1884

Wednesday 9 January (Coppice – Highclere)

Poor Phillimore was much pleased to see me. He remains much the same, the mind very clear.

I talked over with Phillimore the old story of Gladstone's appointment to the Ionian Islands in 1858 as both he and I were interested in it.[791]

I was Under Secretary at the Colonial Office and Lytton was Secretary of State. He consulted me very much on all matters and I did a great deal of the office work, being left greatly my own master.

The Ionian Islands at that time gave us extreme trouble and Lytton asked me to advise him what to do. On reflection I advised him to send out a Special Commissioner of eminence and ability to take charge of the Islands and to recommend a new course of policy if such could be found. He asked me whom I recommended, and I said that I thought it not unlikely that looking to the nature of the work and his then political relations with other political persons and parties, Gladstone might be induced to accept it. He was at first surprised and perhaps disinclined, then, on talking it over became enamoured with the idea and at his wish I made some attempts to ascertain what Gladstone's feelings would be if the proposals were made to him through Phillimore. Phillimore communicated with him, and G. received the overtures, and the way being thus prepared, Lytton made a distinct offer to him which he accepted, to the amazement of every one.

Gladstone's practice at this time was one of great freedom from party and my hope was that this temporary connection with our Government would have become a permanent one. So far as Lytton was concerned there was no obstacle. He was thoroughly and perfectly loyal. Nor as far as I knew was there any real difficulty on Lord Derby's part. The barrier was Disraeli. Lytton repeatedly told me this himself.

[791] The idea originated with Sir Robert Phillimore, a Judge of Admiralty Court (1867–1883), who suggested that Gladstone should be sent as a commissioner to negotiate some disputes with the Neapolitan government. Carnarvon took up the idea, translating it to the Ionian Islands. See above, p. 5; Shannon, *Gladstone*, I, p. 363.

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He also told Phillimore, with whom he was in communication, that Disraeli had said, "The place with its classical aestheticism suits him (G.) very well. Now that we have got him down, let us keep him down". These words were reported to Gladstone and he was furious and on his return to England came back with feelings of anger and irritation against the Government, though he always expressed himself (both to me and to others) as entirely satisfied with the good faith of Lytton in the whole transaction.

My own belief is that it was a turning point in Gladstone's political career and that but for Disraeli it *is possible* he might once more have found his way back to the Conservative side.

Tuesday 4 March (London)

I came up for a conference at Northcote's as to the course to be taken on the Reform bill.[792] Present Northcote, Salisbury, Cairns, Cranbrook, Smith, Stanley, J Manners, Richmond and R Winn. Settled that J. Manners should give notice to oppose it on Second Reading on ground of it being an incomplete scheme.[793]

Afterwards discussion as to time to be taken with regard to the Supplementary estimates – about £500,000 – on account of Egyptian expedition.[794] Settled that Stanley should move a resolution against giving future supplies without some new Statement of Government policy. I wished for some few additional words expressive of our readiness to give whatever may be necessary etc. and Cairns agreed with me; but the others preferred the terms as proposed.

Saturday 15 March (London – Highclere)

A meeting at Salisbury's, present: himself and Northcote, Smith, Cross, J. Manners, Stanley and myself. Northcote much pressed in

[792] Gladstone had introduced the Representation of the People Bill on 28 February: *Hansard*, CCLXXXV, cols 106–134.

[793] Manners spoke in the Commons later that day: 'That this House declines to proceed further a measure having for its object the addition of 2,000,000 voters to the electoral body of the United Kingdom until it has before it the entire scheme contemplated by the Government for the amendment of the representation of the people' (ibid., col. 490).

[794] In November 1883, an Egyptian army of 10,000 troops under an English officer, Colonel William Hicks, was annihilated by the Mahdi in the Sudan, which was under Egyptian rule. The Government decided, in January 1884, to send out Major-General Charles George Gordon (1833–1885) to Khartoum to report on the best means of evacuating Egyptian garrisons. By 12 March, the Mahdi's forces were closing in on Khartoum and telegraphic connection with the town was severed.

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House of Commons by our own friends to declare a policy as to Egypt.[795] Salisbury much against it on the ground that we really know nothing of the feeling of foreign nations and might if called on to take office find ourselves in a difficulty. Agreed to press the Government for information but to do little more.

Smith anxious to move for a secret Committee on the defences of the country which are dangerously insecure. He is alarmed also at the notion of what we should have to do if we were to come into Office. Salisbury deprecated this *much* now and in the midst of all the Egyptian difficulties.

Tuesday 22 April (London)

In the afternoon I questioned the Government as to the position of General Gordon in Khartoum and the measures which, if any, they would adopt. Granville in his reply was very spiteful and cat like, but also very dextrous [. . .]. Salisbury seemed poorly. I told him what it has been long on my mind to say, that I feel sure that he is over-exerting himself and doing more work than he can or anyone can accomplish.

Friday 9 May

Poorly most of the day with cold caught at Peterborough.

Salisbury came to see me in the afternoon and sat and talked with me some time on various matters. Very pleasant. The Randolph Churchill[796] difficulty is at an end by R.C. knocking under. There will I think be trouble later, but for the present at all events we can get on with an united front.[797]

[795]Northcote spoke in the debate on Egypt at a Saturday meeting of the Commons on events in the Sudan: *Hansard*, CCLXXXV, 15 March 1884, cols 1717–1720, 1726–1727. Hartington, Secretary of State for War, had announced that no news had recently been received from Major-General Sir Gerald Graham, in charge of a relief force (ibid., cols 1651–1652).

[796]Lord Randolph Henry Spencer Churchill (1849–1895), Con. MP for Woodstock (1874–1885) and for Paddington South (1885–1895), Secretary of State for India (1885–1886), Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House (1886).

[797]Churchill, then chairman of the National Union, hoped to take control of the Conservative organization. This ambition was made public by him on 3 May. A reconciliation was effected six days later.

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Saturday 10 May (London)

A meeting at Salisbury's of the two front benches to consider the question of how to deal with the Franchise bill.[798] There was remarkable unanimity. It was decided *nem. con.* to reject the bill on the Second Reading, and though no agreement as to the particular mode in which this should be done there was an evident inclination that it should be on the lines of J. Manners' resolution, viz. that the measure is an incomplete one [. . .].

I walked home with Stanley, who said to me that he considered our present position "neck or nothing". Northcote thinks it just possible that the Government may be in a minority if the Irish members vote against them, but I cannot think this very likely.

Tuesday 13 May (London)

Edward Grey[799] to breakfast to discuss Emigration matters and the Charity Organisation Society.

Afterwards a meeting at A. Balfour's[800] to consider the position of the *National Review*. Settled to call a private but larger meeting.

Afterwards in the House of Lords I fired another shot into Granville as to the proposed Conference.[801] I was followed by Cairns and Salisbury and on the whole the discussion was I think a useful one.[802]

Saturday 17 May (London)

We had a large dinner party this evening at which were the Salisburys. She was sitting next to me and said that in the event

[798]The bill entered the committee stage in the Commons on 1 May. The first day of the debate was 6 May (*Hansard*, CCLXXXVII, cols 1484–1548).

[799]Sir Edward Grey (1862–1933), recently succeeded as 3rd Baronet at the age of twenty-two, private secretary to Sir Evelyn Baring in July and, in October, private secretary to Childers, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lib. MP for Berwick-on-Tweed (1885–1916). See G.M. Trevelyan, *Grey of Fallodon* (London, 1937), p. 22.

[800]Arthur James Balfour (1848–1930), Salisbury's nephew. Con. MP for Hertford (1874–1885) and for Manchester East (1885–1906), Secretary of State for Scotland (1886), Chief Secretary for Ireland (1887–1891), Leader, House of Commons (1891–1892, 1895–1902), Prime Minister (1902–1905), 1st Earl of Balfour (1922).

[801]On 1 May, Gladstone had announced the setting up of a conference of European Powers to tackle the problem of Egypt's growing economic decline by changing the Law of Liquidation. See Knaplund, *Gladstone's Foreign Policy*, pp. 195–197.

[802]Egypt. The Proposed Conference: *Hansard*, CCLXXXVIII, 13 May 1884, Carnarvon, cols 150–154, Granville, cols 154–155, Cairns, cols 155–158, Salisbury, cols 159–161.

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of our coming in, R. Churchill must have something but that the great object was to keep him far from English or Irish affairs – an Undersecretaryship in the Colonial Office or India Office, anything better than Home Office or Ireland. I said I doubted if he would be content with this.

She said that Lytton wished for an Embassy. I said "I suppose Paris?" to which she replied, "Yes," and that this would solve a great difficulty as he was not wanted for the Cabinet. She spoke of Cross and W.H. Smith as "Marshall and Snelgrove" rather contemptuously. It was all said in the tone of a person who wished the old relations to be considered to be entirely restored. I of course was very friendly – listened – but nothing more.

