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BRITISH PARLIAMENTARY RADICALISM, 1886-1895:
THE ORIGINS AND IMPACT OF THE NEWCASTLE PROGRAM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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****

The Ohio State University
1974

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. RADICALISM AND LIBERAL POLITICS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. RECOVERY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, 1886-1888</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. POLITICS AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, 1888-1891</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE NEWCASTLE PROGRAM</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. VICTORY AND THE FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. RADICALS AND GLADSTONE'S ADMINISTRATION, 1892-1894</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. RADICALS AND ROSEBERY'S ADMINISTRATION, 1894-1895</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APPENDIX</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. RESOLUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION, 1886-1895</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LETTERS CONCERNING LABOUCHERE'S EXCLUSION FROM THE GOVERNMENT, 1892</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv
CHAPTER I:
RADICALISM AND LIBERAL POLITICS

In the decade following the Home Rule split of 1886 the Radicals increasingly shaped and sometimes even controlled the stated policy of the Liberal party. However, the effect this Radical influence had on the parliamentary leadership of the party, particularly on Gladstone, was significantly less than the Radical section both desired and expected. Study of this decade indicates that in the years prior to the general election of 1892 the Radical section grew in size, in influence, and in respectability. New Radical leaders emerged to take the place of those lost in 1886 and it was expected that the next Liberal Cabinet would have a decidedly Radical composition, at least when compared to Gladstone's previous Cabinets. The Whigs were gone, or at least greatly reduced in numbers, and the Radicals no longer faced the fierce opposition to several of their cherished proposals that had confronted them before 1886. Year by year the program approved by the annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation became more Radical. This process culminated in 1891 with the adoption of the Newcastle Program. That program was approved not only
by the delegates assembled at Newcastle but also by
Gladstone who seemed to give it his blessing in an address
to the conference. The Radicals were euphoric. They
felt they had taken over the party. Even the mighty
Gladstone had acceded to their demands. In spite of
the Parnell scandal and the lack of enthusiastic support
for Home Rule by many Liberal politicians and voters, it
was clear that the Liberal party should win the next
general election. Radicals concluded that following this
expected triumph their program, the Newcastle Program,
would be transformed quickly into legislation.

1892 brought the anticipated Liberal victory, although
the party was disappointed by their small majority.
This was particularly true of Gladstone and the rest of
the leadership which recognized that a large majority
was necessary to force Home Rule on the House of Lords.
Still it was expected that Gladstone and his Cabinet
would carry important measures from the Newcastle Program.
This was not to be. The next three years were years of
almost constant disappointment for the Radicals. Gladstone's
Cabinet was composed mostly of the old guard. The
Government did not move quickly. A year after the election
Ireland was still the major issue before Parliament.
Even after the Irish question was temporarily disposed
of and the Lords had rejected the Home Rule Bill by an
overwhelming margin the Government would not be hurried
and only rarely resorted to closure to get bills through the House of Commons. Gladstone's resignation in the spring of 1894 signalled another downward turn for the Radicals and the Government. Conflict began when Rosebery accepted the Queen's commission to form a government. Dissension was the order of the day. There was dissension within the Government, dissension outside the Cabinet, and dissension between the leadership and the mass of the parliamentary party. That the Rosebery premiership lasted so long came as more of a surprise than did the crushing defeat of the Liberals in the general election of 1895.

If "Radicalism" and "Radical" are to be used to describe a particular section of the Liberal party that can in some ways be identified as being separate from the rest of the party, it is necessary at the outset to establish a fairly comprehensive definition of Radicalism. An adequate definition is of great importance in any discussion of Radicalism because the terms of the definition tend to determine the size and the composition of the Radical group discussed. Too strict a definition, particularly in programmatic terms, excludes from Radicalism politicians who were obviously Radical in action and sympathy. On the other hand, a definition which is too loose broadens Radicalism to include the vast majority of the Liberal parliamentary party.
Either extreme gives a misleading picture of the Radical wing of the Liberal party.

Radicalism as a concept in politics is more susceptible to adequate definition than any particular group of radical politicians. Radicalism tends to a tabula rasa theory of government. Horace M. Kallen in the 1935 edition of the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences defines radicalism as involving three major points. He contends that basic to radicalism is a "conspicuously stressed attitude or frame of mind toward one particular institution of society or toward the social order as a whole." Kallen stresses that the emotional tone of radicalism is one of moral indignation often producing anger and hatred of the institution or society which the radical intends to change and improve. The second component of radicalism, Kallen contends, "is a distinct philosophy and program of social change looking toward systematic destruction of what is hated, and its replacement by an art, a faith, a science or a society logically


demonstrated as true and good and beautiful and just, or at least more so than the condemned establishment or society." Radicalism also tends to be democratic and humanitarian in terms of ends and means. "Its indignation is directed against the classes in behalf of the masses, against the privileged in behalf of the unprivileged, against owners in behalf of the propertyless. It favors the many over the one." It is basically utilitarian.

A radical, then, when he has discovered a problem or an injustice, becomes incensed that this particular situation is allowed to exist. He develops a solution to the problem which is, to him, rational and logical, and which will be of benefit to society at large. He then works for the adoption of his program.

Kallen makes an important point when he writes: "How a measure or a man is to be designated depends on who does it and from what position. The difference is one of purpose and perspective." Gladstone is a good example. While the Whigs, like Lord Hartington, could easily believe Gladstone to be a Radical, the Radicals, like Joseph Chamberlain, just as easily called him a Whig. The label depended largely on perspective. Radicalism is an indefinite concept. Moreover the emphasis of radicalism is constantly changing. New policies, new programs, new panaceas are constantly added to the repertoire of radicalism. As a movement in politics,
radicalism has no definite final goal—not even a nebulous goal like that of the early Independent Labour Party (or I. L. P.) to establish "Socialism".

Radicalism is closely tied to liberalism. In fact, Kallen contends that radicalism "develops out of liberalism in consequence of successful obstruction to the graduated changings of the past in which liberalism consists and which it carries on." The radical is determined to break through the obstruction. In some cases the obstruction becomes more important than the original measure obstructed. D. A. Hamer has used this analysis in his study of the effect of the Home Rule issue on politics after 1886. The Irish question blocked the way to further legislative reforms in the same manner that the necessity for franchise reform had blocked the way before 1885 and in the same way that the House of Lords issue would later become the obstruction to progressive legislation. This concentration on the problem obstructing the enactment of reform legislation provides a focal point for unifying diverse radical groups into an effective political force.

In order for this understanding of radicalism to be operative it must be applied to the unique British

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situation. As it stands, the above definition of radicalism is still somewhat vague and almost too inclusive. It is, however, difficult to narrow this definition to provide a proper understanding of British Radicalism. British Radicalism cannot be defined, even for a short period, purely in terms of program. Even a monument like the Newcastle Program was not totally representative of all Radicals. Some Radicals could not accept every plank in the program. For example, Radical brewers were understandably hesitant to accept the temperance proposals. At the same time certainly not all Radical demands were included in the program. The Miners' Eight Hours demand is one good example of this but there were also exotic demands made by some Radicals, like land nationalization or bimetallism, which were not even seriously considered either by the party or by the leadership. In a more informal sense there was always conflict within the Radical camp about the desirability or undesirability of a given reform and about the order of priority which should be demanded for certain reforms. There was, then, not sufficient unanimity on program to use this as a basis for dividing Radicals from non-Radicals. In addition this is true because some non-Radicals paid at least lip service to Radical demands. The acceptance of some Radical demands by the party leadership did not signify that the party leadership had become Radical but merely
that acceptance of these demands had become a political necessity.

If program can not function as a sole determinant of Radicalism during this period, neither can philosophy. Radicals exhibited a wide range of political philosophies from socialism to old-fashioned *laissez faire* liberalism. Recent analysts have denied the earlier conclusion that there was an age of *laissez faire* in Britain. These historians deny that *laissez faire* ever totally dominated either policy formation or political philosophy. In spite of this conclusion, however, it is nonetheless true that there were individuals who subscribed to the strict Manchester School line in economics. These men, in general, believed that the more liberty given to the individual, and the less restriction placed upon him by government policies, the better. The emphasis in the political careers of staunch Radical defenders of *laissez faire* was on granting additional freedoms and liberties to the mass of the people with the goal of establishing equality of opportunity—equality of opportunity in the sense that all would be free to rise to the limit of their ability, given the possession of means adequate to do so. Men like Charles Bradlaugh and John Morley with

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their emphasis on religious equality are good examples of this type. Their _laissez faire_ attitude is graphically indicated by their opposition to the government interference in economic affairs implicit in the Miners' Eight Hours Bills.

At the other end of the Radical spectrum are those individuals who favored constructive action by the government to promote and ensure greater equality. They recognized that the mere removal of restrictions and the granting of liberties, important though these goals are, would not, by itself, necessarily result in greater equality. It was the duty of government to promote equality through measures for the payment of members of Parliament and for the restriction of the hours of labor in hazardous occupations as well as other measures. Many of these Radicals did not object to being called Socialists. The various Socialist movements and groups in Britain at this time were mostly vague and unclear on the exact meaning of the term so it was easy for these Radicals to define Socialism in a manner that they could accept. "In particular, the radicals define 'Socialism' as meaning power for all the people and government for the benefit of the whole community, not of any one class within it. Their Socialism is the very opposite of the politics of class conflict or aid for the working class
alone." Many Radicals could adopt this kind of Socialism. Radicals generally deprecated emphasis on class conflict but they recognized the beginnings of such a conflict on the political scene. Indeed, some authorities contend that it was to prevent class conflict and to retain working class votes for the Liberal party that the Radicals adopted their constructive program. While this may have been true in some cases, it was quite possibly true in the case of Chamberlain, it seems too cynical to be the entire explanation for constructive Radicalism.

A contemporary analyst of the Radicals, C. B. Roylance Kent, clearly saw the conflict between the two Radical sections; he called them the "old Radicals" and the "new Radicals". Kent did not approve of the new Radicalism at all and although he did not like the old Radicalism much either he certainly preferred its "sturdy individualism" to the "clamour...for legislative interference" which he saw as the main characteristic of the new Radicalism.

In comparing the two he wrote:

...they [the new Radicals] join hands in casting from them that idea of laissez faire which they once so heartily professed. Their work, as the old Radicals conceived it, was to tear off the bonds of privilege and prejudice, to liberate the oppressed and to strike off the fetters


\footnote{Ibid., pp. xi-xii.}
which clogged the energies and industry of the individual man. They sought to obtain the greatest happiness for humanity by a sturdy individualism, and they believed that the surest way to reach the goal in view was to secure to every man his independence. Their work, in a word, was one of disenthrallment. So believing, they set themselves the mission...of redressing human wrong. But all that is now changed; for if there is one thing that is especially distinctive of modern radicalism, it is its constant cry for legislation...The bureaucratic temper appears to be a form of disposition to which democracy is liable to excess. Under the plea of protecting persons against themselves and the consequences of their follies and their faults, legislation is demanded that is too often of a coercive and irritating kind. The Radical policy is branded everywhere with that odious word compulsion.

Kent proceeded to attack the whole catalog of new Radical demands.

It is true that a difference in political philosophy existed between the old and new Radicals but Kent makes the divergence too sharp and clear-cut. Many old Radicals could and did support elements of the new Radical program. Many supported the demand for payment of members which Kent identified as being "new Radical" in origin and many supported the compulsory acquisition of land for allotments—a proposal which was certainly not laissez faire in philosophy. New Radicals consistently supported "old Radical" elements of the program like disestablishment and franchise reform. The new Radicals simply went

further in some of their proposals than the old Radicals were willing to go. This division was nothing new; there had often been disagreement among various elements of the left wing of the Liberal party. One recent historian, H. V. Emy, concludes that "individualism appeared primarily as a statement of desirable behavior rather than an explicit political statement on behalf of a particular party." Emy found that individualism was not the "decisive consideration" in Liberal politics.8

It is an error, then, to attempt to define Radicalism based upon acceptance or rejection of _laissez faire_. There were, however, broad areas of philosophical agreement unifying Radicals. These areas of agreement are most safely stated as tendencies rather than as absolutes. Radicals tended to be more responsive to public opinion than other groups in Parliament. Radicals were the advance guard in Parliament on issues arising in the country. An individual or a section in the Radical group was usually first to raise a particular question in Parliament. That members of Parliament took up a cause brought increased publicity and resulted in the growth of the movement promoting that cause. More specifically, Radicals tended to follow the wishes of their own constituencies.

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more than other groups. Kent contended that historically one of the primary postulates of English Radicals had been that a member of Parliament was a delegate sent by his constituency and the member must therefore represent the wishes of the constituency.\(^9\) This, of course, implies a rejection of the theory of virtual representation which was still widely accepted. It was for this reason that Radicals encouraged an increase in the number of working class members of Parliament. Although, as stated previously, Radicals rejected theories of class conflict and class legislation they did insist that each segment of the population should have its own representatives in Parliament to make its problems and desires known. The final unifying tendencies of late Victorian Radicalism were an emphasis on legislation and a willingness to act independently of party. Radicals were not primarily seekers after place and power. They believed that the leadership of the party should, in general, obey the directions of the party. The party existed not to blindly follow a leader like Gladstone but to guide him and to make certain that he led the party along the lines indicated by public opinion. If the leader did not fulfill this function, the Radicals were willing to find a leader who would; party loyalty did not come before insistence on measures. 

W. L. Guttsman sees this as the major element of British Radicalism:

The characteristic of the Radical party in politics was the preference for measures rather than men. They sought to achieve certain goals without being directly concerned with the carrying out of policies from day to day. Political power as such was suspect;...'Give us the measures and you may have the places' was their battle cry. Those who nevertheless accepted political office were suspect, and it was feared that they might be prepared to compromise in the policies which they had undertaken to carry out. The Radical group did not regard itself bound to the Liberal party under all circumstances. It felt free to support any group which happened to be temporarily allied with them in the prosecution of a certain policy.10

British Radicalism was primarily a pragmatic movement. Radicals could, in broad terms, adopt what Emy called the "Whig-Liberal creed of redress of grievances and legislative scrutiny within a balanced constitution."11 Indeed the Radicals were more ready to redress grievances than the Whigs. Radicals tried to find solutions to problems or injustices which they saw in the existing system. In this search for solutions they were generally not hindered by philosophical limitations nor were they usually united on the nature of the problem, the proper solution to the problem, or the priority to be given in dealing with various problems. What they wanted was a


11Emy, Liberalism, p. 9.
workable remedy, they wanted to get to the root of the problem and solve it.

The Liberal party during this period consisted of three interconnected but almost independent parts: The National Liberal Federation (or N. L. F.), the party leadership, and the parliamentary party itself. Radicals tried, and their attempts were partly and increasingly successful, to control or influence each of these three sections. The National Liberal Federation could be most closely controlled by public opinion—that is opinion in the local Liberal Associations—and it was also the section in which the Radicals had the most success. Indeed, the National Liberal Federation had been founded in 1877 as a Radical institution designed to increase popular control over the policy of the Liberal party. It was a national organization comprised of local Liberal Associations. In theory these Local Associations controlled the N. L. F. and the Local Associations were to include all in the constituency who called themselves Liberals. Although practice did not precisely follow theory, the Local Associations did become more democratic as time passed and the Annual Conference of the National Liberal Federation did provide a forum for the mass of the party as represented by the Local Associations. The function of the National Liberal Federation was to acquaint the leadership of the party with the feelings of the rank
and file. There was not to be any dictation to the leadership. The leader of the party was not compelled to adopt the policy of the N. L. F. as his own or as that of the party. Neither did the N. L. F. possess the power to enforce its policy on local organizations which were free to adopt policies differing from those of the N. L. F. In view of its lack of formal power the influence possessed by the N. L. F. is somewhat surprising. Increasingly after 1886 the N. L. F. became the forum for the formation of party policy.

Instrumental in the formation of the National Liberal Federation, and its first President, was one of the foremost Radical politicians of the day, Joseph Chamberlain, the screw manufacturer who became a municipal politician and then a national political figure and Radical leader. Chamberlain's idea was for a great "Liberal Parliament outside the Imperial Legislature" which would unite Liberalism and which would draw unto itself all those sectional organizations like the Liberation Society and the National Reform Union. This would enable reformers to settle among themselves the order of priority of reforms so that they would not defeat themselves by internal bickering.

The National Liberal Federation... was Chamberlain's answer to the problem of avoiding disorder and incoherence in programmatic Radical politics. Its purpose was to provide an institutional umbrella within which priorities could be fixed among the numerous reform questions of the day. At the outset one of the aims of the Federation was stated to be 'to aid in concentrating upon the promotion of reforms found to be generally desired the whole force, strength, and resources of the Liberal party'. Under its auspices would occur 'the selection of those particular measures of reform and of progress to which priority shall be given'.

The headquarters of the new federation were in Birmingham and it became for a decade the symbol of the Radicalism of the midlands. Its relationship to the party leadership remained equivocal since, although Gladstone had been present at the inaugural conference and had endorsed the Federation, the official head of the party in 1877, the Marquis of Hartington, refused to give "official approval". Gladstone approved the movement because it would bring greater organization to the party. Lack of organization had been blamed by some for the reverse suffered by the Liberals in the election of 1874.

One of the principle figures in the early history of the Federation was Francis Schnadhorst. He had been

13 Hamer, Liberal Politics, p. 46.
secretary of the Liberal Association in Birmingham and became the Federation's paid secretary. Not a great deal is known about Schnadhorst and he has been considered by some, and was so considered by some contemporaries, as a sinister political manipulator. That he was an excellent organizer is not denied and it is primarily to his credit that the National Liberal Federation grew and became successful. In the first years of the Federation he acted as a recruiting agent attempting to get Local Associations to join and to form Local Associations where none had previously existed. Schnadhorst encouraged Local Associations to follow the Birmingham model and organize in the most democratic manner possible. He remained secretary of the N. L. F. until 1893. In 1886 he also became secretary of the Liberal Central Association, a move which was designed to bring further unity and harmony between the leadership and the mass of the party. This was possible because in 1886 the N. L. F. moved its headquarters to London following the Home Rule split. Schnadhorst was successful in carrying a resolution in favor of Home Rule in the executive of the N. L. F. Chamberlain and his followers resigned and the organization moved its headquarters to London.15

15Barry McGill, "Francis Schnadhorst and Liberal Party Organization," The Journal of Modern History, XXXIV (1962), pp. 19-39. This article is the best source on Schnadhorst and is also good on the organization of the party.
The Liberal Central Association represented the other side of the party organization—the parliamentary leadership. The main figure in the Liberal Central Association was the Chief Whip who was appointed by the leader of the party. It should be noted here that the leader of the party was not chosen by the mass of the party in the country or by the N. L. F. He was chosen either by the parliamentary party, as in the case of Hartington in 1875, or by the Queen, as when she named Rosebery Prime Minister in 1894. The Liberal Central Association was thus concerned almost entirely with the parliamentary party. It was the traditional function of the Whip to run the party in Parliament on a day to day basis. General policy would be established by the leader or collective leadership and the Chief Whip and his assistants would be responsible for ensuring that sufficient votes were available in the House of Commons. The Whip was in charge of dispensing much patronage—indeed when in office his position was often that of Patronage Secretary—and it was in this dispensing of patronage and recommending for honors that part of his traditional power lay. Another source of power was that the Whip was the financial officer of the party. He received and dispensed contributions made to the party by wealthy backers. In this way he could reward those M. P.'s who had been loyal and responded to his whips and punish those who insisted on independent
action. This control over contributions was particularly important in the case of a relatively poor man who needed financial assistance to stand for Parliament and in the case of constituencies which were expensive to contest. Because he was the source of money and patronage, the Whip had great persuasive power with M.P.s.

Another function of the Whip's office was to provide candidates for those constituencies seeking them. Of course the candidate recommended had to be acceptable to the constituency but the Whip could still usually pick a candidate of the general political complexion he wanted. Through his position as the central cog in the party's electoral machinery he could, by providing funds and recommending candidates, greatly influence the composition of the parliamentary party.

The power of the Liberal Central Association and the Whip himself becomes more significant when it is recognized that the "parliamentary Whip's organization" had an "essentially Whig character which the very history of the English Liberal party [had] stamped on it." Authority proceeded from the center in the Liberal Central Association while in the National Liberal Federation it lay in the local Liberal Associations and their representatives. Radicals, emphasizing as they did more democratic control of government, were naturally wary of an organization

16Ostrogorski, Democracy, p. 91.
which would not automatically adjust its policy to meet the demands of public opinion. They were doubly distrustful because the Whips were Whigs rather than Radicals. Gladstone believed that an apprenticeship in the Whip's office was valuable training for official life for young members of the great Whig families from which he often chose his colleagues. Gladstone's preference for colleagues from the traditional governing classes was apparent during his entire career, and the composition of his Cabinets was always more Whig than either the party in Parliament or the party in the country. This was true even after 1886 when almost all of the Whigs deserted the party over Irish Home Rule.

The National Liberal Federation represented a Radical challenge to the power of the Liberal Central Association and thus a challenge to the supremacy of the Whigs in the leadership of the party. After 1877 both Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, a national Radical leader of longer standing than Chamberlain, sat on the Executive Committee of the Liberal Central Association and pressed Gladstone to make the Association more Radical in character. Specifically they wanted a Radical Whip and more Radicals on the Executive Committee. Gladstone resisted these pressures effectively until the Home Rule split in 1886.

when the Whig secession forced action upon him. Schnadhorst became secretary of the Liberal Central Association and retained the secretaryship of the National Liberal Federation. This provided coordination between the two organizations not present before. It also indicated that in the struggle between Whigs and Radicals for control of the party the Radicals had gained the upper hand.

Neither of these two organizations could totally control the composition of the parliamentary party. They could both, in some cases, exert an influence on the selection of candidates by assisting constituencies in the running and financing of election campaigns. Most of this activity was left in the hands of the constituency unless the constituency appealed for outside help. Gladstone was always insistent that the selection of candidates was the prerogative of the local Liberals and he would not become involved in that process. Payment of election expenses was usually left to the candidate and this meant that candidates in most cases were wealthy men. In only a minority of cases were election expenses paid by the constituency or by one of the national organizations. This effectively militated against the inclusion of a sizable working class element in Parliament. It also reduced the amount of influence that either the National Liberal Federation or the Liberal Central Association could have on the composition of the parliamentary party.
The parliamentary party can be divided into three basic sections: Whigs, Radicals, and a third group which will be called Gladstonian or Party Loyalist. These groups correspond roughly to the right, the left, and the center of the party. Each group varied in size over time but the Radical section tended to grow at the expense of the Whigs. This was particularly true after 1886. The Gladstonian section of the party also grew after 1886 and was the most stable and loyal section of the party. It was also the largest. It was composed of several types of men: men who wanted to be in Parliament for prestige or for business advantage, men who sincerely believed in the principles and purpose of the Liberal party and thought that loyal support of the party in parliament was the best way to assist, men who were personal followers of Gladstone and whose loyalty was primarily to him rather than to the party, men whose position in their constituency and whose sense of noblesse oblige were such that they found themselves almost unwillingly in Parliament, and men who desired to rise to official status and become part of the leadership of the party and the country. The Whips could count on members of this section to vote as they were told except in rare cases. It was this section which, after 1886, formed the most solid, or stolid, barrier against total Radical domination of the parliamentary Liberal party.
In the years immediately preceding Gladstone's third administration and the schism over Ireland there was mounting disintegration and internal conflict in the party. One of the greatest forces in this conflict was Joseph Chamberlain. While both Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke had held office in the 1880 Government their influence had not been as great as they had expected. Chamberlain's opinion was that the Government of 1880-1885 had suffered from "drift and absense of practical achievement." The reason for this failure to pass progressive legislation was, again in Chamberlain's opinion, that the election of 1880 had not been fought on the basis of a positive program. It had been fought mainly on the issue of Beaconsfieldian foreign policy and the Bulgarian horrors. The Liberals were therefore not committed to a program of legislation when they took office. The result was, at least from Chamberlain's view, that little positive legislation had been passed. Chamberlain feared that the same pattern would repeat itself after the next general election and that the Radicals would again lose out.  

The Radicals were determined to avoid this if possible. They were confident that their growth over the previous years had made them a force which could not be ignored. They in fact came to believe that they could

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18Hamer, Liberal Politics, p. 100.
stand on their own outside the party if necessary. Chamberlain even became convinced that Radicalism could ignore and override Gladstone. The reason for this attitude was, of course, the extension of the franchise which took place in 1884. The Radicals expected that most of the new voters would support them even against Gladstone. They therefore felt confident in presenting program demands to Gladstone and the party.  

The result of this confidence was the production, in 1883 and 1884, of a series of articles in The Fortnightly Review later published as The Radical Programme. Chamberlain was the stimulus behind these articles and became the main leader in the attempt to force the leadership of the party to accept the proposals contained in The Radical Programme as official party policy. The Radical Programme "was closely related to Chamberlain's own 'unauthorised programme'--the name given to the policy proposals which he made in his speaking campaigns during 1885."  

The Radical Programme was an attempt to find a program on which Radicals could agree and which would form the basis for a renewed and unified Liberal party. It was a program designed to be practical in the sense that it could be realized in legislation. Hamer has summarized

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19 Ibid., pp. 100-101.
The Radical Programme in fifteen points. Most of these proposals would later be included in the Newcastle Program although some, like free elementary education and local government reform, had already been passed into legislation by the Unionist Government after 1886. The most important question in the earlier program was that of land reform. Housing, progressive taxation, payment of M.P.s, disestablishment of the Church of England, and the creation of National Councils were also covered in this program.  

Hamer has analyzed Liberal politics during this period as being, on one level, a conflict between "two modes of action—the single great 'concentrating' question and the programme." He has concluded that in 1885 support for program politics reached one of its peaks. This conflict between single issue and program centered on the question of which method would provide the best rallying ground and the most unity in the party. Emphasis seemed to swing between one approach and the other—both being discredited when they did not provide total unity and did not infuse the country with enthusiasm. Gladstone was, according to Hamer, generally in favor of the single question approach:

"For Gladstone came to believe that one of the best ways

\[21\] See Hamer's discussion in his "Introduction" to The Radical Programme for a good analysis in greater depth of the program. This paragraph was based on that source.

\[22\] Hamer, Liberal Politics, p. 99.
of establishing organic order in Liberal politics was to attach them to some great cause that would so impress Liberals with its importance that they would voluntarily subordinate to it their special, divisive interests."\(^{23}\) This was the function performed by opposition to Beaconsfieldian foreign policy before and the Irish question after 1885. On the other hand, "Chamberlain's view was that the wider the electorate was, the more necessary it was to have a large programme to satisfy the increased range of sections, interests, and wants within that electorate. The more 'planks' there were in a programme, the more support the party proposing it would receive: to him programme politics were this simple."\(^{24}\) 1885 was a year when conflict between these two viewpoints came increasingly to the fore. In a more specific sense the struggle was between Chamberlain and Gladstone as representatives of the two schools of thought.

As time passed it was apparent that Chamberlain could not mount as effective a challenge to Gladstone's leadership as he had supposed. His following was not as large as he had imagined. Many saw Chamberlain as the source of disunity and Gladstone as the hope for stability in the party and so, even though they agreed with some of the

\(^{23}\)Ibid., p. 63.

\(^{24}\)Ibid., p. 99.
proposals in The Radical Programme, they threw their weight behind Gladstone.  

Gladstone, on the other hand, began to search for an issue that would end the disunity which he and others associated with The Radical Programme.

... in Gladstone's thinking on the political situation it was Ireland that began to emerge as the great cause that might control and subordinate all other political questions and thus create order out of the prevailing chaos. Gladstone saw Irish Home Rule as a 'ripening' issue, assessed its significance as such in relation to the condition of Liberal politics, and began to shape his concern with it accordingly. Thus by the end of October 1885 there had clearly emerged from Gladstone's ordering, systematizing political mind the familiar form of the single great question functioning to control and subordinate all else.

Gladstone had found in the Irish question the issue for which he had been searching. It would unite all sincere and unselfish Liberals behind his leadership in one last great crusade.

While Gladstone was careful during the 1885 election campaign not to commit himself one way or the other on the Home Rule issue neither did he give any positive indication of the direction in which his mind was moving. The announcement of his altered position on Home Rule was made, with or without his knowledge, by his son, Herbert, in December of that year after the elections were over.

25Ibid., p. 105.  
26Ibid., pp. 110-111.
Evidence has been presented by Hamer indicating that the timing of this announcement was dictated by fears that Chamberlain's attempt to replace Gladstone as leader of the party was becoming more successful in gaining support. Wemyss Reid, Liberal editor of the Leeds Mercury, was one of those writing to Herbert Gladstone in this sense and it was to Reid that Herbert Gladstone confided his father's conversion.\textsuperscript{27} Hamer has concluded that Gladstone probably expected that his conversion to Home Rule would split the Liberal party. Gladstone was not averse to such a schism because he believed that the party would emerge strengthened.\textsuperscript{28} He had never been a strong party man particularly where he saw "higher interests" of moral right involved. The Irish question presented such a moral issue as had the Bulgarian horrors in the previous decade. A split would, at the same time, leave his authority within the party strengthened.

Gladstone's equivocal attitude combined with the results of secret negotiations with the Tories had convinced the Irish leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, to throw the Irish vote in Great Britain to the Tories. The result of the election was all that Parnell could have desired; the number of Liberals elected, 335, exactly equalled the number of the combined Tories and Parnellites. Parnell could put a government of either party out of

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., pp. 113-116.

\textsuperscript{28}Hamer, "Irish Question," p. 520.
office. He held the balance of power. Gladstone's hope that the Tories would deal with the demand for Home Rule was quickly proved without foundation. The Liberal party seemed to have no choice but to throw the Tories out of office, in combination with the Parnellites and to advance behind Gladstone into the Irish bog.²⁹

Just as had been predicted, the party did split. The first to go were the Whigs, under the leadership of the Marquis of Hartington. This group refused from the outset to join Gladstone's Cabinet. They could not accept Gladstone's plan to enquire into the feasibility of Home Rule. This secession by itself was probably enough to doom the third Gladston administration to rapid failure but this eventuality was not foreseen at the time.

The Whig secession should have made the Radicals happy and they should logically have united behind Gladstone on the grounds that Home Rule for Ireland was not incompatible with other Radical goals. This was not to be. The Radicals were divided as was the Radical leadership. Of the three main Radical leaders, Dilke and Labouchere wanted to support Gladstone while Chamberlain opposed the adoption of Home Rule as a Liberal issue. "...Dilke and

²⁹One interesting note is that the issue on which the Tories were defeated—Jesse Collings' "three acres and a cow" amendment to the Address—was taken from the Chamberlainite program of the previous year. Collings was one of Chamberlain's closest followers.
Labouchere argued that by causing most of the Whigs to secede the Home Rule issue was paving the way for a more Radical party and that therefore the Radicals should make a tactical acceptance of Gladstone's policy in order to be able to remain in the party and exploit this new situation.\textsuperscript{30} Chamberlain, on the other hand, although he did join the administration at the beginning, resigned in March when it became apparent that Gladstone meant to try to push Home Rule through.

At the basis of Chamberlain's political conduct throughout 1886 undoubtedly lay the feeling that to accept the strategy favoured by Dilke and Labouchere would be tantamount to submitting to the continuation of Gladstone's controlling influence over Liberal and Radical politics; and this above all was what Chamberlain was determined not to do. Chamberlain now rejected what had clearly become the basis of Gladstone's authority in the party--his unique capacity for unifying it by holding together diverse sections. He defined Gladstone's practice of this mode of leadership as a main cause of division and disunity in the party, and not a remedy for that state of affairs as most Liberals seemed to believe it to be.\textsuperscript{31}

The issue which Chamberlain used as an excuse for his desertion was the insoluble question of Irish representation at Westminster following the enactment of Home Rule. In the first Home Rule Bill Gladstone banished the Irish. Chamberlain said that this meant the breakup of the Empire. Dilke and Labouchere tried to arrange a compromise. In an

\textsuperscript{30}Hamer, \textit{Liberal Politics}, p. 118.

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 120.
I have been trying to get Chamberlain to agree to vote for the 2d Reading, on condition that the Gov't makes the admission of Irish in Parliament a bona fide open question, on which the House may vote without official leading & without the Whips telling. If he would do so, this would reconcile these two babies. I really don't see how Gladstone can accept modifications before Committee, urged in this sic volo sic jubeo style....He [Chamberlain] says that he would be beaten in Committee. But I don't see this, and even if it were so, he would have many opportunities hereafter to get back his friends the Irish, if he really wants them. The great point is to find some modus vivendi, which would keep the Radicals together, & to this he ought to subordinate much, instead of making difficulties.

The attempt at compromise failed and Chamberlain voted against the Bill along with a few of his followers. Later attempts at reconciliation all failed. Henceforth Chamberlain was no longer a Liberal and therefore cannot be considered a Radical.

Whig and Radical dissentients joined with the Tories and defeated the Home Rule Bill on its second Reading. Gladstone appealed to the country but the shift in Liberal policy had been too rapid and the party was decisively defeated. Following the election of 1885, if the Irish and Liberal votes were taken together, the Home Rulers had a majority of 172. Following the election of 1886 the Unionists had a majority of 118. The representation of Ireland remained virtually the same so this swing of 290

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32Labouchere to Dilke, April 26, 1886, Dilke Papers (B. N., Add. MSS., 43892, ff. 148-149).
seats occurred almost entirely in Great Britain. It was a disastrous defeat for Gladstone's policy. It remained to be seen whether this result would be permanent or only temporary.

The Radical desertion in 1886 was certainly not as significant in numerical terms as the secession of the Whigs, indeed several of these Radicals later returned to the party, but it may have had more severe long term consequences. The Radicals never found another leader of Chamberlain's stature either in Parliament or in the country. This became of special significance after Gladstone resigned the premiership in 1894. Many felt that Chamberlain, had he remained within the party, would have succeeded Gladstone and that would have changed the whole later history of the Liberal party.

Another of the trio of Radical leaders temporarily disappeared from the scene in 1886 and never regained his former position either in the party, in Parliament, or in the country, although he did return to Parliament in 1892. Sir Charles Dilke was named co-respondent in a divorce case and, on the advice of his counsel, offered no defense. The lawyer's theory was that there was not sufficient evidence to convict Dilke of adultery and, indeed, Dilke was not found guilty. A further legal attempt conclusively to clear his name failed on a technical point of law. Many strict nonconformists concluded that, since he had not
been cleared, he must have been guilty. This was the position taken by W. T. Stead, the crusading nonconformist journalist who hounded Dilke for years. Dilke never outlived the stigma attached to him because of his supposed involvement in this scandal. Dilke, too, had been considered a possible successor to Gladstone. His loss seriously hurt the Radicals specifically and the Liberal party in general.  

The split in the Liberal party in 1886 was not entirely negative in its effects. For one thing the Whigs almost all left the party. This reduced the party in the House of Lords to an almost insignificant level and also made it much harder for the Whip to raise money to finance elections. On the other hand, the section of the party which did remain was more homogeneous in attitude and philosophy.

The Whigs and radicals who seceded over the Home Rule Bill may have made strange allies but they had this in common, that they had been the principal feuding elements in the party over the previous decade. Seceding, they left behind a party that, even if smaller and out of power, seemed much more united, and many Liberal leaders rejoiced in this.

This, then, was the party which, following its disastrous

33 Roy Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke, A Victorian Tragedy (London: Collins, 1968). Jenkins has evaluated the available evidence but was unable to reach a firm conclusion on Dilke’s guilt. He seemed to believe, however, that Dilke had been framed.

34Jamer, “Irish Question,” p. 520.
defeat in June 1886, would revive itself and recapture most of its supporters in the country. It was the party which, although led by Gladstone, had an enlarged and increasing Radical element which exerted much greater influence after 1886 than had ever before been the case.
CHAPTER II:

RECOVERY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, 1886-1888

Home Rule had been rejected. The Liberal party had been seriously defeated in a general election. In determining the reasons for such a massive reverse both moderates and Radicals sought other reasons than simply the unpopularity of Home Rule. Indeed, the party seemed convinced that the major problem with Home Rule was that it had been sprung too quickly on the electorate and that the mass of the people had not had sufficient time to accept or even understand either the concept or the Home Rule Bill itself. Some Liberals pointed to the unpopularity of the Land Purchase Bill which had accompanied the Home Rule Bill in 1886. Moderates contended that the Radicals were not strong enough to ignore or alienate the moderates and that Gladstone had tried to do too much himself, overrating his power over public opinion, and that if the Liberal party became more Radical it would lose additional support.¹

The Radicals drew different conclusions. In addition to Home Rule, Labouchere, in a letter to Herbert Gladstone,

¹Diary, July 12, 1886, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48644, ff. 61).
blamed the election results on lack of organization and
the fact that many workers had moved or otherwise invali­
dated their registration. "Justice to Ireland" had not
been accompanied by "some radical sops for England."
Defeat had come not because Liberals voted for Tories or
Liberal Unionists but mainly because of Liberal and Radical
abstentions. Abstainers would have to be won back by the
promulgation of a broad Radical program, including,
besides an Irish Government Bill, an English County
Government Bill, a Bill along the lines of "three acres
and a cow," and electoral and taxation reform. Labouchere
was insistent that Gladstone ought not to resign but
rather should meet Parliament and introduce a wide range
of Bills. Then, if defeated in the Commons, Gladstone
could appeal to the country not only on Home Rule but on
a truly Radical program. The combination of Home Rule
and a Radical program was to be Labouchere's recommendation
in the years to come and it was the approach finally
adopted by the party. He wanted this party platform to
be developed through the National Liberal Federation.²

In facing the question of reuniting the party there
was little mourning over the loss of Lord Hartington.
Indeed both moderates and Radicals seem to have expected

²Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, July 9, 1886,
Herbert Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 46016, ff.
93-99); Truth, July 15, 1886, pp. 99-100; Labouchere to
Herbert Gladstone, July 28, 1886, Herbert Gladstone Papers
that he and the other Whigs would have gone over to the Tories fairly quickly even without Home Rule. The problem was Chamberlain. The party was now more Radical; he had been the leader of the Radicals and one of the acknowledged heirs to Gladstone. The Round Table conference in 1887 was the most promising of the attempts to win him back but it was unsuccessful. Some Radicals, like L. A. Atherley-Jones, lamented the loss of Chamberlain. Others, like Labouchère, regarded him as a traitor. Labouchère attacked him both in Parliament and in the Press. Gladstone and Labouchère agreed that any reunion would have to be based on the Liberal Unionists, or a section of them, returning to the fold. The majority of the Liberal party had backed Gladstone, and if the Liberal Unionists would accept this majority decision all would be well and they would be welcomed back. But Chamberlain was too proud a man to do public penance and it soon became apparent that he would not return so long as Gladstone remained head of the party.3

Gladstone was in large measure responsible for the state in which the party found itself. His had been the

choice of Home Rule as the single great issue. He would remain the supreme leader during the years in the wilderness, always concentrating attention on Home Rule. Indeed at first he would talk of nothing else. He replied to one correspondent: "My friends forget my years. I hold on to politics in the hope of possibly helping to settle the Irish question; but general operations, both of party and of particular subjects, I am obliged and I intend to leave in the hands of others." It was only gradually that Gladstone became convinced of the necessity of speaking out on other subjects as Radicals had urged.

