1915

1 January

My first squad drill for the old Boys Corps.

2 January

My second and third squad drills – the first at the Corps' dingy premises 6 Upper Baker Street, the second at the camp at Wembley Park. A fine bright day but plenty of mud at Wembley. The corps has here a range of sleeping huts made very ingeniously out of old railway carriages. The main body marches from the Regent's Park and arrives just as we conclude our drill.

3 January

Day of Intercession – observed in all the Churches of the Allies. E, I and the children to old Marylebone Church.

6 January

Two drills this morning. At 2.30 to the Memorial Service to Percy Illingworth, Chief whip, at the Presbyterian Church in Upper George Street. A great many members of all parties present [. . .] A Dignified and impressive service.

Board of Trade.

8 January

Daily Mail private show (at the Ambassadors Theatre) of the German Govt. Films especially designed for exhibition in neutral countries.

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Excellent films but little calculated, I think, to excite sympathy with the German cause.

13 January

Board of Trade before and after lunch. Runciman tells me that I am one of the three on the Prime Minister's short list for the vacant Under-Secretaryship Home Office and that McKenna is backing me strongly. The Liberal newspapers nominate me pretty definitely.

14 January

Runciman surprised that I have not yet heard from the P.M. McKenna tells him again today that so far as he knows there can be no doubt about the appointment.

15 January

Still no news from the P.M. Is it a case of the cup and the lip I wonder?

19 January

Board of Trade. Important conferences on the railways and on wheat supplies. [. . .]

No news of the H.O. appointment. Runciman tells me that this office is regarded as a 'plum' and may go to a junior Minister who has worked hard in some other department. Meanwhile I remain McKenna's nominee.

29 January

It gets on to the 'tape' from the Central News that I am to be appointed under Home Secretary next week. Meanwhile I have no official information.

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2 February

The House of Commons reassembles today. I receive many hearty but premature congratulations on my appointment to the Under-Secretaryship of the Home Office. Meanwhile have no news from the P.M.

Charles Masterman's resignation of the Duchy of Lancaster confirmed.

4 February

This morning I receive the following letter from the Prime Minister:-

10, Downing Street
Whitehall, S.W.
3 Feb. 1915

My dear Harmsworth,

It will give me much pleasure if you can see your way to accept the Under- Secretaryship of the Home Office, vacated by E. Griffith.

Yours sincerely,
H.H. ASQUITH

I repair early to Downing Street to thank the P.M. in person and he being busily engaged I leave a note. In the anteroom I meet Runciman, Lord Lucas, Peter Murray[1] and Harold Baker[2] all of whom congratulate me warmly. Em and I go to Poynters to tell dear Mother. [. . .]

The rest of the afternoon I spend at the Bd. Of Trade – my last day there. It is not without sincere regret that I leave the President's splendid old room – formerly I suppose the dining-room of the Earls of Pembroke – with its ornate stucco ceiling, gilded cornices and pendant chandelier and above all its view of a spacious lawn and trees and the river with all its busy traffic beyond. These amenities will be sadly impaired when the new Bd. of Trade building is erected.

5 February

My first day at the HOME OFFICE. I lunch first with McKenna and Mrs. McK. at 36 Smith Square, their beautiful new Lutyens house.

[1]Unidentified.

[2]Harold Trevor Baker (1877–1960): called to the Bar 1903; Lib. MP Accrington 1910–1918; Financial Secretary to the War Office 1912–1914; Warden of Winchester College 1933–1946.

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Sir E. Troup,[3] K.C.B., also one of the party. Afterwards McK, Troup and I repair to the Home Office where we meet Ellis J. Griffith, the retiring Under Secretary, who inducts me into my dignified but gloomy apartment.

Shoals of congratulatory letters and telegrams with which I grapple during the rest of the day.

6 February

Home Office in the morning. My H.O. Secretary, Mr. A. Locke,[4] goes over the business with me.

8 February

My first question in the H. of Commons. Lots of cheers which reduced me to a state of almost complete inaudibility. Neil Primrose (Under-Secy. F.O.) makes his debut at the same time and is almost equally voiceless.

12 February

Home Office in the morning and afternoon. My chief executive function just now is to consider applications for naturalization. Very few granted.

H. of C. not now sitting on Fridays.

23 March

First meeting (in my room at the H.O.) of the newly appointed Committee to enquire as to best means of stimulating recruiting in shops.

[3]Charles Edward Troup (1857–1941): Permanent Under-Secretary at the Home Office 1908–1922.

[4]Arthur Locke (d. 1932 at age 59): civil servant.

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29 March

I attend as representative of the Home Office at the Treasury where Lloyd-George and Mackinnon Wood[5] receive a deputation of ship-builders who come to urge the Government to prohibit the sale of drink during the War. The meeting takes place in the handsome Board Room with its vaulted ceiling and fine heavy Chippendale furniture.

Ll.G. very grave and worn, his long grey hair more dishevelled than ever. He is greatly impressed by what the ship-builders tell him.

31 March

Third meeting of the Shops Committee. We consider and pass our first draft interim Report – so speedily must work be done in these days.

13 April

Recruiting Conference at the H.O. with the biscuit manufacturers of the U. Kingdom. All the familiar famous names well represented – Huntley & Palmer; Peek, Frean; McVitie Price; Macfarlane, Lang; Jacobs and the others. I address them in the conference room.

14 April

H. of Commons reassembles. At the H.O – a meeting of our Shops Committee, now happily reaching the end of its labours.

I am busy also with our little emergency Mental Treatment Bill which I am to take charge of in the House. The Bill is to enable officers who have been mentally upset for the time being by wounds and shocks at the Front, to receive treatment without being 'certified' or put into asylums.

[5]Thomas McKinnon Wood (1855–1927); London County Council 1892–1909; Lib. MP Glasgow St Rollox 1906–1918; Parliamentary Secretary to Board of Education 1908; Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs 1908–1911; Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1911–1912; Secretary of State for Scotland 1912–1915; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1916.

