1871

Monday 1 May (London)

I see a horrible phaeton before me in the coming break up of the Government who seem bent upon self-destruction, and in the consequent struggle of the Conservatives to get back into office. It would be a very foolish attempt but some of them seem to be bent upon making it. Sandon began to talk to me of it this afternoon.

Sensible as he is on the subject, Beauchamp went to the point and asked me whether Salisbury would take office with Disraeli, and whether failing him I would. I cannot help thinking Disraeli has inclined him to sound me.

I said I thought Salisbury would not join and that my relations with him had been far too personal and intimate for me to separate my fortunes. He asked the grounds, and I said broadly that it was distrust of Disraeli that he had or he had seemed to trick us and that there could be no confidence in such circumstances with such a colleague, and that as a matter of fact his being in a different House enhanced the difficulty as one could exercise no control over him. I hope sincerely the Government will go on, but they are staggering about so wildly that they may go to pieces at any moment.

Thursday 20 July (London)

Pakington called on me to consult me on "a matter of great importance and difficulty". He explained that there are some 700,000 skilled workmen organized under a Council in London to which they give the utmost obedience, who have certain schemes of social reform. That they distrust the employers, and the radicals and the ordinary M.P.s, that they (mainly the Council) look to the House of Lords, that Scott Russell is President of the Council which consists of the highest class of workmen, that he proposed to Pakington three months ago the formation of a small committee of Peers to consider whether they could promote some of the legislation which these men desire. He showed me the programme which though strong does admit I think of being handled in a Conservative sense. He had consulted Disraeli who properly said he could not act but advised him to communicate

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with me. I promised to consider it and to give what help I could. It is a most serious affair for good or evil; the most serious that I have heard of for a long time.[333]

Gladstone's announcement in the House of Commons of the decision to proceed by warrant and to set aside the vote of the House of Lords on the Army Bill.[334] The same announcement was made by Granville evidently much against the grain. The Duke of Richmond did not speak at all up to the occasion, though it must be owned that it was very difficult to know what to say.[335]

Tuesday 25 July (London)

Saw Pakington in the morning on the subject of our conversation. Names agreed on, Derby, Salisbury, Lichfield, myself, Pakington, Hardy, J. Manners, Sandon. Northcote has been spoken to, but on the whole decided that if the number should be eight, he must be sacrificed. The House of Commons side of the Committee might be stronger.

After the business in the House of Lords met for consultation in Cairns' room, present, Cairns, Redesdale, Chelmsford and myself, Salisbury not being in the House. Discussed the amendment to be issued on Monday and agreed to a slight alteration to avoid a wrangle on the point of form. Afterwards Cairns raised the question of a revival of proxies for such a case as that of the Ballot bill. To my satisfaction the general feeling was against it on various grounds. I think it would be unwise.

Friday 13 October (Ostend)

A startling article in the *Telegraph* of today[336] which I have just seen as to what it calls our "secret treaty" with the working men. I am very uneasy about it.

[333]John Scott Russell (1808–1882), a marine engineer and inventor, conceived the idea of a Council of Legislation, consisting of Conservative peers, and a Council of Workmen, consisting of labour leaders, to agree on a programme of reform that would bring the labour leaders towards Conservatism. Apart from Carnarvon, Salisbury, Manners, Pakington, Northcote, and Hardy were so-called members.

[334]Army (Purchase System). The Royal Warrant. Government statement: *Hansard*, CCVIII, 20 July 1970, cols 16–23.

[335]Ibid., Granville, cols 2 and 10, Richmond, col. 6.

[336]'The secret treaty', *Daily Telegraph*, 13 October 1871, p. 4.

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Saturday 14 October (Tunbridge Wells)

Saw some more newspapers as to this "secret treaty" affair. It is very unsatisfactory and I cannot understand it.[337] Wrote Hardy, telegraphed to Hatfield and to my great relief found Salisbury was there. Retelegraphed to say I would come on Monday evening to see him.

