from 1837 to 1844, during which he served as founding editor of the Journal of the Statistical Society of London *and then as civil secretary to successive Canadian governors-general. Rawson studied poverty in London, amplified criticisms of Malthusian Poor Law disciplines in Scotland, and applied that logic to Indigenous poverty on the colonial frontier. The statisticians sought generic definitions of property and agency that sometimes challenged a more binary logic of civilization. But in Canada, Rawson's very critique of dispossession became an instrument of that dispossession.*

This article studies an early statistician, Rawson W. Rawson, and his activities at the Statistical Society of London and in the Canadian government from 1837 to 1844. Rawson was the secretary of the society from 1835 and the founding editor of its journal from 1838 until he went to Canada in 1842 as secretary to the governor, Sir Charles Bagot. The society during the Rawson years was "the prototype of social science institutions," and statisticians of his milieu, in the 1820s and 1830s, were generally more concerned with "social economy" than political economy, according to Lawrence Goldman.[1] Under Rawson's editorship, "almost two-thirds of the articles published in the journal reported on the statistics of education, the living conditions, crime and the local statistics of the lower classes."[2] Rawson also followed the epidemiological debates that weighed dearth against dirt as causes of disease. As M. J. Cullen remarks, "With men like Rawson taking control the hold of orthodox political economy was weakened."[3] It's possible to see across Rawson's

[1]Theodore M. Porter, "Statistics and the Career of Public Reason: Engagement and Detachment in a Quantified World," in Tom Crook and Glen O'Hara, eds., *Statistics and the Public Sphere: Numbers and the People in Modern Britain, c.1800–2000* (New York, 2011), 32–47, at 37; Lawrence Goldman, *Victorians and Numbers: Statistics and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2022).

[2]Almut Sprigade, "Educational Comparison in England during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," in David Phillips and Kimberly Ochs, eds., *Educational Policy Borrowing: Historical Perspectives* (Oxford, 2004), 37–58, at 46.

[3]M. J. Cullen, *The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain: The Foundations of Empirical Social Research* (Hassocks, 1975), 93.

impressively broad range of interests what a distinctively *social* analysis looked like in 1840, as distinct from political-economic or racial-biological analysis.

The London Statistical Society emerged in 1833–4 from meetings amongst like-minded friends, above all Robert Jones, Charles Babbage, and William Whewell, seeking empirical, inductive grounding to debunk David Ricardo's highly deductive economics. The "Cambridge inductivists" took inspiration from Adolphe Quetelet's new models for a universal statistical science of the average man. They invited Quetelet to the 1833 Cambridge meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, and orchestrated broad support for a new "Statistics" branch of the BAAS, as well as for the new London society. The London Statistical Society was voted into existence at a strategically nonpartisan public meeting, with speeches by leading conservatives and liberals, and hundreds of subscribers. It was one of several that quickly formed and quickly declined. The Manchester Statistical Society, formed in 1833, survived into the 1840s by folding into the Anti-Corn Law League, while an initial Statistical Society of Glasgow, founded in 1836 and failed in 1838, saw a successor Glasgow and Clydesdale Statistical Society formed in 1840.[4] In London, Rawson energetically reversed a downturn in attendance and participation. The *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* (*JSSL*), as an ambitious successor to earlier anemic *Transactions*, drew momentum from international statistical institutions and lent momentum to the local societies by publishing their transactions. Rawson recruited new members and data and used the *JSSL* to build networks. Goldman argues that the statistical movement flourished long after the 1840s, even as the formal associations suffered from their own legislative successes, including a registry office and Corn Law repeal.[5] The early *JSSL* reflected a humanitarian and social-realist moment, visible also in the formation of the Aborigines Protection Society and the literary success of Charles Dickens with *Oliver Twist* in 1837.[6]

Rawson's capacious understanding of the statistical subject deserves a closer look. He remains oddly anonymous in British histories of social statistics, let alone in Canada, where Bruce Curtis has identified a "missing memory of Canadian sociology."[7] Rawson's statistics were highly Queteletian; that is, committed to universal models of explanation that subsumed racial, ethnic, and class

[4]Goldman, *Victorians and Numbers*, 57–8.

[5]Ibid., xxvi, 74, *passim*; Victor L. Hilts, "Aliis Exterendum, or, the Origins of the Statistical Society of London," *Isis* 69/1 (1978), 21–43; Oz Frankel, *States of Inquiry: Social Investigations and Print Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain and the United States* (Baltimore, 2006); William C. Lubenow, *The Politics of Government Growth: Early Victorian Attitudes toward State Intervention 1833–1848* (Newton Abbot, 1971); Crook and O'Hara, *Statistics and the Public Sphere*; Jean-Guy Prevost and Jean-Pierre Beaud, *Statistics, Public Debate and the State, 1800–1945: A Social, Political, and Intellectual History of Numbers* (London, 2016); Yasuhiro Okazawa, "The Scientific Rationality of Early Statistics, 1833–1877" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2018).

[6]Michael D. Blackstock, "The Aborigines Report (1837): A Case Study in the Slow Change of Colonial Social Relations," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 1 (2000), 67–94; Alan Lester, *Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance: Protecting Aborigines across the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2014); Zoë Laidlaw, *Protecting the Empire's Humanity: Thomas Hodgkin and British Colonial Activism 1830–1870* (Cambridge, 2021).

[7]Bruce Curtis, "The Missing Memory of Canadian Sociology: Reflexive Government and 'the Social Science'," *Canadian Review of Sociology* 53/2 (2016), 203–25.

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distinctions within a normal human range. The model pursued a "civilizing" project but also presumed a certain symmetry of analysis applied to civilized and uncivilized, educated and uneducated, propertied and unpropertied.[8] Rawson wrote, edited, and published some provocative empirical findings about poverty in Britain in the late 1830s and early 1840s. In Canada, he brought those findings to bear on the understanding of Indigenous poverty, as one of a three-man "Bagot commission" tasked with investigating the Canadian Indian Department that reported shortly before his departure for Mauritius in 1844. It was published as a state paper in two parts, in 1844 and 1847, the latter containing the data, much like the appendix to Edwin Chadwick's 1842 *Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of Great Britain*.

Here, four sections will sketch out and connect the context, the man, the *JSSL*, and the report. A sustained concern with the causes of poverty lends them unity. As a Queteletian, Rawson scrutinized moral and psychological factors and their environmental and institutional causes and expressions. Like everyone else, he blamed ignorance and improvidence for poverty. But evidence gathered in the *JSSL* and the Bagot report carried the analysis into the causes of ignorance and improvidence and found them more in social institutions than in personal character. The evidence showed that the rich were getting richer and the poor getting poor not because the former were more rational or virtuous, but because they enjoyed greater security of property. A binary reading of provident versus improvident uses of property, one that justified coercive treatment by the state, was being used to strip the modestly propertied of their agency and their property, in domestic slums as on the imperial frontier. That reading tended to blame the state, supposedly the great guarantor of property, as much as the poor for poverty. It also tended to deracialize poverty, associated with Irishness in Britain and Indigeneity in Canada. The findings from London slums, Scottish hospitals, and Canadian reservations, taken together, made the key binary around the uses of property not provident versus improvident but secure versus insecure.

The findings did not appear under Rawson's authorship, hence his invisibility. Moreover, Rawson came around to a measure of social and racial agnosticism slowly and unevenly, more in theory than in practice, and more in the reading of property than in that of education. But by following his trail, we can see overlooked connections in poverty knowledge stretching across social and scholarly fields that have remained surprisingly distinct. The Bagot report recognized that the "Indian problem" in Canada was a poverty problem, more like than unlike the Irish or Scottish poverty problem. Rawson was one common factor to help us see the intellectual continuities. There were others: similar bureaucratic entrepreneurs of the imperial state. Saxe Bannister was making a name for himself by denouncing illegal and violent settler predations on Indigenous land: as a settler in Upper Canada in the 1820s, as attorney general in New South Wales in the mid-1830s, and as secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society in the later 1830s; he published a critical account of colonial predation in New Zealand in

[8]Kaat Louckx, "Urban Populations and Urban Problems in Quetelet's Population Statistics of the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in Bert de Munck and Jens Lachmund, eds., *Politics of Urban Knowledge: Historical Perspectives on the Shaping and Governing of Cities* (New York, 2023), 111–32.

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Rawson's *JSSL*.[9] Meanwhile, Sir Francis Bond Head was making himself the embodiment of the austere, laissez-faire state, as an assistant Poor Law commissioner in Kent to 1835, and as lieutenant governor of Upper Canada from 1835. He defended the scandalous harshness of Poor Law reform in England and Indigenous dispossession in Canada. British humanitarians like Bannister and Rawson singled him out for special condemnation. The humanitarian lobby in Britain made its case against Bond Head using statistical evidence drawn from Rawson,[10] and Rawson amplified the arguments and evidence against laissez-faire austerity and dispossession both domestically and imperially.

The context

In post-Napoleonic Europe, interest in poverty and social statistics exploded together, along with a methodological dispute over induction versus deduction. British wealth and poverty became an international scandal, made visible and scandalous by an "avalanche of printed numbers between 1820 and 1840."[11] Whigs and Liberals brought down the Duke of Wellington's Conservative government in 1830 by alleging that ignorant policies, especially in tax, trade, and debt, were impoverishing the nation. But the governing Liberals under Lord Grey, then Lord Melbourne, were hoist by their own petard as Conservative and radical critics discovered and denounced widespread suffering. Oldham cotton manufacturer and MP John Fielden sent out sixty agents who interviewed 24,000 workers and delivered their findings to Parliament early in 1833: an average net income amongst his interviewees was just over two and a half pence per day. When the *Manchester Guardian* expressed incredulity, Fielden insisted that "severe and unparalleled distress amongst the productive classes pervades almost every country in England, Scotland and Ireland."[12] Charles Poulett Thomson, the Manchester MP running the Board of Trade, fought back with his own inquiries.[13] He obtained a Branch of Statistics within the Board of Trade, created in 1832 under free-trade economist G. R. Porter, to chart the progress of the nation and supply facts needed for Parliamentary debate. Porter and his handy clerk, Rawson W. Rawson, compiled a series of widely cited "Blue Books." But they could only command state facts, not always the most interesting. Porter and Poulett Thomson sponsored the statistical societies in London and Manchester to get at private, commercial, and domestic data, and to lobby for

[9]Elizabeth Elbourne, *Empire, Kinship and Violence: Family Histories, Indigenous Rights and the Making of Settler Colonialism, 1770–1842* (Cambridge, 2023).