Wednesday 18 June (London)

I called with Elsie on old Lord Albemarle[803] to wish him joy on his birthday and on the anniversary of Waterloo day of which he is now one of the few survivors. What a change in the world and the history and position of England since the 18 June 1815.

Dined at the Duke of Cambridge's. My next neighbour was Cairns who told me the following anecdote, which old Lord Lyndhurst told him of his father.[804] Copley was painting a picture of Sir Edward Knatchbull and his wife Lady K. but there came a pause in the sittings and at the end of the time Sir Edward Knatchbull appeared and said that he had had the misfortune to lose Lady K. and the satisfaction of finding another wife, and that on consultation he had decided to ask Copley to substitute the second Lady K. for the first and to introduce the first as an angel in one corner of the picture. Copley acceded and the picture proceeded on the same lines. But then came another break in the sittings and once more Sir Edward appeared and told the same story. The second Lady K. had died but he now proposed to substitute for her the third and to place the second in the opposite corner of the picture as a second angel. After discussion Copley agreed to this: the picture was so altered, and so it remains to this day.[805]

[803]George Thomas Keppel (1799–1891), 6th Earl of Albemarle (1851). At the age of sixteen, he had been an ensign at Waterloo.

[804]John Singleton Copley (1772–1863), 1st Baron Lyndhurst (1827), Lord Chancellor (1827–1830, 1834–1835, 1841–1846); son of the portrait painter, John Singleton Copley (1735–1815).

[805]Sir Edward Knatchbull, 8th Baronet Knatchbull (1758–1819), twice a widower, with ten children. Copley's labours lasted from 1800 to 1802. Rejected by the Royal Academy, the portrait was eventually destroyed. See J.D. Prown, *John Singleton Copley in England, 1774–1815* (Cambridge, MA, 1966), pp. 360–372.

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Thursday 19 June (London)

A meeting of peers at Salisbury's – Cairns, Cadogan, Colville, Lathom, Bury,[806] Beauchamp, Abercorn,[807] to consider the Franchise Bill. Decided to make it two nights' debate, that Cairns should open it and that I should speak first on the second night.

Tuesday 1 July (London)

A very busy day. Soon after 11 a hastily convened meeting at Salisbury's to consider whether I should give up my vote of censure this evening in consequence of what occurred last night in the House of Commons.[808] Present Salisbury, Cairns, Richmond, Northcote and myself. I was rather disposed to go on, but the general feeling was the other way and so it was decided. As soon as this was settled we adjourned upstairs for a general meeting of the Conservative Peers to explain our course as to the vote of Censure on Egyptian affairs, and to decide as to what we should do on the Franchise Bill. With the exception of Jersey and perhaps Norton, the meeting was unanimous for the rejection of the bill on the Second Reading. Cairns' amendment was submitted and agreed to, but with one or two improvements, which in my opinion were really great amendments.

We had scarcely disposed of this when we had another meeting at Salisbury's of the House of Commons' Cabinet and Bruce to consider what course should be taken in the House of Commons as to reversing the vote of censure there (Cairns and Richmond were absent from this meeting). It was finally settled that no steps should be taken with this view.

Then on to the House of Lords where Cairns gave notice of his resolution on the Franchise bill[809] and I put a question to Granville to

[806]William Coutts Keppel (1832–1894), Viscount Bury (1851), 7th Earl of Albermarle (1891), Under-Secretary of State for War (1878–1880, 1885–1886).

[807]James Hamilton (1811–1885), 2nd Marquess of Abercorn (1818), 1st Duke of Abercorn (1868), Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1866–1868, 1874–1876).

[808]Edward Walter Hamilton (1847–1908), Gladstone's secretary, wrote in his diary for 30 June, 'The Egyptian vote of censure [on the terms of the agreement with France] came to an unexpected collapse this afternoon. With the smallest hint beforehand, Mr Goschen challenged Mr G.'s resolution for postponing the Order of the Day, and so successfully was the challenge taken up by the Liberal Party that they succeeded in overpowering the Government Front Bench and the Tories [by 190 to 148], and refused to allow the postponement for which Mr. G. was bound to ask' (Bahlman, II, p. 646; see also *Hansard*, CCLXXXIX, cols 1689–1702).

[809]Cairns's motion objected to 'a change in the constitution of the electoral body of the United Kingdom': *Hansard*, CCLXXXIX, 1 July 1884, col. 1770.

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ask if he adhered to Gladstone's statement, in which case I should not press my motion.[810] It was not altogether an easy matter to extricate ourselves well from the position which it had been determined to give up: but I hope I did it sufficiently well to leave the Party on satisfactory ground.

Friday 4 July (London)

Salisbury ill and obliged to go to Brighton. I hope nothing serious [. . .].

Jersey called on me to consult me as to the Franchise Bill. He much fears and dislikes the course taken and would prefer that we should read the bill a second time and then amend it in some way so as to secure it not passing without a redistribution bill also passing. He speaks, I am afraid, the feeling of a good many and I fear that though little was said in opposition to Salisbury the other day at the Peers' meeting there was no inconsiderable number who remained silent because they lacked the courage to express their opinions. If so this silent dissent will come out in some disagreeable form.

I have myself some doubt as to the wisdom of the course decided on, but it is, I fear, too late now to vary it unless circumstances give us some chance. But I was influenced in my judgement by the very strong opinion of almost all our House of Commons people – Smith, Cross, J. Manners and particularly Gibson, whose opinion I am inclined to accept. All said the same thing and represented the feeling of the Party as unanimous and most strong. Their opinion was that the House of Lords must withstand the bill if redistribution was not given and that they would not be worth keeping if they flinched from their duty.

Monday 7 July (London)

The debate on the Second Reading of the Franchise Bill began, but to my mind it was hardly on the level befitting the occasion. Cairns' speech was able, but I have heard many abler from him and in the beginning of it was I think too lawyer like. The Duke of Argyll was on the whole the best, and as the evening drew on the argument and the speaking seemed to me to flag.[811]

[810] Egypt (Terms of the Agreement with France), 'that the terms of Agreement will not lead to the establishment of tranquillity and good government in Egypt': ibid., cols 1770–1774.

[811] Representation of the People Bill, second reading, first day: *Hansard*, CCXC, 7 July 1884, Cairns, cols 112–125, Argyll, cols 125–134.

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Tuesday 8 July (London)

I moved the adjournment last night and began this evening. I spoke for an hour and on the whole and for me I think I spoke fairly well. What I said was well received and many of our people were much pleased and afterwards thanked me for it.[812] Salisbury's speech was very good: as an Electioneering manifesto it was excellent and was full of hard hitting. Derby's speech in answer to mine was fair and well reasoned, but badly delivered, the Chancellor was dull and Granville was *scratchy* and nothing more.[813]

But the die is cast and we are now in the open sea of war, and we must see what comes of it.[814]

Thursday 10 July (London)

Gladstone has announced that the business of the Session will now in consequence of our vote in the Lords be wound up and an autumn Session called and the Franchise Bill sent up to us again.[815]

After the House I went to Arlington St. and begged Salisbury to give me a few minutes to talk to him on the general state of affairs. I explained to him that in my opinion there were but two courses:

(1) to make a "transaction" with the Govt. on the redistribution question and that this would be done by allowing them to pass the Franchise Bill in October without delay or difficulty in the House of Commons and by then laying at the same time a Redistribution Bill which one would give a fair consideration.

(2) to lay out a plan of campaign for the autumn and counter organise and agitate in the great towns, meeting the agitation against the House of Lords. In this case I said that I was convinced that it was necessary to come to terms with R. Churchill, that however unsatisfactory a character he might be, he had acquired such an influence that it was impossible to go on in the present condition. Salisbury replied that he was going to France till the middle of September, that he preferred to leave the Radicals to agitate and to allow a reaction to set in and that R.C.'s "malignity" towards Edward

[812]Ibid., cols 375–389. Derby judged that Carnarvon's speech was 'thoughtful & in parts able, but rambling and discursive, as if he rather wished to say all that was in his mind about reform rather than to argue the question actually before us' (Vincent, *Derby*, IV, p. 686).

[813]*Hansard*, CCXC, 8 July 1884, Derby, cols 389–402, Selborne, cols 443–455, Salisbury, cols 455–469, Granville, cols 469–476.

[814]The Government was defeated on the Franchise Bill by 205 to 146 on Cairns's amendment motion.

[815]*Hansard*, CCXC, 10 July 1884, cols 692–693.

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Stanhope was such that whilst that lasted he could not act with him or words to that effect.

Friday 11 July (London)

I was astonished and much annoyed at the report of Gladstone's speech in the morning's papers in which he announced an overture to Salisbury and rejected by him, of which I had heard nothing. The want of confidence seemed great.[816] I saw Northcote and Richmond and talked everything over with them, finding them in considerable if not in entire agreement. If the proposal has been made in bona fides, I think something could be made of it and certainly it ought not to have been in any way snubbed. Salisbury's opinion is dead against any compromise and he wishes, too much, I think, to fight.