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15 April

Busy all day with work connected with the Shops Recruiting Committee and the Mental Treatment Bill. [. . .]

Sad news today in the House of the death in action of W.G.C. Gladstone, M.P., the very promising grandson of the G.O.M. He made admirable speeches in the house on the Welsh Church question. I have several times walked home with him to his house in Berkeley Sq. and had a great liking for him.

17 April
Liverpool.

A visit in the morning from the Lord Mayor to discuss the Liverpool meeting in connection with the Shops Recruiting Committee.

Then Em and I go out in a taxi to the Red Cross Military Hospital at Moss Side, Maygull [Maghull]. At this hospital private soldiers and N.C.O.'s are receiving the sort of treatment we propose to make possible for officers under our Mental Treatment Bill. [Bill subsequently withdrawn on account partly of differences of opinion as to its desirability among Members of Parliament and partly because the War Office undertakes to extend as far as possible the Moss Side system to commissioned officers.]

22 April

R. McKenna offers today to bet me 15 to 1 that the Germans have evacuated Brussels (but not Antwerp) by the end of May.

23 April

Very busy day at the H. Office. Discussions about the Mental Treatment Bill, the second reading of which I am to move on Tuesday.

In the afternoon a Recruiting Conference with the Hotel and Restaurant Proprietors of the country. They think that they have but very few men of military age still in their service.

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4 May

Great meeting of the Distributing tradesmen in the Westminster Palace Hotel addressed by the Prime Minister whose speech is almost entirely based on notes furnished by me. I take the Chair.

5 May

To Bath to address the local tradesmen in the afternoon and the Grocers Federation in the evening. Bath full of visitors and enjoying something like a return of its old time prosperity.

6 May

Conference in Committee Room 9 with members and permanent officials with a view to agreement on the Mental Treatment Bill. Bill left in a very delicate state of health.

8 May

News today of the sinking of the great liner 'Lusitania' by murderous German submarine. Over 1,000 men, women and children drowned.

12 May

Grievous news today that Geraldine's eldest boy Luke has been killed in the trenches.[6]

15 May

H.O. and then after lunch to see Alfred at St. James's Place. He is full of the delinquencies of the Govt. – the lax authority of the Prime Minister, the 'muddling' of Kitchener and the general ineptitude the whole body. He tells me that one of the most important of our Ministers

[6]Lucas Henry St Aubyn King (1895–1915): CH's nephew; of the Fourth Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps; killed by shellfire near Ypres.

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(Winston as I guess, but he does not say so) has been at him trying to get him to attack McKenna and Runciman. I reason with him on the folly of undermining one individual Minister after another, there being no other Ministry, Coalition or otherwise, in sight.

17 May

To Birmingham for a Recruiting Meeting in connection with the Shops Committee. Met grandly at New [Street] Station by the Lord Mayor.

This week beginning May 17th will prove, I suppose, one of the most momentous in our political history. On Monday a Liberal Govt. of great achievements and high prestige in full power on Friday everything in the melting pot and active measures being taken for establishing a Coalition Government.

I have set forth how this came about in another book – the details being too many for this diary.[7]

20 May

To Hull to address a meeting of local tradesmen in connection with the Shops Committee. Met grandly again at the station by the Lord Mayor and the Sheriff. March past at the Town Hall of a large number of the new recruits. I am called upon to take the salute!

21 May

H.O. I suggest to McKenna that it will be best for me and for everybody if he will accept my resignation. [In view, that is, of the general ill-feeling (and particular resentment on our Liberal side) excited by Northcliffe's savage onslaught on Kitchener in the *Daily Mail*.] He refuses to hear of it.

[7]Harmsworth's fuller account of the fall of the government appears to have gone missing within his own lifetime.

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22 May

I write to McKenna formally tendering my resignation.

24 May

At lunch at the Reform Gulland[8] (Chief Liberal Whip) tells a group of us that probably the following Liberals will be found in the Coalition Cabinet in addition to the P.M. and Sir E. Grey: McKenna, Runciman and Mackinnon Wood.

Gulland confirms the rumour that a large number of Liberal M.P.s have expressed an emphatic opinion that Winston should on no account be a member of the new Cabinet.

After dinner, also at the Reform, Stanley Buckmaster informs me that Winston has been intriguing for a Coalition (of course with his bosom friend F.E. Smith in it) ever since the War began.

25 May

McKenna accepts my resignation.

Cabinet-making proceeding.

26 May

Before going to the H.O. I pay a visit to Dr. Johnson's house. The library room a great success and all in perfect order.

R. McKenna Chancellor of the Exchequer! I congratulate him. He decides not to show my letter of resignation to the P.M. unless it becomes clear that I must in any case yield place to a Tory Under-secretary. The Cabinet appointments gazetted today.

[8]John William Gulland (1864–1920): Lib. MP Dumfries Burghs 1906–1918; Junior Lord of the Treasury 1909–1915; Parliamentary Secretary (later joint) to the Treasury and Liberal Chief Whip 1915–1916.

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27 May

John Simon's first day as Home Secretary. He is very nice to me when I congratulate him but there is something in his manner that suggests to me that my fate is already sealed.

I preside at the H.O. over a committee of 3 – the others being Will Crooks,[9] M.P. and H. Nield,[10] K.C., M.P. – to consider whether the topographical examination for taxi drivers is not too severe.

28 May

Simon takes me aside at the H.O. this morning and tells me that, greatly to his regret, I am on the proscribed list. The junior Ministers of most recent appointment are to be sacrificed. William Brace, a Labour M.P., is to succeed me.

Another meeting of the little cab committee. The famous Ebenezer Howard takes a verbatim note – his pen flying with great speed over the paper.

29 May
Lambourne.

My first day's fishing of the year. I take darling Daff with me for company. [. . .]