There were three or possibly four other leaders to guide the party: John Morley, Sir William Harcourt, Lord Rosebery, and Lord Spencer. The first three were to play key roles in the party struggles of the 1890's while Lord Spencer, whom Gladstone would have recommended for the Premierships in 1894 had he been asked, remained on a somewhat lower plane. Of the three, Morley was closest to Gladstone in political philosophy and commitment and as closely identified as Gladstone himself with the cause of Home Rule. He owed his position almost solely to Home Rule and was frightened by some of the other issues emerging. Home Rule, at least temporarily, prevented

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4Gladstone to Andrew Reid, Daily News, October 7, 1886.
these other issues coming to the fore. Morley had once been the confidant of Chamberlain but he drew back from the rising acceptance of state intervention, and if he could be classified a Radical after 1886, it would certainly be the old Radicalism rather than the new.6

Sir William Vernon Harcourt was easily the most influential Liberal leader in the House of Commons after Gladstone. His official biographer believes that during the six years following 1886 Harcourt was at the height of his power and influence. As leader of the Opposition during Gladstone's frequent absences, he was more effective than he had been when in office. He welcomed Parliamentary combat but disliked office because of the restrictions and compromises it imposed.7 It was during this period that he came to be spoken of as the likely successor to Gladstone. Unlike Morley, Harcourt did not like the almost exclusive emphasis on Ireland. Never enthusiastic about Home Rule, he believed that if Liberalism was to be the "party of progress" it must have a bold and Radical program.8 It was from Harcourt, then, that the Radicals received the greatest sympathy and assistance.

6Ibid., p. 255.
8Hamer, John Morley, pp. 228-229.
The Earl of Rosebery must be ranked among the leaders although during this period he led only fitfully. Gladstone had singled him out and he was adopted by some Liberals as their candidate for the succession. He was an effective public speaker and must have been a charismatic leader, judged by the loyalty of his followers. But he apparently did not want to lead. He had to be pushed into almost everything whether office or taking a prominent role in party agitation in the country. "He must put himself forward again," wrote Hamilton. "He has only to do this and to play his game dexterously to insure his succession to the leadership or practical leadership of the Liberal-Radical party." In spite of such feelings Rosebery's national role in the years of opposition was minimal.

The Parliament of 1886 saw the rise of a group of young Liberals who twenty years later would control the Liberal party. Chief among them were R. B. Haldane, H. H. Asquith, and Sir Edward Grey. Among the others---A. H. D. Acland, Tom Ellis, Sydney Buxton, Augustine Birrell, Ronald Ferguson, and Frank Lockwood---Acland was the oldest and was considered by some the leader. Their primary interest was in social reform. "They dined together periodically and worked in concert preparing amendments to Bills passing through the House, resolutions

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9Diary, April 16, 1887, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48646, ff. 20-21).
to be proposed when opportunity offered, and schemes of policy to be worked into the programme of the party." The talents and promise of some of the group, Asquith most prominently, were quickly discerned by Gladstone and other older leaders, Asquith primarily for his speaking ability. Haldane claimed to have been the most active of the group in formulating a program.

It would not be correct to include these young Liberals with the mass of Radicals although they often appear to be similar in philosophy and outlook. They did not see themselves as part of the Radical group; indeed Haldane made it plain that he did not approve of "Labouchere and company." The young Liberals were more closely tied to and identified themselves with the parliamentary leadership rather than the National Liberal Federation. Hamer discerns a "progressive-elitist" element in the young Liberals. They were closer to the Chamberlain pattern of using Radicalism to get power than they were to traditional, problem-oriented Radicalism.

The young Liberals identified themselves with two Liberal leaders in particular: Morley and Rosebery. Morley became their philosophical guide although they were


in many ways more advanced than he in terms of a social program. Asquith mentions their coming to be "on terms of growing intimacy and confidence" with Morley. Morley's philosophical nature appealed, particularly to Haldane and Grey, but they recognized that he was not the best choice for a practical leader. This position went to Rosebery whom they saw as a "pillar of political strength." Rosebery was useful to the young Liberals mainly because of his prestige in the party and in the country, not because of any positive act of leadership on his part.

Of prominent newspapers both the Manchester Guardian and the Daily News were closely connected with the Liberal party during this period. The Daily News was


considered to be the official party organ. Both newspapers were staunchly Gladstonian but the Manchester Guardian often took the more independent line. C. P. Scott, the editor, was to make this paper the strongest journalistic force for Liberalism in the country although it had not yet quite reached this position in 1886. Scott's biographer credits the Guardian with a role of "signal importance" in the development of a forward social policy. The Daily News also recommended an advanced program but was less free in criticizing the actions and speeches of party leaders. It was owned by a syndicate of Liberals which included Arnold Morley, Chief Liberal Whip until 1892, and Labouchere. Both newspapers on occasion voiced approval of the Radicals and of Radical proposals, particularly while the Liberal party was in opposition.

For Radicals the primary lesson of the 1886 election was that the Liberal party was now, in fact, a Radical party. Their traditional distrust of the Whigs was certainly reinforced. Labouchere "would not vote for anything which would bring Hartington back" and intended "never to lose an opportunity of accentuating the difference between Whigs and Radicals." The Whigs had turned against Gladstone because they believed they could "crush him, and, by crushing him, hoped to stem, for a time at

least, the democratic tide."\textsuperscript{16} The Liberal party, freed
from the drag-anchor of the Whigs, could now become
rapidly the true party of progress. That Gladstone
quickly recognized this was indicated in a letter to
Alfred Illingworth, one of the Radical leaders: "I have
always considered the Liberal secession as an event highly
favourable to the advanced members of our party."\textsuperscript{17}

One method of insuring Radical success was organization.
The Radical group was generally too heterogeneous to
cooperate in every instance and a structured Radical
party was not immediately formed. Twenty years later
one of the Radical leaders, Sir Charles Dilke, wrote:

There has been continuously a Radical group since
Fawcett revived one on his first return to
Parliament. In 1870 this grew into the Radical
Club, of which Dilke was secretary from its start,
for over ten years, until he ceased to be a
member by becoming a member of the Government in
1880. He was succeeded in the secretaryship by his
brother, and the club died as such with his brother's
death, but was followed by a loose Committee
organization which lasted until 1893.\textsuperscript{18}

Informal meetings of Radicals were held irregularly
beginning at the end of August 1886. These meetings were
usually announced by word of mouth and on an \textit{ad hoc}
basis. Therefore the actual size of the Radical contingent

\textsuperscript{16}Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, August 3, 1886,
Herbert Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 46016, ff.
112-113); \textit{Truth}, July 1, 1886, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{17}Gladstone to Alfred Illingworth, November 19, 1888,

\textsuperscript{18}Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43919, ff. 24-26).
in Parliament can not be determined by reference to attendance figures. Illingworth was chairman of the first meeting and informed the press that he had later learned "that many Liberals who would have otherwise been present were prevented by the invitation (which was entirely verbal) not being more extensively known." 19

The meeting of Radical members which took place on August 31, 1866 had several purposes. The nearly forty members present agreed that the Radical wing of the party should insist upon a greater voice in directing party policy. "Several speakers" claimed that the Radicals were now a "clear majority" and must take control away from the moderates. One suggestion was that a Radical member should become one of the Whips. Illingworth was directed to report the consensus of the meeting to Harcourt. C. A. V. Conybeare "suggested that a distinct Radical party should be formed, but the idea did not meet with general approval," and an independent Radical party was not organized for another three years. Organization remained informal although certain individuals emerged as leaders and a Radical Committee existed from time to time to call meetings and press party leaders for concessions. 20 Meetings continued to take place occasionally

19Daily News, September 2, 1886.

20South Wales Daily News, September 1, 1886; Dundee Advertiser, September 1, 1886.
but did not receive much notice in the press.

A further strategy used by Radicals was to threaten the leadership with loss of support. Labouchere was active in this area through his weekly magazine, Truth. He broadened Gladstone's statement that the Home Rule struggle was between the classes and the masses to involve the entire conflict between the Radicals on the one side and the Whigs and Tories on the other. He clearly believed that the Liberal party must become the party of the masses and that Radicals must not hesitate to turn out of office any Liberal government that lapsed into "Whiggism." Any leader who would not accept the democratic Radical program was given notice to quit.

Yes, my office seekers, you shall be Right Honourables. You shall have salaries. You shall be called leaders. You shall have articles written about you celebrating your wisdom, your self-sacrificing patriotism, and all that sort of thing. We freely give over to you these spolia opima of party victory, but on condition that you toe the Radical mark. We have a great admiration for Mr. Gladstone; we might (it is weak, perhaps, but so it is) not press upon him, were he Prime Minister, our programme in its entirety. But as for the others! Not one jot or one iota would we abate in deference to anything that they may say; and I would respectfully remind you that, on the Liberal side of the House, we are the masters of the situation, not you.22


22 Truth, March 22, 1888, p. 491.
Henry Du Pre Labouchere, born in 1831, became the chief Radical leader in the decade following 1886. He sat briefly for both Windsor and Middlesex in the late 1860's but was defeated in 1868 and remained out of Parliament for twelve years. His early career had been with the Diplomatic Service but his career there had been mediocre at best. After inheriting some £250,000 from an uncle he became involved in the stock market. He had been a great gambler in his youth and this new venture merely represented a shift in the scene of his gambling. He became a noted authority on the Exchange and in the early 1870's was made financial correspondent of the World, a society magazine. He had earlier become part owner of the Daily News and served as its Paris correspondent while the Germans were besieging the city during the Franco-Prussian War. The following thirty years would bring "Labby," as he was commonly known, into increasing public attention both in journalism and in politics.

Labouchere began the publication of Truth early in 1877. He both owned and edited this weekly journal and it was an immediate success. It was both widely read and profitable. It became the mouthpiece for Laboucharian Radicalism. Indeed, Labby's political and social ideas were stated in a more straightforward manner in Truth than in his political speeches. He appeared to find base motives behind any action—including his own—but
while his articles in *Truth* were pervaded by this cynicism, his real concern for justice and equality stood out.

In 1880 Labouchere became the "Christian" member for Northampton. His colleague in representing the constituency was Charles Bradlaugh, the noted atheist, who for several years was denied his seat in the House. Northampton provided a safe seat for Labouchere until he retired in 1906. Labouchere was active in the Parliament of 1880 but he was overshadowed by Dilke and Chamberlain among the Radicals. It was in the Parliament of 1886, following the desertion of Chamberlain and the defeat of Dilke, that he rose to the first rank. He became the recognized spokesman for the Radical group and was regarded as its leader. Opposition was his natural home and he was always more effective in attacking a Tory Ministry than in defending a Liberal one. Indeed his popularity and influence had so increased after 1886 that it was widely expected that he would be offered a position in the next Liberal administration.

Radicals have been denounced both by contemporaries and historians as being faddists. While this may have

\[23\text{As an avowed atheist he was deemed unable either to take the oath or to affirm. He managed to take the oath on several occasions but each time, by a vote of the House, his seat was declared vacant. Always returned at by-elections he struggled for six years to take his seat. Labby played a prominent role in defending Bradlaugh's right to sit. Finally, in 1886, the Speaker allowed him to take the oath and his right to sit was not formally challenged.}\]
been true of some Radicals it was not true of Labouchere. He was a democrat--some thought a Republican--and favored any reform which increased popular control over government or for which he discerned a demand in the country. This naturally meant that he supported some fads because many of these fads had a large measure of outside support. He constantly contended that the Liberal party lost support because it was not sufficiently Radical rather than because it was too Radical.

Labby attended assiduously to his House of Commons duties and after 1886 claimed the seat traditionally held by the leader of the Radicals--the first seat below the gangway. This seat provided easy and inconspicuous access to the lobby for a conference or a cigarette. He was a gadfly and a conspirator. His range of interest extended to insignificant and inconvenient details. He attacked the Government, for example, in 1887 for spending £17,000 to redecorate and build galleries in Westminster Abbey for use only on the day of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. His witty sallies against whatever he considered foolish increased his popularity and influence. He was greatly disliked by some leaders in the party, particularly by the more moderate, probably because of the wide acceptance of his position. He was blamed for making the party more

Radical and was happy to accept the credit. Lord Spencer supposed that Labby "conspires to the leadership!!" but this was quite possibly not the case. Labby simply had too much fun as an independent to sacrifice his freedom by accepting office.

He recognized an order of progression followed by reform proposals.

All legislative reforms originate with the people. In their first phase, they are suggested at public meetings; in their second phase, they are moved in the House of Commons by independent Radicals, and only independent Radicals vote for them; then comes the last phase, when they are brought in and carried by a Ministry.

His function was to assist reforms in moving from the first to the third phase. He probably considered this more important than being part of the Ministry which finally carried a reform.

Labouchere was a progressive Radical. Although he continued to prefer political to social reform he successfully made the transition from the old to the new Radicalism. His colleague in the representation of

25Lord Spencer to A. J. Mundella, December 18, 1888, Mundella Papers (Sheffield University Library, Folio VIII).


Northampton, Charles Bradlaugh, did not make the transition. One instance in which Bradlaugh's orthodox economic philosophy separated him from many Radicals and led him to reject a measure widely demanded by the working class was his opposition in 1888 to the Shop Hours (Early Closing) Bill. He considered the Bill "immoral" because it was an "arbitrary and capricious application of force on wrong principles." He opposed the Bill because it interfered with the freedom of the individual.28 During this same year, however, he carried his Oaths Bill which allowed freethinkers to affirm rather than subscribe to an oath they did not consider binding.29

On January 17, 1888 the first issue of a new Radical evening newspaper, The Star, appeared in London. It was an instant success. Its circulation jumped at once to 140,000 and by the summer of 1889 had reached 279,000.30 The first editor was T. P. O'Connor, a Radical and Irish Nationalist M.P. He sat for the Scotland division of Liverpool and was the only Irish Nationalist to sit for


a British constituency. O'Connor's brisk and concise style appealed to his readers as did The Star's halfpenny price. The brilliant staff included both George Bernard Shaw and H. W. Massingham, Massingham succeeding O'Connor as editor early in 1890. Labouchere had been instrumental in helping O'Connor raise the capital for the new paper and many of the proprietors were wealthy Radical politicians like Sir John Brunner and J. J. Colman. Some of the proprietors found the paper too Radical. In the end O'Connor's interest in the paper was purchased by the proprietors and the editorship was given to Massingham who had assisted in the movement to oust O'Connor. The Radical policy of The Star did not change much under Massingham but it did become more loyal to the Liberal party. 31

The Star's editorial policy was discussed by O'Connor in the first issue. In "Our Confession of Faith" he wrote:

The Star will be a Radical journal. It will judge all policy--domestic, foreign, social--from the Radical standpoint. This, in other words, means that a policy will be esteemed by us good or bad as it influences for good or evil the lot of the masses of the people....Starting from this point, we shall make war on all privilege.

for privilege stands as a barrier on the very threshold of the kingdom into which we would have all sons and daughters of men enter.... vast social reforms imperatively demand treatment. Our statesmen of all parties must make a step in advance, and face boldly and soon the terrible problem of hopeless poverty, unhealthy homes, and overwork or want of work among the masses of the people.32

The Star was not anti-Socialistic and was willing to examine and evaluate any proposal on its own merits. The domestic program outlined in this first article included ending "the House of Lords, the Property vote, the monopoly of Parliamentary life by the rich," and reform of the land laws, Home Rule for Ireland, Home Rule for London. London reforms included taxation of ground rents and municipal control over gas and water companies.33 This was, indeed, a Radical program in part structured for the needs of Londoners. The Star became involved not only in national politics but was extremely influential in London politics and was given much of the credit for the Progressive victory in the first County Council elections in 1889.

Beginning in August 1888 The Star published a series of seven articles entitled "Things to Work for" which, taken together, constituted the program that The Star recommended for adoption by the National Liberal Federation.

32The Star, January 17, 1888.
33Ibid.
The seven points were: 1. Shorter Parliaments, 2. Payment of Members, 3. Equality of Political Power, 4. The Extinction of the House of Lords, 5. Democratic Local Self-Government, 6. Administrative Reform, and 7. The Relief of the Unemployed. Shorter Parliaments would be more responsive to the electorate and bad or inefficient governments could be more quickly dismissed. Payment of members would allow working class men to be elected. Payment by the state was considered preferable to payment either by a political association or by a Trade Union because the member should be responsible to his constituents rather than to an outside organization. Equality of political power involved several electoral reforms which would make the masses equal to the classes: State registration, one man one vote, equal electoral districts, continuity of voting power, and the second ballot. The Star advocated the painless abolition of the effective power of the House of Lords by limiting that power to a suspensory veto for a stated period of time after which the House of Commons could override any objections of the Lords. Democratic Local Self-Government was demanded mainly for London. The London County Council should be given sufficient power to deal with the problems and injustices facing the mass of Londoners. Administrative Reform dealt with the matter of removing aristocratic dead wood from the public service and insuring strict
Parliamentary control over expenditure. For the "Relief of the Unemployed" The Star recommended a reduction of the hours of labor in government establishments and in areas of the economy, like railroads and retail shops, where foreign competition posed no threat. Also advised was the organization of labor by municipalities in workshops or on public works. A large segment of this program was adopted by the National Liberal Federation. Radicals in Parliament continued to press for legislation in all areas recommended by The Star.

The House of Lords provided Radicals with a longstanding grievance to be corrected. Several proposals were made by various Liberals of ways to deal with the Lords. Some, like Lord Rosebery, proposed to "mend" the House of Lords to make it more representative of and responsive to the will of the nation. Radicals contended that this was a Whig remnant and that so long as the hereditary principle was maintained the House of Lords would oppose necessary reforms. "Democracy admits of no hereditary right to legislate, nor any hereditary right to select legislators... no Radical will support any measure likely to strengthen the Hereditary Chamber." Nothing but abolition would

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34 The Star, August 27, 1888; September 6, 1888; September 21, 1888; October 13, 1888; November 7, 1888; November 19, 1888.

35 See Appendix I.

36 Truth, October 13, 1887, p. 595.
do because otherwise Liberal or Radical Ministries would always be "thwarted by the hereditary trades union of landlords who at present are entrusted with the power of veto on all our legislation."  

Another proposal more acceptable to some Radicals was the suspensory veto. This was the plan of The Star but it did not seem to attract much attention at the time. The Westminster Review revived the historical precedent, from the reign of William III and Anne, of "tacking" Bills rejected by the Lords to Money Bills which the Lords could not amend and which they dared not reject. This plan also failed to gain Radical acceptance.

On March 9, 1888 Labouchere introduced a motion in the House of Commons which provided:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is contrary to the true principles of representative government and injurious to their efficiency that any person should be a Member of one House of the Legislature by right of birth, and it is therefore desirable to put an end to any such existing rights.

The motion was rejected by a majority of 61 but 115 Liberals voted in its favor. The question of whether a single or double chamber legislature was most desirable did not

37 Letter from Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Daily News, August 23, 1887.


enter significantly into the debate. What made this
debate important was that both John Morley and Sir William
Harcourt spoke and voted for the motion as did several
other members of the late Liberal Cabinet. "For the first
time in the history of the country the official leaders of
the Liberal party [had] taken up the abolition of the
hereditary principle as an accepted dogma in the Liberal
creed."\(^40\) In the following week's Truth Labouchere
stated that he knew that had Gladstone been present he
also would have spoken and voted for the motion.\(^41\) In his
view the abolition of the hereditary right had now reached
the third stage in the natural progression of reforms
and this meant the "beginning of the end" for hereditary
legislators.\(^42\)

On July 6, 1888 Charles Fenwick, the Northumberland
Miners' leader, introduced a resolution in favor of payment
of members. The resolution recommended that the Government
consider "whether, and under what conditions it would
be expedient to revert to the ancient custom of paying
Members for their services in Parliament."\(^43\) The issue
of payment based on need was raised. Sir George Trevelyan

\(^{40}\)The Star, March 10, 1888.

\(^{41}\)Truth, March 15, 1888, p. 445.

\(^{42}\)Ibid., See above p. 51.

\(^{43}\)Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary
suggested that only those who could not adequately support themselves be paid. Gladstone supported Trevelyan's suggestion. He did, however, vote in favor of the resolution which did not prescribe a specific method of payment. The resolution was defeated by only a majority of 57 with the Liberal party again being united behind the resolution. The argument in favor of the payment of members was simple: "The work done by Parliament is national work. It should be paid for by the nation, and the nation should not be restricted in the choice of its servants." Radicals contended that payment was a necessary adjunct to the advance of democracy. In practice seats were mostly reserved for the wealthy who could afford to keep themselves in London. Working men M.P.s were usually paid by a Trade Union.

The *Daily News* argued that one way that payment of members could possibly be avoided was to have official election expenses paid out of local rates. A Bill to have the expenses of returning officers paid by the community had passed the Commons in 1886 but was thrown out by the Lords. Annual attempts to pass similar legislation had no success. The argument in favor of this proposal was precisely the same as that for payment of members— that, since candidates were forced to pay large sums to returning

44*Dundee Advertiser*, July 9, 1888.
officers, working men found it difficult to stand for Parliament.

Radical members met several times early in April 1888 to discuss the Local Government Bill recently introduced by the Conservative Government. They criticized the Bill for several reasons. For one thing the proposed unit of government, the county, was too large; parishes were the proper unit. They criticized their own leaders for being lukewarm in their opposition to the bad features of the Bill. At these, as at previous meetings, Alfred Illingworth took the chair. The Bill was discussed fully and it was decided that a lengthy debate in the Commons was necessary if the country was not to be tricked. A delegation was appointed to see Gladstone and lay their objections before him; the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation also met to coordinate objections to the Bill. The party leadership was persuaded to bring the weaknesses in the Bill clearly before the country by prolonging the debate on the Second Reading.

These efforts by no means exhausted the issues raised by Radicals. There was opposition to Goschen's Budget of 1888, protests against arrests during public meetings in Trafalgar Square, land reform resolutions and

45 Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43941, ff. 75-77).
46 The Star, April 11, 1888; Daily News, April 12, 1888; The Star, April 12, 1888.
Bills and proposals dealing with temperance and disestablishment. The important fact was that the Radicals were becoming more active in the House. Neither 1886 nor 1887 had been productive years for Radicals in domestic policy. The session of 1886 was held mainly to vote necessary money Bills while the major issue in 1887 was the Unionist Coercion Bill. Certainly during 1887 Radicals fought coercion tooth and nail and also acquitted themselves well in the debate on changes in the rules of the House, but none of these debates furthered Radical principles. It was different in 1888.

Some Liberal leaders, particularly Gladstone and Morley, argued in 1886 and later that Home Rule "blocked the way," that it was an obstruction to further domestic reform. Even Radicals seemed to adopt the theory that nothing could be done before Ireland was out of the way. The merit of the single great question from Gladstone's point of view was that it would end the anarchy of sectionalism and "faddism" within the party since all sections would be forced to subordinate their own demand to the necessity of dealing with the single question. Hopefully this order would be maintained after the question was settled. Indeed, the closest analyst of this phenomenon, D. A. Hamer, contends that the National Liberal Federation "which had been created as a vehicle for Chamberlainite 'programme' politics, was transformed
into an agency for organizing concentration on a single question." If this was the case, and it may have been so, it was so for a very short time. By November 1886 Liberal conferences were being held in various areas of the country.

The object of these conferences was to increase the local interest in political work, to strengthen the Liberal Associations in every district, and to diffuse widely political education, especially on the great question of Home Rule for Ireland. But never at any of these conferences were the other questions of reform, which had been in the front when the Liberal Party were in office, forgotten. On the contrary, they were brought forward in each district as the district itself desired, and were fully and fairly discussed.

The National Liberal Federation had issued a manifesto on August 7, 1886. This manifesto did state that the Irish question had assumed "the first place in the politics of the day." Nothing could be done to further the "ordinary work of the Liberal Party" until it had been settled. However the manifesto also stated that there were other matters "in which the sympathies of the Liberal party are engaged. A thorough reform of the land laws,... of registration...of electoral machinery" all needed to be dealt with in a "thoroughly Radical spirit."

47Hamer, Liberal Politics, p. 135.
48Watson, National Liberal Federation, p. 66.
49Ibid., p. 61.
50Daily News, August 9, 1886.
Radicals were convinced that the Liberal party had to have a program not restricted to Ireland. Labouchere contended that the National Liberal Federation provided the ideal mode of establishing a program since it represented the opinions of local Liberals. At a meeting of the Federation "a programme should be agreed to, both in regard to Ireland and in regard to other matters within the area of practical politics." 51

The annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation was held in Leeds on November 3, 1886. There had been agitation by various sections seeking to influence the program. Stuart Rendel, the Welsh Liberal leader and friend of Gladstone, had written to Morley, who was to be the chief speaker, assuring him "that it would be difficult to overrate the joy and gratitude with which the Principality would welcome an explicit declaration on the subject of Disestablishment in Wales formally made by such a Liberal leader as yourself." Morley replied that disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales "must now form an indispensable article of Liberal policy." 52

Labouchere had also, as usual, been active. In a letter to the Daily News he wrote that in addition to Home

51 Daily News, August 18, 1886; Letter from Labouchere, Daily News, August 14, 1886.

Rule the program should include:

A drastic alteration in our land laws, involving compulsory purchase, on the part of local bodies, of land which they may deem it expedient to buy, at a price based upon its actual commercial value, the abolition of the game laws, and the enfranchisement of leaseholds; the disendowment and the disestablishment of the Church of England, and the application of its funds, after providing for existing life interests, to educational purposes; the extinction of the hereditary principle in our Legislature; local self government based upon equal representation of all those who contribute to its support; non-intervention in continental quarrels; retrenchment; free education; and the withdrawal of our troops from Egypt.  

This, he believed, would attract Radical support in the country. The Daily News found Labouchere's program too drastic; it would make the schism in the party permanent. It did, however, approve the addition of Welsh disestablishment as long as it was realized that the Irish question came first. The Dundee Advertiser, on the other hand, believed that Labby's program "would be acceptable to the great body of Gladstonian Liberals."  

The domestic program actually adopted at Leeds did include several of Labouchere's suggestions but in general it was not nearly as Radical. Registration reform, religious equality, "Free Schools," reform of the land laws with leasehold enfranchisement and compulsory powers

53Letter from Labouchere, Daily News, November 2, 1886.
54Daily News, November 3, 1886; Dundee Advertiser, November 3, 1886.
of purchase for local authorities, local option, and local governing bodies elected "wholly by the ratepayers" were the domestic bases of the program. In spite of the Daily News' support of Welsh disestablishment and although Morley's reply to Rendel had seemed favorable, Welsh disestablishment was not specifically mentioned in a resolution. In analyzing the program the Daily News again insisted that no progress could be made in passing needed reforms because "Ireland stops the way." This feeling was expressed by several speakers. But, in spite of the overwhelming presence of the Irish issue, progress was being made toward the construction of a thoroughly Radical domestic program.

In 1887 the annual meeting of the Federation was held at Nottingham. If the Radicalism of the Leeds meeting had seemed rather pro forma since the major points of the party program had been combined in one resolution there was greater Radical satisfaction with the Nottingham conference. Gladstone's speeches, new resolutions, and great enthusiasm all combined to make the Nottingham meeting a success. Welsh disestablishment became for the first time specifically a part of the Liberal program. The resolution was a simple one stating "That in the opinion of this Council the disestablishment of the English Church in Wales should have an immediate place among the active

55 Daily News, November 4, 1886.
objects of the Liberal party."56 Tom Ellis urged that this should have first place after the settlement of the Irish question, a priority generally accepted by 1892. The Scottish delegation, represented by Angus Sutherland, M.P., indicated the desire of Scottish Liberals to have Scotch disestablishment also part of the program. This was not allowed on the grounds that insufficient notice of the resolution had been given. Apparently the leaders of the Federation were determined to give Welsh disestablishment primacy. In a letter to Stuart Rendel, Schnadhorst had indicated that the Scots wanted to put Scotch disestablishment on the same footing as Welsh disestablishment but "this must be avoided."57

The other separate resolution concerned one man one vote and registration reform. There was little disagreement. One advanced Radical, C. A. V. Conybeare, did advocate manhood suffrage but moved no amendment. This resolution represented a Radical demand of long standing.

The general resolution was only slightly changed from the previous year. But the official party leadership now recognized the program of this "Parliament of the Liberal party" as the official party program. Sir William Harcourt said that "he was there to listen, in the presence

56 Daily News, October 20, 1887.

57 Schnadhorst to Rendel, October 15, 1887, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., 978).
of the delegates, the selected representatives of the Liberal party, under the guidance of its great chief...to the authorized programme of the Liberal party."\(^{58}\)

Gladstone's speeches to the conference were great successes. His position with regard to the program adopted by the N. L. F. has often been misunderstood. Quite simply he accepted the resolutions as constituting the future work of the Liberal party but he did not commit himself to personally supervise their passage into legislation. His excuse was that of age: "I cannot reasonably anticipate the capacity at my age of commencing new controversies." He did, however, discuss several subjects which he believed stood "in the first rank of legislative urgency" after the settlement of the Irish question. The major subjects included: Registration reform and one man one vote, reform of the land laws, reform of the liquor laws, local government legislation, and Welsh and Scotch disestablishment. The significance of Gladstone's acceptance of these subjects as ripe for legislation was stressed by the Manchester Guardian and did, indeed, represent a striking victory for Radicalism.\(^{59}\)

\(^{58}\)Daily News, October 19, 1887; emphasis mine.

\(^{59}\)Manchester Guardian, October 21, 1887; reports of the conference were taken from Daily News, October 19, 1887 and October 20, 1887.
While the Nottingham program was a Radical program, The Star felt it had not gone far enough, contending that some social reforms must be added as well. A series of reforms dealing with the abuses of landlords was highly recommended. It was recognized that the actions of the Liberal leadership in the 1888 session of Parliament—efforts to improve the Local Government Bill, attempts to get equal death duties on realty and personalty, and to get division of rates between owner and occupier—indicated that the party was moving in the proper direction and that there was reason for optimism. The Star could conceive of nothing "more unfortunate than that the Liberal party should take office again without having clearly made up its mind on an English as well as an Irish programme." It applauded the resolutions to be passed at the conference in Birmingham in November 1888. The party would, in the main, adopt those reforms The Star had recommended.

The first business session of the Birmingham conference was devoted to the Irish question. The next day six resolutions dealing with domestic policy were introduced and passed unanimously. Certainly social reforms were now more prominent. The Welsh resolution, for example,

60 The Star, August 30, 1888.
61 The Star, November 7, 1888.
included not only Welsh disestablishment but the proposition that tithes should be "applied to purely national purposes." The electoral reform resolution contained not only one man one vote and registration reform but also shorter parliaments and payment of returning officers' expenses from the rates. Free elementary education and the establishment of technical, continuation, and intermediate schools comprised a motion on education. Taxation reform became an important part of the program. Equalization of death duties, division of rates, taxation of ground rents and values, and the question of mining royalties also were discussed. What could be called a working class resolution included provision for the better housing of the working class, the extension of the Factory Acts, leasehold enfranchisement, and amendments to the Allotment Acts. The composite resolution changed little from the previous year but now included the demand for "mending or ending" the House of Lords. Two amendments had been ruled out of order. One dealt with payment of members; the other with the distress of the Highland Crofters. It was ruled that such major subjects could not be dealt with by amendment but in both cases hope was expressed that the subject could be discussed at the next annual conference.63

Radicals could indeed be pleased. The Star was perhaps typical of Radical response when it commented

63Daily News, November 8, 1888.
that the program was excellent but would need to be expanded. Although it had been in existence for less than a year, The Star took credit for molding the policy of the party. 64 There was no trace of Whiggism left in the authorized program of the party. The Radicals had won. Now they had to insure that the party lived up to its commitments.

Wales presented a special problem. Most Welsh demands fit the criteria established for Radicalism and most had their English or Scottish counterparts. In the period after 1886 Welsh Liberalism was also becoming more Radical and more vocal. The claims of Wales on the Liberal party could hardly be ignored when Wales overwhelmingly supported the Liberal party. In the 1886 election 27 of the 34 members returned for Wales and Monmouthshire were Liberal and during the next few years the Liberals won additional seats. In response to the electoral results Gladstone foresaw "a new development in the political life of Wales." 65

In late 1886 a series of three letters appeared in the Daily News under the heading "Neglected Wales." They were written by a Welsh journalist, T. J. Hughes, who used the pseudonym Adfrfyr. In each case—on the land

64 The Star, November 9, 1888.
65 Manchester Guardian, September 28, 1886.
question, the church question, and the education question—
he argued that Wales had waited too long. Even Ireland
had scarcely been wronged as much as Wales. The Daily
News, for the most part, agreed with Adfryfr.

One method of ending the neglect of Welsh questions
which commended itself to some Welsh politicians was to
improve the organization of the Liberal party in Wales.
If Welsh Liberals were organized and federated with the
National Liberal Federation, perhaps the N. L. F. would
add Welsh questions to the party program. The fact that
Rendel's correspondence with Morley had not led to the
adoption of Welsh disestablishment as a plank of the party
program may have convinced other politicians that affiliation
with the N. L. F. was the answer. Some Welsh leaders,
particularly Stuart Rendel, feared that a Welsh organization
federated with the N. L. F. would be controlled not by
the Welsh but by Schnadhorst. He was convinced that,
because of his correspondence with Morley, the leaders of
the party had "set Schnadhorst on to counteracting any
independent action of Wales and to getting hold of the
reigns by establishing a caucus under central control.

66Daily News, October 13, 1886; October 28, 1886;
November 17, 1886. It should be noted that the October 28,
1886 letter was published the same day that Rendel wrote
Morley to seek his assistance in getting Welsh disestab-
lishment on the Liberal program. I have found no evidence
of coordination between Adfryfr and Rendel and, in any
case, Welsh disestablishment did not that year become part
of the Liberal program.
Wales must not fall into the hands of this central Association here in London...we can not allow our teeth to be drawn and our claws pared." He advocated boycotting the proposed organization.

Nonetheless a meeting was held at Rhyl on December 14, 1886 and the North Wales Liberal Federation was formed. Those who had been fearful that affiliation with the National Liberal Federation would mean control by the N. L. F. were reassured by Schnadhorst himself who was present at the meeting. Resolutions were passed dealing with disestablishment, land reform, and tithes. A resolution moved by Tom Ellis in favor of national self-government for Wales was adjourned to the next meeting because of lack of time for proper discussion. Stuart Rendel was elected President of the Federation. This naturally surprised him because of his previous opposition to the formation of a Federation but he talked with Schnadhorst and was convinced that Wales could continue to act independently, would not be controlled or bound by the N. L. F., and that all the advantages were on the side of organization. Schnadhorst told him that had Wales been

67 Rendel to A. C. Humphreys-Owen, December 6, 1886, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 279).

68 Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, December 8, 1886, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 283).

69 Manchester Guardian, December 15, 1886.
organized and affiliated Welsh disestablishment would probably have been added to the party program at Leeds. Rendel wrote that he left Schnadhorst "with my armour gone or all blunted." 70

Early in the next year the Liberals of South Wales followed the example of their northern compatriots and formed the South Wales Liberal Federation. As was the case in North Wales, the South Wales Liberals saw organization as the best way to draw the attention of party leaders to Welsh grievances. The program adopted by the South Wales Liberal Federation was virtually the same as that of the North Wales Liberals. 71

Later in 1877 the two Federations joined in forming a Welsh National Council which was formally organized and received a constitution in October 1888. The major purpose of the Council was to coordinate the efforts of the two Federations. Recognition of Stuart Rendel's position as the leader of Welsh Liberalism was indicated by his election to the Presidency of the Council.

Stuart Rendel was the man most responsible for the political reawakening in Wales. Rendel, who sat for the

70 Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, December 15, 1886 and Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, December 18, 1886, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 288 and 290).

Welsh county of Montgomeryshire, was not a Welshman but an Englishman who entered Parliament having already made his fortune in manufacturing but he became known as "the Member for Wales." It was Rendel who concentrated Welsh political thinking on disestablishment because he believed that it was not only an important issue in its own right but because it would secure recognition for Wales as a nation. One of Rendel's great advantages was his friendship with Gladstone. His tact and diplomacy were of great advantage in his efforts to persuade Gladstone and other Liberal leaders to adopt Welsh disestablishment. Indeed, Asquith gave Rendel sole credit for Gladstone's conversion. 

Rendel found himself in the middle between two generations of Welsh Liberals. The older members like Henry Richard and L. L. Dillwyn thought Rendel was moving too fast. On the other hand, younger members like Tom Ellis and later David Lloyd George believed Rendel was not moving fast enough and that sole concentration on Welsh disestablishment was wrong. The older members wanted absolute ties to the Liberal party while some of the younger members wanted to be totally independent and they, too, failed to cooperate on occasion. One of Rendel's goals was the establishment of a Welsh Parliamentary Party.

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on the model of the Irish Party and in this effort he succeeded in 1888. Before that time there had been a rather more loosely organized committee of the Welsh Liberal M.P.s.

The organization of the Welsh Parliamentary Party and the finalization of the organization of the Welsh National Council took place at the meeting of the Council on October 9, 1888. There had been agitation in favor of both of these moves, particularly in South Wales. The South Wales Liberal Federation prepared the proposals to be brought forward at the Council meeting and the South Wales Daily News was active in promoting more complete organization. Welsh interests could only be effectively advanced if both Wales and the Welsh M.P.s were united. 73 There was widespread, but not total, agreement with Rendel whose position was that once Wales had a program it should have a party. It was "the duty of a Welsh member to make Welsh interests his first care." 74 A resolution recommended the formation of a Welsh party in Parliament; for this purpose it would be desirable to appoint whips. The South Wales Daily News considered the formation of a Welsh Parliamentary party to be the 'most valuable result of the

73 South Wales Daily News, August 30, 1888.
74 The Times, October 3, 1888.
The Welsh party was in general to support the Liberal party but Welsh interests were to be given priority and independent action was a possibility. English Liberals were not entirely pleased with the formation of a Welsh Parliamentary party. It did not seem to the Daily News "to be by any means a prudent course, in the interests of Wales herself, that a Welsh party should be set up, the business of which should be to press and force the Welsh demands, independently of and in spite of the counsels and actions of the whole Liberal party." The Liberals had adopted Welsh disestablishment as a plank in the Liberal program and Wales could only get action on her demands through the Liberal party. John Morley wrote to Rendel that the Welsh would find the Liberals "the only people who will touch or look at the things they care for."

Neville Masterman in The Forerunner has made the conflict between Rendel and Thomas Edward Ellis, the young son of a Welsh tenant farmer who entered Parliament in 1886 more serious than it actually was. His evidence was the result of a meeting of the Welsh committee in June 1888 where Ellis was in strong conflict with the old guard of Richard and Dillwyn. Ellis would not give

75 South Wales Daily News, October 10, 1888.
76 Daily News, October 6, 1888; Morley to Rendel, September 27, 1888, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., 157).
way and the scene was "painful" to Rendel. This meeting resulted in letters by both Rendel and Ellis on the conflict and lack of unity and, from Ellis, on the inaction of the Welsh members. In his second letter Rendel admitted that Ellis was right about the "want of energy" of Welsh members. Even in these letters and certainly on other occasions Rendel wrote that he held "a very high opinion of his [Ellis'] merits all round" and that he wanted to push Ellis forward and "make the running for him." Ellis described Rendel as "a charming man whose cultured sympathetic influence you cannot resist. You would from many points of view consider him an ideal man." The conflict between Ellis and Rendel was over party program. Rendel believed that the Welsh party must concentrate on Welsh disestablishment while Ellis wanted a broader program to include particularly land law reform. Rendel was of opinion that recognition of Welsh nationality was possible.