Saturday 12 July (London – Syon)

The extraordinary scenes last night in both Houses put a different light on matters. I by accident was not in the House of Lords and though I heard of the fracas, I only saw the account this morning. There has been something like wilful misrepresentation on Gladstone's part. Granville, I take it, was not to blame, beyond the fact that he was not careful enough.[817] It is however difficult to reconcile the whole affair with complete truth and fair dealing.

Wemyss called on me partly to consult me, partly to show me the notice as to the Franchise bill which he has sent to the Papers.[818] I told him at once that his notice meant the cancelling of our vote of last Tuesday and that I did not see how any who had voted then for

[816]In the Lords, there was a bitter exchange between Granville and Salisbury and Cairns concerning an overture made by Granville to leaders of the Opposition on 8 July with a view to coming to terms with them. The understanding was that the meeting was a confidential one, but Gladstone was unaware of this and referred to it at a Liberal Party meeting at the Foreign Office, reported in the Press on 11 July. For Gladstone's explanation in the Commons, see *Hansard*, CCXC, 11 July 1884, cols 832–838. Salisbury told Carnarvon, 'How outrageous of Gladstone to try and make political capital of confidential talk between Granville and Cairns. It makes all such communications impossible for the future' (Salisbury to Carnarvon, 11 July 1884: CP, BL 60759, fo. 139).

[817]Neither Granville nor Cairns would give way in the debate on the Franchise Bill, constantly interrupting each other. For an amusing account of this incident, see H.W. Lucy, *A Diary of Two Parliaments: the Gladstone Parliament, 1880–1885* (London, 1886), pp. 429–430.

[818]Wemyss gave notice on 14 July that he would move a resolution that the Lords should continue with the Franchise Bill providing that a redistribution bill was introduced in the autumn: *Hansard*, CCXC, 14 July 1884, cols 873–874.

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Cairns could now vote for him. He seemed disappointed, talked about altering it, and appeared alarmed at the general position of affairs.

Monday 14 July (London)

To the Conservative Central Association and a talk with Bartley[819] on the position of matters, the organisation of the campaign in the autumn, the meetings of the working men in different places and parks, etc.[820] Afterwards an important conversation with Greenwood as to the Franchise bill. He made a suggestion which falls in entirely with my own views and which I communicated to Salisbury, Richmond and Cairns: and on which I afterwards wrote again to Salisbury, offering to move in it if he liked in the House.[821]

Afterwards a discussion in the House on the French *Recidiviste* question in which I spoke.[822] Granville was very much nettled at some of my remarks, oddly enough, for I intended them to be conciliatory. It is curious that I seem to exercise a sort of irritating effect on him.

Tuesday 15 July (London)

A stormy, agitating day. At 12 we had a meeting of Peers and House of Commons at the Carlton, Salisbury in the Chair and Northcote with him.

Salisbury not favourable to conciliation, Wemyss defended his motion[823] supported by Jersey, Ravensworth[824] in a rather weighty speech and Lansdowne and Ritchie[825] speaking for Tower Hamlets.

[819]Sir George Christopher Trout Bartley (1842–1910), principal agent, Conservative Central Office (1883–1885), MP for Islington North (1885–1906).

[820]Carnarvon addressed meetings supporting the Lords' stance on the Franchise Bill between 25 July and 13 September at Osterley Park, Tredegar, Penrhyn, Highclere, Newbury, Nostell Priory, Teversal, and Hedsor Park.

[821]Carnarvon to Salisbury, 14 July 1884: Hatfield House Papers, 3M/E.

[822]On the proposal to increase the number of recidivists sent to the Western Pacific, a proposition of much concern to Australia: *Hansard*, CCXC, 14 July 1884, cols 876–882.

[823]Resolution on the Representation of the People Act, to be introduced on 17 July. Wemyss had given notice on 14 July (see *Hansard*, CCXC, 14 July 1884, cols 873–874).

[824]Henry George Liddell (1821–1903), 2nd Earl of Ravensworth (1878), Con. MP for Northumberland South (1852–1878).

[825]Charles Thomson Ritchie (1838–1906), Con. MP for Tower Hamlets (1874–1892) and for Croydon (1895–1905), Home Secretary (1900–1902), Chancellor of the Exchequer (1902–1903), 1st Baron Ritchie (1905).

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On the other side Sir G. Elliot,[826] Chaplin in a good speech, H. Dyke[827] in another, and Northcote who went with Salisbury though in more moderate tones. There were many speakers. I did not speak, having risen but not being called, and not caring to do this again I said nothing more. Salisbury afterwards came to the House and made a somewhat awkward excuse, the fact being that *I think* he did not wish me to speak, not being quite sure whether I might not say something in the direction of conciliation. This is foolish, but very much like him and is only likely to oblige me to do it in the House.[828]

Later in the House there was curious excitement and very considerable dissatisfaction with Salisbury. He is getting the character of making what are called "intemperate" speeches and the House has a dread of being led in to scrapes. I can see it plainly and have repeatedly warned him but it is of little use, and with all his ability he will end by making some great mess.

St. John Brodrick[829] came to me with the report of a conversation with Dilke[830] and Goschen and indirectly of Gladstone, Harcourt and Childers. I sent on the papers to Salisbury saying I felt it my duty to do so.[831]

Wednesday 16 July (London)

A long conversation with Stead, Editor of the *Pall Mall*,[832] at his request. He came as far as I could judge mainly to urge on me the policy of some compromise as to the Franchise bill difficulty. I replied that we would gladly agree to any which provided for the consideration of the Redistribution bill also during the autumn. He said that would make us masters of the situation and he urged all the usual arguments as to agitation, the certainty that the House of

[826] Sir George Elliot (1814–1893), Con. MP for Durham North (1868–1880, 1881–1885) and for Monmouth (1886–1892).

[827] Sir William Hart Dyke (1837–1931), Con. MP for Kent West (1865–1868), for Mid-Kent (1868–1885), and for Dartford (1885–1906), Chief Whip and Secretary to the Treasury (1874–1880), Chief Secretary for Ireland (1885–1886), Vice-President of Committee of Council on Education (1887–1892).

[828] See A. Jones, *The Politics of Reform, 1884* (London, 1972), p. 160.

[829] William St John Brodrick (1856–1942), Con. MP for Surrey (1880–1885).

[830] Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke (1843–1911), Lib. MP for Chelsea (1868–1886), President of the Local Government Board (1882–1885).

[831] Carnarvon to Salisbury, 15 July 1884: Hatfield House Papers, 3M/E. The 'Memorandum of conversation between Brodrick and Dilke' is reprinted in Hardinge, III, p. 105.

[832] William Thomas Stead (1849–1912), editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1883–1890).

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Lords would be destroyed etc. I said that if we must fight I thought it was best to fight at once: and that was not a bad ground. Our conversation lasted two hours, most friendly, *absolutely confidential*, and at times interesting. If it did nothing else it left us with probably friendly feelings on both sides, a good prelude to the conflict. He mentioned several things, that Gladstone was the most inclined to be Conservative, that Granville was obsolete and incompetent and must soon go, that any other Redistribution Bill must be worse for us, that the Conservatives in the provinces would not fight, that the agitation would be great, that it would be accompanied by misrepresentation.

Thursday 17 July (London)

I had a letter from Salisbury this morning written in a generally moderate vein.[833] In the House in the evening he was as usual more combative. Part of the case he states very well; but he did not make the offer which I hoped he would make and which I firmly believe would have put him in a better position for fighting.[834] However the die is now cast. We are in for a struggle and it remains to be seen how the House will fight, what is the strength of the Radical caucus and what the power of Convocation in the country.

Friday 18 July (London)

After the fatigue and anxieties of the week today was rather a rest. The fact too is now decided – we must fight and we have nothing to do but to prepare for it. I had a talk with W.H. Smith who is anxious but reasonable.

One thing is very clear to me. Salisbury has not the confidence of those who follow him or who are supposed to be his colleagues and advisers. The first he alarms by his supposed rashness. The latter he alienates by seeming to distrust them. There is a general feeling among them that he will not really consult them, that he is too secretive. Time will show but I am afraid that with all his great gifts he will be a failure and may even do mischief.

[833] 'I hesitate to urge adjournment *now* very strongly – not on account of this question – but on account of the atrocious precedent it would make for helping forward obnoxious bills in future years' (Salisbury to Carnarvon, 17 July 1884: CP, BL 60759, fos 149–150).

[834] *Hansard*, CCXC, 17 July 1884, Salisbury, cols 1368–1373.