Truth to tell, it as not possible these sad days to relish any recreation – even fishing. One's mind *will* revert to the trenches in Flanders. It is nevertheless a sweet peaceful day.

31 May

I say goodbye to the permanent chiefs at the Home Office.

I dine with the McKenna's at 36 Smith Square. It is a dinner of farewell on McKenna's part to the H.O. chiefs and of greeting to John Simon. The new Lord Chancellor (Buckmaster) is the only guest present who is not associated with the H.O. As we are talking after dinner a message comes that a Zeppelin is fast approaching London

[9]William Crooks (1852–1921): elected to London County Council 1892; Lab. MP Woolwich 1903–1918, Woolwich East 1918–1921.

[10]Herbert Nield (1862–1932): Con. MP Ealing 1906–1931; knighted 1918.

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by way of the Thames. Mrs. McKenna instantly thinks of bringing her children down to the cellarage and I make home with all speed. We fetch the children down to the dining-room while the maids repair to the basement. In an hour or so all to bed.

1 June

A long talk with Harold at the Ritz Hotel where he is now staying. He tells me that he has been in close touch with Bonar Law and that if B.L. had been appointed to the Admiralty he (Harold) was to have been Minister of Munitions! The furious *Daily Mail* attack on Kitchener upsets all such plans.

My painful duty today to introduce my successor, Wm. Brace, to the H.O.

The Zeppelin attack on London results in four deaths. The Admiralty is very secretive about the parts of London visited by the airship but rumour is very strong that Shoreditch and Stoke Newington are among them. Over 90 explosive and incendiary bombs dropped.

2 June

I preside over meeting of the governors of the Fisheries Organization society.

Another long talk with Harold at the Ritz. Sir Max Aitken,[11] Bonar Law's confidant has told Harold that Kitchener intends to raise the question of Alfred's attack on him, in the Lords. [. . .]

A letter from Gulland, Chief Liberal Whip, expressing his regret at my retirement from office and saying that I am to sit on the front bench to the left of the Speaker's chair.

[11]William Maxwell Aitken (1879–1964): Canadian businessman; newspaper magnate, owner of *Daily Express* from 1916 and founder of *Sunday Express* in 1918; Con. MP Ashton–under-Lyne 1910–1916; knighted 1911, cr. baronet 1916, Baron Beaverbrook 1917; Minister of Information 1918; Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster 1918; Minister of Aircraft Production 1940–1941; Minister of Supply 1941–1942; Minister of War Production 1942; Lord Privy Seal 1943–1945.

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3 June

The H. of Commons reassembles with the Coalition Ministers – a certain number of them rather – on the Treasury Bench. Simon introduces a Bill to obviate the necessity for new Cabinet Ministers etc. to stand for re-election.

The Liberals and Irish seething with discontent. Why was a Coalition formed without preliminary party conferences? What was the need for it? Where will Liberalism and H. Rule be at the end of it?

T.P. O' Connor takes me along in his cab from the House and tells me that he is plunged in the depths of despair. Carson Attorney and in the Cabinet! Campbell bidding strong for the Irish Lord Chancellorship!

4 June

In the afternoon Em, Gol, Earle and I to Stoke Newington to see the houses damaged by Monday's Zeppelin (or Zeppelins, for nobody seems certain whether there was one or more). It is well-nigh miraculous that more human life was not lost. Both explosive and incendiary bombs were dropped. [. . .]

No apparent panic in this district. A policeman or so and a few women, children and interested visitors like ourselves outside each house.

I preside (after returning from S. Newington) at meeting of General Council of the Old Boys Volunteer Corps. Col. Grant hears at the War Office that we may soon be called on to perform duties usually assigned to the Territorials.

7 June

The Coalition now in full force on the Treasury Bench. It is odd to see Bonar Law, Robert Cecil and H.W. Forster[12] bobbing up among our old Liberal Ministers to answer Questions. Carson cheek by jowl with Simon and the P.M. and B. Law conferring amiably on points as they arise.

[12]Henry William Forster (1866–1936): Con. MP Sevenoaks 1892–1918, Bromley 1918–1919; Financial Secretary to the War Office 1915–1919; cr. Baron 1919; Governor-General of Australia 1920–1925.

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Bill for creating a Minister of Munitions.

The Irish Party raging because of the proposal to appoint Campbell, Carson's colleague in the representation for T.C.D., Ld. Chancellor of Ireland.

Runciman invites me to return to him as Private Parly. Secy. Tells me, however, to go to McKenna at the Exchequer if he wants me.

8 June

McKenna asks me to become his Private Secy. and I accept.

14 June

A long pow-wow in the Board Room at the Treasury on the anxious financial problems of these unhappy times – McKenna, Edwin Montagu, Lord Reading[13] and Sir John Bradbury,[14] the Governor or the Bank of England (Lord Cunliffe)[15] and the Deputy-Governor[16] look in for a few minutes. Most of the discussion is metaphysics to me.

15 June

At McKenna's request I discuss with Hartley Withers[17] the question of an extra tax on War profits. [He had been City Editor of *The Times* and was Editor afterwards of *The Economist*. He was working now at the Treasury as 'Director of Financial Enquiries'. We used to sit in a little room over the passage that runs under Treasury Chambers thinking out schemes of taxation for McKenna. None of them were

[13]Rufus Daniel Isaacs (1860–1935): called to the Bar 1887; Lib. candidate for North Kensington 1900; MP for Reading 1904–1913; Solicitor General 1910; Attorney General 1910–1913; Lord Chief Justice 1913–1921; Viceroy of India 1921–1926; Foreign Secretary 1931; knighted 1910; cr. Baron Reading 1914; cr. Marquess of Reading 1926.

[14]John Swanwick Bradbury (1872–1950): economist and civil servant; Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury 1913–1919; cr. Baron 1925.

[15]Walter Cunliffe (1855–1920): merchant banker; Governor of the Bank of England 1913–1918; cr. Baron 1914.