77 Neville Masterman, The Forerunner: The Dilemmas of Tom Ellis 1859-1899 (Llandybie, Wales: Christopher Davies, 1972), pp. 100-101; Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, June 14, 1888, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 394); Humphreys-Owen to Rendel, June 15, 1888, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., 433); John Duncan to Ellis, June 15, 1888, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 370); Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, June 20, 1888, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 395).

78 Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, July 12, 1887 and July 19, 1887, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 333 and 334).

79 Ellis to D. R. Daniel, December 2, 1886, Daniel Papers (N. L. W., 330).
on the issue of religion but not on land reform and that once Welsh nationality was recognized then land reform would be possible.

Tom Ellis was the leader of that younger generation of Welsh Radicals who were returned to Parliament in increasing numbers after 1886. He was also a member of the young Liberals group which included Asquith, Haldane, and Grey. One of that group later wrote that even during the years after 1886 he was considered the Welshman most likely to become Prime Minister but Ellis died in 1899. Ellis was primarily known as a leader of Cymru Fydd or Young Wales, a Welsh nationalist movement founded in 1886. It differed from Rendel's nationalism in two ways. It wanted immediately a broader program including especially land reform and it wanted Welsh members to show greater independence from English Liberalism.

The Church of England in Wales was clearly the church of a small minority. A serious agitation developed over payment of tithes in 1886, the Welsh wanting a reduction in tithes because of the fall in agricultural prices.

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81 See above pp. 41-43.

82 Spender, Sir Robert Hudson, p. 23.

83 Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, July 21, 1888, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 402); Hamer, ed., Personal Papers of Lord Rendel, p. 305.
The agitation provided useful arguments in support of both disestablishment and reform of the land laws. Rendel contended that "tithe agitation and land agitation [were] but symptoms and accompaniments of the real malady...the incubus on their religious and social life of the English Establishment" which the Welsh wanted to "shake off." This was also the position taken by Labouchere in Truth; disestablishment and disendowment would bring victory. The tithe could then be used for local purposes.84

Landlordism is the enemy [the Daily News concluded]. Its bigoted attachments to the Establishment, or rather its bigoted hatred of Dissent, gives rise to the Welsh form of the grievance of an alien Church, while its economic relations with the tenantry and the mass of the people lie at the root of a land question that calls urgently for settlement.85

The land question was the problem which most attracted Ellis. His maiden speech was on that subject. He discussed the relations between tenants and landlords, a subject on which, as a tenant's son, he was well qualified to speak. On June 29, 1888 he raised the issue again in a motion for a Welsh Land Bill. He contended that the land system in Wales, although similar to that of England, had special problems and required a separate Bill.86


85Daily News, July 9, 1887.

86Masterman, Forerunner, pp. 95-96.
In spite of the opposition of some Welsh members the motion was defeated by a majority of only 18. Labouchere went so far as to recommend that the Welsh adopt the "Plan of Campaign" after the Irish model. This advice was not taken.

Liberal and Radical members from Scotland had a significant advantage over the Welsh members; Scotland was already recognized as a nation. Indeed, separate legislation for Scotland was the rule rather than the exception. Scotland had a distinct legal system and a distinct land system and thus separate legislation was essential. In some cases this led to Scotland being ignored. This neglect was, as in the case of Wales, one of the main complaints of Scottish members. Gladstone's position was, of course, that Ireland blocked the way after 1886 but that when the Irish issue had been removed "Scottish questions...ought to be settled according to Scottish ideas." 

There were organizations of Scottish Liberals but these were neither as powerful nor as pervasive as the National Liberal Federation in England and Wales. The two major competing organizations, one Radical and one Whig dominated, merged in December 1886. Radicals

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88Daily News, July 18, 1887.
succeeded in controlling the conferences of this Scottish Liberal Association, and the party program in Scotland became even more Radical than that in England. In 1888 a resolution was passed favoring Scottish Home Rule and demands for the abolition of the House of Lords and an eight hours' day for miners were added later. The Scottish Liberal Association did not, however, become as effective as the National Liberal Federation in gaining acceptance of its program by party leaders. Gladstone and other leaders who sat for Scottish constituencies paid relatively little attention to the Scottish Liberal Association.89

Scottish M.P.s met to coordinate action from time to time but were not as completely organized as were the Welsh. One reason for this perhaps was the high proportion of "official" Liberals in the Scottish delegation. There was never the unity among M.P.s from Scotland found among M.P.s from Wales.

One of the problems commanding the attention of a Radical section of Scottish members was that of the crofters of the Highlands and Islands. The Liberal Government had passed, in 1886, a Crofters Act but representatives of these peasants considered the Act inadequate and wanted it amended. There was, between

1885 and 1892, a definite "Crofters' Party" in the House of Commons composed of Radical M.P.s who were elected as crofters' representatives and not as Liberals. They raised the question every year (1886, 1887, 1888) and usually received support from other Radicals and the Irish. More moderate Liberals were hesitant to change the 1886 Act without fair trial and either abstained or voted against the motions. Even the Scottish Liberals were split on the issue although the overwhelming majority sided with the crofters' representatives. The particular grievance of the Crofters' party was the policy of encouraging emigration from the Highlands and Islands rather than enlarging crofter holdings by conversion of deer forests and sheep runs. Consistently defeated by large majorities, the Crofters' party continued to raise the issue.

A second Scottish issue, which had split the party in Scotland in 1885, was disestablishment. Gladstone had attempted to establish a truce between the two sections but was only partly successful. In the Home Rule split of the next year those opposed to disestablishment tended to become Liberal Unionists while those in favor of disestablishment...

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91Dundee Advertiser, September 1, 1886; Daily News, September 1, 1886; February 17, 1887; The Times, February 23, 1888; Dundee Advertiser, May 2, 1888; Daily News, May 2, 1888.
lishment also favored Home Rule. At the beginning of 1887 the Scottish Liberal Association declared in favor of disestablishment and, at the Nottingham meeting of the National Liberal Federation in 1887, Gladstone declared that the question of Scottish disestablishment was "ripe" for settlement. The question was raised in Parliament on June 22, 1888 on a simple resolution introduced by Dr. Charles Cameron which called for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland. His resolution received significantly more support than it had in the previous Parliament. A clear majority of Scottish M.P.s now supported disestablishment. The Daily News concluded that, as a result of this expression of opinion, Scottish disestablishment would have to become part of the Liberal program.92

A Scottish Home Rule Association was formed in 1886 and in the same year The Scottish Review published an extensive article on the virtues of Home Rule for Scotland. A federal system with a subordinate Parliament in Scotland would insure attention to Scottish business and would allow legislation to be based on the needs and desires of Scotsmen rather than on the prejudices of Englishmen.93


This cause became identified with Radical politics in Scotland although it did not draw much attention from Liberal leaders and had not been directly raised in Parliament by 1888. A proposal for a Grand Committee for Scottish Bills in March 1888 gave rise to a lively debate. The proposal was generally supported by Liberals and Radicals but some of the more advanced Scottish Home Rulers, like Dr. G. B. Clark, voted against the motion because it did not establish a separate legislature. This division among Scottish members was perhaps one of the main reasons Scottish Home Rule was never really taken seriously by leaders of the Liberal party.

Two parallel tracks of development can be seen during these years of recovery: The party became more organized and a Radical program was developed. The Liberal party after 1886 was still a sectional party and one development of this period was the increasing organization of those sections as separate, but often overlapping, groups within the party. Extra-party special interest groups like the United Kingdom Alliance and the Liberation Society continued to function and prosper. There was increasing organization, particularly in the National Liberal Federation, and within the parliamentary party, too, there was a tendency

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toward increased organization. Radicals, although not yet organized into a party, had formed a Radical Committee to coordinate and concentrate Radical action in Parliament.

Gladstone saw concentration on Home Rule as providing an opportunity to establish programs and priorities for use after the single question was removed. Program development began during the years after 1886 and culminated at Newcastle in 1891. The program which was developed through the National Liberal Federation and was endorsed by the party leaders was more Radical than before. In addition to the increasing proportion of Radicals within the party, stimulus for a more Radical program came from outside the party structure, from the press, particularly from The Star which was established during this period.

The balance was gradually shifting in favor of the new Radicals and many old Radicals were making a successful transition from old to new. Labouchere must be considered the leading Radical during the years in opposition and, indeed, his position was not seriously challenged. He and other Radicals were claiming much credit for the recovery of the party after 1886 and prescribed continuing doses of Radicalism to insure electoral success.
CHAPTER III:
POLITICS AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, 1889-1891

The first four years after 1886 were years of encouragement. The party was recovering its hold on the country. At the meeting of the National Liberal Federation in Manchester in December 1889 Gladstone, predicting a smashing Liberal victory in the next general election, could announce that of the thirteen bye-elections where seats had changed party since 1886 the Liberals had won twelve and the Unionists only one. The party program became more Radical every year and Radicals became increasingly convinced of the sincerity of those Liberal leaders who accepted this program. A major problem, and one never successfully solved, was to persuade the Unionists to dissolve Parliament before they were forced to do so by the Septennial Act. But in spite of this the British public were apparently becoming convinced of the necessity of Home Rule. The Unionist Coercion Act was extremely unpopular. The vindication of Parnell in the Times forgeries case increased his popularity in Britain.

1Daily News, December 3, 1889.
tremendously. The Liberals were riding high. Then, in November 1890, came the fall when Parnell offered no defense as co-respondent in Captain O'Shea's divorce suit against his wife Kitty. One effect the fall of Parnell may have had on Liberal politics was to make them more Radical still. Ireland remained the touchstone of British Liberalism but the domestic planks in the party program began to be increasingly emphasized, particularly in bye-elections.

Early in 1889 Labouchere's emphasis was on perfection of the "instrument of legislation" so that it would be genuinely democratic. If that were done, and his program included elimination of hereditary legislators, Parliament would make short work of the remaining points in the Liberal program. This emphasis on improvement of the machinery of government clearly indicated Labouchere's ties to the old Radicalism. He was not opposed to social reform but democracy would have to come first. He almost seemed to be raising another "barrier to progress" question alongside the Irish issue. What Labouchere meant, however, was that a democratized Parliament would make shorter work of necessary reform. According to The Star the "free breakfast table" was long overdue and would be made possible by taxation reforms already in the program.

"Every Liberal candidate elected during the last eighteen months [from October 1, 1889] [had] gone in on an advanced social and political programme." The lesson was clear; Radicalism meant victory. 3

The significance of the resolutions passed by the National Liberal Federation was much debated during these years. Robert Spence Watson, who became President of the Federation in 1890, quoted the Report to the Birmingham conference to justify his contention that the resolutions adopted by the N. L. F. were not a "formal programme."

That Report stated:

Neither the resolutions which were submitted at Nottingham, nor the resolutions which are submitted at the present meeting of the Council [Birmingham], are intended to constitute a political programme. The resolutions...refer to subjects upon which there is a general consensus of opinion in the Liberal ranks. Every question added which is not thus approved tends to divide and weaken the Party. There is no finality however in the resolutions submitted, and the advocates of other questions not included must not suppose that there is any intention to put aside the objects for which they care, but should understand that those questions are in the stage of discussion, and that the responsibility lies upon their advocates to so instruct the public mind that they may secure for them a place amongst the recognized objects of the Party. 4

The point was that the program should not be considered closed. Additions could be made if there was consensus.

3The Star, September 25, 1889; October 1, 1889.

If "political programme" meant a finalized statement of goals and measures, the resolutions did not constitute a political program. They were, however, the authorized program of the party and represented, at the time of adoption, those goals and measures on which the Liberal party was agreed and which the next Liberal Government would try to effect. This, at any rate, was the interpretation accepted by most Liberals and Radicals. It was strengthened by the fact that the resolutions not only represented party opinion in the country but were drawn up by the leadership of the National Liberal Federation in close contact with the official party leadership. It would have been highly unlikely that the Federation leadership would have submitted resolutions with which the official leadership strongly disagreed.

The annual conference of the National Liberal Federation for 1889 was held in Manchester early in December. Three separate resolutions were passed on domestic reform—a thoroughly Radical resolution on registration and electoral reform, a resolution on land and land tax reform, and a resolution on local government with special reference to London. The omnibus resolution included nine points. The issues covered were little different from a year before although changes in their order may have had some significance. Gladstone dealt with most of the issues raised by the resolutions in one of his speeches when he
spoke about the "legislation of the future." These were matters "ripe" or "ripening" for legislation although at his age Gladstone claimed he could not be expected to take a hand in their practical settlement. Although his endorsement was rather less specific than in some previous years it must still be concluded that Gladstone backed the program. That certainly was the conclusion reached by The Star which had "every reason to be satisfied with Mr. Gladstone's pronouncement at Manchester" and called his speech a "Charter" for reform.5

Radical opinion, as represented by The Star, was "naturally pleased" because it had received nearly all it had asked. The Star was not even greatly concerned that the President of the Federation would not allow the eight hours question to be raised. Democratizing the machinery of government was their first priority and "grease" for the wheels would be provided by taxation reform. The Manchester Guardian was rather more restrained and suggested that the program had, in fact, changed little since the Birmingham meeting. Payment of members was the most striking innovation. The Guardian congratulated the conference on "a good day's work."6 Labouchere's response

5 Daily News, December 3, 1889; December 5, 1889; The Star, December 3, 1889.
6 The Star, December 5, 1889; Manchester Guardian, December 5, 1889
was to again stress the importance of democratic reform. He recognized that Home Rule would be rejected by the Lords and advocated the introduction of a full democratic program alongside Home Rule. Then, when Home Rule was defeated in the Lords, the party could appeal to the country on its entire program including the abolition of the House of Lords. In that case Labby was certain the party would return with a majority.  

Gladstone was not present at the annual conference in Sheffield in 1890. The meeting was held shortly after the conclusion of the Parnell divorce case and Robert Spence Watson, the newly elected President of the N. L. F., wrote that there was "very great strain" because of this "catastrophe." Little was said about the future policy of the Liberal party in regard to Ireland. The party leaders had not had time to assess the situation. 

Early in the year Labouchere, disliking the cut and dried nature of the resolutions presented at the conferences, accused the National Liberal Federation of not being "genuinely representative" and of being out of touch with the rank and file. Robert A. Hudson, Assistant Secretary of the N. L. F., defended the advance preparation of the program saying that it was necessary both to avoid chaos

7Truth, December 19, 1889, p. 1144.

8Watson, National Liberal Federation, p. 121.
and to prevent the raising of divisive issues. The Report to the Sheffield conference encouraged Local Associations to suggest resolutions for presentation at the annual meeting and to advise on policy matters.9

The four resolutions on domestic policy submitted to the Sheffield meeting differed little from their predecessors. Welsh disestablishment and disendowment was given a separate resolution and it was to be brought forward "as soon as Irish Home Rule is attained." There were adjustments in details of other resolutions but the only new item added to the program was the "free breakfast table"—removal of duties on food and drink—certainly not a major addition. In commenting on the program The Star said: "On the whole the new Liberal programme laid down at Birmingham and Manchester, on the lines of which The Star has been the only exponent in the daily press," had been "further enforced and defined at Sheffield."

Sir William Harcourt and John Morley were the principal speakers at the conference. They endorsed the resolutions adopted and indicated their full confidence in the judgement of the Federation. Indeed, Harcourt said that the policy of the Liberal party was "written in the

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9Watson, National Liberal Federation, p. 114; Truth, January 2, 1890, p. 12; January 9, 1890, pp. 59-60; January 16, 1890, pp. 107-108.

10Daily News, November 21, 1890; November 22, 1890; The Star, November 21, 1890.
transactions and in the programme of this Federation."

It was becoming apparent, particularly to Radicals and younger Liberals, that now was the time to lay down the policy the party would follow after Ireland ceased to block the way. Even those who, like Haldane, conceded that the party could win the next election on Home Rule alone were insistent that planning take place now for the future. Problems of policy became almost inextricably entwined with problems of leadership. Gladstone was still leader of the party—that fact was undeniable—and Gladstone had pledged the party to the programs adopted by the National Liberal Federation. But Gladstone had always made it clear that he was too old to commit himself to carry these measures. One of the major complaints of Radicals, and this complaint was also voiced by progressive young Liberals, was that there was "the want of a truly progressive spirit in the leaders, coupled with bad or lukewarm Parliamentary management." Haldane, while he readily accepted Gladstone's disclaimer, attacked the other leaders for "adopting substantially the same course" by

11Daily News, November 22, 1890.


concentrating on Ireland.  

Inaction on the part of subordinate leaders was a continuing problem. The party, to a remarkable extent, was Gladstone's party. He had created it and molded it in his own image and no one else would presume to give the lead so long as he remained at the helm. But Gladstone's hold on popular affection was peculiar to him. There was an empathy between Gladstone and the people not apt to be attained by anyone else, and , indeed not equalled since his death. So long as Gladstone remained he would be respected by Radicals. His successors would have to toe the Radical line to win support. This had long been asserted by Labouchere. No one, certainly no one acceptable to Radicals, was being groomed for the succession. Only Harcourt and Morley had specifically endorsed the program of the National Liberal Federation. But Morley was closely tied to the Irish question and Harcourt was suspected of being a Whig. The problem was succinctly stated by A. H. D. Acland, a leader among the young Liberals: "The old man with no interest in a domestic programme--our other leaders doubtful & if one may say so


16For Labouchere statement of this attitude see above Chapter II, p. 47.
rather ignorant as to what should come next. We want a man with Chamberlain's gifts to stir our Radicalism a bit.17

It was in this way that Chamberlain's defection hurt the Liberal party, especially when combined with the concurrent loss of Dilke. Another Chamberlain had not arisen and those who discussed the succession problem were thrown back on the three or four men discussed in the previous chapter: Morley, Harcourt, Rosebery, and Spencer.

A rumor surfaced from time to time that Spencer had been chosen to succeed Gladstone. "An amiable second-rater and traditional Whig" commented an author in The New Review.18 The Star was indignant:

But what rubbish! As if the Liberal leader could ever—especially in these democratic days—be selected at a hole-and-corner gathering of half a dozen men. Why, the leaders of the future will have to be chosen in full conclave of the whole party—not by half a dozen big-wigs sitting at a table—with the complete concurrence of the Radicals.19

The same rumor came to the fore again in 1891 on the death of Lord Granville. No Liberal leader was named to succeed Granville as leader of the Opposition thus leaving Spencer and Rosebery on the same plane. H. W. Lucy thought this surprising because "it was taken for granted that Lord

17A. H. D. Acland to Ellis, January 1, 1891, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 23).


19The Star, January 6, 1890.
Spencer would succeed, anticipating the time when he shall assume the position of Liberal Prime Minister." Sir William Harcourt was to lead in the Commons following Gladstone's inevitable retirement. It is possible that Spencer was to serve as a caretaker or a "first among equals" Prime Minister until someone else rose from the pack.

Morley, Harcourt, and Rosebery all had little coteries of followers pushing their man forward. The Star seemed divided between Harcourt and Rosebery but also had good words for Morley. It did insist that if Rosebery were to lead he would have to get out of the Lords and into the Commons. One observer, an adherent of Rosebery, showed great foresight. He wrote to Rosebery about the "fundamental divergence of views" between Harcourt, Morley, and Rosebery and predicted that "a future Liberal Government will very probably either be wrecked or rendered powerless by the differences between their leaders." This view was not widely held in 1890.


21The Star, November 22, 1890; December 28, 1889; May 16, 1889.

1889 saw a significant advance in Radical organization. The Radical section became the Radical party. There was no fanfare and, indeed, little notice was taken of this new departure.

Mr. [Alfred] Jacoby undertook, in conjunction with Mr. Philip Stanhope, the duties of Whip. So quietly was the arrangement entered upon that a large majority of the House learned the fact from observing the hon. member for Mid-Derbyshire habitually perambulating the lobby without his hat. It is one of the unwritten laws of the British Constitution that the Whip of a party shall never be seen in the lobby with his hat on....When it was discovered that Mr. Jacoby had become a Whip, further inquiry brought out the facts that he had a colleague in Mr. Philip Stanhope, a titular leader in Mr. Labouchere, and a party which, all told, was said to muster seventy votes.

That Lucy's facts were correct was indicated by an article in The New Review where reference was made to "a new Radical organization in the House, counting at least 70 members" and, in another part of the issue, to Labouchere

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23 I have called the product of this further organization a party because it appointed Whips. This is one of the most essential elements of party and was widely commented on at the time. A parallel example is Wales. One of the major steps taken in the switch from the Welsh Parliamentary Committee to the Welsh Parliamentary party was the appointment of Whips. The section, whether Welsh or Radical, could then be summoned to vote on issues important to that section but not sanctioned by the official Liberal Whips. That the formation of a party with Whips did not necessarily imply separation from the Liberal party was made clear in both cases. It was also called a Radical party by the Annual Register for 1889.

as the Radical leader.  

The purpose of this Radical party was, according to one of the founders, "to give real and effective weight to Radical views" in the House of Commons and on Liberal policy. Others saw the new movement in a more sinister light. "A Liberal-Conservative" wrote:

The Laboucherians did not merely argue and complain. Feeling sure of their ground in the country, they promptly formed themselves into a faction, put a man at their head, settled into a distinct organization, confronted their one-idea'd captain with plans of their own, hustled him and his lieutenants in the character of open mutineers, and are resolute to continue the mutiny.27

This evaluation may have been based on the independent action taken by Radicals on the question of Royal Grants. The judgement of "mutiny" was not justified by events over a more extended period of time.

Philip Stanhope, one of the Radical Whips, wrote to the Daily News to explain the existence of the new Radical group.

...Our [Liberal] party whips only whip and tell for motions or amendments either brought forward by the gentlemen of the front Opposition bench,


26Atherley-Jones, Looking Back, p. 68.

or moved with the official approval of these gentlemen. Under these circumstances, it was found difficult to secure the attendance of Radicals in support of motions or amendments moved by unofficial Radicals. A meeting of Radicals was therefore convened of about 70 Radicals. All present declared themselves strong supporters of Mr. Gladstone. The idea of forming a separate policy was not even mooted. The mechanical difficulty of whipping for non-official Radical motions and amendments and the best mode of meeting that difficulty were alone discussed. In the end a representative committee was elected with Mr. Dillwyn acting as chairman, with three of its members acting as whips. The whips have only been sent out to rally Radicals in support of motions or amendments on which all Radicals are of the same mind, and for which our official whips have not been prepared either to whip or to tell; and it is only when whips have been sent out that the whips of the Radical Committee have told.  

As Stanhope’s letter indicated, the Radical party would cooperate with the Liberals when Radicals and Liberals agreed. It would not function as a party in that case but would nevertheless organize independent action when that was believed necessary. Radicals did take independent action later in the year on the subject of grants to the grandchildren of the Prince of Wales.  

The gradual philosophical shift from the old to the new Radicalism was perhaps best symbolized by the death of John Bright in 1889. Bright had been for some years

28 Letter from Philip Stanhope, May 18, 1889, Daily News, May 20, 1889. The third Whip mentioned in Stanhope’s letter was William McArthur who became one of the junior Whips of the Liberal party in 1892.

29 See below pp. 112-116.
the greatest surviving figure of that earlier *laissez-faire* generation. Bradlaugh remained yet another two years, but the old Radicals were dying out. The debate within the party seemed to involve the philosophical basis of the program rather than the program itself. Haldane, Atherley-Jones and other new Liberals or new Radicals contended that state interference was both necessary and good and that the Liberal party must turn wholeheartedly to social reform to maintain its hold on the mass of the people. 30 Old Radicals like Bradlaugh said that state interference was neither necessary nor good, especially in certain areas. 31 Probably the largest group, certainly the largest section of those in politics before 1885, was in transition between strict individualism and state interference. Labouchere was a key figure here, favoring any proposal that could be shown to be "beneficial to the community--call it social legislation or anything else." 32 His was a pragmatic state interference; he generally rejected the "meddling fussiness" of the philosophical reformers. *The Star* recognized him as


32 *Truth*, December 5, 1889, p. 1043.
"a staunch democrat" whose first interest was not social reform but who recognized that social reform and state interference was necessary and beneficial in some cases. **The Star** had faith that Labby would complete the transition. The radicals became the most sustained force in opposition. They fought the Government tooth and nail and often won. Labouchere held that the Government had lost the support of the nation and should be obstructed to force an election. "Our duty is clear. It is to hinder in every possible way a discredited Ministry from passing party measures, because they have no right to do this without first obtaining the assent of the country." The *Manchester Guardian* praised Radical and Irish members for remaining to the end of the Session after official Liberals had deserted their posts. **The Star** agreed with obstructing bad measures and found the front Opposition bench "our weakest point," wanting in "nerve" and "industry." Labouchere continued to improve his position in the Liberal party to such an extent that it was widely rumored that he would be given, or at least offered, office in the next Liberal administration. **The Star** was convinced that he would become Chancellor of the Exchequer. "No one would

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33 *The Star*, November 30, 1889; December 4, 1889.
34 *Truth*, April 4, 1889, p. 622; July 24, 1890, p. 170.
35 *Manchester Guardian*, August 31, 1889; *The Star*, August 19, 1890.
be better fitted for the task" because of his mastery of figures and his "just principles of taxation." On another occasion he was named as future Secretary of the Treasury.\textsuperscript{36} John Morley believed "Labouchere would probably be offered cabinet place but might \textit{possibly} not accept office."\textsuperscript{37} Indeed, according to one observer, "general opinion was that acceptance of office would decidedly militate against Labouchere's own interests."\textsuperscript{38} Some, although probably not a large number, looked for Labouchere to someday lead the Liberal party.\textsuperscript{39} His independent action over Royal Grants was the most likely cause of a "humorous" proposal for a Government with Labby at its head.\textsuperscript{40}

One incident in 1890 illustrated the gadfly nature of Labouchere's Radicalism as well as what a pest he could be to a Government. It also showed his hatred of law enforcement based on class. This was the Lord Arthur Somerset affair. It involved a homosexual brothel and no one but Labouchere would take it up. Lord Arthur Somerset apparently

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\textsuperscript{36}\textit{The Star}, December 28, 1889; August 19, 1890.

\textsuperscript{37}Record of a conversation with John Morley, June 9, 1891, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., III, 7).

\textsuperscript{38}Diary, record of a conversation with Lord Ashbourne, July 25, 1891, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48656, ff. 35).


\textsuperscript{40}\textit{The Star}, July 10, 1889.
frequented the place which was being watched by the police. A raid was carried out while he was not in the house but evidence of his complicity was apparently uncovered. Two of the "poorest and meanest" of those connected with the place were caught and given, for that time, very short sentences. They had pleaded guilty. There was, in fact, no open trial. Labouchere charged that "the Government, and especially the Marquis of Salisbury and the Law Officers of the Crown, conspired to enable certain persons of high position to escape the justice which their odious and abominable crimes against decency and morals deserved."

He claimed to have strong evidence that Lord Salisbury had caused Lord Arthur Somerset to be warned that a warrant was to be issued for his arrest. Lord Arthur Somerset had immediately fled the country. Labouchere's evidence was not dealt with effectively by the Attorney General but he did relay Lord Salisbury's denial of Labouchere's charges. Labouchere said plainly that he did not believe Lord Salisbury, and refusing to withdraw this statement, he was named by the Chairman and suspended from the House of Commons.  

This incident raised quite a furor. The Manchester Guardian regretted the raising of so odious a subject in

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41The Star, March 1, 1890; March 3, 1890; Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser., Vol. 341 (February 28, 1890), pp. 1534-1611.
the House but recognized that the Government, particularly Lord Salisbury and the Lord Chancellor, had enabled "rich and high-placed persons" to escape from justice while poorer men were punished. The Star concluded that Labby was probably right, condemned the suspension, and found the "extraordinary ruling" of the Chairman, Leonard Courtney, "absurd, illegal, and unconstitutional." 42

During this period one of the pre-1886 Radical leaders, Sir Charles Dilke, reappeared. Involved in an unfortunate divorce suit in 1886, he had then disappeared from politics. 43 He had written and travelled widely but rejected all offers, and there were several, of a candidature for Parliament. One of the most inviting was from the Forest of Dean, a mining constituency in Gloucestershire, where he finally paid a visit in May 1889. He was enthusiastically welcomed and became quite interested in the seat. He thought it advisable to attempt to secure Gladstone's advice on returning to Parliament. Gladstone wrote, in August 1889:

"I deeply feel the loss we sustain in your absence from public life...And I have almost taken it for granted that with the end of this Parliament, after anything approaching the usual full term, the ostracism would die a kind of

42Manchester Guardian, March 1, 1890; The Star, March 1, 1890; March 3, 1890.

43Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke, pp. 358-367. See above Chapter I, pp. 33-34.
natural death." Dilke also received encouragement from Schnadhorst. He gave the Liberals of the Forest of Dean plenty of time to make up their minds because he knew the sort of scurrilous opposition he would face from W. T. Stead and others. Finally, in June 1891, he agreed to run.

The situation had, however, changed with the Parnell divorce making Gladstone now far less receptive to Dilke's candidature although he refused to interfere with the choice of the constituency. The Star thought that his involvement in the Forest (this was before he accepted the candidacy) was "greatly to be regretted" and advised him to clear himself in court before he returned to public life.

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44 Gladstone to Dilke, August 10, 1889, Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43875, ff. 276-278).


46 Jenkins, Sir Charles Dilke, pp. 572-580.

47 Gladstone to E. J. C. Morton, March 5, 1891, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44512, ff. 151-152).

48 The Star, April 13, 1891. The attitude of The Star is surprising considering the letter written to Dilke by H. W. Massingham, editor of The Star, a year earlier "with the greatest admiration and the sincerest regard" in which he professed "no more fervent wish than that you may come back to us to initiate the policy you have outlined." It is only fair to note that this letter was written before the Parnell divorce. H. W. Massingham to Dilke, July 10, 1890, Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43914, ff. 260).
Dilke placed himself in the forefront of the new Radicalism with a series of articles, entitled "A Radical Programme," published in 1890 in The New Review. He had made an even more successful transition than Labouchere. His Radical program closely paralleled that of the National Liberal Federation but he went further to demand the shortening of the hours of labor, particularly in the case of the miners and in municipal and state employment. He believed the state could intervene without detriment to the individual and his change from "individualism to collectivism" was "marked." He also advocated free education to an advanced level and manhood suffrage. It was clear that if Dilke could return to Parliament, and regain at least a portion of his former influence and prestige, he would be an extremely powerful force for Radicalism.

Charles Bradlaugh reached the zenith of his Parliamentary career in these years. His power and influence in the House rose rapidly after he was finally admitted in 1886. He was responsible for the passage of several important reforms--the Oath's Act, the Truck Act, improvements in the Employers' Liability Act, and ending perpetual

49Gwynn, Sir Charles Dilke, II, 278.

50Sir Charles Dilke, "A Radical Programme," The New Review, III (July 1890), pp. 1-14; (August 1890), pp. 157-167; (September 1890), pp. 250-256; (October 1890), pp. 363-369; (November 1890), pp. 404-413.
pensions. Bradlaugh had become such a respected figure that the Northampton Tories did not intend to oppose him at the next election. In 1890 Gladstone inquired, through Harcourt, whether Bradlaugh would join a future Liberal government. If Gladstone would promise that one of the first things he would do would be to secure the removal of the resolution expelling Bradlaugh from the House, Bradlaugh would be "proud" to join Gladstone's Government. Gladstone made the promise. On January 27, 1891 he was scheduled to move a resolution expunging the old resolution for his removal but he was too ill to attend and it was moved by another Radical, Dr. W. A. Hunter. After some bickering by the Tories and strong support by Gladstone the motion passed and the old resolutions were expunged. Bradlaugh died without ever knowing that the House had purged its old insult. Bradlaugh, like Bright, remained dedicated to individualism. He opposed eight hours for miners as he opposed the restriction of shop hours. He was an old Radical, widely respected, but increasingly out of step.

The old and new Radicals were largely in agreement on the House of Lords. Here in 1889 and 1890 Labouchere received the support of almost the entire Liberal party. The leadership, with the exception of Gladstone, voted

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with Labouchere as they had done in 1888. The Daily News attributed Gladstone's absence to his dislike of abstract resolutions. The whip was issued by the Radicals and the tellers were the Radical Whips in both years. In spite of the lack of an official whip Labby wrote in Truth that "the entire Liberal Party" was pledged to the ending of hereditary legislators. In 1889 the resolution was defeated by only 41 votes but in 1890 the defeat was by 62 votes. This changing minority probably was not significant because those Liberals present did vote with Labouchere on both occasions.

"But the House of Lords blocks the way of reform of Land Laws, Liquor Laws, Education Laws, and all other laws the amendment of which will make the homes of the people better and their lives brighter," wrote the Dundee Advertiser. This became particularly true after Lord Salisbury indicated that the Lords would throw out Home Rule even if a Liberal majority was returned at the next general election. The Daily News attacked Salisbury for his "deliberate menace." If the Lords followed Salisbury they would have "voted

55 Dundee Advertiser, December 10, 1889.
against the clear and unmistakable will of the people."\(^{56}\)

"Until its hereditary right to veto all Liberal Bills has been swept away," said Labouchere, "it is idle to expect that any Liberal Government can give effect to the popular mandate to which alone they owe their tenure of office. They are powerless."\(^{57}\)

Radicals were active in introducing other resolutions and Bills. Much of the positive work done by Liberals in Parliament during these years was done by Radicals. Few of their resolutions or Bills passed, none of the purely Radical measures were adopted, but they were raised and the Liberal leaders were almost forced to endorse Radical measures. This meant that not only had the leaders of the party accepted the Radical program of the National Liberal Federation but had spoken and voted in favor of parts of that program in the Commons.

By early 1891 Gladstone had publicly indicated that the party must seek a mandate for electoral reform at the next general election in addition to the mandate for Home Rule.\(^{58}\) In addition to registration reform the major issue was plural voting. The Liberal party had been defeated in 1886 by "plural non-resident voters."\(^{59}\)

\(^{56}\) *Daily News*, August 24, 1891.

\(^{57}\) *Truth*, September 3, 1891, p. 475.

\(^{58}\) *Truth*, January 15, 1891, p. 118.

\(^{59}\) *Ibid.*
On March 3, 1891 Gladstone spoke in favor of a motion for registration reform and one man one vote. This motion was defeated by a large majority but Gladstone had made it plain that electoral reform would be part of the business of the next Liberal Government. 60

The issue of payment of members of Parliament was not one on which the Liberal party could wholly unite. The division remained between those who believed that all members should be paid and those who wished payment confined to those in need of pecuniary assistance. There was also a minority opposing payment altogether. An additional cause of division was the argument over whether such payment should be made by the locality from the rates or by the state from general taxation. No argument from Radical supporters of payment for all members ever swayed Gladstone from his belief in payment based on need. In 1889 when a resolution on the subject was introduced by Charles Fenwick, who had raised the question the previous year, the debate was counted out indicating the division within the party. The resolutions including payment of members adopted by the National Liberal Federation during these years were purposely left vague, merely expressing approval of payment and not prescribing the method, amount,

or coverage of payment.61

In 1889 nine Bills were introduced by London members constituting a Radical program for London.62 It was probably not imagined that these Bills would pass under a Tory administration but the stage was to be set for their later adoption. The same sort of situation obtained regarding temperance legislation with various Bills introduced for Local Option and Sunday Closing. The general impression given was one of enthusiastic Radical activity and constant demands by proposers of new measures for attention from the Liberal party and from Parliament.

Radicals differed from Gladstone and most of the rest of the Liberal leadership on the granting of subsidies to two of the grandchildren of the Queen, Prince Albert Victor, heir apparent, and Princess Louise of Wales, both children of the Prince of Wales. Radicals opposed this grant. Gladstone and most of the leadership supported the Government. In this test of the strength of Parliamentary Radicalism, the Radicals came off surprisingly well.

The matter, pending for some time,63 was raised and settled in July 1889. The Radicals complained that they

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62The Star, July 4, 1889.

had been promised, by both Gladstone and W. H. Smith, a committee of inquiry on the subject of grants to the Royal Family before another request for funds was entertained and now "with characteristic and indecent haste" the Royal Family had once again "swooped down on the British taxpayer." The Star concluded: "The whole thing is a trick, and we will not be tricked. The royal grants must be stoutly and uncompromisingly fought on high grounds of principle, for important public reasons."  

The Government found it necessary to appoint a Select Committee but its terms of reference were not such as to satisfy the Radicals or The Star. Radicals wanted the Committee to inquire into the savings made by the Queen out of the Civil List and to determine whether or not she could adequately provide for her grandchildren without appeal to the taxpayers. They divided against the appointment of a Committee. Jacoby and Stanhope, the Radical Whips, were the tellers for the Opposition and the Radicals obtained 125 votes against 313 for the Government. Only 37 Liberals, following Gladstone's lead, voted with the Government while 95 Liberals were in opposition. The Committee of 23 included eight Liberals and two Irish Nationalists but only four could be considered Radical.

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64 The Star, July 3, 1889.
65 The Star, July 4, 1889; July 5, 1889; Dundee Advertiser, July 5, 1889; Daily News, July 5, 1889; July 6, 1889.
Henry Labouchere, Alfred Illingworth, Thomas Burt, and Dr. Charles Cameron. Charles Bradlaugh, who probably knew more about Royal Grants than any other Radical was not included. *The Star* branded the Committee a "fraud."  

The Radical minority on the Committee naturally had little effect on the outcome but Gladstone did have a moderating influence on the original proposal made by the Government and reduced the size of the grant somewhat. Labouchere prepared a minority report which stated that the Royal Family already possessed adequate means to provide for the grandchildren of the Queen and that no additional grant should be made. This report was rejected by 19 to 2 with only Labouchere and Burt voting in its favor.  

Labouchere pressed home his point in an amendment to the Government resolution on the grants: If more money was necessary it could easily be obtained by cutting superfluous household offices. A strong whip was issued in favor of this amendment by Stanhope and Jacoby and *The Star* estimated that not less than 70 would favor it.  

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66 *The Star*, July 9, 1889; July 10, 1889.  
67 *The Star*, July 23, 1889; July 24, 1889; Manchester Guardian, July 23, 1889; July 24, 1889; *Daily News*, July 24, 1889. Since the entire Committee was 23 in number and only 21 voted on Labby's report I assume that Illingworth and Cameron were either not present or abstained.  
Pressed to give up his amendment in favor of a weaker one to be moved by John Morley Labouchere refused to give way. Had he done so any one of several other Radicals would have moved a similar amendment. The vote on the amendment was 116 to 398, a majority of 282 for the Government. However, viewed another way, 114 Radicals had opposed almost the entire party leadership over a matter of substance. Only 36 Liberals followed Gladstone. The Radical press considered the division excellent; the Radicals had achieved a "great good work," and had "reason to be satisfied."

On Morley's amendment a few days later the minority rose to 134. The thrust of his amendment was "to stop the grants after the present gifts." To The Star this division represented "absolutely the high-water mark of Radicalism" and, what was even better, that Morley had become "leader of the advanced section."