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Tuesday 30 September (Greystoke)

We had a prosperous journey and arrived here in good time. Salisbury was in the same train going down to speak at Glasgow,[835] so I travelled with him between Rugby and Crewe. We had time for a full conversation on many subjects, and we discussed everything I think of consequence, Franchise agitation, foreign matters, Plan of Campaign, on the meeting of Parliament,[836] Ireland. He contemplates a renewal of Irish outrages this winter, not a pleasant anticipation. We discussed also the state of the House of Lords and some possible reforms which might be made. It was indeed on the whole the most undisturbed and satisfactory conversation which I have had with him for some time. He seemed well.

He told me of a sort of compromise through Argyll but the compromise was an unreal one and I see that he still remembers and resents the public use which Gladstone tried to make out of the private negotiations with Cairns and Granville at the end of last session on the Franchise Bill.

Friday 10 October (Ravenstone)

I got the news of this extraordinary revelation in the *Standard* of the Government's scheme of Redistribution – most astonishing.[837] I cannot resist a suspicion that it came from Chamberlain through E.[838] to the *Standard*.

Monday 13 October (Hams, Birmingham)

Elsie, Aubrey[839] and I came on here to Norton's.[840] On arriving in Birmingham which was in a political ferment, we found Station and

[835]Salisbury spoke at two meetings in Glasgow and then made further speeches in south-west Scotland (see *The Times*, 1 October 1884, p. 5).

[836]Carnarvon, writing of the conversation, remarked, 'I found that he agreed with me that it was important not to allow the House of Lords to be adjourned to long intervals, as during our last autumn Session, but to ventilate the different large questions which are pending' (Carnarvon to Cranbrook, 9 October 1884: Cranbrook Papers, HA3 T501/262).

[837]'The Redistribution Bill: the Government scheme', *Evening Standard*, 9 October 1884, pp. 2–3. The paper stated, 'We are now enabled to lay before you the complete details of the Government plan, in their present shape'.

[838]The identity of this person is not known.

[839]Aubrey Nigel Herbert (1880–1923), Carnarvon's elder son by his second marriage. Served in diplomatic service (1903–1905), then travelled extensively throughout the Turkish Empire. Unionist MP for Somerset South (1911–1918).

[840]Carnarvon and Elsie stayed at Hams Hall, Lord Norton's residence (W.S. Childe-Pemberton, *Life of Lord Norton* (London, 1909), p. 263).

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Streets crowded. Northcote (and I think R. Churchill) arrived at about the same time and were received with great acclamations. It is to be a great demonstration and the Radicals are attempting to break it up by violent means.

Tuesday 14 October (Hams, Birmingham)

Last night there was a disgraceful attack made by the Liberals under the guidance of the Caucus upon the Conservative meeting in Aston Park. It was planned and organised and conducted with much ruffianly violence.[841] Today when I went into Birmingham everyone was full of it, and matters were so doubtful that I would not let Elsie go with me. Everything however at the Conservative banquet passed off quietly and the outrage of last night was the text on which we all more or less preached.

R. Churchill spoke remarkably well. His speech, which was apparently carefully prepared and written on several sheets of paper, was disfigured in parts by some personalities and violences, but in its general character it was extremely good and delivered very well. He had evidently modelled himself on Disraeli. The phrases are often imitations of him and he has even caught some of the intonations of his voice. But taken as a whole the speech impressed me with its ability.[842]

Wednesday 22 October (London)

An important conversation with Bartley at the Conservative Central Office.[843] He showed me his redistribution scheme, which as far as I have examined or understand it I like. It proceeds on a distinct principle and has no Party taint about it – all this most confidential.

[841]At the meeting, the platform was stormed by rioters, and Churchill and Northcote, who were to have publicly shaken hands, had to flee for safety (see T.H. Escott, *Randolph Spencer Churchill as a Product of his Age* (London, 1895), pp. 261–264). Hamilton attributed the rioting to a number of Liberal supporters at the meeting who were wearing Gladstone badges (Bahlman, II, p. 706).

[842]The banquet was held at the Exchange Assembly Rooms, Birmingham. Churchill's address was entitled 'Our Constitution' (*The Times*, 15 October 1884, p. 6).

[843]Bartley believed that 'the Scheme as put forward by the *Standard* is one which is so unfair in its operation, that it is quite out of the question our accepting it. It is based on no general principle whatever and shows signs of Party prejudice in every detail' (Bartley to Carnarvon, 11 October 1884: CP, BL 60832, fo. 30).

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After this to a meeting at Northcote's where Salisbury and I alone represented the Peers, all the rest House of Commons, among them G. Hamilton, Bourke, R. Churchill, Dyke, Winn etc. I walked away with Salisbury and said something to him as to the redistribution scheme of Bartley. He is much opposed to it evidently: and as I understand wishes to fight on "without showing our hand." I do not agree in the wisdom of this. I doubt if we can continue to do this much longer.

On my return to Portman Square whilst writing I was told that Sir H. Ponsonby wished to see me. He was at once shown in, and he told me that he had seen the suggestion which I threw out yesterday that it was much to be wished that the Redistribution Scheme could be referred to 3 or 4 impartial men who had the confidence of both parties;[844] that he was now in London endeavouring to find some way out of present difficulties as the Queen was extremely anxious about it.[845] He told me that she had seen Richmond and that he and Cairns had been consulted, but that they could throw no light on the matter: that she had communicated with Salisbury that he had given no hope of a compromise on his part; that he had come to me and wished for my opinion in perfect confidence, undertaking that it should go to no one but the Queen.

I replied that I had only two objects in view:

(1) that I should do or say nothing which directly or indirectly could be thought to be acting behind the backs of those with whom I was acting

(2) that I considered it and always had considered it my duty to give any information or advice in my power to the Queen and to place myself absolutely at her command where I felt I could serve her.

Our conversation then continued. I told him that I had not spoken unadvisedly, that it was my deliberate opinion that a redistribution scheme, without any party taint would be drawn up on some fixed principle which both sides might accept and which would work out fairly and adequately. As to the four men who could enjoy the confidence of all sides, it was far more difficult to find them.

He asked me what he should do, and on the whole I advised him to talk to Northcote, and if he made way with him then to Salisbury; but I added that it would I thought be best to keep my name out of

[844]At a speech to the Hackney Conservative Union on 21 October, Carnarvon stated that, in his opinion, 'if the scheme of redistribution were submitted to a body composed of a few men on each side, who had the confidence of their respective parties, a settlement of the question might be arrived at' (*The Times*, 22 October 1884, p. 7).

[845]Ponsonby had told the Queen on 22 October, 'Lord Carnarvon in his speech said that four independent men might be found to settle it. Why should this not be tried?' (Buckle, *Letters*, III, p. 554).

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it. But it would also be best for him to speak from the Queen and not from himself.

I said I doubted whether there was sufficient endeavour on the Government side to make this practicable. He also doubted. He excluded the violent men like Chamberlain and probably Dilke; but he said that Gladstone was very uneasy, very anxious and that he thought that he would agree to any fair compromise if it could be found. The advantage he said of my suggestion was that it was not a compromise but something in which the representatives of both parties would agree.

He left me to telegraph at once to the Queen to inform her generally of what had passed with me and to ask her to empower him to speak to Northcote.

I offered on my part to see him again if he would need it and to do anything in my power.

Thursday 23 October (London)

I received a letter from Sir H. Ponsonby telling me that he had met the "Secretary of one of the ministers" who told him that the suggestion of mine of a reference of the Redistribution question to some impartial persons had attracted attention and that some committee were passing [*sic*]. I am afraid however that nothing will come of it.[846] There is a general feeling and desire for more compromise. It is unmistakable. Richmond has talked much to me this evening in that sense and several of the more moderate men have said much the same, but I fear that Salisbury is very obdurate. We had a meeting of our old Cabinet this morning, but we did little beyond discussing the Queen's Speech. Richmond and Cairns were there but they go back to Scotland tomorrow.

The debate in the Lords was nothing remarkable. Salisbury's speech was good humoured, but hardly I thought up to the mark, Granville's below it. I followed but only on South African matters. Derby replied most fair, but the debate was on a rather dull level. Argyll spoke for

[846]Carnarvon immediately replied, 'The question is – first, are there a few individuals who sufficiently have the confidence of parties to undertake the task? Second, who are of sufficient fair temper to do the work? I have no doubt as to the second: I do not feel sure of the first, though on the whole I believe not, for such "righteous men" might be found' (Carnarvon to Ponsonby, 23 October 1884: Royal Archives, C50/12). More optimistically, he told Bath, 'If there be any merit in it, it is this – that there is no surrender or concession on either side. It is a common agreement, not a compromise which means concession' (Carnarvon to Bath, 23 October 1884 (copy): CP, BL 60772, fo. 102).

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a few minutes and well in favour of coming to an understanding, but his was really the only speech in that sense.[847]

Richmond told me in strict confidence that he and Cairns had pressed on Salisbury the following proposal – that we should read the Franchise bill a second time then suspend it, then the House of Commons pass the Redistribution bill, and that on that being passed we could at once dispose of the Franchise and then proceed to the Redistribution. I said I doubted if the Government would agree to this bargain and I suggested a joint understanding as to Redistribution. This he thought impracticable.

