

TEXT 2 : Poor Relief in 19th century Britain

In the essays presented in this volume Bentham lays down (= exposes, explains) the theoretical principles from which he develops his proposals for reform of the English poor laws in response to the perceived crisis in poor relief in the mid 1790s. In 'Essays on the subject of the Poor Laws' Bentham seeks to justify the principles upon which entitlement to **relief*** should be grounded. (vol. 1, ed. Michael Quinn, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2001)

***Relief = Financial assistance** from a municipal, state, or federal government because of poverty or need

(vol. 1, ed. Michael Quinn, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2001)

*« If the **condition of persons maintained by the labour of others** were rendered more eligible than that of persons maintained by their own labour then, in proportion as the existence of this state of things were ascertained, individuals destitute of property would be continually withdrawing themselves from the class of person maintained by their own labour (...) : and the sort of idleness, **which** at present is more or less confined to persons of independent fortune, would thus extend itself sooner or later to every individual... **till at last there would be nobody left to labour at all for anybody.** »*

John Bentham, *Essays on the subject of the Poor Laws*, 1797

I. Vocabulary : In the quote, find synonyms for (**word** or **expression**):

Work : _____

Inactivity/leisure : _____

Poor people : _____

Wealthy people : _____

Desirable : _____

II. Understanding :

1. Observe the phrase « persons maintained by the labour of others » : Who is the author referring to here ? And to what issue ?

2. Rephrase the very last sentence of the passage : What concern or fear does it express ?

3. Make a connection between the idea expressed by Bentham and the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 : How does the reform reflect the influence of contemporary thinkers of the time ?

III. **GRAMMAR FOCUS 2** : Observe « **which** » : Which type of grammatical word is it ? Give others and explain how to use them.