[10]Herman Merivale, *Lectures on Colonization and Colonies Delivered before the University of Oxford in 1839, 1840, and 1841* (London, 1841), 173.

[11]Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (Cambridge, 1990), viii and *passim*.

[12]Stuart Angus Weaver, *John Fielden and the Politics of Popular Radicalism, 1832–1847* (Oxford, 1987), 6–9.

[13]Lucy Brown, *The Board of Trade and the Free-Trade Movement, 1830–42* (Oxford, 1958); Adam Shortt, *Lord Sydenham* (Toronto, 1908), 17–19; Ian Radforth, "Sydenham and Utilitarian Reform," in Allan Greer and Ian Radforth, eds., *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto, 1992), 64–102.

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reforms.[14] The statisticians delicately negotiated across public, private, and partisan divides in pursuit of data to ground policy.

Thomas Malthus had argued in 1798 that population increased geometrically while food supply only increased arithmetically, so that population must "press on the means of subsistence" unless prevented by the positive checks of vice and misery or the preventive check of moral restraint. Britain was outspending other countries on poor relief and, thereby, seen to obstruct the checks that should "naturally" keep birthrates down.[15] British governments were discredited in the 1820s for mismanaging food and taxes, and in the 1830s for mismanaging space, as the focus of scrutiny shifted to epidemics, diaspora, and settlement.[16] Problems of mobility connected public health and the colonies, both areas of vulnerability for Melbourne, both seeming to demand, if not more soldiers and more taxes, then something more ostentatiously liberal. The cholera pandemic of 1832, met by militarized quarantines in Eastern Europe, and their loosening in Western Europe, showed how such perplexities dovetailed. Liberals insisted that improved landscapes and a freer flow of goods and people would improve prosperity and lessen disease and military spending. But they needed statistical data to support the theory.

Were epidemics caused by similar historical processes or was something actually spreading them? Geographical mobility and spatial density—your place of origin and your proximity to your neighbour—were two things that the statisticians could correlate to wealth and death. Civilization was supposed to be more settled than nomadic, but hard times after the Napoleonic Wars were driving a mass diaspora, one with deep roots in eighteenth-century clearances and enclosures. People were being pushed off the countryside and flocking to cities and the frontiers. The spectre of impoverished Irish migrants as a uniquely decivilizing and deskilling diaspora haunted much social analysis of the 1830s, fueling talk of "dangerous classes."[17] On both sides of the Atlantic, observers saw "unsettled and unsettling" racialized nomads, driven by economic changes, the problems intensified by restrictions on relief provided only to long-standing "settled" residents.[18] Those restrictions fueled intense debates about the causes and consequences of the Poor Laws. Racialized nomads seemed as likely to be recapitulating a specifically Malthusian model of decline as to be spreading germs.

[14]Jack Morrell and Arnold Thackray, *Gentlemen of Science: Early Years of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (Oxford, 1981); National Archives, BT 24/1 Board of Trade, Statistics Department, Outgoing Letters.

[15]David Green, *Pauper Capital: London and the Poor Law, 1790–1870* (London, 2010).

[16]William Coleman, *Death Is a Social Disease: Public Health and Political Economy in Early Industrial France* (Madison, 1982); Giovanna Procacci, *Gouverner la misère: La question sociale en France, 1789–1848* (Paris, 1993); Margaret Pelling, *Cholera, Fever and English Medicine* (Oxford, 1978); Peter Baldwin, *Contagion and the State in Europe, 1830–1930* (Cambridge, 1999); Christopher Hamlin, *Cholera: The Biography* (Oxford, 2009); Mark Harrison, *Contagion: How Commerce Has Spread Disease* (New Haven, 2013).

[17]Lionel Rose, *"Rogues and Vagabonds": Vagrant Underworld in Britain 1815–1895* (New York, 1988); Jim MacLaughlin, "'Pestilence on Their Backs, Famine in Their Stomachs': The Racial Construction of Irishness and the Irish in Victorian Britain," in Colin Graham and Richard Kirkland, eds., *Ireland and Cultural Theory: The Mechanics of Authenticity* (London, 1999), 50–76; Louis Chevalier, *Labouring Classes and Dangerous Classes in Paris during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1973).

[18]Frankel, *States of Inquiry*, 238.

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Statisticians tested economic theories by discovering shocking levels of poverty and disease in industrial and metropolitan heartlands and they put their findings towards international comparison of good versus bad governance. High rates of poverty and morbidity were *ipso facto* indictments of bad governance. The cholera pandemic had intensified those trends but the social-medical turn had deeper roots. Since the last plague, Kevin Siena has shown, epidemic discourses had blamed dirt, density, and the working classes for "fevers," especially typhus and typhoid fever. People suffering from those fevers seemed to harbour in their surroundings and their bodies a kind of physical corruption or poison.[19] The Napoleonic Wars terribly intensified typhus epidemics wherever people were penned up in dreadful conditions: in barracks, prisons, ships, and sieges, where they were often closely scrutinized by medical officers caught up in the events. French medicine was particularly fertilized with those observations, thanks to the early abolition of medical schools and later the thesis requirement for a Paris MD. Many French military medical officers, dispatched for service with scant medical training, earned postwar MDs with accounts of their wartime experiences. Small wonder that French medical statistics exploded in the 1820s and debated the causes and contagiousness of yellow fever, plague, and cholera. All three seemed to owe something to the model of typhus (only hazily distinguished from typhoid), understood as the model epidemic disease par excellence, because it *only* struck people who were poor and densely crowded. Overcrowding turned sociability into pathology. Doctors saw animate matter becoming inanimate matter through exhalations and excretions that made people poisonous to one another and turned healthy environments into unhealthy ones. And if typhus could have wholly social causes, then Occam's razor suggested that others might as well: yellow fever was sometimes called "American typhus," plague "African typhus," and cholera "Indian typhus," as a way of making the case for social causes.[20]

The early British statisticians imported those models. Even as cholera waned, other diseases, especially smallpox, typhus, and typhoid, waxed and nowhere more than in crowded industrial slums in London, Manchester, and Glasgow. If the doctors could not make visible the causes of those epidemics—whether miasmata, germs, or constitutions—perhaps statistics could. Sickness was a major problem for the liberal state because it prompted demands for medical care and relief payments that seemed a slippery slope to pauperism. Harsh restrictions on outdoor relief were one solution in 1834; municipal investment in sewers and waterworks was another. Given that a shocking amount of taxes, anomalous by international standards, was going to relief, could you engineer either the people or the environment so as to reduce those expenses? The sanitarian movement tended to treat the moral as the material; it tended, like Michel Foucault's prison theorists, to manipulate the mind through the body and manage humans as decaying matter in motion on the landscape.[21]

[19]Kevin Siena, *Rotten Bodies: Class and Contagion in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New Haven, 2019).

[20]Caroline Hannaway and Ann La Berge, eds., *Constructing Paris Medicine* (Amsterdam, 1998); E. A. Heaman, "The Rise and Fall of Anticontagionism in France," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History* 12/1 (1995), 3–25.

[21]Christopher Hamlin, *Public Health and Social Justice in the Age of Chadwick: Britain, 1800–1854* (Cambridge, 1998).

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The tendency to decay was seen to characterize poor and racialized bodies. Observers reasoned between the people before and the people after civilization, slum dwellers and "savages": some directly—like Alexis de Tocqueville who followed his American tour with tours of British slums—and some indirectly—like Thomas Southwood Smith, physician to the London Fever Hospital and a fellow of the London Statistical Society. In March 1840, he told a Parliamentary inquiry that "out of 77,000 persons who have received parochial relief, 14,000 have been attacked with fever,—one-fifth part of the whole; and that 1300 have died. It should be borne in mind that there is no disease which brings so much affliction on a poor man's family as fever." On average, one pauper in five was attacked by fever, but in Bethnal Green it was a third, in Whitechapel half, and in St George's in the East six out of seven. Whole families were swept off in Camden Gardens and Lamb's Field. "It seems to me to be perfectly in the condition of the wigwams of the vilest savages; they cannot be worse; we constantly hear of whole tribes of those savage people being swept away by fever, small-pox, and dysentery; and there is precisely the same thing constantly going on" in London. He blamed lack of sanitation. Asked whether it was possible to map "invariably, and with absolute certainty, where the sewers are, and where they are not, by observing where fever exists," he answered bluntly, "Yes."[22]

Careers were made attacking existing policies and practices. The lead character in a novel by William Makepeace Thackeray set in that period, *Pendennis*, channeled his political ambitions around "social" issues; that is, by studying "the Blue Books" and coming out "rather strong on the Sanitary and Colonisation questions."[23] Careers were also made defending the policies. Malthusians blamed disease and lack of moral restraint for poverty. The first argument redirected social spending towards infrastructure spending that improved property values, while the second justified cutbacks. The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act enabled harsh and coercive management of the poor by narrowing the grounds for relief and centralizing discretion. Women were specially targeted as, "for the first time in English history, single women were made legally and economically responsible for their illegitimate children."[24] John Stuart Mill supported the new sexual disciplines.[25] So did Francis Bond Head. Harsh treatment was the only possible engineer of moral restraint amongst people too ignorant, idle, and immoral to respond to ordinary market persuasions. If paupers were overbreeding, he argued in the conservative *Quarterly Review*, women must be the moral check and decline sex with men in and out of wedlock. Consider the matter like a business transaction. If women won rewards for protecting their "female virtue," should they not be "the sole sufferer for its loss? Could any better arrangement be invented?" To make women's honour "the joint-stock property of the sexes" must hasten bankruptcy. If you understood sex as a kind of property, men and women were natural rivals:

[22]Minutes of Evidence, Select Committee on Health of Towns, *Reports from Select Committees of the House of Commons* (London, 1840), 25 March 1840, 6; also *Provincial Medical & Surgical Journal* 1/5 (October 1840), 81.

[23]Kathryn Chittick, *Dickens and the 1830s* (Cambridge, 1990), 5.

[24]Lisa Forman Cody, "The Politics of Illegitimacy in an Age of Reform: Women, Reproduction, and Political Economy in England's New Poor Law of 1834," *Journal of Women's History* 11/4 (2000), 131–56, at 131.

[25]Nancy J. Hirschmann, *Gender, Class, and Freedom in Modern Political Theory* (Princeton, 2009), 257.