[16]Brien Cokayne (1864–1932): Deputy Governor of the Bank of England 1915–1918, Governor 1918–1920; cr. Baron Cullen of Ashbourne 1918.

[17]Hartley Withers (1867–1950): City editor, *The Times* 1905–1910, *Morning Post* 1910–1911; merchant banker 1911–1915; Director of Financial Inquiries at the Treasury 1915–1916; editor, *The Economist*, 1916–1921.

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new devices, so far as I remember – I mean of our devising. (C.H. 6th Feby. 1934) (See 9th August)]

16 June

To see Harold (Rothermere) at the Ritz Hotel. He is just back from a second or third visit to the front in Flanders and is, for the moment at least, as pessimistic as he was formerly sanguine. He says that the important soldiers at the front whom he has seen do not believe that we shall ever be able to dislodge the Germans. Further, that they have little confidence in French (Sir J.). H. takes too a very gloomy view of our financial position. He walks with me to the Treasury and makes some suggestions to McKenna.

17 June

I dine with the McKennas at Smith Square. Also of the party the Walter Runcimans and Harold Baker. Some amusing political gossip – how that Simon is very unpopular with his colleagues in the Cabinet partly because of his huge vanity – and of Arthur Balfour's subtle workings to consolidate his position in his own party and to keep Bonar Law out of the reversion to the leadership of the Tory Party. There is talk too of Lloyd George's machinations which are supposed to have for their object the ousting of the P.M. and the putting of Ll. G. in his place. The P.M. reported to be very firm in the saddle and keeping a tighter rein than formerly.

18 June

Another talk with Hartley Withers about the proposed tax on War profits and methods for popularising the War Loan which McKenna is to announce in the H. of C. on Monday.

21 June

We are feverishly busy at the Treasury with the War Loan and with plans for popularising it.

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Today McKenna makes his great War Loan speech in the House – surpassing all his previous achievements and, it must be added, the most sanguine expectations of his friends, by the lucidity of his Statement. He aims at a loan reaching to the stupendous figures of perhaps 900 millions – but will be well satisfied with 500 or 600.

22 June

Our constant visitors at the Treasury are: the Governor of the Bank, Lord Cunliffe, a large jovial John Bull of a man whose levity of manner is only the thinnest disguise for one of the astutest minds in the country: Lord Reading, Lord Chief Justice, with his splendid handsome face and deep musical voice – the only member of his race I have ever really liked: Chisholm,[18] the financial editor of *The Times*: Alfred Spender[19] of the *Westminster Gazette*: *The Economist*, *The Statist*, and all manner of people skilled in high finance.

At my instance, McKenna invites Northcliffe to the Treasury with a view to enlisting the largest circulations in active support of the loan. They get on famously together.

23 June

The H. of C. sits but we are very little there except at question time. Hartley Withers and I are to knock out a scheme for popularising the Loan. We decide to ask for the assistance of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee.

24 June

The best part of the day with Hartley Withers in the room that has been taken for him at the Bd. of Education. His nominal post is that of Director of Financial Intelligence or something of that kind.

We draw up a letter addressed to John Gulland, Chief Liberal Whip and Chairman of the Parly. Recruiting Committee, asking the Committee to lend their valuable assistance to the War Loan movement.

[18]Hugh Chisholm (1866–1924): financial editor of *The Times* 1914–1920.

[19]John Alfred Spender (1862–1942): prominent Liberal journalist; editor of the *Westminster Gazette* 1896–1922; biographer of Asquith and Campbell-Bannerman.

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These several days McKenna receiving all sorts of deputations about the Loan.

25 June

Meeting of the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee in the long room at 12 Downing Street. Hartley Withers and I asked to be present. Of the Committee itself the following members:

J. Gulland, Lord Edmund Talbot[20] (Chief Tory Whip), Steel-Maitland,[21] E.S. Montagu, Herbert Samuel (Post Master General), Sir Jesse Herbert, Boraston[22] (Chief Tory Agent), Arthur Henderson (Chairman of the Labour Party and President Board of Education), Lord Colebrooke and Arthur Peters.[23] It is agreed to create a second War Savings Committee to work through and on parallel lines, with the Recruiting Committee.

Montagu and I walk away from the meeting together and go through No. 10 to the Treasury. Mrs. Asquith drives up as we are knocking at the door. I carry in her parcels – among them a broken cardboard box revealing a pair of blue satin shoes.

All the rest of the day with McKenna in the Board Room and working with Hamilton[24] (principal private secretary).

27 June

How quickly these delicious week-ends pass! It is only in such happy intervals that one really lives. And yet since the War began it has not been possible fully to enjoy a respite from work. Always in the

[20] Edmund FitzAlan-Howard (1855–1947): styled Lord Edmund Talbot 1876–1921; 2nd son of the 14th Duke of Norfolk; Con. MP Chichester 1894–1921; joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury and Chief Whip 1915–1921; Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1921–1922; cr. Viscount FitzAlan 1921.

[21] Arthur Herbert Drummond Ramsay Steel-Maitland (1876–1935): Con. MP Birmingham East 1910–1918, Birmingham Erdington 1918–1929, Tamworth 1929–1935; Chairman of Unionist party 1911–1916; Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies 1915–1917; Secretary for Overseas Trade 1917–1918; Minister of Labour 1924–1929; cr. baronet 1917.

[22] John Boraston (1851–1920): assistant secretary of Liberal Unionist organisation 1887–1891; Liberal Unionist Chief Agent 1891–1912; Principal Agent for combined unionist party 1912–1920.

[23] Arthur Peters: Labour party national agent 1908–1919.

[24] Horace Perkins Hamilton (1880–1971): civil servant; Permanent Secretary to the Board of Trade 1927–1937; Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Office 1937–1946; knighted 1921.

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background of one's mind is the life and death struggle in Flanders and in Gallipoli. It seems unworthy to rest at such a time.