Some Unionists forecast that the split in the Liberal party over the Royal Grants would be permanent. Labouchere wrote:

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69 Manchester Guardian, July 24, 1889; Dundee Advertiser, July 25, 1889.

70 The other two votes were cast by one Liberal Unionist and T. P. O'Connor, editor of The Star, an Irish Nationalist.


72 The Star, July 29, 1889; July 30, 1889.
Of course, a great deal of nonsense about Gladstonian "dislocation" has appeared in Unionist journals and in Unionist speeches because in the division on the Royal Grants Mr. Gladstone voted on one side and the large majority of his followers on the other. Every Radical understands Mr. Gladstone's exceptional position, and makes allowance for it. He had himself proposed numerous grants of a like nature, and he simply remained in his former state of mind in respect to the system of providing for Royalties out of the Consolidated Fund. I rather admired his attitude. The Court has persistently snubbed him, except when it has been in want of his aid. He has heaped coals of gold on it. We have been told, again and again, that he is ready to adopt any course which he may deem popular. He has proved that he is not. His followers, on the other hand, have been told, again and again, that they have no opinions of their own, but take their opinions blindly from him. They have proved that this is not the case.

Liberals and Radicals also found it impossible to agree on the restriction of the hours of labor of adult males. There was a movement, which grew stronger over time, for a law restricting labor to eight hours per day. A wing of this movement, and the only section which had significant success in gaining adherents in Parliament, advocated the eight hour day for miners. There was a general recognition that mining was a hazardous profession and that miners ought not to work more than eight hours. The disagreement occurred over the propriety of this limitation being imposed by Parliament. There was even disagreement among the working class members of Parliament. Thomas Burt and Charles Fenwick, for example, opposed

73Truth, August 8, 1889, pp. 247-248.
such a measure while William Abraham favored it. Burt and Fenwick represented the Durham and Northumberland miners who already worked less than eight hours a day while Abraham represented the miners of South Wales who worked longer hours. John Morley and Charles Bradlaugh, both firm individualists, opposed the movement while Dilke favored it. Other Radicals, like Labouchere, were not attracted by the movement and disliked state intervention in the hours of adult male labor but were willing to support an eight hours Bill if it could be proved: "(1) that the thing is economically possible; (2) that the majority of artisans wish it; (3) that it cannot be effected by Trade Unions." The Star was strongly in favor of the proposed legislation.⁷⁴

The division in the party over the eight hours proposals was to become more significant in the future. Morley's opposition to this measure virtually disqualified him from the leadership of the advanced section, in spite of the hopes of The Star, and cost him his seat for Newcastle in 1895. While Morley and Bradlaugh opposed the measure both on the ground of principle and because of its supposed harmful economic effect other Radicals found no strong demand for it. That became Labouchere's major position. He knew that Sidney Webb wanted an eight

⁷⁴Truth, April 25, 1889, p. 761; The Star, July 4, 1889; November 21, 1889.
hours Bill. "I do not want to know what Mr. Sydney Webb and his brother Fabians think on the subject--I want to know what those for whom these gentlemen so kindly propose to legislate think on it. So far as I can gather, the vast majority of them are against it. . . . show me that the workers desire the limitation, and I will with pleasure vote...for an Eight Hours Bill." Labby advocated a Royal Commission on the subject. 75

Labouchere was more willing to grant a legislative reduction in hours to railroad workers because of their difficulty in organizing and because railroads were chartered and regulated by the state. F. A. Channing raised the question of railroad hours in Parliament but, aside from the appointment of a committee, it got no further than did the Miners Bill. 76

The dissatisfaction of Welsh Radicals with the leadership of the Liberal party and with Gladstone in particular threatened to explode into open revolt in 1889 and 1890. Gladstone had repeatedly failed to speak and vote for resolutions on Welsh disestablishment and the National Liberal Federation had failed to make it clear that Welsh disestablishment should follow Irish Home

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75Truth, December 19, 1889, p. 1144; Truth, October 30, 1890, p. 874.

Rule in the Liberal program and in Parliament. Welsh disestablishment was raised in a resolution moved by Dillwyn on May 14, 1889. The Government maintained a majority of only 53 with 231 voting for the resolution. The official Liberal Whips told for the minority but Gladstone neither spoke nor voted. The Welsh were upset.  

Gladstone issued an enigmatic statement in defense of his failure to vote contending that Welsh and Scottish disestablishment were related to one another and that he would pursue the same course in each case.  

Gladstone's failure to vote for Dillwyn's resolution resulted in the passage of two threatening resolutions by the Executive Committee of the North Wales Liberal Federation deploring Gladstone's abstention and warning that unless Liberal leaders promised to treat Welsh disestablishment as second only to Home Rule the support of Welsh Liberals would be forfeited. On the same day, June 12, 1889, "Mr. Gladstone was explaining to a Cornish audience the reason why he had not voted, and was emphatically declaring his adhesion to the principle of disestablishment in Wales." He also supported Scottish disestablishment in his speech,


78*South Wales Daily News*, May 21, 1889.

79Extract from *North Wales Observer*, June 14, 1889, Lloyd George Papers (Beaverbrook Library, A/6/3/5).
and said that it should perhaps come first because the required legislation would be much simpler. In effect he failed to give Welsh disestablishment the primacy the Welsh had demanded. 80

At the annual conference of the National Liberal Federation at Manchester in December 1889 a rider was added to the previously prepared omnibus resolution to the effect that the Welsh question should be dealt with as soon as Irish Home Rule was attained. 81 The South Wales Liberal Federation early in 1890 insisted that Welsh disestablishment should be second only to Home Rule and that they should be dealt with concurrently if possible. 82

The Executive of the North Wales Liberal Federation, in a meeting at Rhyl on April 30, 1890, resolved that every candidate for a Welsh constituency should pledge "that he will decline to support any Government except on the condition that the Bill for Welsh Disestablishment and Disendowment shall be brought in either concurrently with or immediately after the passing of a measure of

80 Daily News, June 13, 1889; The Star, June 13, 1889. It is interesting to conjecture that perhaps Gladstone went as far as he did in endorsing Welsh disestablishment because of the resolutions which were probably passed earlier in the same day. I have, however, no proof of correlation.

81 Manchester Guardian, December 10, 1889; December 13, 1889; Rendel Papers (N. L. W., I, 19446E, V, 1).

82 Manchester Guardian, February 5, 1890.
Home Rule for Ireland, and dealt with by the same Parliament." The Rhyl resolution was praised by Radical Wales and received wide support; local Associations passed resolutions along the same lines.

In a letter to Thomas Gee, one of the foremost non-Parliamentary Welsh Radicals, Gladstone hinted that the policy embodied in the Rhyl resolution was "premature and injurious." This position was also taken by Rendel and the Manchester Guardian.

Rendel was informed that Welsh disestablishment would have a separate resolution at the next annual conference of the National Liberal Federation and that the Manchester resolution would be amended to read "should be dealt with in the next Parliament as soon as Irish Home Rule is attained." The leadership of the National Liberal Federation would urge the party leaders to include Welsh disestablishment in the electoral program so that the next election would result not only in a Home Rule mandate but also in a Welsh disestablishment mandate.

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84 Manchester Guardian, May 6, 1890; South Wales Daily News, May 3, 1890; Resolution of Montgomeryshire Liberal Association, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., I, 1944, V, 4).

85 Manchester Guardian, July 15, 1890; Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, June 19, 1890, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 492); Manchester Guardian, June 4, 1890.

86 Humphreys-Owen to Rendel, June 17, 1890, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., I, 19464C, 543); Schnadhorst and Hudson to Rendel, July 24, 1890, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., I, 194555E, 484a).
amended resolution was adopted at the Sheffield conference in November.

When Welsh disestablishment again came before the House of Commons in February 1891, Gladstone both spoke and voted for the resolution. The South Wales Daily News rejoiced that Gladstone had at last "come out and openly identified himself with them in the struggle." The resolution was only defeated by a majority of 32. The policy adopted at Rhyl may have been fraught with danger but it had succeeded. Both Gladstone and the National Liberal Federation had been won over apparently by the threat of revolt.

In addition to becoming more militantly Radical, Wales also became more nationalistic. The policy of Home Rule for Wales was discussed and even adopted by Liberal Associations and politicians. The precise goals of the Home Rule movement in Wales were unclear with Rendel concluding, probably correctly, that those who demanded Home Rule for Wales "either do not know or do not agree what specific shape Home Rule for Wales should take and therefore what they are demanding." Even Rendel could favor this sort of vague Home Rule. Resolutions supporting self government were passed by both Welsh

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87 Daily News, February 20, 1891; South Wales Daily News, February 21, 1891.

88 Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, December 11, 1888, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 439).
Liberal Federations indicating the growing impatience of Wales with the lack of attention to Welsh questions in Parliament. It was also a symptom of a growing national consciousness for which Rendel must be given most of the credit.

Alfred Thomas moved an amendment to the Address in 1890 requesting a Welsh Department be created with a Minister "acquainted with the national characteristics of Wales." This amendment was supported by only one other Welsh member and eventually withdrawn. Thomas had not sought the approval of his amendment from the Welsh party and they, therefore, refused to support it. With the assistance of Tom Ellis, Thomas amended his proposal to include the establishment of a National Council in Wales made up of representatives of the County Councils, a proposal which had already been widely endorsed.

In two other areas the Welsh party made its influence felt. The party cooperated with the Tory Government in passing an Intermediate Education Bill for Wales in

89 Manchester Guardian, February 5, 1890; February 24, 1890.


91 Alfred Thomas to Ellis, September 12, 1890 and October 24, 1890, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 1982 and 1983); Manchester Guardian, May 12, 1891. For other proposals see "The New Round Table: Home Rule for Wales," The Westminster Review, 133 (April 1890), pp. 394-416.
1889. But in 1889 and the following year the Welsh party was responsible in large part for the failure of the Unionists to pass a Tithes Bill. The Welsh practiced the same sort of obstruction the Irish party had made infamous and secured the withdrawal of the Bill. Finally the Government forced a Bill through in 1891 over strenuous opposition.

One of the heroes of the Tithe Bill debates was the new member for Caernarvon District, David Lloyd George. His victory, in April 1890, in winning a seat that had been held by a Tory, brought into national politics one of the most fiery of the Welsh nationalists. He quickly took a leading position among Welsh Radicals and by 1892 was second only to Ellis in the leadership of Welsh Radicalism. In Lloyd George Welsh Radicalism had, at least temporarily, a promising champion.

While Scottish Radicals remained concerned with other issues, like the suffering of the crofters, as in Wales the primary issues were disestablishment and Home Rule. As late as early 1889 Gladstone was still taking a rather neutral attitude toward Scottish disestablishment. He did, however, in a letter to Childers, recognize that the time had almost arrived when he must make up his

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93 Ibid., pp. 88-89.
mind. On two occasions the majority of Scottish members had voted for disestablishment and in June 1889 he conceded that Scotland had "sufficiently and unequivocally declared" its mind on the subject. He would therefore be bound to support Scottish disestablishment in Parliament. When Dr. Cameron brought his motion before the Commons in May 1890, lost by a majority of 38, Gladstone not only voted but also spoke in its favor. Scottish disestablishment had become part of the Liberal program, although not on the same level as Welsh disestablishment, and even moderate Scottish Liberals like Campbell-Bannerman believed its adoption aided the party in Scotland.

In 1889 and 1890 Dr. G. B. Clark, President of the Scottish Home Rule Association, moved a resolution for the establishment of a national legislature for Scotland. In the first instance the proposal received only 79 votes against 200 and on the second occasion 112 votes against 278. In both debates it was widely admitted, particularly by Liberals, that the claims of Scotland were often ignored and that Scottish members were outvoted on Scottish


95Kellas, "Scottish Church Disestablishment," pp. 41-42.

96Dundee Advertiser, May 3, 1890.

matters. But Scottish members were not united on the cure for Scotland's grievance. The solution to Scotland's legislative problems most favored in the debate and in the press was the establishment, in Parliament, of a Standing Committee for Scotch Bills. Both the Daily News and the Manchester Guardian favored this approach. Only The Star spoke generally in favor of devolution to a Scottish body. Gladstone spoke in both debates against Dr. Clark's remedy.98

That there was a wide range of disagreement was indicated in a round table article on Home Rule for Scotland in The Westminster Review. Proposals included a national Parliament, a national body representing county councils, a Grand (or Standing) Committee, and devolution only on Private Bill legislation.99 The people of Scotland had not declared themselves in favor of any particular plan.100 An amendment moved to Dr. Clark's resolution in 1890 favoring control of Scotland's domestic affairs by Scottish representatives was rejected by a majority

98Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 3rd ser., Vol. 335 (April 9, 1889), pp. 68-124; Vol. 341 (February 19, 1890), pp. 677-724; Daily News, April 10, 1889; Manchester Guardian, February 20, 1890; The Star, April 10, 1889; February 20, 1890.


100Dundee Advertiser, September 26, 1889.
of only 40 with 141 voting in its favor. A moderate proposal had, it appeared, a greater chance of success than insistence on a national Parliament.

The plan that secured the widest acceptance would have devolved on Scottish members a part of the management of Scottish domestic affairs. This usually involved the establishment of a Grand Committee to deal with Bills at a certain stage. A writer in *The Scottish Review* analyzed several possibilities and contended that the Grand Committee would result in the least disturbance and was preferable to more drastic remedies. John Leng, member for Dundee, advocated Grand Committees, or something like them, not only for Scotland but also for England, Ireland, and Wales. This was "Home Rule all round" which, in a more drastic form, was also accepted by Campbell-Bannerman. It was in the form of Home Rule all round that Dr. Clark raised the issue in 1891. His motion was seconded by a Welsh Radical member, S. T. Evans. The representatives of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales would be given, under the terms of the resolution, "the management and control of their domestic affairs." The debate was counted out with only 37 members present. Even *The Star* admitted that this result indicated that

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Dr. Clark was "ahead of public opinion on the question." While the question of devolution was still a live issue in both Wales and Scotland little progress had been made either in determining the form of devolution to be adopted or in raising support for devolution in Parliament or in the country.

The years 1889 and 1890 witnessed the further Radicalization of Liberal policy. Although much of this Radicalization of program was merely development and clarification of principles already part of the program there were significant additions particularly in the areas of local government and electoral reform. Payment of members was added to the Liberal program as was Scottish disestablishment. Specific reforms of the land laws were also added. By 1890 the Liberal program had in fact developed into virtually that which was to become famous as the Newcastle program. It was a thoroughly Radical program. Increasing emphasis was placed on items of policy other than Ireland. The Irish question was without doubt still predominant but Liberals and Radicals had begun to bring forward other reforms such as Welsh

disestablishment and registration reform. Sectional interests and organization became more pronounced in this period with the Radical Committee transforming itself into the Radical party in 1889 and with Welsh Radicalism becoming more militant and organized.
CHAPTER IV:
THE NEWCASTLE PROGRAM

The Newcastle Program is the most widely known example of programmatic politics in the late nineteenth century. Ever since 1891 there has been considerable controversy over the extent to which the program was actually adopted by the party leadership, particularly Gladstone, and whether the program was a unifying or a divisive force for the party. Was the program a striking victory of the sectionalists and faddists over the advocates of a single unifying question? Did it attract or repel voters in the 1892 general election? Did it play a role in the failure of the Liberal Government formed in 1892?

Newcastle, then, has become a symbol of the state of the Liberal party in 1891 and after. The usual interpretation has been that if there was nothing new about the program adopted by the National Liberal Federation at Newcastle there was a striking departure from prior meetings because Gladstone accepted the Newcastle Program in his speech to the delegates thus making it the official program of the party. Gladstone is seen as endorsing this program in order to get votes for Home Rule which
remained his sole ambition. Gladstone believed it necessary to do this because the Parnell divorce scandal had reduced the viability of Home Rule as the vehicle for restoring party unity. That the party did not become permanently unified and attained power only briefly has been blamed either on the deficiencies in the Newcastle Program or on the adoption of any multi-faceted program.

Gladstone wrote to several Liberal leaders in December 1890 to ask their opinion on "some affirmative legislation" that might rally and provide "reparative strength" to the party. Hamer cites this as proof that Gladstone now believed "some expansion of policy might be advisable." Gladstone's letter to Ripon indicated that he did not have expansion of program in mind.

Our great object must be, while we cannot interfere in the Irish quarrel without doing more harm than good, to keep the party well together in England. There floats before my mind the idea that this may perhaps be handled by our taking up one of the articles of our programme, say "one man one vote," with the reform of registration. I am corresponding a little on this question. How does it strike you?

Ripon replied that while he believed registration reform and one man one vote should be the first legislation of the next Liberal administration, care had to be taken not to give the impression of being "lukewarm" on Home Rule and that registration reform was only "an improvement of machinery and that it would not form a basis sufficiently
wide or attractive to be made the chief ‘plank’...of an Election Platform."¹

Democratic reform along with Home Rule had long been emphasized by Labouchere. He wrote in Truth: "We are Home Rulers, but we have other strings to our bow. In order to secure Home Rule and every other democratic reform, it is necessary that the legislative machine should be democratized. Our programme for the next Election should be Electoral Reform and Home Rule."

When the Lords rejected Home Rule another election would be necessary and it was "only common sense for us, if we win the first, to make sure that the second will not be lost by the disfranchising clauses of the present Franchise and Registration Acts."²

Harcourt proved even more accurate in his forecast of the result of rejection of Home Rule by the Lords. "In that case we won't resign, until we have a vote of want of confidence passed in us, but we will go on sending Bill after Bill to the Upper Chamber, in order to run up a good score against the Lords, before we appeal to the country on their obstructive action."


²Truth, January 1, 1891, pp. 17-18.
Harcourt, who was never an enthusiastic Home Ruler, wanted to get rid of Home Rule and emphasize British questions.3

Among the leaders Morley was almost alone in clinging to Home Rule as the single great question. He did, apparently, suggest other items but was conscious of "their inadequacy and the absence of systematic binding principles to give such a programme unity."4

Liberals and Radicals knew in advance that the Newcastle Program would be the platform on which the party would fight the election. The Daily News regarded the program as needing, at most, only minor readjustments, stressing five categories: Home Rule, Welsh disestablishment, registration reform, the London program, and rural reform, all part of the Liberal program for some years.5 The Star in a series of articles gave rural reform with establishment of parish councils and amendment of the Allotment Acts a high priority. The London program should have a resolution of its own. As a final item it added payment of members, including election expenses. Viewed as the "only means of securing an

3Diary, October 18, 1891, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48656, ff. 111); Hamer, John Morley, p. 267.

4Hamer, John Morley, pp. 265-266.

5Daily News, September 5, 1891.
adequate representation of labour in the House of Commons," it had recently been the subject of a strong resolution passed by the Trade Union Congress.6

Schnadhorst forwarded Gladstone a letter from Robert Threshie Reid and commented: "Apart from Welsh disestablishment which is a really burning question in Wales, there are only three matters of real importance as effecting public opinion in its bearing on the general election—Ireland, Reg11 Reform & Labour (urban & rural)." Reid believed that a "really forward policy in domestic affairs", an absolute "necessity," could be found in the usual National Liberal Federation program made more militant in some respects.7 Professor James Stuart, a London member, wrote asking Gladstone to say a word for London and also recommended "support of the principle of the payment of Members."8 An attempt, encouraged by Schnadhorst, to broaden the program by including a resolution which combined regulation of railwaymen's hours with fair wages for contract labor, was not successful.9

6 The Star, September 14, 1891; September 17, 1891; September 24, 1891; Daily News, September 30, 1891.


8 Professor James Stuart to Gladstone, September 26, 1891, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44513, ff. 179-180).

9 Channing, Midland Politics, p. 117.
The Newcastle conference was held on October 1 and 2, 1891. It passed these resolutions.

That this Council holds that the case for Home Rule in Ireland has been still further confirmed by the steadfastness, sound judgement, and moderation with which the great body of the Irish people have during the last year successfully faced one of the sharpest ordeals in political history. And it looks with unshaken confidence to Mr. Gladstone upon his return to power to frame and—in spite of idle menaces from the House of Lords—to pass a measure which shall fully satisfy the just demands of Ireland, and leave the Imperial Parliament free to attend to the pressing claims of Great Britain for its own reforms.

That this Council reaffirms its belief that the time has come for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England in Wales, and for the application of the tithes to the public purposes of the Principality, and declares that this question should be dealt with in the next Parliament as soon as Irish Home Rule is attained.

That this Council declares that the interests of good government urgently demand that the London County Council should without delay be put in possession of full municipal powers, including the control of its own gas and water supplies, markets, and police, and should, by taxation of ground values and by other financial reforms, be enabled to govern and improve the metropolis without undue pressure upon the occupying ratepayers, and that such powers should be enjoyed by all other municipalities.

That this Council expresses its satisfaction that the principle of free education, which for five years has been a prominent feature in the resolutions of the Federation, has been embodied in legislation, but regards the Act now in operation as partial and defective, since it fails to recognise the right of public control, and does not secure that the increased grant shall be devoted to greater educational efficiency; and by omitting, at the instance of the House
of Lords, the provision that free accommodation shall be suitable as well as sufficient disregards the conscientious convictions of many parents. The Council again declares that no system of public elementary education can be regarded as satisfactory or final unless it secures that every family shall have within reasonable reach a free public school, and that all schools supported by public money shall be subject to public representative control.

That this Council condemns the action of the Government in resisting, with the full support of the Dissentient Liberals, Mr. Stansfeld's motion for the amendment of the Registration Laws, regards the present state of these laws as a public scandal and injustice, and trusts that one of the first efforts of a Liberal Government will be to amend them by the appointment of responsible registration officers, the reduction of the qualifying period to three months, and the abolition of the disqualification now attaching to removals. The Council believes that only by such amendments, and by basing the franchise solely on the principle of "One man one vote," can a full and fair expression of the national will be secured. The Council also declares that the duration of Parliaments should be shortened, returning officers' expenses at Parliamentary elections be placed upon the rates, all elections be held on one and the same day, and that the principle of payment of members of Parliament by the State should be recognised as the only means of securing an adequate representation of Labour in the House of Commons.

That in the opinion of this Council, the well-being of the nation, no less than that of the districts immediately concerned, require that the condition of the rural population should receive the immediate attention of Parliament. The Council regards with satisfaction the action taken by the General Purposes Committee of the Federation, and while approving generally of the suggestions it has formulated, affirms as of primary importance: (a) The establishment of district and parish councils, popularly elected; (b) the concession of compulsory powers to local authorities to acquire and hold land for allotments, small holdings, village halls, places
of worship, labourers' dwellings, and other public purposes; (c) the reform of existing Allotment Acts by the removal of restrictions, by giving security of tenure and the power to erect buildings, and the right of full compensation for all improvements.

That this Council again affirms its declaration in favour of a thorough reform of the land laws such as will secure the repeal of the laws of primogeniture and entail, freedom of sale and transfer, the just taxation of land values and ground rents, compensation to town and country tenants for both disturbance and improvement, together with a simplified process for obtaining such compensation, the enfranchisement of leaseholds, the direct popular veto on the liquor traffic, disestablishment and disendowment of the Established Church in Scotland, the equalisation of the death duties upon real and personal property, the just division of rates between owner and occupier, the taxation of mining royalties, a free breakfast table, the extension of the Factory Acts, and the "mending or ending" of the House of Lords.10

Contemporary analysts remarked on the status of the men who moved the resolutions. James Bryce moved the resolution on the London program, the Marquis of Ripon moved that on rural reforms, and Sir George Trevelyan the resolution on registration reform, electoral reform, and payment of members. This indicated the seriousness with which the proceedings were treated. It reinforced the belief, already present, that the next Liberal Government would carry these reforms.11

The verdict of the Dundee Advertiser that the

10Daily News, October 2, 1891; October 3, 1891.
11Watson, National Liberal Federation, pp. 133-134.
conference had been "a great success from beginning to end" was widely shared in the Liberal and Radical press. The Daily News called it "the most successful and inspiring meeting ever held by the National Liberal Federation." The Star labelled the program "Worth Fighting For."\(^{12}\)

The Welsh Liberal press was well pleased with the position attained by Welsh disestablishment—second only to Home Rule. A separate evening meeting had been held on the subject. This was the first time such a meeting had been officially held in conjunction with the conference to further a special cause. The South Wales Daily News gave most credit to the Welsh party and particularly to its younger members because of the "spirited attacks and daring assaults" they had carried out. The resolution had been moved by Ellis who had now risen to the leading position in the Welsh party.\(^{13}\)

The Star, while pleased with the renewal of the pledge to carry through the London program, placed even greater emphasis on the "unhesitating, complete, and unreserved adhesion to the payment of members." Payment of members combined with registration reform provided "a program large enough, practical enough, important

\(^{12}\)Dundee Advertiser, October 3, 1891; Daily News, October 3, 1891; The Star, October 5, 1891.

\(^{13}\)South Wales Daily News, October 2, 1891; Masterman, Forerunner, pp. 163-164.
enough to pull together all sections of the Progressive party." It was called "Labor's New Charter" and the Dundee Advertiser was confident that it would promote greater cooperation between the Liberal party and labor. The President of the Federation had refused to allow eight hours to be introduced but indicated that special meetings of the Committee would be held to discuss the issue. Only five out of over 800 Associations had made recommendations on eight hours and only two of the five agreed. Both The Star and the South Wales Daily News approved Watson's action.

The principle speaker on the first day of the conference was John Morley who sat for Newcastle. He spoke of "an immense ripening on great political questions." He seemed to be attempting to create another single great question. He subsumed most of the major points in the party program under the heading "The Battle Against Privilege," saying: "Nearly all the questions which are dealt with in the motions that will be put before you...turn upon the principle of privilege." The party struggles of the future would be between Liberals as supporters of equality and Tories as defenders of privilege. He spent some time on labor questions endorsing

14 The Star, October 2, 1891; Dundee Advertiser, October 3, 1891.

15 The Star, October 3, 1891; South Wales Daily News, October 2, 1891.
payment of members and other labor reforms. He did not, however, raise the question of the eight hour day for miners. In spite of this he was congratulated by the South Wales Daily News as being a leader of public opinion: "He is a leader who leads, and on most, if not all, questions of public policy holds a position in the very van of the forward movement."  

Gladstone's speech at Newcastle was his last to an annual conference of the National Liberal Federation. "The veteran spoke in full view of a dissolution of Parliament; with consciousness that any policy outlined he would himself be called upon to carry into effect."  

He counseled the "virtue of patience" because "without that patience, disappointment and even confusion might be the results of triumph."

He disposed of most of the subjects in the wide program he outlined in a sentence or two which by no means negated the fact or the value of his endorsement. Ireland naturally occupied a large portion of the speech. He also stressed the great importance of registration reform and one man one vote and spoke especially of the need to amend the lodger franchise. Because of the value to the nation of a large extension of labor members of

16Daily News, October 2, 1891; South Wales Daily News, October 2, 1891.

17South Wales Daily News, October 3, 1891.
Parliament he advocated the payment of necessary election expenses and the payment of members. The country should not be deprived of the services of labor members simply because they were not rich men; this was the substance of his argument.18

He touched briefly on the subject of rural reforms (parish and district councils, compulsory powers for land acquisition in the public interest by local authorities, and land law reform) which had been "long ago inscribed in the Liberal creed." Welsh and Scottish disestablishment were endorsed with no attempt to determine precedence. Local control of the liquor traffic was essential and Gladstone saw progress being made toward its realization. Shorter Parliaments and readjustment of taxation between various kinds of property completed his positive endorsements in domestic policy. He did not pronounce with finality on the question of legislative restriction of the

18It is worthwhile here to cite his specific reference to payment of members because his endorsement, couched in Gladstonese, was rather narrower than generally assumed by Radicals and by the press, "Nothing can be clearer than the title of such men--men whose private means are inadequate to the performance of the public duty put on them--to receive such aid from the Treasury as may be necessary in order to enable them to discharge the task which for the public benefit and under public authority has been imposed on them...I only state, and state with very great confidence of conviction, the proposition which has just proceeded from my lips." In other words he only endorsed paying those members who needed payment. This is the only example of possibly misleading endorsement I can find in the speech.
hours of labor, the subject having not been sufficiently examined.

Gladstone warned the House of Lords that interference with the passage of necessary reforms, particularly Home Rule, would raise up a question which takes precedence of every question, because upon that alone would depend whether this country was or was not a self-governing country, or whether, on the contrary, there was a power not upon the throne or behind the throne, but between the throne and the people, that would stop altogether the action of the constitutional machine which has now been perfected, or been brought nearer to perfection, by the labour, the struggle, the patriotism, and the wisdom of many generations.¹⁹

This battle-cry was widely praised in the press as a "trumpet call to the fight." The Star was struck by the "assimilation of new ideas" reflected in this "statement of a program of reforms, strong, practical, far-reaching, on which a united Liberal party will be borne to victory." Gladstone was, according to the South Wales Daily News, in "accordance with the more advanced phases of popular sentiment." Labouchere was convinced that leader and followers were in unison. That Gladstone had accepted and endorsed the program of the National Liberal Federation was clear beyond question.²⁰

¹⁹Daily News, October 3, 1891.

²⁰The Star, October 3, 1891; South Wales Daily News, October 3, 1891; Dundee Advertiser, October 3, 1891; Daily News, October 3, 1891; Manchester Guardian, October 3, 1891; Truth, October 8, 1891, p. 721.
Gladstone's endorsement in 1891 seemed more logical and orderly than in previous years. It almost appeared that he was discussing a plan for legislation. There would be a problem in establishing the proper order of precedence, he admitted, but patience and hard work would carry the entire program.

The Newcastle program was virtually identical to past programs. The Radical program of the National Liberal Federation had really been developed between 1886 and 1889. Each year new reforms had been added to the program and accepted by party leaders. After 1889 the program remained relatively static.

The Newcastle program has been widely attacked and blamed, by some, for the plight of the Liberal party in the 1890's. One of the prime questions concerns Gladstone's role. Morley, in his biography of Gladstone, wrote that "after the shock caused by the Irish quarrel, every politician knew that it would be necessary to balance home rule by reforms expected in England and Scotland." The Irish quarrel had nothing to do with the adoption of the Newcastle program since the substance of that program

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21 Abolition of primogeniture and entail was added but it had been included in discussion of land law resolutions in previous years so this is a mere adjustment of detail.

22 See chart, Appendix I, for confirmation of this conclusion.

had been adopted and endorsed in 1889 when Parnell was at the height of his popularity in Britain and the Irish split lay a year in the future. Philip Magnus contends that in order to win the election Gladstone was "pushed into radicalism against his will" and he therefore announced at Newcastle-on-Tyne...a number of policies which had been crudely designed to provide a practical answer to the social problems which were agitating the public mind, and to offset the reverse inflicted on the Liberal Party by the quarrel with the Irish Nationalists.

The 'Newcastle Programme' wore the appearance of a demagogic hotch-potch which had been hastily compiled with the object of attracting as many votes from as many different sources as possible.

Magnus further accuses Gladstone of being careless of the means he used to achieve his ends. It is doubtful whether Gladstone had been dragged into Radicalism "against his will" but, be that as it may, Magnus' analysis of the Newcastle program could hardly be more faulty. He makes the same erroneous connection between the Irish split and Newcastle that Morley had made and ignores the fact that not only had the program been in existence for some years but that Gladstone had endorsed these earlier programs in the same manner he endorsed the Newcastle program.

about the respective roles of the Federation and Gladstone at Newcastle. Herbert's position was that the "policy was formulated by the Federation and pressed on the official leaders...as something essential for party interests."

"He gave in to his party then practically represented by the Federation" but indicated that the policy was for the future and for others. Hudson contended that the Federation had never had anything to do with program making but merely expressed the opinions of the rank and file. Gladstone, according to Hudson, had turned this into a program.25 Herbert Gladstone was trying to blame the Federation and Hudson was trying to blame Gladstone for the Newcastle program. The Newcastle program did not deserve the bad reputation it got after 1895 but rather praise as an accurate representation of the aims of the party.

Rosebery, too, adopted the theory that the Newcastle program was imposed on the party leaders by the Federation. Asquith accepted the view that the program was the result of the Irish split over the Parnell scandal.26 All of this is misrepresentation but it has had its effect on the


26Spender, Sir Robert Hudson, p. 18; Asquith, Fifty Years, p. 215.
interpretation of Liberal party history.

Hamer, in his biography of Morley, contends that the weak appeal of Home Rule in 1891 was the cause of Newcastle. He concludes erroneously:

What was different about the Newcastle program was the adoption of this "omnibus" resolution by the party leaders, their willingness to display as party policy binding on themselves this by now traditional recital of reforms favoured by the sections of activists among the Liberal rank and file.27

Party leaders, including Gladstone, had adopted the program of the National Liberal Federation at least since 1887.

Misrepresentation, misinterpretation, and plain error have been the rule with regard to the Newcastle program.28 At Newcastle the National Liberal Federation adopted a series of resolutions representing those issues on which the party could agree almost unanimously. The substance of these resolutions was no different in 1891 than it had been in 1889 and 1890 and, indeed, changes in detail were minimal. These resolutions were endorsed first by John Morley and then by Gladstone as constituting the program of the Liberal party. Party leaders, usually


28Emy, for example, stated that Scottish disestablishment was the only new inclusion at Newcastle. Emy, Liberalism, p. 42. Scottish disestablishment had been in the program since 1889.
Gladstone, had been accepting the National Liberal Federation resolutions as the party program for years. What was new was that the Newcastle program became the electoral platform of the Liberal party for the 1892 election. It became more than that:

The Newcastle programme may in a certain sense be described as the modern charter of Liberalism, and the soundness of Mr. Gladstone's judgement in the choice of the particular reforms which it included has been remarkably justified in the large measures of legislative fulfilment which Parliament has accorded to what Mr. Morley described as 'the British case and its various demands.'

In the short term it improved the party's electoral prospects. The "omnibus" replaced the "old umbrella" and, for a time at least, had greater success in unifying the party because it was more adaptable and flexible.

The Newcastle program was an excellent program, representing accurately the opinions of the rank and file of the party. It unified the various sections and special interest groups within the party, always a challenging task for Liberal leaders, and gave the Liberal party that appeal to the British voter that was necessary if the party was to return to power. The

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31 Ostrogorski, Political Parties, I, 156.
responsibility for the eventual failure of the Newcastle program rests not with the program itself but with a party leadership which was, after Gladstone's resignation if not before, too divided and too timid to provide the spirit and drive necessary to carry the program into effect.
CHAPTER V

VICTORY AND THE FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Newcastle program had become the focal point of Liberal politics. Ireland, still a primary concern, was recognized as a major element in the Newcastle program but increasingly attention shifted to other items.¹

Liberals were encouraged by the enthusiastic reception of the Newcastle program. The Star, using one of Gladstone's phrases, commented that: "The flowing tide' which has been running for five years increases in volume as time goes on." Herbert Gladstone pointed to the example of the Parliament of 1868 and concluded that the next Liberal Government, armed with the closure, would find a way to enact the important elements of the party program.²

In December 1891 a large conference on rural reforms, sponsored by the National Liberal Federation, was held in London. Delegates were chosen by local Liberal Associations in rural constituencies. One session of the conference was devoted to local government in rural areas while the other dealt with problems of land. Discussion on these topics naturally overlapped but emphasis in

¹Speech by Sir George Trevelyan as example of this. Manchester Guardian, December 17, 1891.

²The Star, December 29, 1891; May 11, 1892.
both cases was on local control. The rural laborer had been dominated for too long by the unholy alliance of squire and parson and popularly elected parish councils would remove this incubus from the laborers. These parish councils should be given wide powers to deal with land problems; compulsory powers to acquire land for allotments, small holdings, or other public purposes; and control over allocation of local charities. There was also a demand for extension or amendment of various Acts, such as the Allotment Acts and the Artisans Dwellings Act.

The *Daily News*, which had been in the forefront both in studying rural problems and in agitating for their inclusion in the program, termed the meeting "an unqualified success." Advanced opinion in rural constituencies dominated the conference. Speeches were limited to five minutes in length and 58 delegates made speeches, certainly a larger number than usually spoke at the National Liberal Federation conferences which were spread over two days.³

On the following morning Gladstone addressed the delegates and strongly endorsed the rural reforms. Advocating stronger organizations of rural laborers, he suggested changes in the law of conspiracy which would make this easier. Parish councils would go far, he said,

³*Daily News*, December 11, 1891; *The Star*, December 10, 1891.
to restore the laborer to "freer access to the use of the
land." He sympathized with the Liberal goal of improving
the laborer's material condition. He believed that the
condition of the rural laborer was an important facet of
the general labor question and that payment of members
would provide the same boon for the rural laborer as for
the urban worker. His speech was warmly received by the
delegates.4

Payment of members had, in a sense, become a symbol
of the Liberal commitment to deal with labor problems.
The Star repeatedly stressed its opinion that the issue
must be dealt with early in the next Parliament. It
applauded a speech by Dr. Spence Watson, President of the
National Liberal Federation, in which he placed payment
of members next after Home Rule.5 Charles Fenwick, who
had raised the question previously, introduced a resolution
"that, as the principle of gratuitous public service,
upon which representation in this House is a present
based, limits the freedom of constituencies in the
selection of their representatives, this House is of
opinion that a reasonable allowance should be granted to
members for their services in Parliament." The motion
was defeated by a majority of 65, a greater margin of

4The Star, December 12, 1891; Daily News, December 12,
1891.

5The Star, October 17, 1891; December 10, 1891.
defeat than in 1888, but not by a significant amount. The resolution did not prescribe the method of payment or whether all members would be paid and this remained an unsolved problem.  

Early in 1892 the party began a campaign to strengthen its position in London, party leaders assuring London audiences of their determination to deal with London grievances. The Star stressed that London must respond by returning Liberal members to insure the success of the London program which Gladstone himself had endorsed.  

Registration reform was an essential measure if Londoners were to be accurately represented in Parliament since plural voting and restrictive registration practices had a greater effect on elections in London than elsewhere because of the large number of part-time householders and the migratory nature of the working population. James Stansfeld and G. J. Shaw Lefevre composed Bills dealing with registration reform and one man one vote, but no effective progress was made toward carrying these measures before the election. 


7The Star, February 5, 1892; February 6, 1892; March 7, 1892; May 5, 1892; June 1, 1892. 

8The Star, April 14, 1892; Daily News, May 18, 1892.
Following the adoption of the Newcastle program, and in keeping with the trend of the previous years, Radicalism became more integrated into the Liberal party. Fenwick and Stansfeld, for example, who prepared Bills or motions discussed above, were Radicals but their efforts were supported by many moderates in the party. Radicals maintained their separate party structure in 1892. The Radical party continued to meet from time to time to coordinate action and, at a meeting in March, at which Dillwyn presided, Stanhope and McArthur were reelected Whips and Jacoby party secretary. That there was a degree of overlapping between the sections in the Liberal party was indicated by Dillwyn's chairmanship of this Radical meeting as well as by references in Rendel's correspondence. Coordination of policy between the sections should have been made easier by the fact that they were not mutually exclusive.9

Labouchere, more active in speaking at public meetings after Newcastle, upheld the Newcastle program as thoroughly Radical and attacked the Tories for their policy of coercion and drift. He did believe that on some issues the Newcastle program was not as advanced as it should be but that it represented the most forward policy on

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9Manchester Guardian, March 8, 1892; Herbert Lewis to Rendel, January 9, 1892, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., I, 19453C, IX, 376).
which the party could unite. He regretted, for example, "that the policy of ending the Lords did not form part of the Newcastle programme."  