Friday 24 October (London)

A very long conversation with Michael Beach on the Franchise and Redistribution question. I explained to him my whole view of the present position and my reasons for desiring to come to some good settlement of the matter if practicable. He started by replying that he was not much afraid of anything that would be done and that almost any reform of the House of Lords would be an improvement, and he doubted the practicability of my suggestion of a reference of the redistribution scheme to 4 impartial outsiders. But he ended by I think coming very much to my view and he said that he should call on Salisbury and without mentioning me urge these points on him and he proposed if necessary to come down to Highclere to talk again to me. It was a long, important and interesting conversation, and impressed me favourably with his clear and rather vigorous capacity.[848]

Tuesday 28 October (London – Highclere)

I have had a busy and anxious time the last two or three days which I propose to recapitulate as clearly and as briefly as I can. Raikes[849] and

[847]Parliament reassembled that day. Debate on the Queen's Speech: *Hansard*, CCXCIII, 23 October 1884, Salisbury, cols 16–27, Granville, col. 27, Carnarvon, cols 27–32, Derby, cols 34–39, Argyll, cols 41–43.

[848]Hicks Beach's views on franchise reform were somewhat in advance of the rest of the Party. With Churchill's encouragement, Hicks Beach suggested to Salisbury and Northcote that he should approach Hartington in confidence to discuss matters. See Hicks Beach, *Life of Sir Michael Hicks Beach*, I, p. 217.

[849]Henry Cecil Raikes (1838–1891), Con. MP for Cambridge University (1882–1891), Postmaster-General (1886–1891).

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Sir Erskine May[850] spent Sunday here and I talked much with both of them on the present critical juncture and without explaining to them what had passed between Ponsonby and myself. I talked much on the feasibility of coming to some understanding with the Government by means of some such expedient of a conference as I indicated in my speech at Hackney. They both from different points of view seemed to be of much the same opinion as myself. On Sunday night I wrote a very full letter to Salisbury explaining my views and saying that I believed Gladstone was disposed to meet us on my suggestion of a conference. I requested Salisbury to communicate this letter to Northcote. Raikes took it with him to London on Monday morning.[851]

On Monday in the afternoon I received a letter from Norton enclosing one from Gladstone in which he commended and seemed to accept my suggestion and appeared to invite some overture from us in accordance with it.[852] This appeared a singular confirmation of my letter to Salisbury and I decided to go up to London that night, writing to Salisbury and Northcote and Beach and Ponsonby to appoint meetings.

On Tuesday morning I received a letter from the Duke of Argyll urging me to endeavour to arrange matters.[853] I then went to Northcote, read him copy of my letter to Salisbury as S. had not yet communicated it to him, showed him Gladstone's letter to Norton and explained everything.

He was I think much struck, agreed generally with me and we both went together to Salisbury whose brougham was at the door and who did not seem much pleased at the communication or desirous of going into the matter. He listened however to me and I told him of Ponsonby's communication, of the feeling of some others and of Gladstone's letter to Norton. Northcote supported what I said and Salisbury agreed that I should go to May and ascertain whether Gladstone's letter meant business.

I went on to May whom I found at home. I informed him of the substance of Gladstone's letter. He had not seen it tho' Gladstone showed it him immediately afterwards, but he said that Richard Grosvenor[854] had talked on Monday evening to him very earnestly as regards my suggestion, R. G. speaking, as I understood, Gladstone's

[850]Sir Thomas Erskine May (1815–1886), Clerk of the Commons (1871–1886), an authority on parliamentary procedure. Created Baron Farnborough (1886).

[851]Carnarvon to Salisbury, 26 October 1884 (copy): CP, BL 60832, fos 166–168.

[852]Norton to Carnarvon, 24 October 1884: CP, BL 60832, fos 40–41. See also Gladstone's reply to Norton, 24 October 1884: ibid., fo. 42.

[853]Argyll to Carnarvon, 26 October 1884: CP, BL 60832, fos 43–46.

[854]Richard de Aquila Grosvenor (1837–1912), 1st Baron Stalbridge (1886), Lib. MP for Flintshire (1861–1886), Liberal Unionist from 1886.

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opinions. May asked if I would see Gladstone myself; I agreed provided that Gladstone asked me to do so and that it was understood that I represented only myself.[855]

May went to Gladstone, was absent for about an hour and returned saying 1st that Gladstone thought on the whole it was more prudent we should have no verbal communication which would be sure to be noticed and might lead to misunderstanding and 2ndly that he thought that the individuals who according to my suggestion should meet to confer upon Redistribution should not be accredited by the Government but should meet voluntarily thus casting upon them the initiative and the responsibility of action. I replied that I feared this would make my scheme at all events impracticable as no one whose character and position commanded weight would care to thrust themselves into a situation which under the best of circumstances was most difficult. Gladstone as I understood proposed that these gentlemen thus coming voluntarily together should agree if possible on some principle of Redistribution and would then communicate it to the Government who would then give it every consideration. 3rdly Gladstone avoided, as I understood, any distinctive answer to a further suggestion I had made through May for adding a suspending clause to the Franchise Bill.

From May's I went to the Carlton and had a long talk with Beach to whom I showed Gladstone's letter to Norton and to whom I also explained all that was essential in that which had passed. Beach is more anxious than I am to fight but he feels the situation critical and on the whole is disposed I think to agree with me. He told me that he was thinking of communicating personally and on his own responsibility with Hartington, Northcote and Salisbury being aware of this. I encouraged him in this.

From this I went to Ponsonby, told him again all that was essential in that which had passed. He said the Queen was most anxious to effect a settlement and had urged the Duke of Argyll to come up to London.[856]

Thence I went to Northcote, found him in, told him everything and with him went on to Salisbury to whom I announced that my mission had been fruitless. Salisbury said he expected this, but was evidently

[855]When May saw Gladstone on 28 October, Edward Hamilton noted, 'Mr. G. gave Sir T. May every assurance of a disposition for peace; and though he thought it might hardly be proper for him to see Lord Carnarvon behind (as it were) the back of the Tory leaders, he sent Lord Carnarvon friendly messages of encouragement' (Bahlman, II, p. 719).

[856]Salisbury told Ponsonby that day that the Lords should read the Franchise Bill a second time and then wait for the Redistribution Bill to come up from the Commons. See Cecil, III, p. 118.

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much relieved, and then with great cordiality discussed Dunraven's motion on Fair Trade for Thursday week.

Friday 31 October (London)

These difficult and vexatious negotiations continue. Elsie and I came up to London yesterday afternoon in consequence of a letter most confidential which I received from Herbert[857] telling me that a friend of the Government had called upon him knowing our intimacy to offer to show me and any friends whom I might name the Government Redistribution scheme. Northcote, Richmond and Beach were specially mentioned as persons to whom I was free to communicate this but it was also requested that in the present stage I would not make any communication to Salisbury.[858] This placed me in a singularly awkward position.

On arriving in London I followed Northcote to the H. of Commons [and] told him briefly the circumstances but found him too busy to be able to attend. This morning I talked to him freely and told him that I proposed to write in reply that if I was free to communicate the offer to Salisbury and any others with whom I am acting I would at once do so. I then went on to the Colonial Office where I found [Sir Robert] Herbert[,] ascertained from him in confidence that the anonymous negotiator was Lord Reay[859] and I then wrote a letter to Herbert as I had proposed.

On returning to the Carlton I found Beach and communicated what had passed in the strictest personal confidence. He was very angry at the terms of the proposal saying that it was not a bona fide one. I differ with him there. It is absurd diplomacy to attempt to exclude at any stage Salisbury from a knowledge of such negotiations, but I believe it arises in part from a genuine apprehension of him and his supposed intentions. After a time he quietened down and gave me details of his conversation with Hartington to whom he seems to have explained all the principles which he thought ought to govern a Redistribution Bill and in which I think I agree with him. Hartington's view was for

[857]Auberon Herbert to Carnarvon, 29 October 1884: CP, BL 60795A, fos 9–10.

[858]Replying to Herbert, Carnarvon stated that he reserved the right to inform Salisbury of the letter, as well as Northcote and two or three other political friends (Carnarvon to Herbert, 31 October 1884 (copy): CP, BL 60795A, fo. 15).

[859]Donald James Mackay (1839–1921), 11th Baron Reay (1876), Governor of Bombay (1885–1890).

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a much more limited and a Whig scheme. Beach wished for a larger and I think on the whole a safer measure.