8 July

To Manchester with M.H. Whitelegge[25] of the Home Office to attend a Conference of the Cotton industry to discuss what means should be taken to release a larger number of men for enlistment. With Gerald Bellhouse,[26] also of the H.O., we spend the afternoon going over a spinning mill.

9 July

In the morning we visit a weaving mill.

After lunch the Conference of employers and operatives at the Town Hall. I take the chair. An amicable discussion. It is agreed on both sides that everything must be done – whether by substituting women for men in some branches, by the relaxing of Trade Union rules etc., and by assurances from employers that any such readjustments shall be purely temporary – to facilitate recruiting.

16 July

Em's first night as a nurse at Lady Mountgarret's private military Hospital 18 Cadogan Gardens.

20 July

In H. of C. the P.M. moves a Vote of Credit for £150,000,000 bringing the total voted since the outbreak of War to £1,012,000,000.

Veiled references of the P.M.'s to possible loans to Powers which are not in alliance with us revive hopes that Bulgaria, Roumania and Greece may be coming in. A fantastic rumour in the lobbies that Turkey is going to join us!

[25]Maurice Horsley Whitelegge (1889–1978): civil servant.

[26]Gerald Bellhouse (1868–1946): civil servant; Chief Inspector of Factories 1922–1932; knighted 1924.

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22 July

I am now installed at the Treasury in a little room of my own almost exactly over the tunnel under the Treasury house and looking through some green pleasant trees to Downing Street. The room has been cut out of a much larger one and boasts a very handsome carved marble mantel-piece and a beautiful mahogany door. McKenna is on the other side of the narrow passage in the fine old Board Room.

23 July

The deadlock continues on the Western front and there seems to be little doing at the Dardanelles, but every day has its grievous casualty list. We are awaiting with anxiety the outcome of the Germans' third great thrust for Warsaw. A terrible struggle is proceeding.

29 July
Ongar Camp.

I go into Camp for a few days with the Old Boys who rejoice on ceremonious occasions in the fuller title of the 3rd Battn. (Old Boys) Central London Regt. (Volunteer). We make quite a brave show in spite of our years as we muster at 6 o'clock in the evening on the platform at Liverpool Street.

Our camp is in a meadow within a stone's throw of Blakehall railway station and consists of 4 lines of bell tents, a huge mess marquee, a smaller marquee for the officers, and quarters for the cooks, waiters and other details. Straw is spread thick on the floors of the bell tents and water is laid on from the station.

9 August

I spend the afternoon with Hartley Withers considering taxation proposals for McKenna's Autumn Budget. We decide to recommend the doubling of all existing taxes and licences and of inland postages and receipt and cheque duties. New taxes also on tickets for theatres, cinemas, race-meetings, football matches, etc. [. . .]

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News today that Harold's eldest boy Vyv.[27] has been wounded again – this time in the face. We do not know how seriously. Harold at Boulogne where Vyv. is in hospital.

10 August

Treasury. A talk this morning at the War Office with General Montgomery,[28] Director-General of Recruiting, about the trades or departments of trades in regard to which the W.O. recognises that further recruiting is inadvisable. Such occupations are certain branches of work in engineering and agriculture, and 'piecers' in the woollen and cotton industries.

Discussion with Hartley Withers on the proposed memorandum to McKenna with suggestions for his forthcoming Budget.

11 August

(Vyv had a very narrow shave of it this time. A bullet glanced from his left eyebrow to the bridge of his nose leaving scars that he will probably carry with him all his life.)

18 August

My little room at the Treasury is also the waiting-room for important visitors to McKenna.

Today while McKenna is presiding over the first meeting of the Retrenchment Committee Lord Reading comes in and we discuss gloomily the latest phase of the War on the eastern front – the reported fall of Kovno and other cheerless details. Then Edward Grey is shown in wearing his great smoked-glass spectacles. He tells us that by the use of these glasses he will retain his power of eyesight but that any loss of power must be permanent. He has no actual improvement to look for. All this he explains philosophically – with a quiet heroism

[27]Harold Alfred Vyvyan St George Harmsworth (1894–1918): eldest of the three sons of Harold Sidney Harmsworth; killed in action.

[28]Robert Arthur Montgomery (1848–1931); retired in 1910 after a long military career but was re-employed upon the outbreak of war and served as Director-General of Recruiting in 1915.

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that is admirable and characteristic. A sad misfortune indeed to fall on a fine sportsman, the beau ideal of English statesmen.

19 August

Treasury again today. Lord Reading comes in again and we continue our doleful talk about the War. Suppose after all that a material part of the Grand Duke's forces is surrounded by the Germans? What if the Russians grow weary of the War and decide on a separate peace? Again, what is the use of this agitation for compulsory service, seeing that it is not so much largely-increased numbers of men we want as rifles and machine-guns for the hundreds of thousands now in training? If the Allies fail, shall we go on squeezing the Germans by means of our sea-power? And so on in melancholy strain until Reading, tired of waiting for McKenna who is again busy with the Retrenchment Committee, goes in to No. 11 to see Lloyd-George who is suffering from a bad cold.

14 September

Reassembling of Parliament. A few Questions – chiefly on the vexed question of Compulsory Service – and then some talk on the Adjournment.

I walk back to the Treasury with McKenna who is full of his Budget speech on Tuesday.

15 September

The P.M. moves another vote of credit for £250,000,000 and Kitchener makes a general statement in the H. of Lords. He stands up at the table and reads through his big spectacles from a manuscript. He looks like a great big foot-guardsman and is red and bronzed and healthy as vigorous a man at 65 as you will find anywhere. A thin attendance of their Lordships who murmur polite applause two or three times.

In the H. of C. we have a warm discussion on Compulsory Service.

I never quite know whether the P.M. recognises me but he called to me by name behind the Speaker's chair this afternoon and asked me to find Gulland (the Chief Whip) for him which I accordingly did.