After Newcastle the Welsh were primarily concerned with keeping disestablishment as the second item on the Liberal agenda. Even The Star with all its various programs and priorities admitted that Welsh disestablishment had priority second only to Home Rule. Tom Ellis was one of the major speakers in a propaganda campaign designed to arouse English feeling about the injustices suffered by Welshmen because of the maintenance of an alien established church.  

Welsh disestablishment was again raised in the House of Commons in 1892, this time on the motion of Samuel Smith. The debate was rather pro forma and the argument covered the same ground that it had covered before. Gladstone, suffering from influenza, was not present so Sir William Harcourt and James Bryce spoke for the Liberal leadership. The motion received 110 votes and was only defeated by a majority of 47. The Manchester Guardian wrote that "however questions of precedence

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10 *Manchester Guardian*, March 8, 1892; *Times*, December 9, 1891; *Daily News*, December 15, 1891.

11 *The Star*, October 6, 1891; Rendel to Ellis, October 10, 1891, Ellis Papers, (N. L. W., 1740); *Manchester Guardian*, November 23, 1891.
may be settled there can be no doubt that it [Welsh disestablishment] stands well to the front."

Welsh Radicals remained suspicious because Welsh disestablishment was not always referred to as the next major legislation after Home Rule and some Welshmen believed they were being led on by party leaders. "Beware of our leaders," wrote one.

The Welsh Home Rule agitation had ebbed somewhat and the only proposal in Bill form was Alfred Thomas' Welsh National Institutions Bill. Thomas, whose measure provided for the "appointment of a Secretary for Wales, the creation of a Welsh National Council, and the granting of a charter for a Welsh University," had now obtained significant support from other Welsh members. The South Wales Daily News saw this as an extremely moderate measure which should receive wide support. A special conference in support of the Bill was held in December in conjunction with a meeting of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Liberal Association which also endorsed the Bill. Although the Bill was introduced in 1892 with wide support from the Welsh party there was no opportunity


13Frank Edwards, M.P., to Ellis, May 22, 1892, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 478).
for a debate. The Welsh Nationalist movement had united behind this one proposal as a satisfactory beginning to self-government for Wales.

A Clergy Discipline Bill introduced by the Government and supported strongly by Gladstone and other Liberal leaders provoked the most intense opposition on the part of Welsh Radicals. Five of them—Tom Ellis, Lloyd George, S. T. Evans, D. A. Thomas, and Wynford Philipps—forced five divisions on the second Reading and 21 divisions on the report stage. Evans and Lloyd George, who were also active against the Bill in the Grand Committee, argued that it was "no part of the function of the State to attend to matters of spiritual discipline."

This obstructive opposition infuriated Rendel who recognized that English Liberals did not like this treatment of Gladstone. Rendel believed that persistence in this "mischievous work" would hurt Welsh disestablishment. Evans and Lloyd George "behaved so badly" that Rendel, who was to visit Lloyd George's constituency, concluded that he could not "stand on a platform with Lloyd George


right now." "The madness of Wales in slapping John Morley and Mr. Gladstone in the face and of quarreling with the Liberal Leaders and party after Newcastle puts me to despair." Morley was particularly upset.  

Rendel's friend, A. C. Humphreys-Owen, defended the Radicals, suggesting that perhaps English Liberal leaders were trying to renege on their bargain. The Manchester Guardian reported that at a South Wales Liberal Federation meeting where Dr. Spence Watson was present a "unanimous vote of thanks" was passed "to those Welsh members who fought so stubbornly against the bill." Welsh opposition was also endorsed in several other meetings throughout the Principality and was seen as a warning to the Liberal leaders. In spite of heroic and extended effort the Welsh Radicals failed to prevent final passage of the Bill.

A resolution was moved by Dr. G. B. Clark proposing that Legislative Assemblies should be established in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England for "the management and control of their domestic affairs." This brought Welsh and Scottish Nationalists together. The motion was

16Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, May 24, 1892, Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, May 28, 1892, Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, May 29, 1892, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 591, 593, 597).

17Humphreys-Owen to Rendel, May 30, 1892, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., I, 19465B, 620); Manchester Guardian, May 31, 1892.
seconded by John Leng with Tom Ellis intervening briefly to give strong support. The motion was only defeated by 20 votes but because of the small size of the division—54 to 74—the narrowness of the defeat was hardly significant.\(^8\)

During this same session Dr. Cameron introduced a resolution for Scottish disestablishment and disendowment which was supported by Campbell-Bannerman in a strong speech from the Liberal front bench. Even with his enthusiastic support the motion was defeated by 265 to 209. Gladstone took no part in the discussion. Scottish disestablishment was certainly still a live issue but it had not gained a position similar to Welsh disestablishment.\(^9\)

The eight hours question returned to haunt the Liberal party in 1892. A motion for the second Reading of a Mines (Eight Hours) Bill was debated on March 23 and the question was then brought to a vote for the first time. The division list for that debate clearly indicated

\(^8\)Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 4th ser., Vol. 3 (April 29, 1892), pp. 1684-1714; Masterman, Forerunner, pp. 166-167. This case provides another example of Masterman's errors. He wrote that the debate was counted out. A count was moved but 40 members were found to be present, the debate continued and a division was taken. He also has Dr. G. B. Clark as Dr. R. B. Clark both here and in the index but this is less significant.

the split within the party. Both Liberals and Radicals were found on either side. Indeed, the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists were also split but the rift was not as significant to these parties as to the Liberal party. Only the Irish voted uniformly for the Bill. The tellers on both sides were Liberal and Labor members, Burt and John Wilson against the Bill and Abraham (Mabon) and Robert Leake for the Bill. Of the 133 Liberals who took part in the division, 98 voted in favor including representatives of the party leadership like Harcourt and Fowler while Labouchere and other Radical leaders also voted for the measure. Morley led the 35 Liberal opponents and was followed by Haldane and Radicals like Illingworth, Brunner, and Colman. Gladstone took no part in the division.20

Harcourt indicated the severity of the split in a letter to his wife: "It is not an agreeable situation, but it will have great consequences in the future as the question will not sleep." It was "a very difficult and embarrassing situation" because of the open front bench split. Morley was firmly committed against the Bill while Harcourt's constituents were "strong in its favor." Morley was quite distressed at the preponderance of

Liberal opinion in favor of eight hours legislation and told Harcourt that he would "have no part nor lot in any governmt that brings in 8 hours' bills."\textsuperscript{21}

One of the leading proponents of the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill outside Parliament was Sir Charles Dilke and he later became a most active supporter in the House. He spoke widely in favor of the Bill and, after its defeat, corresponded with Chamberlain about the future prospects. He proposed a plan for restriction of hours to apply to "dangerous and unhealthy trades" including "alkalai workers, miners, and railway servants" although he conceded that separate legislation would probably be necessary for each industry. Also raising the possibility of "trade option," he was not certain how it could be worked. Chamberlain's replies, although he had voted for the 1892 Bill, were not encouraging and he could see no real hope of Tories joining with Radicals to carry an eight hours Bill against a Liberal Government.\textsuperscript{22}

Gladstone faced pressure in 1892 to declare for the restriction of hours. The particular organ of pressure was the London Trades Council which claimed to represent


\textsuperscript{22}Gwynn, Sir Charles Dilke, II, 281-282; Dilke to Chamberlain, March 28, 1892, April 1, 1892, July 13, 1892, Chamberlain to Dilke, March 31, 1892, Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43889, ff. 84-88).
70,000 workers. At first Gladstone requested a written statement of views rather than the deputation which the Council wanted.

I need not say that I shall carefully and respectfully consider any statement of views and reasons with which the council may favour me but I have usually found that the time when measures can with advantage be orally discussed with deputations is when they are about to undergo early discussion in Parliament; but there is no likelihood of serious discussion in Parliament of this important subject until the attention of the multitude of classes affected by it shall be thoroughly attracted to it so as to throw light upon the practicability and the consequences of applying a uniform compulsory rule to an almost unbounded number of highly diversified employments. I am certainly of opinion that this question has not yet been sufficiently considered by the classes to which I have referred to enable me in any manner to advance the consideration of the question by conversing with the deputation at the present time.23

He would, however, welcome a "document in order both to enlarge my knowledge of the subject and to assist me in giving it consideration."24

Gladstone later changed his mind and met with a deputation from the London Trades Council on June 16, 1892. Although Gladstone raised several objections to the legislative scheme he did not definitely pronounce against it and there was a full exchange of views.

23Gladstone to George Shipton, April 29, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44514, ff. 219)

24Gladstone to George Shipton, May 17, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44514, ff. 278-279).
The result of the discussion is that, while Mr. Gladstone has in no sense declared against an Eight Hours Bill as a legislative, or even as an economic proposition, he has given the most satisfactory reasons why it cannot enter into his plans. It may be ripe for mere debate in Parliament; it certainly is not ripe for the action of Government.  

Gladstone really promised to approach the subject with an open mind but said he could not take it up because of age and prior commitment to Home Rule. If the deputation was convinced that the eight hours question should take precedence over all others Gladstone wished them well and "God speed you" but they would have to get a younger leader. The interview was conducted in good humor and, while the deputation did not get what it wanted, there seemed to be good feelings on both sides.  

One reason the London Trades Council was so anxious to ascertain Gladstone's position was because of the dissolution which took place at the end of June with the general election following in July. Gladstone had asked the deputation which day the workers would prefer for polling and they replied, "Saturday." Parliament could easily have been dissolved on a day making Saturday polling possible and Liberal leaders appealed to the Tories to do this but the Tories were determined to

25 *Daily News*, June 17, 1892.

disfranchise as much of the working class as possible and would not yield.27

Traditionally the address of the party leader contained the issues on which the national party would fight the campaign and Gladstone's address stressed Ireland, as was to be expected, but also dealt in some length with "British wants and wishes" which comprised, roughly, the party program as stated at Newcastle. He called these reforms "a group of great political and social subjects" with a "sense of urgency attaching to them." Removal of the Irish question would allow attention to be given to the "varied legislative wants of England, Scotland, and Wales."28

The election addresses of both Liberals and Radicals tended to follow this same pattern. While Morley's address, published before Gladstone's, placed more stress on the Home Rule issue, he was less definite in his endorsement of domestic reforms. Harcourt, on the other hand, had "nothing to add" on Home Rule beyond his position as stated in his 1886 address. He concentrated on domestic reforms and on the "aspirations" of the Liberal party as "set forth in the policy declared at Newcastle," mentioning specific reforms. G. O. Trevelyan followed the Gladstonian

27Daily News, June 17, 1892; June 18, 1892; June 24, 1892.

28Daily News, June 24, 1892.
formula stressing both Ireland and other, domestic, Newcastle reforms. 29

Radical election platforms followed closely the general Liberal pattern—usually including both Home Rule and other reforms. Many expressed faith that a whole series of reforms would be carried quickly. Some included an eight hour day for miners. Tom Ellis included Home Rule all round and the creation of a Welsh National Assembly while warning the House of Lords not to interfere with the expressed wishes of the people. 30

The election resulted in a Liberal and Nationalist majority of 40 with the Liberals again dependent on Irish votes to maintain their majority. The disfranchisement of large sections of the working class by the Tory Government undoubtedly had its intended effect in reducing the size of the Liberal majority. Gladstone, who had expected a real swing to the Liberals, was disappointed.

As to the future I am as you know deeply bound to Ireland my only public pledge and tie in honour to public life when I am prosecuting it against nature. Nevertheless I see these things: had we not put English Scotch & Welsh questions well forward we should probably have had no majority at all—Ireland herself has by her

29 Daily News, June 21, 1892; June 25, 1892; June 24, 1892.

incidents a good deal damaged herself and us. Our majority while small will not be quite homogeneous. The center of gravity is somewhat shifted.31

The lesson for Gladstone was clear: "I have been hankering after legislation which shall be at once concise and drastic, to help the British part of the bill of fare." He corresponded at some length with Harcourt about the proper response to the election results. Harcourt agreed with Gladstone's analysis: "It was only the promise of things which lay altogether outside Ireland which saved us from a complete defeat at the Polls."

More specific than Gladstone in his recommendations for immediate legislation, he wrote:

I hold very strongly that the only chance of holding together our majority small as it is will consist in giving satisfaction at once to the various sections of which it consists... I think therefore when Parlt. meets in Feb' next we must be prepared to produce Bills on the following subjects
(1) Temperance Reform & Local option
(2) Village Councils with control of Schools
(3) Registration reform & one man one vote
(4) Payment of Members
(5) Welsh Disestablishment
This I think is the very minimum of what we should bring forward and is only a fraction of what you pledged us to at Newcastle.

Gladstone responded with two general considerations for the 1893 session:

1. How to give for 1893 just satisfaction to Ireland without spending the Session on Home Rule

2. And to make a good though of course incomplete bill of fare for England Scotland Wales (with some aid from Executive Acts) by means of those subjects which will allow of very concise legislation, such as will be most likely to defy obstruction.

Harcourt recommended "Registration, One man one vote and the payment of members." "Of course the House of Lords will reject all these measures—but so much the better and the more they are, the worse for them. In short I think our cards should be played with a view to strengthening our hands for the next Election a year or two hence."\(^{32}\)

Morley, with his dependence on Home Rule, had an entirely different interpretation of the election. Having himself placed second in the poll at Newcastle behind a Tory, he assured Gladstone that "Ireland had nothing to do with the result," and blamed the small Liberal majority on the adoption of a wide Radical program. "The truth is we have moved much too fast and too far towards the Extreme Left in every subject at once—and quiet sensible folk don't like it."\(^{33}\)

Labouchere contended that the Liberals could have doubled their majority had they advocated the abolition

\(^{32}\)Gladstone to Harcourt, July 14, 1892, Harcourt to Gladstone, July 16, 1892, Gladstone to Harcourt, July 18, 1892, Harcourt to Gladstone, July 19, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44202, ff. 157-158, ff. 163-175).

\(^{33}\)Hamer, John Morley, p. 280.
of the hereditary right to legislate. "I should have been glad had our majority been larger. It was not because we were afraid of going, as some thought, too far. My remedy for any pause in the Radical advance is a simple one--more Radicalism. In politics, boldness wins the day." His recommendations, including several specific measures, were almost identical to Harcourt's:

As nothing is more certain than that Home Rule will not become law until a Dissolution has been followed by a General Election, whether we take Home Rule first or last seems to me a question of tactics rather than of principle; whilst it is a matter of necessity that we should make the franchise a reality, and fulfil our promise to the English electors before the final fight for Home Rule.34

With remarkable unanimity the Liberal and Radical press was not discouraged by the results. The Manchester Guardian said that the party had a "substantial majority." Positive and effective programs of legislation were suggested all round. These programs, although differing to some extent from paper to paper, recommended concentration on basically the same items that Harcourt and Labouchere stressed along with Home Rule. There was no notion that introduction of Home Rule would prevent the passage of other legislation. The Star added the London program to the list of necessary reforms, recommending use of the closure. Even the Daily News recognized that

34Truth, July 21, 1892, p. 130; July 28, 1892, p. 185.
Home Rule would have to be combined with other essential measures. All had faith that the Liberal party, under Gladstone's leadership, would succeed.\textsuperscript{35}

This was all, in at least a technical sense, premature. Lord Salisbury was still Prime Minister and decided not to resign pending defeat in the Commons. This was actually an attempt by Salisbury to trick Gladstone into revealing his plan of Home Rule in the Queen's Speech debate. Salisbury believed that such a revelation would split the Liberals and result in a victory for his Government but the trick did not work. The amendment moved on August 8, 1892 by Asquith and seconded by Burt stated simply that the Government "should possess the confidence of this House and of the Country" but that "such confidence is not reposed in the present Advisers of your Majesty."\textsuperscript{36} This amendment did not force the Liberals to reveal any of their policy and the defeat of the Tories was a foregone conclusion. The actual vote was 350 to 310 with a majority of 40 for the Liberals.

It ought not to be assumed that the Queen was impartial and merely served as an honest broker to pass

\textsuperscript{35}Manchester Guardian, July 18, 1892; The Star, July 21, 1892; July 25, 1892; Daily News, July 22, 1892; July 23, 1892.

\textsuperscript{36}Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 4th ser., Vol. 7 (August 8, 1892), p. 105.
the seals of office from Salisbury to Gladstone. She was nearly rabid on the subject of Gladstone, calling him a "dreadful old man" and a "dangerous old fanatic."
Indeed, at the end of July she wrote to Sir Henry Ponsonby, her private secretary, that "one must not be quite sure... of the present Gov't being beaten." If possible she would avoid having "that dangerous old fanatic thrust down her throat." One scheme to which the Queen turned in this moment of alarm was to summon someone else to form a Government. "In '80 she sent for Ld Hartington & Ld Granville. Why not send for Ld Rosebery or some other person? She will resist taking him [Gladstone] to the last."37 She was dissuaded from such a course and, having accepted Salisbury's resignation "with great regret," sent for Gladstone.

For Gladstone, Cabinet making was one of the least enjoyable functions of political life. His tendency was always to include mainly those who had served with him before and to pick men from the aristocratic, and usually Whig, section of the party. The Cabinet of 1892 did have a relatively large infusion of new blood and was, thus, a departure from the past, but it was still more weighted toward the Whig side than the actual state of the party

37Queen to Ponsonby, July 13, 1892, July 26, 1892, Arthur Ponsonby, Henry Ponsonby, Queen Victoria's Private Secretary, His Life from his Letters (London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1943), pp. 216-217.
warranted. He received, as usual, a surfeit of advice, much of it conflicting.

One of the new men given office was Thomas Burt, the Northumberland miners' leader, who was offered and accepted the position of Secretary to the Board of Trade, without Cabinet rank, under A. J. Mundella who returned as President of the Board, the position he had held in 1886. Burt severed his official connection with the Northumberland Miners' Association but Gladstone assured him that he would be free to advise the Association if such advice was sought.38

The Young Liberals did well, two being given Cabinet rank and three posts outside the Cabinet. H. H. Asquith became Home Secretary and A. H. D. Acland, Vice President of the Council, which meant he was in charge of education policy. Sir Edward Grey and Sydney Buxton were given Under-Secretaryships at the Foreign and Colonial Offices respectively and Tom Ellis became a junior Whip.

Ellis' decision to join the Government was a hard one for him to make. The focal question was whether he could be a more effective influence for Wales by remaining independent or by working from inside. The suggestion

of office was originally made by Acland in a letter to Ellis in April. Ellis' reply seems to have been favorable but he proceeded to ask advice from fellow Welsh members. "I feel I dare not advise you," wrote J. Herbert Lewis. "Like yourself, I am in great perplexity. Sometimes I oppose it, sometimes I am in favour of it. I know not what to say." Ellis finally concluded that acceptance "would be a visible recognition of the position of Welsh Liberalism and of its recent successes." He assured a Welsh friend that he would be "steadfast in my loyalty to Wales and true to my ideals for her future." Osborne Morgan and Sir Edward Reed had been offered posts but rejected the positions as less than they deserved. 39

Samuel Storey, one of the leading English Radicals, was offered a choice of two minor positions by Gladstone Storey replied:

because I do not in my time expect to see another Minister like you, & because of my deep reverence & regard for you I will very gladly do all I can in my small way to assist you from the outside.

But I am a very extreme Radical and would rather be quite free to preach the doctrine which will have sway in the near-future.

I have therefore declined, being self-assured you have plenty of younger men to fill

39Masterman, Forerunner, pp. 174-176; J. Herbert Lewis to Ellis, May 19, 1892, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 1400); Ellis to Edward Marjoribanks, no date [1892], Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 2926); Ellis to Parry Jones, August 21, 1892, Daniel Papers (N. L. W., 37); Morgan, Wales, pp. 120-121.
the places, either of which would be most uncongenial to me & in which I could tender no real and effectual service to the Radical cause. 40

The major problem was Rosebery. It has been difficult to determine exactly what Rosebery was trying to do—whether he was in fact serious about his stated desire to retire from public life or whether he thought himself indispensible and wanted total power over foreign affairs when he finally did agree to join the Cabinet. No one really took seriously his frequent statements of impending retirement. Indeed, the impression Rosebery gave was of "one who was always craving for sympathy and never knew how to get it." He knew, as did everyone else, that the Queen wanted him at the Foreign Office, but he purposely made himself unavailable by sailing off on his yacht for a tour of the Scottish Islands. The Queen had written that Rosebery "must be Foreign Minister" and that she would "insist" that he have that position. She even considered communicating with him directly but did so instead through the Prince of Wales. Even after this appeal Rosebery remained firmly opposed to taking office. 41

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40 Samuel Storey to Gladstone, August 17, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44515, ff. 204-205).

Rosebery's wife, to whom he had been devoted, had died in November 1890 and he was never the same again. Ever after he wrote on note paper rimmed in black. This was not an unusual practice but he maintained the habit longer with thicker black borders than anyone else.

"Rosebery said his nerves were unstrung. He never slept now and...work was impossible," he told Ponsonby, the Queen's secretary. But if that was the case, and if he was sincere in his desire not to take office, why had he taken an active part in the election campaign? Why did he not stay away on his yacht rather than return under pressure from Gladstone, the Queen, and even from Tories like Buckle, editor of the Times. On the day he was to go to Osborne to see the Queen, Gladstone was persuaded to make a final appeal stating that unless he heard to the contrary he would submit Rosebery's name to the Queen as Foreign Minister. Rosebery telegraphed Gladstone at Osborne, "So be it. Mentmore." His name was submitted and he became Foreign Secretary and a great source of argument and divisiveness both in the Cabinet and in the party.  

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42 Ponsonby, Henry Ponsonby, p. 262; Robert Rhodes James, Rosebery: A Biography of Archibald Philip Fifth Earl of Rosebery (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1963), pp. 227-251. The men who really arranged all of this were Edward Hamilton and Algernon West. West was in charge of Gladstone's secretariat. Hamilton actually sent the telegram from Rosebery, having forced him to
Aside from Rosebery the major difficulty in forming the Government concerned Labouchere. His influence had risen tremendously during the last Parliament; indeed Lucy contended that "few private members...exercised a measure of influence equal to that of Mr. Labouchere... in speculation as to the formation of a Liberal Ministry his name was never omitted from competitive lists."

T. Wemyss Reid in _The Nineteenth Century_ called him "the brilliant freelance of politics," and said: "It will rest with Mr. Labouchere himself to decide whether he will sit on the Treasury Bench in the next Parliament."

Even those Liberals who opposed his beliefs conceded that he was "unquestionably the ablest man" of the "really advanced left wing." 43

Labouchere was not even asked to join. The crux of the problem was the Queen; she would have none of him. In another of her unconstitutional acts she informed Gladstone, through Ponsonby, that "she positively refuses to take either Sir C. Dilke or that equally horrid write it out. It seems to me that, considering Rosebery's ego and neuroses, Gladstone should have left him out of the Cabinet. That he was the cause only of trouble will become clear later.

Mr. Labouchere. The exception taken to Dilke can be understood in light of the divorce scandal from which he had not absolutely cleared himself but the reason for the exclusion of Labouchere, and the coupling of his name with Dilke, was harder to fathom. Various reasons were given after the fact—his republicanism, his attitude and action on the Royal Grants, and his connection with Truth—but the real reason the Queen objected to Labouchere was stated by Gladstone in a conversation with Rendel which Rendel later recorded.

Yesterday Mr. G. consulted me on terms of strictest secrecy as to Labouchere. The Queen he said objected to Labouchere on the grounds of his earlier relations to Mrs. Labouchere. But apart from other obvious difficulties Mr. G. felt it impossible to reject Labouchere on such an objection. He could hardly state it to L. himself nor could he allege it elsewhere without reviving the whole question of similar obstacles in the case of Ld Melbourne, Ld Palmerston & even now the D. of Devonshire. 45

One of Labby's biographers, Hesketh Pearson, mentions that the Queen had heard a "rumour of a deferred marriage." That this was what Gladstone was talking about was indicated by the fact that the Duke of Devonshire (previously the Marquis of Hartington) had recently married, reportedly to his mistress of long standing.

44Queen to Ponsonby, May 20, 1892, Ponsonby, Henry Ponsonby, p. 215.

45Record of a conversation with Gladstone, August 12, 1892, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., III, 20569D, 25).
Victoria's refusal to receive Labouchere much exercised Gladstone who discussed the problem repeatedly between May and August. Early in August, relative to Labouchere, he told Lewis Harcourt, Sir William's son and always known as Lulu, that he did not "like to leave any of our hard workers out or seem to treat them badly." Lulu's Journal recorded a week later that Gladstone was still "much disturbed at the Queen's insistence on the exclusion of Labouchere."46 Even the Prince of Wales was called in by the Queen to convince Gladstone not to force Labouchere on her. The Prince's private secretary, Francis Knollys, called on Gladstone and received "an intimation" that Labby would not be offered a post.47 But for the Queen's stubborn opposition, Gladstone would probably have offered Labby a position although he told Rendel it would not have been of Cabinet rank.48

The real reason for the ostracism could not be made public and Labby himself had to be given another explanation. Rendel reported a conversation on the subject:


47Diary, August 11, 1892 to August 13, 1892, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48658, ff. 95-101).

48Record of a conversation with Gladstone, August 12, 1892, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., III, 20569D, 25).
Mr. G. thought he could select no better form of explanation than Labouchere's connection with "Truth." In the 1st place Truth was devoted not to news or record but to criticism & observation. In the next place it had consistently adopted a line offensive to the Court and so clearly hostile as to necessitate a complete change of front if its Editor & proprietor became a minister of the Crown. But such a change would be distasteful and damaging to Labouchere in the extremest measure and seeing that Truth was now a great estate it would be unreasonable to expect L. to accept the only alternative of throwing up all connection with it. For these reasons Mr. G. thought he might best rest his decision not to offer office to L. upon his connection with Truth. He proposed to communicate with L. through Bertram Currie who was, he understood, on intimate terms with L. and he recited a proposed form of letter to Bertram Currie.49

In the letter to be given Labouchere through Currie, Gladstone paid tribute to Labby's standing in the House and said he "should naturally have desired to propose to him the acceptance of some office under the Crown."50 The barrier, as Gladstone stated it, was Truth, which Labby could not be expected to give up and Gladstone could therefore not ask him to take office. On the back of the cover letter to Currie is written "Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Labouchere--not delivered"51 and Hamilton wrote in

49Ibid.

50This correspondence may be found in full in Appendix II.

51Gladstone to Bertram Currie, August 13, 1892, (2 letters), Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44515, ff. 141-142, 143-144).
his diary that the letter was not delivered. This cover letter is followed by the letter originally intended to be given to Labby, dated August 13, 1892, and addressed to Mr. Bertram Currie. Later there is a letter which is identical to the letter intended for Labouchere, except it is dated August 16, 1892. It is possible that this second letter was at least shown to Labouchere. Labby wrote that he had been visited by "an emissary" from Gladstone on August 15, 1892. This was possibly Bertram Currie although Pearson, Labby's biographer, states that it was Tim Healy, the Irish Nationalist, and Healy himself wrote that he had "conveyed" to Labby the news that the Queen objected to him. The conversation on this occasion, as reported in Truth, was to the effect that Gladstone would welcome a letter from Labouchere stating that he wanted no office. This would solve Gladstone's problems both with the Queen and with Radicals who expected an offer to Labouchere. In return Gladstone "would always be glad to consult" with Labby "on public

52 Diaries, August 19, 1892, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48658, ff. 113-115).

53 Gladstone to Bertram Currie, August 16, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44515, ff. 167-168).

54 Truth, August 25, 1892, p. 385.

matters." Labby refused to write the letter and later commented, "I may be a political leper, but I hardly could be asked to admit it."57

In explaining his exclusion to a constituent, Labby wrote: "The Queen expressed so strong a feeling against me as one of her ministers that, as I understand it, Mr. Gladstone did not think it desirable to submit my name to her."58 Gladstone immediately wrote to Labouchere and an exchange of letters followed.59 Gladstone claimed the responsibility for not submitting Labouchere's name to the Queen. Certain ambiguous phrases were given as reason for this action but these phrases could either apply to Labby's ownership of Truth or to his action on

56It is possible to resolve this confusion of detail. Gladstone wrote to Bertram Currie enclosing the letter for Labouchere. Someone, whether Gladstone or one of his secretaries, had second thoughts and asked Currie only to "see if he could ascertain Labouchere's real wishes; but those wishes he failed to extract." [Diary, August 19, 1892, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48658, ff. 113-115).] Healy was then sent with a more specific message and mission but this, too, failed. This explanation does not solve the riddle of the purpose of the August 16, 1892 letter to Currie but perhaps it was shown to Labby. At any rate Labby was not included in the Ministry and he knew, whether through the above process or through private sources, that the Queen objected to him.


58Letter from Labouchere to Councillor Tonsley, August 19, 1892, Daily News, August 22, 1892.

59This correspondence, which was published in Truth, may be seen in Appendix II.
the Royal Grants. Labby agreed that Gladstone was constitutionally responsible while maintaining that the Queen was, in fact, behind the whole affair. Gladstone, in reply, stuck to his original letter which did not rule out Labby's explanation. With Labby's reply to this second letter the matter dropped.

Labby's reaction to this affair was on two levels: the personal and the political. Personally he insisted that he had never asked for any office, a fact which Gladstone readily admitted. In Truth Labby wrote:

Strange as it may appear to some, I like my independence, and I have no great liking for the trammels of office, even if they involve the right to wear a uniform and to be addressed as Right Honourable.\(^{60}\)

Nonetheless he resented the Queen's attitude and would, at least, have liked the opportunity to refuse office even if he did want to remain independent. Herbert Gladstone wrote later that Labby "never bore malice because his keen desire for office could not be met."\(^{61}\)

On the political level he was incensed and made great capital out of the Queen's action. Considering it absolutely unconstitutional and a bad precedent for the future, he was particularly incensed that there had been

\(^{60}\)Truth, August 25, 1892, p. 386.

an attempt to fix the blame for the incident on Gladstone. "The personal disfavour of the Sovereign outweighed the deliberate intention of the Prime Minister," and Labby considered this "in opposition to constitutional usage, and, therefore, contrary to the constitution." Labouchere believed he had done Gladstone "good service" in placing the blame on the Queen because it would not be wise for Gladstone to alienate the Radicals "and his exclusion would have done this, not from any personal merits of mine, but because I had become a sort of 'Jenkins ears' with them."

Labouchere believed, at least so he wrote in Truth, that his opposition on the Royal Grants issue was the reason the Queen objected to him. He considered this to be a grave threat to the independence of members of Parliament since it meant that those who aspired to office could not oppose the Court with impunity. Gladstone, 

62 Truth, August 25, 1892, pp. 385-388; September 1, 1892, pp. 441-444; Labouchere to Mr. Frederick Covington, Chairman of the Northampton Liberal and Radical Association, September 9, 1892, Times, September 13, 1892; Truth, September 8, 1892, p. 509.

63 Labouchere to Marjoribanks, August 28, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44332, ff. 232-233). In this letter Labby reported that a "Court flunkey" had told him "in strictest confidence" of a conversation in which the Queen "declared that never would she object--in fact that I was almost her one love--& I was seriously expected to believe in this romance." If this was accurate, and it may have been, it would be even more damning to the Queen.
however, assured a correspondent that opposition to the Royal Grants had not been the "bar" because several members who had voted with Labby were included in the Government. It was thus apparent that Labouchère's ownership of Truth was the reason the public was to be given for his exclusion. 64

Gladstone had formed a strong Government, containing men of great ability in Harcourt, Asquith, Morley, and Fowler among others, although it was not all the Radical section of the party would have wished. It also possessed, in part because of the strong personalities included, the potential for great dissension, particularly if Gladstone was for some reason removed as a unifying factor.

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64 Truth, August 25, 1892, pp. 385-388; September 1, 1892, pp. 441-444; September 8, 1892, pp. 509; Gladstone to a "Liberal residing at Leigh," Manchester Guardian, September 6, 1892.
CHAPTER VI
RADICALS AND GLADSTONE'S ADMINISTRATION, 1892-1894

Liberals and Radicals now worked more closely together but Radicals did not become indistinguishable from Liberals. General cooperation on measures introduced by the Government was combined with an eagerness to proceed further and faster than the Cabinet was willing to lead.

One of the sources of the Government's failure to act decisively was disharmony in the Cabinet which grew worse as time passed. Peter Stansky, in his excellent analysis of the trials of this Government and its leading personalities, discerns a quality common to most members of the Cabinet: "a curious passivity in the face of events, a less than passionate commitment to policies in which they professed to believe, a conviction that their decisions did not really matter."¹ Since Gladstone was primarily concerned with Home Rule, leadership in areas of domestic policy should have been taken by men like Harcourt and Morley but they seemed content to let matters drift and events overwhelm them.

The decision not to hold an Autumn session in 1892 should have indicated to Radicals that the Government was not unwilling to put off disturbing issues. J. Keir Hardie, who had been elected for the first time in 1892, was unsuccessful in his attempt to raise the question of an Autumn session during the short meeting of Parliament in August. The Cabinet intended to introduce a large number of measures when Parliament met for business early in 1893 and time was needed to prepare those Bills. The Star recommended that this time be used not only to draw up "thoroughgoing" Bills but to make certain those Bills were as short as possible in order to defy Tory obstruction.

Parliament convened on the last day of January. The Queen's Speech outlined an ambitious and sweeping plan of legislation headed by Home Rule.

Bills will be promptly laid before you for the amendment of the system of registration in Great Britain; for shortening the duration of Parliaments; and for establishing the equality of the franchise by the limitation of each elector to a single vote.

There will also be proposed to you various Bills bearing on the condition of labour, among which are measures in relation to the liability of employers, the hours of labour for railway servants, and a Bill to amend the Law of Conspiracy.

Your attention will likewise be invited

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3The Star, October 29, 1892.
to measures for the further improvement of Local Government, including the creation of Parish Councils; for the enlargement of the powers of the London County Council; for the prevention of the growth of new vested interests in the Ecclesiastical Establishments in Scotland and in Wales; and for direct local control over the liquor traffic; together with other measures of public utility.  

This program would demand leadership and enthusiasm to effect but it was by no means an impossible program.

Heartily approving the Speech, the Manchester Guardian warned of the great danger: Obstruction. "Of course if the threats of obstruction to the principal measure of the session are fulfilled the prophecies of failure to the remainder of the Government programme may in some degree be made to fulfill themselves." Action against obstruction would be necessary.

The Home Rule Bill was introduced by Gladstone on February 14, 1893 in a packed House of Commons but the second Reading debate did not come until after Easter and the Bill did not escape from the Committee stage until mid-Summer. The Parliamentary struggle, while tangential to this study, was important because of the notorious but effective campaign of obstruction carried out by the Unionists. It was their stated goal to force the Government to spend the entire session on Home Rule and they

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5Manchester Guardian, February 1, 1893.
obstructed any measure the Liberals brought forward. The Unionists were not satisfied with forcing the Ministry to reschedule the second Reading debate for after Easter; obstruction continued in an "endeavour to prevent all legislation." It soon became apparent that the Government either could not or would not act decisively against obstruction and this failure taxed the patience and sapped the energies of the rank and file of the party.

Everything appeared at stake; failure to stop obstruction of Home Rule would mean the eventual loss of the whole Newcastle program. Labouchere recommended "that the supporters of the Government should not, by much speaking, aid and abet the Tory plan of obstruction." Labby followed his own advice and did not speak in the second Reading debate on the Home Rule Bill. Having welcomed his suggestion, The Star made it the basis for exhortations to the party and Labouchere's advice was made the subject of a resolution passed at a Radical meeting. But the Bill was read a second time only after seemingly interminable debate, wasting valuable days.

The Committee stage of the Bill provoked even more effective obstruction from the Unionists. Radicals urged that the Government fix a day for the conclusion of the

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6 The Star, March 14, 1893.

7 The Star, March 27, 1893; April 12, 1893; April 13, 1893.
Committee stage, but Gladstone would not agree. By the end of May the Manchester Guardian had joined The Star in urging the Government to take positive action. The Guardian, blaming the Government, said that the leadership would "be held by their followers in the country to have fallen short in their duty, and will reap the inevitable consequences in the weakening of the spirit of the party, in disgust, or in apathy." Radicals began to press more seriously for action early in June, proposing a deadline for amendments after which only the Government could move new amendments. A meeting of the Radical Committee, attended by between 60 and 70 members, passed a resolution urging the Ministry to consider "the measures required" to assure rapid passage of the Bill. 

It was not until the end of June, when the Bill had been in Committee for six weeks, that Gladstone moved to limit obstruction and even then he allowed four more weeks for the Committee stage. Having passed the Commons the Bill, on September 8, 1893, was ignominiously thrown out by the Lords by a vote of 419 to 41 after a

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8The Star, May 19, 1893; Manchester Guardian, May 30, 1893.

9Daily News, June 8, 1893; Dundee Advertiser, June 10, 1893; Daily News, June 10, 1893.

10The Star, June 29, 1893; Manchester Guardian, June 29, 1893.
debate of only four days. The verdict of the Lords had long been foreseen. Gladstone told an audience at Edinburgh that the Lords had never succeeded in overriding the House of Commons when that body was determined to have its way and that if the Lords did persevere in their foolish attitude they would raise an issue on which the people would pronounce against the Lords.

An Autumn session was required to carry British reforms necessary for the success of the Administration. The two measures given preference were the Parish Councils Bill and the Employers' Liability Bill, the former having been declared an essential measure by the Radical Committee. This measure would establish representative bodies at the local level, particularly in rural areas. These Councils could deal more effectively with certain local problems than County Councils because they would be more responsive to local feeling. The Government envisioned wide powers for these Councils, powers seen as threatening by the local Tory parsons and squires. The Parish Councils Bill faced only slightly less obstruction than had Home Rule. The Star, although it had wanted a Bill for London reform included in the Autumn program, recognized


12Manchester Guardian, September 28, 1893; September 29, 1893.
the importance of the Parish Councils Bill and early recommended the use of the guillotine.\textsuperscript{13}

While Radicals wanted the Bill to pass they were not totally satisfied with it in its original form. Labouchere considered the Bill a compromise between what the Government wanted and what they thought the Tories would allow them to have. Dilke also saw serious difficulties in the original Bill. Attempts to change the Bill proved embarrassing to the Government and resulted in defeats for the Cabinet. One such defeat came over an instruction to the Committee allowing it to include women's suffrage in the Bill. On other points, the control of parish charities for example, the Government was forced to give way to avoid defeat. In spite of this desire to amend details in the Bill the Radical Committee declared its hope "that the Government will adhere to the Local Government Bill as a whole; and the members present pledge themselves to sit on until it is passed."\textsuperscript{14}

Eventually carried in the House of Commons the Bill was sent to the Lords who amended it in such a way

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{The Star}, June 7, 1893; September 5, 1893; November 4, 1893.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Truth}, November 23, 1893, p. 1099; Dilke to Chamberlain, [September 1893?], Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43229, ff. 103); \textit{The Star}, November 17, 1893; December 6, 1893; \textit{Manchester Guardian}, November 17, 1893.
as to make it much less satisfactory, one analyst calling it a bundle of "sapless bones." Although the Government at first refused to accept any of the Lord's amendments a compromise was reached and the measure passed.\textsuperscript{15}

The other major piece of domestic legislation sent to the Lords was the Employers' Liability Bill. This Bill had been introduced early in the regular session but faced the same tenacious obstruction as other Liberal measures and the second Reading was not carried until May. Reference to a Grand Committee allowed Employers' Liability to at least partially bypass Tory obstruction and the Bill was again brought before the House in the Autumn session for the Report stage.

