1880

Tuesday 24 August (London)

I came up to town for the Employers' Liability bill[712] and a question on Cape affairs which I had intended to ask, but which I found had never been placed on the Orders of the day in consequence of the House not sitting yesterday. I spoke however on the Employers' bill. Whilst in the House D[israeli] wrote on a slip of paper the following "do you think you could meet a few of our friends tomorrow morning at 11 o'clock at No. 1 Seamore Place? Beaconsfield". I nodded assent and so in this brief fashion I once more return to the councils of the Party, a curious little episode.

Wednesday 25 August (Highclere)

In the morning I attended the meeting at 1 Seamore Place (Rothschilds)[713] and found about 9 or 10 others – members of the late Cabinet, D. of Buccleuch and Aveland[714] – summoned I conclude for the Hares and Rabbits bill.[715] The greatest part of the time was

[712]Second reading: *Hansard*, CCLV, 24 August 1880, cols 1989–1991. Although Carnarvon believed that employers should be held responsible for accidents to their employees in certain circumstances, he added, 'The masters had a great deal to answer for in the past, and now the men tried to get more than they were entitled to.'

[713]Ferdinand James de Rothschild (1839–1898), Baron Rothschild (1874), Lib. Unionist MP for Aylesbury (1885–1898). Carnarvon and Disraeli differed on the reason for Carnarvon's presence at the meeting (see entry for 24 August). Disraeli wrote to Lady Bradford, 'Today I had my late colls. Duke of Buccleuch, Bradford, Aveland and Carnarvon! The latter will surprise you. It was at his own request!' (Buckle, *Disraeli*, VI, p. 588).

[714]Gilbert Henry Heathcote-Drummond Willoughby (1830–1910), 2nd Baron Aveland (1867), 1st Earl of Ancaster (1892).

[715]The Hares and Rabbits Bill, later the Ground Game Bill, was intended to redress the position whereby the relative value of sporting rights was the liability of the landlord. Under the bill, the tenant could recover a portion of the poor rate from the landlord. The debate on the second reading was due to take place on 1 September. Carnarvon told Cranbrook, 'I shall not come up on Monday [30 August]. If I were to come I must vote with Redesdale and I do not desire to place myself in needless opposition to the advice which Disraeli has given' (Carnarvon to Cranbrook, 28 August 1880: Cranbrook Papers, HA3 T501/362). Both the Ground Game Bill and the Employers Liability Bill received the Royal Assent on 7 September.

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occupied in discussing the Employers' Liability bill: and it was finally settled that Disraeli should move that the bill should be limited (like the Ballot Act) in its operation to two years. It was a fair and friendly discussion. Afterwards we began to discuss Hares and Rabbits. I was on the whole in favour of rejecting it on 2nd Reading, and was ready to move the rejection but Disraeli was afraid of it. On the whole there is so great unawareness that I think there will be no opposition. I believe they are wrong but I do not think that it matters very greatly.

Thursday 26 August (London)

I came up again for the Committee on the Employers' Liability bill. I found a large muster in the House and we had an animated debate in which I spoke a good many times, but there is little or no report in the papers of what passed.[716] The Duke of Argyll made two or three of the best speeches I have ever heard from him, because they were very quiet and well reasoned.[717] Kimberley made an indiscreet admission of which I took advantage.[718]

[716]Carnarvon spoke four times in the debate: *Hansard* CCLVI, 26 August 1880, cols 61, 62, 67–68, 79.

[717]George Douglas Campbell (1823–1900), 8th Duke of Argyll (1847), Postmaster-General (1855–1858), Secretary of State for India (1868–1874), Lord Privy Seal (1880–1881). Ibid., cols 69–71, 82–85.

[718]Carnarvon took Kimberley to task for his statement that 'the Bill was introduced in the interest of the workman alone. Was the Bill intended to apply only to one single class in the community?' (ibid., cols 67–68).

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