After Beach I saw W. H. Smith and in the same strict confidence talked over the whole question. He agreed entirely in what I had done and I think looked at the matter from my point of view. He is not anxious to come to terms unless those terms are good, but he thinks that we ought not to reject a good bargain if one can be struck merely on the chance of what a Dissolution can bring us if taken on the existing Franchise.[860] Winn on the other hand with whom I have had a long conversation today is so despairing as to an election on the new Franchise that he would not accept any Redistribution Bill however favourable. He believes that it means the hopeless break up of the party and Cameron of Lochiel[861] tells me that the lowering of the Franchise in Scotland means the loss of every single seat. Akers Douglas[862] who helped to work out Bartley's scheme is rather more hopeful but he says that the Redistribution scheme published in the *Standard* when worked out was seen to be the most unfair and would have been fatal in many parts to us.

In the evening of Friday between 6 and 7 Herbert called and gave me verbally and in writing Reay's answer to my letter – and a singular answer it was. He said that circumstances had somewhat altered, that the bill was in fact not yet drafted, but he suggested (from the Government or Gladstone) that I and my friends should propose *our* redistribution scheme to the Government. I at once said that I thought the negotiations were at an end, but that I would see Northcote and Salisbury. The next morning (Saturday) I saw them both. Northcote agreed with me in my estimate of the whole transaction and was I think rather sorry at the failure of the negotiations: Salisbury evidently very much pleased.[863]

In the afternoon Elsie and I returned to Highclere.

[860]For Smith's views on the bill, see E.A. Douglas, 3rd Viscount Chilston, *W.H. Smith* (London, 1965), pp. 183–184.

[861]Donald Cameron of Lochiel (1835–1905), diplomat.

[862]Aretas Akers-Douglas (1851–1926), MP for East Kent (1880–1885) and for St Augustine's (1885–1911), Opposition Whip (1883–1885), Government Whip (1886–1892), Home Secretary (1902–1905), 1st Viscount Chilston (1911).

[863]Carnarvon had been in communication with leading Liberal peers on 29 October. In reply to a lengthy letter from Carnarvon, Granville wrote, 'I can answer for Gladstone in being sincerely anxious for an adjustment, provided it is compatible with his responsibility to the Liberal Party, with regard to the legislation he has undertaken' (Granville to Carnarvon, 31 October 1884: CP, BL 60773, fo. 139). To Argyll, Carnarvon declared, 'My efforts so far have been fruitless, but I am not without hope that some understanding may ultimately be built on them. The door is still open' (Carnarvon to Argyll, 1 November 1884 (copy): CP, BL 60832, fo. 70).

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Thursday 6 November (London)

Debate in House of Lords on Dunraven's motion for a joint Committee on agriculture and trade. It was not a discussion worthy of time and place. Dunraven did not handle his subject well. Sandon spoke with force but only in a party point of view and I know that I was not particularly good.[864]

Dined with the Greenes, met Waddington,[865] Goschen, Foster, Froude, Reay. Had a great deal of conversation with Goschen as to the present situation. His great fear is that in any redistribution scheme the "middle class" should be trampled out of existence by the Tory democracy on the one side and the Radicals on the other. I agree, but they are a timid body which will not speak out for themselves.

Gladstone's speech in moving the Second Reading of the Franchise bill was extremely moderate and conciliatory and a very large part of it was written out.[866] Goschen told me this and Northcote repeated it to me.

Friday 7 November (London)

A talk with Northcote as to the position of affairs.[867] We talked freely and I went so far in personal confidence to tell him that there is a most widespread belief that Salisbury is "riding for a fall" and is quite reckless as to the destruction of the House of Lords.[868] He admitted it, but said that the Government disliked him so much and were anxious to damage him that he believed they would with that view accept

[864]Motion for a Select Committee jointly with the House of Commons 'to inquire into the condition of the work and commerce of this country': *Hansard*, CCXCIII, 6 November 1884, Dunraven, cols 1044–1060, Harrowby, cols 1070–1073, Carnarvon, cols 1076–1079. The motion was withdrawn.

[865]William Henry Waddington (1826–1893), French diplomat, Minister of Foreign Affairs (1877), ambassador at London (1881–1893).

[866]*Hansard*, CCXCIII, 6 November 1884, Gladstone, cols 1121–1129. The bill was carried by 372 to 232.

[867]Behind the scenes, on 31 October, Queen Victoria had suggested a bipartisan conference consisting of Gladstone, Salisbury, and Northcote. Salisbury accepted but Gladstone hesitated on the grounds that discussions were already under way between Hicks Beach and Hartington. See C.C. Weston, 'The royal mediation in 1884', *English Historical Review*, 77 (1967), p. 306.

[868]John Fair has pointed out that Carnarvon's remarks were less to do with a challenge to Salisbury than concern over the future of the House of Lords and perhaps more. Richmond told Carnarvon on 31 October, 'If the House of Lords is to be tinkered and the hereditary principle interfered with, it is not a very long step from the Throne' (J.D. Fair, 'The Carnarvon diaries and royal mediation', *English Historical Review*, 106 (1991), pp. 105–106.

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worse terms for themselves as to re-distribution. But he knew that what I have said is the feeling all round and he admitted that it was very disastrous.

Cleveland seems to be elected President of the U.S., which as far as one can see is likely to be the best issue of the controversy.[869] On the other hand the cholera appears to be in Paris and I suppose we shall have it here.

Politically the tide at this moment seems against us. The pending Elections are likely to be a failure, and Fawcett's death[870] removes one moderate and upright man from the Government.

Tuesday 11 November (London)
[House of Lords]

The Franchise bill has passed so swiftly through all its stages that will be with us on Thursday.[871] Granville proposed to put down the Second Reading for next Tuesday, being less than a week. Salisbury objected strongly. G. very suave, S. very rough. Salisbury afterwards spoke to me about it and I said I thought it would be a pity to divide on such a point as to whether the bill should be taken on Tuesday or Thursday, and at last Salisbury agreed in this. But at first he let Granville understand that he should probably divide. It would have been a pity.

I am afraid the chances of a compromise or an understanding are fading away. The South Warwickshire election has excited some of our men.[872] The Duke of Argyll told me that he had been talking to Chaplin who was very hot to get rid of the bill altogether. Impossible. We have gone too far on the road of change.

Meanwhile there is great trouble brewing among the Scottish crofters, and all the airs of demagogism and agitation are at work there to fan the fire. There is a proclamation put out by some anonymous person inciting to the burning and destroying of the landowners' property.

[869]Grover Cleveland, the Democratic Party nominee, was elected after a turbulent campaign (see P. Nevins, *Grover Cleveland: a study in courage* (New York, 1932), pp. 156–188).

[870]Henry Fawcett, Lib. Postmaster-General since 1880, had died on 6 November. For an assessment of his career, see L. Stephens, *Life of Henry Fawcett* (London, 1886), pp. 450–456.

[871]*Hansard*, CCXCIII, 13 November 1884, cols 1463–1553.

[872]The South Warwickshire by-election on 9 November resulted in the capture of a former Liberal-held seat for the Conservatives: Sampson Lloyd, the Conservative candidate, obtained 3,095 votes; Lord William Compton, 1,919. Compton told Sir Edward Hamilton that his 'crushing defeat' was mainly due to 'the dislike of farmers to the enfranchisement of their labourers' (Bahlman, II, p. 730).

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Wednesday 12 November (London)

A meeting at Salisbury's to consider what should be done as to the Franchise Bill.[873] A good deal of discussion. Salisbury's view was not to help, if possible, any redistribution and to compel a dissolution, and with him agreed J. Manners and R. Winn. Against that view and in favour of coming to terms if good ones can be had were Cross, Smith, Sandon, Northcote and myself. Nothing definite was settled except that the proposal to postpone the Committee to some distant time should not be made, as Salisbury suggested, *immediately* after the Second Reading but in the usual course, when the bill comes on for Committee. This was undoubtedly the opinion of the majority but perhaps this was not distinctly agreed to.[874]

Friday 14 November (London)

Conversation with Northcote as to the state of affairs. It seems that Beach's negotiations are still in progress, or at least have not broken down. Northcote is desirous of some compromise and would like if possible that the Government should announce an intention to introduce a redistribution bill in the House of Commons as soon as we have passed the Second Reading of the Franchise bill in the Lords, and that on this we should put our Committee to say, a fortnight or to give time to see the nature of Redistribution, proceeding with the Committee rather gradually, to give time for discussion of Redistribution in House of Commons. This I think a very good idea, my only doubt is whether it is practicable. It depends first on the Government, secondly on Salisbury: the former are doubtful, the latter very doubtful.

In the evening we dined with the Jeunes[875] and went to see *Hamlet* at the Princess. It was very poorly played to my mind, not a single actor

[873]The second reading was to be in the Lords on 18 November.

[874]After the meeting, Salisbury wrote to Carnarvon, 'On the whole I come to the conclusion that it would be wisest, as you suggested, to let the bill pass through the second reading in the ordinary way on Tuesday, and take the division on going into Committee on Thursday. The words to that effect will go out tonight, the arrangement was of course made with the assent of Granville' (Salisbury to Carnarvon, 12 November 1884: CP, BL 60760, fos 3–4).