Debate centered on the problem of "contracting out." Under previous Acts the employee had been allowed to sign away his benefits under the Act if the employer provided his own insurance scheme for compensation in case of injury. In general terms management favored contracting out while the workers, particularly Trade Union leaders, opposed it. The most notable exception was the London and North Western Railway, which provided a compulsory insurance scheme for its workers more comprehensive than the provisions of the Bill and which

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{The Star}, February 3, 1894; \textit{Manchester Guardian}, March 2, 1894. Lords amendments accepted raised the minimum population necessary for the establishment of a Council and removed control of Parochial charities from the Councils.
threatened to drop its program if the Bill passed. An amendment moved by a Radical, Walter M'Laren, would have allowed contracting out but, after a three day debate, it was rejected by a majority of 18.\(^\text{16}\)

An amendment adopted by the Lords allowed contracting out on a much wider scale than M'Laren's amendment would have done. The verdict of The Star was that the Lords had "mutilated the Employers' Liability Bill in such a way as to render it futile!" The Government attempted to reach a compromise by permitting contracting out for a period of only three years. Having been opposed by those who wanted no compromise with the Lords as well as by those who agreed with the Lords, this amendment was narrowly carried by a majority of two. The Lords refused to compromise and the Bill was lost--killed by the Government.\(^\text{17}\)

The Government had, of course, introduced other measures but, in the face of so much obstruction, they had to be left behind. Two of these Bills were a Local Option Bill introduced by Harcourt and a Registration


Bill introduced by Fowler. Although progressive and widely accepted, neither of these Bills went far enough to satisfy all Radicals.\(^{18}\)

Immediately after the general election, on the meeting of Parliament, the Radicals had revived their party organization. Its primary function was not to harass the Government but to support it while at the same time pressing forward Radical measures. At the first meeting only 56 members attended but by the beginning of the 1893 session the party was reputed to have grown to more than 100. Again in 1893 the party met to coordinate strategy and to organize support of certain measures. Bills to be given priority included "an eight hours bill for miners, local option for Scotland, taxation of ground values, and a bill to alter the qualification and mode of appointment of county magistrates." A strong committee was established to press forward Radical measures.\(^{19}\)

Labouchere carried on an extensive campaign. He wrote to Herbert Gladstone, his usual conduit to the Prime Minister, imploring him to explain to his father


\(^{19}\)Dundee Advertiser, August 9, 1892; August 12, 1892; Manchester Guardian, August 12, 1892; January 30, 1893; January 31, 1893.
the necessity for English reforms.\textsuperscript{20} In \textit{Truth}, too, he emphasized the Newcastle program as the irreducible minimum that would satisfy the Radicals. Although having great faith that the Government would carry out its pledges, he warned Ministers of the consequences of treachery to their Radical supporters.\textsuperscript{21} This same theme formed the basis of speeches and public correspondence in the long recess before the meeting of Parliament. He also returned to one of his favorite topics, the House of Lords, threatening it with extinction should it interfere with the will of the nation.\textsuperscript{22}

It became apparent to Labby during the course of the session that while the Government had "good intentions" its members were "without any clear perception of how to give effect to them. The ship drifts.” Seeing it as his duty to make recommendations to the Government and, if necessary, to force Ministers into the proper path, he particularly recommended tactics which would place a Registration Bill and an attack on the Lords in the forefront.\textsuperscript{23} Even before the beginning of the Autumn

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20}Labouchere to Herbert Gladstone, August 27, [1892?], Herbert Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 4601, ff. 156-158).
\item \textsuperscript{21}\textit{Truth}, August 18, 1892, p. 344; September 8, 1892, pp. 510-511.
\item \textsuperscript{22}\textit{Daily News}, September 13, 1892; November 22, 1892.
\item \textsuperscript{23}\textit{Truth}, December 14, 1893, p. 1272; \textit{Daily News}, August 14, 1893; \textit{Truth}, August 24, 1893, p. 381.
\end{itemize}
session he was corresponding with Dilke about the proper strategy to use to make the Government program more Radical in the following year. His plan was for Dilke to move an amendment for payment of members while he would move one for the abolition of the House of Lords. This, he believed, would bring the Government up to the mark and rally support in the country. Labby was, of course, faced with the same problem as all advanced Radicals. He could not justify a vote which would bring down the Government so long as it was producing good measures at however slow a pace. He could only try to encourage and push the Government forward.

Payment of members was not included in the Queen's Speech except possibly under the omnibus phrase "other measures of public utility." Shortly after the opening of the session Harcourt wrote to Gladstone on the subject:

I observe that there is a question down to you today on the subject of the payment of Members. I am very strongly of opinion that this is a most critical matter and that if the Radical Party are not satisfied in respect of it the majority will be most seriously shaken. I do not know any question which is more certain to break up the united action of the Party. I am also sure that no reply which indicates the view that it is only to be given to Members who can satisfy the poverty test, will be

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24 Labouchere to Dilke, October 8, [1893?], October 11, [1893?], Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43892, ff. 179, 180-181).
accepted but that on the contrary concession in that form will be more resented than even a refusal.\textsuperscript{25}

Two methods of passing the proposal were discussed. The traditional method would have been to pass it as a Bill but there were those who favored simply including the reform in the Budget, thus negating the Lords' veto. For a time this latter form of providing payment for at least some members was favored even in the Cabinet.\textsuperscript{26} Gladstone "denied that such a great reform could properly be carried out by a Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget." He was also of opinion that no Bill for the purpose could be added to the already large Ministerial program for the current session.\textsuperscript{27}

A week later the issue was raised on a resolution, moved by William Allen, stating that "a reasonable allowance should forthwith be granted to all Members of Parliament." Sir William Harcourt, declaring the acceptance of the motion by the Government, agreed that all Members should be paid as soon as practicable but it would be impossible, said Harcourt, to take this step during the 1893 session. The motion was carried by a majority of 47 committing the

\textsuperscript{25}Harcourt to Gladstone, February 9, 1893, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44203, ff. 41-42).

\textsuperscript{26}The Star, February 18, 1893; Truth, February 23, 1893, p. 408.

\textsuperscript{27}Daily News, March 20, 1893; March 18, 1893.
Government and the House to payment of members. 28

Mending or ending the House of Lords became of almost overriding importance during this first eighteen months of the Liberal Administration. Indeed, although this had not yet happened, it appeared that the House of Lords might become the "single great question" of the future, replacing Home Rule: "The abolition of the House of Lords has become the foremost and most urgent of all reforms," claimed The Star, "for on it all others are seen now to depend." 29

This had been Labouchere's position all along. Recognizing the futility of trying to pass legislation through that Tory stronghold, he had made abolition of the House of Lords a central point of his Radicalism. Being a practical man he also knew the difficulty to be overcome in getting the Lords to abolish themselves. His remedy was either to create enough peers to swamp the Tories or to issue writs of summons only to those peers who "had shown themselves in accord with the views of the Executive." This last suggestion would have resulted in a House of Lords of less than fifty members. Labby prepared two Bills for introduction in 1893 dealing with the Lords. The first required that heads of all


29The Star, February 23, 1894.
Executive Departments be members of the Commons and provided that peers could give up their seat in the Lords and stand for the House of Commons. The second Bill provided simply that after 1895 "no person shall sit in Parliament either by hereditary descent or because he is a Bishop." This approach left the question of one or two legislative chambers to be decided later.\textsuperscript{30}

In August Samuel Storey moved a resolution which would have given the Lords the same sort of suspensory veto they possessed after the Parliament Act of 1911. If a measure was rejected twice by the Lords, having passed the Commons, and was again passed by the Commons it would receive the Royal assent and become law. Radicals really wanted the extinction of the Lords and the resolution consequently received little support and was quickly counted out. Even the \textit{Daily News} pronounced it to be "decidedly inferior to that which Mr. Labouchere has several times proposed." Labby himself did not approve Storey's motion.\textsuperscript{31} A month later Radicals divided against the Vote of Supplies for the Lords, only losing by 33; the vote was 96 to 63. \textit{The Star} considered that the

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Times}, January 6, 1893; \textit{Truth}, January 26, 1893, pp. 187-188.

Government had made a mistake in not joining the Radicals in opposing this vote, a course which had been recommended earlier in its columns.  

On the evening following this last Radical attack on the Lords that body rejected Home Rule by 419 to 41, an action greeted with indignation but no great outburst because the rejection had been foreseen. The cry of The Star—"Now that the Lords have slain Home Rule, it is the duty of every democrat to prepare to slay the Lords"—did not elicit a wide response. Labouchere did not immediately begin an agitation against the Lords although he used this latest act as an example of its perfidious influence. He returned to his standard recommendation of a Registration Bill to prepare the way for a rapid general election which should be fought on the issue of whether the Lords would be allowed to overrule the verdict of the people.

London members felt particularly cheated by the ineffectiveness of the Government in 1893. At Newcastle the party had been pledged to a specific set of reforms with regard to London and the London members wanted the


33The Star, September 9, 1893; Truth, October 12, 1893, pp. 747-748.

34Truth, November 16, 1893, p. 1038.
Government to make at least a token gesture in their direction. A measure "for the enlargement of the powers of the London County Council" had been promised in the Queen's Speech. The Star pointed out that half the Liberal majority came from London constituencies. Moreover the Government appointed a Commission to consider and plan the amalgamation of the City into London metropolitan government. Shortly thereafter, on February 24, a private motion for equalization of rates was supported by the Government, Henry Fowler, President of the Local Government Board, saying that if the resolution was adopted it "would be the duty of the Government to do its best to carry it into effect." The Tories did not oppose and the resolution was carried unanimously.

Tory obstruction and the ineffectiveness of the Government in dealing with it quickly forced the cancellation of plans for other London Bills and concentration was focused on the Equalization of Rates Bill. The Star urged that it be "pushed forward without a moment's delay," in keeping with the pledge at Newcastle, as soon as the second Reading of the Home Rule Bill was passed. The

35The Star, November 21, 1892. See above pp. 183-184 for the Queen's Speech.

36The Star, February 22, 1893; February 25, 1893.

37The Star, April 18, 1893; April 20, 1893; May 8, 1893.
Bill was later withdrawn, unnecessarily in the opinion of The Star. "On the Government...lies the real responsibility, and on them there cannot fail to fall a serious part of London's not unnatural indignation." The indignation of the London members was expressed at a meeting presided over by the Attorney General.38

The Government was somewhat more fortunate in its dealings with labor questions. Again the most important issue was the eight hour day for miners. That the Government fully recognized the significance of this question was indicated by the fact that when it took the entire time of the House for Government business it specifically put aside a Wednesday for this question. There were three major positions taken in the debate. There were those like Morley, most Conservatives, and the Durham and Northumberland miners' representatives, who opposed the Bill. A second group favored the Bill while a third, led by Gladstone, accepted the Bill subject to revision in Committee. The particular revision this group wanted was provision for local option which would deal especially with the opposition of Durham and Northumberland. The promoters of the Bill rejected this compromise and it was attacked in the debate by Dilke. In spite of this attitude, the supporters of local option voted for the

38The Star, September 8, 1893; Times, November 7, 1893.
Bill, and the second Reading was carried by 280 to 201. Only 33 Liberals voted against the Bill while 185 supported it.39

Relations between the Government and labor in other areas remained good. Asquith and others in the Cabinet made administrative changes for the benefit of labor and an Act was passed to "keep hours on railways within reasonable limits." Much remained to be done but the Parliamentary Committee of the Trade Union Congress gave a positive report to the annual conference. F. A. Channing, Radical member for Northamptonshire, called this Liberal Government "the first Labour Ministry this country ever had."40

One instance of delay in meeting a Radical demand capable of being met by administrative action was the appointment of Magistrates. Traditionally appointments had been made by the Lord Chancellor on the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant of the County involved. The Lords Lieutenant were predominantly Tory and the men appointed to the bench on their recommendation were also predominantly Tory. Radicals resented this and tried


40The Star, September 5, 1893; From a speech he delivered early in 1894, Channing, Midland Politics, pp. 153-154.
to convince the Lord Chancellor to change his method of appointment but he did not believe he would be justified in doing so until the House of Commons had given its opinion on the matter. Consequently Dilke moved a resolution to the effect that appointments to the bench should no longer be made solely on the basis of the recommendation of the Lord Lieutenant. Asquith spoke for the Government in accepting the resolution and it was carried by a majority of 53.\textsuperscript{41}

Radicals now expected that the resolution would be carried out and that Liberals and Radicals would become Magistrates but they were disappointed. Special Radical meetings were held from time to time during the balance of the year to protest against the failure of the Lord Chancellor to observe the resolution. In November a Radical deputation had a very unsatisfactory meeting with the Lord Chancellor. Lord Hershell was not tactful and the Radicals went away in a huff. This was followed by correspondence with Gladstone, the Prime Minister both defending the Lord Chancellor and promising that the resolution would be carried out.\textsuperscript{42} James Bryce, as


\textsuperscript{42}Manchester Guardian, July 26, 1893; The Star, July 26, 1893; Diary, November 16, 1893, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48661, ff. 126); The Star, November 17, 1893; Daily News, November 24, 1893; The Star, November 24, 1893.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, also possessed the power to appoint Magistrates. In spite of Tory opposition he appointed Liberals and working men to the bench to redress the balance. With this example before them the Radicals were legitimately concerned about the inaction and unsympathetic attitude of the Lord Chancellor.

Harcourt's first budget did not satisfy Radicals. The Government thought it best not to introduce another contentious measure requiring an extended amount of time to pass through the Commons. Radicals began early in the next year to press for a Radical Budget for 1894. A group of nearly a hundred Radicals sent a letter to Harcourt making suggestions on how to draw up the next Budget along "Radical and Democratic lines." They particularly recommended graduation of the death duties and an equalization of the death duty on realty and personalty. A graduated income tax was also recommended as was the ending of Imperial grants to aid local revenues which really meant, in the opinion of the Radicals, relief for wealthy ratepayers. The additional revenue provided by these reforms would make it possible for the Government to establish the free breakfast table, payment of members and election expenses, and other necessary

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measures. Harcourt promised that "a document representing such a weight of opinion" would receive his "most careful and respectful consideration."

Wales presented a serious problem for the Gladstone Administration, Welsh members having been led to believe that Welsh disestablishment would be the first item in the Liberal legislative program after Home Rule. On the other hand Welsh disestablishment appealed to a rather limited section of the British public. Even though Wales had returned 31 Liberals out of 34 members, and even though the Government's majority depended on Welsh loyalty, there were other items in the Newcastle program which would appeal to a wider public and would therefore be of more benefit to the party electorally. The problem was how to keep the Welsh loyal while at the same time postponing Welsh disestablishment. Disestablishment would require a Bill only less controversial than Home Rule but some token had to be given to Wales.

Welsh members, particularly Ellis, also wanted a Royal Commission to study the land question in Wales. Gladstone apparently tried to satisfy this demand by suggesting a Select Committee, Rendel accepting this

44Daily News, January 13, 1894. More Radicals would have signed the letter had they not left town in anticipation of the end of the session.

45Daily News, January 16, 1893.
alternative. There were certain differences between the two methods of procedure which made Ellis believe that a Commission was essential, one important difference being that a Commission could take evidence in Wales rather than forcing the tenant farmers to come to London. Ireland and Scotland had both had Royal Commissions on the land question and Wales was determined not to be treated as inferior. Asquith agreed with Ellis as to the necessity of a Commission and the Welsh National Council had also pronounced for a Commission. Finally a meeting of Welsh members unanimously adopted a resolution insisting on a Commission. Faced with this unanimity Gladstone gave way and a Land Commission for Wales was appointed. 46

There had been some demand before 1892 for disestablishment to be carried concurrently with Home Rule and Ellis apparently now made that suggestion to Gladstone through Rendel. Gladstone considered the suggestion highly impractical: "I had thought Mr. E. an intelligent man..." 47 There was still widespread distrust of Gladstone's intentions both in Wales and among the Welsh members and

46 Ellis to J. Herbert Lewis, November 8, 1892, November 18, 1892, November 19, 1892, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 2893, 2899, 2900); Manchester Guardian, November 11, 1892; J. Herbert Lewis to Rendel, November 30, 1892, December 19, 1892, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., I, 19453C, IX, 389 and 392); Morgan, Wales, pp. 121-122.

47 Gladstone to Rendel, September 3, 1892, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., III, 20570D, 96).
there was much demanding and threatening in the period before Parliament opened. Rendel saw "no excuse for suspicion or mistrust of the pledge of Mr. Gladstone & Liberal leaders & party." Gladstone welcomed Rendel's suggestion of a Suspensory Bill to prohibit the creation of further vested interests in the Church pending the passage of disestablishment and submitted it to the first meeting of the Cabinet. Rendel's difficulty was with those who "scouted" the "preliminary step of Suspensory Bill" and wanted disestablishment at once. The November meeting of the Welsh party accepted the idea of a Suspensory Bill if it included Monmouthshire. Rendel then convinced Gladstone, against Gladstone's decided opinion, to give the matter "early attention" in Parliament. Rendel termed this an "unwilling surrender" on Gladstone's part but looked forward to a "satisfactory reference to Welsh Disestmt in the Queens Speech."49

The Queen's Speech announced measures "for the prevention of the growth of new vested interests in the ecclesiastical Establishments in Scotland and in Wales." There was fierce Welsh resentment that the Suspensory

48 Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, October 15, 1892, October 18, 1892, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 613 and 615).

49 J. Herbert Lewis to Rendel, November 30, 1892, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., I, 19453C, IX, 389); Rendel to Humphreys-Owen, January 15, 1893, Glansevern Papers (N. L. W., 624).
Bill had been relegated to the "omnibus clause" of the Speech. An immediate protest meeting was held. Secrecy was deemed essential because of negotiations through Rendel with Gladstone and several meetings were not reported in detail. The intimations reaching the press indicated that the negotiations were less than successful and that discussion revolved around the possibility of withdrawing support from the Government. The Executive Committee of the North Wales Liberal Federation passed a resolution encouraging the Welsh members to vigorously press their demands on the Government and warning the Government of "disastrous" results if the Suspensory Bill was not accorded second place in the program. Ellis received telegrams complaining of the attitude of the Government: "The Government's flagrant breach of faith has left nothing for us but to fight it firmly and to the bitter end," and "Wales shamefully betrayed no Welsh patriot can support Gladstone any longer."

The Suspensory Bill, introduced on February 23, 1893, put a temporary end to this crisis. Asquith introducing the Bill and Gladstone supporting it in a strong speech, the first Reading was carried by 56, the vote being 301

50Manchester Guardian, February 1, 1893; February 7, 1893.

51Manchester Guardian, February 13, 1893; Evans Jones to Ellis, "Gwynoro" to Ellis, February 17, 1893, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 2975).
to 245. The Suspensory Bill itself and the speeches made in its favor were seen as committing the Government to propose disestablishment within a reasonable time.

As the Home Rule Bill dragged on the impatience of the Welsh members grew and, toward the end of June, they finally sent a memorial to Gladstone "with a view to obtaining...assurances which would set at rest all our concerns" about the postponement of disestablishment. Gladstone replied that he believed the Government had "given some evidence of their desire to go as far as they are able in securing a forward place for Welsh disestablishment" but he could not go beyond this statement while the Home Rule Bill remained in Committee, an answer deemed unsatisfactory by the Welsh members.

The Manchester Guardian warned that "should another session pass without something having been done to meet the demands of Welsh Liberals, very serious consequences would follow. The Welsh members again wrote to Gladstone requesting him to place "in the forefront of your programme for next session, not a preliminary, but a final and complete measure for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales." Gladstone was encouraging but did not give the required promise.  


53This correspondence (Welsh members to Gladstone,
Less than a week after Gladstone's last letter the South Wales Liberal Federation passed a resolution of support for any action the Welsh members might find necessary to assure priority for disestablishment in the 1894 session. The Welsh members met, on August 15. Although no decision was reached at this meeting there was a movement toward independence, and a resolution was proposed "intimating that unless satisfactory assurances were forthcoming the Government would be unable to rely upon the party for support." When the Welsh members met again the first motion discussed proposed an immediate secession from the Liberal party because Gladstone would not assure them that the Welsh church question would be dealt with "in order of priority accorded to it by the Liberal party."

This resolution was defeated by 18 votes to 7. A more moderate resolution was then moved by Lloyd George and seconded by Ellis expressing confidence that the Government would carry Welsh disestablishment through the House of Commons in the next session but also warning "that unless the bill is placed in that position we shall, as a party, be under the regrettable necessity of having to reconsider our attitude of support to the Government.

June 26, 1893 and July 28, 1893, and Gladstone to Welsh members, July 5, 1892 and August 8, 1893) was published in Manchester Guardian, August 16, 1893; Manchester Guardian, July 26, 1893.

54 Manchester Guardian, August 15, 1893; August 17, 1893.
and to take an independent course." This motion was
carried by an "overwhelming majority" and the crisis
passed. Ellis wrote to his friend D. R. Daniel: "Welsh
Disestablishment next session is certain." 55

Scotland presented a much smaller problem. Although
a Suspensory Bill for Scotland was announced in the Queen's
Speech it was never introduced. Dr. Cameron introduced
his own Church of Scotland Bill providing for the immediate
disestablishment and the gradual disendowment of the
Church of Scotland. The first Reading was carried on a
division by 246 to 180, a majority of 66. The Bill was
not proceeded with but did form the basis for a deputation
to Gladstone in August. Gladstone's response to this
deputation was similar to his answer to the letters from
the Welsh party. He expressed his sympathy with the
objects of the deputation and considered the Bill to be
liberal and just and he expressed his "friendliness"
and the "friendliness of the Government" to the Bill.
Nonetheless he could not promise to advance its consider­
ation. The Scottish members received this response with
much greater equanimity than the Welsh and there was no
threat of secession. 56

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55 Manchester Guardian, September 2, 1893; Ellis to
Daniel, September 3, 1893, Daniel Papers (N. L. W., 416).

56 Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary
Debates, 4th ser., Vol. 12 (May 9, 1893), pp. 462-463;
Dundee Advertiser, May 10, 1893; Daily News, August 26, 1893.
The National Liberal Federation played a much less significant role in Liberal politics after 1892 than had been the case over the previous six years. The resolutions passed at the annual conferences became almost sterile, being for the most part simple reaffirmations or amplifications of the Newcastle program. Gladstone did not attend a meeting of the Federation after 1891 so the conferences were without the authority gained from his presence. The major role of the Federation was encouragement—encouragement both of the Government and of the party in the country. In a circular to local Associations the leadership of the National Liberal Federation plainly stated the Federation's role:

It is for the Federation not only to insist upon the unwavering allegiance of the Liberal party in the House of Commons to the demands formulated by the representative bodies of Liberals throughout the country, but to continue and extend the good work it has done in the past by instructing and guiding public opinion, and by strengthening and organizing the forces which are ranged on the side of freedom and progress.57

No conference was held in 1892 but the annual meeting took place at Liverpool in January 1893. Dr. Watson accurately summarized this conference:

It was felt that the business would naturally, under the circumstances, not admit of any great novelty; the appeal to the country had practically been upon the Newcastle Programme of reforms, and the country had responded in its favour.

57Daily News, November 8, 1892.
so that the main business of the meetings was the emphatic reaffirming of the items which had been carried before, and expressing congratulations upon the results of the elections.\textsuperscript{58}

Only two resolutions were adopted at Liverpool. The first was a motion of confidence in the Government and thanks to those who had assisted in the election victory. On the second day the resolution was a reaffirmation of the Newcastle program. It also urged that Liberal measures be prepared in the widest spirit "without reference to the insidious powers of obstruction and rejection possessed by the House of Lords." The Home Secretary, Asquith, was the major speaker at the conference. He stressed the administrative reforms made by the Government. This was all he could do since Parliament had not yet met. He also said the Government would do their best to carry the Newcastle reforms into legislation. Spence Watson, in his speech, put Welsh disestablishment second in the program as it had been at Newcastle.\textsuperscript{59}

Reaction to this conference was almost as noncommittal as the conference itself, The Star sympathizing with the situation faced by the National Liberal Federation since the Government program was not yet known. The Guardian had wanted an expansion of the program to include items

\textsuperscript{58}Watson, \textit{National Liberal Federation}, p. 146.

\textsuperscript{59}\textit{Daily News}, January 20, 1893; January 21, 1893.
like miners' eight hours but expressed itself generally satisfied with the conference and particularly happy at the attitude expressed toward the House of Lords. 60

Shortly after the House of Lords threw out the Home Rule Bill the National Liberal Federation issued a manifesto of vigorous protest to the Federated Associations. 61 The Lords' rejection of Home Rule had been an attempt to "arrogate to themselves a paramount authority in the State."

The question of 'the mending or ending of the House of Lords,' which had a subordinate place in the Newcastle programme, may before long, as Mr. Gladstone then forecast, displace for a while all other subjects of reform, and cry aloud for vigorous and unflinching treatment.... For the present we entirely reject the pretension of the Peers to the right to force a dissolution, and we look with confidence to the Government to go forward with those reforms for which the country is waiting. 62

This manifesto was welcomed in the Liberal press and especially by The Star which was "longing to come to close quarters with the tyrants whom we have tolerated

60 The Star, January 20, 1893; January 21, 1893; Manchester Guardian, January 19, 1893; January 20, 1893; January 21, 1893.

61 Francis Schnadhorst, "the Carnot of Liberalism," resigned his position as Secretary of the National Liberal Federation in 1893. He had been in failing health for some time. Robert Hudson, his assistant for some years, was named his replacement both in the National Liberal Federation and the Liberal Central Association. Daily News, June 27, 1893; Spender, Sir Robert Hudson, pp. 38-39; McGill, "Francis Schnadhorst," pp. 38-39.

62 Daily News, September 13, 1893.
When the National Liberal Federation met at Portsmouth in February 1894 the House of Lords provided the prime topic of discussion. Not only had the Lords rejected or emasculated the three major Government Bills but the House of Commons was in the process of considering the Lords' amendments to the Parish Councils Bill and the Employers' Liability Bill. In the report presented to the conference the General Purposes Committee expressed the hope that the Liberals in the Commons would not compromise away any important feature of either Bill. One of the major resolutions adopted by the conference dealt with the Lords:

That the habitual disregard of the national will manifested by the House of Lords in delaying, mutilating, and rejecting measures demanded by the country and approved by the House of Commons, is an intolerable abuse of the powers possessed by the hereditary and non-representative Chamber, and that the Ministry may be assured of the enthusiastic and strenuous support of the Liberal party in whatever measures it adopts to secure that the House of Commons shall be the paramount authority in the State.

Sir William Harcourt and A. H. D. Acland represented the Cabinet at the Portsmouth conference. Both attacked the House of Lords at some length, much to the delight of the delegates.  

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63 The Star, September 13, 1893.

64 Watson, National Liberal Federation, pp. 156-158; Daily News, February 15, 1894.
Reaction to any mention of the House of Lords at the conference indicated that the delegates were fully prepared for war with the Lords. "The warlike temper which marked yesterday's meeting of the National Liberal Federation accurately represents the temper of the party of progress throughout the United Kingdom." The Star took this as a warning that the Government must be firm and decisive: "Our forces are spoiling for the fight." The South Wales Daily News noted that the Ministry had "fallen far short" in passing needed reforms because of the House of Lords and that the time had come for ending the Lords. Harcourt's speech seemed to promise that effective leadership would be forthcoming.

Other issues, too, were raised at Portsmouth. Resolutions were passed congratulating the Government on its legislative program and on its "admirable administrative achievements." A specific resolution pressed Welsh disestablishment which would be "sent up to the House of Lords during the coming session of Parliament." Registration and electoral reform, London reform, and temperance reform also received special attention. A final resolution again reaffirmed the Newcastle program.

65 The Star, February 14, 1894; South Wales Daily News, February 13, 1894.
66 Daily News, February 14, 1894; February 15, 1894.
The National Liberal Federation at Portsmouth took a more active role in encouraging the Government to carry specific measures from the Newcastle program.

On March 3, 1894 it was announced that Gladstone had resigned. The Queen and the public were told that the reason for his resignation was the state of his health—particularly the loss of full powers of vision and hearing. His hearing had been affected for some time and he was developing cataracts on his eyes. The G. O. M. was, after all, 84 years old and, although he was remarkably well preserved, the infirmities of age were bound to overtake him sooner or later. The way had been prepared for a resignation on these grounds by Gladstone's equivocal response to a report in the Pall Mall Gazette on January 31, 1894 that he would retire.

He wrote from Biarritz:

> The statement that Mr. Gladstone has definitely decided, or has decided at all on resigning office is untrue. It is true that for many months past his age, and the condition of his sight and hearing have in his judgement made relief from public cares desirable, and that, accordingly his tenure of office has been at any moment liable to interruption.67

This equivocal statement allowed him a month later to plead "eyes and ears" as his reason for resignation.

"Eyes and ears" had little, if anything, to do with it. The leader of the Liberal party stood almost

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67Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44776, ff. 44).
alone opposed by the rest of the Cabinet on what he regarded as a matter of principle. At issue was a massive increase in spending for naval construction. Spencer, who was not the strongest of men, had been blackmailed and browbeaten by the Sea Lords into agreeing to a substantial increase. The Cabinet increasingly supported Spencer. This conflict began in December 1893 and was still unresolved when Gladstone left for Biarritz in mid-January. All efforts to persuade Gladstone to change his mind proved futile. This was not the first serious dissension in the Cabinet. Two previous disagreements had pitted Rosebery against Gladstone over Uganda and Egypt. In both cases Gladstone gave way. His position now was: "Liberalism cannot put on the garb of jingoism without suffering for it, and suffering for it justly, whether soon or late." This may have made him less willing to compromise a third time when the force against him within the Cabinet was greater. Both the Cabinet and Gladstone came to believe that resignation was the best way out and that the time had finally come for him to step down.

While at Biarritz Gladstone decided that an immediate dissolution on the House of Lords would solve the crisis, at least temporarily. The record of the Lords during

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the previous session was such that the Liberals would be justified in asking the judgement of the nation on their destructive actions. The Lords had rejected Home Rule, mutilated Employers' Liability to the extent that the Bill was dropped, amended the life out of Parish Councils, and had passed only the Railway Servants (Hours of Labour) Bill. He wrote to Marjoribanks, the Chief Whip, about the idea and sent West, his private secretary, back to London with the letter to ascertain the opinion of his colleagues. They were unanimously opposed. Perhaps Gladstone saw more clearly than they the inevitability and necessity of settling this issue if any Liberal Government hoped to succeed. Perhaps, on the other hand, his colleagues thought the time was not yet right—that the "cup of its misdeeds" had not yet been filled—or perhaps they were fearful of the result of an election on a new issue just sprung on the electorate after the example of Home Rule in 1886. For whatever reasons they refused to adopt or even seriously consider the suggestion of a dissolution on the House of Lords.69

Gladstone could not get his colleagues to reverse their decision on the naval estimates nor could he obtain

69 This section is based in large part on Stansky's Ambitions and Strategies. I have not thought it necessary to enter into great detail in this discussion because of Stansky's excellent work in following the maze of activity during this period on a subject not entirely related to Radicalism.
their assent to a dissolution so he had no alternative but resignation. He met his Cabinet for the final time on March 1, 1894. That afternoon the House of Commons assembled to hear the response of the Government to the Lords' amendments to the Parish Councils Bill. Having first announced that the time for sending the Bill repeatedly up to the Lords had ended and that, in order to save the Bill, the Government had decided to accept the Bill as amended by the Lords but would try to change the Act later, Gladstone then launched into a "brilliant and spirited attack" on the House of Lords. It was, in fact, a declaration of war against the Lords and was enthusiastically welcomed by his followers, particularly the Radicals. Gladstone spoke in "grave and measured sentences:" "The Government is compelled to say that in their judgement this state of things cannot continue.... the issue which has been raised...if once raised must go forward to its issue." He concluded that this question would, in the final analysis, have to be decided by the nation.70

This valedictory address was warmly welcomed. A "superb speech" which "nothing could surpass" in "dramatic fitness" wrote The Star. "Full of fire, full of import,

70 Dundee Advertiser, March 2, 1894; The Star, March 2, 1894; Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 4th ser., Vol. 21 (March 1, 1894), pp. 1150-1151.
full of a statesman's insight into the reality of the
things and forces in which he works" was the verdict of
the Guardian. It would "for sustained vigour and brilliancy
of thought and diction rank amongst the noblest of his
great masterpieces of oratory," said the South Wales
Daily News. 71

Gladstone officially resigned at Windsor on March 3,
1894. 72 Plotting and intriguing by potential successors
had been under way for some time. The two leading
contenders were Harcourt and Rosebery with both Spencer
and Kimberley mentioned as possible compromise Premiers.
Harcourt was the logical successor in every respect but
one—his colleagues in the Cabinet were unwilling to
serve under him because of his moods and temper. He
would, however, according to Birrell, have been the choice
of the backbenchers but their opinion was never asked. 73
A Prime Minister in the Commons was only less than
essential if the party was to be consistently and effec-
tively led, particularly if the party was to begin a

71 The Star, March 2, 1894; Manchester Guardian, March
2, 1894; South Wales Daily News, March 3, 1894; Daily News,
March 3, 1894; Dundee Advertiser, March 2, 1894.

72 The pathos of this visit to Windsor and the
gratuitous insults the aged statesman received from the
Queen he had served so faithfully and long have been
movingly chronicled by his biographers. Morley, Gladstone,
II, 564-567; Magnus, Gladstone, pp. 422-427.

73 Augustine Birrell, Things Past Redress (London:
Faber and Faber Ltd., 1937), p. 137.
campaign against the House of Lords. The Queen had determined to send for Rosebery and even unanimity against Rosebery by his Cabinet colleagues would probably not have deterred her from sending for him first. Rosebery's colleagues supported him and he accepted the Queen's commission to form a Government. 74

74 The intrigues surrounding the succession are handled in an excellent manner by Stansky. His work is especially good on the role played by "Lulu" Harcourt.
CHAPTER VII:
RADICALS AND ROSEBERY'S ADMINISTRATION, 1894-1895

One notable factor in Rosebery's succession was the unanimity of the Liberal and Radical press in his favor. This included even The Star, the upholder of Radicalism in the metropolis. Massingham, its Editor, also wrote an adulatory article for The Contemporary Review comparing Gladstone and Rosebery to the latter's credit. The fiction was also spread that Gladstone had recommended Rosebery to the Queen. He had not; his advice had not been asked; had it been, he would have recommended Lord Spencer.¹

There was no unanimity within the Parliamentary party in Rosebery's favor. Both Liberals and Radicals believed that, other things being equal, the Prime Minister should sit in the House of Commons; even those favoring Rosebery's succession shared this belief. A group of Radicals, led by Labouchere, felt that a Peer ought not to be the leader under any circumstances and that steps should be taken to insure that the Prime Minister would

be in the Commons. This group naturally favored Harcourt. Labby organized a deputation to Edward Marjoribanks, the Chief Whip, to protest against the leadership being transferred behind their backs to a Lord. Gathered together quickly after many members had left the House, the deputation consisted of only eighteen members—all Radicals. At this point, March 1, Gladstone's resignation had not been announced and the deputation was organized on the basis of a rumor. The objection was not stated as a specific objection to Lord Rosebery personally but to any peer being forced on the party as Prime Minister.²

Attempts were made in the press to minimize the significance of this deputation, but it did represent widespread sentiment. However strong this movement appeared on the surface, it soon became evident that it lacked staying power. Marjoribanks attached little importance to the protest and the general feeling was that Radicals would rather have a Liberal Government under Rosebery than a Tory Government under Salisbury and would therefore not desert the party on any important vote. Letters appeared from members of the deputation denying that they intended to form a "cave" against Rosebery but still insisting on the difficulties of a peer Premier. The number of potential cave dwellers

²The Star, March 2, 1894; Daily News, March 2, 1894.
quickly dwindled to one—Labouchere. 3

Labouchere sent to Marjoribanks, on the day following
the protest deputation, an even more emphatic objection
to a peer Premiership than the deputation had presented.
Complaining that the party had not been consulted he
rejected the idea that the Queen or the Cabinet possessed
the power to name the party leader without reference to
the party. "With me and with many other Radicals it is
a cardinal article of faith that the Premier must be in
the House of Commons." He particularly disliked the
element of secrecy which "smacks of cabal and intrigue."

A peer premiership forced on the party without
even consulting it, and in opposition to the
objections of many of the truest Radicals,
will wreck the party. For my part, if such
an outrage is attempted, I believe that it
will become the duty of every Radical to make
it manifest that so high-handed and pernicious
a proceeding will not be tolerated...I mean
to be the follower of no peer. I shall vote
no confidence in a Cabinet the chief member
of which is not in the House of Commons, for
I believe that such a Ministry would put
us back on the path of democracy by 20 years. 4

Failing to draw together a party to act with him
Labby, in spite of his strong language, did not act alone.

3The Star, March 2, 1894; Daily News, March 2, 1894;
Diary, March 3, 1894, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS.,
48663, ff. 8); Manchester Guardian, March 3, 1894; Charles
McLaren to Daily News, March 2, 1894, Daily News, March 3,
1894; Samuel Storey to Daily News, March 6, 1894, Daily
News, March 7, 1894; The Star, March 5, 1894; March 6, 1894.

4Labouchere to Marjoribanks, March 2, 1894, Daily
Labby’s response to the Rosebery Premiership was in part motivated by personal feelings. Rosebery, as Foreign Secretary, had rejected Labouchere’s application for the Ambassadorship to the United States, a position Labby had requested in 1892 following his exclusion from the Cabinet. The rejection rankled Labby, all the more since his wife had gone personally to see Rosebery on the matter. But Labby still based his objection to Rosebery on sound Radical principles, failing to see how an effective campaign against the Lords, which he considered supremely important, could be carried on by a Prime Minister who sat in the Upper Chamber.

The only important change in the Government was the promotion of Tom Ellis to Chief Whip, Marjoribanks having entered the peerage as Lord Tweedmouth on the death of his father. There was some reshuffling in the Cabinet, with Kimberley replacing Rosebery at the Foreign Office and Fowler replacing Kimberley at the India Office, but these and other minor Governmental changes were not especially significant. Radicals did protest the presence of both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary in the Lords but to no avail.

The Parliamentary Liberal party met at the Foreign Office on the day Parliament reassembled after only a

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5Pearson, Labby, pp. 263-264.
week's recess. The party endorsed the new Prime Minister and he and Harcourt announced the Government's program. Rosebery claimed to adopt the Gladstonian program in regard to both Home Rule and the Lords: "We stand where we did," he said. No protest was raised at this meeting, even by Labouchere, although it was noted that Harcourt, who arrived after Rosebery, received louder cheers.  