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"it is an anomalous fact which no one can deny, that in every climate under the sun man appears as her open, avowed enemy—and strange as it may sound, the more he admires the treasure she possesses, the more anxious he is to deprive her of it." However "incomprehensible to us" the rivalry, "we" could trust to its ultimate justice. Bond Head opposed any fiscal redistribution from rich to poor and from men to women. He even opposed the Foundling Hospital for stacking the odds in favour of degraded women.[26] So, too, on the frontier, Bond Head observed, Indigenous women were being "seduced and corrupted" under pretence of care and conversion. That the "simple virtues" of Indigenous peoples "should fade before the vices and cruelty of the old world, is a problem which no one among us is competent to solve; the dispensation is as mysterious as its object is inscrutable." But "we" could trust to its justice.[27] Women must learn to say no, and so must the modern state. It should follow economic logic and defy historic debts and contracts even when the result was to redistribute wealth, so long as the redistribution was not downward but upward.

Bond Head's "treasure" argument was a model for stringent economic liberalism. An American economist, Henry Carey, fully and faithfully reproduced it in a pamphlet, applauding "the excellence of the argument and *its applicability to all other cases of regulation*," as against state intervention in the workings of the market.[28] Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, the "joint-stock" model was widely debated around the question of limited liability for stockholders; that is, for shielding investors from the consequences of market risk and loss. Carey supported limited-liability laws in the United States that Poulett Thomson, at the Board of Trade, reluctantly began to extend to English investors in 1837.[29] Law was being reworked to protect the propertied but not the poor from market vagaries. Carried into North American settler colonialism, the joint-stock model encouraged men to spill their seed and their wealth as recklessly as they pleased, trusting that the state would transfer the social costs to others.

But there was a contradiction in the model of agency. Modern civilization, the kind that Europeans enjoyed, was collective agency, something that uncivilized people were supposed to lack. That binary and teleological view, canonical amongst conservative Enlightenment thinkers such as William Robertson and Lord Kames, was reaffirmed by John Stuart Mill in an essay on "Civilization" for the *London and Westminster Review* in April 1836:

> Wherever, therefore, we find human beings acting together for common purposes in large bodies, and enjoying the pleasures of social intercourse, we term

[26][Francis Bond Head], untitled review, *Quarterly Review* 53/106 (1835), 473–539, at 492, 501, 504–5, 503; republished as "English Charity," in Francis Bond Head, *Descriptive Essays Contributed to the* Quarterly Review, vol 1 (London, 1857), 46–150.

[27]Francis Bond Head, "Memorandum on the Aborigines of North America," 26 November 1836, published as Appendix A, in Bond Head, *A Narrative* (London, 1839), 1–15, at 3.

[28]Henry Charles Carey, *Essay on the Rate of Wages* (Philadelphia, 1835), 155–8, italics in the original; Eric Helleiner, *The Neomercantilists: A Global Intellectual History* (Ithaca, 2021).

[29]James Taylor, *Creating Capitalism: Joint-Stock Enterprise in British Politics and Culture 1800–1870* (London, 2006); Timothy L. Alborn, *Conceiving Companies: Joint Stock Politics in Victorian England* (London, 1998); Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1785–1865* (Oxford, 1986).

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> them civilized. In savage life there is little or no law, or administration of justice; no systematic employment of the collective strength of society, to protect individuals against injury from one another; every one trusts to his own strength or cunning, and where that fails, he is generally without resource.[30]

But to refuse succor was also selfish, sharing out resources also a kind of collective mutual protection. Social statisticians comparing social agency across different communities might find that the data challenged liberal economics.

Where Malthus (who attended the first meeting of the London Statistical Society) invoked facts to show that state intervention transferred wealth downwards, Ricardo invoked deduction to show that it transferred wealth to landowners. The London statisticians responded with inductive arguments for state intervention. They advocated national welfare, national schools, and national development projects, often citing successful European models, such as Belgium. Porter gave a paper to the London Society and the BAAS, published in the *JSSL*, that urged systematic collection of agricultural statistics, as in Belgium.[31] Rawson urged state sponsorship of railways in Ireland, pointing to their success in Belgium; he flagged Belgian statistics on public instruction; he presented evidence that a "system of charity" in Belgium had successfully eradicated local indigence; and he defended the data, as he told Quetelet, against "one of our associates famous for his knowledge of Political Economy."[32] Rawson insisted that "statistical data must constitute the raw material of all true systems of economy and legislation, local and national."[33] These were highly contested arguments. Time and again the statisticians were advised to stick to the facts and not to venture into fraught theoretical and political questions; time and again, after pledging to respect such restraints, the London Statistical Society and its journal breached them. Slippage between facts and theories was inevitable. But Rawson and Porter were never content to be intellectual hewers of wood and drawers of water.

The man

Rawson didn't bring just a talent for and fascination with statistics to this debate, but also personal experience of poverty. His father, Sir William Rawson, né Adams, had been a prominent clinician with a knighthood and hospital connections when he lost everything in the Latin American silver crash of the mid-1820s. Sir William saw Latin American civilization and autonomy as a good

[30]John Stuart Mill, "Civilization," *London and Westminster Review* 25 (April–July 1836), 1–27, at 2. Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton, 2005); Pitts, *Boundaries of the International: Law and Empire* (Cambridge, 2018); Lauren Benton and Lisa Ford, *Rage for Order: The British Empire and the Origins of International Law 1800–1850* (Cambridge, 2016); John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline of Canada's Indian Policy," *Western Canadian Journal of* Anthropology 6/2 (1976), 13–30.

[31]G. R. Porter, "Suggestions in Favour of the Systematic Collection of the Statistics of Agriculture," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* (hereafter *JSSL*) 2/5 (1839), 291–6.

[32]R., "On Railways in Belgium," *JSSL* 2/1 (1839), 47–62; "Recent Statistical Publications," *JSSL* 1/3 (1838), 191–2; Cullen, *The Statistical Movement*, 93.

[33]"Fourth Annual Report of the Council of the Statistical Society of London," *JSSL* 1/1 (1838), 5–13, at 8.

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investment. But critics blamed the crash on the corruption, ignorance, and backwardness of the local populations. According to a young British mining engineer, none other than Francis Bond Head, they were "perfectly destitute of the idea of a contract, of punctuality, or of the value of time." His 1826 book was greeted with dismay by investors.[34] The Rawsons had to relocate from Mayfair to Marylebone and young Rawson had to leave Eton and find work.

Thus did Rawson come to clerk for Porter at the Statistics Branch of the Board of Trade. Porter was an abolitionist and free-trader, who made statistics serve those purposes, as when he showed that abolition of slavery in the West Indies did not reduce labor productivity.[35] Porter and Rawson regularly attended and presented material at the London Statistical Society and the Central Education Society. Rawson produced statistical digests for the Central Education Society as well as the Statistical Society and the Blue Books. He was also gathering facts and doing other work for Board of Trade officials, including Poulett Thomson. In 1841, after Poulett Thomson, now Lord Sydenham and governor-general of the Canadas, died suddenly from a fall and his private secretary refused to stay on with Sir Charles Bagot, Rawson was sent. He came highly recommended by the newest director of the Board of Trade, William Gladstone, as clear-headed, well-informed, indefatigable, and cheerful. Colonial minister Lord Stanley informed Bagot that "if he has any politics, I believe they incline to Conservative, but certainly they are not violent."[36] (Even Porter now looked to Conservatives to get Corn Law repeal.[37]) A hastily penned note to Babbage cancelled dinner plans and asked him, "What can I do for Science in Canada?"[38]

Rawson's version of statistics was universal and Queteletian, as well as state-adjacent and medicine-adjacent. Statistical and medical questions dovetailed: there could be no serious investigation of humans as matter in motion without doctors. Where political economists were just beginning to get university chairs, doctors modelled professional intellectual authority in universities, professional associations, and learned journals.[39] The London Statistical Society convened a medical committee dominated by Rawson and William Augustus Guy, a professor of hygiene and forensic medicine at King's College Hospital and another Queteletian. Rawson published Guy's uncompromising manifesto for moral and medical statistics in the *JSSL* in February 1839, eight months before his own programmatic statement. Guy attacked most medical writing as replete with vague words where exact numbers should figure: "The 'sometimes' of the cautious is the 'often' of the sanguine, the 'always' of the empiric, and the 'never' of the sceptic; but the numbers 1, 10, 100, 1000, have but one meaning for all mankind."[40]

[34]Frank G. Dawson, *The First Latin American Debt Crisis: The City of London and the 1822–25 Loan Bubble* (New Haven, 1990), 121; Michael P. Costeloe, *Bubbles and Bonanzas: British Investors and Investments in Mexico, 1821–1860* (Lanham, 2011).

[35][Porter], *The Many Sacrificed to the Few, Proved by the Effects of the Sugar Monopoly* (n.p., 1841).

[36]Liverpool Record Office, Derby Papers, 920 DER 14/175/1, 91–2.

[37]Norman McCord, *The Anti-Corn Law League: 1838–1846* (Abingdon, 2006), 199.

[38]British Library, Add MS 37192, Babbage Papers, 11, Rawson to Babbage, 18 June 1842.

[39]W. F. Bynum, *Science and the Practice of Medicine in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994).

[40]William Augustus Guy, "On the Value of the Numerical Method as Applied to Science, but Especially to Physiology and Medicine," *JSSL* 2/1 (1839), 25–47, at 39.

However unpredictable individual illness, large numbers behaved predictably. "If we consider the health of large masses of men placed under different circumstances, and acted on by different influences, it is to the numerical method that we must look for accurate information as to the effect of these circumstances." To get large, comparative numbers, you had to do with facts what Montesquieu had done with laws: see underlying similarities across sect, sex, class, nation, and race. The statisticians sought a cosmopolitan objectivity about such identities.

Rawson also applied the numerical method to mind and body. "Moral, no less than physical, phenomena may be found to be controlled and determined by peculiar laws. Science has taught, and daily experience proves, that the universe is regulated upon a uniform and immutable system" so that "what appear to our imperfect senses to be variations, form part of one comprehensive and perfect system." The argument for underlying similarity made differences epiphenomenal rather than innate. Rawson argued that neither as matter nor as mind were humans "exempt" from general laws. Everywhere,

> the passions and tendencies of the mind are the same, subject to the same influences, and exhibiting the same results, modified only by external circumstances … the same mental and moral phenomena apparently arise from similar causes, and reproduce under all conditions nearly the same effects,—we are justified in supposing that not only is there a limit, but also a law, to the actions of the minds.

Infants, Rawson observed, were everywhere the same in all things save temper, albeit developing differently in response to such local determinants as a healthy parent or moral education.