[875]Francis Henry Jeune (1843–1905), judge, created Baron St Helier (1905), and Lady Mary Jeune (1849–1931), society hostess (see E.F. Benson, *As We Were: a Victorian peep show* (London, 1930), pp. 284–286). The following year, Lady Jeune played a part in helping to set up the meeting between Carnarvon and Parnell on 1 August (Lady Jeune to Carnarvon, 22 July 1885: CP, BL 60822, fo. 125).

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or actress of any power, and it proved to me that with all his faults Irving is in a rank far above his competitors.[876]

Saturday 15 November (London)

A long conversation with Greenwood as to the Franchise Bill. He too agrees that the time for negotiation is come, but that secret negotiations would be a mistake, except as to particular details in the redistribution plan, because if a joint bill could be agreed on by the Government and Opposition it would have to be forced on Parliament and would be bitterly objected to both by Radicals and Irish. There is much sense in this: but the fact is that Parliamentary Government is nearly at an end. It has lost all its old vital power.

Sunday 16 November (London)

In the afternoon I had a long and most important conversation with Richmond who arrived in London this morning with Cairns from Scotland about 4 a.m. He discussed the whole situation and I think we are perfectly agreed on everything of any consequence.

He is most anxious as to the crisis, much annoyed at the joint meeting of members of both Houses at the Carlton on Thursday which he says is an attempt to coerce the Lords by noisy members of the House of Commons, very much disturbed at Salisbury's attitude and supposed intentions, anxious to open private communication with the Government, and resolved at any price not to allow the hope of compromise to break down.[877] The Queen is *extremely* anxious on the matter and he read me a really important letter from her to him which she had sent to him by Ponsonby at Perth as he was on his way South. She is very desirous of bringing about a meeting of the leaders on both sides, and is extremely alive to the risks of a dissolution at present. We are undoubtedly in the midst of a very serious crisis; but assuming that we do not show too much anxiety to deal, which would probably induce Gladstone to raise his terms, I think we ought to

[876]Wilson Barrett (1846–1904), actor-manager of the Princess's Theatre (1881–1886), took the leading role. Henry Irving (1838–1905) had long been celebrated for his interpretation of the part.

[877]Carnarvon had arranged to meet Salisbury at midday on 17 November. Meanwhile, he warned Salisbury, 'I am afraid that your joint meeting of the two Houses on Thursday is not popular with many peers; and even if no open dissatisfaction is expressed, I doubt if the results will be good. You can learn more of the feeling by enquiry but it is, I think, even now worth considering whether anything can be done to give them the sense of a somewhat free and more independent discussion of the course which they will pursue' (Carnarvon to Salisbury, 16 November 1884 (copy): CP, BL 60960, fos 6–7).

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settle the matter. Richmond, Cairns and I, reinforced as we now are by Sandon, are I think strong enough for the purpose. But I foresee that matters may be very disagreeable.[878]

Sir John A. Macdonald dined with us in the evening, alone, and we had some interesting conversation. One of the principal subjects was Ireland. I asked him how far his opinions had altered since we last spoke on it, and how he believed it could be governed. He said "by 'thorough', by Strafford's policy."[879]

But I said, "It is impossible, impossible under your present Parliamentary system."

He said "It is very difficult, and for this reason, that you are in a transitional state. You have neither the stability and permanence of an aristocracy nor the force of a democracy. A democracy may coerce Ireland, for there is nothing so hard and corrupt as a democracy when a dominant race in its dealings with a subject one".

I asked him who in his opinion would hereafter stand out as the greatest minister since 1832. He said Palmerston. Lord Derby had not had office long enough; Gladstone would be killed by the record of his own speeches and the "swamp" of words. Lord John Russell was already forgotten.

He first came to England in 1842 in the "great rally of Conservatism" and there saw and heard Peel, O'Connell[880] and Mr. Stanley. He seems to have been a good deal attracted by Lord Derby, then and afterwards, and spoke of him as "a great Patrician."

Tuesday 18 November (London)

We have had an anxious two days, ending however in a most successful and satisfactory compromise. On Monday morning

[878]When the Hartington–Hicks Beach discussions broke down, the way seemed clear for a meeting between Salisbury and Gladstone. As Gladstone was now willing to come to some understanding, Ponsonby informed the Queen on 15 November that he had talked to Richmond and Cairns (at Perth station that day, on their way to London) as she had requested, in order that they might persuade Salisbury to negotiate with Gladstone (F.E.G. Ponsonby, *Sidelights on Queen Victoria* (London, 1930), pp. 274–276). Salisbury, for his part, told Northcote on 13 November that there would be no easy passage for the Franchise Bill unless the Commons first sent up a Redistribution Bill (Salisbury to Northcote, 13 November 1884: Iddesleigh Papers, BL 50020, fo. 91).

[879]Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford (1593–1641), despotic Lord Deputy of Ireland (1633–1639). The previous year, Carnarvon had visited Canada and stayed with his old friend John Macdonald, the Leader of the Canadian Conservative Party. In discussing the Irish question, Macdonald expressed 'drastic and almost Cromwellian views' (Hardinge, III, pp. 92–93).

[880]Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847), MP for Dublin, Kilkenny, and Co. Cork, 'The Liberator', who supported Catholic emancipation in 1805.

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the Papers announced that the Government would make some declaration on the subject of the Franchise and Redistribution question,[881] and at 12 some Peers met at Salisbury's. I had understood it was to be a very small and private meeting, instead of which it was composed of all the Conservative Peers who had held *any* office in the late Government – Bury, Beauchamp, Mount Edgcumbe,[882] Cadogan, Colville, with the addition of Northcote. Anything so unfit to discuss a delicate question like this in the actual crisis of the case it is impossible to conceive. I felt it at once, and Richmond afterwards said to me that he could not but perceive that it had been constituted in order [to] overbear Cairns, himself, myself, etc.[883] I fully believe it was so designed, but it did not answer, for the general feeling was that in the face of this announcement it was impossible to take up a fighting attitude and that we must defer our decision till after the declarations of ministers. Nothing however could be more hostile to compromise than Salisbury's attitude.

When the House met Granville made his announcement and with studied conciliation of language and manner. Salisbury merely replied by asking a question and the matter dropped.[884] Immediately after the House rose our same committee of the morning reassembled at the Carlton. The prevailing feeling was all in favour of an acceptance of the Government's proposals, and so strong was it that I was afraid of too much eagerness being shown. Salisbury came last, and his first words were all hostile. He insisted on it that the Government evidently meant to make our acceptance of the Franchise Bill a condition precedent on their showing us their Redistribution scheme. I said I thought this mot unlikely and advised some private communication to clear up the case, but while we were arguing and while Salisbury was very adverse to the proposals there came Arthur Balfour and his memorandum, which was afterwards read in the House and which set the matter

[881] *The Times*, for instance, announced that 'Lord Granville in the House of Lords and Mr Gladstone in the House of Commons will today make a public declaration of the basis on which they are prepared to proceed with reference to the Franchise and Redistribution Bills' (*The Times*, 18 November 1884, p. 9).

[882] William Henry Edgcumbe (1832–1917), 4th Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe (1861), Lord Chamberlain (1879–1880), Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall (1877–1917).

[883] Cairns and Richmond, strong advocates of reconciliation, nevertheless received Salisbury's permission after the meeting to talk to Granville (Richmond to Queen Victoria, 17 November 1884, in Buckle, *Letters*, III, pp. 575–576). Gladstone, in his speech later to the Commons on 17 November, as an act of reconciliation had offered either a conference or a Redistribution Bill on the lines discussed with Northcote, and that a second reading in the Commons could take place simultaneously with the passing of the Franchise Bill into Committee in the Lords (*Hansard*, CCXCIII, 17 November 1884, cols 1820–1824).

[884] *Hansard*, CCXCIII, 17 November 1884, Granville, cols 1806–1809, Salisbury, col. 1809.

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right and showed that the Government did not mean to set a trap for us. This, as Salisbury said, altered the case greatly, and we broke up.[885]

On Tuesday morning we had a meeting of our ex-Cabinet only at the Carlton where this point was made still clearer by further communication, so a conciliatory policy of meeting the Government was agreed on. After this we digressed into considerable discussion as to the principles of Redistribution. Beach *very* strong as to his own view in favour of single-membered constituencies, John Manners equally strong as to the fatal effects on the Conservative Party by the co-operation on Redistribution to which we are now pledged. Salisbury on the other hand now that he is compelled to accept this course seems inclined to accept it pretty heartily. Cairns suggested that the two leaders should go into consultation with the Government and that behind them there would be a small Committee, mainly House of Commons men, to advise them and keep them in relation with the Party. It is a good suggestion and is really almost identical with what I originally proposed in my abortive negotiations through Sir E. May.

After this the mixed meeting of Lords and Commons at the Carlton followed. It was singularly harmonious, the feeling of all being one of great satisfaction at this conclusion to an awkward business. Chaplin, though still anxious to get a dissolution, professed complete satisfaction.