Later that afternoon the Government formally announced its program for the session in the Queen's Speech and again, as in 1893, an optimistic series of measures was announced. Ireland would receive an Evicted Tenants Bill. There would be Bills to amend registration and to end plural voting and measures would be introduced "dealing with the Ecclesiastical Establishments in Wales and Scotland." London would receive equalization of rates, Scotland would get Local Government, and the temperance section would get a Local Veto Bill. Bills would also be introduced to promote "conciliation in labour disputes," to amend the Factory and Mines Acts, and to reform the "present method of conducting inquiries into fatal accidents in Scotland."  


7 Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 4th ser., Vol. 22 (March 12, 1894), pp. 2-3.
The next day the Government was defeated in the House of Commons on an amendment to the Address moved by Labouchere:

And we humbly pray Your Majesty that the power now enjoyed by persons not elected to Parliament by the possessors of the Parliamentary franchise to prevent Bills being submitted to Your Majesty for Your Royal approval shall cease, and we respectfully express the hope that, if it be necessary, Your Majesty will, with and by the advice of Your responsible Ministers, use the power vested in Your Majesty to secure the passing of this much-needed reform.

There was some Laboucherian trickery involved in the division. Labby had so arranged the debate that the division would be taken at a time when many unsuspecting Liberals would have paired for dinner. The Tories, he believed, would abstain if possible to avoid supporting the Government. The debate consisted of only three speeches: Labouchere moved the amendment, William Allen seconded it, and Sir William Harcourt rejected it on behalf of the Government although saying that the Government agreed substantially with its aims. The debate then died. No one rose to speak for the amendment so a

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8Great Britain, Parliament, *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 4th ser., Vol. 22 (March 13, 1894), p. 205. Labouchere had been in agony for some time on the form of this amendment and had corresponded at length with Dilke on the subject. See Labouchere to Dilke, March 5, 1894, March 6, 1894, March 7, 1894, Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43892, ff. 182-186). He finally introduced a vague amendment to get support from those with different ideas of how to solve the problem of the House of Lords.
vote was taken and the Government was defeated by two votes, 147 to 145. A majority of Liberals and Radicals present and unpaired voted in favor of the amendment—79 in favor and 57 against (27 official and 30 nonofficial). 9

The balance of the majority consisted of 70 Irish representatives, no Irish Nationalist voting with the Government. The Irish were extremely upset at a remark made by Rosebery the previous day in the House of Lords: "before Irish Home Rule is conceded by the Imperial Parliament England, as the predominant Member of the partnership of the Three Kingdoms, will have to be convinced of its justice and equity." 10 This naturally perturbed the Irish who were not satisfied with Morley's attempt to explain the statement away. They therefore used Labby's amendment as a way to hit back.

Was this "an unlucky beginning" as West recorded or a "disastrous beginning" as Stansky has concluded? While most contemporaries refused to take it seriously, Harcourt and Asquith apparently did and, according to West, "talked of resignation." One of Labby's biographers called this episode "the best joke of his political


career" but a letter he sent to the *Times* two days after the amendment indicated that he took it very seriously indeed. The Liberal press was disturbed at the Government's defeat contending that it was a snap division and that the Government basically agreed with the policy expressed anyway. Resignation was certainly not recommended and the Government was advised to disregard the amendment as a bad joke.\textsuperscript{11} There can be little doubt that this defeat reduced the confidence of the Government's supporters and hurt Rosebery's prestige. The Government could not survive many such jokes. In order to extricate themselves from the situation the Government had to undergo humiliation in the House. There being no way to remove the amendment, the Government voted against its own Address and, on a motion by Harcourt, a new Address was carried. Labby, having made his point, did not object to these proceedings.\textsuperscript{12}

The Government had escaped, but for what purpose?

During the next two sessions the Government carried only one major piece of legislation—Harcourt's Budget in 1894


with which the Lords could not interfere. The Ministry had introduced several measures from the Newcastle program but few of them even passed the Commons. The Newcastle program received lip service but the Government did not seriously attempt to pass its proposals. The failure of the Government of 1892-1895 has often been blamed on the Newcastle program itself. The Government did not fail because of its program. The Government failed because of a collective indecisiveness and the absence of a dominant personality in the Cabinet committed to the program. Rosebery was incapable of providing this necessary leadership just as he was incapable of establishing a beneficial policy of his own. He was only good at platitudes for public consumption and was a great disappointment even to those whose conspiracy had resulted in his accession. By the beginning of 1895 Haldane, one of the chief Rosberyites, told West that he was most pessimistic about Rosebery's "want of go and sympathy." He said Rosebery "wished to be a Pitt but ended in being a Goderich." 13

Only Harcourt or Morley could have provided the necessary leadership but Morley was out of sympathy with both the program and the general direction of policy and Harcourt was pouting. He had no real reason to seek

13 Hutchinson, Sir Algernon West, p. 303.
any success for which Rosebery would receive the credit. These attitudes must be considered along with the disharmony in the Cabinet. At the beginning of 1895 Campbell-Bannerman was reputed to be the only member of the Cabinet on "speaking terms" with all his colleagues. Harcourt and Rosebery were almost constantly angry with one another, lessening both the effectiveness of the Government and Harcourt's desire to prolong its miserable life.

Paralyzed by indecisiveness and disagreement the Cabinet's only course was that of "filling the cup" or "ploughing the sands." This was a valid policy which envisioned a large number of Bills being passed by the House of Commons and rejected by the Lords. Having filled the cup of the Lords' iniquities the party could then appeal to the country against the Lords. The policy did not work because the Government refused to take the steps necessary to pass Bills through the Commons. It was reluctant to apply the closure and the Tory plan of obstruction was successful beyond all expectation. Ineffectiveness in the Commons naturally demoralized Liberals and reduced the Government's popularity in the country.

Radicals were especially irate. They began to believe that the Government had no desire to carry its measures and was holding office because it was fearful
of defeat if it appealed to the nation. The Star asked: "Do you sincerely and honestly desire to pass your program? If you do, why do you not take the necessary steps for that purpose?...do you expect that the electors will accept as an excuse that the Tories obstructed you? No, gentlemen, the fault will be yours, and the blame will be yours." Labouchere began calling for an early dissolution to let the electors decide on the record of the Government and on the veto power of the Lords.\textsuperscript{14}

The major Government measure of 1894, and indeed the only major reform passed by the Rosebery Administration, was the Budget. Harcourt, responsible for its development, should receive full credit particularly since Rosebery opposed its most Radical provisions. The most important innovation was the graduation of death duties with land taxed equally with other property. The principle of graduation was also applied to the income tax with incomes over £500 paying a higher rate. Rates were increased on liquor and beer. The death duties represented the most Radical change and they were welcomed by Radicals. Labby called it "an excellent Budget" and to The Star it was "an epoch-making Budget." In spite of encouragement to do so Harcourt did not apply the closure on the

\textsuperscript{14}The Star, June 12, 1894; Truth, June 7, 1894, pp. 1311-1312.
Budget and it occupied 35 sittings of the House thus reducing the time that could be devoted to other measures but Harcourt felt that full discussion should be given to a measure which could not be amended in the Lords. That was one of the great advantages of the Budget.  

Registration reform was the other major subject introduced in 1894. This Bill, probably more complex than necessary, reduced the residential qualification and ended plural voting. Labouchere considered it mere "tinkering" and the Manchester Guardian said it was "disappointing" because the residence requirement had not been reduced to three months. "Not deemed a good Bill by those Radicals who are experts in these matters," it was carried on second Reading by a majority of only 14, equalling the majority on the same stage of the Budget, and was later withdrawn by the Government.

Three other Government Bills were passed by the Commons, two surviving the ordeal of the Lords: An Evicted Tenants Bill for Ireland, an Equalization of Rates Bill for London, and a Local Government Bill for Scotland. The latter two became law. On the Irish Bill

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15 The Star, April 17, 1894; Stansky, Ambitions and Strategies, pp. 130-132; Truth, May 10, 1894, p. 1067; Manchester Guardian, June 20, 1894.

16 Truth, April 19, 1894, p. 882; Manchester Guardian, April 21, 1894; Truth, May 10, 1894, p. 1067.
the Government finally imposed the guillotine and forced it through the Commons but the Lords threw it out by a vote of 249 to 30. The second Bill was relatively non-contentious and had no trouble in either House. The Local Government (Scotland) Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Scotch Bills, which had been established earlier in the same session, thus by-passing the most obstructive phase of consideration in the Commons. There was some disagreement with the Lords over this Bill but a compromise was reached. 17

The 1894 session had not been entirely wasted; the Budget had been excellent and other good Bills had been carried. But the Government was making little progress at "filling the cup" against the Lords since the only important Bill rejected by their Lordships had been an Irish Bill which would arouse no great feeling in the country. On the other hand both the Budget and the Registration Bill had passed on second Reading by a majority of only 14, giving the Liberals little room for error if they were to avoid defeat. Within the Government, too, conditions had not improved. Harcourt's biographer concludes that things were "growing steadily worse" and that Harcourt's "affection for the Government sank steadily

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lower." In the country his position and popularity were rising while Rosebery's were falling.18

As in previous years the Queen's Speech in 1895 announced an ambitious program. The Government's major Bills would include an Irish Land Bill, a Welsh Disestablishment Bill, a Local Veto Bill, and Bills to end plural voting and to pay Returning Officers expenses. Also mentioned were proposals for the unification of London, light railways in rural areas, conciliation in labor disputes, amendment of the Factory Acts, the completion of local government in Scotland, and legislation for the benefit of the Scotch Crofters.19

"Hopes high and confidence unabated" was the verdict of The Star on the party's attitude as it approached the 1895 session. The Manchester Guardian was closer to the mark in predicting that this would be the last session of the Parliament of 1892. Opinion within the Government was certainly not optimistic; Rosebery thought the Government would be defeated on the Address.20 It managed to hang on until late June without, however, accomplishing anything significant. Most Government Bills were not

20The Star, February 5, 1895; Manchester Guardian, February 5, 1895; Stansky, Ambitions and Strategies, p. 149.
carried past the second Reading. 21

The Government was no more eager to invoke the closure during this session than it had been in previous sessions despite repeated pleas from supporters and the press. "Their most remarkable characteristic," said The Star in evaluating the Cabinet, "is not that they lead us, but that we drive them." Party leaders were "too mealymouthed, too milk-and-water in their Parliamentary methods." 22

Labouchere was gradually joined by a group of Radicals also dissatisfied with the Government's performance. He was discontented on two grounds. He did not approve of peer Premiers in general and had a specific dislike for Rosebery. He also thought the legislative program of the Government shortsighted and self destructive. He had begun to prophecy failure for Rosebery before the latter had become Prime Minister and he also began to prophesy that defeat and disaster lay ahead unless such Bills were passed as would engender Radical enthusiasm.

In almost every political article he wrote between Rosebery's accession and the election of 1895 Labby

21 The Welsh Disestablishment Bill was the main measure of the session and was taken further than any other major Bill. It is discussed in greater detail below, see pp. 252-254.

22 The Star, May 1, 1895; May 23, 1895; June 10, 1895; June 11, 1895.
attacked the Prime Minister. The personal antipathy between the two may have had something to do with these attacks but in almost every case Rosebery deserved exactly what he got from Truth. Two points were repeated again and again concerning the conspiracy which had made him Premier and his lack of decisiveness in that role. Labby credited Haldane with having "invented" Lord Rosebery and being his "political manager." Rosebery had been put into office by the combined force of his adherents—Labby called the the "Prigs" of the Eighty Club, who insisted that he was a man of transcendent ability—and by the reluctance of some in the Cabinet to serve under Harcourt. Some party leaders, wanting to "stem the advancing wave of Democracy," had concluded that Rosebery would better perform this function than Harcourt. Then, too, there had been the desire and pressure of the Court. It had been a grave mistake:

There is hardly one single man in the House of Commons who does not now admit that the party would have been in a better situation had the Leader of the House of Commons [Harcourt] been made Leader of the Party. There is hardly a single man who questions that, under our Peer-Leader, we are marching to assured defeat.  

Rosebery was an equivocator; Labouchere's reference was to "His Lordship on the Fence" or to "Humpty Dumpty

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Truth, April 12, 1894, pp. 825; April 19, 1894, p. 883; July 19, 1894, pp. 136-137; March 7, 1895, pp. 1584-1585.
Sat on the Wall." Rosebery had, according to Labouchere, no definite line of policy aside from "goody goody twaddle" about a "burning love for suffering humanity." On Rosebery and his followers, Haldane in particular, declaring that "they would inaugurate a new era in social legislation," Labby cynically commented:

I regard them like Sam Slick's Yankee clocks with a show case and sham works, and his wooden nutmegs. There is absolutely nothing new in such legislation. It is the common property of all parties, so far as professions go, the real question being what is meant by social legislation; and this, not exactly knowing themselves, Messrs. Rosebery, Haldane, and Co. find some difficulty in explaining.

Labby had no objection to social legislation nor did he object to state interference: "Whilst fully recognizing individualism, we should also recognize that the State has collective duties which it is bound to accept at all cost." This belief did not mean to Labouchere, as it did to Rosebery, that reform in the machinery of government should cease but rather that every obstacle to progressive legislation should be removed. The party drifted because Rosebery, while claiming to support "social legislation" made no precise recommendations and refused to be serious about other items in the Liberal program.

Recognizing that the Government had lost any power to legislate, that it was not sound on policy, that it was

24 Truth, July 26, 1894, pp. 192-194; December 13, 1894, pp. 1381-1382.
divided amongst itself, Labby contended that the more quickly an election was held the less damage would be done to the party. He recommended two things: A Registration Bill to be sent to the Lords and a resolution or Bill against the Lords to be passed through the Commons. Then when the Lords rejected or emasculated the Registration Bill the Government, having stated its proposed policy to deal with the Lords, would be justified in taking the opinion of the nation. This recommendation he repeated again and again but with no success. He certainly disliked the "air of mystery", the refusal of the Government to declare its policy on any major issue but his opposition to this policy was particularly intense on the question of the House of Lords.  

By 1895 he was thoroughly disgusted with the policy of "ploughing the sands" but, as he wrote to Dilke, the Radicals were in a great dilemma: "It is difficult to vote against the Party on a question of precedence of Bills yet it is obvious that the sea ploughing will end in a great disaster." The Liberals did not have a firm working majority in 1895--their majority fluctuated around a dozen--but the Government appeared unable to do anything but drift aimlessly and wait to be turned out.

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Labouchere's verdict was: "The Party has rotted." 26

The Radical party was neither as militant nor as unified as Labouchere would have wished. He told Dilke they were "like Falstaffs when it comes to fighting." They did nevertheless maintain their organization and met early each session to coordinate action on desired reforms to be advanced by private action in the House. Miners’ Eight Hours and Taxation of Land Values received first and second places in both 1894 and 1895. In spite of both the presence of Rosebery as Prime Minister and the lackadaisical attitude of the Government toward carrying Newcastle reforms there was still no idea, as Dilke made clear in a speech, that the Radical party was hostile to the Government to the point of voting against it but rather that its function was to attempt to keep the Government "to the high-water mark of Radicalism." There was a movement in 1894 to expand the horizons of the Radical party by active work in the country in cooperation with the National Reform Union. Many Radical members of Parliament were present at the 1894 meeting of that organization when a thoroughly Radical program was adopted which included the abolition of the House of Lords, the legislation of an eight-hour day, old age pensions,

26Labouchere to Dilke, January 25, [1895], Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43892, ff. 197-198); Truth, May 23, 1895, pp. 1262-1263; April 25, 1895, pp. 1005-1006.
and other social reforms.27

Radicals remained concerned about the same issues which had occupied them in opposition but they had no more success in reaching their objectives than they would have had under a Tory Government, the Liberal Government offering sympathy and excuses instead of encouragement and action. This attitude was bound to affect the enthusiasm of Radicals for keeping such a Government in power.

One issue which Radicals had been pressing for years and which had been included in the Newcastle program was payment of members. The situation with regard to this reform was typical of that faced by many measures desired by Radicals. The Government met their questions and requests with evasion and procrastination. The issue was not pressed in 1894 because of the importance of the reforms already included in the Budget and the recognized lack of time for a Bill. Radicals had, however, been led to believe that a Bill would be forthcoming in 1895 and were greatly disturbed when it was not announced in the Queen's Speech. Harcourt did not provide satisfactory answers to Radical questions and Radicals passed a resolution of dissatisfaction with the attitude expressed

27Labouchere to Dilke, March 9, [1894]*, Dilke Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 43892, ff. 187); The Star, March 14, 1894; Daily News, February 6, 1895; South Wales Daily News, May 19, 1894; Manchester Guardian, May 7, 1894; June 6, 1894.
by the Government. Harcourt expressed the full concurrence of the Government with the principle of a private member's motion on payment of members and the resolution was carried. But payment of members was no closer to reality than it had been in 1891. As The Star commented, the attitude of the Government would not enhance its reputation for "reforming zeal." 28

The Mines (Eight Hours) Bill had not been adopted as a Government Bill but the Government did grant time for its consideration in 1894. The second Reading was carried with a majority of 87. The principle of the Bill was widely accepted but the details were not and it was generally forecast that the Bill would face serious difficulties in Committee. The promoters of the Bill, showing themselves willing to compromise in some areas, accepted an amendment limiting the operation of the Bill to five years and it was unanimously adopted by the Committee, but no compromise was possible on the issue of local option or contracting out. This had before been the key difference between the two factions supporting the Bill. An amendment to allow local option was carried and the Bill was withdrawn. 29 At least the Bill reached the Committee stage in 1894. In 1895 the same Bill did


29The Star, March 26, 1894; August 14, 1894; August 15, 1894.
not even reach a second Reading.

In 1893 the Duke of Edinburgh, one of Queen Victoria's sons, became Duke of Coburg. Earlier given two grants totalling £25,000 per year, on his acceptance of the Coburg Dukedom he voluntarily relinquished the grant of £15,000 retaining that of £10,000 because he planned to spend several months of each year in England. When Gladstone announced this at the end of December 1893 there had been an immediate Radical protest. When Gladstone responded negatively to Labouchere's question of whether the House would be given an opportunity to debate the issue Labby had moved the adjournment of the House to discuss the matter. The subject had been raised so suddenly that only 38 members rose in his support instead of the requisite 40 and the opportunity was lost.30

A. C. Morton and Labouchere moved, on April 20, 1894, that the annuity to the Duke of Coburg should be ended. The Government was forced to oppose this motion even though many of its members would have preferred to vote with the Radicals. The Government asked and received the assistance of the Opposition to avert defeat, the resolution being rejected by 298 to 67. If the Government had not declared the resolution a motion of no confidence

30 The Star, December 22, 1893.
the vote against the grant would probably have been larger. 31

In 1895 the same members again brought forward their resolution. Liberal opinion was strongly opposed to the continuation of the grant but the resolution, owing to the active opposition of the Unionists, was again defeated, this time by 195 to 74. Analysis of the division list indicated that the number of nonofficial Liberals and Nationalists supporting the motion was more than double the number of nonofficial Liberals and Nationalists opposing it. The Radical party decided to "black-list" those independent members who had voted against the resolution. The feeling was also expressed at this meeting that the Radical party should "be constituted on a more independent basis." Later in the year The Star concluded, on the basis of a large correspondence, that many voters had supported Tories in the general election because of the failure of the Liberal Government to end the Duke's annuity. 32

The issue on which Radicals were most agreed, on which they wanted to fight and expected to win the next...
general election, was that issue which Gladstone had raised in his last speech—the House of Lords. It was on an amendment to the Address concerning the House of Lords that Labouchere had defeated the Government. This issue became more pressing and the Government's inept handling of it disgusted and disheartened its supporters both in the Commons and in the country. In spite of repeated Radical prodding neither Rosebery nor anyone else in the Cabinet would take the lead.

If the Government had not yet taken the measure of Radical feeling against the Lords these feelings received further expression and reinforcement at a special conference called by the National Liberal Federation at Leeds in June 1894. The "Party of Progress" was to consider how the "obstacle" presented by the House of Lords could "best be surmounted or removed." Indignation against the House of Lords was taken for granted but the Liberal party, it was pointed out, had no definite policy for dealing with the obstructive powers of the Lords. The Daily News discerned "an urgent and even impatient demand" for a definite policy statement concluding that it was desirable that "an explicit and authoritative method should be placed without further delay before the constituencies."
Rosebery claimed that the demonstration at Leeds was called without any consultation with him or with any other Ministers and he was not pleased. This did indicate that the leadership of the National Liberal Federation was willing to try to pressure Rosebery and the Cabinet to accept a more forward and positive policy. Publicly, however, Rosebery endorsed the conference saying that he "attached great importance to the proceedings of that Conference." In the same speech he gave the impression that he was not at all clear on his own policy and asked for "guidance and inspiration."\(^{34}\)

The Star insisted that the House of Lords question was not to be turned into another item of the Newcastle program but would overshadow all else. The conference must therefore be definite in its proposals. Labouchere was also for a forceful statement being convinced that it was necessary to "anchor the Party and its Leaders to a definite scheme of reform" both so that the next general election would be held on that issue and because he thought Ministers should be firmly committed to a specific remedy which would not allow them room for evasion. He also emphasized that agitation would be wasted if the Government was not prepared to coerce the

\(^{34}\)Diary, June 24, 1894, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 40664, ff. 28-29); South Wales Daily News, May 25, 1894; Truth, May 31, 1894, pp. 1253-1255.
Lords. Rosebery had indicated his reluctance to pursue such a course either by creation of peers or by other means, and Labouchere reacted strongly.\(^{35}\)

The resolutions to be presented at the conference were published by the National Liberal Federation. There was some feeling among the more advanced Radicals that they did not go far enough. Labouchere, having been assured that amendments would be allowed, planned to attempt to make the resolutions more specific and more Radical. The Star advocated most of the same changes as Labouchere. Both wanted a statement that the House of Lords ought to be abolished included as a preamble to one of the resolutions and both wanted it clearly understood that if the Commons reaffirmed a Bill either in the same session or in the same Parliament it would become law. Labouchere also wanted the resolutions to state that the Government should introduce a measure on the indicated lines in the present session. Aside from these requested changes Radicals were generally pleased with the proposed resolutions.\(^{36}\)

Local Liberal Associations had been advised to select as delegates those who would be representative of

\(^{35}\)The Star, June 19, 1894; Truth, May 31, 1894, pp. 1253-1255.

\(^{36}\)The Star, June 19, 1894; Manchester Guardian, June 20, 1894.
every section of the party. Almost 1900 delegates attended the conference from English and Welsh constituencies. Three resolutions were introduced and two were passed without amendment. The three resolutions dealt with "the need of reform, the method of reform, and the force behind reform." On the first and last resolutions there was total agreement:

That the power now exercised by the House of Lords to mutilate and reject legislative measures passed by the elected representatives of the people in the House of Commons has been systematically used to defeat reform; is inconsistent with the right of free and popular self-government; and should cease to exist.

That this meeting assures the Government of the resolute support of the Liberal party in any steps which may be deemed necessary to enforce the passage into law of this great constitutional reform.

Labouchere moved an amendment to the second resolution which received significant support but was defeated. Two of the three changes he had proposed were added to the official resolution; only the statement of the desire to eventually abolish the Lords was left out. The second resolution as adopted advocated:

That this meeting, therefore, calls upon the Government to introduce as soon as practicable in the present session a measure for the

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37 The Star, June 21, 1894.
38 Daily News, June 21, 1894.
abolition of the House of Lords' veto,\textsuperscript{39} by providing that whenever a Bill passed by the House of Commons shall be altered or rejected in the House of Lords, such a Bill may be reaffirmed by the House of Commons at any time in the same session or the same Parliament, with or without such alterations, and, subject only to the Royal assent, shall thereupon become law.\textsuperscript{40}

\textit{The Star} considered this a "cry for battle—battle without delay, and battle without quarter."\textsuperscript{41}

Labby's attitude was that the Leeds conference had pledged the Liberal party to a "specific course of action." The resolutions adopted at Leeds had been an "irreducible minimum;" the Government could do more but it could do no less than follow those resolutions.\textsuperscript{42}

Labby became President of the National League for the Abolition of the House of Lords which held a mass rally in Hyde Park late in August. The party refused to give funds for this demonstration but it was a great success. The "universal demand" was for the Government to declare its policy and end its "conspiracy of silence." The

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{Manchester Guardian}, June 21, 1894 and Watson, \textit{National Liberal Federation}, p. 165 substitute "Parliament" for "session" in this phrase. Labouchere in \textit{Truth}, June 28, 1894, p. 1491 also refers to the measure being introduced in the "present Parliament" so that may be the correct version. The wording would have made some difference in Radical expectations.

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Daily News}, June 21, 1894.

\textsuperscript{41}\textit{The Star}, June 21, 1894.

\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Truth}, June 28, 1894, pp. 1491-1493; July 5, 1894, pp. 18-20.
issue of the House of Lords had taken hold of the public imagination, it was argued, but this enthusiasm would die without leadership and encouragement from the Government. 43

By the time the session drew to a close in August, the Government had not announced its policy. Dissatisfied Radicals and Irish Nationalists divided against the Government on the vote in Supply for the salaries of the officers of the House of Lords. The Government carried the vote but only by a majority of nine, and that they had a majority at all was due to the assistance of the Unionists. On the day this vote was scheduled to be taken through the Report stage Harcourt was asked to state the intentions of the Government on the Lords' issue but refused to make a definite reply. Although he had indicated that the Report stage of the House of Lords Officers vote would be taken later in the sitting, when that point was reached he refused to take it. Taking the vote through Report would have given another opportunity for Radical and Irish protest, and Harcourt may not have wanted to again be dependent on Unionist support, there also being a good possibility that the vote would have been rejected even with Unionist support. The result was that the Radicals and Irish refused to allow any progress

43 Charles J. Hunt to Ellis, August 17, 1894, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 1536); The Star, August 27, 1894.
whatever and the House sat until 4:00 A.M. while the Radicals and the Irish attacked the Government for its failure to announce its policy.\footnote{The Star, August 18, 1894; Dundee Advertiser, August 22, 1894.}

This incident should have clearly indicated to the Government the deep unrest among two important sections of its supporters. The Liberal and Radical press certainly did not miss its significance and, for the most part, sided with the Radicals and protested against the Government's "policy of silence."

Rightly or wrongly, justly or unjustly, Lord Rosebery and Sir William Harcourt have for some time been suspected of dilly-dallying and shilly-shallying with the question of the House of Lords.\footnote{The Star, August 21, 1894.} It is all very fine for Sir William Harcourt to look grave, and say it is a grave question, and that it is the intention of the Government to deal with it. Here we are on the verge of our autumn campaign, our soldiers ready for the fight, eager for battle. Where are our leaders?\footnote{Dundee Advertiser, August 21, 1894.}

The silence of the Government gave credence to the rumor that the Cabinet was split and could give no lead. Without a forceful and resolute lead the agitation in the country would be severely hampered.\footnote{Dundee Advertiser, August 21, 1894.}

Although the Government managed to get the vote passed, again with Unionist help, the Radicals and Irish
were not satisfied. No policy had been announced. Radicals could not understand why, if Ministers were serious about the Lords' issue, they would give no lead. They had been "guided" repeatedly during the year but apparently refused to accept the guidance of their followers.47

Finally at Bradford, near the end of October, Lord Rosebery partially revealed the policy his Government would pursue, dealing with the Lords by resolution. In the next session a resolution would be submitted to the Commons declaring the House of Commons to be the predominant House with respect to all legislation. A dissolution would follow and the election would be held on the issue as presented in the resolution. As usual Rosebery delivered a stirring speech but he said very little, neither indicating the terms of the resolution nor how it was to be carried out if the Liberals were returned to power. He did say that the only constitutional way to deal with the question was by a Bill passed through both Houses but how the Upper House was to be forced, or even if it was to be forced, to pass such a Bill he did not say. Labouchere quickly found the weaknesses and equivocations in the speech. He considered that the speech "ought to put Radicals on their guard," insisting that the resolution must be based on the "irreducible

Leeds minimum" and that Rosebery must be prepared to create peers if necessary.  

Rosebery made several other speeches during the course of the autumn and winter but he did not make his policy much clearer. Labouchere contended that this vagueness and uncertainty had hampered agitation in the country. Radicals debated the meaning of Rosebery's words rather than "uniting to win the great issue on which the future of democracy depends." Atherley-Jones wrote an article on "Lord Rosebery's Enterprise Against the House of Lords" which was not enthusiastic about Rosebery's equivocal policy. Labouchere himself undertook a campaign of letters in the press and speeches in the country agitating for the "irreducible minimum." He contended that Rosebery's policy would surely result in Liberal defeat at the election. Rosebery had declared that he favored some sort of Upper Chamber to restrain the Commons and that the Commons would be asked to "plough the sands of the seashore" for a few months before the election.

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48 The Star, October 29, 1894; Manchester Guardian, October 29, 1894; Truth, November 1, 1894, pp. 1002-1004; November 8, 1894, pp. 1061-1063.

49 Truth, November 27, 1894, pp. 1190-1192; L. A. Atherley-Jones, "Lord Rosebery's Enterprise against the House of Lords," The Nineteenth Century, 36 (December 1894), pp. 837-845; Labouchere to Times, November 29, 1894, Times, December 1, 1894; Labouchere to Times, December 3, 1894, Times, December 4, 1894; Times, December 6, 1894; Manchester Guardian, December 27, 1894.
resolution on the House of Lords was brought forward. Predicting a vague resolution giving Ministers a free hand to deal with the Lords, Labby could imagine no policy more likely to end in total defeat.\textsuperscript{50}

Morley told Rendel that there was a serious split in the Cabinet and that he, Harcourt, and Asquith disagreed with Rosebery on "the main question of the Lords." Rosebery wanted two chambers while most of the Cabinet wanted only one. The Cabinet was not even agreed on an interim policy for dealing with the Lords' veto. Furthermore it was not likely to reach agreement and when the time came would have no firm policy to announce, at least none that would not reveal their wide division.\textsuperscript{51} This disagreement had still not been resolved by the end of May 1895 and Harcourt, Morley, and Fowler were determined not to appeal to the country on the Lords' issue.\textsuperscript{52}

The general situation did not improve in 1895; it became worse. Labouchere continued to insist, somewhat forlornly, that the promised resolution be based on the Leeds minimum. Regretting that the agitation against the Lords had been allowed to "die out" because of the

\textsuperscript{50}\textit{Truth}, December 6, 1894, pp. 1317-1219; \textit{Truth}, December 20, 1894, pp. 1445-1446.

\textsuperscript{51}Notes of a Conversation with John Morley, December 21, 1894, Rendel Papers (N. L. W., II, 681).

\textsuperscript{52}Diary, May 21, 1895, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48666, ff. 134-135).
irresolution of the Government, he suspected that no one knew what the resolution against the Lords would contain. "All that I know, or any one else, on the matter is that the National Liberal Federation passed a resolution, which our Leaders told us was absurd; that they did not tell us what they would substitute for it; and that since then things have gone on as though the Lords had never been attacked." He recognized that the policy of the Government would end in defeat and vainly reiterated his recommendation of Registration and Lords resolution and then dissolution. The Government was defeated and resigned without either declaring a definite policy or submitting their resolution to the House of Commons. The leadership had on this issue, as on so many others, failed the Radicals and apathy and discouragement was the natural result.

If Radicals had reason to be dissatisfied with the dilatory tactics of the Government, Welsh Radicals had more reason, particularly in 1894. Welsh disestablishment had been given second place in the Newcastle program but it was obviously not being granted that position by the Parliamentary leadership. The Welsh party entered the session of 1894 with a new leader; Sir George Osborne

53Truth, February 21, 1895, pp. 460-461; May 2, 1895, p. 1070; May 16, 1895, pp. 1198-1199; June 6, 1895, pp. 1391-1392.
Morgan replaced Rendel who had accepted a peerage on Gladstone's retirement. The new leader of the Welsh party did not have the intimate personal connection with the Liberal leaders that Rendel had had with Gladstone. At the time when Ellis became Chief Whip it was recognized that his advice was based on the interests of the Ministry rather than solely on the interests of Wales.

Measures "dealing with the Ecclesiastical Establishments in Wales and Scotland" were announced in the Queen's Speech for 1894. A call for the Government to "fulfil the pledges of the Liberal party given to Wales in the Newcastle programme" had been issued a few days previously at a meeting of the South Wales Liberal Federation. Some doubt had been expressed in the sincerity of Rosebery's commitment to Welsh disestablishment but the consensus was that the new Government should be given a chance to prove its good intentions. Indeed, the reasonable attitude of the Welsh was indicated by their willingness, stated at the South Wales Liberal Federation meeting, to allow a Registration Bill to take precedence if Welsh disestablishment was given second priority. But the Welsh, not satisfied with the position allotted to their measure in the Queen's Speech, sought an opportunity to impress upon Harcourt the desirability of taking disestablishment as the second measure of the session. Harcourt met with a deputation of Welsh members and told them:
(a) that the Government intend to carry the Bill through the Commons;
(b) that a mere second reading debate is not the intention of the Government; and
(c) that Sir William thinks that the Bill can be passed through the Commons this Session.

The Welsh members were temporarily mollified. 54

This attitude changed again as it quickly became apparent that the arrangement of Government business would make it impossible to carry Welsh disestablishment through the Commons in 1894 without an autumn session. This the Government resolutely refused to promise. It appeared that the time had come, in the words of the resolution moved by Lloyd George and Ellis the previous September, for the Welsh "to reconsider our attitude of support to the Government and to take an independent course." 55

Three of the Welsh members did reconsider their position and the result was a "Welsh revolt." Lloyd George, D. A. Thomas, and Frank Edwards informed the Liberal Whip that they would henceforth take an independent line and could not be counted on to support the Government. Lloyd George wrote to Ellis that the Welsh were being "trifled with." The Government "seem to me to be willfully

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54 For Queen's Speech see above p. 225; South Wales Daily News, March 9, 1894; Carnarvon Herald, March 16, 1894, in Lloyd George Papers (Beaverbrook Library, A/7/3/6); North Wales Observer and Express, March 23, 1894.

55 Manchester Guardian, April 13, 1894; For the resolution see above Chapter VI, p. 208.
placing themselves in a situation where they cannot possibly redeem their pledges to us." Lloyd George was also not enthusiastic about what he had heard were the provisions of the Bill. He appealed in vain to Ellis "to join us and to lead us. I earnestly think it is your duty." In a speech to his constituents at Carnarvon, Lloyd George said that while he had been prepared to allow a Registration Bill to be taken first he would not grant the same privilege to a Scotch Grand Committee Bill and to an Evicted Tenants Bill for Ireland. His constituents overwhelmingly supported his decision to take an independent line.55 J. Herbert Lewis, a close friend of Ellis, later joined the revolt. He wrote to Ellis:

My recent talks with Ministers and members have convinced me that Wales is simply being led on from step to step without any definite goal in actual view, that we have nothing to gain by subservience to the Liberal party, and that we would never get the English to do us justice until we show our independence of them.57

He also appealed to Ellis to "come out and lead us." The two Whips of the Welsh party, Frank Edwards and Herbert Lewis, were now in revolt.

Before the revolt was announced, the North Wales

55 Lloyd George to Ellis, n. d. [1894], Herbert Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 46022, ff. 94-97); North Wales Observer and Express, April 20, 1894; Manchester Guardian, April 16, 1894.

57 J. Herbert Lewis to Ellis, n. d. [1894], Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 1411).
Liberal Federation had passed a resolution calling for the Welsh members to take strenuous action to secure the passing of disestablishment through the Commons "during the present Session." Again the reason for this resolution was that other measures had been given precedence over disestablishment. Press reaction to the revolt at this early stage was mostly cautious and it was generally felt that the revolt, even if justified, had come at an inopportune moment since the Government had just assured Osborne Morgan that a Welsh Disestablishment Bill would be introduced during the week of April 23. The South Wales Daily News strongly deprecated any lack of loyalty to the Liberal Government and advocated trust in the Government's good intentions. Another newspaper, however, pointed out that the Government had not announced the date for the Bill's introduction until the rebels had formally removed themselves from the whip. Most of the Welsh press came out in favor of the revolt before the Government introduced its Bill.

Asquith introduced the Welsh Disestablishment Bill on April 26, 1894 and it was read a first time without a division. The Star called it "an admirable measure in

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58 South Wales Daily News, April 16, 1894; Manchester Guardian, April 17, 1894; South Wales Daily News, April 20, 1894; North Wales Observer and Express, April 20, 1894.

59 Manchester Guardian, April 25, 1894.
its general outline" although conceding that it was perhaps too generous to the Church. Hamilton recorded in his diary that there was "presumably no chance of its getting beyond a Second Reading, even if it gets as far as that stage. It is only meant for show." 60

The four members who had declared their independence of the Government took their campaign to Wales, winning wide support for their position in a series of meetings. The extensive coverage given to this campaign in the English as well as the Welsh press indicated the seriousness with which the revolt was viewed. The Daily News and The Star found it difficult to believe that the situation had deteriorated to the point where a section of the Welsh party was willing to "imperil the existence of a Liberal Government." If the Government fell Welsh disestablishment would be postponed indefinitely. On the other hand, it could not be denied that the independents made a good case for their position. Their audiences were fully convinced and there appeared to be overwhelming support for the idea that "the time has now come for a bold fight on independent lines." 61

The Welsh correspondent of the Manchester Guardian

60The Star, April 27, 1894; Diary, April 27, 1894, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48663, ff. 86).

stated categorically that "the solemn pledges of the Liberal party have been broken." Party leaders were now refusing to do what most of them had promised before the election of 1892. Welsh disestablishment had not been placed second in the program of the Government but was constantly pushed back into the future. He contended that if Liberal leaders continued to renege on their pledges there would be a Welsh party in the next Parliament on which the Liberal party could not depend for support. He had learned from an authoritative source "that Ministers are now deliberately contemplating a dissolution next year without having given effect to the demands of Wales." Wales, he concluded, had "far more to gain than to lose" by independent action.  

Executive Committees of both the North and South Wales Liberal Federations met in May to consider their position with reference to the revolt. The North Wales Liberal Federation pronounced strongly for an independent policy. It was of "emphatic opinion that the time has now come for the Welsh Parliamentary party as a whole to take up the independent line of policy indicated by the resolutions passed by that party in September last." The South Wales Daily News considered this a "suicidal policy," calling on the South Wales Liberal Federation to repudiate it and remain loyal to the Government. This editorial contended that the policy of North Wales had

weakened the Government. The South Wales Resolution was much less militant, requesting the Government "to give a definite pledge that it will do its utmost to pass it [the Welsh Disestablishment Bill] in all its stages through the House of Commons this session, or in an autumn session, or utterly failing that, as the first Government Bill of the next session." If such a pledge was given the Welsh party should give the Government loyal support. This resolution was taken as tacit approval of the revolt; certainly the revolt was not condemned.  

At a later meeting of the South Wales Executive, at which a disruption occurred and several members including the Chairman walked out, a motion was carried unanimously approving the action taken by the four independents.