Facts, he continued, confirmed that "metaphysical speculation." Statistics proved, for example, that in both England and France, four-fifths of crimes were committed by men. "Whence arises this uniformity from year to year, and this similarity between the two countries?" It might be general law or local conditions: either way, statistics could yield an answer. And if, say, Turks and Hindoos turned out to have very different proportions, that too could be put to prove the relationship between general laws and "the several external circumstances by which they may be influenced." One had to do some sleuthing to see how institutions shaped choices and vice versa, as differently situated people seized upon the "most suitable and convenient" ways of gratifying their passions: "these are not abstract qualities, but material or visible objects." You had to presume a visible and universal rationality to things like murder if you wanted a genuinely universal science. Rawson believed that statistics, applied to humanity, proved the essential moral unity of the species.[41]

Rawson carried those views into his researches into poverty, crime, and education in Marylebone, now a wealthy part of London, but then on the western border of the city, and home to many poor migrants, especially Irish migrants concentrated in the notorious Calmel buildings not far from the Statistical Society's

[41]Rawson W. Rawson, "An Inquiry into the Statistics of Crime in England and Wales," *JSSL* 2/5 (1839), 316–44, at 316–18, 344.

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headquarters. At a meeting in February 1837, the society resolved to investigate the state of the poor, and especially of education, in the "most wretched and notorious localities in the parish," beginning with the Calmel buildings. The findings were presented by Rawson in May. Tallying the twenty-six houses and 231 rooms, and the 882 inhabitants who made up 280 families, most of them Irish and Catholic, he saw an average of thirty-four people per house and 4.5 people per room. One hundred and sixteen families with children each occupied one room, and seventy-six each occupied only part of one room. Fifty rooms each accommodated more than one family, and one room had thirteen people. The Calmel findings anticipated warnings against overcrowding from Southwood Smith and the registrar-general, William Farr. Digesting Farr's first report for the *JSSL* in 1839, Rawson observed, "It is found, from a comparison of the several districts, that, *cæteris paribus*, the mortality increases as the density of the population increases." (The evidence wasn't perfectly conclusive; hence a qualifier: "and, where the density and the wealth of the population are the same, the rate of mortality depends upon the efficiency of the ventilation, and of the means which are employed for the removal of impurities."[42]) But Rawson saw glimmerings of moral as well as material agency amongst the Calmel poor. English families were less concentrated but the Irish suffered less from their greater poverty, thanks to their greater readiness "to assist one another, and the small quantity and cheap quality of the food which they consume."[43] Even the poorest had moral agency.

Rawson also rebuffed conservative arguments about the relationship between crime and education at the Statistical Society's education committee from 1837.[44] Liberal statisticians in England were responding directly to an 1833 argument made by a French statistician, A. M. Guerry, that education did nothing to reduce crime. When an argument along those lines was made at a BAAS meeting in Glasgow in 1840, using data from Worcestershire, Lord Sandon and Rawson (who, Cullen remarks, "had sat through much more dubious papers in the past") both interrupted him in mid-paper, with Sandon telling the author to "stop wasting their time" and Rawson arguing that it was easy to overlook small and short-lived schools.[45] Rawson had small hopes for education from those small schools but he still counted them alongside elite academies for statistical purposes. He had discovered those small schools in West London while trying to measure crime rates by class and to show that increased property crimes were the price of urbanization and industrialization. In 1841, his statistics on nonviolent larcenies showed "that the collection of large masses of the population in crowded cities conduces more

[42]"First Annual Report of the Registrar-General on Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England, in 1837–8", *JSSL*, 2/4 (1839), 269–74, at 273. See John M. Eyler, *Victorian Social Medicine: The Ideas and Methods of William Farr* (Baltimore, 1979).

[43]"Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the State of the Poor in the Parish of St. Marylebone," *The Athenaeum* 498 (13 May 1837), 344–5; Rawson, paper presented to the Statistical Society of London, 15 May 1837, *Transactions of the Statistical Society of London* 1/10 (1836–7), 286–9; Rawson W. Rawson, "Results of Some Inquiries into the Condition and Education of the Poorer Classes in the Parish of Marylebone in 1838," *JSSL* 6/1 (1843), 44–8.

[44]Derek Gillard, *Education in England: A Brief History* (History Docs Articles, 2011); Guido de Ruggiero, *The History of European Liberalism* (1927), trans. R. G. Collingwood (Boston, MA, 1959), 108.

[45]Cullen, *The Statistical Movement*, 139–40.

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than anything else to the creation of those causes, whatever they may be, which stimulate the commission of crime."[46] Correlating education and crime, he discovered that education couldn't prevent crimes of lust and could prevent crimes of premeditation, but he also found that "forgery, and offences requiring for their execution some degree of intelligence and powers of mental combination, are necessarily peculiar to the instructed classes."[47] Different social classes had their own normal vices and crimes: that was a highly Queteletian view. But they were not to be allowed their own standards of education: reformers' arguments for schooling came with a "sweeping dismissal of the entire structure of learning in the communities of the labouring poor."[48]

Statisticians could read the data as confirming or denying similarities across such categories as education and property, ethnicity, race, and religion. To borrow from David and Ricardo Nirenberg: "for every object of knowledge we have a choice of focus and attention, a choice between willing sameness and willing difference (or perhaps not willing at all). That choice is, however, often prejudiced in the literal sense of the word: prejudged, the product of prior habits and commitments, theory laden."[49] In the interests of a genuinely universal and comparative science, Rawson sought sameness more than difference. Thus, reflecting on education in Nattore in Bengal for the Central Society of Education, Rawson argued in 1838, "This frightful state of ignorance in a partially civilised country does not proceed from any indisposition to acquire knowledge, at least, on the part of the male population, nor from any national prejudices or religious obstacles; but from sheer poverty." Ignorance and improvidence abounded not just in Nattore but in its schools, on Rawson's secondhand digested account: the "native system" of education failed to "unshackle" mind from "the trammels of mere usage," because "the radical faults of the native character, the want of enlarged views of moral and social obligation," as well as "the narrow and contracted selfishness universally to be found in native society," still prevailed. That was a recapitulation of Mill's argument about civilization. But if "present depressed circumstances" were depressing formal education, Rawson still saw "the struggle which the ancient habits and the practical sense of the people" were making to keep up education in households, if not schools.[50] Close scrutiny of ignorance and poverty showed elements of rationality and moral agency checking them from within.

[46]Rawson, "An Inquiry," 344; see the discussion of this passage in Thomas Osborne and Nikolas Rose, "In the Name of Society, or Three Theses on the History of Social Thought," *History of the Human Sciences* 10/3 (1997), 87–104, at 92.

[47]Rawson W. Rawson, "An Enquiry into the Condition of Criminal Offenders in England and Wales, with Respect to Education; or, Statistics of Education among the Criminal and General Population of England and other Countries," *JSSL* 3/4 (1841), 331–52, at 347.

[48]David Vincent, "The End of Literacy: The Growth and Measurement of British Public Education since the Early Nineteenth Century," in C. A. Bayly, Vijayendra Rao, Simon Szreter, and Michael Woolcock, eds., *History, Historians, Development Policy: A Necessary Dialogue* (Manchester, 2011), 177–92, at 180–81; Brian Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780–1870* (London, 1960).

[49]David Nirenberg and Ricardo L. Nirenberg, *Uncountable: A Philosophical History of Number and Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (Chicago, 2021), 180.

[50]Rawson W. Rawson, "An Account of the State of Education within the District of Nattore, in the Province of Bengal," *Central Society of Education Papers* 2 (1838), 293–320, at 297.

To dispossess people, to take their property on grounds of civilization, you needed a double standard of civilized versus uncivilized that might be either racial or cultural. The normal statistical subject could also be racially or culturally or socially distinct, but the agnostic statistician could not presume that double standard. He must also look for rationality and solidarity—that is, social agency and collective protection—in places that the austerity lobby and the colonizing lobby refused to see it. The statisticians dug a little deeper and sometimes saw more similarity than difference. They also ritually intoned that statistics made invisible things visible and disproved common errors and prejudices. Debunking accounts of colonialism in New Zealand and poor relief in Scotland, published in the *JSSL*, were applied to the tangled workings of property and rationality in Canada by the Bagot commission.

The *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*

Rawson launched the *Journal of the Statistical Society of London* in May 1838, promising "a Journal devoted to the collection and comparison of Facts which illustrate the condition of mankind and tend to develop the principles by which the progress of society is determined."[51] Statistics referred to all the parts of knowledge in any field that had any connection with "the practical purposes of life." That determination to decide for themselves what was knowable and useful earned statisticians many enemies amongst traditional knowledge brokers. Rawson promised to eschew theory and party, but not policy: statistics "does not discuss causes, nor reason upon probable effects; it seeks only to collect, arrange, and compare, that class of facts which alone can form the basis of correct conclusions with respect to social and political government." In fact, Rawson and his authors speculated about causes all the time. Once you had pointed out that *x* population was dying much faster than *y* population, you couldn't help but itemize the most obvious environmental or social or economic correlations, well understood as possible causes. They had to disavow rigorous attributions of cause to avoid censure, not just from doctrinaire liberals but also from conservative intellectual gatekeepers, including Whewell at Cambridge, who grew hostile to Rawson's agenda and stopped the BAAS from undertaking statistical investigations in the early 1840s. The London Statistical Society heard and the *JSSL* published a wide variety of papers, some more economic or more Christian or more racializing than others. But the more substantial papers, by such men as Porter, Rawson, and Guy, were reconfiguring knowledge to be more agnostic, secular, and social, a useful resource not just for reformers but also for radicals. Here I'll focus on examples that show how the early *JSSL* constructed categories and observations that debunked racialized accounts of property and immunity to disease.

Rawson's opening salvo defined statistics as "the knowledge and proper appreciation of those facts which determine and explain the civilization, riches, power, and happiness of our own and other nations" and the determinants of "the character of uncivilized nations." But the methods expounded and the facts uncovered challenged comfortable explanations for those distinctions. Rawson defined the

[51]"Introduction," *JSSL* 1/1 (1838), 1–5.