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16 September

A story current just now:

Lord Rosebery was dining at Buckingham Palace where, in accordance with the King's pledge of abstinence during the War, temperance drinks only found place on the royal table. The conversation turned on Zeppelin raids. 'I suppose,' said H.M., 'if they come about here we shall all have to bolt for the wine-cellars.' Rosebery, fingering somewhat ruefully a glass of barley-water: 'May I start now, Sir?'

21 September

McKenna introduces the biggest Budget that ever was in a speech of admirable lucidity. Heavy increased taxation on most of the old lines and a new little tariff on imported manufactures which greatly pleases the 'Tariff reformers'. The proposal to raise the charges on Press telegrams received with the loudest cheer of all by a House that does not love the Press.

My part in the proceedings consists in sending along the front Bench to McKenna a small glass containing egg flip with which he moistens his parched lips from time to time. I have never before known him so nervous.

House rises about 9 o'clock. On my way home I call in at the Ritz to see Harold. He has just returned from another visit to the Front and is full of interesting news from the British and French lines. He says that the French are just as confident as our people are depressed. Our officers full of complaints of our generals.

Harold tells me that the P.M. and Ll.-George have been scarcely on speaking terms of late. The rumours quite true that Ll.-G. is or has been leading a revolt against the P.M. and in favour of a more energetic conduct of the War, together with Compulsory Service and other vigorous policies.

Murray of Elibank, the former Liberal Chief Whip, busily employed in bringing the two great men together.

23 September

Budget in Committee. I receive for McKenna a deputation of motor agents and retailers who protest vigorously against the $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ Tariff on imported cars, bicycles and accessories. My memories of the old

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'Tariff Reform' controversy vividly awakened. British manufacturers who are now mainly occupied on munitions of war want foreign cars etc. kept out – the agents declare that they will be ruined if the duty is imposed. (They are interested chiefly in the small American cars against which the duty has been mainly designed with a view (1) to restoring the balance of trade between the U.S.A. and ourselves and (2) to checking the extravagance of our people.)

24 September

Another lesson in Tariff mongering. The Managing director of our chief manufactory of ball-bearings, his most important works being in Sweden, wants to know if the 33 1/3 duty is to apply to ball-bearings. If so he must forthwith decline Government and other orders. Ball-bearings are used in a hundred different kinds of machinery and he cannot separate those used in motor-cars and bicycles from those required for the many other purposes.

Another visitor represents the French and Italian motor-manufacturers. A few cars are still coming to us from our Allies. Are we going to dash their enthusiasm by imposing on them a duty which is directed against the huge import of small American cars? This visitor is only too willing that American cars should be penalised but French and Italian cars are quite another matter.

(On Thursday night I went to Islington start a 'War Savings' movement on behalf of the Parliamentary War Savings Committee.)

27 September

Treasury. Interview with Luton people about the duty on hats. What are hats from the Budget point of view? If only complete hats are to be taxed then the staunchest Free Traders amongst my Luton friends are prepared to accept the 33 1/3 tariff with resignation – the 'hoods' and forms and shapes are another matter. I ring up the Commissioners of Customs & Excise and find that 'hats' means hats in all stages of evolution. This is a sad blow to my visitors.

A Member of Parliament comes in to complain that the doubled duty on Patent medicines has thrown the whole trade into confusion and that the abolition of the halfpenny postage for circulars will cost him £250 a year.

'Broadening the basis of Taxation' has its disadvantages after all.

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28 September

My birthday. A card from dear Mother who is touring round the West Country still – kept away from Poynters by fear of Zeppelins. Not that she is afraid of Zeppelins but that Alfred is apprehensive on her behalf. [. . .]

H. of C. and Treasury. Deputations today about watches and hats. Everybody enthusiastic for a tariff on somebody else's commodities.

Dinner given by H.M. Government to M. Bark,[29] Russian Minister of Finance, who has been in and out of the Treasury for days trying to raise the wind, as I understand, for his suffering government. The London Museum is the scene of the banquet. A very splendid gathering the P.M., Kitchener, Simon, Winston Churchill (sitting immediately opposite me), McKenna, Ld. Chr. Buckmaster, Walter Long, Lord Crewe, Lord St. Aldwyn,[30] Sir John Bradbury, Sir Edward Grey (in his great black spectacles), the Russian, French and Italian Ambassadors, the Servian, Belgian and Greek Ministers, Walter Runciman, Lulu Harcourt, Sir Guy Laking[31] (curator of the Museum) and a fringe of Secretaries of Legations, private secretaries (like myself) and other small fry. Dinner excellent – cigars even better.

30 September

Better news of our forward movement. Many German guns and prisoners taken. Protective tariffs debated in H. of C. Hat tax laughed out of the House.

1 October

To see Sir Edward Troup at the Home Office. They want me be Chairman of another recruiting committee – to enquire how best clerks can be released for military service.

[29] Pyotr Lvovich Bark, later Peter Bark (1869–1937): Russian Minister of Finance 1914–1917; exiled to London after the revolution; knighted 1935 for services to banking.

[30] Michael Edward Hicks Beach (1837–1916): Con. MP for East Gloucestershire 1864–1885, Bristol West 1885–1904; Chief Secretary of Ireland 1874–1878 and 1886–1887; Secretary of State for the Colonies 1878–1880; Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the Commons 1885–1886 and 1895–1902; President of the Board of Trade 1888–1892; cr. Viscount St. Aldwyn 1906 and Earl St. Aldwyn 1915.

[31] Guy Francis Laking (1875–1919): first Keeper of the London Museum from 1911 until his death; succ. as 2nd baronet 1914.

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2 October

To Luton to take part in a big recruiting 'rally'. A procession through the town – soldiers, Volunteers, hospital nurses, Boy Scouts and two field guns. Mass meeting outside the Town Hall.