Two of the more advanced Welsh members, Alfred Thomas and Major Evan Jones, received assurances from the Government, through Ellis, that "the Welsh Disestablishment Bill will be persevered with and carried through the House of Commons." Whether this would be done in 1894 or as the first Bill of the next session had not yet been decided. About the same time Rosebery, speaking at Birmingham, affirmed "that before we meet the country

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64North Wales Observer and Express, June 1, 1894.
we shall meet it with a measure of Welsh Disestablishment passed through the House of Commons." The Welsh party, with four dissentients, passed a resolution of confidence in and support for the Government. The four independents were not yet ready to end their protest but did express satisfaction at Rosebery's declaration. Although refusing to vote for the resolution they did begin to support the Government and respond to its whips. Herbert Lewis and Frank Edwards wrote to Ellis and received his assurance that the Government would pass the Bill in the current session if possible or, if that was not possible, as the first Bill in the following session. With this guarantee the Welsh revolt effectively ended, having reached its original goal of obtaining a definite assurance from the Government that the Bill would pass. The Bill was later withdrawn without reaching the second Reading stage.

The Bill for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Welsh Church which Asquith introduced on February 25, 1895 was almost identical to that introduced in 1894. Even during the first Reading debate, it was obvious

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65North Wales Observer and express, May 25, 1894; Manchester Guardian, May 26, 1894; Daily News, May 26, 1894; North Wales Observer and Express, June 1, 1894; J. Herbert Lewis and Frank Edwards to Ellis, June 1, 1894, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 1410); Ellis to J. Herbert Lewis, June 11, 1894, Ellis Papers (N. L. W., 2904); South Wales Daily News, June 5, 1894.
that the Opposition was determined to obstruct progress and The Star encouraged the Government to make full use of the closure. Closure was not applied and the first Reading debate lasted three days. Asquith moved the second Reading on March 21 in a speech reported to have been one of the finest in his career. Obstruction again came to the fore and this stage was not carried until the first of April. The Government did have the surprising majority of 44 on this division, certainly much larger than its normal majority which was less than 20. None of the three Tory members from Wales spoke during the debate.66

Liberal unanimity for the Bill was not preserved in Committee. Progress, of course, was slow, due to effective obstruction but the Government rejected requests for the application of closure or time limits. Asquith stated that in the twelve days the Bill was in Committee prior to the Government's defeat "little substantial progress had been made." Lloyd George, D. A. Thomas, and some other Welsh members were determined to make changes in the Bill. A crisis arose on May 20 when the former moved an amendment that Asquith first refused to accept but finally agreed to consider on a later clause. The Unionists refused to allow Lloyd George to withdraw his...
amendment and, in spite of Lloyd George and other Welsh members voting against their own amendment, the Government's majority fell to ten. Lloyd George wanted the establishment of a National Council to handle disendowed Church revenues rather than the appointed Commissioners provided in the Bill. It was clear that the Government might be defeated if it did not accept this arrangement. 67

To compound the Government's problems Ellis announced on June 19 that Gladstone had broken his pair on certain clauses of the Bill. Still favoring disestablishment he thought some of the disendowment provisions too harsh. The next day the Government's majority was reduced to seven on an amendment moved by D. A. Thomas which was preparatory to Lloyd George's amendment establishing a National Council. Asquith had not yet accepted that amendment although he was reported to have done so the next day. It was certainly apparent that if he did not accept the amendment the Government was in grave danger of being defeated when it was moved early in the next week. 68 That possibility was not faced, since the Government was defeated and resigned in the interim. 69

67 The Star, May 10, 1895; May 12, 1895; Asquith, Fifty Years, I, 259; South Wales Daily News, May 21, 1895; The Star, May 21, 1895; Manchester Guardian, June 18, 1895.

68 The Star, June 21, 1895.

69 See Morgan, Wales, pp. 149-159 for a discussion of the course of the Bill and the Government's problems on it.
Scottish issues raised in 1894 and 1895 certainly did not present the same problem to the Government as Welsh issues. A Scottish Disestablishment Bill was introduced in both years by Sir Charles Cameron but was not carried past the first Reading in either year. The major issue in both years was the extension to Scotland of some control over Scotland's local affairs, resolutions in favor of Scottish Home Rule and Home Rule all round passing in the House of Commons and a Scottish Grand Committee being established to deal with Scottish Bills in one session.  

The Government, encouraged by a resolution adopted by the Scottish members, in 1894 established a Scottish Grand Committee to consider Scottish Bills on the Committee stage, thus expediting procedure in the House, freeing it for other business, while still allowing full discussion and even amendment on the other stages by the full House of Commons. The effectiveness of this procedure was proved in 1894 when a Parish Councils Bill for Scotland was referred to the Grand Committee and eventually passed into law. Time pressure would probably have forced withdrawal of that Bill had the Grand Committee not been available for the Committee stage. The Scottish Grand Committee was composed of all 72 Scottish members plus

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70Kellas, "Scottish Church Disestablishment," pp. 43-44.
fifteen members nominated by the Committee of Selection and therefore had the added advantage of allowing Scottish members to shape legislation for Scotland.  

Some Scottish members considered the Grand Committee only a "makeshift" expedient pending the adoption of Home Rule for Scotland. J. H. Dalziel moved a resolution on April 3, 1894 "to establish a Legislature in Scotland for dealing with purely Scottish affairs." Sir George Trevelyan, the Scottish Secretary, declared that the Government considered the question open and announced that he would vote for the resolution. It was carried by a majority of 10, 180 to 170.

In 1895 Dalziel's resolution proposed Home Rule all round: "to devolve upon Legislatures in Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England, respectively, the management and control of their domestic affairs." The resolution was seconded by Lloyd George. Again the Government remained neutral with Trevelyan personally supporting the motion. Both Campbell-Bannerman and Ellis voted for the resolution which was carried by a majority of 26 on a lower total vote than in 1894.

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71 Daily News, February 14, 1894; Manchester Guardian, April 3, 1894.

72 Dundee Advertiser, April 14, 1894; Hanham, Scottish Nationalism, p. 98.

73 Hanham, Scottish Nationalism, p. 98; Dundee Advertiser, March 30, 1895; Daily News, April 1, 1895.
Even though Scottish measures were discarded along with other measures the only serious protest was a personal one by Dr. MacGregor, member for Invernesshire. One of the Government Bills which was in danger of being withdrawn in 1895 was a Scotch Crofters Bill, Dr. MacGregor’s special interest. He attempted to get assurance from Harcourt that the Bill would be carried but failed. Leaving the House he resigned his seat in protest. The Conservative candidate won the by-election with a majority of 650. This clearly did the Government a damage it could ill afford.74

The only annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation which took place while Rosebery was Prime Minister was held at Cardiff in January 1895. The report of the Executive Committee to the conference stressed the positive work of the Government in both legislation and administration during the previous year. It reconfirmed the resolutions adopted at the Leeds conference, claiming that Rosebery had agreed that they would form the basis of Liberal policy even though the initial step was to be a resolution rather than a Bill. The Committee expressed its disappointment that other important items in the Liberal program had not yet been at least passed through the House of Commons and was particularly distressed to

74 South Wales Daily News, May 21, 1895; Manchester Guardian, June 17, 1895.
find Registration reform and One Man One Vote in that position. The serious condition of the party in the country and the effect of by-election defeats were not minimized but served as a warning that the party must be vigilant and constantly prepared for battle. The recommended program for the coming session, with Welsh disestablishment at its head, was briefly discussed in the report. 75

The House of Lords and Welsh disestablishment were the two major points of emphasis at the conference. The first resolution expressed gratitude to Gladstone for his long service to his party and confidence in Rosebery and the Cabinet while the second resolution reaffirmed the continued primacy of Home Rule. The resolution on the House of Lords expressed confidence that "the policy declared at Leeds" would be "clearly embodied in the resolution to be introduced into the House of Commons by the Ministry" and looked forward to the success of the campaign when "the veto of the House of Lords on measures passed through the House of Commons shall cease to exist." This resolution certainly went beyond Rosebery's stated policy and was virtually that advocated by Labouchere. The first resolution on the second day of the conference welcomed the intention of the Government to send a Welsh

75Manchester Guardian, January 14, 1895.
Disestablishment Bill to the Lords in the next session. Other subjects dealt with in separate resolutions were registration and electoral reform, "direct popular control of the liquor traffic," the unification of London, "local reforms," and labor and social reforms. One of the themes occurring in many speeches was that the Government must be prepared to deal firmly with obstruction.  

Rosebery spoke at Cardiff in conjunction with the National Liberal Federation meeting although he did not address the delegates directly. He had never addressed a National Liberal Federation conference and broke with the Gladstonian tradition by not doing so on this occasion. He also made clear his opinion that the function of the National Liberal Federation was to establish a general outline of policy. It was the business of the Cabinet to "winnow" that general policy and produce its own program based, if possible, on that policy. The same two subjects which had been of greatest concern at the conference were also Rosebery's major topics. He spent much of his speech on Welsh disestablishment assuring the Welsh that they would have first place in 1895. He referred his listeners to his previous speeches at Bradford, Glasgow, and Devonport where he had said "all that is in my mind" on the House of Lords. His policy did not become clearer

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76_Daily News_, January 18, 1895; January 19, 1895.
at Cardiff nor did he specifically accept the resolution of the conference on the Lords. He ended his speech with passing reference to other reforms. 77

"A masterly exposition of Liberal policy" wrote the South Wales Daily News, although it admitted that Rosebery had not clarified his position on the House of Lords. The Star was not enthusiastic about some of Rosebery's phrases but preferred to treat them as slips of the tongue. His speech did not excite the enthusiasm in the press that Gladstone's speeches at previous conferences had produced. Labouchere was certainly not satisfied first because he disliked the policy Rosebery announced of "filling the cup" or "ploughing the sands" and, second, because Rosebery had remained "misty" on the House of Lords issue. 78 Although the conference had been enthusiastic about the Liberal program there was an underlying feeling that the Government would have to be more effective in prosecuting that program if it was to succeed in the country.

The Government refused to take the advice which bombarded it from all sides—from the National Liberal Federation, from the Radicals and other sections of the

77Daily News, January 19, 1895.

party, and from the press. The apathy of its followers was compounded by its difficulties with the Welsh over the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. Labouchere considered that the situation had deteriorated to the point where the plow was stuck fast in the sand and the Ministerial horses were not possessed of the power necessary to draw it further.

If no one was surprised that the Government was defeated everyone was surprised at the occasion of that defeat. On June 21, 1895 one St. John Brodrick moved to reduce the salary of the Secretary of State for War, Campbell-Bannerman, by £100 because of an insufficient supply of cordite. Campbell-Bannerman had earlier in the sitting announced the resignation of the Duke of Cambridge from the office of Commander in Chief. This was considered a great coup and redounded to the credit of Campbell-Bannerman who had carried out sensitive negotiations leading to this resignation. On the cordite question he did not think it proper to publicly announce the amount of cordite on hand but told the House that his military advisors assured him that the supply was adequate. His guarantees were not accepted by the Opposition, a division was taken and the Government was defeated by seven votes. It was a small division, the numbers being 132 to 125. Campbell-Bannerman immediately moved to report progress and left the House. It was obvious that
this had been a snap division on a "sham issue." In terms of tactics this division compared closely with the Government's defeat on Labby's House of Lords amendment the previous year and it was relatively less significant because Labby's majority had been composed entirely of supposed supporters of the Government. Only one Liberal, Sir Charles Dilke, had voted against the Government in the cordite division. It was not a true test of the confidence of the House. The Government could easily have reversed the vote with a motion of confidence and C. B.'s salary could have been raised again on Report. In short there was no reason for the Government to take the matter seriously.\(^7^9\)

Campbell-Bannerman, probably the most personable and popular man in the Cabinet, was considered by both civilians and military men to have been the best War Secretary since Cardwell. On the subject of cordite his military advisers assured him that if he had offered them additional money "small-arms ammunition was the last thing they would have wished to spend it upon." C. B. suspected that one of the reasons behind Brodrick's action was that an ordinance factory in his constituency had not received a contract for cordite. Whatever the reason

\(^7^9\)Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 4th ser., Vol. 34 (June 21, 1895), pp. 1685-1712; Channing, Midland Politics, pp. 163-164.
for the defeat C. B. sent his resignation to Rosebery the same night. 80

The Liberal press was convinced that resignation or dissolution would be a mistake; the Government would fall short of its duty if it left its tasks uncompleted. On the other hand, Labby wrote C. B. telling him that "if Ministers do not seize this opportunity to resign, they are mad." He pointed out that the size of the majority made defeat probable at some early date and that the party was "losing support in the country every day." The party would lose the election "but to go on will only convert defeat into rout." 81

The Government made no effort to maintain itself. The Welsh Disestablishment Bill had been put down for the following Monday and there was a good possibility that the Government would be defeated on that day over Lloyd George's amendment or on some other day over a similar incident. The internal relations in the Cabinet were not such that Ministers desired to prolong their hold on office. Hamilton wrote in his diary: "What was wanted was an opportunity of getting out, and here is the


81 Manchester Guardian. June 22, 1895; The Star, June 22, 1895; South Wales Daily News, June 22, 1895; Labouchere to Campbell-Bannerman, June 22, 1895, Campbell-Bannerman Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 41222, ff. 6-7).
opportunity and under the circumstances a good one." On June 24, 1895 the Cabinet resigned and Lord Salisbury again became Prime Minister. 82

The Liberal party was immediately thrown into an election campaign for which it showed itself singularly unprepared. In one sense the election had been sprung on the party but in a more accurate sense it had been coming for some time, the only question being when it would take place. The party should have been ready but there was little agreement on the electoral platform, candidates had not been provided for all vacancies, and the party was in a generally disorganized state.

The National Liberal Federation issued a Manifesto to Liberal Associations throughout the country. This document began by reminding the Associations of the "remarkable series of legislative and administrative triumphs" of the late Government. The House of Lords being the main subject of attack, the Leeds resolutions were emphasized along with those measures which had been rejected or mutilated by the Lords. It was not a particularly rousing Manifesto. "I never read an electoral appeal worse written," Labouchere wrote, "worse conceived, and less likely to create enthusiasm." It was filled with "a series of platitudes" and "for the Federation

82 Morley, Recollections, II, 47; Diary, June 22, 1895, Hamilton Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 48667, ff. 36).
to expect to rouse the Radicals to activity by celebrating the excellencies of the late Government, and by vague assurances that, if again in office, it will do something in regard to the Lords to which the Lords will assent, is the very climax of folly."\textsuperscript{83}

Other sections within the party issued their own special Manifestos. The "Welsh National Manifesto" emphasized Welsh Home Rule and disestablishment. The United Kingdom Alliance demanded that any candidate be required to take its pledge on the liquor question. The Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress issued a wide program of desirable labor legislation including a general eight hour day, as well as miners' eight hours, the House of Lords, and electoral reform. The Radical Manifesto was issued by the National Reform Union stressing the abolition of the legislative power of the Lords, registration and electoral reform, and a reform of the rules of Parliamentary procedure as being necessary before the other measures in either the Liberal or the Radical program could be passed.\textsuperscript{84}

The triumvirate of Liberal leaders all had different ideas on the major issue of the campaign. Rosebery thought

\textsuperscript{83}\textit{Manchester Guardian}, June 27, 1895; \textit{Truth}, July 4, 1895, pp. 16-18.

\textsuperscript{84}\textit{Daily News}, July 4, 1895; June 25, 1895; \textit{Manchester Guardian}, July 2, 1895.
his vague version of the House of Lords issue could be the single great question. Morley stuck to Home Rule and Home Rule alone. Harcourt stood on the Liberal (Newcastle) program but emphasized Local Option as the key issue. With the three leaders going in three different directions there was no hope for party unity. The Manchester Guardian issued a clarion call for focussing energies and proposed hitting the House of Lords through Home Rule with the rest of the program trailing along behind. No one listened. The party was obviously not united and not in a mood to be united.

There had never been much doubt but that the Liberals would lose the election. Labouchere had been saying this for months and it was doubtful if any of the leaders either expected or hoped to return with a Liberal majority. What had not been expected was the enormity of the debacle and the defeat of so many of the Liberal leaders. Harcourt, John Morley, Arnold Morley, and Shaw-Lefevre were all defeated. The leadership presided over a party only 177 strong. Liberals and Nationalists were in a minority of 152 and in England alone the Liberals were in a minority of 233. The rout was the result of a shift of about

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86 Harcourt did manage to find another seat--for Monmouthshire.
4.5% or 221,000 votes out of an electorate of 4,800,000. With a vote of 2,380,000 the Liberals had obtained 49.6% of the vote cast. One reason for the imbalance was that the Liberals failed to contest 124 seats while the Unionists let only 10 seats go by default.87

Labouchere did not adopt a policy of silence, dealing repeatedly with the disaster in an "I told you so" manner. He had, after all, been telling the party and the leadership for some time that it would be defeated. "Never yet was there a more crushing defeat; never yet was defeat more merited." In Labby's view the major culprits were the leadership and the wirepullers.

I have no doubt that the Radicals constitute the majority in the United Kingdom. They are beaten at the election because they did not think much of their self-elected shepherds, or of the barren pastures into which these shepherds led them. Sheep they may have been, but even sheep are apt to stray when they are driven up and down rocks without a blade of grass, and told that they are to be thankful for being taught an object-lesson on starvation. The shepherds are now discomfited, and the sheep are scattered abroad.88

Labby also contended that the country, in addition to the party, had found that "the late Ministry was collectively weak, unpractical, vacillating, and, taken collectively,

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88Truth, July 25, 1895, p. 197.
not up to statesmen's rank." The problem was not a "disbelief in Radicalism;" it was "distrust in the late Ministry." 89

Labouchere did advocate changing the "shepherds." He also recommended a specific program—not much different than his previous recommendations—consisting of abolition of hereditary or nominated legislators, drastic electoral reform, payment of members and election expenses, the Cabinet to be entirely from the Commons, and Home Rule all round. After this program was passed into law the Government would be responsive to and representative of the people and could then proceed to enact those items of social and labor legislation which were demanded by the people. His recommendations were intended for the distant future because he believed the party would now remain in the wilderness for six or seven years. During this time, according to Labouchere, it must solve its leadership problems and it must convince the country both of the efficacy of its program and that the party would carry that program if returned to power. 90

Explanations of the 1895 defeat may be divided into three categories: Program, Party, and Leadership. Some,

89. *Truth*, August 1, 1895, pp. 249-250; August 8, 1895, pp. 312-323.

both contemporaries and historians, have tended to see the major reason for the defeat in the program of the party and have therefore condemned the Newcastle program out of hand. There can be no doubt that certain elements in the program alienated some voters, local option providing perhaps the best example of this. The "trade" was solidly against the Liberals and exerted great influence. Both the *Daily News* and Sir Wilfrid Lawson saw liquor as playing a major role in the election. Harcourt had emphasized this issue at Derby and had lost. There was also some tendency to blame the entire program; the party had tried to do too much. John Bright's phrase about driving several omnibuses abreast through Temple Bar was much in vogue. Nevertheless the Liberal program in 1895 was virtually the same program that had won the election of 1892.

The fragmented state of the party was another reason given for the rout. There was no doubt that this had had a great deal to do with the resignation of the Government. The attitude and action of the Welsh Radicals had been an important factor as had the general tendency

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toward splintering. While this propensity may have decreased public confidence in the party it was not the entire cause of the debacle, probably having more effect on the leadership of the party than on public opinion and, conversely, the quality of party leadership had been the main reason for the splintering.93

The real failure of the Liberal party and the root cause of the party's rejection by the country was the lack of positive, forceful, united leadership. Labouchere was right. Gladstone's retirement had left a void which it had been impossible to fill and no one had developed an alternative style of leadership which would as successfully unite the party as the old Gladstonian umbrella. The failure of leadership was apparent long before the election when the Cabinet could not unite on program, on Parliamentary tactics, or on the personnel of the leadership itself. The result was that while the party was in power it did nothing but drift aimlessly and "plough the sands of the seashore." Since the party leadership could not effectively run a Government it could not effectively run a campaign in the country. The failure of the anti-Lords campaign had indicated this. It was idle to suppose that these same men could unite in

an appeal to the country for a vote of confidence. They had shown no pluck and no daring. Their failure had been almost total and the country knew it. The country also knew that there was a gap between the leadership and the party. This was most obvious between Rosebery and the Radicals. If the leadership would not lead in the direction indicated by the party it could not expect to be supported either in Parliament or in the country. Not only would the leadership not lead in the direction the party wanted; it would not lead at all. The leadership was neither firmly committed to the Newcastle program nor did it successfully raise any alternatives. As Prime Minister Rosebery was the chief culprit but others must share responsibility.

The reason for the defeat, then, was not program. The program was more than adequate if the leadership would have attempted coherently and enthusiastically to sell it to the country. The problem was not the party. The party was sound. It begged for and would have united behind positive and forceful leadership.
CHAPTER VIII:
CONCLUSION

Radicalism had not begun as an influence in Liberal politics in 1886 nor did it end in 1895. After ten years in the wilderness the party was, if anything, more Radical than in 1895 and the leaders of the party were more willing to carry out a Radical policy. Nonetheless Radicalism had, between 1886 and 1895, established its dominance over policy if not over party leaders.

Just as the Liberal party during this period was a party of sections so its Radical wing was itself subdivided into sections, each with a particular interest. The Welsh disestablishers formed a Radical section, with some Welsh members forming a Radical nationalist section within the larger section. The same division existed in Scotland. The Crofters' party was, after all, quite Radical, as were the disestablishers and the nationalists. English Radicalism, too, embraced a diverse collection of groups: the Liberationists, the Land Law reformers, the labor section, and to some extent the Temperance reformers. These sections were usually welded together under the title Radical. Membership in the subgroups was not exclusive and many Radicals belonged

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to several such groups, each group generally accepting the proposals of other Radical groups while still maintaining that its particular cause was the most important. Radicalism could be a powerful political force as long as unity could be maintained. Once the groups began to bicker among themselves, as they did in 1894 and 1895, the effectiveness not only of Radicalism but of the Liberal party significantly decreased.

There was always a group of Radicals who functioned as Radicals pure and simple. They did not have the close identification with a subgroup that others had. Labouchere, for example, was never identified with a subgroup in the way Sir Wilfrid Lawson was identified with the Temperance movement. Both were Radicals but Labouchere was better able to fill the role of leader and coordinator because of his independence of the subgroups. 

Late nineteenth century Radicalism was primarily pragmatic in philosophical terms. It was thus easy for many Radicals to make the transition from individualism to state intervention because the transition was not mainly philosophical but practical. Radicals wanted practicality and definiteness in their political program. This meant that Radicals spoke of social reform differently from men like Rosebery and Haldane. The latter school emphasized general social reform, rarely condescending to detail. This movement for general social reform was
based on a philosophical conviction that social reform was necessary and good but philosophical social reformers faced great difficulty in attempting to apply their philosophy to political realities and often opposed specific social reform proposals. This group advocated that the Liberal party become the party of social reform without confiding to the party what they meant by social reform—one is tempted to conclude, as Labouchere did, that they did not know what they meant. Most Radicals had no prejudice against social reform but, as with any other proposal, wanted to examine the practical aspects of the problem and its proposed solution. Labouchere and others contended that Rosebery and his followers were trying to shelve reform of the machinery of Government and substitute for it a vague social reform because they were afraid of democracy and believed that Government should be carried on and policy made by "superior persons," identified by Labouchere as "Eighty Club prigs." Radicals were convinced that a democratic government was of the highest importance because the true wishes of the people could then be ascertained and followed.

The Home Rule split of 1886 was of tremendous significance for the Radical wing of the Liberal party. Before 1886 the Radicals had always been overwhelmed by the Whig section of the party but the Whig section was becoming increasingly restive both with Radical pressures
and with Gladstone's leadership. The Whigs believed that Gladstone would not stand firmly against Radicalism. They were, in a sense, looking for an excuse to leave the party; Home Rule provided that excuse. The Whig secession greatly strengthened Radicalism in relative terms. Radicals looked on the Whig secession not as a loss but as an opportunity. The party could now become a coherent party of progress without its Whig drag anchor. There was no desire on the part of the Radicals for Liberal reunion. Indeed one of the reasons for Radical suspicion of Rosebery was that he was reputed to desire reunion and was reported to have held conferences with the secessionists after he became Prime Minister. Reunion would weaken Radicalism and make party unity over policy impossible.

In the period after 1886 the influence of Radicalism within both the Parliamentary party and the party in the country grew significantly. The best indication of this growth was the changing program of the National Liberal Federation which became more and more Radical. The close connection between the National Liberal Federation and the Liberal Central Association and thus with the party leadership led to the conclusion that the program of the National Liberal Federation was the program of the party, a conclusion further reinforced by the presence at the annual conferences of party leaders like Gladstone, Harcourt, and Morley who regularly expressed their approval
of the resolutions adopted at the conferences.

The rising tide of Radicalism in the country as indicated by the program of the National Liberal Federation was mirrored by the attitude and action of the Parliamentary party. The growing Radicalism of their followers forced party leaders to become more Radical, at least while the party was in opposition. Labouchere's dictum that the party in the country was always more Radical than the party in Parliament which, in turn, was more Radical than the party leadership, fits this situation. The corollary was that in order to maintain their leadership and to obtain the enthusiastic support of their party the Liberal leadership became more Radical as the party became more Radical.

The Radicalization of the Liberal program culminated at Newcastle in 1891 with the resolutions adopted there by the National Liberal Federation. Virtually the same program as that adopted at the two previous conferences, the name "Newcastle" stuck because it was on that program that the Liberal party fought the election of 1892 and it was that program which was intended to form the basis of the legislative policy of the next Liberal Government. The Newcastle program can be seen as the focal point around which Radicalism moved between 1886 and 1895. In the period before Newcastle Radicals worked and agitated for the Radicalization of the program. In the period
after 1891 their major concern was to try to insure that the party and later the Liberal Government carried out that program.

Newcastle was the last occasion Gladstone addressed an annual meeting of the National Liberal Federation and he endorsed the program adopted by that conference. It was not until the Newcastle program fell into disrepute after 1895 that it began to be attacked and that the claim was made that it had not been the official program of the party. Others said that it had been forced on leaders who had disapproved of it or that these leaders had not endorsed the National Liberal Federation program. None of this was true. The fact remained that the Newcastle program was the official party program.

The development of this program resulted in more complete unification of the Liberal party. Since the Liberal party was a sectional party some means had to be found to bind it together. Two methods were broached at various times. One was to find a "single great question," an umbrella, of such overriding importance that the sections would be willing to submit to its dominance, thus providing unity of purpose in the party. The other was "program building." A broad program could be developed which would also unite the various sections within the party. Gladstone had discovered in Home Rule an issue he believed would unite the party and, following the dissentient secession,
it did. The best use of the single question approach was to provide a temporary unity during which the party could plan and organize for the future. Unity would then remain when the single issue had been removed. Home Rule as a unifying issue served this function and the party laid out a plan for the future. This was done mainly by the party as distinct from its leaders, some of whom were, like Rosebery and Morley, not enthusiastic about the programmatic approach. The Newcastle program was a program for Ireland and beyond; the party had committed itself to deal with other subjects after Home Rule.

Unity based on Newcastle was stronger than had been the unity based on Home Rule alone but maintenance of such unity depended on the ability and willingness of the next Liberal Government to follow Home Rule with other items from the program. If this was done the party would support the Government. Otherwise, if the Government moved too slowly, the sections would begin to squabble among themselves for priority.

It was the Newcastle program, and not Home Rule alone, which gained the Liberals their majority in 1892. This was recognized by Liberal leaders like Gladstone and Harcourt and was also proclaimed by Radicals. The first commitment of the Government was to Home Rule but it was also committed to pass other measures based on its program.
Radical confidence in Gladstone seemed to be justified in the autumn session of 1893. The Parish Councils Bill was carried into law, although not with precisely those provisions that Radicals would have wished, and the Employers' Liability Bill was passed through the House of Commons even though the Government later decided to drop it rather than accept the amendments of the Lords. The Government appeared determined to carry out its mandate even if it was not doing so with the speed or with measures of as Radical a character as the Radical section would have desired.

The Government was also confronted with some important issues which divided the party, like miners' eight hours, not in its program. Eight hours had not been included in the Newcastle program perhaps because John Morley, who sat for Newcastle, adamantly opposed it. Although most Radicals, except those from Durham and Northumberland, favored it, this was the sort of issue that could divide the party because it directly raised the issue of state intervention. A deeply disturbing issue for some Liberals, its electoral effect was great only in individual cases; John Morley's opposition probably cost him enough votes to result in his defeat in 1895. The acceptance of and support for miners' eight hours indicated that most Liberals and almost all Radicals were making a successful transition from strict individualism to modified state
intervention.

The crisis over Gladstone's successor began the real decline of the Liberal Government. With few exceptions Radicals preferred Harcourt over Rosebery but they acquiesced in the fait accompli rather than cause the resignation of the Government. An indication of the changed attitude of Radicals was quickly given in the division over Labouchere's House of Lords amendment to the Address. As Labouchere had foretold, Radicals would be more demanding of Rosebery's Government than they had been of Gladstone's. They expected the Newcastle program to be carried in a thoroughly Radical manner and with no delay.

Harcourt's Budget provided the only Radical success of 1894 and aside from the Budget the Government showed itself surprisingly unwilling to exert itself to carry any program. Dissension within the Cabinet resulted in public inaction. Rosebery and Harcourt rarely spoke to each other and it was not surprising that Harcourt refused to put himself out to secure successes which would redound to Rosebery's credit. He was widely quoted as having said, "As you know I am not a supporter of this Government."¹ The Government refused to limit debate or

¹Harcourt to Spencer, September 21, 1894, Gardiner, Sir William Harcourt, II, 308.
to deal with Unionist obstruction in any effective way.

It was a combination of obstruction and a conviction that the Government was not making a sincere attempt to carry its program that began the breakup of the party into its component parts. Each section began to insist that its measure be passed through the House of Commons immediately so that it would have some success to offer the electorate after the apparently imminent collapse of the Government.

The Welsh posed a great threat to the Government when the four Welsh Radicals withdrew their support in 1894. The Government again got into trouble with Welsh Radicals on the Committee stage of the Welsh Disestablishment Bill in 1895 and would probably have soon fallen as a result of a blow from this quarter had it not decided to resign over the snap cordite division. No other group posed such an effective threat of revolt with the exception of the Parnellites who were in perpetual revolt.

Radicals faced an unenviable dilemma under Rosebery's Government. The Government obviously was doing neither what it had been elected to do nor what Radicals wanted it to do. The question Radicals had to face was whether they should make their disapproval of the Government concrete by voting it out of office, and they could easily
have done this, or whether they should keep it in power because it called itself Liberal and on the off chance that it would do something commendable. When confronted with this choice Radicals almost invariably chose to keep the Government in office but did so without enthusiasm. Labouchere considered this weak behavior but also supported the Government in most cases.

Apart from carrying its program, and partly to make that possible, Radicals wanted the Government to mount an effective campaign against the veto power of the House of Lords. Gladstone had given the lead on this subject in his last speech in the House of Commons. The minimum Radical demand was contained in the resolutions passed at the special meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Leeds in 1894. Radicals expected Rosebery and his colleagues to follow this guidance but they refused. Rosebery, while maintaining that he was against the unrestricted power of the House of Lords, refused to say exactly what his policy would be and Radicals were not willing to take Rosebery on trust as they might have taken Gladstone. The result of Rosebery's silence was that the agitation against the House of Lords died.

Having shown itself inept and inefficient in office the Government accepted with alacrity the opportunity to step down following the cordite defeat. Resignation was followed by a disastrous defeat at the polls and the
Liberal party went into the wilderness for ten years. Radicals shed few tears at the passing of Rosebery's Government. Both Liberals and Radicals moved into Opposition with a feeling of relief hoping that Opposition would purify the party, give it the opportunity to deal with its problems, to get effective leaders, and to unify around a common program.

For this protracted desert tramp which lies before our band
Will lead at last to Pisgah's top and to the Promised Land.²

²Truth, July 25, 1895, p. 197.
RESOLUTIONS OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL FEDERATION, 1886-1895

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In this table "X" means that the subject either had its own resolution or was included with similar items, "O" means the subject was mentioned in the "omnibus" resolution, and "NA" indicates that an attempt to move an amendment or resolution on this subject was not allowed. Resolutions on Home Rule, on foreign policy, and of confidence in the Liberal Government were not included in the table.
Appendix II:

Letters Concerning Labouchere's Exclusion from the Government, 1892

August 13, 1892

My Dear Mr. Bertram Currie,

Please to read and to consider this enclosed letter and to administer it personally in your very best manner to the gentleman whom it principally concerns. I rely much on your ability and tact.

Your mission if you are good enough to accept one is limited to what has here been written; though doubtless your conversation may range over a wider field.

Sincerely yours

W. Gladstone

August 16, 1892

Dear Mr. Bertram Currie,

I believe you are on terms of intimacy with Mr. Labouchere, and I therefore would beg you to make a communication to him on my behalf, which may be more acceptable than if it came from me direct—as I am wholly unacquainted with his personal views.

I recognize with pleasure the position which he has attained in the House of Commons, as an independent member of remarkable talents, activity, and energy.

Such being the case I should naturally have desired to propose to him the acceptance of some office under the Crown, in connection with the ministry now in course of being formed.

1Gladstone to Bertram Currie, August 13, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44515, ff. 141-142). On the back of this letter was written "Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Labouchere—not delivered."
I am however encountered by this difficulty—that he is as I understand the proprietor and director of the widely known Journal called "Truth"—that journal is believed to constitute a valuable estate, to be a journal rather of comment and animadversion than of record, and to have been in relations of pretty sharp antagonism at times with the Queen, & Royal Family, which would hardly be fitting for a servant of the Crown, and which at the same time could not be changed in connection with an acceptance of office, except at some loss (a loss not confined to the paper as distinct from the proprietor) of what Mr. Labouchere would undoubtedly value far more highly than official position, if indeed he set on this any value at all. I therefore regard neither of these alternatives as available.

Under these circumstances I have thought it best at once thus to state frankly a reason which bore on this occasion me from making a proposal to Mr. Labouchere, although his talents and Parliamentary position and standing notably tended to invite such a proposal.

Believe me
Dear Mr. Bertram Currie
Very faithfully yours

W. Gladstone

August 19, 1892

Dear Mr. Tonsley,

The Queen expressed so strong a feeling against me as one of her ministers that, as I understand it, Mr. Gladstone did not think it desirable to submit my name to her.

Yours truly,

H. Labouchere

2Gladstone to Bertram Currie, August 16, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44515, ff. 167-168). The text of this letter is precisely the same as that from Gladstone to Bertram Currie, August 13, 1892, Gladstone Papers (B. M., Add. MSS., 44515, ff. 143-144).

3Labouchere to Councillor Tonsley of Northampton, August 19, 1892, Daily News, August 22, 1892.
August 22, 1892

Dear Mr. Labouchere,

My attention has been called to a letter addressed by you to Mr. Tonsley, and printed in the Times of to-day, and I have to assure you that the understanding which has been conveyed to you is not correct.

I am alone responsible for recommendations submitted to her Majesty respecting the tenure of political office, or for the absence of such recommendation in any given instance. I was aware of the high position you have created for yourself in the House of Commons, and of the presumption, which would naturally arise, that your name could not fail to be considered on an occasion when a Government had to be formed. I gave accordingly my best consideration to the subject, and I arrived at the conclusion that there were incidents in your case which, while they testified to your energy and influence, were in no degrees disparaging to your honour, but which appeared to me to render it unfit that I should ask your leave to submit your name to her Majesty for a political office, which would involve your becoming a servant of the Crown.

Believe me,
very faithfully yours,

W. E. Gladstone

August 23, 1892

Dear Mr. Gladstone,

I beg to acknowledge your letter of yesterday's date, and to thank you for its kindly tone towards myself. I had been away from home, and only got it when it was too late to alter anything I had written for this week's Truth upon the matter, as the paper goes to press on Tuesday at twelve o'clock.

I am aware that you will recognize that I have never asked you--directly or indirectly--for any post in your Administration. I should, indeed, not have publicly alluded to the matter, owing to its personal character, had it not been that the newspapers were discussing why I was not asked to become a member of your Administration, the implication being that I had urged "claims," and that I resented their being ignored.

I fully perceive the difficulty of your position, and, whilst I cannot admit that the Sovereign has a right to impose any veto on the Prime Minister that
she has selected in the choice of his colleagues, I admire your chivalry in covering the Royal action by assuming the constitutional responsibility of a proceeding, in regard to which I must ask you to allow me to retain the conviction that you were not a free agent.

With respect to myself, it is a matter of absolute unimportance that I am not a servant of the Crown, or—as we Radicals should put it—an Executive servant of the Nation. The precedent, however, is a dangerous one, as circumstances might occur in which the Royal ostracism of some particular person from the public service might impair the efficiency of a Liberal Ministry, representing views not in accordance with Court opinion. Of this, there is no danger in the present case. My personality is too insignificant to have any influence on public affairs, and I am—if I may be allowed to say so—far too stalwart a Radical not to support an Administration which I trust will secure to us Home Rule in Ireland; true non-intervention abroad; and many democratic reforms in the United Kingdom. My only regret is that the Liberal Party has not seen its way to include many other and more drastic reforms in its programme, notably the abolition of the House of Lords, and the Disendowment and Disestablishment of the Church of England.

It will always be a source of pride to me that you thought me worthy of being one of your colleagues, and that, in regard to the incidents which rendered it impossible for you to act in accordance with this flattering opinion, you consider that they testify to my energy and influence, and are in no degree disparaging to my honour.

With the sincerest hope that you long may be preserved as the People's Minister, I have the honour to be, yours most faithfully,

H. Labouchere

August 25, 1892

Dear Mr. Labouchere,

I cannot hesitate to answer your appeal. At no time and in no form have I had from you any signification of a desire for office.

You do me personally more than justice. My note to you is nothing more or less than a true while succinct statement of the facts as well as of the constitutional doctrine which applies to them.

I quite agree with you that men in political office are servants of the country, as well as of the Crown.
There are incidents attaching to them in each aspect, and I mentioned the capacity which alone touched the case before me.

Believe me,
very faithfully yours,
W. E. Gladstone

August 26, 1892

Dear Mr. Gladstone,

I beg to acknowledge your letter of yesterday's date, which I received just as I was starting for the Continent.

I cannot admit that I have ever done you more than justice; indeed, in my ardour for democratic reforms, I am afraid that I have occasionally appeared not to do you sufficient justice, in view of your long and noble services to the Liberal cause, for which all who call themselves either Liberals or Radicals owe you an eternal debt of gratitude.

I am fully aware that you did not ask my leave (as you courteously put it) to submit my name to the Queen, and I as fully recognize your constitutional obligations, nor am I so foolish as to make it a grievance that you assume them. Far from this, I hope to have many occasions in the forthcoming session to show that neither I nor my constituents "greatly regret" that Lord Salisbury has been forced by the People's verdict to resign office, and that you have replaced as Prime Minister that pliant "Unionist." Whatever regret for this change may be felt in Palaces, this feeling—if I may judge from the sentiments that I heard expressed at the numerous recent elections at which I took a humble part—will find no echo in the homes of the millions, who have an unbounded faith in your fidelity to the People's cause, and a warmer affection for you personally than any other person in the United Kingdom.

Permit me to express my regret that, in the midst of your arduous and important avocations, you should have been troubled for an instant with a matter affecting myself.

I have the honour to be, yours most faithfully,

H. Labouchere

These letters were printed in Truth, September 1, 1892, p. 441. Labouchere published the letters with Gladstone's permission.
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