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subject of social statistics as the "state, or a body of men existing in a social union." Not to see social union was parochial and unscientific, hence his discovery of small schools and mutual aid amongst the very poorest in Marylebone. But social union was exactly what the austerity lobby and the civilizing lobby sought to deny in the people before and the people after civilization, in contrast with their own institutions for collective agency. That was Mill's account of "savage life" in 1836. It was also a widespread description of slum dwellers, many of them Irish and Scottish country folk. A *JSSL* article by William Felkin on the "Moral Statistics of a District Near Gray's Inn, London, in 1836," argued, "Little or no social feeling is exhibited amongst the neighbours; they seldom speak except to quarrel; cruelty, revenge, and oppression, are frequently practised upon each other. Sickness, sorrow, and death occur, and often no one heeds the sufferer; the widow and the fatherless may weep as in the solitude of a desert." But Felkin also criticized the sociability that took them into brothels, pubs, and shops where stolen goods were fenced.[52] His account resembled Charles Dickens's account of Fox Court (where Dickens had a cousin), first described in *Sketches by Boz* (1834), reused for Fagin's den in *Oliver Twist* (1837), and again in *Bleak House* (1852).[53]

Rawson, who had, like Dickens, been impoverished by an improvident father, shared the fascination with the dark corners of London. Dickens ridiculed the statisticians as dry Gradgrinds, but Rawson was no Gradgrind. He followed an "Abstract of Criminal Tables for England and Wales, 1837," with an editorial note: "It will probably excite some astonishment that one child of eight years old, two of nine, and eight of ten, should be imprisoned, even under committed sentences, for three years; and still more, that a child of ten years old, should, in the same manner, be committed for ten years."[54] There were other appalled accounts of mortality amongst the poor. Rawson challenged improvidence narratives and noticed counterevidence. He also drew into the London Society people like himself, clerks, who commanded more local knowledge than social prestige, signing dozens of their membership papers.[55] Insurance officers were particularly recruited. Insurance companies were like doctors: they used statistics to quantify risk and debunk boosters and fraudsters. Guy's paper used life insurance tables to prove that the numerical method was rigorous and useful, while another paper in the *JSSL* invoked insurance tables to compare colonial and metropolitan rates of death and disease. This was a democratization of knowledge and an avenue to advancement for educated but penniless young men like Rawson and Dickens within the emerging administrative state and its social field.

The categories for analysis could sometimes challenge racializing and essentializing trends. In 1840, the society and its journal drew up a model for statistical inquiry, with universal templates. The general headings were I. Physical Geography, Division and Appropriation; II. Production; III. Instruction; IV. Protection, Consumption and Enjoyment. Appropriation had the subclassification "1st. Of private tenures and private property; 2d. Of voluntary association to hold

[52]W. Felkin, "Moral Statistics of a District Near Gray's Inn, London, in 1836," *JSSL* 1/9 (1839), 541–2.
[53]Michael Allen, *Charles Dickens and the Blacking Factory* (Oxford, 2011), 25–32.
[54]"Abstract of Criminal Tables for England and Wales, 1837," *JSSL* 1/4 (1838), 231–45, at 242.
[55]Archives, Royal Statistical Society, nomination forms.

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property in common use, or to the common benefit; and, 3d. Of public property, or property held by the state, or the political organization of any whole community, to the common use and advantage, against all claimants, internal or external."[56] That was an agnostic and eclectic definition of property and a red flag to colonizers, for whom the incommensurability of civilized versus uncivilized property regimes allowed you to dispossess other people. The categories jarred with the double standard whereby the people with civilization, understood as collective purpose, forced unpropertied people to relinquish older traditions of solidarity and pull themselves by their bootstraps into modern, atomized sociability.

Agriculture exemplified the double standard. Kames had argued that the sense of property followed the development of agriculture, and primitive people lacked both.[57] Mill's article on civilization likewise saw no agriculture amongst uncivilized people. Colonizers everywhere put that argument to justify dispossession of the "waste" lands of Indigenous peoples. But the paper on New Zealand by Saxe Bannister, published in the *JSSL* in 1838, proved the claim false and predatory. Land speculators argued that the Māori were essentially asocial and unpropertied, while their defenders marshaled statistical evidence to show that the Māori were impressive warriors and farmers, thereby persuading Lord Glenelg in December 1837, and Lord Stanley in 1844, to identify gradations of civilization and property rights.[58] The New Zealand colonizers claimed to want only the waste lands, but their critics showed that there were no waste lands, and farmlands were being targeted. The New Zealand Company pleaded that it was following the usual template for colonization. But the new data were making dispossession harder. Bannister itemized the neat rows of potatoes and kumeras, taro, Indian corn, cabbages, shallots, garlic, turnips, and yams, as well as the neat piles of weeds and stones pulled from the soil: "Few farms in civilized countries could be planted with greater attention to neatness." He showed commerce, education, work, and credit advancing creditably but also that, even as the Māori were making gains from "their more civilized customers and employers, they are parting with their lands in a way that does not produce sufficient equivalents to themselves." Where colonizers and missionaries invoked lofty ideals, Saxe Bannister's account of New Zealand noticed secular outcomes: "at missionary institutions, the native children are dying extensively" while missionaries were becoming large landed proprietors.[59] Bannister's findings were reprinted in the *Monthly Review*, the *Penny Magazine of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, *The Athenaeum*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Edinburgh Review*, and the *American Journal of Science*. Evidence from the field, mobilized in the metropolis, forced the colonizers to purchase land rather than merely claiming it as an entitlement of identity. There were useful lessons for

[56]"Sixth Annual Report of the Council of the Statistical Society of London," *JSSL* 3/1 (1840), 1–13.

[57]Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Principles of Equity* (Edinburgh, 1760); Andreas Rahmatianm, *Lord Kames: Legal and Social Theorist* (Edinburgh, 2015), 246–7; Daniel J. Carr, "An Iron Mind in an Iron Body: Lord Kames and His *Principles of Equity*," University of Edinburgh School of Law Research Paper Series, 2013/25 (2013), 21.

[58]Bain Attwood, *Empire and the Making of Native Title: Sovereignty, Property and Indigenous People* (Cambridge, 2020), 273, *passim*.

[59]Saxe Bannister, "An Account of the Changes and Present Condition of the Population of New Zealand," *JSSL* 1/6 (1838), 362–76, at 368.

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Rawson: in Canada as the governor's secretary and on the Bagot commission he would meet deputations, hear grievances, and transmit petitions, such as in February and March 1843 when he sent the attorney general complaints of encroachment and requests for protection from Abenaki communities at Bécancour and Saint-François.[60]

Rawson's *JSSL* sought comparative analysis to test existing causal explanations for wealth and poverty, and looped in health and disease as measurable factors. He published a series of articles on sickness and mortality amongst British troops in the West Indies by Sir Alexander Murray Tulloch, extracted from four volumes of state-sponsored research, that had begun as private enquiries into sickness observed when he served as a lieutenant in India from 1827. The articles, using R. T. H. Laennec's new diagnostic tool, debunked many preconceived theories of sickness: to move around was highly fatal, but long-acclimatized people also proved surprisingly vulnerable, as did those in highly ventilated parts, and as did black people recently recruited from Africa. Tulloch thought that "there must be in the constitution of the negro some peculiarity which predisposes him to affections of the lungs." But the same was true of white rank-and-file troops who, though they, unlike officers, were tested for disease, still died at higher rates than officers.[61] Tulloch compared the incidence of illness in the West Indies to other regions, including Canada, to rule out such factors as seasonality or marshy lands. Rawson added a note at the end of the paper arguing that comparative knowledge of this sort taught governments to provide better provisions and better accommodation in more carefully selected locales, with racially specific assignments.[62]

Lessons on the interaction of race, health, and property were also routed through the "social question" in Britain. There, too, Kames's and Mill's distinctions between propertied and unpropertied were reifying, as the 1832 Reform Act extended the vote to leaseholders but also disenfranchised thousands with borough votes.[63] There, too, data about morbidity and mortality challenged basic theories and policies. Scottish statisticians wrote up accounts of epidemic disease that revealed the intellectual bankruptcy of the improvidence model. The cholera epidemic of the

[60]Rawson to Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine, in *Au nom de la loi: Correspondence générale* (Montreal, 2003), 227–35. See Daniel Carpenter, *Democracy by Petition: Popular Politics in Transformation, 1790–1870* (Cambridge, MA, 2021); Maxime Gohier, "La pratique pétitionnaire des amérindiens de la vallée du Saint-Laurent sous le régime britannique: Pouvoir, representation et légitimité (1760–1860)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2014); Isabelle Bouchard, "Des systèmes politiques en quête de légitimité: terres 'seigneuriales,' pouvoirs et enjeux locaux dans les communautés autochtones de la vallée du Saint-Laurent (1760–1860)" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2017).

[61]A. M. Tulloch, "On the Sickness and Mortality among the Troops in the West Indies," *JSSL* 1/3 (1838), 129–42; 1/4 (1838), 215–30; and 1/7 (1838), 428–44; also J. W. C. Lever, "On the Sickness and Mortality among the Troops in the United Kingdom. Abstract of the Statistical Report of Major Tulloch," *JSSL* 2/4 (1839), 245–60.

[62]"Note by editor," *JSSL* 1/7 (1838), 444–5, at 444.

[63]S. J. Thompson, "'Population Combined with Wealth and Taxation': Statistics, Representation and the Making of the 1832 Reform Act," in Crook and O'Hara, *Statistics and the Public Sphere*, 205–33; David A. Bateman, *Disenfranchising Democracy: Constructing the Electorate in the United States, the United Kingdom, and France* (Cambridge, 2018); Martin Daunton, *Progress and Poverty: An Economic and Social History of Britain, 1700–1850* (Oxford, 1995), 482

early 1830s had already begun to undermine that model by felling the propertied as well as the poor, not indiscriminately but more than was quite comfortable for the paradigm.[64] As the pandemic receded, medical statisticians continued counting endemic fevers. The intellectual debates about the poverty–disease nexus and its fiscal consequences were center stage in 1840 when the BAAS met in Glasgow and heard medical men argue for and against extending the Poor Law to Scotland. Rawson's *JSSL* leaped to join the fight.

Again, the statisticians had to decide whether they were observing physical contagion or social reproduction; that is, an innate tendency to decay and corruption. Unchecked rutting and rotting amongst the "dangerous classes" was what civilization was supposed to surmount. Shouldn't societies that cultivated knowledge and capacity be able to mitigate mass die-offs? Diseases tended to be seen as either constitutional (inherited—applied to cancer and tuberculosis), or contagious (like rabies or syphilis), or epidemic; that is, subject to general causes that affected whole populations. The statisticians were beginning to look for general causes that might affect constitutions and vectors of infection working together. These were always pragmatic debates about what could be done to prevent or mitigate epidemics. The evidence from Scotland challenged the sanitarian model championed by Edwin Chadwick, secretary to the Poor Law commissioners and a Statistical Society member.

