



Source 8

Task

8a. What recommendations did the Assistant Commissioner make?

8b. What evidence is there that he was concerned about the ways that children were being treated?

Look back at **Source 7**, which was written by the same man who wrote Source 8.

8c The Poor law Commissioners were sometimes accused of only being concerned with saving money. Do these sources suggest that this was the case?

Source 8

This is part of a letter written by an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner to the Poor Law Commissioners.

48,858 55
Mr. Pigott
2
London,
22 December 1855.
My Lords and Gentlemen,
I have the honour
to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th
instant, in which you inform me that having
had under consideration the expediency of some
farther provision than now exists for the Dietary
of young Children in Workhouses, between the ages
of two and nine years, you ask my opinion
as to the expediency of dividing this Class for the
purposes of Diet, into two; and as to what measures
may be advisable to secure to the Children
in Workhouses the kind and quality of food
suited to their respective ages. —



In reply, I have no hesitation in stating my opinion that the present system by no means secures this important object; that the discretion, as regards the younger Children, is very imperfectly exercised; to the great prejudice of their health and to unnecessary waste of food; and that the modification of the existing practice, proposed in the letter of the Poor Law Board, is highly desirable. I venture however to suggest that in place of leaving the preparation

Poor Law Board
Whitehall. —



preparation of the Dietaries for Children between 2 and 9 years of age to the Guardians conjointly with the Workhouse Medical Officer, the latter should be required to submit such Dietary as he thinks proper to the Board of Guardians, and that they should transmit the same to the Poor Law Board, with such observations as they may desire to make thereon. —

I take this opportunity of adding my opinion of the desirableness (whilst establishing this additional Classification) of insisting in every Workhouse on the formation of a Distinct Nursery Class, under the charge of a competent Female, for the custody and care throughout the day of all



Children under 6 years of age; in a wood floored room, well warmed and ventilated, where they may have their meals under the new regulation. This practice prevails in some Workhouses with the most beneficial result to the health of the Children, and to the discipline and order of the Workhouse. Mothers having Children at the breast are allowed to resort to them at all times, and have them with them also in their
Dormitories



Dormitories at night. The Children are thus kept clean and out of harm's way during the day, and have their meals as regulated by the Medical Officer. —

In the Workhouses where Nurseries are not provided (which compose by far the greater number) the Children are constantly with their mothers, often young single women, who make them a pretext for evading their due share of the labours of the house; preventing due cleanliness; and especially at meal time, having them upon their laps, and supplying them



with portions of their own food, unsuited to the digestive functions of infants, whereby the mortality amongst this class becomes often very formidable, this mortality being increased also in many instances by the cold brick or stone floors of the Able women's Day Wards. A further evil consequence of the absence of regular Nurseries is the practice of putting young Infant Bastards in charge of young Girls



Girls of 15 and 16 years old, whilst the mothers are at work, who having continual resort to the Children are thus brought into the ^{closest} ~~closest~~ and most continual communication with those from whom they ought to be the most carefully separated. —

Lastly for want of these Nurseries, Children of 4 or 5 years of age are often placed in the Female School, to the prejudice of the older Children, by undue diversion of the attention of the Teacher, and often to the



permanent injury of their own health by a
 premature exertion of their nervous system. —

 I have the honour to be,

 My Lords and Gentlemen
 Your very obedient Servant,

 Grenville Pight

 Poor Law Inspector. —

 I have with the
 other answers
 26 Dec 88

(PRO ref: MH 32/62)