3 October

With Daff to Poynters to see Mother and St. John. Alfred comes later from *The Times* office a little more cheerful about the War.

11 October

I attend Lord Derby's[32] recruiting conference at the Chief Whip's office 12 Downing Street. (Lord Derby is the newly-appointed Director General of Recruiting). Parliamentary Recruiting Committee and Labour leaders present. Lord Derby is to give the voluntary system a final trial and then – ?

The rest of the day at the H.O. and the Treasury arranging *our* new recruiting campaign in the clerical employments.

12 October

At tea time to the H.O. to receive two members of the Amalgamated Society Union of Co-operative Employees. It is charged against their Union that action taken by them is hindering recruiting.

In the morning to 22 St. James's Place to see Northcliffe who is indoors with a chill. I find him in bed flanked by a telephone on either side and partially submerged under piles of newspapers. He was to have told me of fresh Cabinet disruptions but a War Correspondent from the Western front and another visitor occupy his attention, and I hear nothing. N. is more dreary than ever about the War. There is nothing for it but a brand new Government!

[32]Edward George Villiers Stanley (1865–1948): Con. MP for West Houghton 1892–1906; Junior Lord of the Treasury 1895–1899; Financial Secretary to the War Office 1901–1903; Postmaster General 1903–1906; Director-General of Recruiting 1915–1918 and author of the so-called 'Derby Scheme' to promote enlistment; Ambassador to France 1918–1920; succ. as 17th Earl of Derby 1908; known as the 'Uncrowned King of Lancashire' because of his importance to the county's political and associational life.

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What Government and where from? – I should have heard something of this but for the interlopers before-mentioned.

13 October

Quarterly supper of the Johnson Club at Dr. Johnson's House. After supper a paper (an excellent one) with the unpromising title of 'The Cynicism of Dr. Johnson' is read by a visitor and we are discussing it when of a sudden there are three or four tremendous reverberating crashes and lesser sounds of gunfire. We rush to the windows and there poised almost immediately overhead is a Zeppelin. White and beautiful with the beams of searchlights full upon it. Though probably at a great height I distinguish its huge flat fish-tail quite clearly. The shells from our air-craft guns break like stars round the great vessel with only a faint popping sound.

Whether any of the shells are anywhere within range of the Zeppelin we cannot tell. The airship remains poised over St. Paul's for some two or three minutes – for such time at least as enables Mr. Birrell and me to escape from the press of Johnsonians at the windows of the Dictionary Attic and to make for one of the rooms below. Here we have an uninterrupted view of the Zeppelin which lingers for some time before eventually it fades away in a S. Easterly direction. The fusillade of the aircraft guns has meantime been briskly maintained. Long after the departure of our murderous visitant two military gentlemen of our company keep their gaze fixed on the constellation Pleiades and stoutly assert that it is the vanished airship.

After these sensational events we return to the discussion of Johnson's cynicism. Birrell's contribution to the debate is less happy than usual what could be expected even of the most brilliant after-dinner orator in London who has been engaged at a stormy Cabinet meeting all the afternoon and the train of whose reflections has been broken by a Zeppelin raid? [. . .]

Renewed rumours in the H. of C. today of troubles in the Government. There is a Cabinet Council from 4 o'clock in the afternoon until past half-past 6. Carson ostentatiously dissociates himself from his colleagues and sits in the smoking room gossiping with friends while the Council is taking place in the P.M.'s room behind the Speaker's Chair.

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14 October

In the H. of C. there is much talk about the Cabinet dissensions. Carson is said to be profoundly dissatisfied with the Dardanelles situation and with the Allied landing of troops at Salonica.

15 October

Treasury. Lord Fisher,[33] recently First Sea Lord, comes into my room to wait for McKenna. 'Jackie' Fisher, as he is called, is sometimes described as the maker of our modern navy and is brisker at 74 than most men of half his age, a bantam for size with an indescribably clever face. He has just time to express wonder that none of our generals have been shot when McKenna comes in to fetch him away.

19 October

First meeting of the Clerical employments Committee. [Committee, that is, for the substitution of women for men in banks, insurance offices, etc. When I think of it, how the H.O. and the Departments piled these committees on me during the War! I ought to have stuck to my place in the House. C.H. 23/10/1935.]

23 October

At the H.O. in the morning with Delevingne[34] and Whitelegge. We go to the Board of Education to see Sir L.A. Selby-Bigge[35] in connection with proposals for training girls for clerical employments.

[33]John Arbuthnot Fisher, (1841–1920): became a full Admiral in 1901 after a long naval career, and an Admiral of the Fleet in 1905; Second Sea Lord 1902–1904; First Sea Lord 1904–1910, 1914–1915; chairman of the Board of Invention and research 1915–1918; cr. 1st Baron Fisher 1909. His recall as First Sea Lord by Churchill upon the outbreak of war was followed by a disastrous clash between the two men, which helped trigger the creation of the Asquith coalition in May 1915.

[34]Malcolm Delevingne, (1868–1950): entered the civil service 1892, rose to be Permanent Secretary at the Home Office1922–1932; knighted 1919.

[35]Lewis Amherst Selby-Bigge (1860–1951): Permanent Secretary at the Board of Education 1911–1925; knighted 1913.

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I [go] to the Scottish Office to discover whether they want our Committee to operate in Scotland. I am not surprised to find that Scotland prefers to manage her own affairs.

1 November

The McKennas and Harold (Rothermere) lunch with us at Gough Square. An excellent repast, including a small edition of the famous beefsteak pie, served piping hot from the Cheshire Cheese. It is a snug and harmonious little party – the McKennas greatly enjoying their novel experience.

Afterwards Reggie hurries off to a Cabinet Council and I to a Conference on the subject of my Committee with certain Lord Mayors at the H.O.