Scottish statisticians marshaled formidable intellectual credibility and data.[65] According to a paper presented at the BAAS by Robert Cowan, a Glasgow clinician and professor of medical jurisprudence and medical police, ordinary continued fevers had risen absolutely and proportionally, from around 10 percent of patients in the Glasgow Infirmary to more than 50 percent of all cases by the 1830s. Continued fevers grouped typhoid and typhus together alongside smallpox and scarlet fever, but it was hardly by chance that a Glasgow doctor, Robert Perry, reporting to the Glasgow Medical Society on his cases in the fever hospital in 1835, distinguished typhus from typhoid or "dothinenteritis."[66] Where typhus spreads by body lice and requires close contact, typhoid spreads by fecal matter, like cholera, so it could leap out of the slum and fell even the occasional Prince Consort. Meanwhile, Edinburgh physician and professor William Pulteney Alison gave a paper on the "practical operation" of poor relief in Scotland. Rawson published both papers in the *JSSL* over nearly a hundred pages.[67] Both Scots correlated fever with poverty rather than with dirt, and both reflected the anti-Malthusian views also articulated at length by William's brother, Archibald Alison, president of Glasgow's statistical society.

[64]Hamlin, *Cholera*; Pelling, *Cholera*; Baldwin, *Contagion and the State*; Harrison, *Contagion*; Hans Zinsser, *Rats, Lice and History* (Boston, 1935).

[65]Megan Coyer, *Literature and Medicine in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1817–1858* (Edinburgh, 2017), 1 and *passim*.

[66]Archibald L. Goodall, "Glasgow's Place in the Distinction between Typhoid and Typhus Fevers," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 28/2 (1954), 140–53. The word "dothinenteritis" shows intellectual debts to Pierre Bretonneau in Tours.

[67]W. P. Alison, "Illustrations of the Practical Operation of the Scottish System of Management of the Poor," *JSSL* 3/3 (1840), 211–57; Robert Cowan, "Vital Statistics of Glasgow, Illustrating the Sanatory Condition of the Population," *JSSL* 3/3 (1840), 257–92.

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Cowan tabulated decades' worth of fever patients at the special fever hospitals and the Glasgow Infirmary, to show that numbers were exploding. Manchester, once harder hit than Glasgow, now treated an average of 497 cases per year, rising to 780 during the epidemic of 1836; Glasgow was treating 1,842 a year, rising to 3,125 in 1836. Comparisons with other English cities were only more "alarming." Between 1835 and 1837, Cowan counted 38,072 cases of fever in Glasgow. "The mind cannot contemplate without horror the amount of human misery which the above statement so forcibly expresses." General causes seemed to hit Glasgow particularly hard. There had been more than ten thousand deaths from different fevers in Glasgow in the past ten years, more than half from typhus and more than half in children under ten. Many people blamed the Irish diaspora as carrying contagion or creating poverty through economic competition. Cowan noted that Dr Lombard of Geneva, writing in the *Dublin Medical Journal* in 1836, blamed the Irish for the fever, and so did the chapter on "Vital Statistics" in J. R. McCulloch's *Statistics of the British Empire*, citing Glasgow Infirmary statistics.[68]

Glasgow was a natural experiment because it attracted few English but many Irish and Scottish economic migrants. Country folk were being dispossessed and evicted, losing access to the commons, or losing family work traditions such as weaving to mechanization. Cowan counted one Irish person for every 9.67 admitted to hospital for fever in 1819, and one for every 5.69 in 1831: "From this increase of Irish alone, without including the influx of labourers from the Highlands and Lowlands of Scotland, it is quite obvious that the relative proportion of the middle and wealthier classes to the labouring class must have been yearly diminishing; and, hence, one source of the increasing rate of mortality in Glasgow." But Cowan's findings debunked the anti-Irish etiologies and proved Lombard and McCulloch "incorrect." Irish constituted 30.12 percent of patients, Scottish 67.76 percent of patients, and English 2.10 percent of patients, and the fever patient numbers were similar. "The proportion of Irish treated in the Fever Hospital," Cowan concluded, "is much less than what is generally believed by those who have not paid attention to the subject." They had more typhus but less smallpox than Scots because they were more likely to be vaccinated.[69]

For Cowan, that medical attendants fell ill suggested contagion as well as general causes,

> among which certain states of the atmosphere and contagion must be ranked; but the most influential of all is poverty and destitution. In every one of the epidemic fevers which have ravaged Glasgow, its progress has been slow, unless extreme destitution has existed; and it is only when contagious fever, that unerring index of destitution, has prevailed, and influenced the selfish fears as well as the benevolent sympathies of the inhabitants, that any active, although temporary, measures have been taken to alleviate the existing distress. The fever abates from want of *materiel*, and the wants of the poor remain unnoticed till its next recurrence.

[68]Cowan, "Vital statistics of Glasgow," 275.
[69]Ibid., 286.

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Applications for relief could be correlated to fever but many refused to apply, so a better correlation, Cowan argued, was the shrinking value of goods at pawnshops, as furniture ceded to bedding and clothing. He counted 2,043 families who pawned 7,380 items on which they raised £740, the majority of whom had "never applied for, or received, charity of any description."[70]

Dearth, not dirt: that was the message from Cowan and also from William Pulteney Alison in Edinburgh.[71] He made two main arguments. First, that extreme destitution in Scotland proved the need to rise to the "prudent but liberal" relief offered in England. Scottish law demanded that the poor be "unbeggared" but they were being beggared, illegally, by people following the opinions of "Mr Malthus." Parish authorities were treating pauperism "*as a disease which they were bound to keep down* by every means in their power, and with this view they have reduced both the number of paupers admitted on the roll, and the amount of allowance, to the smallest possible limits," demanding three years' settlement. The refusals forced people into beggary and mobility, and thereby caused urban destitution and disease. "In one instance, I remember a poor family wandering in search of employment, and infected with fever, who were driven from one part of the town to another, and introduced the disease into three different districts, all inhabited by very poor people," resulting in fifty cases.[72] The poor came to the towns for work, not relief. They were said to have bad characters, but their numbers, not their character, was the problem and most had been in work or had working parents. Second, you could always see dirt, but typhus only coincided with dire hardship. Alison debunked Southwood Smith's "hasty and unfounded" inference that sewers prevented typhus: "The districts without sewers will, naturally, be not only the dirtiest, but the *cheapest*; they will be inhabited by the poorest and most destitute people, who will be huddled together in the greatest numbers in proportion to the space they occupy," and especially the Irish, who were largely excluded from poor relief. Thus, epidemic fever.[73] Rawson published Alison's paper and personally sent it around to colleagues, including Chadwick and the Irish viceroy, Lord Ebrington, who described himself as "quite a convert to Alison's views."[74] Cowan and Alison, like Rawson, made themselves poverty experts through close personal observations. They concluded that the real improvidence was among the propertied classes, who misunderstood and exacerbated the causes of poverty. Because the poor could not and the local ratepayers would not obviate the terrible conjunction of dearth, dirt, and disease, a national response with centralized boards must respond, using taxes rather than donations.

[70]Ibid., 289.

[71]Sheonagh M. K. Martin, "William Pulteney Alison: Activist Philanthropist and Pioneer of Social Medicine" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of St Andrew's, 1995); Coyer, *Literature and Medicine in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical Press*; James Hanley, "Edwin Chadwick and the Poverty of Statistics," *Medical History* 46 (2002), 21–40; Hamlin, *Public Health*.

[72]Alison, "Illustrations," 240–41, original emphasis. He had visited Tours and Bretonneau.

[73]Ibid., 233–4, original emphasis.

[74]City of Westminster Archives, Barkly Papers, M:Acc0618/57/3; University College London Archives, Chadwick Papers, GB 0103, 1646.

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Archibald Alison, brother to William and a sheriff, joined in the campaign. He published a two-volume *Principles of Population, and Their Connection with Human Happiness* in 1840 as a response to

> the vivid and universal anxiety … excited by the late proceedings of the Chartists, and the revelations of social distress and degradation to which they have led, as well as the general and well-deserved interest awakened by the late admirable publication on the Poor in Scotland, by the author's nearest relative [William], whose long experience had given him such ample meanings of judging of the causes which really depress or relieve the humblest classes.[75]

God was at work in the "Invisible Hand and Irresistible Agency" of history, and especially of population growth, which pushed people to expand their geographical range and increase their productive powers. Granted, some people were indolent and must be forced to work (he used Porter's statistics to denounce emancipation), but even former slaves and uncivilized tribes in the Americas could sustain whole families "by merely scratching the earth for a few weeks in autumn with the branch of a tree or the rudest implement of husbandry," while a "civilized" settler could turn three or four acres in Canada into "his fortune and that of his descendants."[76]

The Alison brothers believed, with Dugald Stewart (their professor at the University of Edinburgh and a friend of their father's), that the most important civilizing agency was the capacity to buy something other than what was absolutely necessary. William's college-days transcription of Stewart's lectures survives with later markings (in a different pen) on the key passage: "The real or artificial wants of men is [*sic*] the only true stimulus to human industry."[77] Base need provoked industry but the capacity to exceed base need provoked providence. The middle classes were a spur to the poor to improve themselves as well as a spur to the aristocrats not to fall behind. Where there was no middle class, as in an Ireland drained of its wealth by absentee landlords, the poor sank into immiseration, according to Archibald Alison. William Alison argued that you couldn't blame the destitute for improvidence when they had no capacity for providence; that is, for supplying unnecessary as well as necessary wants. Improvidence had a kind of rationality, much like ignorance in Nattore in Rawson's analysis. Alison concluded that, *pace* Bond Head, family feelings were

> necessarily out of the power of those who are constantly and anxiously occupied in the pursuit of the first necessaries of life. From which we may infer, that security against destitution, if accompanied by religious and moral education, can have at least no injurious effect on family affection, and that, by reducing people to destitution, we are much more likely to weaken than to strengthen those sacred ties.[78]

[75]Archibald Alison, *The Principles of Population and Their Connection with Human Happiness*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1840), 1: x.

[76]Ibid., 37–8.

[77]Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, W. P. Alison Papers, 1/5/4, notes on lectures of Dugald Stewart, 1809, 55. Capitalization silently corrected.

[78]Alison, "Illustrations," 257.