Monday 16 October (Hatfield)

Went by myself to Hatfield and found Salisbury alone, all his family being on their way to if not in Italy.

Discussed this tiresome affair of the alleged secret "compact" with the working men. His opinion was against any collective action on our part by the publication of our memorandum or otherwise; but he much approved of my writing and getting Hardy also to write to *The Times* to give separate contradictions to the statements which have been made.

His conclusion was pretty much my own, that Pakington had mismanaged the affair in his conversations with Scott Russell and that there had been foul play on the part of some of the workmen. Later a letter arrived from Pakington to him speaking of his regret at the "premature publication of our plan"!! a sentence which though in accord apparently with his Address at the Social Science meeting[338] shows how little he appreciated our position or intentions. Altogether we have narrowly escaped burning our fingers, if indeed we do come out of the mess quite unharmed.

Thursday 19 October (London)

In the evening saw Salisbury and discussed the situation as regards this vexatious affair of the working men's resolution.

[337] Pakington had summoned a meeting of the Committee at the Carlton on 1 August. Carnarvon had attended, together with Hardy, Manners, and Sandon. Carnarvon was disturbed at the newspaper accounts of the negotiations. Singling out the *Daily News*, he told Sandon, 'The form in which it appears is a travesty of our resolutions as agreed at the meeting at the Carlton' (Carnarvon to Sandon, 15 October 1871: Harrowby Papers, 2nd series, ii, fo. 102). For details of the alleged agreement on a seven-point programme between peers and working men, see E. Feuchtwanger, *Disraeli, Democracy and the Tory Party* (Oxford, 1968) pp. 92–93.

[338] Pakington's presidential address at the Social Science Congress at Leeds on 4 October included a plea for legislation to improve the condition of the working classes in housing, education, and food. See *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (1871), pp. 1–21.

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He is against any further letters or correspondence to the Papers if possible. If however there should be a very distinct challenge of facts by some one in a position to give such a challenge as Scott Russell it must be met by a denial and a publication of our memorandum; but he would far prefer to wait for Parliament if further explanations are needed.

He has begged me if it should be necessary to make any further disclaimers or statements to include him in anything that I may say for myself, which I have promised to do. He promised me a short memorandum in writing on one part of the question.

He, like myself, fears that Pakington has been very unwise to say the least of it. I suspect that he said to Scott Russell far more than he was authorised to say.[339]

Tuesday 24 October (Hemsted)

Spent a quiet day walking about with Hardy. In the evening came a telegram from Pakington saying that the "final form of statement settled yesterday evening" (i.e. at Hughenden whither Pakington, Sandon and I think Northcote were going)[340] and urging strongly Hardy to give his signature. He answered by saying that he would sign the August memorandum but not the statement in which I made him include me.

Settled with Hardy that if there should be any necessity to write again to the Papers on this subject we should not do so till after communication with each other.[341]

Friday 27 October (Highclere)

I see by the Papers that, as I expected, a kind of counter-statement is put forth by the Working Men's Council in answer to ours. It seems that Scott Russell has played fast and loose with both parties. Had a letter from G. Hardy on the subject.[342]

[339]Carnarvon informed Salisbury that Disraeli had advised Pakington to stay silent and that members should 'prevent the publication of anything purporting to be a collective statement' (Carnarvon to Salisbury, 20 October 1871: Cranbrook Papers, HA3, T501/262).

[340]'The visit to Hughenden was amusing and pleasant [. . .]. We sat up till one o'clock' (Sandon to Lady Sandon, 24 October 1871: Harrowby Papers, 2nd series, xlv, fo. 80).

[341]Hardy noted in his diary on reading *The Times* on 25 October, 'The statement and memorandum appear quite unexceptionable and the leader in *The Times* so accepts them' (Johnson, p. 144).

[342]Carnarvon replied, 'Like you, I was satisfied on reading it that we were not open to attack' (Carnarvon to Hardy, 26 October 1871: Cranbrook Papers, HA3 T501/262).

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