In the House of Lords later Salisbury's speech, though not perhaps quite as conciliatory as it might have been, was good – and so ends the first stage of this question.

Wednesday 19 November (London)

In the evening we dined at the Jeunes where Northcote was. He begged me to draw him any suggestions as to redistribution, which I promised to do.

[885]Before the Carlton Club meeting, Salisbury despatched his nephew, Arthur Balfour, to Gladstone, seeking reassurance whether the pledge to pass the Reform Bill '*is* or *is not* to predate an agreement with regard to the provisions of the Redistribution Bill'. Acting through Hartington's private secretary, Reginald Brett, Gladstone replied in a conciliatory manner. An inter-party conference would safeguard Salisbury's position. See J.D. Fair, 'Royal mediation in 1884: a reassessment', *English Historical Review*, 88 (1973), p. 111. The Franchise Bill was given its second reading later in the day: *Hansard*, CCXCIV, 17 November 1884, cols 1–10. There was also some unease on the Liberal benches at the settlement. Arthur Elliot reported a dinner party conversation hosted by another Liberal MP, Leonard Courtney: 'Courtney like other people were taken aback by the novelty of Ministers and Opposition jointly bringing forward the Redistribution Bill: a course of action which effectively destroys any influence from the House at large before the measure' (Elliot, Diary, 19 November 1884: Minto Papers, MS 19511, vol. 10, pp. 75–76).

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Monday 24 November (London)

I went to the House but there was no business of consequence. On returning to Portman Square, I had a long and interesting talk with Stead. He believes nothing to be yet settled as to naval expenditure, the Cabinet probably deciding it this week![886] He tells me that Gladstone and Salisbury get on very well in conference on the Redistribution matter and that all Gladstone's liking for Salisbury has returned.[887] Meanwhile Salisbury has summoned us to a small meeting next Wednesday to consider redistribution, so I think it all looks like a settlement. He mentioned to me a curious speech of Gladstone's yesterday indicating his Conservatism. G. was reviewing the last half century of Liberal legislation and he pronounced it be very remarkable, but wound up by saying that it was so remarkable that it now left nothing to be done.[888]

Wednesday 26 November (London)

A meeting of our ex-Cabinet at Salisbury's. He and Northcote were there to explain the course of negotiation and to get our consent and agreement to what they proposed to do.[889]

They read the memorandum of the proposed Government distribution bill which is in many respects like that which appeared in the *Standard*, perhaps is in essentials the same. They seemed to have not effected much in the way of alteration. Single membered constituencies appear to be about the only point on which the

[886]Stead, greatly concerned at the Liberal government's policy of reducing the vote on naval expenditure, wrote an article, 'The truth about the Navy', for his journal, the *Pall Mall Gazette*. It was later reprinted as a pamphlet and had a significant impact on public opinion. This led to an increase in the naval vote.

[887]On 22 November, Salisbury and Northcote met Gladstone, Hartington, and Dilke, President of the Local Government Board, with no minutes taken. A written compact known as 'the Arlington Street Compact', agreed between Salisbury and Dilke, was concluded on 28 November. See S. Gwynn and G.M. Tuckwell, *The Life of the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Dilke*, 2 vols (London, 1917), II, pp. 74–75.

[888]Edward Hamilton reported after one meeting between the two men, 'Mr. G. was in great spirits [. . .]. He said the discussions were intensely interesting and carried on in great humour. Lord Salisbury, who seems to monopolise all the say on his side, has no respect for tradition. As compared with him, Mr. G. declares he is himself quite a Conservative' (Bahlman, III, p. 741).

[889]Carnarvon wrote to Salisbury later the same day, 'It seems to me of the highest consequence that the Redistribution Bill should be as far advanced at once as to have the Speaker out of the Chair on this side of Christmas' (Carnarvon to Salisbury, 26 November 1884: Hatfield House Papers, 3M/E).

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Government are disposed to yield, minority voting being absolutely refused and grouping of towns strongly objected to.

Single membered constituencies and a good boundary Commission appear to be about all that can be got.

We agreed, everyone thinking it better not to break off the negotiation, and we consented though unwillingly to an increase of the total number of the House.

Ireland is to stand at the number of 100, and Scotland to get an addition of 10 or 13 members.

It is not satisfactory, but it is probably all that can be had and matters might be much worse; but one thing strikes me painfully, viz. that no one seems to have any knowledge or intelligent forecast of what will be the result of all this. It is another leap in the dark.[890]

In the evening I dined at the Empire Club at a dinner given in honour of Sir John Macdonald. He made a long speech which would have been a very good one if it had been a little more condensed, but it was too diffuse. Salisbury, Derby, Kimberley and I spoke.[891]

Tuesday 2 December (London)

Meeting of both Houses at Carlton. Salisbury made an able statement of his and Northcote's negotiations with the Government, describing the duty as a "repulsive" one, but claiming credit for considerable success.[892] It was most coldly received and a good deal of protest was entered by Chaplin, Raikes and some others. Ritchie on the other hand endorsed it all. But taking everything into account the Party seemed to me to behave very well, though many were under sentence of death there was nothing said that was unbefitting. It is a great question how it will all turn out. It may be the end of the old historic "Country Party" and sometimes I fear that it is, but it is the direct outcome of '67.

Later an important statement by Northbrook as to the Navy. I replied for our front bench as no one else knew anything of the

[890] After earlier hearing Gladstone's report to the Cabinet on the proposed conference between the two parties that day, Carlingford wrote, 'Very promising and near an agreement, but it is accepting the great change of the almost general introduction of the system of single member electoral districts instead of groupings which the Conservative chiefs began by proposing' (Carlingford, Diary, 19 November 1884: Carlingford Papers, BL 63692, fo. 254).

[891] *The Times*, 27 November 1884, p. 7.

[892] Gladstone had introduced the Redistribution Bill on 1 December: *Hansard*, CCXCIV, cols 372–385.

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matter, the Admirals who spoke not saying much but what they said was much to the point.[893]

Thursday 4 December (London)

The Franchise bill passed through Committee in House of Lords. There was little discussion.[894] I said a few words on the subject of the female franchise,[895] and was afterwards interviewed by Mrs Hallett and Miss Becker, a rather grim and bespectacled lady of middle or any age.[896]

Dined at the Jeunes. She tells me that Chamberlain is much annoyed and dissatisfied at the Redistribution bill, which is good.

Monday 8 December (Highclere)

This afternoon as I returned from riding a telegram was put into my hands containing an invitation to Elsie and myself from the Queen to Windsor. It is evidence of a reconciliation on her part after nearly six years of absolute silence. I shall be curious to see whether when we meet everything falls back into the old lines and she gives me at once all the old confidence, or whether the meeting is to be a purely formal one, the step perhaps to other communications, but for the moment nothing more. I saw all the best side of her 7 or 8 years ago, and I have nothing to learn now: but if I can be of any use she may, as she must have known, command me now as always. I think it possible my communications with Ponsonby some weeks ago may have led to this overture.

[893]The State of the Navy: ibid., 2 December 1884, Northbrook, cols 395–414, Carnarvon, cols 414–422.

[894]Ibid., 4 December 1884, cols 572–594. Carlingford wrote the following day, 'To the House of Lords, and saw the Franchise Bill passed without a word, with a few cheers from our side – a historical event' (Carlingford, Diary, 5 December 1884: Carlingford Papers, BL 63692, fo. 254). It received the Royal Assent on 6 December.

[895]*Hansard*, CCXCIV, 4 December 1884, cols 578–579.

[896]Lilias Sophia Ashworth Hallett (1844–1922), who with Millicent Fawcett was responsible for campaigning for a bill to enfranchise unmarried women and widows; Lydia Ernestine Becker (1827–1890), agent for the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage. See E. Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement* (London, 1999), pp. 46, 260. Carnarvon received a warm letter of thanks from the Central Committee for his supportive speech (CP, BL 60832, fo. 107).

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Wednesday 10 December (Windsor Castle)

In the afternoon Elsie and I went to Windsor. Only Cairns and Lady Cairns were invited besides ourselves. The rest of the party was composed of the Ladies in waiting and equerries etc.

The Queen was most gracious, it was an entire renewal of the old manner and apparently feeling, just as if the last six years had gone by and as if all cause for offence with me was entirely blotted out. She talked to Elsie after dinner for a considerable time, and evidently with great kindness, about the children and herself, and all kinds of people and things; and when after dinner she talked with me she went with all her old frankness into a conversation on the recent agitation and the recent conference. She said something to the effect that she was aware that I had done my best to help matters to this conclusion; but I said that the greatest service of all had been rendered by her, at which she was pleased, though it certainly is no more than the bare truth. It was a real personal pleasure to me to feel that the Queen was completely reconciled to me; for the alienation after so much kindness to me in former years pained me.

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