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For the Scots, measurable providence required a modicum of security, whatever the class. The propertied and unpropertied reasoned alike and differences between their conditions and choices could be attributed to the presence or absence of economic security. Glaswegians all, the Alisons and Cowan reflected the moral philosophy, enunciated by Adam Smith in his lectures at the University of Glasgow, transmitted by Dugald Stewart in his at Edinburgh, that the history of freedom was the history of security of oneself and one's property against the tyrant and the "man of system" who "seems to imagine that he can arrange the different members of a great society with as much ease as the hand arranges the different pieces upon a chess-board."[79] Malthusians were defying Smith's wisdom by treating them as chess pieces and exacerbating their insecurity. Scottish statistics debunked the Malthusian state. And Rawson carried those lessons to the Canadian frontier, where Bond Head was recommending forcible movement of whole Indigenous nations as the wisdom of political economy.

The report

Rawson's vast social knowledge proved shockingly useless to Governor Bagot in 1842. He lacked the detailed knowledge of local relations and conditions that his predecessor had commanded. Worse, Rawson could "know" nothing officially because his position was politically compromised. He landed in the middle of the crisis over responsible government, just as reformers demanded full control of patronage, including his own job. They had a "natural & justifiable jealousy of my interference in any provincial matter," he informed Gladstone, so that "I have nothing to do with provincial affairs. I do not know what occurs or is determined upon in Council except what the Governor mentions to me, or I learn incidentally from some member of it."[80] Bagot consulted and protected Rawson but he soon lay dying and his successor, Sir Charles Metcalfe, had his own man. Distrusted and isolated, Rawson begged Gladstone for a transfer.

Meanwhile, Rawson directed his energies to an investigation of the Indian Department, as one of a three-man commission appointed in October 1842, alongside William Hepburn, a registrar in the Court of Chancery, and John Davidson, a well-connected timber trader, who had served as a Canada Company director and as commissioner of Crown lands. Where Davidson represented settler colonial interests, Hepburn represented their limits as state policy: he had served on prior investigations into "Indian conditions," provoked by the intense outcry against Bond Head's arguments of Indigenous declension. Bond Head had argued that, because Indigenous people were incapable of civilization, they should be resettled

[79]Paul Sagar, *Adam Smith Reconsidered: History, Liberty, and the Foundations of Modern Politics* (Princeton, 2022), 57; see also Ted McCormick, *Human Empire: Mobility and Demographic Thought in the British Atlantic World, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 2022).

[80]British Library, Gladstone Papers, 44359, 259–61, Rawson to Gladstone, 27 December 1842; Philip Buckner, *The Transition to Responsible Government: British Policy in British North America, 1815–1840* (Westport, 1985); Jeffrey L. McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791–1854* (Toronto, 2000); Christian Blais, "Pour en finir avec 1848! Les deux facettes du government responsible aux parlements de Kingston et de Montréal," *Les cahiers des dix* 74 (2020), 135–90, and 75 (2021), 201–56.

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in remote northern territories to die off quietly. The argument appalled humanitarians in Britain and Canada, who saw conversion, education, and civilization as largely interchangeable. A Parliamentary select committee and the Aborigines Protection Society denounced the "positive injustice" of the policies and lamented Indigenous "insecurity of title,—and their actual removal from it in late remarkable cases under an oppressive and fraudulent treaty" forced on them by Bond Head.[81] Early Canadian reports concurred. A first done in Lower Canada in July 1837, and a second in Upper Canada in 1839 that confirmed the first, refused any but "accidental influences" holding back Indigenous people from knowledge and religion "uniformly bestowed on the rest of mankind," and citing statistical evidence of improvement and cultivation.[82] The rebellions of 1837–8 diverted attention and briefly reinvigorated older alliances between Indigenous people and the British state, but as Canadian legislators returned to development policies in the early 1840s, such reports provided scant protection against mounting pressure from the austerity and colonization lobbies, who vehemently attacked fiscal transfers to Indigenous communities in the form of annuities and presents paid for service and lands. The government needed a rigorous, scientific response and apparently had the right man in place to do the job. The Bagot commission, which was known locally as "the Rawson commission," began to investigate the policy, the Indian Department, and the condition of the Indigenous peoples of the Canadas.[83] Rawson chaired the commission and with Hepburn attended every session, while Davidson fell away after a few months. Rawson reported on his meetings with different interested parties, including the chief superintendent of the Indian Department, Samuel Peters Jarvis, who, Rawson verbally advised him, must address some improper expenditures. It was also Rawson who discovered Jarvis's falsification of the books.[84]

The commission began with remarkable energy, meeting often, sometimes daily, through the fall and winter of 1842–3, to draft and read correspondence and hear written and oral evidence. It drew up questionnaires regarding Indigenous lifestyles, beliefs, economic practices, and health, posed to experts: Indian agents, missionaries, doctors, and one Mississauga chief, Kahkewāquonāby or Peter Jones, a Methodist minister and longtime advocate and exemplar of civilization, well known in British Methodist circles. Amongst the property questions: how was land chosen for cultivation, how was it cultivated, and how did the landless subsist?

[81]*Report on the Indians of Upper Canada, by a Sub-committee of the Aborigines Protection Society* (London, 1839), 4.

[82]Library and Archives Canada (LAC), RG10, vol. 717, Macaulay report, July 1839.

[83]Susan M. Hill, *The Clay We Are Made Of: Haudenosaunee Land Tenure on the Grand River* (Winipeg, 2017); Brian Gettler, "En espèce ou en nature? Les présents, l'imprévoyance et l'évolution idéologique de la politique indienne pendant la première moitié du XIXe siècle," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 65/4 (2012), 409–37; John Leslie, "The Bagot Commission: Developing a Corporate Memory for the Indian Department," *Historical Papers* 17/1 (1982), 31–52; Mathieu Arsenault, "'Maintenant nous te parlons, ne dédaigne pas nous écouter': Pétitions et relation spéciale entre les premières nations et la couronne au Canada, 1840–1860," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 2019); Nathan Ince, "An Empire within an Empire: The Upper Canadian Indian Department, 1796–1845" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 2022).

[84]LAC, RG10, vol. 720, Minute book of Bagot commission, 26; vol. 721, letter book of Bagot commission, 68.

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Was improved land secure from other people and was it securely conveyed? The missionaries, as well as the doctors, were asked for advice on checking excess mortality. The commission produced hundreds of pages of evidence that, like Chadwick's data, went into a statistical appendix. But in mid-1843 the commission's meetings became irregular, then, after June, infrequent, with meetings called on 1 July and 19 September to respond to requests by Metcalfe for information, and a final meeting on 22 January 1844 to approve the final report that had, apparently, been informally "under consideration in various occasions for some time past," while the appendix was approved in advance.[85] It may be that, much as in London, Rawson wrote up and circulated the findings, without formal discussion and perhaps without much informal discussion.

The Bagot commission was a creature of the governor's office and it upheld the British connection against the reform arguments for loosening it. Thus could Rawson's interventionist model play to imperial and colonial conservative purposes. But there were also terrific pressures coming from the Colonial Office to end the annuities and gifts that defied Malthusian strictures against downward fiscal redistribution. Rawson's determination and capacity for connecting social knowledge and progressive policy would be tested. The Aborigines Protection Society had already identified the imperial problem: a settler population that formed "virtually a party" in favour of Indigenous dispossession, which governors pandered to by ceding land as preferable to ceding constitutional privileges.[86] But if the Bagot report denounced the obvious "plunder" of Indigenous land, it also cited Emer de Vattel to argue that "the people of Europe, too closely pent-up at home, finding land of which the Savages stood in no particular need, and of which they made no actual and constant use, were lawfully entitled to take possession of it, and to settle it with Colonies."[87] Poverty had its rights and the poor must get their bread in Canada if they could not get it in Britain. But were Indigenous rights those of the propertied or the poor?

The commission was pulled in different directions by the social and medical evidence, the political pressures, and the complaints from Indigenous peoples of mismanagement and neglect. Much of its formal activities consisted of pressing Jarvis and other officials for better information about the most scandalous financial lapses and misappropriations. The complaints dominated proceedings from the start, beginning with the first witness, Peter Jones. He complained that they had not received accounts of land sales and investments for several years, as Jarvis brushed them off, saying that "he could not find time to furnish them." Jarvis's larger failure to uphold their interests in the courts stripped them of legal rights: "Magistrates will not act in Indian cases."[88] Likewise, in January 1843, a deputation from the Six Nations on the Grand River, which had close relations with the Credit

[85]LAC, RG10, vol. 720, p. 127.

[86]*Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes (British Settlement), Reprinted with Comments by the Aborigines Protection Society* (London, 1837), 5–6; "Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada," Part II, *Appendix to the Sixth Volume of the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada* (1847), Appendix T, 336.

[87]"Report on the Affairs of the Indians of Canada," Part I, *Appendix to the Fourth Volume of the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada* (1844), Appendix EEE, 5.

[88]LAC, RG10, vol. 719, 4–8.

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Mississauga, complained of forced and fraudulent land concessions, illegal squatting and timbering, and reckless spending of their investments, with Jarvis claiming unlimited executor's rights and paying himself rather than them. They also conceded their own corruption problem: individuals who ceded land without any community mandate.[89] But, *pace* Mill, selfishness was a problem for the settler state as well as for supposedly "savage" society.

The Bagot commission, like its predecessors, demanded better legal protections and financial accountability for Indigenous peoples. But it also understood from the historical evidence the hollowness of such demands. Some deeper account was needed to understand the underlying processes of impoverishment. So what were they and how much did they owe to biology and race, to disease and environment, to history and law? The Bagot report marshaled extensive evidence to show Indigenous people living in both civilized and "natural" conditions. It described different groups, and especially the more nomadic, as indolent and diseased, but it also explicitly and vehemently debunked Francis Bond Head. It signaled the capacity for and measures of civilization, in people with the same moral and psychological capacities as everyone else. "Indians" had the same "higher attributes of the mind; their perceptions of religion and their sense of moral obligations are just; their imagination is fertile; their aptitude for instruction, and their powers for imitation are great, neither are they wanting in a desire to improve their condition." They sought schools and jobs and leadership, just like everyone else, and where educated "are equal in every respect to their white associates."[90] They had never been disenfranchised and were "entitled to all the political privileges of the whites."[91] Overdetermined descriptions measured improvement. The Credit River Mississauga, formerly "filthy drunken and debased creatures, now they are elevated, cleanly, sober," with "good and comfortable homes," according to Reverend B. Slight and Reverend James Coleman, who likewise contrasted earlier "disorder, destitution, both in food and clothing, and dirt," with their current circumstances: "fixed residence in a good and comfortable house, gardens, order, plenty of food and clothing, cleanliness in house, person and food; and every necessary household utensil."[92] At Walpole Island, Supt. J. W. Keating compared "natural" and civilized" states at length:

> The former, squalid, dirty, and in rags, the latter warmly and comfortably clad, the one, barely drawing a scanty subsistence from the chase, wallowing in his intoxication, in his angry passions, aroused, illtreating his wife and family, or attempting the life of his friend; the other supplied with regular and abundant meals, a comfortable house, surrounded with domestic animals, and leading the quiet, orderly life of the well-to-do respectable farmer … Let the Village of the Ottawas at Manitowaning be my example. It contains at least sixty neat log houses, whitewashed within and without, erected by the Indians

[89]Ibid., 56–9.
[90]"Report on the Affairs of the Indians of Canada," Appendix T, 336.
[91]"Report on the Affairs of the Indians of Canada," Appendix EEE, 6.
[92]"Report on the Affairs of the Indians of Canada," Appendix T, 504.