2 November

Alfred rings me up early to announce that he is coming to take me for a walk round Hyde Park. He is in a more equable mood than usual but is full of the crimes and shortcomings of the Government. The only Minister he has a really good word for is my chief McKenna. I leave him in Trafalgar Square and he proceeds on his way to Printing House Square.

5 November

After lunch at the Reform today I find a small knot of people gathered round the still-veiled statue of Captain Scott in Waterloo Place. It is about to be unveiled by Arthur Balfour. Gradually the crowd increases in size, and admirals and other high personages assemble. At last Mr. Balfour arrives and from a small platform proceeds to address us. He pulls the tape and the very picturesque statue, the work of Lady Scott, is revealed. It ought to be more like the original than any statue in London but I should not have known it was meant for Captain Scott if I had not been told. Perhaps the lights on the new green bronze of the face are deceptive.

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6 November

News today that Kitchener has gone abroad on important business connected with the War. The Prime Minister takes over the War Office in his absence.

9 November

Lord Mayor's Show Day. Em on duty with other St. John's nurses in the street. I meet Mrs. McKenna at the H. of C. in the evening and she tells me that Em has saved two lives in the crowd – one that of a woman who falls in a fit. Mrs. McKenna is Commandant of Em's detachment.

17 November

Simon asks me to take charge of a Committee to consider the general Question of substituting women for men in employment luring the War. A gigantic task!

25 November

These apparently blank days[36] I have spent at the Home Office engaged on work of the Clerical Employments Committee and of the new Committee on women's employment generally. The question is how best to mobilise the reserves of woman labour so that the gaps in industrial and other employment caused by enlistment may best be filled. This problem and that of National economy are the two most anxious domestic questions of the War.

My attendances at the H. of C. few and far between these days.

[Later: I hope that my time on these Committees was usefully spent but even in wartime an M.P.'s proper place is the House of Commons, if he is not on active service. As it was, most parliamentary hours were occupied by snipers who harassed the Government continually with but few members to talk back to them and to put the Government and national case. The life of a Government always depends in the long run on the House of Commons and in wartime it is more than

[36]i.e. 22 and 23 November.

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ever necessary that it should be a friendly, reassured and contented House. C.H.]

2 December

Conferences at the H.O. of manufacturing clothiers and operatives of the U.K. The operatives desire certain assurances if women are to be introduced into departments hitherto reserved to men. No agreement reached but I do not despair.

Afterwards Conference with Bankers at the H.O. – they greatly alarmed at the prospect of losing their indispensable men under Lord Derby's recruiting scheme.

3 December

Conferences at the H.O. all day long with great associations – Accountants, Corn Exchange and Shipping Federation with a view to securing them better safeguards under Lord Derby's recruiting scheme.

I seem to live at the H.O. these days. [. . .]

To Poynters. Harold comes in later.

13 December

First meeting of the new War Loan Committee from which McKenna would not let me escape. [The Committee that devised and recommended War Savings Certificates. The idea was Lord Bradbury's.]

16 December

Second meeting of the War Savings Committee in Birrell's room at the H. of Commons. Our problem is to devise a scheme of saving that will really attract the working classes. We toy with suggestions for a lottery on Continental lines!

To Paddington, first of all, to meet Gol returning from his first term at Summer Fields.[37] The little lad in an absurd bowler hat and a bright

[37] Oxford preparatory school.

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red tie is in the very pink of condition and brings with him a prize — Scott's Poems — for Latin.

20 December

I forget what day it was but earlier in the Session I had a long talk on the Terrace with John Burns about the War**.** Since his resignation in August of last year he has taken no part in the proceedings of the House nor has he had anything to do with Peace movements but he is as strong as ever in his conviction that we should have kept out of the War. 'The result will be – you mark my words – the loss of 500,000 of our best, a debt of 3,000 millions, two years stagnation and a draw!'

24 December
Totteridge.

Mother's birthday. [. . .] Alfred, Harold and Vyv come in time for dinner.

Our talk is all of the newest Government Crisis. The P.M.'s repeated promise that unmarried 'slackers' should be compelled to enlist before the married men are taken seems likely to prove very awkward, if, as it is beginning to be alleged, the number of slackers is considerable. The results of the Derby canvass are now being made up. The P.M.'s pledge must of course be kept yet it would be a violent thing to bring in compulsion merely in order to redeem a pledge somewhat hastily and heedlessly given.

27 December
Poynters.

Alfred in after dinner with fresh news of the Cabinet Crisis. Resignations are threatened on the one side if Compulsion is insisted on and on the other if it is not!

28 December

To town today with Alfred, and busy at the Home Office with Delevigne considering the Report of our Committee on the general question of substituting women for enlisted men.

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In the evening to Totteridge. Alfred comes in before dinner and says that the Cabinet have decided to adopt Compulsion. He does not know how far any Ministers on the one side or the other are standing out. He goes to bed very early and I read to him and translate passages out of a batch of German Christmas numbers of periodicals he has with him.

29 December

Bud and I come in to town early in St. John's car – the others following later.

After lunch I walk to Westminster Abbey to hear the carols. [. . .]

Afterwards to the Treasury. H.P. Hamilton, McKenna's Secretary, all agog with excitement and wondering whether McK. is still Ch. of the Exchequr. He has all McK.'s affairs in order and merely awaits marching orders.

McK. himself looks in for a moment. He is very cheerful but sphinxlike as to his intentions.

It seems that he, Runciman and John Simon are the strongest anti-conscriptionists in the Cabinet and McK.'s resignation is actually in the P.M.'s hands. The die appears not to be irrevocably cast, however.

30 December

All the afternoon with the Women's Occupations Committee. We consider our Report. A 4 hours' session!

Afterwards to the Treasury for a few moments. McKenna looks in and I have just time to say that I hope he is not going to shake the dust of the Treasury off his feet when he goes out again.

31 December

For an hour to the Treasury where I hear that Simon has left the Government but that there is a good chance of McKenna and Runciman remaining. Cabinet councils morning and afternoon.

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