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themselves; a good Church also built by them, and stands in the midst of several hundred acres of land under flourishing condition.[93]

But the evidence was contradictory: some doctors thought "Indians" peculiarly unhealthy; others thought them as healthy as their neighbours. There was evidence of poverty and disease amongst settled, farming peoples, the numbers comparable to metropolitan slum dwellers. How to avoid falling into the declensionist arguments of a Bond Head? The conclusions drawn up by the Bagot commission entirely ignored health, too obviously a no-win realm for an anti-austerity position, thanks to Chadwick's recent *Sanitary Report*. Instead, the official conclusions of the Bagot report focused on Christianity, property and credit, schooling and civil institutions more generally, and official positions as postmaster and ranger, to be held and administered by politically empowered Indigenous people themselves.

Even as it admitted that schooling was no panacea, the Bagot report demanded education that "must consist not merely of the training of the mind, but of a weaning from the habits and feelings of their ancestors, and the acquirements of the language, arts, and customs of civilized life."[94] That had been Peter Jones's recommendation, as was the argument that it occur in residential schools.[95] The Bagot commission recommended education and assimilation in 1844 for Indigenous peoples, much as Lord Durham's famous report had recommended them for French Canadians in 1839, but in both cases understood as *self*-assimilation by empowered political agents—voters and office holders—much like everyone else.[96] But if the staffing of such institutions was to be hybrid, their content was not: "weaning" recapitulated Rawson's "sweeping dismissal" of grassroots education. Rawson found some room for vernacular knowledge and pedagogy in his Marylebone studies, but the gap between vernacular knowledge and abstract statistical knowledge grew as statistics were adapted elsewhere.[97] Rawson's recommendations for practical education in England became, in Canada, a racially specific "industrial" education more like forced labor and entirely in the hands of officials, purposely distanced from parental influence. Rawson and Jones thought that Indigenous office holders would share in school governance, but disenfranchisement and responsible government, with its partisan control of political offices, obviated that mechanism of accountability. Between the War of 1812 and the 1840s, the Indian Department represented and amplified Indigenous voice and agency within the state; from the 1840s, it would become the mechanism for imposing a centralized assimilation policy and extinguishing Indigenous voice and agency.[98]

The commissioners tried to debunk Bond Head by inverting his cause and effect. The thing being spread from Britain to the Canadian frontier was the Malthusian

[93]Ibid., 134–5.

[94]Ibid., 3.

[95]Rebecca Swartz, *Education and Empire: Children, Race and Humanitarianism in the British Settler Colonies, 1833–1880* (Cambridge, 2019), 141; John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879–1986* (Winnipeg, 1999).

[96]E. A. Heaman, *Civilization: From Enlightenment Philosophy to Canadian History* (Montreal, 2022).

[97]Bert de Munck and Jens Lachmund, "Introduction: Urban Knowledge and the Politics of Governing Cities," in de Munck and Lachmund, *Politics of Urban Knowledge*, 1–25, at 11.

[98]Ince, "An Empire within an Empire."

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state with its strategically constructed and destabilizing insecurity of property. Indigenous people were being made demographically, politically, and legally liminal by the settler state, as a massive influx of settlers determined to use the local state to take their land, following the settler colonial pattern set in New England.[99] Valuable land held in "large blocks" became "objects of jealousy and dislike to their neighbours; of these the more unprincipled are always on the alert to take advantage of the weakness and ignorance of the Indians, and of their partiality for spirits, in order to plunder them of their improvements and other property."[100] Indigenous people were being plundered by high-handed officials and liberal reformers, made insecure in their rights, entitlements, and holdings. Rawson saw that threat because he felt that he shared it: Metcalfe and the reformers were also making him insecure in his office, understood as a kind of property. So he left for greener pastures to enjoy a successful career in colonial governance and imperial statistics.[101] His was a brief and shallow stand against state predation upon the racialized poor.

But where Americans were violently seizing lands in the 1840s, the Bagot report saw at work in those years a more British strategy of dispossessing the poor, in Canada as in Scotland and elsewhere, by making their settlement and tenure insecure. Even where land was most positively transferred and obviously cultivated, as amongst the Six Nations on the Grand River by Governor Haldimand's positive declaration, the inhabitants were, the Bagot report observed, "rendered very uneasy and unsettled by the uncertainty attending the possession of their farms, in consequence of the frequent removals rendered necessary by the successive surrenders of portions of their tract."[102] Again, amongst the Mississauga of the Credit river, "their progress has been retarded by the uncertainty which has prevailed as to their stay in the present settlement." Paradoxically, the more "enlightened" the Indigenous observer, the more uneasy they became because more able to see, as surely as any statistician, the legal double standard that made dispossession predictable. Lack of protection for title "caused great uneasiness among the more enlightened Indians in Upper Canada. They apprehend that as the tide of settlement flows on, and the pressure of the whites to possess their lands increases, they may at some future day be dispossessed or forced to surrender on disadvantageous terms, because they can shew no title deeds for their reserves."[103] If Bond Head's "Indians" were too uncivilized to possess property securely, then Rawson's were too "enlightened." Indigenous landholders were making an intellectual and economic assessment of probability that the statistician recapitulated. They could hold land on terms satisfactory to themselves but they could not hold it on terms that inspired Eurowestern confidence in the security of their property, because it was not in the interest of

[99]Allan Greer, *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires and Land in Early Modern North America* (Cambridge, 2018).

[100]"Report on the Affairs of the Indians of Canada," Appendix T, 1.

[101]Dane Morton-Gittens, "Sir Rawson William Rawson: Governor of Barbados, 1869–1875," in Shane J. Pantin and Jerome Teelucksingh, eds., *Ideology, Regionalism, and Society in Caribbean History* (London, 2017), 179–205.

[102]"Report on the Affairs of the Indians of Canada," Appendix EEE, 28.

[103]"Report on the Affairs of the Indians of Canada," Appendix T, 18.

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Eurowesterners to have such confidence. Colonialism presumed improvidence, imposed insecurity, and monetized them both in a toxic cycle. Civilization in Canada was dispossession by other means.

Rawson's presence on the Bagot commission lent it a certain agnosticism about property, even when collectively owned. Had Indigenous property been properly protected, the report observed, "they would, at the present time, have been an independent and opulent people." But they were easy to plunder because neither the British nor the Canadian state exerted itself to protect their extensive holdings where local opinion demanded cession. The Bagot report had recommendations for securing their investments and their lands, as well as removing squatters, but it also urged individual ownership as the only effective security against plunder. The Bagot commission's attempts to debunk Bond Head's invisible hand of dispossession ultimately confirmed it. The report's assessment of probability became a self-fulfilling prediction that turned settler values into settler truths. The recommendations did shore up tenure and did achieve some protections for existing reserves and woodlands, legislated in 1847. But a new report and new legislation in the 1850s "perverted the Bagot recommendations" by conjoining usurpation of the land, disenfranchisement, and a formal assimilation process.[104]

Conclusion

Rawson's vision of a mixed or *métis* society and state nexus was too optimistic. His interventions intensified a wider trend away from older political reciprocities and toward centralized and racialized bureaucratic coercions. The clerks and officials taking charge of the civilization project were as deeply implicated in dispossession as New Zealand missionaries. Government officials were illegally speculating in unceded lands, their connection to the state understood as virtual guarantee of eventual legalization.[105] They were making up lies and turning them to truths. The information revolution that Rawson hoped would reform the state was enhancing the corruption, as were the social networks. Offered a choice between an information project and a dispossession project, the "bureaucratic civilizers" chose the latter.[106] Where Americans dispossessed with war, Canadians dispossessed with bureaucratized insecurity.[107]

Rawson's social analysis of poverty did not just fail to check the workings of Malthusian political economy and racialized civilization; it intensified and extended their reach. To discover "the social," according to Pierre Manent, is to discover a

[104]Jean Barman, *Abenaki Daring: The Life and Writings of Noel Annance, 1792–1869* (Montreal and Kingston, 2016), 231; J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian–White Relations in Canada* (Toronto, 1989); Arsenault, "'Maintenant nous te parlons"; Ince, "An Empire within an Empire"; Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation."

[105]"Report on the Affairs of the Indians of Canada," Appendix T, 55.

[106]Padraic X. Scanlan, "Bureaucratic Civilization: Emancipation and the Global British Middle Class," in Christof Dejung, David Motadel, and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *The Global Bourgeoisie: The Rise of the Middle Classes in the Age of Empire* (Princeton, 2019), 143–62; see also Greer and Radforth, *Colonial Leviathan*.

[107]Elizabeth Mancke, Jerry Bannister, Denis McKim, and Scott See, eds., *Violence, Order, and Unrest: A History of British North America, 1749–1876* (Toronto, 2019).

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certain political "opacity" between the individual and freedom.[108] The statisticians sought to see further and intervene further as regards public and private agency. But in practice it was easier to see into poor households and to demand that they conform to expert standards of progress and virtue. Not self-integration but a more violent, coercive form of assimilation was imposed by white officials and teachers who saw Indigenous institutions and sociability as so many obstacles to freedom to be dismantled, thereby enacting a new kind of cultural genocide. But Rawson's early work lent momentum to later antipoverty analysis, including that of young Friedrich Engels, whose *Condition of the Working Class in England*, published in 1845, drew extensively from the *JSSL* and the findings of Cowan and both Alisons.[109] Rawson deserves some mention in that history.

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[108]Pierre Manent, *Natural Law and Human Rights: Toward a Recovery of Practical Reason* (Notre Dame, 2020), 72–3.

[109]Friedrich Engels, *Die Lage der arbeitenden Klasse in England* (Leipzig, 1845).

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